

Will question PTI about non-compliance with court orders: IHC CJ



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Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on Wednesday slammed both Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the government for their failure to respect citizens' rights during and after the November 24 protest. During the hearing of a contempt of court petition filed by Islamabad traders, IHC remarked that he would ask PTI about the violation of court orders, Express News reported. "I will also ask PTI why the court's orders were disregarded," he remarked and added, "You [govt] closed Islamabad in such a way that even I, as a judge, could not

reach.” “You [government] were supposed to restore law and order, but instead, you shut down the entire Islamabad. You kept saying on the media that we are not allowing it on the order of Islamabad High Court. The court had instructed you to consider the fundamental rights of citizens, business people, and protesters.,” the CJP maintained. “It was as if I fell prey to my own order.”

During the hearing, DSP Legal Sajid Cheema, state counsel Malik Abdul Rehman, and others appeared in court. Malik Abdul Rehman informed the court that some reports had arrived, and some were still pending. The court reprimanded the State Counsel, asking, “Is this your first time appearing before the court? This expert opinion should have been provided there.” The court adjourned the case until next week, requesting a detailed report from the Ministry of Interior.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Tuesday that his government plans to establish “a world-class anti-riots force” to manage protests, rallies, and similar law and order situations, aiming to uphold public order with a modern approach. Shehbaz chaired the maiden meeting of the joint task force (JTF), he had formed on December 1 to identify individuals and groups behind unrest and smear campaigns, both within Pakistan and abroad, and recommend measures to bridge any policy gaps. The JTF comprised representatives from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the Military Intelligence (MI), and other key

agencies. The first JTF meeting came on the heels of recent turmoil in Islamabad during a protest march by the PTI on November 24-26, which not only led to violent clashes between the protesters and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) personnel, but also resulted in loss of lives. Chairing the meeting, Shehbaz emphasised the urgent need for modernising Pakistan's approach to managing protests that not only tested government's nerves time and again but also caused losses to the tune of billions of rupees on a daily basis because of the lockdowns.