

SENATE OF PAKISTAN

House of the Federation



House of the Federation

**REPORT OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION**

REPORT NO. 1 OF 2018

**ON THE POINT OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE RAISED BY
SENATOR MIR KABIR AHMED MUHAMMAD SHAHI
REGARDING "CLOSURE OF INTERNET SERVICES IN
DISTRICT KALAT, NON-AVAILABILITY OF
TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
BALOCHISTAN" AS REFERRED BY THE HOUSE IN ITS
SITTING HELD ON 30TH AUGUST, 2018**

PRESENTED BY

**SENATOR RUBINA KHALID
CHAIRPERSON**

SENATE SECRETARIAT

REPORT OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION
ON THE SUBJECT MATTER OF POINT OF PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE RAISED BY SENATOR MIR KABIR AHMED
MUHAMMAD SHAHI REGARDING CLOSURE OF INTERNET
SERVICES IN DISTRICT KALAT, NON-AVAILABILITY OF
TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
BALOCHISTAN ETC. RAISED IN THE SENATE ON 30TH
AUGUST, 2018

I, Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson, Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication, have the honour to submit, on behalf of the Committee, this report on the subject matter of Point of Public Importance raised by Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi, in the Senate sitting held on 30th August, 2018, regarding "Closure of internet services in District Kalat, and non-availability of Telecommunication services in various parts of Balochistan".

2. The Composition of the Standing Committee is as under:-

1)	Senator Rubina Khalid	Chairperson
2)	Senator Abdul Rehman Malik	Member
3)	Senator Dr. Ashok Kumar	Member
4)	Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi	Member
5)	Senator Faisal Javed	Member
6)	Senator Fida Muhammad	Member
7)	Senator Ghous Muhammad Khan Niazi	Member
8)	Senator Kamran Michael	Member
9)	Senator Mian Muhammad Ateeq Shaikh	Member
10)	Senator Molana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri	Member
11)	Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizenjo	Member
12)	Senator Sana Jamali	Member
13)	Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi	Member

3. The Senate Standing Committee in its meeting held on 26th September, 2018 was briefed by the Chairman, PTA, regarding closure of internet services in seven districts of Balochistan on the directions of the Inter Services Intelligence. The Chairman PTA further added that services were restored in three districts.

4. The Senate Standing Committee opined that internet services should only be blocked for a specified time period, and not indefinitely. Taking cognizance of the matter, the Committee decided to constitute a Sub-Committee in terms of Rule 183 (1) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, to look into the issue in detail and report back to the Standing Committee.

5. The Composition and TOR's of the Sub-Committee are as under:-

COMPOSITION:-

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Senator Mian Muhammad Ateeq Sheikh | Convener |
| 2. | Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi | Member |
| 3. | Senator Sana Jamali | Member |

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORs):-


- i. To consider and report on the matter pertaining to closure of internet services by PTA in various parts of Balochistan on the advice of law enforcement agencies; (Point of Public importance on closure of Internet services in District Kalat, Non-availability of Telecommunication service in various parts of Balochistan raised by Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi in the Senate on 30th August, 2018
- ii. Complaints regarding non-availability of cellular services in various parts of Balochistan; and
- iii. Reasons for non-completion of projects initiated by Universal Services Fund (USF) in various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA, and other adjoining agencies.


6. The Sub-Committee convened its meeting on 23rd November, 2018. Representatives from the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA), and Universal Services Fund (USF) attended the meeting. The Sub-Committee finalized its report and the Convener presented the same before the Standing Committee during its meeting held on 28th November, 2018.

7. The Standing Committee unanimously adopted the report of the Sub-Committee and decided to present the same before the House.

8. I am grateful to the members of the Sub-Committee for their efforts in addressing the issue and finalizing recommendations for resolution of the same.

9. The report of the Sub-Committee is placed at Annexure-A


(Iffat Mustafa)
Secretary Committee


(Senator Rubina Khalid)
Chairperson Committee

SENATE OF PAKISTAN
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REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND
TELECOMMUNICATION

**ON THE POINT OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE RAISED BY SENATOR
MIR KABIR AHMED MUHAMMAD SHAHI REGARDING "CLOSURE
OF INTERNET SERVICES IN DISTRICT KALAT, NON-
AVAILABILITY OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES IN
VARIOUS PARTS OF BALOCHISTAN" AS REFERRED BY THE
HOUSE IN ITS SITTING HELD ON 30TH AUGUST, 2018**

