

business

TRA records 89 pc jump in telecom disputes

The authority expects disputes in the mobile sector to continue to rise

● **TRA's Consumer Call Center receives over 31,000 calls**

● **TRA operates video call service for subscribers with special needs**

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Bahrain recorded an 89 per cent jump in telecom disputes in 2019 when compared to that a year ago, the latest Telecommunications Regulatory Authority's statistics said. The authority also said it expects the disputes in the sector to rise as more and more consumers are becoming aware of their rights.

"Mobile services represent the largest segment of disputes consistently, year on year," said Anna Al Ghatam, TRA Manager

of Consumer Affairs.

"Statistically, Mobile subscriptions outnumber every other service in the sector, thus this is expected, paired with the fact that mobile service disputes comprise of mobile data, calls, coverage, billing and roaming, among other factors.

"We welcome and urge consumers to approach us with any issues they face with their telecom services by escalating their disputes through our channels," added Al Ghatam.

60% - mobile disputes

Mobile services recorded the highest number of disputes at 60pc, whereas Broadband made up 24pc, Fixed Line services 11pc and others including calling

cards 5pc.

Out of the 1,604 complaints received in 2019, TRA said it resolved 1,597 of them.

"The rise in the number of complaints reflects that more and more consumers are becoming aware of our role," said TRA Director of Consumer Affairs & Media Shaikh Abdulla Bin Humood Al Khalifa adding, "We take every precaution to ensure that consumers are represented fairly."

The video call service to subscribers with special needs, Shaikh Abdulla said, reflects TRA's effort in such direction.

The service, he said, enables subscribers with special needs to facilitate the communication process and educate them of their rights as consumers in the telecom sector.

He also pointed out that TRA's Consumer Call Center (81188) has received more than 31,000 calls since its inception, with an average of 96pc success rate of responses to the calls.

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Statistics



95.8%
Average response success rate



31,607
Total number of received calls



97%
Average successful calls answered



1,604
Total Disputes



1,597
Closed Disputes



5%
Others



11%
Fixed Line Services Disputes



24%
Broadband Services Disputes



60%
Mobile Services Disputes

We receive your calls and inquiries on 81188



Subscribers can raise disputes by contacting the TRA's call centre on 81188, or through the consumer portal on www.tra.org.bh.

Batelco offers extra 10GB of data monthly



Right now, digital connectivity for businesses is more important than ever and we remain focussed on enabling businesses to operate to the max. Therefore, we made the decision to add extra GB's to support business efficiency

BATELCO CEO MIKKEL VINTER

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Batelco is offering an extra 10GB of Data per month for its mobile Postpaid Business customers for three months, effective from 1st April and valid until the end of June 2020 to support business customers.

The 10GB will be automatically added on top of the customers' existing Mobile Business packages monthly, and will be valid for April, May and June.

This is besides the earliest offer including that of unlimited usage for all Fixed Internet users and Same-Day Home Delivery for devices and services.

The offer aims at helping businesses to continue their operations seamlessly as the

offices of many businesses, especially small to medium companies, are currently closed with staff working remotely from home leading to an increased demand for data.

Commenting, Batelco CEO Mikkel Vinter said, "The current situation calls for the unity of the entire community, and as a proud member of Team Bahrain, Batelco is committed to playing its part in assisting its customers with the introduction of extra benefits and services."

"Right now, digital connectivity for businesses is more important than ever and we remain focussed on enabling businesses to operate to the max. Therefore, we made the decision to add extra GB's to support business efficiency," he added.

Khalifa Bin Salman Port 'moving full steam ahead'

Strict safety measures in place to limit the spread of the COVID-19

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The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications (MTT) confirmed that Khalifa Bin Salman Port (KBSP) which handles 99.5 per cent of consumer goods to Bahrain continues to operate at its full capacity, to support the national economy.

The Ministry, in collaboration with the port operator APM Terminals Bahrain, is working actively to maintain critical operations at KBSP by implementing strict health and safety measures to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Other measures include regular monitoring of Bahrain's and World Health Organisation's (WHO) circulars and guidelines as well as ensuring regular screening of all incoming vessels with MTT.

Incoming vessels are required to declare at least 10 of their last port of calls and previous visits to any of the infected countries, 72 hours before their arrival at KBSP.

The port, as per a circular issued by MTT on 26 February 2020, temporarily suspended crew disembarkation from ships and private jetties and at KBSP until further notice.

Besides, the port, in collaboration with local businesses, is ensuring fast and efficient delivery of all import containers and shipments, including food



items and essential supplies to help Bahrain maintain sufficient food stock for the next six months.

Cruise vessels banned

However, no cruise vessels will be allowed to enter the port until further notices. An MTT circular on 26 February 2020 suspended cruise vessels making the port of calls in Bahrain for two weeks, which was further extended on 8 March 2020.

Temperature screening

APM Terminals Bahrain has also initiated temperature screenings of all employees and customers at various point of entries at the terminal' offices including customer services building, main gate, staff gate, and temporary gate pass office. This also includes social distancing measures in addition to the sterilization of port shuttle buses and bus waiting stations.

Control measures include sanitising all public areas and equipment and providing all medical supplies including portable hand sanitisers, gloves, sur-

gical masks, etc.

Work from home

The port has also implemented working from the home policy as well as holding meetings and workshops remotely using electronic applications.

Adopted a strict policy of separation between each shift of critical operators to protect essential resources and limit the impact of any potential infection.

Commenting on the measures, Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications said, "We are working with our partners at APMT to ensure the business continuity of operations in Khalifa Bin Salman Port as it is a vital and important facility as we strive to minimize any negative impact on the supply chain and local trade to support the Kingdom of Bahrain's national economy." "Our team at the Ports and Maritime Affairs is on hand to help with any customer issues as needed, and we thank all our customers for their cooperation



Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications



Susan Hunter

at this time as we work to keep everyone safe."

On this note, Susan Hunter, CEO/Managing Director of APM Terminals Bahrain, said, "We are moving full steam ahead and continue to invest in control measures and contingency plans with operational alternatives, should the needs arise."

For updates or containers movements or general enquiries, customers can call 38885831 or email: combah@apmterminals.com.