

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

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load shedding hydroelectric  
Dasu Hydropower projects  
forced marriage Mangla Dam  
POK Diامر Bhasha  
Gilgit-Baltistan CPEC  
Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan terrorism



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## Political Developments

### **PTI's core body gets Kashmiri member**

*Dawn, 25 March 2024*

Founding chairman Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan has nominated his Kashmir-origin lawyer Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry as a member of the party's apex decision-making body. It is the first time that Kashmiri has been directly involved in the decision-making process of the PTI. Mr Chaudhry stated that his nomination to the core committee of the PTI had been appreciated by the Kashmiri community. This appointment interprets as an indicator of Imran Khan's deep interest in the Kashmir issue, symbolising a gesture of inclusion and recognition towards the Kashmiri populace as integral stakeholders. In the autonomous region of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), as well as among the politically aware segments of the population in 'India-administered' Jammu and Kashmir, this move is viewed with significant regard. It underscores Mr Khan's unwavering commitment to the Kashmir cause, an issue he vociferously championed during his tenure as prime minister of Pakistan, he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1823573/ptis-core-body-gets-kashmiri-member>

### **Indian occupied Ladakh region population stage anti-India protest in**

### **sub-zero temperature in support of their demands**

*Daily Parliament Times, 26 March 2024*

The 'Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir's (IIOJK) high-altitude Ladakh region, thousands of local population have been protesting in sub-zero temperatures, since 2019, to press the 'occupying Indian government' to fulfill their longstanding demand for a region separate from 'IIOJK'. But since 2020, they have frequently taken to the streets, accusing the Indian government of 'betrayal' and false promises, says a report from across the Line of Control (LoC). Ladakh, the 'IIOJK' northernmost region, is a desert inhabited by 300,000 people from the Muslim and Buddhist communities. The 'occupied Leh' region is dominated by Buddhists while the Kargil region is inhabited by Shia Muslims. For decades, the Buddhist community demanded a separate region for its people, while those in Kargil wanted to be integrated with the Muslim-majority region of 'IIOJK', the report said.

On 5 August 2019, Modi's government revoked Article 370 of the constitution which accorded special status to the former state of Jammu and Kashmir and gave it significant autonomy. The internationally-acknowledged disputed 'Indian occupied state' was then divided into two parts, Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir forcibly

against the wishes of the people of the entire 'occupied state' and both are unlawfully claimed as the 'Indian central government-' administered territories', the report added. A year later, Kargil and Leh districts joined hands and formed the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), aimed at addressing people's concerns.

The civil society groups have held massive rallies against the Indian government and its installed puppet administration in the State. Earlier this week, shops closed and thousands took to the streets in Kargil to demand statehood. In Leh, protesters have planned a border march next week. We were demanding a separate territory with a legislature, says Chering Dorjay Lakrook, a veteran Buddhist leader from Leh. But we were granted only a centrally governed territory, the report noted quoting the Buddhist leader. For people in Ladakh, who depend primarily on agriculture, the move also sparked fears it would affect the region's culture and identity as it made it easier for those from outside the region to buy land in the area.

According to India's home ministry, as of 5 April 2023, no Indian company had invested in Ladakh in the past three years, nor had anyone from outside purchased any land. But residents remain apprehensive about an influx like in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir state where data shows, 185 outsiders (Indian nationals) have bought land between 2020-22. Their

demands include statehood for Ladakh, jobs, protection of their land and resources, and a parliamentary seat each for Leh and Kargil districts, according to the report. They also want the implementation of the Sixth Schedule, a constitutional provision that protects tribal populations and allows them to set up autonomous organisations that frame laws on land, health, and agriculture. Nearly 97% of Ladakh's population is tribal, the report revealed.

The Sixth Schedule was designed to protect the rights of indigenous and tribal groups, says Dorjay Lakrook, who until 2020 was president of the regional unit of India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This, he adds, will save them from exploitation by industrialists, it said. The federal home ministry set up a committee to discuss these demands, but locals say there has been no progress. Young people in the region are also concerned about not getting government jobs. Ladakh holds significant geostrategic importance for India as it shares borders with both China and Pakistan, the two countries that strongly condemned India's decision to revoke Article 370. Mr Sonam Wangchuk, who gained fame after Bollywood star Aamir Khan played a character based on him in the 2009 blockbuster *Three Idiots*, is on a 21-day-long fast 'to remind the government of its promises to safeguard Ladakh's environment and tribal indigenous culture.'

