

CLAWS Newsletter



Pakistan Unveiled | Volume I | No. 3

by Akashika Mate

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Controversies with the Cholistan Canal ([Dawn, March 03](#); [The Friday Times, March 08](#); [Dawn, March 10](#); [Business Recorder, March 11](#))

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir inaugurated the Cholistan irrigation project last month, aiming to boost agricultural production in South Punjab. However, the project has triggered widespread protests in Sindh, where lower riparian farmers fear it will compromise their water rights. Critics argue that Punjab's six new canals could divert water from the Indus River, affecting Sindh's allocation. The Sindh government has long opposed several new water projects along with the Cholistan Canal such as the Greater Thal Canal (GTC) Phase-II, and the Jalalpur Irrigation System, all of which remain pending decisions in the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

The projects planned for Sindh are key components of the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI), a state-backed effort to modernise agriculture and irrigation systems. Stakeholders dispute that instead of addressing water shortages for small farmers, such projects primarily serve the interests of powerful agro-corporations and real estate developers, further exacerbating inequalities in land ownership and resource distribution. Tensions escalated further on March 04 when the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) condemned the use of "disproportionate force" against nearly 100 students protesting the project in Jamshoro, Sindh. The police crackdown has only intensified the outrage, deepening the sense of injustice felt by many.

2. Aurat March 2025 ([People's Dispatch, March 07](#); [Firstpost, March 08](#))

On March 08, International Women's Day, Pakistan's annual Aurat March took place nationwide despite mounting restrictions. Organisers reaffirmed their right to peaceful assembly and free speech, urging the government to declare March 08 a national holiday to enable greater participation. This year's theme, 'Feminist Politics vs. the Patriarchal State', underscored urgent issues outlined in the movement's 60-point charter of demands, including:

- a. Ending gender-based violence and recognising it as a national emergency
- b. Eradicating child and forced marriages
- c. Protecting Afghan refugees from illegal deportation

- d. Opposing the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) to safeguard farmers
- e. Defending workers' rights, including unionisation and fair wages

Since 2020, authorities have intensified their crackdown on Aurat March activists, denying permissions, filing blasphemy cases, and using violent repression. Despite these challenges, prominent activists Dr. Farzana Bari, Huda Bhurgri, Nishant Maryam, Zainab Jamil, and Jiya Jaggi remain at the forefront, ensuring the movement's resilience.

3. Punjab Home Department Releases List of Banned Organisations ([Dawn, March 07](#); [Daily Excelsior, March 08](#))

The Punjab Home Department has released a list of 83 banned organisations, including alleged Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's outfit, and urged citizens not to donate (*zakat*) to unregistered charities, particularly during Ramadan and Eid. The directive emphasises that providing financial aid to proscribed groups is a punishable offence under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. The process of maintaining a list of proscribed organisations started on August 14, 2001, when the state banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-i-Mohammad Pakistan. On January 14, 2002, the government banned groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The other notable banned organisations among the total 83 are Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation, ISIS, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Al-Qaeda Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army Ansar-e-Islam and Balochistan Republican Army (BLA). Citizens are advised to ensure their *zakat* and donations go to organisations registered with the Punjab Charity Commission, which can be verified through QR codes on official certificates. The new list of banned organisations is available at [Dawn](#).

4. Protests Against Constitutional Amendment ([The Express Tribune, March 10](#))

A coalition of 38 human rights activists and civil society members has filed a petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, challenging the 26th Constitutional Amendment as unconstitutional and a threat to judicial independence. Unlike previous legal challenges, this petition is led by civil society representatives, including trade unionists, student leaders, and advocates for

press freedom and gender equality, with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) being particularly vocal against the move. The petitioners claim that the amendment restricts legal recourse for marginalised groups, curtails freedom of expression and assembly, and allows unchecked state power. They warn that it could be used to suppress dissent, restrict workers' rights, and interfere in interprovincial resource disputes. The 26th Amendment, enacted in October 2024, introduced major changes to Pakistan's judiciary, notably altering the process for selecting the Chief Justice of Pakistan. Instead of following a seniority-based system, the amendment allows a Special Parliamentary Committee to nominate one of the three seniormost Supreme Court judges for a fixed three-year term.

