

# Business

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## Zain Kuwait, OSN sign strategic partnership

### Zain's new 5G plans subscribers to enjoy OSN streaming content

- OSN and Zain Kuwait enter strategic partnership to offer OSN streaming app bundled with Zain's new 5G plans.
- Zain's new 5G plans subscribers will enjoy OSN streaming content as part of their plans, other customers will enjoy unique offers through Direct Carrier Billing.

KUWAIT: OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, and Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, have sealed a partnership to make the OSN streaming app available to Zain customers in Kuwait. Zain customers can now enjoy access to the OSN streaming app and the thousands of hours of premium exclusive content available on the platform. Postpaid customers will receive a complimentary one-year OSN subscription when they subscribe to any of Zain's new 5G plans starting from KD 15 monthly.

The strategic partnership gives Zain subscribers exclusive access to original content from Disney+, HBO, Universal, MGM, Paramount+ and many other major Hollywood studios in addition to premium Arabic and Turkish productions, all available on the OSN streaming app.

Zahra Zayat, Senior Vice President of Telco and OTT at OSN said, "We are very excited to have Zain as our Telco partner in Kuwait. With the revolutionary 5G rollout by Zain, video consumption on OSN Streaming service is expected to take a quantum leap, hence, our partnership came as a natural extension to the 5G offering and an essential opportunity to uplift lower tier internet users to higher value tiers." Zayat added: "Customers in Kuwait demand quality streaming content on their phones and our OSN

Streaming app addresses this need by bundling the huge library of premium English and Arabic content with the unbeatable experience of 5G. Those who subscribe to any of Zain's new 5G plans will enjoy unlimited OSN streaming content at no extra cost for a year. All other customers can subscribe through direct billing via their Zain lines and enjoy special offers."

Modhey Al-Sabah, Chief Government Affairs and Business Development Officer at Zain Kuwait, said: "We are thrilled to partner with OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, to offer our customers the best world-class content from the biggest names in the global entertainment industry. Zain proudly operates the largest and most powerful 5G network in Kuwait, and with that comes a commitment to offer top-quality services to the largest family of subscribers in the country. For this, we were keen on offering all customers subscribing to our new 5G plans with a complimentary one-year subscription in OSN to allow them to enjoy the true power of this revolutionary technology."

Accessing world-class entertainment in the palm of their hand, Zain Kuwait customers can look forward to binge-watching their favorite shows including Game of Thrones, The Mandalorian, and Al-Tuffah Al-Haram on the go.

Customers will also have access to OSN's range of OSN Original productions including reality TV show 'Yalla Neta'asha' and 'A'adet Regala'. Relunched in April 2020, OSN's enviable streaming library also boasts thousands of hours of universally acclaimed blockbuster movies, trending series, boxsets, kids content, award-winning documentaries, and more.

Zain's new 5G plans include a wide range of revolutionary fixed and mobile Internet devices, including two that are exclusively available at Zain: the 5G Netgear M5 Hotspot with 1 TB of 5G Internet starting at KD 15 monthly, and the Zain 5G HUB; powered by HTC, with 1 TB of 5G Internet for KD 20 monthly only. In addition, the plans include the all-new Huawei 5G CPE PRO 2 with 1 TB of 5G Internet starting at KD 17 monthly, as well as many more devices that meet customers' various personal and professional needs.

#### New offer

Zain is also introducing a new offer that allows postpaid customers to enjoy unlimited 5G Internet on two separate SIM cards with one subscription, starting at KD 20 monthly only. The offer includes one free Internet device, as well as the ability to add an additional device if needed. This offer also includes a free

one-year OSN subscription.

Customers can easily get any of these offers by visiting Zain's branches or through the Zain Online Store (kw.zain.com/5G) and enjoy FREE delivery to their doorstep, noting that Zain follows strict protocols that adhere to official health guidelines to ensure the safety of customers and staff.

The announcement comes to reinforce Zain's leadership in the Kuwaiti market by offering the largest and most

powerful 5G network in Kuwait. Since commercially launching fifth generation wireless technology (5G) back in June 2019, Zain was the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas. The company succeeded in designing the first integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, ultimately transforming the telecom sector across the country and region.

## Trump touts 'fantastic' TikTok deal with Walmart and Oracle

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said Saturday he had approved a deal allowing Silicon Valley giant Oracle to become the data partner for TikTok to avert a shutdown of the massively popular Chinese-owned video app that Washington has called a security risk.

The deal, announced by the companies, also includes Walmart as a commercial partner and would create a new US company named TikTok Global. "I think it's going to be a fantastic deal," Trump said. "I have given the deal my blessing. If they get it done that's great, if they don't that's okay too."

Shortly after, TikTok-owned by China's ByteDance-confirmed the agreement, which came with companies racing against a Sunday deadline set by Trump's administration after which new downloads of the app would be banned. Oracle could buy a 12.5 percent stake in TikTok before a future IPO, and Walmart a 7.5 percent stake.

According to a source close to the matter, ByteDance would keep the rest of the shares. But since the Chinese company is 40 percent owned by American investors, TikTok would

eventually be majority American-owned. "We are pleased that the proposal by TikTok, Oracle, and Walmart will resolve the security concerns of the US Administration and settle questions around TikTok's future in the US," a spokeswoman for TikTok told AFP. ByteDance also confirmed the deal on social media, saying the three companies would reach an agreement that was "in line with US and Chinese law" as soon as possible.

