

AWS CloudWatch Dashboards for Comprehensive Monitoring

Project 1

Batch

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Project: 1 <https://github.com/Smolke9/AWS-CloudWatch-Dashboards-for-Comprehensive-Monitoring-.git>

Title: AWS CloudWatch Dashboards for Comprehensive Monitoring

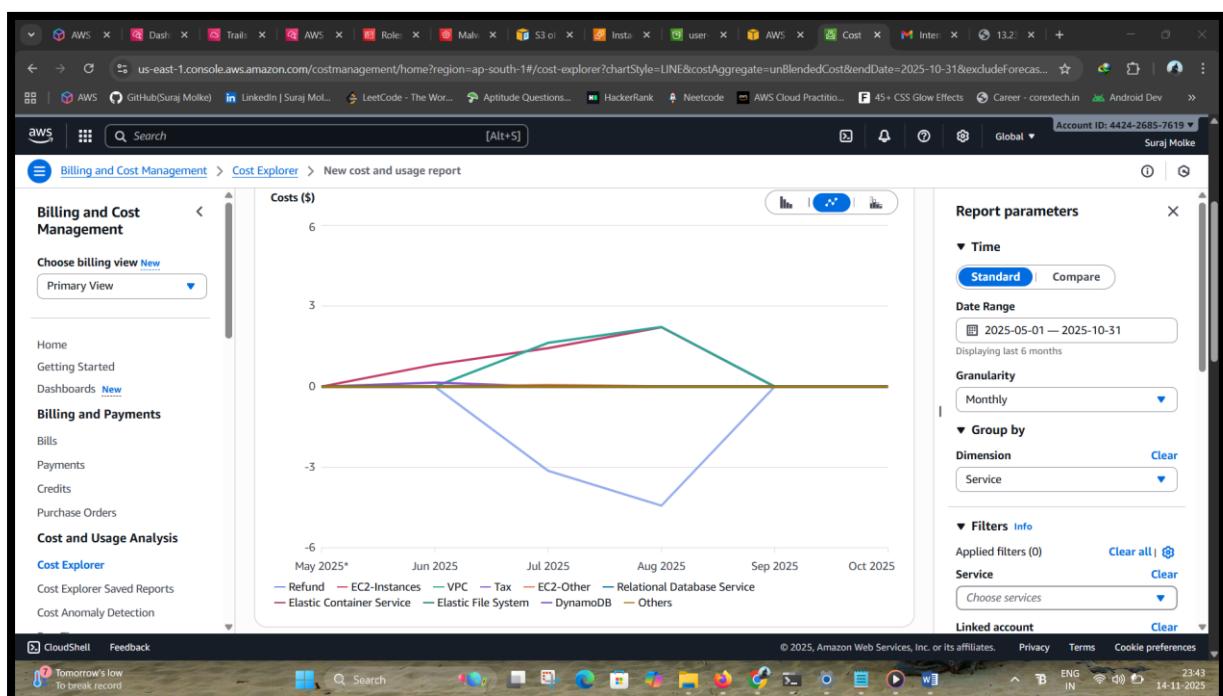
- ✓ Services used:
- ✓ Amazon CloudWatch (Dashboards, Metrics, Logs Insights)
- ✓ AWS Config (for compliance)
- ✓ AWS GuardDuty (for security threat detection)
- ✓ AWS CloudTrail (for API monitoring)
- ✓ IAM (for access control)
- ✓ EC2 (host to push logs)
- ✓ S3 (used for AWS Config)
- ✓ Application Load Balancer (for network monitoring)

Objective:

Build and configure a CloudWatch Dashboard that provides real-time visibility into key operational and financial metrics across four focus areas:

Step 1. Enable Billing Tools

1. Go to **Billing → Cost Management**
2. Enable **Cost Explorer**



Billing and Cost Management

Cost and usage breakdown (19)

	Total	May 2025*	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September
Total costs	\$0.97	\$0.00	\$0.97	-\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.00
EC2-Instances	\$4.46	-	\$0.82	\$1.43	\$2.21	\$0.00
VPC	\$3.84	-	\$0.00	\$1.63	\$2.22	\$0.00
Tax	\$0.15	-	\$0.15	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
EC2-Other	\$0.07	-	\$0.00	\$0.06	\$0.01	\$0.00
Relational Database Service	\$0.00	-	-	-	\$0.00	-
Elastic Container Service	\$0.00	-	-	-	-	\$0.00
Elastic File System	\$0.00	-	-	\$0.00	-	-
DynamoDB	\$0.00	-	-	\$0.00	-	-
S3	\$0.00	-	-	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Report parameters

