

# New technology set to triple Net speed



■ Bahrain's 80 per cent households will be wired with fibre optic lines to receive Internet three times faster than what is currently available

INTERNET in Bahrain is expected to triple in speed in the next four years with the introduction of a nationwide fibre optic network.

A three-year plan that will connect 80 per cent of the country with fibre optic cables has been drawn up by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), which will launch the scheme next year.

The lines will be able to deliver up to 300 megabytes a second which is three times faster than the 4G LTE mobile broadband.

"There are certain targets that we need to establish – one

of them is the national broadband," said TRA chairman Dr Mohammed Ahmed Alamer.

"It's a big project, it's a major project, in fact actually it will be one of the biggest projects in Bahrain.

"We are trying to connect the country with fibre optics providing the connectivity as well as the speed – the desirable speeds that will also take technology even further and propel all other services."

Dr Alamer explained that the process of connecting areas to the network will be carried out

gradually until 2018.

He said some of the country's existing operators have already connected some areas with fibre optic lines which will be linked with the new network.

"We should achieve at least 75pc to 80pc of households in Bahrain to be connected with the fibre optic lines," he said.

"There is a measure; we are talking about until 2018, so by 2018 about 80pc of the country should be connected.

"It won't be 100pc at that point and it won't happen all at once. It is a gradual growth and connectivity until we reach that year.

"We still don't know how much of the country has already been connected with fibre optics.

"We still have to establish dialogue between us (TRA) and the other operators so we can know what can be used from the lines that are already underground and to determine how those lines are usable for the full nationwide network.

A budget for the broadband grid has not been finalised yet, but Dr Alamer said investments pumped into the project will increase the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"We also need to open lines of communication with the existing operators because some of the current operators have got fibre optic lines in the ground right now. We don't want to create a whole other network," he explained.

"We want to utilise what is already in the ground, preserve the investment and also make sure that we can build on them.

"Whatever we spend on this project will raise our national GDP. There is a direct relation between the economic growth and networking and bandwidth.

"So every dinar you spend on your network is a dinar spent on the country's infrastructure that will by itself be utilised for other services and other sectors, for instance the banking sector or entertainment industry".

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## Chance for 13 students to study in UK

THIRTEEN students from Bahrain Polytechnic will attend a business programme at the University of East London as part of an agreement between the two institutions.

The business students who will enroll in four programmes – London financial markets, international business and communication, luxury brand management and sustainability and innovation in industry.

Two information and communications technology students of the batch will also join an internship with Advanced Financial Network, an internationally known financial website.

The students were selected from 20 applicants, who were third and fourth year students with Grade Point Average above three.

Starting from July 16, the students will have the chance to visit Canary Wharf – the hub of the financial sector located in East London – for 25 days where they will take part in lectures and visit widely known industries such as Barclays, KPMG and the London Stock Exchange.

## RAMADAN IN FOCUS



■ Iftar banquets are being hosted daily by Bahrain's mosques for expatriate Muslims. The spirit of sharing is celebrated during the holy month and several mosques provide food and drinks paid for by donations from charities or anonymous individuals. Iftar, which takes place after the Maghrib (sunset) prayer, is a Muslim's first meal after sundown during Ramadan and marks the end of the daily fast. Above, expatriate Muslims break their fast at Kanoo Mosque, in the Manama suq. Right, Muslims wait outside Kanoo Mosque for the Maghrib prayer. Pictures: EBRAHIM AL SINAN

