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JI students' wing hands over Imran to police

By Intikhab Hanif

LAHORE, Nov 14: Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf chairman Imran Khan was arrested from outside the Punjab University's new campus on Wednesday after he had been manhandled and detained in the campus allegedly by activists of the Islami Jamiat Talaba.

Imran Khan had gone to the university at the invitation of a joint action committee of students. The visit had been approved by Qazi Hussain Ahmed, chief of Jamaat-i-Islami, to which the IJT is affiliated.

The police booked Imran under section 124, 353, 149, 186, 148 of the Pakistan Penal Code, Section 16 of the Maintenance of Public Order and Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act. Imran was first taken to the Iqbal Town police station and later moved to the Sabzazar police station, and again to the Civil Lines police station.

On his arrival at the campus, the PTI chief was confronted reportedly by a group of IJT activists who kicked him around and punched him. They took him to a room in the Centre for High Energy Physics and detained him there for about 45 minutes.

A cameraman of a private television channel who managed to get inside the building and a teacher said the students had maltreated Imran also in the room.

They quoted the PTI leader as saying that he had come to the university at the invitation of students to join them in a protest. The assailants bundled Imran into a wagon with white curtains and later handed him over to police waiting outside.

JI information secretary Amirul Azim, who was present when all this was

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happening, condemned the action of IJT activists and said that they had discredited the party in front of the international media and harmed the joint cause. Punjab University IJT nazim Mohammad Ayub alleged that Imran Khan had been manhandled by the university administration and that his party was not involved in either detaining him or handing him over to police.

At the same time, he and other IJT activists denied that they had invited the PTI chief to the university. "We do not want any politician to hijack the movement of students against the imposition of emergency and they should keep away from the campus," they told reporters.

University registrar Dr Mohammad Naeem Khan said the university administration had not helped police in arresting Imran Khan. "We had given him a free passage."

PTI secretary-general Shahid Zulfikar and other leaders blamed IJT activists for the incident.

Addressing a news conference at the Lahore Press Club, they held the entire JI leadership responsible for what had happened to their leader.

"The JI leaders should have informed us if they had any doubts about the students' intentions. But they did not do so although we contacted them after the IJT had issued press releases opposing Mr Khan's visit."

Punjab PTI leaders Saloni Bukhari, Naseem Zahra and Talat Naqvi, who had accompanied Imran Khan to the campus, claimed that he had been detained by plainclothesmen and after he was driven out in "a joint operation by agencies and IJT activists".

The PTI chief who was reported to have been hiding in the campus since early morning, had appeared suddenly in front of the CHEP building at around 12.30pm and a group of students, mainly from the university's Law and Hailey colleges, warmly welcomed him and raised slogans in his favour.

Two students lifted him on their shoulders, but soon another group of students came there and pushed the two students to the ground. They took hold of Imran and dragged him into the building.

A few fire-crackers were exploded to scare away students who had started gathering outside the building where he had been detained.

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