Experts say China would watch for any sign of 'weakness in the region',

according to the report. Unrest and discontent, especially if sustained, is something that Beijing could try to exploit, says Michael Kugelman, director of Washington-based think-tank South Asia Institute at the Wilson Centre. The report continued by saying Beijing didn't recognise the creation of Ladakh as a centrally-governed territory in 2019. The region lies along the disputed 3,440km (2,100 miles)-long de facto border along the Himalayas – called the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which is poorly demarcated. Since 2020, tensions between India and China have been high after their forces clashed in the Galwan River valley in Ladakh, which left at least 20 Indian soldiers dead.

Following the clashes, both Delhi and Beijing increased troop movement and built massive military infrastructure along the LAC. China launched incursions in Ladakh, claiming over 1,000 sq km of India-claimed territory. India has repeatedly denied China's claim. Incidents of Chinese soldiers entering Ladakh and restricting residents from grazing their herds have added to local grievances. In January, a group of local herders clashed with Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers after they were prevented from taking their cattle to traditional grazing lands near the LAC facing China.

Mr. Kugelman argues that India cannot afford an unstable Ladakh. Praveen Donthi, a senior analyst for the International Crisis Group, a Delhi think-tank, says this is most likely why

India refuses to extend powers to the local government in Ladakh. The LAC in the 'occupied Ladakh' region of the 'IIOJK' facing China is unstable since the Galwan clash between Chinese and Indian troops and India probably would like to tread carefully, he says. The 'occupied Ladakh' residents, however, hope the strength of their unity-the joint action by the Muslim and Buddhist communities will eventually force the authorities to address the issue till the permanent settlement of the much delayed global issue of Jammu and Kashmir in line with international norms and commitments mainly under the spirit of the United Nations resolutions on the Kashmir dispute, the report concluded.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/03/26/indian-occupied-ladakh-region-population-stage-anti-india-protest-in-sub-zero-temperature-in-spport-of-their-demands/>

### **Court summons Gilgit police in girl's 'abduction' case**

*Dawn, 27 March 2024*

The chief justice of the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Court has summoned the Gilgit SSP and Danyor SHO in a case relating to the alleged abduction of an underage girl and her forced marriage. A legal team of the GB High Court Bar representing the father of 13-year-old Falak Noor filed a petition in the GB Chief Court, citing five accused and five police officials as respondents in the case. The petition requested Chief Justice Ali Baig to direct the police to immediately recover Falak Noor and

produce her before the court. It also asked for declaring the nikha null and determining her age through a medical board. According to the petition, the girl was abducted from Gilgit on January 20 this year and later taken to Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where she was forced into a marriage with Fareed Alam. Talking to Dawn, Advocate Ehsan Ali, a member of the legal team, alleged that the police didn't move to recover the girl despite knowing of the accused and their locations.

He said a statement of the girl under Section 164 of CrPC was recorded before a magistrate in Mansehra in the presence of abductors, and a private lady doctor declared the girl an adult without fulfilling the requirements to determine her age. Later, he added, the accused obtained pre-arrest bail from Peshawar High Court's Abbottabad bench till 6 April. Right activists, politicians, and civil society organisations have been protesting against the incident in Islamabad and GB and demanding the culprits' arrest.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1823961/court-summons-gilgit-police-in-girls-abduction-case>

### **GB Assembly sees plot to hurt Pak-China ties**

*Dawn, 28 March 2024*

The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Assembly condemned the suicide attack on Chinese nationals and termed it a conspiracy to sabotage the Pakistan-China friendship. Through a

unanimously adopted resolution, the lawmakers vowed to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Chinese nationals. During the session chaired by Deputy Speaker Sadia Danish, opposition leader Kazim Mesum Javed Ali Manwa and Wazir Salem from the opposition benches tabled the resolution. The resolution condemned the suicide attack on Chinese citizens in Bisham and the terrorist assault on a navy base at Turbat in Balochistan and said that attacks at the beginning and end of the CPEC route are alarming. It paid great respect to all those who sacrificed their lives in the war on terrorism.

