

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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educational council POK cellular mobile
Gilgit-Baltistan projects international airport
provincial status local tourists
digital infrastructure CPEC
Rathoa-Haryam bridge Youth
optical fibre network



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Political Developments

AJK President meets with British parliamentarian Lord Wajid in Islamabad

Daily Parliament Times, October 11 2021

The President of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry held a detailed meeting with a member of the British House of Lords, Lord Wajid Khan at the Presidency Kashmir House in Islamabad. Both the leaders had discussion on various issues related to the present development scenario in AJK and internalization of the Kashmir issue. Both the leaders emphasised that the Indian government's massive human rights violation in "occupied Kashmir" needs to be raised at the international level. Lord Wajid Khan stressed that the British Parliament and the House of Lords will work aggressively to expose the atrocities of the Indian government in "occupied Kashmir" so that India can be brought to a defensive position. He further invited 'AJK' President to address the British Parliament which was accepted by the President.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/11/president-sultan-mehmood-chaudhry-meets-lord-wajid-in-isb/>

'Modi's reign badly failed to oppress Kashmir's freedom voice:' JKSM Chairman

Daily Parliament Times, October 14 2021

Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM), Altaf Ahmed Bhat while talking to media in Islamabad, said that "the Indian

occupational force's brutal target killing of the youth in different fake encounters across Kashmir," will not deter Kashmiris right to self-determination.

He further noted that in another pretext to continue their oppression, the "occupational forces" are leaving no stone unturned to subdue the freedom-loving people of "occupied Kashmir". The recent targeted killing, arbitrary arrest and putting them behind bars outside Kashmir will never deter them from their birthright of freedom as per the United Nations (UN) resolutions.

He further stressed that Kashmiris' steadfastness and their commitment to the freedom movement showed their great resilience and bravery against "Indian state terrorism". He emphasised that the present government of India has completely failed to suppress the freedom sentiments and resistance of the people, despite using all sorts of "oppression and suppression."

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/13/modis-reign-badly-failed-to-oppress-kashmirs-freedom-voice-jk-sm-chairman/>

'Resolution of Kashmir, Palestine issues must for world peace:' Punjab Governor

The Nation, October 17 2021

Punjab governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has said that the key to peace in the world lies in resolving the Kashmir and Palestine issues. While addressing a function titled "Aik Sham Kashmir Keh Naam" at Bergamo in Italy, Governor of Punjab

said that “Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and Pakistan is ready to make any sacrifice for its freedom.” He stressed that during his recent visit to European countries, he met more than 25 members of the European Parliament and apprised them of the “Indian atrocities and terrorism in Kashmir” and have urged all to take steps to put an end to such atrocities in Kashmir. He further said that India has perpetrated worst form of “state terrorism” in “occupied Kashmir” and the dream of peace in the region cannot be fulfilled until the Kashmir issue is resolved. He further noted that peace in the South Asian region is in jeopardy since the time “Narendra Modi has come to power because he stands by the terrorists and their facilitators.”

Governor of Punjab while appreciating overseas Pakistanis for raising their voice in the world for the rights of Kashmiris said that the sacrifices of Kashmiris will not go in vain and the time will surely come when “Kashmir will become Pakistan.” During the occasion, European Union-Pakistan Friendship (EUPF) Chairman, Pervez Iqbal said that the bravery and courage with which Kashmiris are fighting against “Indian atrocities” is a testament to the fact that no power in the world can defeat the morale of Kashmiris.

<https://nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2021/resolution-of-kashmir-palestine-issues-must-for-world-peace-says-sarwar>

Youth can play a more vital role for promoting Kashmir cause: KIIR Chairman to the delegation of youth parliament of Pakistan

Daily Parliament Times, October 16 2010

The delegation led by deputy secretary general of youth parliament of Pakistan, Tabish Abbasi, met with the chairman of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), Altaf Hussain Wani. While talking to a delegation of 30 Youth representatives from different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from all over the Pakistan, the KIIR chairman said that youth are a great asset and future of the nation. Pakistani youth can play an important role in promoting Kashmir cause and highlighting the plight of Kashmiris through the effective use of digital platforms. He noted that in the era of technology, youth can significantly contribute to advance the cause of peace and justice, become a voice for the voiceless, especially Kashmiris who were reeling under the “brutal suppression of the Indian colonialism.”

The KIIR chairman briefed the youth about the aims and objectives of the think-tank that has been working on Kashmir for over the past three decades. He emphasised that in the given regional and international scenario, educated youth of Pakistan can play a vital role in promoting the cause of Kashmir and highlighting the plight of Kashmiris through the effective use of digital platforms.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/16/wabu-calls-for-youths-more-vital-role-for-promoting-kashmir-cause/>

Economic Developments

‘GB will soon become world tourist destination’

The News International, October 12 2021

Gilgit-Baltistan’s (GB) Chief Minister (CM), Khalid Khurshid, while addressing the gathering at Pakistan pavilion in the Dubai Expo 2020 exhibition stated that GB would soon become an international tourist destination as Skardu Airport would be given the status of an international airport. He also noted that the discussions were also underway with international airlines for direct flights carrying foreign tourists to Skardu. The CM was also a key speaker in the climate change conference held at the sidelines of the Expo 2020. He also visited the glittering Pakistani pavilion at the Dubai Expo and commended the organisers for introducing the culture of the region and its snow-capped scenic valleys to the international community.

