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## PM urges acceleration in nationwide anti-smuggling drive

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### PAKISTAN:

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated the resolve to purge the country of smuggling during a meeting on Friday, directing the authorities concerned to accelerate the nationwide drive against the menace. Chairing a high-level meeting aimed at curbing smuggling, the premier paid tribute to Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir for his full cooperation with the government in his efforts against smuggling. A report from the investigation committee, headed by AD Khawaja, was also presented during the meeting. The prime minister commended the committee for identifying the elements involved in the misuse of Afghan Transit Trade for smuggling, as well as the officers facilitating them. He was informed that a list of smugglers, hoarders, and their facilitating officers had been forwarded to law enforcement

agencies and provincial governments. PM Shehbaz directed the removal of identified officers from their respective posts and initiate disciplinary proceedings against them. He also asked the LEAs and intelligence agencies to cooperate with each other to curb the smuggling. Calling for the punishment of smugglers and drug dealers, the prime minister instructed the law ministry to immediately enact necessary legislation for this purpose. Emphasising no leniency for those who loot public funds and their facilitators, PM Shehbaz directed measures to provide alternative earning opportunities and a conducive atmosphere for youths living in frontier regions. He stressed the need for more swift and effective monitoring of the sale and smuggling of Afghan Transit Trade goods in the country, and called for a third-party audit of the monitoring system. PM Shehbaz ordered the complete elimination of sugar smuggling and the immediate release of funds to examine the prevalence of drug consumption at the national level. The meeting was briefed on smuggling, misuse of Afghan Transit Trade, drugs, as well as sugar, wheat, fertiliser, petroleum products, and illegal weapons. It was informed that, after consultation with stakeholders, a national anti-smuggling strategy was in its final stages and would soon be presented for approval. The meeting was also informed that law enforcement agencies had raided a godown of smuggled goods in Mastung a couple of days ago, confiscating goods worth over Rs10 billion. The prime minister commended law enforcement agencies for their accelerated efforts to combat smuggling.

Federal ministers Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Rana Tanweer Hussain, Dr Musaddik Malik, Azam Nazeer Tarar, the Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue, the attorney general, personnel from law enforcement agencies, and senior officers attended the meeting.