Speaking on the issue, GB Minister for Law Sohail Abbas Shah suggested the resolution be declared unanimous. Opposition member Manwa said the attack on Chinese nationals amid talks for an IMF loan seems to be aimed at discouraging investment in Pakistan. Mr Mesum called for preventive measures to avoid such incidents in the future. Later, the chair announced the resolution to have been passed unanimously. Meanwhile, Governor Syed Mehdi Shah, Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan, lawmakers, and political and religious leaders of GB condemned the terrorist attack on Chinese nationals. According to a statement, the CM said anti-national elements were trying to spoil the development and peace of Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1824171/gb-assembly-sees-plot-to-hurt-pak-china-ties>

## **Pak Army organizes one-day free medical camp in Kharmang Baltistan**

*The Nation, 29 March 2024*

Pakistan Army organized a one-day free medical camp in the remote village of Gamba Pari of Kharmang district of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Pakistan Army provided medical assistance to seven hundred and forty-three patients which also included women and children. Allergy, flu, fever, gastrointestinal and maternity problems, joint problems, physical weakness, toothache, stomachache, blood pressure, diabetes, and infection patients were given free medical check-ups at the medical camp. Facilities for blood pressure, sugar test, ECG, ultrasound, lab tests, and minor operation theater procedures were also provided to the residents of the area. Patients were provided with free medical examinations as well.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2024/pak-army-organizes-one-day-free-medical-camp-in-kharmang-baltistan>

## **Security beefed up across GB after threat alert**

*Dawn, 31 March 2024*

Security has been beefed up across Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) following an advisory from the interior ministry regarding the threat of possible terrorist attacks. GB Home Minister Shamsul Haq Lone told Dawn the federal interior ministry had issued a threat alert regarding possible attacks by the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and asked the region's

government to enhance security. The last ten days of Ramazan are sensitive as many religious gatherings are held, including Friday and Eid prayers, he said, adding that meetings have been held with the GB inspector general of police and other law enforcement agencies. The meetings have decided to enhance checking at sensitive places and the region's entry points. Along with female police officers, GB Scouts have also been deployed in the region. Meanwhile, Chinese workers and engineers, who suspended work on the Diamer Bhasha Dam project after the Bisham attack, will resume their duties within two days, Diamer Deputy Com-missioner Arif Ahmed told Dawn.

He added that the security of Chinese nationals working on the project has been enhanced. According to Mr Ahmed, over 1,400 security personnel from police, GB Scouts, and WAPDA's security force have been deployed at the dam site. Separately, Punjab Police's Counter Terrorism Department has sent a letter to the inspector generals of KP and GB regarding security threats. The letter, seen by Dawn, said the outlawed TTP has reportedly devised a plan to launch an attack between the 19th and 21st of Ramazan. Gilgit Range DIG Mirza Hassan told Dawn that foolproof arrangements have been made for the security of religious gatherings, mosques, and other important installations in the wake of the threats.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1824761/security-beefed-up-across-gb-after-threat-alert>

## **50 miscreants arrested for attacking KFC in 'AJK', say Police**

*The Nation, 31 March 2024*

Local police have rounded up at least 50 alleged miscreants on the spot during a violent attack on Mirpur KFC Fast Food Outlet late Friday night, police said. Mirpur 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Senior Superintendent of Police Kamran Ali, in a statement released to the media, said that police are after other absconding accused miscreants involved in storming the KFC outlet at sector F/1 in the city for its alleged involvement with Israel during a pro-Palestinian protest demonstration, calling for a boycott of the KFC products.

Raids are being conducted to unearth and round up the accused with the help of CCTV cameras, the statement said, adding that all the accused would be brought to justice as the case has been registered with the concerned police station. Besides, those involved in fanning provocation in connection with the incident are also being identified for onward punitive action under the law, it said. The statement further stated, that we equally share grief with the Palestinian Muslims suffering Israeli brutalities. No person or group could be allowed to create tension and unrest and create law and order under the bogey of the religious extremity, the SSP said in the statement, warning to deal with the violators of the law with iron hands.

Unveiling the details of the mishap, SSP Kamran Ali expressed that about 350

people brought out a protest rally from the local mosque at Allama Iqbal Road against the Israeli aggression against Palestinian Muslims at about 9.00 pm on Friday, calling for a boycott of the fast food products of the KFC outlet located at F/1 in the city. The mob in the procession of cars, bikes, and by-foots reached the KFC and other adjoining business hubs of commercial activities and started trying to damage private properties.

