

PTA gives PTCL two-day deadline

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ISLAMABAD: National Telecom watchdog, Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) has given PTCL two-day deadline to sign agreement with the broadband companies, failing which PTCL may be served with a show cause notice.

This warning was communicated by Nasar ul Kreem, Member Finance PTA at a high-level meeting here at the authority's office.

The arrangement was to allow the broadband companies to lay fiber optical cable up to PTCL exchanges. A high level meeting was conducted at the PTA's office last week, which was also attended by the representatives of the PTCL and broadband companies. The broadband companies pointed out that the agreement between both the parties was still in limbo, as PTCL had not signed the agreement as yet despite clear instructions from the telecom authority.

The authority approved the DSL interconnect agreement vide its letter No 15-53/09(CA)/PTA dated 10th June 2009 and directed the parties to sign the same within seven days. However, it was reported to the authority by the DSL operators that the same had not been signed by PTCL despite repeated reminders.

PTCL argued that DSL operators before acquiring IP bandwidth from a third party should first ask PTCL to match the prices. PTCL also submitted that DSL operators should not be allowed to provide services of VPN and video conferencing under this agreement, as the same were also not allowed in previous agreement.

It was clarified to PTCL that the issue of DSL operator's right to acquire IP bandwidth from third parties was discussed in the meeting held by the authority with the parties in April 2009 and it was decided in the meeting that DSL operators should have this right. The same was also conveyed to the parties through minutes of the meeting No 15-53/09(CA)/PTA dated 5th May 2009 without any concerns from the parties.

Regarding provision of VPN and video conferencing services it was informed that these services were under the scope of DSL operator's license. Hence it would be unfair to restrict DSL operators to provide these services.

PTCL shall respond to the authority by Friday (4th September 2009) regarding its final decision on signing of approved DSL interconnect agreement with DSL operators; so that further necessary action can be taken accordingly.