5. Observers at Security Belt 2025 ([The Moscow Times, March 10](#); [India Shipping News, March 12](#))

Pakistan has sent observers to the Maritime Security Belt 2025 naval exercises, currently underway in the Gulf of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean. The joint drills, involving Russia, China and Iran, focus on counter-piracy, counter-terrorism operations, and securing maritime trade routes. Hosted at Iran's strategic Chabahar Port, the exercise features ship liberation operations, search and rescue missions, and live-fire drills against maritime and aerial targets. Russia's Pacific Fleet has deployed corvettes Rezky and Hero Aldar Tsydenzhapov, while China is represented by the guided-missile destroyer Baotou and supply ship Gaoyouhu. Iran has contributed over 10 naval vessels, including the Jamaran and Alvand destroyers. Pakistan's presence as an observer underscores its strategic interest in regional maritime security. Other observer nations include South Africa, Oman, Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka and more. Given Pakistan's long coastline and reliance on sea trade routes, participation in such exercises—albeit in an observational role—aligns with its broader maritime security and defence diplomacy objectives.

6. Mistreatment of Religious Minorities ([Amnesty International South Asia/X, March 11](#); [Daily Times Pakistan, March 12](#))

Amnesty International, in a post on X, has urged the Pakistani government to immediately release and drop all charges against members of the Ahmadiyya community who have been arrested in recent weeks. According to Amnesty, more than 60 Ahmadi, including children,

have been unlawfully detained in the past two weeks across Daska, Sargodha and Karachi. Meanwhile, Ahmadi places of worship have been desecrated in Bahawalnagar and Gujranwala. Authorities have also filed cases under Section 298-C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which criminalises Ahmadis identifying as Muslims or preaching their faith. The organisation has reiterated that the persecution of Ahmadis violates Article 20 of Pakistan's Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion, as well as Pakistan's international human rights obligations.

Echoing these concerns, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has also raised concerns over mob-led attacks targeting religious minorities, including Ahmadis, Hindus, and Christians. Their recent report, '[Under Siege: Freedom of Religion or Belief in 2023-24](#)', revealed that over 750 people were in prison on blasphemy charges as of October 2023. The HRCP also documented at least four faith-based killings, three of which targeted Ahmadis. The report highlights the increasing weaponisation of blasphemy laws, with law enforcement officials themselves initiating cases against Ahmadis in Punjab. It calls on the Pakistani authorities to protect religious minorities, investigate violations, and hold perpetrators accountable.

7. Misuse of International Aid ([The Express Tribune, March 12](#))

Pakistan's decision to redirect Rs550 million from an Asian Development Bank (ADB) grant for flood relief efforts in Turkey and Syria has sparked debate. During a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) meeting, concerns were raised about using aid meant for Pakistan's own flood victims. PAC members questioned whether it was appropriate to send assistance from funds designated for domestic recovery. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik defended the move, stating that the aid was drawn from available stock and reaffirming Pakistan's tradition of supporting friendly nations. However, critics, including PAC members, argued that using external aid for international relief raises accountability concerns. The NDMA has assured that the ADB grant was restored to Pakistan, and the PAC has requested a detailed report on the matter within a month.

8. Stalled Hospital Revamp in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ([Dawn, March 12](#))

Auditors have flagged serious delays in the revamping of district headquarters hospitals (DHQs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, despite an advance payment of Rs1.08 billion made to

the Infrastructure Development Authority of Punjab (IDAP) nearly three and a half years ago. A contract between the KP health department and IDAP, signed in June 2021, aimed to improve infrastructure across 13 DHQs under a phased project. However, while the agreement required IDAP to commence work after receiving a 25% mobilisation advance, the project management only disbursed Rs1.08 billion, well short of the required sum. As a result, IDAP refused to begin work, leaving the funds idle and the project in limbo. Auditors have urged an investigation to determine accountability, citing poor planning, lack of government oversight, and financial mismanagement as key failures.

9. Pakistan Establishes Crypto Council (The Express Tribune, March 14; Dawn, March 15; Al Sadat Marketing, March 15)

Pakistan has taken a significant step towards regulating digital assets and blockchain technology with the launch of the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC). Backed by the Ministry of Finance, the council aims to integrate cryptocurrency into the country's financial system while ensuring investor protection and financial security. The PCC will focus on policy formulation, innovation, and regulatory compliance to create a secure and structured environment for digital finance. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will chair the council and Bilal Bin Saqib, an expert in blockchain and investment strategy, has been appointed CEO of PCC to spearhead this initiative. The council's board includes key government figures such as the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), the Federal Law Secretary, and the Federal IT Secretary.

