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Balochistan Cuts Mobile Data to Curb Militant Attacks

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The Balochistan government has suspended mobile data services across the province until August 31, 2025, in an effort to disrupt communications among separatist insurgents following a surge in terrorist attacks.

On August 6, the Balochistan Home Department issued a notification ordering the suspension of all 3G and 4G mobile data services in the province, including Quetta, citing a deteriorating law and order situation. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority implemented the order, which provincial officials said was aimed at preventing militants,

particularly those affiliated with the banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), from coordinating attacks. Government spokesperson Shahid Rind stated that insurgent groups rely heavily on mobile networks for communication and planning, making the suspension necessary.

The decision follows several violent incidents in recent weeks, including a roadside explosion in Mastung on August 5 that killed a Pakistan Army officer and two soldiers. The BLA claimed responsibility for the attack.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by area, has a population of about 15 million and has experienced a significant increase in insurgent activity. In February 2025, the province accounted for the majority of terrorism-related deaths in the country. Authorities have expressed concern over the targeting of security forces and Chinese nationals involved in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, including Gwadar Port. Last month, the government also imposed a ban on road travel from Quetta to Iran and Iraq due to security threats. In March 2025, a BLA attack on the Jaffar Express train killed 31 people, including 23 soldiers, underscoring the scale of the violence.

The suspension of services, which is set to last more than three weeks, has disrupted access for approximately 8.5 million mobile subscribers in the province. Students, professionals, and businesses have reported difficulties due to the loss of internet connectivity. Civil rights groups have criticized the measure, calling for a balance between security needs and public access to communication, but officials have maintained that the restrictions are necessary to counter militant operations.

Authorities said the mobile data suspension is part of a broader security strategy that includes intelligence-based operations against insurgent groups. As Balochistan prepares for Pakistan's Independence Day on August 14, security forces have been placed on heightened alert to prevent further attacks.