

ISPs unhappy with PTCL

By Hina Mahgul Rind

KARACHI: The ISP Association of Pakistan (ISPAK) has claimed that the Pakistan Telecommunication Company (PTCL) is causing problems for private Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in installing broadband DSL connections to their customers using the PTCL's copper line network.

ISPAK spokesperson Wahaj-us-Siraj claimed that for the last five days the PTCL had not been connecting ISP customers' DSL connections on the pretext that it was making the provisioning system automated.

"We have approached the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) for immediate intervention but the PTA's response was unclear," said Wahaj. "The PTA said that it was investigating the matter whereas the matter is clear, required no investigation and a clear directive from the PTA should have gone to the PTCL keeping in view the gravity of the situation but nothing has happened so far," said Wahaj.

He added that later the PTA replied that the issue had been taken up with the PTCL and investigated at different levels. It stated that the PTCL was just changing the manual system to an automated one so that customers' request could be entertained in a more effective way. On the issue of running both systems in parallel there were chances of mismatching of records creating further complexities. The PTCL had intimated that the new system would be effective from December 29, 2009.

Wahaj claimed that this move had left hundreds of new customers without a broadband connection across the country for the last many days. ISPAK stated that under the Agreement and Standard Operating Procedure, the PTCL had to give a new connection within 48 hours but it had been denying the rights of ISPs.

When the PTCL was contacted for its views on the issue, it said there is a technical glitch which is being sorted out and the provisioning shall resume as soon as possible. The PTCL did not give a timeframe.

According to PTA reports, there are around 400,000 broadband connections out of which 300,000 are on copper DSL whereas the rest are on wireless, mainly WiMAX.