Time: Standard | Compare
Date Range: 2025-05-01 — 2025-10-31
Displaying last 6 months

Granularity: Monthly

Group by: None

Dimension: Service

Filters: Info
Applied filters (0) | Clear all | Service: Choose services

Linked account: Clear

Step 2. Create Reports in AWS Cost Explorer

2.1 Total Cost Over Time

- Open Cost Explorer
- Granularity: Daily
- Metric: Unblended Cost
- Group by: None
- Save report

Billing and Cost Management

Cost and usage overview

Total cost: \$0.01 | Average monthly cost: \$0.00

Cost and usage graph

Costs (\$):

0.0075	0.01
--------	------

Report parameters

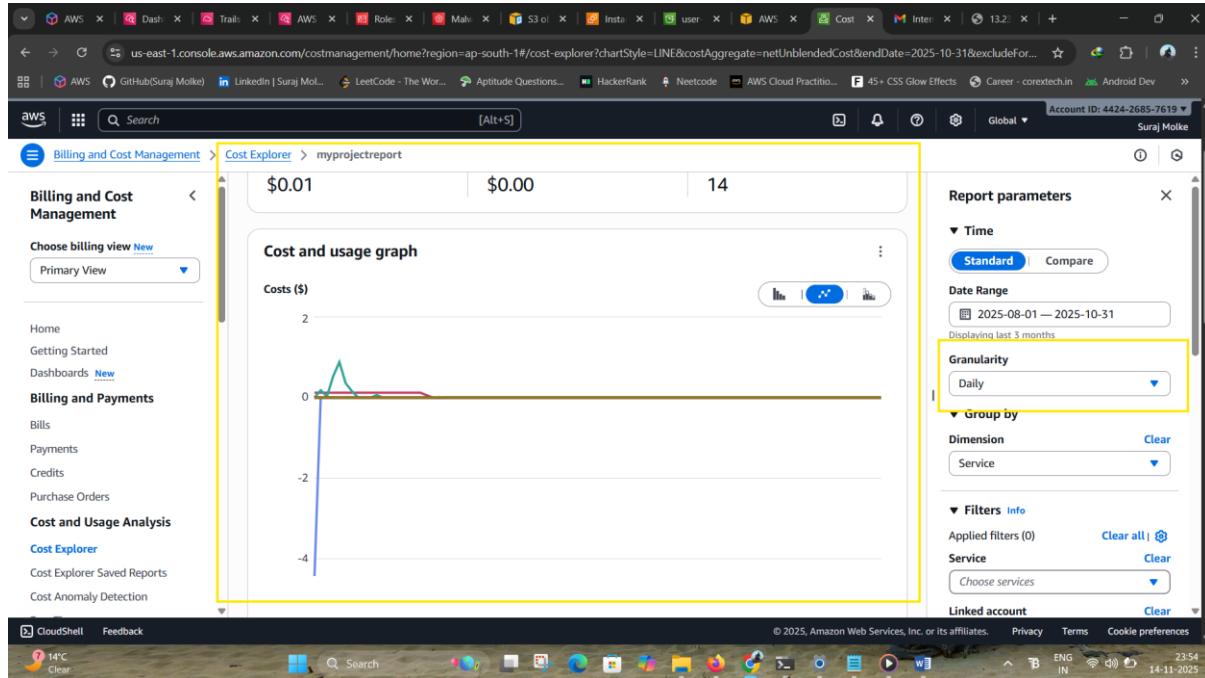
Time: Standard | Compare
Date Range: 2025-05-01 — 2025-10-31
Displaying last 6 months

Group by: Dimension: None

Filters: Info
Applied filters (0) | Clear all | Service: Choose services
Linked account: Choose linked accounts
Region: Choose regions
Instance type: Choose instance types
Usage type: Choose usage types

2.2. Daily Estimated Charges by Service

- Cost Explorer → Create Report
- Granularity: Daily
- Group by: Service (EC2, S3, RDS, etc.)
- Save report



2.3. Monthly Cost Breakdown

- Granularity: Monthly
- Group by: Service
- Save report

Use charts/screenshots in your dashboard report.