He said that during this act of miscreants, at least eight police officers, including a DSP, an Assistant Sub Inspector of Police, ADC (G) Mirpur Muhammad Yasir, and Tehsildar Imran Yousaf Chaudhry, sustained serious injuries during the attack by the attackers. The above officials of the administration, including the police, through the best of their professional skills, stopped the miscreants from resorting to damage to the private properties, including the business centers. But a few of the miscreants, under the bogey of the religious extremity, damaged the property of the general public by targeting the above foreign chain outlets. Further investigations are in progress.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/31-Mar-2024/50-miscreants-arrested-for-attacking-kfc-in-ajk-say-police>

## **Redefining Justice: Taking Stand for Women's Rights in Gilgit-Baltistan**

*Pamir Times, 31 March 2024*

Plato, in *The Republic*, defines justice as the harmony of the soul in the context



of an ideal state where each fulfills their societal roles for the collective good. In the modern nation-state concept, political entities are characterized by sovereign governments marked by common culture, language, history, ethnicity, and defined territory. Every nation is characterized by its system and how it establishes a system that can cherish its population, irrespective of gender, race, religion, or origin. Every nation is at a crossroads in the 21st century, the world over! The last three centuries have witnessed crucial human-provoked rational movements that include the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and many other movements including in recent history Arab Spring where the human race rationally demanded equality, liberty, and fraternity.

Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) is Pakistan's northernmost region where a very significant segment of society, i.e., women, has been subject to inequalities and social and domestic violence. Women in GB are heroic, undaunted, and vibrant for seeking their due rights and raising their unheard voices at all forums but unless the system of justice for women is redefined and elucidated, women can't come to the front, move ahead and join hands with men on equal footings, like developed nations. GB's population is 2 million. The female literacy rate in the region has been recorded at 41% which is far less than the male literacy rate of about 66%, according to the Education Department of GB.

Justice for women must be exercised by facilitating all incentives through governmental structures, as well as non-governmental support, to uplift women of GB, enabling them to step forward and contribute to establishing a society based on gender equality and equal opportunities and privileges for all, especially women. They have endured domestic violence and social injustice, and it is imperative that women are made aware of these issues and that they are addressed through proper justice and fair play. Women should not be discouraged from claiming their rights and should be provided with a secure environment to voice their concerns. In this regard, the doors of justice must be open 24/7 to hear women, and the government must ensure that justice is delivered to all women promptly, without resorting to delay tactics or fraud.

Recently, two stories of injustice and grave women's rights violations have been reported in GB. In one case, a 13-year-old teenage girl named Falak Noor was abducted, per her father, and married off. The case came to the surface when the child's father Sakhi Ahmed, a daily-wager laborer, filed FIR No. 10/24 under section 364-A PPC at police station Danyore, Gilgit. The father accuses the police of bribery and protecting the culprits. Falak has been missing since 20 January 2024. A social media video surfaced in the aftermaths of FIR and the news went viral on local and national media, in which Falak reportedly claimed that she was happy

and had married Fareed Alam, in Mansehra, KPK, willingly,

However, discrepancies in her age emerged after Nikah Nama stated that she was 16 years of age, aided by a medical certificate issued by a local clinic in Mansehra. Form B, and birth certificate, presented by her father and lawyers, however, state that is 12.7 (13 years) old. The child's father said that the statement issued by Falak Noor was under duress and held on legal significance. Meanwhile, Fareed, claiming to be Falak's husband, obtained interim bail from the Abbottabad Bench of Peshawar High Court until 6 April 2024. According to the law of Pakistan, the minimum marriageable age for females is 16 while for man is 18.

After hearing the case, the GB Chief Court ordered police to produce Falak Noor in Court before 2 April, but the question arises over the legitimacy of the court's order as under the G-B 2018 order in which article 77 (2) says, the direction or decree issued by GB Supreme Appellate Court and Chief Court of GB will not be enforceable in rest of the country. But since the alleged crime was committed in Gilgit, the Police have promised to the court to bring the child and produce her before the court. Another case is the mysterious death of Inara, an 18-year-old girl whose body was found on the riverside in Danyore, Gilgit, after she

went missing almost three weeks ago in March 2024.