Key Objectives of the PCC are:

- Regulatory Clarity: Establishing clear legal frameworks for cryptocurrency adoption.
- International Collaboration: Engaging with global blockchain organizations to adopt best practices.
- Fintech & Startup Growth: Encouraging innovation in the blockchain and digital finance sectors.
- Financial Security & Compliance: Implementing strong consumer protection and anti-fraud measures.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. FIA Restrictions on First-Time Travellers ([Deccan Herald, March 02](#))

Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has intensified scrutiny of first-time travellers, particularly those around 35 years old, from cities like Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Mandi Bahauddin, and Jhelum. According to a report submitted to the Lahore High Court (LHC), the FIA is closely monitoring passengers travelling to 15 countries—identified by the Risk Analysis Unit as key points for illegal immigration—including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Türkiye, Qatar, Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Russia, and Libya. The agency has made it mandatory for passengers to have a clear travel purpose, confirmed hotel bookings, and sufficient funds. In the case of Umrah pilgrims, the FIA has reportedly stated that they must also demonstrate adequate religious knowledge. The heightened scrutiny follows recent migrant tragedies, where boats capsized off the coasts of Libya, Greece, Morocco, and Mauritania, resulting in numerous casualties.

2. France-Pakistan Military Relations ([Resonant News, March 04](#))

Despite France's official restrictions on exporting military equipment to Pakistan, recent reports suggest that French defence companies are finding alternative avenues to engage in military contracts. These firms are allegedly leveraging subsidiaries and international shareholders to facilitate the supply of advanced defence technology to Pakistan. A key development in this evolving relationship is Pakistan's naval modernisation, with the PNS Hunain and PNS Yamama set to be equipped with MBDA's Albatros NG surface-to-air defence system and Thales NS110 surveillance radars. In addition, reports indicate that the French Defence Attaché to Pakistan recently visited Daudsons Armoury, a Pakistani defence manufacturer. The firm has recently expanded into drone warfare technology, integrating mini-rockets into unmanned aerial systems, signalling a strategic shift towards advanced weaponisation. Other Pakistani defence firms, such as the Karachi-based Alsons Group, are also reportedly in discussions with French companies. While France has historically refrained from direct military exports to Pakistan, primarily due to its strategic defence partnership with India, these emerging indirect dealings indicate a shift in approach. If additional defence agreements materialise, they could reshape the security dynamics of the region.

3. United States of America

a. CT Operation (Reuters, March 05, The Diplomat, March 11)

In a significant counterterrorism operation, Pakistan and the US collaborated to arrest Mohammad Sharifullah, a top commander of Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), near the Afghan border. Washington holds him responsible for the 2021 Kabul airport bombing that killed 13 US soldiers and 170 Afghan civilians. President Donald Trump thanked Pakistan for its role, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to regional stability. Sharifullah has been extradited to the US, where he faces charges of supporting ISIS-K. This development highlights ongoing security ties between Islamabad and Washington amid evolving regional dynamics.

Notably, just a few days before this joint operation, the US Department of State [issued a travel advisory](#) urging its citizens to “reconsider travel to Pakistan due to terrorism and the potential for armed conflict.” The advisory specifically warned against travel to Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the immediate vicinity of the India-Pakistan Line of Control.

b. Pakistani Diplomat Denied Entry (The International News, March 11)

In a rare diplomatic incident, the United States denied entry to Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkmenistan, K K Wagan, and deported him from Los Angeles. Despite holding a valid U.S. visa and necessary travel documents, Wagan was stopped by immigration authorities upon arrival and sent back to his last port of departure. Diplomatic sources suggest that his deportation was triggered by “controversial visa references,” though the exact concerns remain unclear. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Foreign Secretary Aamna Baloch have been briefed, while the Consulate in Los Angeles has been directed to investigate the matter. So far, there has been no official statement from Pakistan's Foreign Office, and efforts to reach Wagan for comment have been unsuccessful. The incident has raised questions about diplomatic protocol and the increasingly hostile nature of U.S. immigration policies under Trump 2.0.

4. Developments with China

a. Balochistan's Solar Home Systems (Pakistan Today, March 06; Independent News Pakistan, March 06)

To address the persistent electricity shortage in Balochistan, the provincial government has launched a programme to distribute 15,000 solar home systems, with financial support from

Chinese aid agencies. The initiative, backed by the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) and the South-South Cooperation for Addressing Climate Change, will be implemented through Balochistan's Energy Department. During the launch ceremony in Quetta, Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti highlighted Gwadar's importance in the CPEC. He announced that at least 5,000 solar systems will be allocated to Gwadar, calling the port city the "jewel in the crown" of CPEC. This is not the first time China has assisted in addressing Gwadar's energy challenges. In July 2022, the Chinese government donated 3,000 solar systems, aiming to alleviate power shortages and support climate resilience.

b. Huawei Trains Pakistani Youth in Advanced ICT Skills (Arab News, March 09)