The screenshot shows the AWS Cost Explorer interface with a yellow box highlighting the 'Cost and usage breakdown' table. The table lists 15 services and their costs for August, September, and October 2025. The 'Report parameters' sidebar on the right is also highlighted with a yellow box, showing the date range from August 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025, and the granularity set to 'Monthly'. The sidebar includes sections for 'Group by' (set to 'Service'), 'Filters' (with a dropdown for 'Choose services'), and 'Linked account'.

Service	Service total	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025
Total costs	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.00	\$0.00
VPC	\$2.22	\$2.22	\$0.00	\$0.00
EC2-Instances	\$2.21	\$2.21	\$0.00	\$0.00
EC2-Other	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.00	\$0.00
Relational Database Service	\$0.00	\$0.00	-	-
Elastic Container Service	\$0.00	-	\$0.00	-
S3	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Key Management Service	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CloudWatch	\$0.00	\$0.00	-	-
Tax	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CloudFormation	\$0.00	-	\$0.00	-

Step 3. Application & System Logs

Steps:

3.1. Send Logs to CloudWatch Logs

From EC2

Install and configure CloudWatch Agent

```
sudo yum install amazon-cloudwatch-agent -y
```

```
sudo nano /opt/aws/amazon-cloudwatch-agent/bin/config.json
```

Add log paths:

```
{
  "logs": {
    "logs_collected": {
      "files": {
        "collect_list": [
          { "file_path": "/var/log/messages", "log_group_name": "system-logs" },
          { "file_path": "/var/log/nginx/error.log", "log_group_name": "nginx-logs" }
        ]
      }
    }
  }
}
```

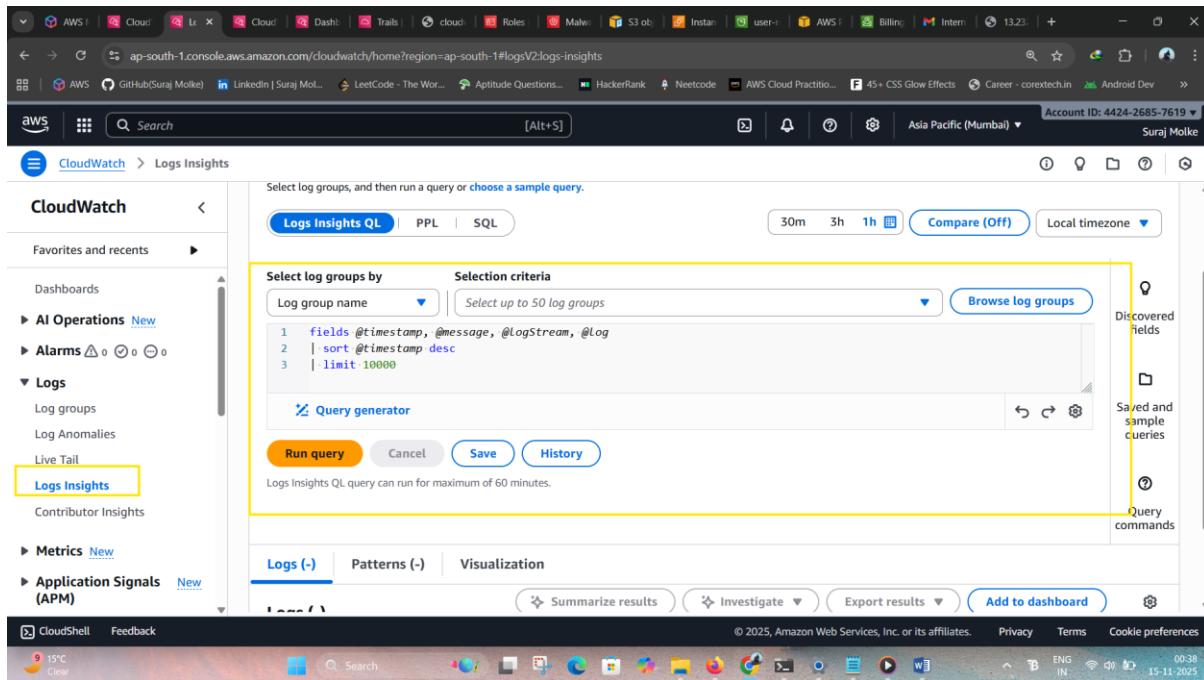
Start agent:

```
sudo systemctl start amazon-cloudwatch-agent
```

Step 4. Create CloudWatch Log Insights Queries

Go to:

CloudWatch → Logs → Log Insights → Select a Log Group



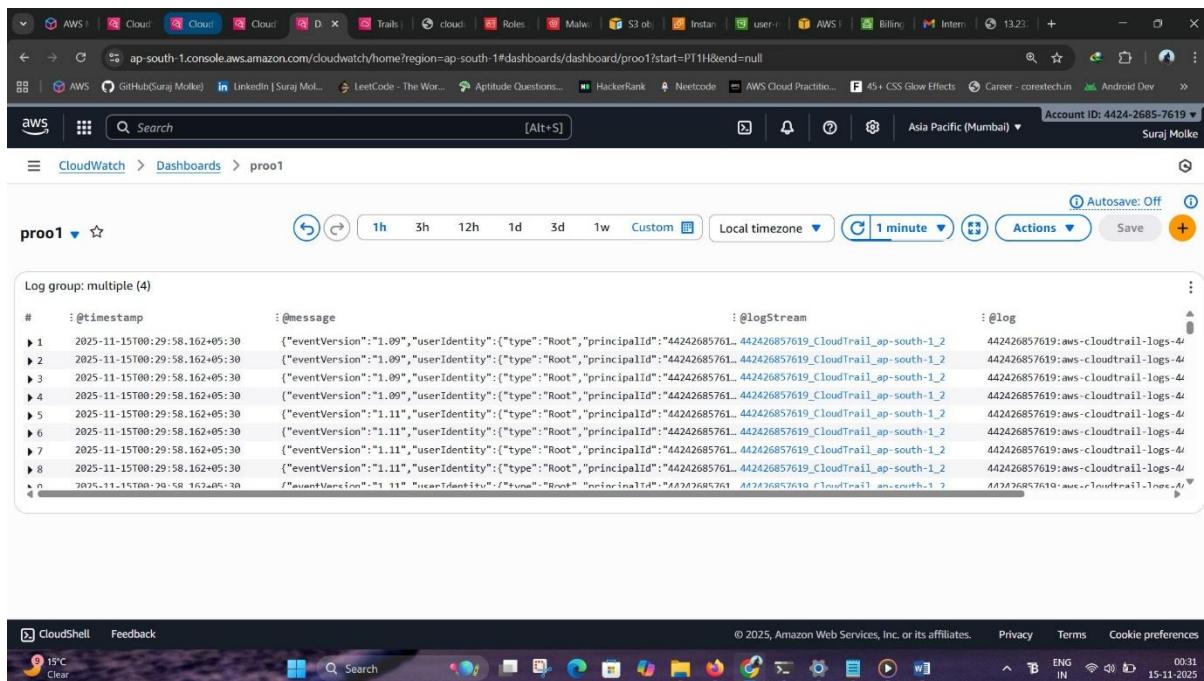
Step 5. Add Log Insights to Dashboard

Go to:

CloudWatch → Dashboards → Create Dashboard → Add Widget

Add widgets:

- Log Insights → Query results (Table)
 - Line graph for response times
 - Bar chart for error counts
 - Number widget for total errors in last 1 hour



Step 6 System Logs for CloudWatch Logs Dashboard

6.1. /var/log/messages

- This is the **main system log file** on Linux servers (Amazon Linux, CentOS, RHEL).
- Contains:
 - Kernel events
 - Service start/stop logs
 - System warnings
 - General OS activity
- Useful for identifying:
 - Server crashes
 - Restart issues
 - Hardware/network errors
 - Authentication problems

Path: /var/log/messages

2. /var/log/nginx/error.log

- This file stores all **Nginx-related errors**.
- Contains:
 - HTTP errors
 - Backend connection failures
- **Install CloudWatch Agent**
- sudo yum install amazon-cloudwatch-agent -y
- **Edit agent config**

```
{  
  "logs": {  
    "logs_collected": {  
      "files": {  
        "collect_list": [  
          {  
            "file_path": "/var/log/messages",  
            "log_group_name": "/ec2/system-messages",  
            "log_stream_name": "{instance_id}-messages",  
            "timestamp_format": "%b %d %H:%M:%S"  
          }  
        ]  
      }  
    }  
  }  
}
```

```

    },
    {
        "file_path": "/var/log/nginx/error.log",
        "log_group_name": "/ec2/nginx-error",
        "log_stream_name": "{instance_id}-nginx-error",
        "timestamp_format": "%Y/%m/%d %H:%M:%S"
    }
]
}
}
}
}

