
Punjab govt enforces Section 144 ahead of PTI protests



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LAHORE:

In response to the opposition's call for protests across various cities, the Punjab government has imposed Section 144, banning public gatherings for three days in eight cities. The decision comes ahead of demonstrations planned by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as part of a broader campaign. On Tuesday, PTI announced a fresh wave of protests in several districts of Punjab, including the provincial capital, Lahore. The party's political committee announced simultaneous

rallies in six districts between October 11 and October 14, demanding the supremacy of the Constitution, judicial independence, and the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, who remains imprisoned in Adiala Jail. In response, the Punjab government has once again enforced Section 144 in Multan, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Vehari, Pakpattan, Okara, and Wazirabad. According to a government notification, the ban will be in effect from Thursday, October 10, until Saturday, October 12. A spokesperson for the provincial Home Department said the decision was made following requests from district administrations. The ban will prohibit all political gatherings, rallies, protests, sit-ins, and other similar activities in select cities. The spokesperson emphasised that the move was necessary due to security concerns, warning that public gatherings could be vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The spokesperson added that the imposition of Section 144 is intended to maintain law and order and ensure the safety of citizens and property in these districts. Despite the restrictions, PTI plans to proceed with its protests. The revised schedule includes rallies in Multan and Sahiwal on October 11, Gujranwala and Sargodha on October 12, Dera Ghazi Khan on October 13, and Lahore and Faisalabad on October 14. The party has also hinted at the possibility of a nationwide protest in Islamabad, pending further deliberations among its leadership.