As part of Pakistan's push to develop a technologically skilled workforce to meet international standards, over 20,000 Pakistani youth have received training in AI, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and other advanced ICT skills under Chinese tech giant Huawei's digital training initiative, which aims at training a total of 3,00,000 in the longer run. The program not only upskills students but also trains local instructors, ensuring long-term knowledge transfer. During a recent meeting with a Huawei delegation in Lahore, PM Shehbaz Sharif emphasised the need to expand ICT training projects to reach all provinces, including PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan. He also stressed making the ICT training portal accessible to more individuals. Pakistan sees ICT as a key driver of economic growth and is actively working with international partners to strengthen digital infrastructure and workforce capabilities.

c. CPEC Progress Stalls: Pakistan Planning Minister (Dawn, March 12)

Pakistan's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has voiced frustration over the slow pace of key China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, particularly those vital to Gwadar's development and the long-delayed Karachi-Peshawar Railway Mainline (ML-1) project. Chairing a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Joint Cooperation Council session in July, Iqbal criticised delays in three crucial projects: grid connectivity for Gwadar, a water desalination plant, and socio-economic development initiatives. He also noted that despite repeated directives, progress on ML-1 remains stalled. To break the deadlock, Iqbal has instructed Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Beijing and the Economic Affairs Division to engage with Chinese authorities and finalise a visit by technical and financial experts to assess and expedite the projects. As the JCC meeting approaches, all eyes are on whether the Pakistani

government can resolve bottlenecks and ensure these mega projects move forward, or if bureaucratic inertia will continue to hinder CPEC's progress.

d. Joint Scientific Expeditions in the Pamir-Karakoram Region (Pakistan Today, March 14)

Northwest University (NWU) of China and Karakoram International University (KIU) of Pakistan are set to collaborate on scientific expeditions in the Pamir-Hindu Kush-Karakoram region under the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences (CPJRC). Under a newly signed agreement, the universities will focus on geological disaster prevention, environmental protection, and cultural heritage conservation. The partnership will also offer opportunities for higher education and postdoctoral research at NWU to Pakistani students. KIU Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Attaullah Shah emphasised the pressing need for international cooperation in the region due to its complex geological conditions and frequent natural disasters. NWU President Sun Qingwei highlighted that the collaboration will leverage China's expertise in disaster management and ecological protection alongside KIU's regional knowledge. The initiative follows the February signing of a Declaration of Understanding (DoU) between CPJRC and KIU to establish the Karakoram Observation and Research Station (KORS) on Natural Hazards. This marks another step in the expanding scientific cooperation between China and Pakistan.

5. Comments at UNSC (Dawn, March 11)

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Munir Akram raised the issue of cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan while addressing the UN Security Council in New York. He accused the Kabul administration of failing to curb groups such as Al-Qaeda, TTP and the Baloch Liberation Army's (BLA) Majeed Brigade, which he claimed operate from Afghan soil. Furthermore, the ambassador suggested that the TTP also operates as an umbrella organisation for regional militant groups. He also alleged that the TTP receives external support and financing from Pakistan's "principal adversary," in an apparent reference to India. "Pakistan will continue to take all necessary measures to eliminate the terrorist threats to our national security in accordance with our right to self-defence under international law," Akram said during the briefing. Islamabad has intensified military operations under '*Azm-i-Istehkam*,' targeting TTP strongholds in Afghanistan.

6. Review of Maritime MoU with Denmark ([Arab News, March 13](#); [Daily Times Pakistan, March 14](#))

Pakistan and Denmark have reaffirmed their commitment to a 2 billion USD investment in Pakistan's maritime sector, focusing on modernising infrastructure, enhancing port efficiency, and promoting sustainability. During a high-level meeting, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Danish Ambassador Jacob Linulf reviewed the progress of the investment plan outlined under a MoU signed on October 02, 2024. Denmark's expertise in maritime technology is expected to boost Pakistan's economic growth and global trade competitiveness. Discussions also explored green shipping initiatives, renewable energy solutions for ports, and capacity-building programs to strengthen Pakistan's maritime workforce. Beyond economic cooperation, both sides highlighted cultural exchange and tourism promotion as key areas for future collaboration. Ambassador Linulf reiterated Denmark's strong interest in expanding its footprint in Pakistan's maritime sector, while Minister Chaudhry assured full cooperation to facilitate Danish investors. Both countries agreed to accelerate the implementation of the MoU, paving the way for deeper trade, investment and cultural ties between Pakistan and Denmark.

7. IT and Maritime Cooperation with Oman ([Business Recorder, March 13](#); [The Nation Pakistan, March 15](#))

Pakistan and Oman are set to enhance trade, transportation, and IT cooperation, with discussions focusing on establishing direct sea routes to boost logistical efficiency and economic ties. During a recent visit to Muscat, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, met with Omani Minister for Communication, Transport, and IT, Saeed bin Hamoud bin Saeed Al Mawali, to explore new avenues for collaboration. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening sea and air connectivity, alongside expanding IT sector cooperation to foster trade and technological advancements. Minister Al Mawali also announced plans to send a high-level delegation to Pakistan to finalise joint initiatives.

