
Hammad Azhar steps down as PTI's Punjab president, cites 'internal lobbying'

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ISLAMABAD:

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Hammad Azhar has announced his resignation as PTI's Punjab region president, citing internal lobbying as a key reason. "Unfortunately, I no longer have access to Imran Khan," Azhar tweeted on Thursday, adding, "I did not hold any press conference, nor did I make any deal." Azhar mentioned that his movements are heavily restricted, making it impossible for him to visit Adiala Jail to meet Imran Khan. He expressed dissatisfaction with decisions made within the Punjab organisation, stating that he was neither consulted nor agreed to them. "Many decisions were based on lobbying and limited access to Imran Khan, with one-sided information being provided to him," he said. Azhar pointed out ongoing lobbying to replace Lahore President Chaudhry Asghar, stating, "Today, they succeeded by providing Khan Sahib

with misleading facts.” He defended Asghar, saying his only fault was being imprisoned for two months, winning elections from Nawaz Sharif’s constituency with Form 45, and being elected Lahore president three months ago. “I can confidently say that the work Asghar did and the way he led from the front in three months was unprecedented for any Lahore president,” Azhar remarked. He highlighted several instances of injustice and wrong decisions made without Khan’s knowledge. “In this situation, it is impossible for me to compromise on merit as Punjab president,” Azhar said. Azhar recalled resigning earlier for similar reasons, citing lack of access to the party chairman as a major hindrance to leadership. “Major organisational responsibilities should only be held by those who have access to the party leader so that they can communicate the full story to him,” he concluded. Azhar announced he is stepping down from his role as Punjab president but reaffirmed his loyalty to the party, saying, “I was, and will remain, a worker of Imran Khan, God willing.” After nearly a year of staying out of the public eye, Hammad Azhar made a dramatic reappearance in May, igniting tensions at the party’s secretariat as police attempted to apprehend him, resulting in a heated confrontation. Azhar, who formerly held the position of finance minister under the PTI government, had gone into hiding following a government crackdown on the party leadership last year after the May 9 incidents.