

Lahore admin caught NAP-ping as anti-Ahmedi banners displayed across city

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LAHORE: Banners inciting religious hatred have been put up in several areas of the provincial capital, singling out Ahmedis and congratulating the entire Muslim community on a day when they were declared “infidels” by parliament, *Pakistan Today* has observed.

The banners put up by the Pakistan Khatam-e-Nubuwwat Forum term ‘Khatam-e-Nubuwwat Day’ as its Defence Day.

The banner further reads: “This is the day when parliament unanimously declared Qadianis (Ahmedis) infidels.”

Permission to display banners on city roads and junctions is granted by the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), however, a senior official denied that they had given any such permission to the Forum.

“Lahore is a big city. People put up banners overnight all the time, and sometimes we don’t even know about it,” said Shahzad Tariq, a deputy director in PHA.

Interestingly, the inciting banners were not put up overnight and no action has been taken by the authority

to take them down either.

Pakistan Khatam-e-Nubuwwat Forum General Secretary Muhammad Hassan told Pakistan Today that they don't need permission from any authority to put up banners as the whole nation celebrates the day as Defence Day.

He further said that they have put up these banners in the past too and have never gotten into trouble with the authorities.

“As far as the National Action Plan (NAP) is concerned, it is only limited to the two majority Muslim sects in the country,” he claimed.

Maulana Abdul Naeem, a member of the Aalmi Majlis Tahaffuz Khatam-e-Nubuwwat, while talking to Pakistan Today, said that NAP doesn't apply to any matter pertaining to Ahmedis, so the banners are not violating any law.

Imran Maqbool, public relations officer of the District Coordination Office, said that the banners are put up either with the permission of Metropolitan Corporation or PHA. The police department is responsible in case any violent incident takes place, he added.

“The DCO office has nothing to do with the matter,” he said before hanging up the phone.

Salim Ud Din, spokesman for the Jamaat-e-Ahmediya, said that display of such banners incited more hatred against the community.

“No group or individual should be allowed to display banners that may provoke religious sentiments against any community,” he said.

Commenting on the matter, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Director Najamuddin said that religious outfits were quite capable of putting up such banners.

“Both the federal and the provincial governments are responsible for implementing NAP in letter and spirit,” he said.

Former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Asma Jahangir condemned the targeting of the minority Ahmedi community.

“We do not even try to hide our bigotry and then we wonder how we have a poor image,” she said.

Repeated calls were made to Lahore Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations) Dr Haider Ashraf but he did not respond.

However, Lahore Police Spokesman Syed Hammad Raza said that he is not aware of any such banners displayed in the city.

“The PHA and Metropolitan Corporation are to be blamed if such banners are put up in the city,” he said.



The National Action Plan (NAP) bans literature, newspapers, and magazines promoting hatred, violence, sectarianism, extremism, and intolerance. It also says that stern action will be taken against religious persecution, and the act comprises various other points that deal with religious intolerance or promotion of it in any way.

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