

Somalia's internet returns after 3-week outage caused outcry

July 17 2017, by Abdi Guled

Somalia's internet has returned after an outage of more than three weeks cost the Horn of Africa nation about \$10 million a day, authorities said Monday.

Hormuud Telecom, the country's largest telecom company, announced the restoration of service in a message to subscribers.

The loss of internet service sparked anger across Somalia and affected the central and southern parts of the country including the capital, Mogadishu. The government called it a "major disaster."

Officials and internet providers attributed the problem to a commercial ship that they said cut an undersea cable.

Major companies reported millions of dollars in revenue losses. University studies were disrupted.

The internet outage also complicated efforts to combat a nationwide drought that has half of the country's 12 million people in need of assistance.

Residents in the capital celebrated the return of service. "This helps a lot," Abdirashid Duale, the CEO of the largest international Somali remittance company, Dahabshiil, told The Associated Press. While the company had a backup satellite internet service in place, "the internet outage has affected many of our customers."

The lack of internet service also stranded patients who were seeking medical attention abroad as they couldn't access online paperwork.

"The internet outage had my father stuck in Mogadishu. Now we can take him to India having received all medical paperwork via internet," said Nur Hussein.

Somalia is trying to emerge from a quarter-century of conflict. The fragile central government remains a target for the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group, which often carries out deadly attacks in the capital.

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Citation: Somalia's internet returns after 3-week outage caused outcry (2017, July 17) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-somalia-internet-week-outage-outcry.html>

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