

# Arrests Mark Beginning of Second Phase of PTCL Anti-Privatisation Struggle

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**Karachi: (August 01)** The second phase of PTCL anti-privatisation struggle has begun. Police arrested brother of Qasim Khan a central leader of PTCL Employees Union Central Mardan in a raid and also raided the house of Jadad Gul another central leader of PTCL EU Central Peshawar in late night operations on July 31. Today in Karachi the police reportedly raided the houses of PTCL Unions Action Committee in Federal B Area but like Peshawar and Mardan they failed to arrest anyone. Reports of police raids are also coming from other parts of the country. The 8 union PTCL UAC had announced resumption of agitation against the take over of PTCL by the Etesalat Group on August 18.

Etesalat won the bid on June 18<sup>th</sup> after 45 days of protests, strikes and shut-downs by PTCL workers. Reports coming from Nawabshah, Sukkur and Larkana inform that posters demanding end to privatization and for job security have appeared at telephone exchanges in these cities which are considered strongholds of PTCL UAC union Lions Staff Union. The President of Lions Staff Union, Haji Khan Bhatti and Workers Pak Union Shahid Amin were arrested on June 25 in Karachi after they made speeches at spontaneous meeting of workers at PTCL Headquarters in Karachi. Now the PTCL management has pasted notices in various exchanges and headquarters banning the entry of Haji Bhatti and Shahid Amin in any PTCL premises.

Six workers including Bhatti and Amin were suspended during the June agitation and subsequently arrested when thousands began the strike movement. PTCL was privatized despite massive protest by the workers and after the military took control of the telephone exchanges throughout Pakistan on June 02, 2005 the day the govt broke the promise it earlier made agreeing not to privatize PTCL. In Karachi and Pindi the recently held Anti-Privatisation Alliance conferences have pledged to support the PTCL struggle. The second phase of PTCL workers demands immediate support from all those against privatization and neo-liberal policies.

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## P.S.

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