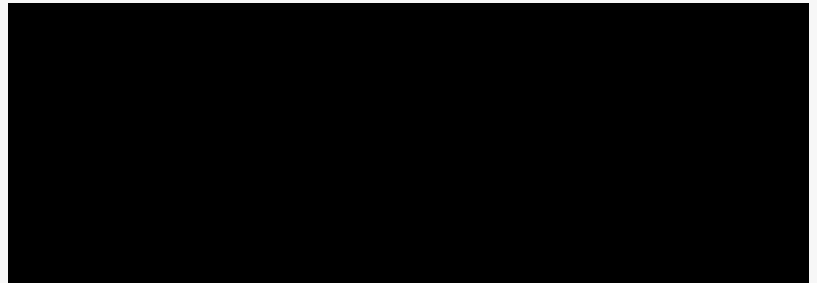


Black Hat MEA Wraps its Biggest Edition yet, Reinforcing Riyadh as the Region's Cyber Control Room

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, December 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Record attendance, SAR 1 million prize winners and three days of high value industry announcements define the 2025 edition

Black Hat MEA wrapped its biggest edition yet, marking a 55% increase in size from last year and proving why Riyadh has become the place where the global cybersecurity community aligns on what comes next. This year's event spanned 60,612 m² of space, the largest Cybersecurity floorshow in the world for the second year running and brought together attendees from more than 163 countries, 500 global brands and 300 speakers for three days of live research, high pressure demos and frontline intelligence exchange, with \$13.9Bn investor assets under management represented across the show floor.



The scale and depth of the event revealed how the global community now collaborates and why the conversations held in Riyadh are shaping the direction of cyber defence in the year ahead.

Competition finals set a new benchmark for regional cyber talent

The world's largest CTF competition reached its finale, with teams racing through the last wave of exploit challenges that spanned cryptography, reverse engineering and AI driven attack surfaces. Platinum claimed the top Saudi team position after three days of sustained problem solving, whilst 0xA won top spot in the international team category.

Alongside the CTF, the Bug Bounty Cup closed with Omar Alzughaibi securing first place after uncovering high impact vulnerabilities across live environments on the BugBounty.sa platform. Both competitions showed how quickly regional talent is scaling and how strong the security community in Saudi Arabia has become.

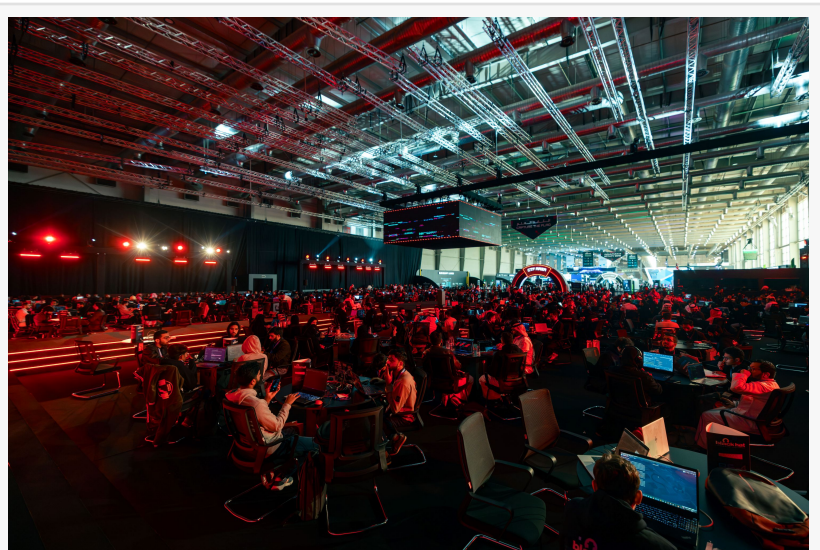
CyberSeed, the pitch competition built to spotlight the region's most ambitious cybersecurity founders, delivered one of day three's sharpest moments. Ten shortlisted startups stepped onto the Black Hat MEA stage to prove why their technology deserves a global audience. Each team had one chance to convince investors, CISOs and operators that their idea could shift how the industry defends itself.

After a fast, high-pressure round of pitches, Sahl, an AI-powered governance, risk, and compliance platform built specifically for the MENA region, walked away with the \$30,000 equity-free prize and the opportunity to represent the region at Black Hat USA, where they will compete in the Global Startup Spotlight against all regional champions.

Session highlights

In Strike First in the AI War: Re-wiring the Internet with Zero Trust, David Redekop, CEO and founder of ADAMnetworks, examined why phishing and domain abuse keep accelerating despite years of defensive investment. He noted that "80% of the world's economic engine is still powered by small, medium businesses" that often lack modern controls, while attackers have surged ahead with a "4,151%" increase in offensive AI. Redekopp urged the industry to rethink long-held assumptions and move protective controls lower in the stack, arguing that defenders must act earlier in the kill chain to contain threats that traditional detection layers routinely miss.

In a session on cyber insurance, Daniel Bowden, CISO at Marsh McLennan, outlined why incident



response planning has become the single strongest predictor of whether an organisation can withstand a breach level event. As he told the audience, “the punchline for being insurable is how likely you are to have a breach,” and the one control that most reduces that likelihood is a well-rehearsed, fully mapped incident response plan. He urged CISOs to treat incident response as the goalkeeper of modern defence and to work closely with brokers who “see incidents from all of their clients every day” and know what fails under stress.

Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony brought the tempo of the week together. After three days of high value intelligence exchange, the sentiment across stages was clear.

Steve Durning, Portfolio Director of Black Hat MEA at Tahaluf, spoke to the momentum created as teams from around the world compared lessons, tools and incident pressure points. He said, "Blackhat MEA has welcomed over 40,000 attendees over 3 days. Over 4 editions, the show has become an unmissable moment where the global community comes meet, compete and shape the future of cyber here in Riyadh and beyond."

Looking ahead to 2026

Black Hat MEA 2026 will return to Riyadh from 1 to 3 December 2026 with a deeper technical programme, expanded competitions and new stages shaped by the themes that dominated this year. Registration for Black Hat MEA 2026 is now live. If you want first access to agenda updates, programme reveals and the next wave of competitions, sign up here:

<https://register.visitcloud.com/survey/017dqu86kxshl>

Passwords expire. Connections here do not. #BlackHatMEA.

About Tahaluf:

Headquartered in Riyadh, Tahaluf brings together strategically important commercial communities from Saudi Arabia, the wider Gulf, and the global stage through a portfolio of world-class exhibitions and digital platforms.

Tahaluf is a joint venture between Informa PLC, the world's largest trade show organizer; the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones (SAFCSP); and the Events Investment Fund (EIF). Sela, the Saudi-owned event production company known for creating world-class experiences, is also set to join the venture.

Tahaluf is behind leading events including LEAP, DeepFest, Money20/20 Middle East, Black Hat MEA, Cityscape Global, Global Health Exhibition, and CPHI Saudi Arabia.

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