In a separate meeting, Minister Jam Kamal Khan met with Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral trade and activating the Joint Business Council between OCCI and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Minister Khan

emphasised that removing logistical and communication barriers could triple the trade volume between the two countries. An *iftar* dinner hosted by OCCI followed the meeting, featuring a B2B networking session organised by the Embassy of Pakistan, where Pakistani business delegates engaged with Omani investors. Rawas expressed a strong interest in bringing more Pakistani products to Omani markets and invited Pakistani brands to explore investment opportunities in Oman.

8. Aid from Saudi Arabia ([Arab News Pakistan, March 14](#))

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) has distributed 50,000 winter relief kits across Pakistan, including PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan. This initiative, launched in January, aims to support communities facing extreme winter conditions and natural disasters. The relief effort reached 52 districts. The comprehensive winter kits provided essential protection against harsh temperatures, including two high-quality polyester quilts, warm shawl kits for men and women and winter clothing for children and adults. Over 337,000 people have benefitted from this initiative, made possible through close collaboration between KSrelief and Pakistan's national and provincial disaster management authorities. Saudi Arabia's KSrelief has implemented over 200 humanitarian projects in Pakistan, addressing food security, healthcare, education, and emergency relief.

PAKISTAN-OCCUPIED-KASHMIR (PoK)

1. Malaysian Delegation at Mirpur (Daily Times Pakistan, March 02)

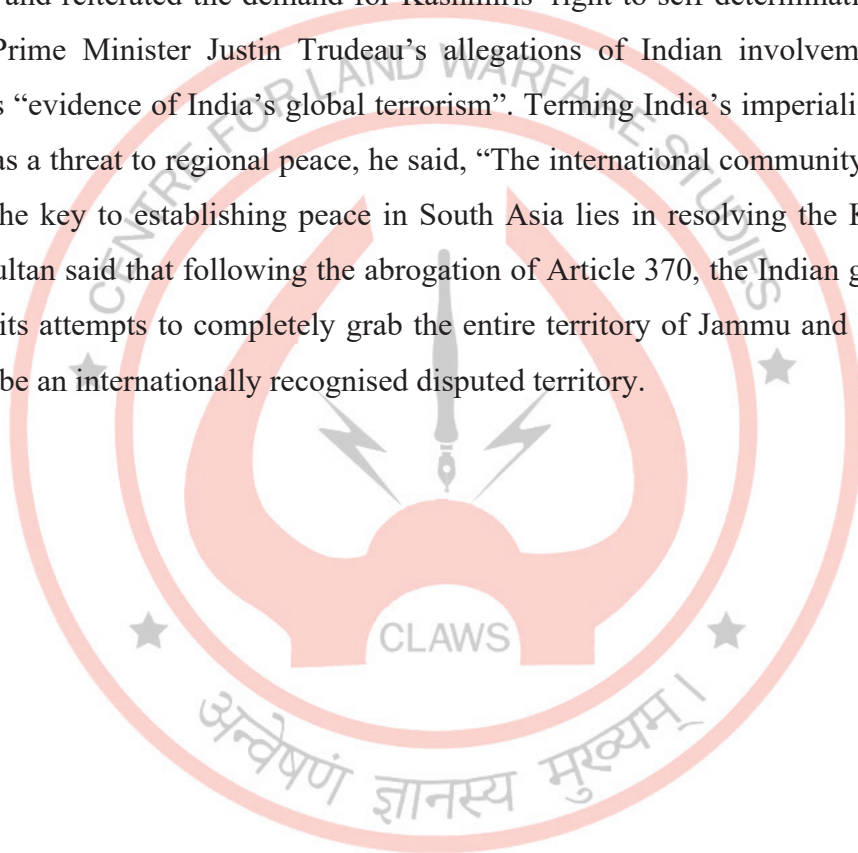
High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Dato' Mohammad Azhar bin Mazlan, visited the Mirpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in PoK to explore economic and investment opportunities. Accompanied by Syafik Firdaus bin Hasbullah, Deputy Head of Mission, the High Commissioner engaged in discussions with local business leaders on potential areas of collaboration such as agriculture, technology, and infrastructure. The delegation was received by members of the MCCI, including former Minister of the Government of PoK Chaudhary Muhammed Saeed, Chair of District Council Raja Naveed Akhtar Goga, and Mayor Usman Khalid. Amb. Dato' Azhar allegedly commended Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) for its efforts in promoting agricultural development and emphasised Malaysia's interest in investing in palm oil, rubber, technology, education and tourism. While such foreign engagements may appear purely economic, India will be watching closely for any broader geopolitical undertones.