PRESENTED BY

SENATOR MIAN MUHAMMAD ATEEQ SHAIKH
CONVENER

SENATE SECRETARIAT

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION ON THE POINT OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE RAISED BY SENATOR MIR KABIR AHMED MUHAMMAD SHAHI REGARDING CLOSURE OF INTERNET SERVICES IN DISTRICT KALAT, NON-AVAILABILITY OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF BALOCHISTAN IN THE SENATE ON 30TH AUGUST, 2018

The Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication, in terms of Rule 183 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of business in the Senate, 2012, constituted a Sub-Committee in its meeting held on 26th September, 2018. The Composition and TOR's of the Sub-Committee are as under:-

COMPOSITION:-

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Senator Mian Muhammad Ateeq Sheikh | Convener |
| 2. | Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi | Member |
| 3. | Senator Sana Jamali | Member |

TERMS OF REFERENCE:-

- i. To consider and report on the matter pertaining to closure of Internet services by PTA in various parts of Balochistan on the advice of law enforcement agencies; (Point of Public Importance on closure of Internet Services in District Kalat, Non-availability of Telecommunication Service In various parts of Balochistan raised by Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi in the Senate on 30th August, 2018
 - ii. Complaints regarding non-availability of cellular services in various parts of Balochistan; and
 - iii. Reasons for non-completion of projects initiated by Universal Services Fund (USF) in various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA, and other adjoining agencies.
2. The Sub-Committee convened its meeting on 23rd November, 2018. Representatives from the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, Pakistan



Telecommunications Authority (PTA), and Universal Services Fund (USF) attended the meeting.

TOR No. I To consider and report on the matter pertaining to closure of Internet services by PTA in various parts of Balochistan on the advice of law enforcement agencies; (Point of Public Importance on closure of Internet Services in District Kalat, Non-availability of Telecommunication Service In various parts of Balochistan raised by Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi in the Senate on 30th August, 2018

3. After detailed presentations by the Ministry, PTA and the USF, the Sub-Committee, was apprised that the Ministry of Interior and Law Enforcement Agencies approach the Ministry with written requests to block internet services in certain areas due to National Security concerns, as per the Policy set out in the PTA Act, 1996. In February of 2017, LEA's had requested closure of data services in 07 districts of Balochistan. In March, 2018, data services were restored in 03 districts, while the remaining 04 districts are still blocked. In addition to this, the PTA, in compliance of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Information Technology and Communications had written to the LEA's for restoration of data services. The Ministry of Interior and LEA's responded that they would consider the matter. However, no time frame was given for the same.

4. The Convener observed that no mechanism existed to assess the on ground situation and for restoration of telecommunication services and closure of data and telecommunication services is open ended, and operates on ad-hoc basis. Even though the PTA follows up on the matter, no SOP's have been set in place. The Sub-Committee has observed that this creates great difficulties for the people of Balochistan, and defined SOP's must be drawn up to ease the problems of the people of Balochistan. The Sub-committee has also taken cognizance of the closure of telecom services in FATA, and has decided continue discussion on the same in the Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication.

RECCOMEDNATION:

After detailed briefing, the Sub-Committee recommended that the PTA and Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications must time bind closures of data services, and in case of indefinite closures, must review and follow up with the relevant Law Enforcement Agencies for restoration of



telecommunication services every three months. The Sub-Committee also directed the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications to submit to the Committee all correspondence regarding the closure of data services in the 07 districts of Balochistan, including the written request for closure, closure order, and the subsequent reminders for restoration. The Sub-Committee also directed that the decision of the Islamabad High Court, which upheld these closures be submitted to the Committee. The Sub-committee decided to take up the matter lack of and closure of data services in FATA in its subsequent meetings.

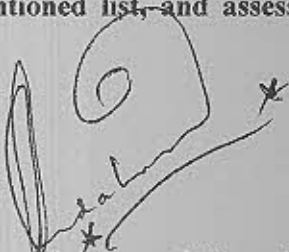
TOR No. ii Complaints regarding non-availability of cellular services in various parts of Balochistan;

5. In a detailed presentation, the Chairman, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) stated that following issuance of 3g and 4g licenses, telecommunication providers are free to invest and provide cellular services as per commercial viability. Though the government cannot bind private enterprises, it has incorporated minimum rollout obligations at the time of granting the licenses, and has also incorporated added obligations of serving underserved areas. Of these obligations, most have been completed, and the remaining will be completed latest by 2024.

RECCOMEDNATION:

Following a detailed briefing, the Sub-Committee directed the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications to submit to the Committee the list of all projects undertaken by the USF in FATA, Balochistan, and KPK over the past 5 years. The Sub-Committee decided to make further recommendations after perusing the aforementioned list, and assessing which areas need up-gradation.


(Iffat Mustafa)
Secretary Committee


(Senator Mian Muhammad Ateeq Shaikh)
Convener