GOVERNOR'S RULE AND EMERGENCY IN KPK HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

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INTRODUCTION:

Governor's Rule allows federal intervention in provincial affairs under Articles 232 and 234 of Pakistan's Constitution [7]. On 11 October 2026, it was imposed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly NWFP).

President Asif Ali Zardari declared an emergency and imposed Governor's Rule [2] on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's advice [1]. CM Sohail Afridi and his cabinet were removed, while the Provincial Assembly's powers shifted to Parliament [2]. A joint sitting approved the measure for two months [3].

The federal government claims it restored law and order [1], while PTI protests demand Imran Khan's release and oppose military operations near the Afghan border. The coming two months will be crucial.

A NATIONAL PATTERN:

Punjab experienced Governor's Rule (1949–1951) after Nawab Mamdot's dismissal. Sindh faced similar interventions (1951–1953) over corruption allegations and again in 1988. Balochistan saw interventions in 1973 after Attaullah Mengal's dismissal and in 2013 following Hazara attacks. In Punjab (2009), the Sharif brothers' disqualification led to Salman Taseer's appointment as governor, while the assembly remained active [6].

NOT THE FIRST TIME FOR KP:

The province has been here twice before. In 1975, between February and May, Bhutto's government took over after Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao was killed in a bomb blast at the University of Peshawar. Chief Minister Inayatullah Gandapur was removed and the National Awami Party was banned [6]. In 1994, between February and April, Benazir Bhutto's government removed Chief Minister Pir Sabir Shah [6]. That makes 2026 the third time.

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS OF GOVERNOR'S RULE AND EMERGENCY IN PAKISTAN

1. EMERGENCY IN NWFP (1975): A HISTORICAL PRECEDENT FOR KP

On 16 February 1975, Governor's Rule was imposed in NWFP due to political unrest and security concerns, lasting until 3 May 1975. This highlights federal intervention and tensions over provincial autonomy in KP [8].

2. NWFP CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS (1994): JUDICIAL LIMITS ON GOVERNOR'S RULE

On 25 February 1994, President Farooq Leghari imposed Governor's Rule in NWFP under Article 234 following a constitutional deadlock involving Chief Minister Pir Sabir Shah.

Case Law: Pir Sabir Shah v. Federation of Pakistan, PLD 1994 SC 738.

The Supreme Court ruled that Governor's Rule is temporary and cannot permanently dismiss an elected provincial cabinet. It also emphasized that such action exceeds presidential authority [9].

3. RELEVANCE TO KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA (2026):

Governor's Rule imposed in KP on 11 October 2026 under Articles 232 and 234 must follow constitutional requirements, judicial limitations, and provincial autonomy. Under Article 234(3), it requires parliamentary approval and cannot exceed six months [9][7][13].

CONCLUSION:

Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was previously imposed in 1975 and 1994 due to political and security crises. In Pir Sabir Shah v. Federation of Pakistan (PLD 1994 SC 738), the Supreme Court emphasized its temporary nature [9].

The 2009 Punjab case highlighted judicial oversight [10], while the 2013 Balochistan case stressed the State's duty to protect life under Article 9 [11][12]. Article 234(3) requires parliamentary approval and limits its duration [13].

Thus, restoring normal governance, protecting fundamental rights, and respecting provincial autonomy remain essential [1][3][4].

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