

Court order reveals Imran Khan's role in targeting military installations and government properties

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LAHORE:

PTI's founder Imran Khan had delegated the task of attacking military installations, government properties, and police officials to exert pressure for his release in case of his arrest. This revelation came from a detailed order issued by Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Khalid Arshad, who dismissed Imran Khan's bail plea in a case related to the May 9 riots, including the Jinnah House attack. On July 9, the ATC judge announced in court the dismissal of Imran Khan's bail plea, stating that a detailed order would follow later. The order revealed that Imran Khan not only incited people but also instructed leaders to create chaos, disturb law and order, and commit arson to pressure the military and government for his release. This was disclosed in statements from two prosecution

witnesses. Despite objections from Imran Khan's counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar, regarding the credibility of the accusations, the detailed order stated that two witnesses had testified under section 161 Cr.P.C. They reported that Imran Khan had a meeting on May 7, 2023, where he instructed PTI leaders to prepare for his potential arrest on May 9, 2023, in Islamabad. Upon his arrest, they were to mobilize PTI workers to attack military installations, government properties, and police officials to compel the government and armed forces to release him. Moreover, on May 9, 2023, before leaving for Islamabad, Imran Khan sent a video message warning that the country's situation would deteriorate like Sri Lanka if he were arrested. The order also noted that Imran Khan's statements were widely disseminated via PTI's official Twitter account, urging PTI workers to protest, labelling it as a "real jihad for real freedom." Furthermore, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had announced that if Imran Khan initiates a hunger strike, similar protests will erupt across Pakistan and globally. Addressing the concerns of the PTI founder, he said, "His reservations are completely valid. If he goes on a hunger strike, the protest will spread throughout Pakistan and around the world. We adhere to the law and respect it, and we can engage in peaceful protests to claim our rights." The prosecution's case against Imran Khan is that he orchestrated a criminal conspiracy, which was agreed upon by top PTI leadership and communicated to protesters online. As a result of this incitement, protesters

allegedly attacked and set fire to Jinnah House, thereby waging war against the state to intimidate the government. The ATC judge concluded that Imran Khan's bail plea should be dismissed, emphasizing that pre-arrest bail is intended for innocent individuals, not for those who engage in criminal conspiracies to destabilize the government and commit acts of terrorism. Given ATC rejected the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in three cases related to May 9 riots, the court had reserved its verdict on the bail petitions after the completion of arguments by the parties on July 6. Barrister Salman Safdar represented Imran Khan and argued for bail while Special Prosecutors Rana Abdul Jabbar and Rana Azhar opposed the bail petitions during the final arguments on behalf of the prosecution. Earlier, on August 11, 2023, an ATC had revoked pre-arrest bails for Imran Khan in seven cases due to his absence, as he was imprisoned following his conviction in the Toshakhana case.