

(317th Session)

SENATE SECRETARIAT

“QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS AND THEIR REPLIES”

to be asked at a sitting of the Senate to be held on

Friday, the 28th January, 2022

***Question No. 104 Senator Shahadat Awan:**

(Notice Received on 29/12/2021 at 2:30 PM) QID: 38645

Will the Minister Incharge of the Cabinet Division be pleased to state the mode and procedures for registration of local and international social media firms by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority indicating the number and details of firms registered under the social media regulations during the last one year?

Minister Incharge of the Cabinet Division: 1. On 13th October 2021, the federal government approved Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards) Rules, 2021 (Rules), promulgated under section 37(2) of Prevention of Electronic Crime Act 2016 (PECA).

2. Under Rule 7(6)(a) of the said Rules, a Significant Social Media Company having more than 0.5 Million users in Pakistan or is in the list specially notified by the Authority for this purpose from time to time, has to register itself with the Authority, separately for each Application/Service. PTA has placed the registration form on its website www.pta.gov.pk which can be submitted by applicants through e-mail “SM-Reg@pta.gov.pk” or postal address “Director (WAD), PTA HQs F-5/1, Islamabad or by physically visiting office of Director (WAD). So far PTA has registered two companies *i.e.* Joyo Technology Pakistan (Private) Ltd. (Snack Video) and BIGO Service Pakistan (Private) Ltd. (BIGO Live, Likee) so far while other Significant Social Media Companies are being pursued for Registration.

***Question No. 107 Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur:**

(Notice Received on 31/12/2021 at 10:45 AM) QID: 38674

Will the Minister for Information Technology & Telecommunications be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is a fact that Pakistan stands at serial No. 97 at Network Readiness Index 2021 lagging behind neighboring states, if so, reasons thereof; and*
- (b) *the steps being taken by the Government to increase the accessibility of people towards internet facilities in Pakistan especially the availability of public WIFI?*

Syed Amin Ul Haque: (a) It is fact that Pakistan has been ranked 97th/ 130 in NRI 2021 showing an improvement of 14 positions since 2020 where it was ranked 111/134. In 2021, out of 130-countries assessed against four pillars, Pakistan is at 73rd position in Technology in 2021 showing an improvement from 97th rank in 2020, followed by impact 92, governance 108 and people 105.

Pakistan has done well in mobile tariffs (65th) international bandwidth (16th), adoption of emerging technologies (68th), investment in emerging technologies (49th), annual investment in telecom service (42nd), active mobile subscribers (9th), ICT regulatory environment (57th), ICT services export (34th). However, indicators including gender gap (91), public and use of open data (100), E-commerce legislation (112) and internet shopping (120) are some of the not so well performing indicators of Pakistan.

In Asia and Pacific, Pakistan is ranked 18th and lags behind other countries.

(b) The Government of Pakistan through Ministry of IT & Telecom and PTA have taken several initiatives to improve the ICT indicators in Pakistan. Especially gender inclusion has been an area of concern and MoIT/PTA are working on it. In this regard, MoIT has re-energized the ICT for girls, and ITU initiative. PTA has rigorously taken up the matter and is in the process of devising digital inclusion

strategy and will be launching digital accessibility projects with Telecom Operators and international telecom organizations like A4AI and GSMA. Similarly, availability of public WIFI is another area in which PTA is working and in this regard access to broadband at the Airports is being ensured in addition to public areas like malls and markets. The government is working on improving cyber security in the country and has recently announced National Cyber Security Policy, 2021. E-commerce Policy 2019, Cross Boarder B2C Regulatory Frame-work, 2020 are steps in improving the e-commerce eco-system in Pakistan. Similarly, the Draft Data Protection Bill, 2021 will also help improving Pakistan ranking in NRI.