```

- **Start the agent**
- sudo systemctl start amazon-cloudwatch-agent
- Logs appear in:
 - /aws/system-logs
 - /aws/nginx-logs
 - Permission problems

The screenshot shows the AWS CloudWatch Log Groups interface. On the left, there's a navigation sidebar with options like Dashboards, AI Operations, Alarms, Logs (Log groups, Log Anomalies, Live Tail, Logs Insights, Contributor Insights), Metrics, and Application Signals. The main area is titled 'Log groups (5)' and displays a table of log groups. The columns include Log group, Log class, Anomaly d..., Data ..., Sensi..., Retenti..., and Actions. The first log group, '/ec2/nginx-error', is highlighted with a yellow box. The table also lists '/ecs/mytask1', 'RDSOSMetrics', 'aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179bec', and 'aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179becc'. At the bottom of the page, there are links for CloudShell, Feedback, and various AWS services like S3, Lambda, and CloudWatch Metrics. The footer includes copyright information, privacy terms, cookie preferences, and system status.

Action	Log group	Log class	Anomaly d...	Data ...	Sensi...	Retenti...
Configure	/ec2/nginx-error	Standard	-	-	-	Never exp...
Configure	/ecs/mytask1	Standard	-	-	-	Never exp...
Configure	RDSOSMetrics	Standard	-	-	-	1 month
Configure	aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179bec	Standard	-	-	-	Never exp...
Configure	aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179becc	Standard	-	-	-	Never exp...

Network Performance

Step 7. VPC Network Monitoring

Collect and visualize:

- VPC Flow Logs (Accepted/Rejected traffic)
- Bytes in/out
- Packet count
- Rejected connections by security groups or NACLs

Steps :

1. Enable VPC Flow Logs (VPC → Flow Logs → Create).
2. Send logs to CloudWatch Logs.
3. Use Log Insights to monitor:
 - Top IPs hitting instance
 - Rejected traffic
 - Port scans

Useful Log Insights Query:

```
fields srcAddr, dstPort, action, bytes  
| filter action="REJECT"  
| sort bytes desc
```

The screenshot shows the AWS CloudWatch Logs Insights interface. The left sidebar has a 'Logs' section selected, showing 'Log groups', 'Log Anomalies', 'Live Tail', and 'Logs Insights'. The main area is titled 'Logs Insights Info' and contains a query editor. The query is:

```
1 fields srcAddr, dstPort, action, bytes  
2 | filter action="REJECT"  
3 | sort bytes desc
```

The results pane is currently empty. The interface includes various filters like 'Log class' (Standard), 'Account(s)' (All accounts), and time ranges (30m, 3h, 1h). On the right, there are sections for 'Discovered fields' and 'Saved and sample queries'.

Step 7.1. EC2 Network Metrics

From CloudWatch → Metrics → EC2 you can monitor:

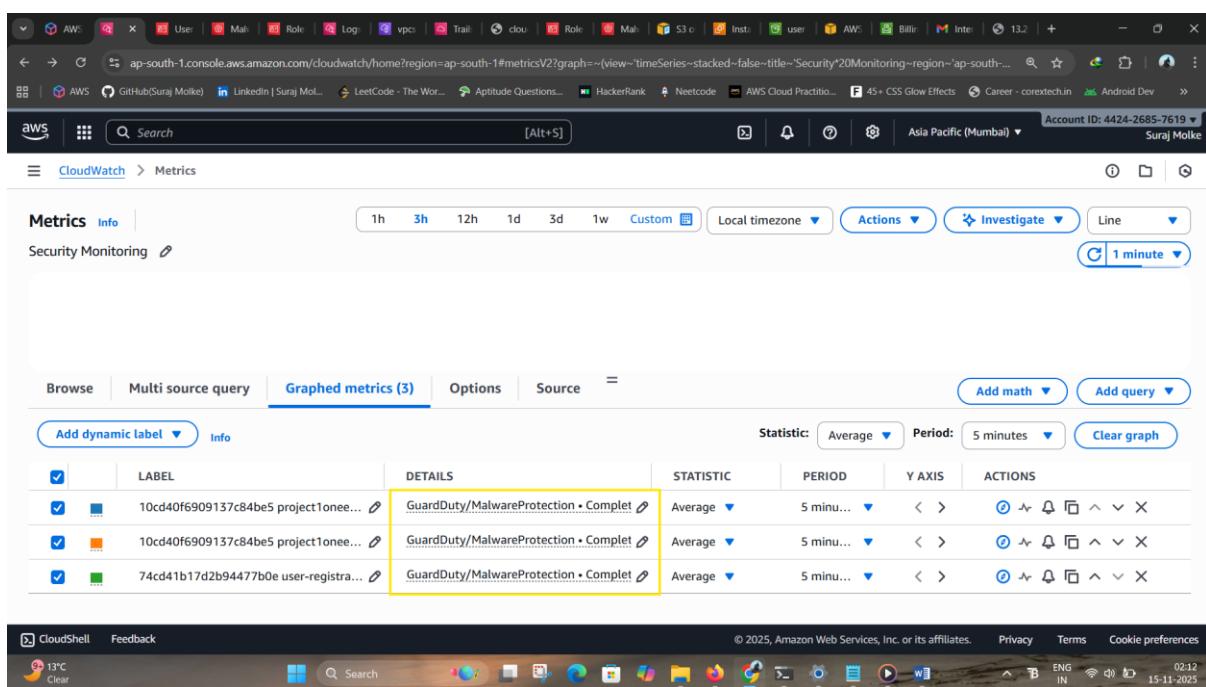
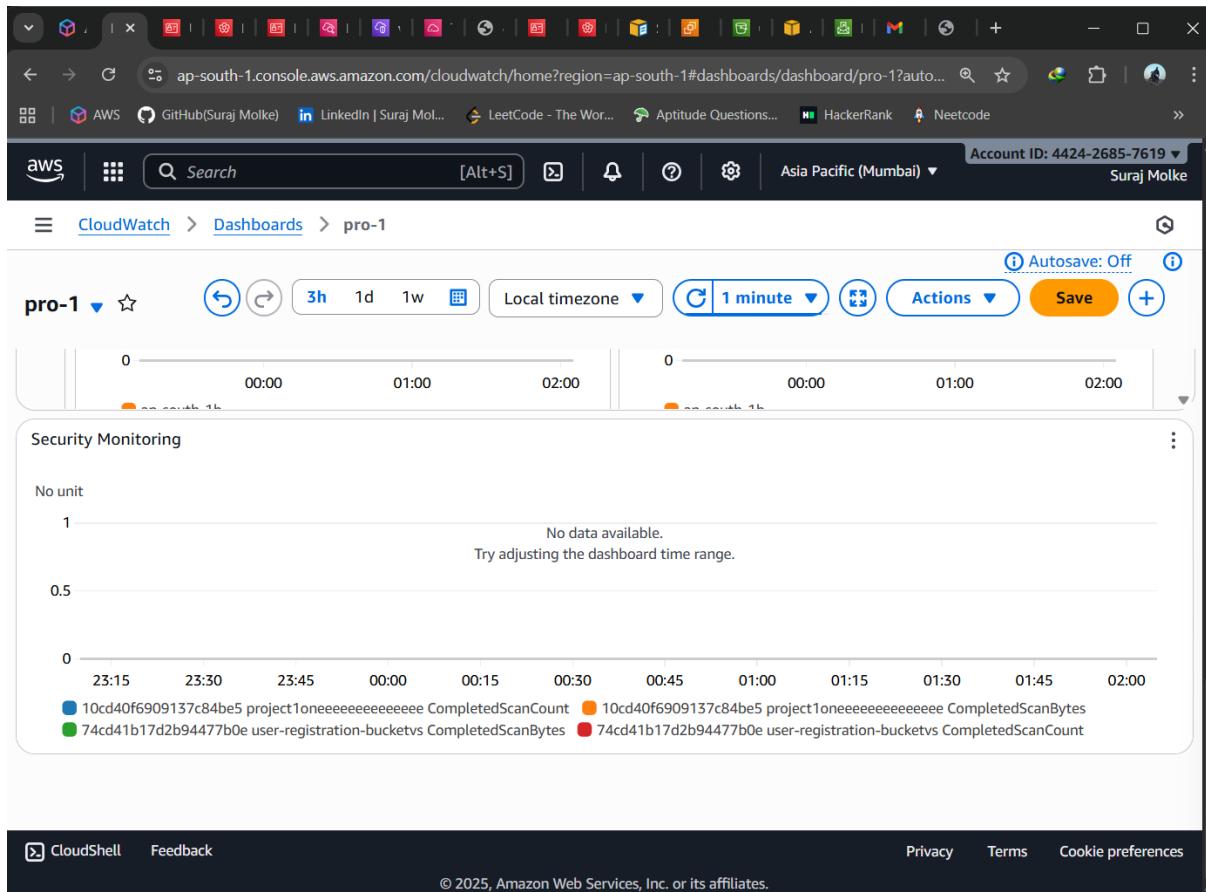
- NetworkIn (bytes received)
- NetworkOut (bytes sent)
- NetworkPacketsIn/Out
- StatusCheckFailed

