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Punjab IGP Summoned Over Police Encounter Death

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The Lahore High Court (LHC) has summoned Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar to address allegations regarding the death of a suspect in a police encounter, raising serious questions about law enforcement practices. The court's action follows a petition claiming that the killing was staged, highlighting ongoing concerns over custodial deaths and police accountability.

On July 22, 2025, LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum heard a petition filed by Farhat Bibi, who sought protection for her incarcerated son, Ansar

Aslam, fearing he might suffer the same fate as his brother, Ghazanfar Aslam. The petitioner's counsel alleged that both brothers were arrested by Sharaqpur police, and on April 22, Ghazanfar was killed in what they described as a "fake police encounter" by the Crime Control Department (CCD). "My client's son was murdered, and we fear for Ansar's life in Sheikhupura Jail," the counsel stated.

Chief Justice Neelum expressed concern over the increasing number of such cases, noting, "The court is seeing a surge in petitions over killings in alleged encounters." She questioned the Sharaqpur Station House Officer (SHO) about the incident, who claimed that Ghazanfar was killed during an attack by accomplices. The court challenged this account, pointing out that no police personnel or vehicles were harmed, which cast doubt on the legitimacy of the encounter.

The LHC's summons reflects growing unease over police tactics, particularly those employed by the CCD, which has faced repeated accusations of extrajudicial killings. The court ordered IGP Anwar to appear with relevant records on July 23, signaling a demand for greater transparency.

This case underscores broader concerns about Punjab Police's history of misconduct, including reports of custodial torture and arbitrary arrests, which have eroded public trust. The IGP Complaint Center (1787), established to address grievances, has been criticized for insufficient follow-up, leaving families like Farhat Bibi's to seek justice through the courts.

The incident highlights the urgent need for police reform to ensure accountability and protect citizens' rights. As the LHC investigates this alleged encounter, it marks a critical moment for Punjab's law

enforcement to restore public confidence and address systemic flaws that allow such tragedies to persist.