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Kohistan Scandal: 35 Objections Challenge NAB's Asset Freezes

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The National Accountability Bureau faces 35 objections in Peshawar's Accountability Court over asset-freezing orders tied to the Rs40 billion Kohistan financial scandal, as investigations intensify.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is facing legal pushback in the Rs40 billion Kohistan financial scandal, with 35 objections filed in Peshawar's Accountability Court against its asset-freezing orders. The bureau, tasked with probing the massive embezzlement of public funds in Upper Kohistan, has issued 20 orders targeting movable and immovable properties of suspects, as confirmed by NAB sources on July 30, 2025. The scandal, involving fraudulent treasury cheques and fake development projects, has

led to the arrest of 10 individuals, including government officials, bankers, and contractors, according to a Geo.tv report.

The objections, lodged by suspects including Shafiq ur Rehman Qureshi (District Account Officer), Muhammad Riaz (former bank cashier), and contractors like Muhammad Ayub, challenge the freezing of assets such as 109 properties worth Rs17 billion, 77 luxury vehicles valued at Rs940 million, and over Rs5 billion across 73 bank accounts. NAB's investigation revealed that funds were siphoned through fake firms like M/s Hilal Construction and laundered via benami accounts, with Rs3.45 billion traced to Ayub alone. The bureau's prosecutor told the court that these measures aim to recover misappropriated funds, as reported by The Express Tribune.

On July 26, 2025, NAB approved a plea bargain from Ayub for Rs1.45 billion, to be paid in three installments, with the Accountability Court set to review the agreement within days, per LeadPakistan.com. The objections argue that NAB's actions, including the seizure of assets like a luxury bungalow featured in the drama *Parizaad*, lack sufficient evidence or violate due process. Advocate Ameenur Rehman Yousafzai, representing a suspect, claimed NAB's arrests were unjustified, citing torture and procedural lapses under Section 24 of the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO).

The Kohistan scandal, uncovered in February 2025 by the Auditor General of Pakistan, exposed systemic failures in oversight by the Communication and Works (C&W) Department and the National Bank of Pakistan. With Rs25 billion in assets already seized, NAB's ongoing probe signals a determined effort to hold the guilty accountable and restore public trust in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's financial governance.