Local activists and the victim's family have demanded the establishment of a JIT and probe into the matter with full transparency and enforcement of law to deliver justice to the deceased's family in due time. Both of these cases are intolerable and reflect how women suffer and how their voices are unheard. These two incidents are only the tip of the iceberg, so say, as there are numerous cases of sexual and physical violence against women and girls and abduction of girls and women.

What is baffling is the lackluster approach of the Police and the judiciary in these matters. These two incidents need to be treated as test cases. All of us should take a stand for the protection of the life and honor of the women and girls across GB. If the barriers to women's rights are not addressed and society and state don't hear their legitimate voices, then the system will reflect no change but a complete state of anarchy and social injustice will ensure. In such a scenario, suppressing women will remain a normal thing while protecting culprits will become the norm, indicating how our system is outdated and brutal towards victims or justice seekers.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/03/29/redefining-justice-taking-stand-for-womens-rights-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

## Economic Developments

**Mangla Dam water level on the verge of swift seasonal decline: Only 0.138 MAF water remains in the reservoir as the discharge continues**

*Daily Parliament Times, 26 March 2024*

As a result of continual heavy snowfall in the upper reaches of the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir, the water level in the country's second biggest reservoir-Mangla dam is constantly on the verge of seasonal dryness getting very close to the stipulated minimum level of 1050 feet following continual decline due to low inflows to the reservoir, official sources said. The water level in Mangla Dam was reported as 1073.30 feet against a maximum conservation level of 1242 feet with a live storage capacity of 0.138 MAF in the reservoir. It may be mentioned that Mangla Dam stands largest reservoir in terms of water storage in the country, was filled to its maximum conservation capacity of 1242 feet, on 17 August 2023 as seasonal impounding of the reservoir, the sources said. The inflows and outflows of the Jhelum River at Mangla reservoir were recorded respectively as 18000 and 28000 cusecs of water from the dam. The inflows and outflows of the River Jhelum at Mangla have been reflected as mean flows of 24 hours, the sources added.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/03/26/mangla-dam-water-level-at-the-verge-of-swift-seasonal-decline-only-0-138-maf-water-remains-in-reservoir-as-discharge-continues/>

**Who should we complain to if decisions are not being implemented: GB Finance Minister**

*Dailyk2, 26 March 2024*

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Assembly was presided over by speaker Nazir Ahmed Advocate. Two opposition assembly members, Javid Ali Manwa and Kaneez Fatima, submitted a motion in the House regarding prolonged load shedding in GB during the meeting. In response, Finance Minister Muhammad Ismail said that long-term load shedding in GB is under the control of the electrical department and emphasized that it was decided last month that power will be accessible between the Suhar and Iftar periods throughout Ramadan. Furthermore, additional funding has been made available in light of this. Unfortunately, neither of these actions is taking place. To find out, he requested that the Speaker of the GB Assembly call the electrical officials to confirm.

He continued, saying, that during one of his visits to Naltar Valley (Gilgit) to assess the electricity situation, he found that billions of dollars have been invested in a drain that doesn't have water. Now whom to blame and cry with? He noted that since he is on the steering group for the Department of Electronics and despite the committee's resolution to remove around 400 special transformers in Gilgit City—excluding hospitals—it has been claimed that special lines have been halted. He said that eighty to ninety

percent of the hydroelectric projects are completed, but since release has not yet been made, which is creating delays and that is the reason we are currently facing difficulties. After these tasks are completed, the system will supply enough electricity, he added. When the government was drafting the budget last year, he regretted that the health endowment fund had also been included in the deficit budget. Poor patients are currently facing difficulties as a result of a lack of funding in this sector.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/21280>

### **Chairman WAPDA visits the Dasu Project to express solidarity with the Chinese**

*Pakistan Observer, 28 March 2024*

Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), engineer Lieutenant General Sajad Ghani (Retired), visited the Dasu Hydropower Project to express solidarity with the Chinese engineers and workers serving at the project. He visited there after a terrorist attack near Besham in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, killing five Chinese and a local on their way to the Dasu Hydropower Project site from Islamabad. China's Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong together with Chairman Ghani spent time with the Chinese workforce at the project site. At the Construction Camp of China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) – Contractor of Dasu Hydropower Project – the Chairman condemning the tragic incident, offered

condolence on behalf of WAPDA over the loss of lives.

