

Punjab offers Rs10m bounties for Kacha dacoits as Rahim Yar Khan toll hits 12

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LAHORE:

The Punjab government has announced bounties of up to Rs10 million on the heads of the most dangerous kacha dacoits in an effort to eliminate the persistent threat posed by these criminals.

According to a government notification issued on Friday, high-value targets are subject to a Rs10 million bounty, while Rs5 million and Rs2.5 million rewards are being offered for other dangerous bandits in lower categories. The decision is part of a broader strategy to restore peace in the region, following decades of costly and largely unsuccessful operations against the dacoits. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of yesterday's violent incident in which a police van was attacked with rockets, resulting in the deaths of over 12 policemen and multiple injuries, the Punjab government has replaced the top police command in Rahim Yar Khan. DPO Imran Ahmed Malik, SP Muhammad

Javed Akhtar Jatoi, and DSP Kaleem Ahmad have been asked to report to the Central Police Office.

Rizwan Omer Gondal, formerly Senior Superintendent of Police at the CTD Punjab in Lahore, has been appointed the new DPO of Rahim Yar Khan. Gondal previously served in the same role and was involved in the most recent joint anti-kacha bandit operation conducted by the Sindh and Punjab police. Despite spending billions of rupees from the national exchequer since the 1990s, the problem has persisted. Last year, a joint operation by the Sindh and Punjab police was launched, costing over Rs4 billion, yet the issue remains unresolved. Reports indicate that these bandits often disappear when operations begin, only to re-emerge later, often with greater strength. On Friday, the last rites were performed for police officers killed in a recent attack by the Kacha bandits. The funeral was attended by high-ranking officials, including Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Punjab Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal, and Punjab Inspector General (IG) of Police Dr Usman Anwar. Addressing those gathered, Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal reaffirmed the government's commitment to pursuing the outlaws. "The sacrifices of our martyrs will not go in vain," Mengal stated. "The operation against the Kacha bandits will continue until the area is completely rid of these criminals." Mengal assured the public that the government, in collaboration with the police and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), is determined to restore the rule of law in the region. Following the funeral, Mengal visited the site of

the attack and held a meeting to discuss the future course of action. He also visited Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Rahim Yar Khan, where he met with injured police officers, offering support and ensuring they receive the best possible care. Punjab IG Police Dr Usman Anwar, accompanied by senior officials, visited the injured officers and praised the bravery and sacrifices of the Punjab Police. He highlighted that the police force has consistently faced challenges from terrorists, bandits, and other criminals in the Kacha area and border posts. Dr Anwar assured the injured officers of the government's full support, pledging that operations would continue until the region is secured. The operation against the Kacha bandits has been ongoing for several months, with bandits frequently targeting law enforcement personnel. The dense forests and riverine belts of the Kacha area provide natural hideouts for the bandits, making operations challenging. Nonetheless, the government remains committed to eradicating these criminals. In response to the recent attack, the Punjab Government has deployed fresh contingents of CTD and police to the Kacha area with orders to intensify the operation. The government is also considering deploying advanced technology and additional resources to support the ongoing efforts.