2. Women's Protest in Muzaffarabad (Daily Parliament Times, March 08; Urdu Point, March 09)

On International Women's Day (March 08), a large protest rally was held in Muzaffarabad under the banner of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir to highlight 'the plight of Kashmiri women.' Hundreds of women and activists participated, holding placards and demanding the release of women detained in connection with security-related cases. Led by prominent figures, including Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Ch. Latif Akbar, the protest condemned the alleged violence, sexual exploitation, and fear tactics used by Indian forces in PoK. Speakers emphasised that over 23,000 women have been widowed due to conflict, and 2,700 remain 'half-widows' as their husbands have forcibly disappeared. They also recalled past atrocities, including the Kunan-Poshpura mass rape case and the brutal murders of Asifa Bano, Nilofar Jan, and Aasiya Jan. The protest march, which started from Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk and ended at Gharipan Chowk, urged international human rights organisations to support humanitarian efforts and ensure the well-being of affected women.

3. Pakistan Criticises the UK on Kashmir (The International News, March 12)

President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has hailed his recent visits to the UK and the US as successful, claiming to have effectively highlighted the Kashmir issue and alleged human rights violations by Indian forces. Speaking at a press conference in Muzaffarabad on March 10, he criticised Britain for leaving the Kashmir dispute unresolved during Partition and claimed that he had reminded British and American lawmakers of their “moral and legal responsibilities” in settling the conflict. Chaudhry called on the international community to take action and reiterated the demand for Kashmiris’ right to self-determination while citing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s allegations of Indian involvement in terrorist activities as “evidence of India’s global terrorism”. Terming India’s imperialistic presence in the region as a threat to regional peace, he said, “The international community should bear in mind that the key to establishing peace in South Asia lies in resolving the Kashmir issue”. Barrister Sultan said that following the abrogation of Article 370, the Indian government had intensified its attempts to completely grab the entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir which happens to be an internationally recognised disputed territory.



TERROR TALLY

1. Confrontations and CT in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan

- a. **Dawn, March 02 | Lakki Marwat:** A militant was killed and a police official injured in an exchange of fire in Abbasa Khattak, Lakki Marwat, on March 02 after a police patrol party came under attack. The killed militant's accomplices managed to escape into nearby mountainous terrain and the injured policeman was shifted to a hospital, where he is reported to be in stable condition. A large-scale search operation has been launched to track down the remaining attackers.
- b. **Geo News, March 05 | Bannu:** On March 04, Pakistani Security Forces (SFs) foiled a terrorist attack on Bannu Cantonment, KP, eliminating all 16 militants. However, 13 civilians died, and 32 others were injured due to a mosque and a residential building suffering "severe destruction." The attack involved suicide bombers from the TTP, who detonated two explosive-laden vehicles at the compound's perimeter in an attempt to enter the premises.
- c. **Dawn, March 08 | Tank:** On March 08, SFs eliminated three terrorists in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Tank District, KP, according to a statement by the military's media wing ISPR. Acting on intelligence reports, security personnel launched the operation and neutralised them on the spot. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the site.
- d. **The Khorasan Diary, March 09 | Lakki Marwat:** In an operation conducted in Sultankhel, Lakki Marwat district of KP province, SFs killed at least four TTP militants, leaving several others injured. The clash also resulted in the deaths of three security personnel.
- e. **ARY News, March 09 | Lakhani:** On March 09, SFs successfully foiled another terrorist attack on the Lakhani border post near the KP-Punjab border. This marks the second attack in 24 hours and the third major assault in a week. A group of 20 to 25 heavily armed terrorists, equipped with rocket launchers and advanced weaponry, attempted to breach the security post. However, thermal imaging cameras detected the intruders in time, allowing police personnel to retaliate effectively. The attackers were forced to retreat, reportedly suffering heavy casualties.
- f. **Geo News, March 13 | South Waziristan:** SFs successfully thwarted a terrorist attack on a checkpoint in Jandola, South Waziristan District, KP, on March 13.

According to the ISPR, the attackers attempted to breach the checkpoint but were repelled by troops. In a desperate move, the terrorists rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into the perimeter wall. Troops engaged the assailants in an intense firefight, ultimately eliminating all 10 terrorists, including a suicide bomber. No breach of the post occurred.