***Question No. 108 Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur:**
(Notice Received on 31/12/2021 at 10:45 AM) QID: 38673

Will the Minister for Information Technology & Telecommunications be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of spectrum auction made by PTA / Frequency Allocation Board since 2014 till to date indicating also the total revenue generated therefrom; and*
- (b) whether it is a fact that tons of spectrum in five more bands is laying unused, if so, the time when the same will be auctioned?*

Syed Amin Ul Haque: (a) The total spectrum auctioned by PTA/FAB since 2014 is as under:

- a. 850 MHz = 10 MHz
- b. 1800 MHz = 29 MHz
- c. 2100 MHz = 30 MHz

Total revenue generated from the Spectrum Auctions till date is US\$ 2,081.82 million. Details of spectrum allocated to the Operators (15xyear term) is at **Annex-A**.

(b) Spectrum is a scarce resource and is being made available to the operators through Policy Directives by the Federal Government by obtaining input from Frequency Allocation Board (FAB). FAB prepares

Table of Frequency allocation, in line with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations for all bands *i.e.* Cellular, Wireless Local Loop, Law Enforcing Agencies (LEAs) or any other utilization etc. Some of the important aspects in relation to the response of the Question are:

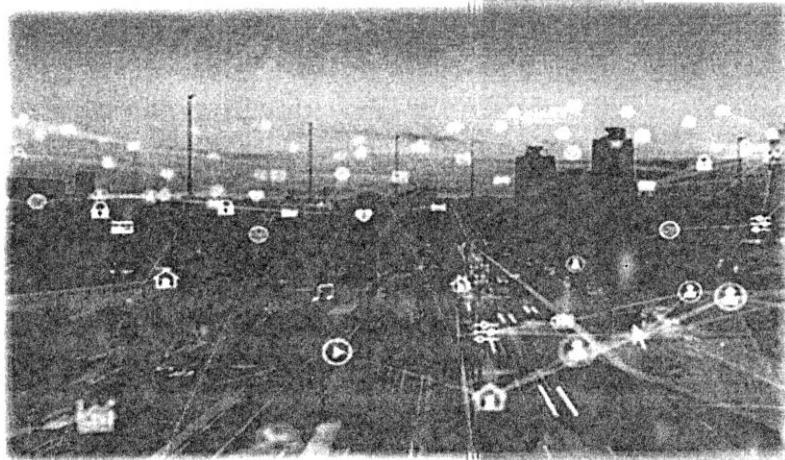
- (a) *The 5xbands being considered as vacant have not been mentioned.*
- (b) *MoITT has issued Draft Policy Guidelines for future 5G technologies and spectrum availability as per **Annex-B**. Details of the spectrum being considered is as under:*
 - (1) *700 MHz - Spectrum will be made available after re-framing.*
 - (2) *2.3 GHz - Spectrum is currently with Govt. entities, will be made available after vacation.*
 - (3) *2.6 GHz - 53 MHz available.*
 - (4) *3.5 GHz - 115 MHz is available; 170 MHz assigned to WLL operators, will be made available after 2024.*
 - (5) *2100 - 2x15 MHz is available.*
- (c) *Spectrum for 5G will be auctioned by PTA as and when Policy Directive will be issued by the Government of Pakistan.*

Annex-A

| Year | Spectrum (MHz) | Bandwidth (MHz) | Base price | Auction Price (US\$ Mn) | Winner | Base price in US\$ Mn (per MHz) |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2014 | 2100 | 10 | USD 295 Million | 300.9 | PMCL/ Jazz | US \$ 29.5/ MHz |
| | 2100 | 10 | USD 295 Million | 306.92 | CMPak (Zong) | US \$29.5/ MHz |
| | 1800 | 10 | USD 210 Million | 210 | | US \$21 / MHz |
| | 2100 | 5 | USD 147.5 Million | 147.5 | Telenor Pakistan | US \$ 29.5 / MHz |
| | 2100 | 5 | USD 147.5 Million | 147.5 | PTML Ufone | US \$ 29.5 / MHz |
| 2016 | 850 | 10 | USD 395 Million | 395 | Telenor Pakistan | US \$ 39.5 / MHz |
| 2017 | 1800 | 10 | USD 295 Million | 295 | PMCL/ Jazz | US \$ 29.5 / MHz |
| 2021 | 1800 | 9 | USD 279 Million | 279 | PTML Ufone | US \$ 31/ MHz |
| Total | | | | US\$ 2081.82 mln | | |