WAPDA is in close coordination with the quarters concerned to further beef up the security arrangements to avoid such untoward incidents in the future, he said. Chairman WAPDA lauded the Chinese firms for their contribution to implementing the projects of water and hydropower in particular for the development of Pakistan. The leading Chinese firms are engaged in constructing several WAPDA projects including Dasu, destined to provide much-needed water and low-cost energy for economic stability and social uplift in the country. We are confident that such cowardly attacks by the enemies of Pak-China friendship are undoubtedly bound to fail in derailing the cooperation meant for the stability and progress of Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/chairman-wapda-visits-dasu-project-to-express-solidarity-with-chinese/>

### **All resources being utilized to ensure supply of food: GB Ministers**

*The Nation, 29 March 2024*

Minister for Food Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Ghulam Muhammad has said the government is taking policy-based steps to ensure the supply of quality food and all resources are being utilized in this regard. Addressing the consultative session in Gilgit to devise a comprehensive strategy for better nutrition by the Planning and Development Department, he said strict disciplinary action is being taken

on the delivery and sale of sub-standard food items in all districts of GB. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Planning and Development Raja Nasir Ali Khan said concrete steps will be taken to ensure the availability of food items to the consumers and the establishment of a food testing laboratory to ensure the supply of quality food. Special Assistant on Information Iman Shah said that the media and other stakeholders need to adopt a coordinated strategy to spread awareness for the promotion of better nutrition.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2024/all-resources-being-utilized-to-ensure-supply-of-foods-gb-ministers>

### **Chinese companies temporarily suspend work on Dasu, Diamer-Bhasha dams**

*The Nation, 29 March 2024*

Civil work at the sites of the Dasu and Diamer-Bhasha Dams (DBD) has been temporarily suspended by the Chinese companies overseeing operations due to security concerns, a day after work was also suspended at the Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project. The development comes after a terror attack in Shangla claimed the lives of at least six people including five Chinese engineers, working on the Dasu Dam, earlier this week. The victims were killed when an explosive-laden vehicle hit the bus carrying them on the Karakoram Highway in the Bisham area. Approximately 991 Chinese engineers were working on both

projects, while the local staff has been told to stay at home till further instructions, an official working on the project confirmed. Around 741 Chinese and 6,000 locals are working on the 4,320 MW Dasu Dam in District Upper Kohistan.

However, work on the Mohmand Dam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues with Chinese engineers still working at the site. Similarly, DBD Nazakat Hussain also confirmed that the Chinese company had suspended work on the dam. He said around 500 Chinese nationals were engaged in DBD but the Frontiers Works Organisation (FWO) staff continues to work. Around 6,000 locals are busy in dam construction. He hoped that the situation would normalize in a few days, leading to the return of Chinese employees. The DBD would produce 4,800 MW of electricity through hydropower generation.

However, the General Manager (GM) of Mohmand Dam Asim Rauf said that 250 Chinese continue to work on the Mohmand Dam and they have not stopped work. Chinese have shown satisfaction over the security situation in the project area and they are working on the site, the official said. Once completed, the Mohmand Dam will generate 740 MW of hydroelectricity, irrigate 15,100 acres of land, and control floods downstream.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2024/chinese-companies-temporarily-suspend-work-on-dasu-diamer-bhasha-dams>

## From Vernacular Urdu Media

### **Strange silence from GB female leaders over the alleged abduction of a young girl, Falak Noor**

*Pamir Times, 26 March 2024*

Following a one and a half month of silence over the reported kidnapping and premature marriage of Falak Noor, a thirteen-year-old girl, her father Sakhi Ahmed Jan has become vocal in recent weeks. Following media attention, there is also considerable agitation in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) political circles. But the female members of the GB Assembly have observed a fast of silence. After making a few remarks to the media, Social Welfare Minister Dilshad Bano has largely kept quiet. Sadia Danish, the deputy speaker of the GB assembly, has not yet made a detailed statement about this issue in the media. Advisor to GB CM, Soraya Zaman has likewise decided not to comment on this matter as if it is not an important issue for her. The situation is similar with other ministers, advisers, and officials.

Even within the GB Assembly, no special voice has been raised on this issue, due to which many questions are being raised on the priorities of the House and the government regarding ensuring the safety of women and children. The GB government has been criticized on social media for the last few weeks for its indifference and outmoded response on the matter. GB Police is also being targeted for not

actively pursuing the matter. Women leaders occupying different positions in political parties are particularly criticized as they take on the crucial responsibility of making laws and raising their voices on issues of women and girls when they go to the assembly.

