

# Telecom regulation termed best in region

By Our Reporter

ISLAMABAD, June 15: Pakistan has a better regulatory environment for mobile telecommunications than India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

This has been revealed in the results of the first Telecom Regulatory Environment (TRE) survey conducted in five Asian countries, including Pakistan, by Sri Lanka-based independent telecom research organisation LIRNEasia.

The results were presented at a workshop on "Assessment of Telecom Regulatory Environments" organised by the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) here on Thursday.

The workshop was inaugurated by PTA Chairman Maj Gen (Retd) Shahzada Alam Malik and was attended by senior executives of the telecom sector, regulators and academics.

Speaking on the occasion, the PTA chairman said independent researchers like GSMA and LIRNEasia were a few names that motivated the regulators to perform even better every time.

"The survey will give us insight on our performance reflected in different areas of tele-use in the country," he said. The PTA had provided level playing field to all operators during the course of liberalisation, he claimed.

"Now, there is competition in every telecom service segment in Pakistan, including fixed telephony, mobile cellular, payphones, internet and other value-added services."

He said the total teledensity reached 43.44 per cent in May, which was just 12 per cent in June 2005. On average approximately 2.3 million subscribers are being added on cellular mo-

bile networks each month in Pakistan, which is an exemplary growth in relation to the population of any country in the Asian region.

He said that mobile penetration reached 37.6 per cent at the end of April 2007. Total mobile subscribers at the end of May 2007 crossed the 60.8 million mark. He said that during the first three quarters of 2006-07, telecom sector attracted US\$ 1.4 billion foreign direct investment (FDI).

The results of the 2006 TRE survey, carried out in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka as part of a multi-component study, provide a useful diagnostic tool for assessing regulatory efficacy. Overall, Pakistan scored particularly well on market entry and on the management of scarce resources (spectrum) in mobile sector.