The screenshot shows the AWS CloudWatch Metrics interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Metrics' and 'Info', and a search bar. Below the search bar are time range buttons: 1h, 3h, 12h, 1d, 3d, 1w, Custom, and Local timezone. There are also 'Actions', 'Investigate', and 'Line' buttons. A yellow box highlights the 'Metrics' tab. On the left, a sidebar shows 'Network Monitoring'. The main area displays a table of metrics for 'Server Project 1'. The columns include 'Source' (labeled 'Server Project 1'), 'Metric Name', 'Unit', and 'Alarms'. The metrics listed are: CPUUtilization, NetworkIn, NetworkPacketsOut, NetworkOut, NetworkPacketsIn, and MetadataNoTokenRejected. All metrics show 'No alarms'. The table has a total of 20 rows, indicated by 'Browse (20)' at the top. At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'CloudShell', 'Feedback', and various browser tabs. The footer includes copyright information, privacy terms, cookie preferences, and system status.

Step 8 Security Monitoring Dashboard — Short Steps

8.1. GuardDuty Monitoring

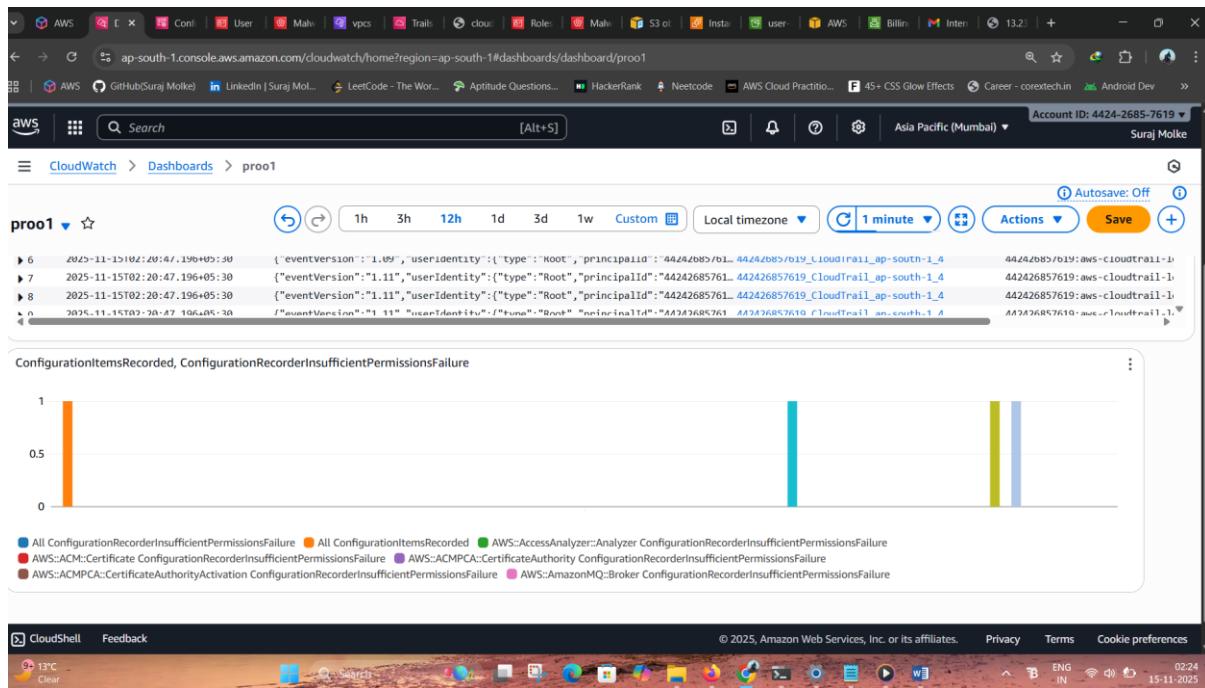
- Enable **GuardDuty** from the AWS Console.
- Go to **CloudWatch → Metrics → GuardDuty**.
- Monitor:
 - **Findings** (Severity: Low, Medium, High)
 - **Threat detections over time**
- Add widgets:
 - Line chart → *Total Findings Over Time*
 - Bar chart → *High Severity Findings*