The question arises that if one has to remain silent on such sensitive issues, is access to the assembly only for privilege and protocol? Taking a young girl from home and marrying her against her parents' will is illegal, criminal, and immoral in every corner of the world, every society, and every religion. By remaining silent on this issue, all political leaders, especially women's leaders in the GB assembly, seem to be sending a message that they have no interest in women's safety, and no sympathy for poor families.

<https://urdu.pamirtimes.net/2024/03/25/asd-2873/>

### **We will use every resource at our disposal to fulfill the mission of Mirwaiz Kashmir: 'AJK' President**

*Urdu point, 26 March 2024*

Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, the president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), has declared that all available means will be employed to fulfill the goal of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. He claimed that Kashmiris are fighting for their rights as advocated by Mirwaiz Kashmir and added that India needs to show seriousness, cease violating human rights in 'occupied

Kashmir', and give up its stubbornness in granting Kashmiris their right to self-determination. In his speech on Maulana Yusuf Shah's death anniversary, he stated that the greatest way to honor him is to recommit to completing his religious, national, and political goals in the modern era. The movement for the Kashmir Azadi would never forget Maulana Muhammad Yusuf's contribution, although Mirwaiz expressed sadness that the state as a whole should have integrated into Pakistan. A notable religious and political figure, Mirwaiz Kashmir has been remembered in history for the wisdom and unwavering resolve with which he led the state's Muslim population throughout a pivotal time in Jammu and Kashmir's history. Mirwaiz, Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Shah, and his family provided invaluable assistance in preserving the Kashmiri people's adherence to Islam and bringing them the blessing of freedom.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-3963432.html>

**'Listen up, Amit Shah-'occupied Kashmir' will become part of Pakistan:' GB Home Minister**

*Dailyk2, 27 March 2024*

The interior minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Shamsul Haq Lone, has stated that Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks made yesterday on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) are

absurd. He declared that GB is the real Pakistan and that Amit Shah seems to have forgotten that it was the people of GB, who killed the 'obstinate dogras' with sticks and axes to free this territory from the 'nasty India' and consented to Pakistan. He said that the people of 'occupied Kashmir' have been sacrificing their lives to secure freedom from India, which has occupied their region for 75 years. He claimed that every day, people in 'occupied Kashmir' wave the Pakistani flag in their houses and on the streets, proclaiming to the world that they are not a part of India. He declared that although the 'filthy and treacherous Indian Army' may carry out as many crimes as they choose, the bond of affection between Kashmiris and their love for Pakistan will never wane. The night of tyranny always ends in the morning, no matter how long it lasts. He reminded Amit Shah that Kashmir will always be a part of Pakistan.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/21315>

### **From Social Media**

**Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan\_Din**

*27 March 2024*

The family of 18-year-old Anara, whose body was found on the bank of a river in Denyur area of Gilgit, has demanded a JIT to find out the cause of her death. They said that an FIR of her disappearance was registered at the Denver police station on March 5, but the police failed to follow up on the

case. He also demanded the force commander to provide justice to the bereaved.

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1773041510260384244](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1773041510260384244)

**Basharat Issa** @BasharatIssa

28 March 2024

It's such a shame that we haven't seen many women joining the protests for Falak Noor in Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad. The depoliticisation and tokenism of empowerment in GB has impacts like this and much more. Some people will join a protest if it's arranged in Serena only!

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1773250381197226266](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1773250381197226266)

**Azhar Uddin** @AzharUddinSays

29 March 2024

Protesters in Hunza, expressed concerns over the alleged abduction of 13-year-old Falak Noor demanding the immediate arrest of the accused. They also raised concerns over the recovery of the dead body of 18-year-old Inara from the riverside in Gilgit #BringBackFalak.

*Video link:*

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1773425142544167023](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1773425142544167023)

**Mamtaz Gohar** @mhgohar

31 March 2024

Today's press conference on the Falak Noor case underscores the GB government's failure to prioritize the safety of a minor girl. The one-sided approach of govt. officials is concerning & demands accountability. #JusticeForFalakNoor @Rohshan\_Din @SaraMirGilgity.

*Image link:*

<https://twitter.com/mhgohar/status/1774451282851369217>



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**Disclaimer**

*PoK weekly News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. MP-IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.*



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