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RPP case: SC orders arrest of PM Ashraf

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The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to arrest Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf in Rental power project case, FP News Desk reported.



A three member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Chaudhry Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry resumed hearing of rental power case.

The Supreme Court ordered the arrest of 16 people, including the prime minister, and directed authorities to present Raja Pervez Ashraf in court on Wednesday.

Fawad Chaudhry, an adviser to the PM, condemned the court's order, calling it "unconstitutional".

PM Ashraf served as the water and power minister from 2008 to 2011 and later retained his position in the federal cabinet led by Yousaf Raza Gilani as the information and technology minister in 2012.

He was elected twice as a member of the National Assembly from his constituency, NA-51 Rawalpindi-II of Gujjar Khan in 2002 and 2008.

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf was accused of receiving kickbacks in the rental power projects. He was also accused of buying property in London from money earned through corruption in various scams.

The surprising move has come as Tahir-ul-Qadri, a populist cleric, demanded the resignation of the government in protests attended by thousands of followers in the heart of the capital Islamabad. His supporters welcomed the news, celebrating at their sit-in protest outside the parliament in Islamabad.

Pakistan's benchmark Karachi Stock Exchange index fell by nearly three percent after news of the court order, highlighting investor anxiety over political uncertainty.

Yousuf Raza Gilani, the country's last prime minister, was also dismissed by the Supreme Court in April last year after being found guilty of committing contempt of court by refusing to send a letter to Swiss authorities related to corruption investigations against President Asif Ali Zardari.