2. Targeted Militant Attacks

a. JUI-F Leaders Assassinated (Dawn, March 02)

Two local leaders of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) party, Wadera Ghulam Sarwar and Molvi Amanullah, were shot dead in a targeted attack in Zehri, Khuzdar district, Balochistan, on March 02. According to police officials, unidentified assailants on motorcycles opened fire on them while they were on their way home, killing both on the spot. A security guard accompanying the leaders sustained bullet injuries and was rushed to a local hospital for treatment. The attackers managed to escape, and no group has claimed responsibility for the assassination. Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident, and the bodies were handed over to the families after medico-legal formalities. JUI-F's central spokesperson, Aslam Ghor, condemned the attack and called for the immediate arrest of those responsible.

b. TTP Faction Attacks Police Constable (The Khorasan Diary/X, March 02)

A police constable, Qurban Ali, was shot dead on Raiwind Road in Lahore, Punjab province. The attackers also stole his motorbike before fleeing the scene. An encrypted channel linked to the Hafiz Gul Bahadar Group, a faction of the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the attack. Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident, and a search operation is underway to apprehend the perpetrators.

c. Coordinated Attacks in North Waziristan (Dawn, March 04)

Four security personnel lost their lives in intense clashes with terrorists in Miramshah, North Waziristan, on March 03. The confrontations erupted when militants launched coordinated attacks on six security checkpoints, targeting Spalga, Gosh, Tappi, Barwana, Pipana Lower, and Pipana Top. Security forces effectively repelled the assault, killing at least 13 terrorists and injuring several others. However, in the exchange of fire, 13 security personnel also sustained injuries. The wounded were transported to Miramshah Headquarters Hospital, with critically injured personnel referred to the Combined Military Hospital in Bannu. Additional troops have

been deployed to the area, and a search operation is underway to locate the fleeing militants. The Pakistani military's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), has not released any statement on the attack, and no group has claimed responsibility yet.

d. Two CTD Officers Killed in Kohat (The Khorasan Diary/X, March 10; Dawn, March 10)

Two officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) were shot dead by unidentified gunmen at Tanda Dam, Kohat district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The deceased officers, Sub-Inspector Zahid-ur-Rehman and Constable Ghulam Mustafa were travelling in the area when they were ambushed. Kohat District Police Officer (DPO) Zahid Khan confirmed that the assailants managed to escape, prompting a large-scale police search operation. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the Kohat attack and paid tribute to the fallen officers. KP Inspector General Zulfiqar Hameed has directed the formation of special investigation teams to apprehend those responsible, vowing that the perpetrators will be brought to justice. However, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.

e. Sindhi Barbers Killed Over 'Spying' Allegations (Times of India, March 11)

On March 09, three migrant barbers from Sindh were shot dead inside their shop in Panjgur district, Balochistan. According to police reports, unidentified gunmen arrived on a motorbike, entered the shop in the Gowargo area, opened fire on the victims, and fled the scene. The deceased hailed from the Mirpurkhas and Jacobabad districts in Sindh. Baloch separatist militants, who have been engaged in an insurgency against the Pakistani military, often accuse non-Baloch residents—particularly those from Punjab and Sindh—of spying for state forces. This has led to an increase in attacks against barbers, commuters, and labourers from other provinces.

3. Forced Disappearances in Balochistan

a. Four Missing Baloch Found Dead in Awaran (The Balochistan Post, March 03)

The bodies of four Baloch youth, who were allegedly subjected to enforced disappearances, were discovered in Mashkay, Awaran district of Balochistan, on March 03. The victims were identified as Kamran Alam, Mehraj Niaz, Momin Aslam, and Hafeez Baloch. According to reports, these individuals had been forcibly disappeared on February 28, 2025, along with five others, allegedly by Pakistani security forces. The whereabouts of the remaining five

individuals remain unknown. The discovery of these bodies has further fueled concerns among the Baloch community, which has long faced the crisis of enforced disappearances. Families of the missing continue to demand answers and justice, calling for immediate action to address the ongoing human rights violations in Balochistan.

b. Outrage by Paank (ANI News, March 01; Paank/X, March 08)

Paank, the human rights department of the Baloch National Movement, has strongly the fresh wave of enforced disappearances in Balochistan in a [new post on X](#). According to reports, on March 6, 2025, Pakistani forces detained Rasheed Baloch, son of Gohram, from the Bundeki area of Tehsil Mashkay in Awaran district. He has been missing since his abduction. On the night of March 8, 2025, security forces raided the home of Qais Nisar in Ward No. 6 of Pasni, a coastal city, and extrajudicially took him into custody. The same day, four more individuals were forcibly disappeared from Baghao Basti Balwani in Barkhan district. Paank has called for an immediate and transparent investigation into these disappearances and has demanded the safe release of all abducted individuals. The disappearances, allegedly carried out by Pakistani forces, have intensified since the last week of February when seven individuals were abducted between February 27 and 28 alone. The organisation stressed that enforced disappearances violate fundamental human rights and international laws and urged the Pakistani government to be held accountable for its actions in Balochistan.