The GB chief minister also revealed that the government was not only trying to give Skardu the status of an international airport but have also identified land for building a new airport. The new proposed airport in Gilgit would be all-weather airport where flight can operate in the night. The GB chief minister also revealed that Skardu has emerged as the busiest airports in the country with domestic flight connectivity to all major cities of Pakistan as more tourists are headed to the northern region. He said that the demand for residential hotels for local tourists has increased tremendously. The government has decided to build several international cities in GB with

plans to have residential hotels, restaurants and picnic spots, and tourists’ guidance centers.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/899721-gb-will-soon-become-world-tourist-destination>

‘Auction for NGMS in AJK, GB: Three CMOs issued new Licences’

Business Recorder, October 12 2021

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Monday issued new license to three cellular mobile operators after winning spectrum for Next Generation Mobile Services (NGMS) in ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), which has generated a revenue to the tune of \$30.322 million. The new license were issued to three Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs) including CMPak (Zong), Telenor Pakistan, and PTML (Ufone).

The event was attended by Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur; Chief Minister (CM) of GB, Muhammad Khalid Khurshid; Federal Secretary for Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication Dr Suhail Rajput, Secretary Kashmir and GB Affairs, and senior management of mobile companies among others. Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB said that with the addition of this spectrum, tourism would receive a boost. The minister said that one of the two demands of the area was spectrum auction, which has been met and the other demand of giving provincial status to GB is in final stage. He further said that GB is very important with respect to China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the additional spectrum would resolve connectivity issues faced by the residents as well as tourists.

GB Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid said that one of the biggest issues being faced by the region was connectivity. Additional spectrum would give further boost to Prime Minister's Digital Vision to enhance connectivity and improve digital infrastructure in the country.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40126119/auction-for-ngms-in-ajk-g-b-three-cmos-issued-new-licences>

National Assembly standing Committee on AJK and GB Affairs summoned AJK Chief Secretary, NESPAK Managing Director

Business Recorder, October 13 2021

Pakistan National Assembly's (NA) standing committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) called Chief Secretary (CS) of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) and managing director of National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK), to brief the committee on the ongoing projects under the public sector development programme (PSDP) in the AJK. During the discussion, the committee was informed by senior officials of the ministry of Kashmir Affairs and GB that about 75 percent physical progress related to the construction of Rathoa-Haryam bridge project in Mirpur district of 'AJK' has been completed, while the remaining 25 percent work was lying in waiting due to an unwanted tug of war among the government of AJK, NESPAK and the Chinese contractors.

Regarding the status of approved PSDP projects in 'AJK' and GB undertaken during last three years, the committee was informed that a considerable number of development schemes worth billions of rupees were carried out under the PSDP in the AJK and the GB are on the verge of completion. Apart from that seven special development projects worth billions of rupees will also be undertaken by the federal government under the Prime Minister's special package in various parts of the GB.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40126387/ajk-cs-nespa-md-summoned-by-na-panel>

We are focused on accelerating work on development projects in GB: PM Imran Khan

Dailyk2, October 13 2021

Pakistan Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan chaired a meeting to review the progress of integrated development plan for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and said that the government is concentrating on speeding up the progress of the integrated development plan for GB through effective measures. He emphasised that effective measures need to be taken to ensure delegation of administrative and financial powers. PM further directed the concerned authorities to remove all the legal and procedural obstacles in the way of GB development projects and directed the authorities to facilitate the people of GB who are travelling long distances to reach Islamabad for getting their issues resolved.

PM Imran Khan also ordered the provision of internet connectivity to the

area at the earliest to cater better communication facilities to the local population. The concerned authorities briefed PM about the progress of the implementation of the “historic five-year development package” of 370 billion for GB, for various development projects till the fiscal year 2025-26. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Muhammad Hammad Azhar, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, special Assistant to the PM on political communication Dr Shahbaz Gill, and GB Chief Minister Khalid Khursheed, among other officials.

https://www.epaper.dailyk2.com/Home?Issue=NP_GB&p=5882

‘Gilgit-Baltistan, ‘Azad’ Kashmir to have 4G internet services’

Dawn, October 13 2021

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in agreement with Zong, Telenor Pakistan and Ufone granted additional spectrum for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The representatives of all three telecommunication service providers in GB and ‘AJK’ have requested to the PTA and the Ministry of Information and Technology (IT) to ensure that the required facilities will be provided in the region for fast and reliable 4G internet service.