5G Strategic Plan & Policy Guidelines



Draft Policy Guidelines

Ministry of IT & Telecommunication

Government of Pakistan

Government of Pakistan
Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication

DIGITAL PAKISTAN

Considering the feedback of 5G readiness plan after consultation with all relevant domestic & International stakeholders following “draft recommendations” may be considered with the below objectives for timely 4th Industrial Revolution & 5G Technology deployment in Pakistan.

Objectives

- i. Socioeconomic development of Pakistan
- ii. Broadband proliferation and promote effective utilization of Spectrum
- iii. Promote consumer welfare (user experience, affordability, etc.)
- iv. Enhance digital inclusion and E-Governance
- v. Promote innovation entrepreneurship and Startups in ICT sector
- vi. Economic growth in the ICT sector

Policy Guidelines

- (1) For efficient utilization of the IMT spectrum and timely launch of commercial 5G ecosystem in Pakistan, improvement of mobile broadband services, phase wise availability of at least 840 MHz (including the current licensed spectrum) for IMT in low and mid-bands by the end of 2024 or first half of 2025 (i.e after expiry of WLL licences by 2024) may be planned as per best practices. In this regard, maximum possible spectrum bandwidth shall be made available in the following IMT spectrum bands which are already approved by the FAB for re-farming subject to process of re-farming as per Section 8.5 of the Telecom Policy 2015:
 - a. (B28/n28) 700 MHz
 - b. (B40/n40) 2.3 GHz
 - c. (B41/n41) 2.6 GHz – efforts to clear litigation be expedited
 - d. (B42-43, B52/n78) 3.5 GHz - 3300 MHz - 3415MHz is available; 3415 – 3600 MHz be made available after completion of re-farming and expiry of WLL Licenses in 2024
 - e. Available spectrum in (B3/n3) 1800 MHz and (B1/n1) 2100 MHz
 - f. mmWave bands (n257, n258 and n261 etc.) may be made available while its use shall be subject to market demand assessment.

- (2) **Frequency Allocation Board (FAB)** shall make the maximum possible interference free bandwidth available as mentioned in para (1)
- (3) Efforts should be made for expeditious resolution of respective court cases by MoIT&T, PTA, FAB and PEMRA. Attorney General Office and Ministry of Law & Justice shall provide all support for vacation of these IMT bands for inclusion in Spectrum Auction planned in early 2023.
- (4) PTA shall carry out the **appointment of reputed consultant(s)** after issuance of 5G Policy Guidelines fulfilling codal formalities, in order to recommend to GoP on:
 - a. Investment friendly spectrum auction design to provide an opportunity for both existing and prospective operators to acquire maximum IMT spectrum.
 - b. Per MHz spectrum price determination in USD or PKR, payment terms like flexible/ dynamic installment plan.
 - c. IMT/5G Spectrum Block sizes, minimum bandwidth per operator in line with international best practices.
 - d. Number of operators, tenure of license, regional/national IMT spectrum licensing models, license template including rights and obligations; and supportive changes to the licensing regime, auction rules and optimum timelines related to the auction process to offer better visibility, preparation and confidence to the investors and facilitate successful 5G launch.
 - e. Incentives for auction winners with commitment on 5G roll out.
 - f. Spectrum sharing and Trading, active sharing and national roaming
 - g. Recommendations on sharing of IMT bands between IMT/5G and other services including Satellite.
- (5) The spectrum assignment shall continue to be technology neutral.
- (6) MoIT&T may review the Right of Way policy to facilitate telecom network deployment.
- (7) MoIT&T shall finalize the Spectrum Re-farming Framework for IMT bands after recommendations/consultation from PTA, PEMRA and FAB. Process of spectrum refarming shall be realized through a policy directive and Spectrum Refarming Committee comprising of MoIT, FAB, PTA/PEMRA and incumbent users, in line with the Telecom Policy 2015.
- (8) To enable the 5G technological eco system, Ministry of Finance in consultation with MoIT&T, PTA, FAB and any other relevant stakeholders to finalize incentives be reflected in the Financial Bill 2022 included but not limited to the following:

- a. Tax rebate, Tax rationalization and elimination of duty tariff on import of all components of high end 4G and 5G devices (smartphones, IOT devices, and CPEs) across all slabs to promote local manufacturing of high end 4G and 5G devices including handsets and customer premises equipment (CPE), 2G handsets (CBU) import shall be banned.
 - b. Duty free IMT/5G network ready equipment imports to facilitate 5G readiness and mobile broadband to support wider mobile broadband and 5G networks deployment.
 - c. Special incentives for global Telecom equipment vendors to establish assembly and production lines in Pakistan to promote local assembly of IMT/5G and IoT eco system devices including chipsets.
- (9) Licensee shall establish at least one 5G Innovation & test centers/labs to scale up 5G eco system for startups and entrepreneurship activities at their own cost for citizens free of charge for academia and research purpose at GoP designated institute all over Pakistan- within 02 years of the grant of license
- (10) Extensive non-commercial 5G trials (mobile and fixed) shall be supported. Trials may include establishment of 5G hotspots in academic institutions, incubation centers, research organizations etc. Existing training programs within MoIT&T/Ignite should incorporate digital skills that support 5G use-case discovery process.
- (11) MoIT&T and PTA shall lead 5G awareness and orientation campaign for other ministries and departments (including Science & Technology, Education, Health, Agriculture etc.) to enable them to develop coordinated policies and use cases relevant to mobile broadband and 5G.
- (12) The MoIT&T and PTA along with the Ministry of Health, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency and other stakeholders should engage in a public education campaign in relation to 5G reassuring the public about the safety of the technology.
- (13) All relevant stakeholders including MoIT&T, MoF, PTA and FAB to work in parallel for conduct of spectrum auction in 2023.

Suggested Timelines & Milestones:

1. PTA to commence hiring of consultant for Auction Process after issuance of 5G Strategic plan and Policy guidelines.

2. Finalization & Reflection of Incentives by Finance Committee in the Finance Bill FY 2022-2023 – June 2022.
3. PTA consultation recommendation finalization for Policy Directive by December 2022.
4. Commercial launch target is first quarter 2023.

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***Question No. 109 Senator Muhammad Qasim:**
(Notice Received on 3/01/2022 at 12:40 PM) QID: 38689

Will the Minister Incharge of the Aviation Division be pleased to state

- (a) *whether it is a fact that Quetta International Airport lacks the basic facilities like, Money Exchange ATM Machine, luggage wrapping machine, etc. if so; and*
- (b) *whether there is any proposal under consideration to provide the above facilities, if so, the deadline for provision of the same at Quetta International Airport?*

Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Khan: (a and b) Basic facilities like ATM Machine are being provided at QIAP. Currently, one ATM Machine is operational at the airport. Other facilities like baggage wrapping, money exchange will be made available at QIAP in due course for which tenders are under process.

***Question No. 110 Senator Saifullah Abro:**
(Notice Received on 7/01/2022 at 3:00 PM) QID: 38719

Will the Minister Incharge of the Aviation Division be pleased to state:

- (a) *the time since Moenjodaro airport, District Larkana, is non-operational with reasons thereof; and*

- (b) *whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to make the said airport Operational in the interest of people of the area?*

Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Khan: (a) Moenjodaro Airport is an operational Airport equipped with allied facilities to accommodate Aircraft *i.e.* ATR. However, scheduled commercial traffic stands suspended since 2018 due to commercial non-viability of the Airlines.

(b) Flight operations from Moenjodaro airport will be commenced upon request by airline operators.

ISLAMABAD,
the 27th January, 2022

MAJ. (R) SYED HASNAIN HAIDER,
Acting Secretary.