

## Geo News shut down on President's order in parts of country

Contributed by Harris Badar  
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ISLAMABAD: It has been learned that cable operators across the country blocked the transmission of Geo News on the directive of President Asif Ali Zardari.

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President Zardari has sent messages to Geo TV administration in which he has said that if Geo has recovered from the courts the losses incurred following the ban on the channel in former president Pervez Musharraf's rule then it should stop forthwith the coverage of lawyers movement for the restoration of November 3, 2007 judiciary.

The reason why President Asif Ali Zardari has taken the step is that Geo TV is reminding the President his past promises and commitments he had made to the nation and what Shaheed Benazir Bhutto had said about the freedom of expression, restoration of judiciary and Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

It is pertinent to mention that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto strongly condemned the blocking of Geo news in 2007 during the tenure of former President Pervez Musharraf. She also assured the PPP would not take any such decision if it comes in power corridors.

The Jang Group had earlier faced victimisation during Nawaz Sharif's government before Musharraf regime banned the Geo TV Network. The victimisation resulted in a two-page spread of Pakistan's number one Urdu newspaper Daily Jang.

Geo TV does not further agenda or manifesto of any political party. It aims at promoting saner voices, supporting an independent judiciary and rule of law in the country.

Earlier, transmission of Geo News was blocked in some parts of Karachi, Hyderabad, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Quetta, Multan, Rawlakot, Muzaffarabad, Deepalpur, Sargodha and Dera Murad Jamali.

The concerned officials have directed the cable operators to place Geo News channel at the tail end, making it difficult for the viewers to watch the channel.

Viewers of Geo News have started making phone calls to Geo's office, trying to find out reasons for not receiving the transmission.

General Secretary Pakistan Muslim League-Q Mushahid Hussain said Geo News is being punished for airing the truth.

Talking to Geo News, he said the government should not repeat mistakes made in the past.

PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif, Tehreek-i-Insaf Chief Imran Khan and Senator Babar Ghauri condemned the blocking of Geo News.

Reporters Without Borders has also condemned the action which, it said, has brought back memories of military rule in the country.

Hamid Mir said the government had a plan to block the transmission of three channels including Geo News.

The threat of blocking the channel loomed during the past days and now the action has finally been taken.