During the meeting, GB chief minister, Khalid Khursheed said that lack of political will has delayed the launch of 3G and 4G services in the region despite the fact that these services were launched in the rest of Pakistan in 2014. He stressed that in addition to the visiting tourists and the business community, the launch of 3G/4G

services in GB and AJK will also be beneficial for local people. They will be able to avail e-education, e-health, e-learning, e-commerce etc., which will eventually uplift the overall economic and social standards. He lauded the efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan and IT Minister Syed Aminul Haq for initiating the auction of spectrum for the region.

GB chief minister further noted that the governments of GB and AJK will also get a total of up to 07 billion in terms of royalty from the auction that will be divided between the two regions at the ratio of 40:60, respectively, based on their population. Besides, additional spectrum will be distributed equally in rural and urban areas of GB and ‘AJK’. PTA has already granted 45 licenses to various companies for establishing optical fibres and other services in the region. Kamal Ahmed, chief cooperate affairs officer Telenor Pakistan, which has the highest market share in the region called upon the PTA to establish optical fibre network in the region if the benefits of connectivity have to be achieved.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1651468/gilgit-baltistan-azad-kashmir-to-have-4g-internet-services>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Pakistan Army conducts educational council in Diامر District of GB

Dailyk2, October 14 2021

An educational council (Jirga) was organised by the Pakistan army at Thor Nala in Diامر district. The council was attended by Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) force commander, Inspector General of Police (IGP) GB, elders of the area,

religious scholars, civil and military officials and local people. While addressing the council, the force commander said that the Pakistan Army has been committed to bring the backward areas on par with other areas. He urged the students to use their talents and play a positive role for the development of the country and the region. Faizullah Faraq, former spokesman of the provincial government said that the education jirga held in Diامر Thor would be a catalyst for a change in consciousness here.

He further said that Pakistan army has provided immense benefits to the locals and the people of Diامر are indebted to them. During the meeting, Director of Education, Faqir Ullah said that Pakistan army has made the nation aware of the importance and usefulness of education by holding educational council in Diامر. He further said that by providing free education to more than 600 children here, the region has moved towards an educational revolution. He urged that Pakistan army should announce army public school in Thor.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/3753>

'If the government opts for a third option on the Kashmir issue, it will be sent back to home'

Editorial, Jasarat, October 14 2021

In response to the question raised by Jasarat newspaper whether "Prime Minister is talking of the third option in Kashmir under the US pressure?" Many of Pakistan's leading political, legal and religious scholars said that if the government goes for the "third

option" on the Kashmir issue, it will be packed off. The only acceptable solution for Pakistan is the implementation of the United Nations (UN) resolution on Kashmir. Kashmiris have to decide whether they will stay with Pakistan or India. China can also become a party. Imran Khan has no experience in diplomacy. Azeem Chaudhry, former advocate general of Balochistan, said that at present there are three parties to Kashmir issue – India, Pakistan and Kashmiri people. So "the Kashmiri people have to decide through an independent referendum, whether to go with India or Pakistan." This is written in the UN resolutions. If any other option is discussed then China can also become a party.

Dr. Salahuddin Mengal said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has played cricket all his life and he has no experience in diplomacy, economy and running the government. As far as the third option is concerned, Kashmir has always been under United States (US) influence. This influence continues however it does not mean that Pakistan will change the basis of its foreign policy. Analyst, Mazhar Tufail said that the government of Pakistan has always tried to include the people of "occupied Kashmir" so that the Kashmiri people will get their full constitutional rights. But unfortunately, the ugly manner in which the present government of Pakistan has presented the case of Kashmir at the international level shows that Imran Khan has not only disappointed the Kashmiri people but in fact it has facilitated India's plans for Kashmir. Undoubtedly, India's diplomacy on the Kashmir issue has been invaluable. That is why even after

the abolition of the constitutional status of 'occupied' Kashmir, India has presented itself as an oppressed country to the international community.

Shortly after the triumphant return of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan from his visit to the US, the Indian government ended the constitutional status of "occupied Kashmir" and to some extent succeeded in shifting the balance of power in its favour. Mentioning the eternal sacrifices of the late Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, he said that, it is because of him that Pakistan has earned the honor of being the world's first Muslim nuclear power. Due to Pakistan's nuclear status India has not been able to fulfill its intentions even after removing the constitutional status of 'Occupied' Kashmir. He argued, Pakistan's diplomacy has failed. Not many Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, have supported our position. Member of political committee of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Ramzan said that the pretense of third option is a joint project of India and US which Imran Khan is unable to understand due to his inexperience and the nation will never accept it.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2021/10/14/211014-01-22/>

'IOK plight' could be highlighted in European and British Parliaments: AJK President

Nawaiwaqt, October 14 2021

"Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), president said that an "integrated strategy" is needed to prevent human rights violations in 'Occupied' Kashmir

and to effectively address the Kashmir issue globally. Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry said that "we will raise the barbarism and atrocities taking place in Occupied Kashmir" in the European Parliament as well as in the British Parliament. The AJK president further said that he would draw the world's attention to the ongoing "Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir" during his visit to Britain and Europe.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/AJK/2021-10-14/page-1>

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Disclaimer

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