
President reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to protecting Chinese workers

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President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Chinese nationals working on various projects in the country. He made this assurance during a meeting with Jiang Zaidong, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan, at the presidency, as per an official statement. The discussion between President Zardari and Ambassador Zaidong delved into matters of mutual interest, with a particular emphasis on bolstering counter-terrorism cooperation and intelligence sharing to combat the threat of terrorism. The tragic incident of March 26, wherein six individuals, including five Chinese engineers, lost their lives in a suicide attack in Besham, a remote area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, was also addressed. During the attack, an explosive-laden vehicle detonated as a convoy, transporting Chinese engineers to the Dasu hydroelectric project site from

Islamabad, passed by. This marked the second assault on Chinese workers at the Dasu project, following a similar terrorist attack in July 2021 that claimed the lives of 13 individuals, including nine engineers. While no group has claimed responsibility for the March 26 attack, preliminary investigations point towards a network associated with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Authorities have taken steps towards apprehending suspects, leveraging evidence such as the recovered SIM card from the suicide bomber, believed to be of Afghan nationality. Further investigations reveal that the car used in the terrorist attack was non-custom paid and smuggled into Pakistan through the Chaman border. It remained stationed for 10 days at a petrol station near Shangla before being relocated to the attack site on the day the Chinese engineers were expected to travel to the area. Sources familiar with the matter assert that Afghan soil likely played a role in facilitating the attack on Chinese engineers. Consequently, Pakistan intends to address this issue through diplomatic channels with Afghan authorities, aiming to ensure accountability and prevent future incidents targeting foreign nationals on Pakistani soil.