

Media Update

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ITU

PRESS RELEASE

Visit of the Gokina village by the delegation of the Ministry of IT & Telecom and the International Telecommunication Union at the launch of Gokina Smart Village by the Honourable Minister IT & Telecom

The Smart Villagey Gokina pilot project comes under the umbrella of Smart Villages of Pakistan, a nationwide initiative launched by the MoITT in 2021 together with International Telecommunication Union (ITU), USF and Huawei. The official launching of the Gokina pilot took place on 22 February 2023 with the presence of His Excellency Mr Syed Amin ul Haque, Federal Minister, MoITT.

Education– Gokina village has a high school for boys and for girls. However, it was found that there were no science teachers, particularly in girls' schools, which creates hurdles for students in getting benefits both, in terms of learning as well as competing for the future professional opportunities that science subject's offer at national and international levels. The project has identified an e-education provider (Tele-Taleem) to bridge this gap.

Health– There is a medical center in the village with limited to no medical services available. The health worker is responsible to provide very basic health advice and services to the community members. It was also highlighted that the biggest challenge in getting access to health services is time consuming as it involves commuting to Islamabad, no emergency services, no doctors and absence of pharmacy etc. The project has identified an e-health provider (Sehat Kahani) to bridge this gap.

In today's visit on 23 February 2023, MoITT and ITU together with USF, Sehat Kahani, Teletaleem, and IsDB visited the clinic and school and they had direct interactions with the community members, particularly the school girls.

In Gokina Smart Village, e-Learning and e-health services were introduced with community.

Shaiza, a 9th grade student at Islamabad Model School for girls who experienced e-Learning from her class said "I am very happy to learn science subjects through the online classes that are now offered due to these smart classrooms. We never had this opportunity in the past."

Rania, a nurse who works for Sehat Kahani's telemedicine clinic said "Sehat Kahani and Smart Village have filled a big gap of access to health services in Gokina. Clinic has already benefited lots of patients. Particularly, we have patients with Gyne patients/women and patients suffering from anemia. Before establishment of this clinic, these patients had to travel long distances for services and medicines and that resulted in further deterioration of their conditions. Now having e-clinic within the community with online access to doctors, these patients are getting quick and accessible health services."

In her visit to Gokina Smart Village, Atsuko Okuda, Reginal Director of ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific expressed appreciation to all partners and said "We are delighted to witness the concrete benefits of the Smart Village Pakistan and hear from the girls and health clinic staff in Gokina today. We hope that the Gokina pilot is a first step towards accelerated expansion of similar Smart Villages all across Pakistan, as part of ITU's Smart Villages and Smart Islands initiative".

Addressing the occasion, Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of ITU stated that "*The Smart Villages Initiative will digitally transform remote and rural communities in Pakistan by connecting them with digital services and improve their wellbeing and livelihoods with tech. We at ITU, in the Telecommunication Development Bureau, are proud to see this Initiative which started in Niger scaling up to accelerate inclusive digital transformation of rural villages across the world.*"