8.2. AWS Config (Compliance Monitoring)

- Enable AWS Config → Choose recording & S3 log bucket.
- Go to CloudWatch → Metrics → Config.
- Monitor:

- **NonCompliantResourceCount**
- **ComplianceStatus**
- Dashboard widgets:
 - Number widget → *Total Non-Compliant Resources*
 - Gauge widget → *Compliance %*



8.3. CloudTrail (API Activity & Security Events)

- Ensure CloudTrail is enabled (1 trail per region).
- Use **CloudWatch Log Insights** to analyze activity:
 - Unusual logins
 - Root account usage
 - Deletion/modification events

Trails

Name	Home region	Multiregion trail	ARN	Insights	Organization trail	S3 bucket	Log file prefix	Cloud Watch Logs log group	Status
ProjectO-nemanagement-events	Asia Pacific (Mumbai)	Yes	arn:aws:cloudtrail:ap-south-1:442426857619:trail/ProjectOnemanagement-events	Disabled	No	aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179bcc	-	arn:aws:logs:ap-south-1:442426857619:log-group:aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179bcc	Disabled

Log Insights Query:

```
fields eventName, userIdentity.arn, sourceIPAddress
| filter errorCode = "AccessDenied"
| sort @timestamp desc
```

Logs Insights

Select log groups, and then run a query or [choose a sample query](#).

Logs Insights QL | PPL | SQL

5m 30m 1h 3h 12h Custom Compare (Off) Local timezone

aws-cloudtrail-logs-442426857619-0a179bcc

```
1 fields eventName, userIdentity.arn, sourceIPAddress
2 | filter errorCode = "AccessDenied"
3 | sort @timestamp desc
4
```

Run query | **Cancel** | **Save** | **History**

8.4. IAM Security Events

Monitor via CloudWatch metrics and CloudTrail logs:

- Access key usage
- Unauthorized attempts
- Password policy compliance

Useful query for Unauthorized attempts:

```
fields userIdentity.userName, eventName, errorCode, sourceIPAddress  
| filter errorCode like /AccessDenied/  
| sort @timestamp desc
```

The screenshot shows the AWS CloudWatch Logs Insights interface. The URL in the browser is [ap-south-1.console.aws.amazon.com/cloudwatch/home?region=ap-south-1#logV2:logs-insights\\$3FqueryDetail\\$3D~\(end~0~start~3600~timeType~'RELATIVE~tz~'LOCAL~unit~'...](https://ap-south-1.console.aws.amazon.com/cloudwatch/home?region=ap-south-1#logV2:logs-insights$3FqueryDetail$3D~(end~0~start~3600~timeType~'RELATIVE~tz~'LOCAL~unit~'...). The page title is "Logs Insights". The breadcrumb navigation shows "CloudWatch > Logs Insights > suraj/trails". The main area displays a query editor with the following code:

```
1 fields eventName, userIdentity.arn, sourceIPAddress  
2 | filter errorCode = "AccessDenied"  
3 | sort @timestamp desc
```

The interface includes a "Logs Insights QL" tab, time range controls (5m, 30m, 1h, 3h, 12h, Custom), a "Compare (Off)" button, and a "Local timezone" dropdown. To the right, there are sections for "Discovered fields" and "Saved and sample queries". At the bottom, there are links for "CloudShell", "Feedback", and system status indicators.

Dashboard widgets:

- Number widget → *Unauthorized API Calls Today*
- Status icon → *Access Key Rotation Age*

Conclusion

This project successfully demonstrates a complete, cost-efficient monitoring setup using AWS CloudWatch without relying on additional paid services like Lambda. By configuring four dedicated dashboards—Billing, Logs, Network Traffic, and Security—you

achieved full visibility across system performance and operational health. The EC2 instance, integrated with CloudWatch Agent and supported by appropriate IAM roles, enabled seamless log streaming and remote management through SSM. Realistic traffic generated using a load balancer with NGINX ensured practical network insights, while custom log groups and queries provided actionable details on failed logins, system events, and API activity. Overall, the solution delivers a fully functional, scalable, and low-cost monitoring architecture suitable for both learning and real-world cloud operations.