c. Protests in Kardgap and Panjgur (The Balochistan Post, March 09)

Since March 01, demonstrations against enforced disappearances have escalated across Balochistan, with sit-ins in Mastung's Kardgap area and protests in Panjgur gaining momentum. The Kardgap protest took a dramatic turn as demonstrators blocked train services, bringing railway operations to a complete standstill. Attempts by the district administration, led by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mastung Manan Tareen, to negotiate with the families of the disappeared have failed. Protesters remain firm in their demands for the immediate release of ten missing individuals and an end to extrajudicial killings. The Kardgap sit-in has drawn increasing attention, with Baloch Yakjehti Committee leader Dr. Mahrang Baloch and other key figures joining the protest on March 09.

Meanwhile, in Panjgur, a protest at 14 Chowk Saraduk continues, with residents of Washbod demanding the release of Aqil Jaleel, who allegedly forcibly disappeared. The roadblock has left hundreds of travellers stranded, with long lines of vehicles stretching for miles. Despite

growing frustration among commuters, Jaleel's family remains resolute, insisting they will not end their demonstration until he is safely returned.

4. Ranked 2nd in the Global Terror Index 2025 (The Print, March 06; India Today, March 06)

Pakistan has been ranked the second-most affected country in the [Global Terror Index 2025](#), following Burkina Faso, with Syria in third place. The report, released by the Institute for Economics and Peace, highlights a sharp surge in terror incidents in Pakistan, with attacks more than doubling from 517 in 2023 to 1,099 in 2024—the highest recorded since the index's inception. The TTP, allegedly operating out of Afghan soil, remains the deadliest militant group, responsible for 482 attacks and 558 deaths, marking a 91% rise in fatalities. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan remain the most affected regions, accounting for 90% of terrorism-related incidents. Baloch separatist groups have also escalated violence, carrying out 504 attacks in 2024, compared to 116 the previous year. Pakistan's security forces face mounting challenges as militant activity intensifies, worsening already strained ties with Afghanistan.

5. Jaffar Express Hijacked by the BLA (Al Jazeera, March 11; Indian Express, March 13; The Guardian, March 14; The Hindu, March 15)

In a shocking escalation of the Baloch insurgency, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for hijacking the Jaffar Express in the Mashkaf region of Bolan, Balochistan, on March 11. The train, carrying approximately 500 passengers across nine bogies, was en route from Quetta in Balochistan to Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa when it was ambushed near Tunnel No. 8. In [an official statement](#), the BLA announced that the operation is being conducted by its Majeed Brigade Fidayeen Unit, with operational support from their specialised units—the Fateh Squad, STOS, and the intelligence wing Zirab. The group issued a 48-hour ultimatum, threatening to execute the remaining hostages unless the Pakistani government released Baloch political prisoners and activists. It had also warned that if military intervention continues, all hostages will be executed, and the train will be completely destroyed.

After more than a day of armed combat, the Pakistani army announced the end of the rescue operation. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General General Ahmad Sharif, security forces eliminated all 33 BLA attackers, but 21 hostages were killed. Over 300 passengers were rescued.

The attack quickly escalated into a diplomatic flashpoint, with Pakistan's Foreign Office accusing India of involvement. Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan alleged that "terrorists had been in contact with their handlers and ring leaders in Afghanistan." The claim was reiterated by army spokesperson Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif at a March 14 news conference, where he referred to India as the "main sponsor" behind the attack.

India categorically rejected the accusations, with Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stating:

"We strongly reject the baseless allegations made by Pakistan. The whole world knows where the epicentre of global terrorism lies. Pakistan should look inwards instead of pointing fingers and shifting the blame for its own internal problems."

The hijacking of the Jaffar Express marks one of the most significant attacks in recent years, raising concerns about the security situation in Balochistan and escalating tensions between Pakistan and its neighbours on both sides.

About the Author

Akashika Mate is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) with a focus on strategic and security issues concerning Afghanistan and Pakistan. She recently earned her master's in international relations from King's College London, where her research explored themes of conflict, diplomacy, and resistance. Her areas of interests include South Asian geopolitics, foreign policy analysis, and gender in conflict. She can be reached at akashika.claws@gmail.com



All Rights Reserved 2023 Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, archived, retained or transmitted through print, speech or electronic media without prior written approval from C L A W S. The views expressed and suggestions made in the article are solely of the author in his personal capacity and do not have any official endorsement. Attributability of the contents lies purely with author.