

Protest

28

MAY
6:39 UTC

Pakistan Tactical: Student groups to hold nationwide protests from May 29-June 1; maintain vigilance

Please be advised:

- Student groups have called for nationwide protests from May 29 to June 1 to voice disaffection against the Education Ministry's decision to hold in-person national board examinations from June 20.
- Protests are slated outside Islamabad's National Press Club and at Rawalpindi's Faizabad Chowk at 16:00 (local time) on May 29 and June 1.



- Protests will also be held daily outside the Karachi Press Club at 16:00 from May 29 until June 1.



- In Lahore, student protests have been scheduled at 16:00 outside the Punjab Assembly on May 29. Additionally, protests have been called in Liberty Chowk at 16:00 on May 29 and June 1.



Assessments:

1. The protest calls signal the widespread discontent among the student community over authorities' perceived disregard for the potential health impacts of conducting physical examinations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns are further amplified by the fact that the exams in question are one of the largest of such undertakings, thereby lending credence to the students' grievances.
2. Turnouts are likely to reach the high hundreds to low thousands based on social media metrics and sustained activism on the matter. The authorities' backtracking on decisions pertaining to the April 2021 O/A Level exams in response to similar protests is liable to further fuel turnouts. Bolstered security is expected across the aforementioned locations, with a significant potential for low-level scuffles between the protesters and security personnel should the high turnouts be especially unruly in nature. Localized travel disruptions are also likely in the vicinity.

Recommendations:

Those operating or residing in Pakistan on May 29-June 1 are advised to maintain vigilance near the aforementioned locations given the slated protests and associated risk of unrest.