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## Imran Khan, 200 PTI workers charged with ‘rebellion against state’ and ‘terrorism’

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A case has been registered against former incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founding chairperson Imran Khan and several party leaders and workers under serious charges of “rebellion and terrorism”. The case was filed at the Islam Pura police station on Sunday, accusing former premier Imran, along with 200 party members, of inciting “violence against the state”. Among the named individuals in the FIR are prominent PTI lawmakers, including Hamad Azhar, Salman Akram Raja, Ghulam Mohiuddin, MPA Shahbaz, Musrat Jamshed Cheema, Sheikh Imtiaz, Ali Imtiaz, and Shabbir Gujjar. According to the FIR, Imran allegedly incited these leaders from jail, urging them to “promote violence against the state”, which led to protests and vandalism. The police reported that PTI activists injured a constable, Bilal, during the demonstrations, and 16 agitators were detained at the scene. Despite the imposition of Section 144 in Lahore and four other

cities, banning all political gatherings, PTI supporters turned out in large numbers. The government had also deployed Rangers in Lahore, setting up roadblocks with containers and putting police and paramilitary forces on high alert. The Punjab government, acting on the recommendations of the Standing Committee of Cabinet on Law and Order, had also requested army troops to maintain order. Additionally, cases have been filed against PTI workers for violating Section 144 during protests across the city, including at the Milat Park and Hanjra Wal police stations. A case was registered at Hanjra Wal police station against 20 workers on behalf of ASI Aqeel, who had apprehended protesters on the previous day. Several PTI leaders, including Lahore MPA Ahmer Rasheed Bhatti, ticket-holders Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar and Malik Nadeem Bara, were detained at the protest venue. The opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly, Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar, was also arrested, and his whereabouts remained unknown until late in the night. Meanwhile, an FIR was filed at Milat Park police station by Sub-Inspector Hafiz Imran against 10 workers for similar violations. As a significant number of protesters reached Islamabad on Friday and Saturday, the PTI party has resolved to maintain its protests until they receive a directive from founding chairman Imran Khan to withdraw party workers. However, the decision by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to leave his party workers in Islamabad and move to the KP House caught many by surprise. The PTI's political

committee criticized the chief minister's absence and warned of "serious repercussions" if Gandapur were to be arrested. They further decided that in the event of the chief minister's arrest, Azam Swati would take over the leadership of the protests, with a new leader to be announced if Swati is also detained. Former National Assembly speaker and senior PTI leader Asad Qaiser told Dawn, "The PTI's political committee decided to continue the protest as long as it gets a clear directive from Imran Khan to end the protest." He added, "It was also decided that Azam Swati will lead the protest if Gandapur would be arrested." Qaiser warned that arresting a sitting chief minister would have disastrous consequences for the country. Responding to a question, Qaiser alleged that the government was attempting to arrest PTI legislators and criticized the treatment of Zartaj Gul by law enforcement agencies. "Although the government has been trying to kidnap MNAs and their family members, we hope they will stand firm on their stance. Thousands of PTI workers have been arrested across the country," he said. Meanwhile, CM Gandapur's whereabouts remained unclear late into the night. This marked the third instance in which the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister was unable to reach the PTI march destination, having previously failed to arrive in Lahore and Rawalpindi. On Saturday, after entering Islamabad, he opted to go to the KP House instead of leading the protesters. His subsequent disappearance fueled rumors of his arrest, though government sources denied these reports. Earlier, Interior Minister

Mohsin Naqvi claimed that no one would be allowed to enter Islamabad, stating that arrangements were in place to confront protesters with an iron fist. On Saturday, however, a rally from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by CM Gandapur, made it to Islamabad, where some workers gathered near Centaurus Mall and China Chowk, just a few kilometers from D-Chowk. Earlier on Friday, numerous PTI workers led by Amir Mughal arrived at D-Chowk, celebrating Imran Khan's birthday by cutting a cake at midnight. KP government spokesperson Barrister Mohammad Saif also stated that the KP Chief Minister had been "arrested," but later clarified on X (formerly Twitter) that "The KP CM has not been formally arrested. A heavy contingent of Rangers and police are present at KP House. The KP CM is on bail until Oct 25. If arrested, it will be an insult to the mandate of the people of KP; the fake government will have to answer for such unconstitutional and illegal actions." Additionally, opposition leader in the National Assembly, Omar Ayub Khan, claimed that Mr. Gandapur had been arrested at KP House. In the meantime, PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Khan told media that the protest was originally planned for one day, but due to the crackdown, the PTI has opted to continue. When asked by reporters whether the chief minister had been arrested as he left KP House, Mr. Gohar declined to comment.