If it comes to fruition, the deal could mark the de-escalation of a technology battle between Washington and Beijing. It could also allow Americans to continue using the wildly popular app: the US Department of Commerce announced it was postponing the ban on TikTok downloads until September 27, citing "recent positive developments."

#### Security concerns

Trump has claimed for weeks that TikTok is collecting user data for Beijing, without ever providing evidence for his allegations. In early August, he gave ByteDance until September 20 to hand over TikTok's US operations to an American company.

And on Friday, the Trump administration ordered a ban on downloads of the video-sharing app, as well as Chinese-owned messaging platform WeChat. TikTok's brand of short, quirky phone videos has become a global phenomenon, especially among young people, with 100 million users in the United States alone.

Trump said the "security will be 100 percent" and that the companies would use separate cloud servers. The deal will lead to the creation of a new company, headquartered in Texas, that will have "nothing to do with China" but will still be called TikTok, according to the president.

Oracle will be in charge of hosting all US user data and the security of the associated computer systems, while Walmart will supply its online sales, order management and payment services.

#### 'Bullying'

In a joint statement, Oracle and Walmart said TikTok Global would "pay more than 5 billion in new tax dollars to the US Treasury," while they and the other companies involved in the deal would launch an initiative to develop online education. Trump, who previously said the federal government deserved a cut of the deal for authorizing it, had initially announced the companies would make a



The logo of Chinese video app TikTok is seen on the side of the company's new office space at the C3 campus in Culver City, in the westside of Los Angeles. — AFP

"contribution" towards education. Under Friday's US order against the Chinese apps, Tencent-owned WeChat would lose functionality in the United States from Sunday. Following the TikTok-Oracle-Walmart deal's announcement, TikTok users will be banned from installing updates starting September 27.

In response, China's Commerce Ministry on Saturday condemned what it called US "bullying," saying it violated international trade norms and that there was no evidence of any security threat, shortly before launching a mechanism that would allow it to sanction foreign companies. — AFP

## Oil recovery waits for international flying to return

LONDON: Jet fuel consumption remains the hardest hit section of the global oil market as passengers avoid air travel as a result of the pandemic and government travel restrictions. The specific problems of the jet market explain why refinery margins for closely related distillates such as diesel are currently being hit much harder than benchmark oil prices.

Jet's travails have helped push distillate margins to their lowest levels for more than a decade and are undercutting refinery demand for crude ("Bleated diesel stocks weigh down global oil market").

Sustained recovery in distillate margins and crude oil prices will therefore depend on a wider resumption of cross-border aviation. But an early resumption of long-haul flights is currently looking less likely than a

few months ago, given the resurgence of coronavirus cases in many parts of the world.

So an uptick in jet consumption and with it distillate margins and crude oil prices depends on one or more of three factors:

- (1) Early deployment of an effective COVID-19 vaccine;
- (2) Alternative methods of infection control (e.g. rapid testing or improved contact tracing and isolation); or
- (3) Lifting air travel restrictions with or without a vaccine.

#### National borders

Quarantines and other infection controls have mostly been imposed on a national, or occasionally continental basis, and on potentially infective passengers rather than manufactured products. — Reuters

## Palantir listing may shine light on Big Data firm

WASHINGTON: Perhaps the most secretive firm to emerge from Silicon Valley, Palantir Technologies is set for a stock market debut this month that may shed light on the Big Data firm specializing in law enforcement and national security. Created after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks with initial funding from a CIA venture-capital unit, Palantir and its predictive analytics platform reportedly have helped the US military locate Osama bin Laden and track weapons movements in the Middle East.

Its platform has also been used in the controversial practice of "predictive policing" to help law enforcement, detect medical insurance fraud and fight the coronavirus pandemic.

While Palantir's data practices and algorithms are secret, the company claims it follows a roadmap which is, if anything, more ethical than its tech sector rivals.

It moved its headquarters to Denver this year, partly in an effort to set itself apart from

its Silicon Valley rivals. "Our company was founded in Silicon Valley. But we seem to share fewer and fewer of the technology sector's values and commitments," Palantir says in its prospectus. "From the start, we have repeatedly turned down opportunities to sell, collect or mine data." Palantir, whose name comes from the mystical, all-powerful seeing stone in "Lord of the Rings," is opting for a direct listing, expected on September 29. This will not raise capital but will allow shares to be traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Palantir's filing suggests a valuation of some \$10 billion, down from a private value as high as \$25 billion, according to Renaissance Capital.

The company posted a loss of \$580 million last year on revenue of \$743 million. But it sees prospects improving as it offers solutions to what it calls "fractured healthcare systems, erosions of data privacy, strained criminal justice systems and outmoded ways of fighting wars," its regulatory filing says. Palantir's biggest shareholder is Peter Thiel, an early Facebook investor and one of the rare tech executives who backed Donald Trump's campaign in 2016. "We are in a deadly race between politics and technology," Thiel wrote in a 2009 essay for the libertarian Cato Institute.

"The fate of our world may depend on the effort of a single person who builds or propa-



WASHINGTON: Peter Thiel, PayPal founder-turned-venture-capitalist, discusses his support for US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. — AFP

gates the machinery of freedom that makes the world safe for capitalism."

Activists argue that Palantir's technology, which scoops up financial records, social media posts, call records and internet records, enables unprecedented opportunities for mass surveillance with little oversight on privacy and fundamental rights. Human rights activists have staged protests against Palantir after US agencies used its technology to hunt down illegal immigrants in the United States. — AFP