

Pak HC resumes case of prez Nawaz Sharif



Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court today resumed the hearing of high-profile Panamagate graft case against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his family, a week after a probe panel in its final report recommended filing of a graft case against him and his children.

Strict security measures are in place in and around the Supreme Court. Around 700 policemen, along with Rangers personnel and officials of the local administration, have been deployed for the hearing.

The six-member Joint Investigation Team (JIT), set up by the apex court to investigate charges of money laundering against 67-year-old Sharif, submitted its 60-day investigation report to the court on 10 July.

It recommended filing of a corruption case against him and his children after finding "significant" disparities in their income and actual wealth.

The JIT report recommended that a corruption case should be filed against Sharif and his sons Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz, as well as daughter Maryam Nawaz, under the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinance 1999.

The court after receiving the report had ordered that its copies should be provide to the parties and adjourned with directives that the rival lawyers come prepared for the hearing about the JIT report.

The report, however, was slammed by the Nawaz Sharif government as "trash". Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said that government will challenge the JIT report in the court and will contest its every clause.

Sharif's daughter Maryam also rejected the report, saying, "JIT report REJECTED. Every contradiction will not only be contested but decimated in SC. NOT a penny of public exchequer involved."

Major opposition political parties have asked Sharif to step down and stay away from power until his name was cleared. However, Sharif has rejected JIT findings and refused to resign by saying that he was not charged of any specific crime.

His Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz party has also supported him to contest the report in the court. The six-member JIT was set up in May by the Supreme Court with the mandate to probe the Sharif family for allegedly failing to provide the trail of money used to buy properties in London in 1990s.

Last year, the Panama Papers revealed that three of Prime Minister Sharif's children owned offshore companies and assets not shown on his family's wealth statement.

The assets in question include four expensive flats in Park Lane, London. The top court took up the case in October last year on petitions filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Awami Muslim League and Jamaat-e-Islami and reserved the verdict in February after

conducting hearings on a daily basis.