

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Gilgit-Baltistan POK
hydropower
protest Skardu blockade
Special economic zone
Neelum-Jhelum
hydropower project tourism



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

Pakistan army one of the best fighting forces: 'AJK' PM

Pakistan Observer, July 05, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan while addressing a special function organized by the Loyalpur Warriors to pay tributes to the families of martyrs of Pakistan armed forces, said that the Pakistan army had 'foiled' many aggressive attempts by the Indian particularly at Line of Control (LoC), added that Abhinandan had become a symbol of moral and ethical values of Pakistani armed forces. He said that 900,000 Indian 'boot-force' has 'unleashed barbarism' in 'Indian occupied Kashmir' and the Indian army is involved in the 'worst type of human rights violation'. Yet they have failed to crush Kashmiri's struggle for an independent homeland. He said that 'Azad Kashmir' started from glaciers and stretched till the borders of Sialkot. Pakistan was created in the name of 'Kalima Tayyabah', but the attitude of the Hindus towards Pakistan always remained 'discriminatory.' He said that India was dependent on 'fake propaganda' but could not deter our courage.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-army-one-of-the-best-fighting-forces-says-ajk-pm/>

Kashmir webinar 'denounces India' for using UAPA to suppress press freedom, dissent in 'IIOJK'

Daily Parliament Times, July 05, 2022

The speakers at a webinar titled 'UAPA: A hanging sword on

journalists and human rights defenders in 'IIOJK' denounced the Indian government for using the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and other 'draconian laws' to 'suppress press freedom' and 'dissent' in the 'Indian occupied Kashmir' (IOK). The webinar was organized by the Kashmir Institute of International Relations ((KIIR) with the coordination of the World Muslim Congress (WMC), at the sideline of the 50th session of the United Nations (UN) human rights council. The webinar was addressed by 'noted' human rights activists, academicians, and law experts among others. While referring to PM Modi's government's 'systematic clampdown' on civil society, journalists, human rights defenders, and political activists in 'IOK', the chairman of KIIR, Altaf Hussain Wani said that the 'occupation authorities' have been using anti-terror laws as a weapon to silence the voices of 'dissent' in Kashmir. He said that in addition to PSA, AFSPA and other draconian laws like UAPA was being used by India as a 'weapon of war' to enable complete silence in Kashmir.

The panelists noted that in the aftermath of 5th August 2019, the UAPA was badly misused in Kashmir to suppress the voices that have been critical of the Indian government's 'muscular' policy towards Kashmir. They noted that dozens of rights activists including Khurram Pervaiz, Ahsan Untoo, and others, who worked extensively to 'document human rights violations' being committed by the 'Indian army' in the region, were booked under the UAPA law, added that there are also 'arbitrary' restrictions on Kashmiri journalists,

like barring Kashmiri photojournalist Sanna Irshad Mattoo from traveling to Paris to receive her award despite holding a valid visa. This serves as an eye-opener for the world as how the government of India was 'violating the journalists' right to mobility.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/07/05/kashmir-webinar-denounces-india-for-using-uapa-to-suppress-press-freedom-dissent-in-iiok/>

Pressurizing India on an international level could release Yasin Malik

Daily Parliament Times, July 7, 2022

Due to the efforts of the chairman of the All Parties Task Force for Kashmir, Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, a petition drive has been started in the British Parliament to discuss Yasin Malik's fair trial and release. Additionally, more than 10,000 people will participate in and sign petitions across the UK calling for Yasin Malik's trial and release. In this regard, a special function was organized in the British Parliament under the Jammu and Kashmir Movement for Self-Determination International. During the event, the chairperson of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Kashmir, Debbie Abrahams MP, and former adviser to the government of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', Raja Shaukat, among others were present. Sarwar said that by putting 'diplomatic pressure' on India at the international level, we have to win the independence of Yasin Malik, added that a similar campaign will be launched in the International Court of Justice, European countries, European Parliament, the USA, and Middle East

countries to ensure Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik gets justice.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/07/07/pressurising-india-on-international-level-could-release-yasin-malik/>

'AJK' president vows to raise the Kashmir issue with full vigor at the international level

Daily Times, July 7, 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mehmood, while talking to senior journalists during the sixth anniversary of Burhan Wani Shaheed reiterated his commitment to raising the Kashmir issue with full vigor at the international level. He said that the government would utilize all available resources to promote Kashmir cause both nationally and internationally. While paying tributes to Burhan Wani, the president said that the martyrdom of Burhan Wani infused a new spirit in the Kashmiris' ongoing resistance movement. He said that despite using all means of 'oppression' and 'suppression,' India had 'miserably failed' to break Kashmiris' resolve and their urge for freedom. While denouncing the Indian government for denying Syed Ali Geelani the right to choose a burial site, he said that Gilani was detained for a long time and the world knows well what the Indian government did at his funeral and burial. He said that Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik has recently been sentenced to life imprisonment by an Indian court in false cases, adding that such 'mean tactics' being employed by

the Indian state won't deter Kashmiris from pursuing their cherished goal of freedom.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/964153/ajk-president-vows-to-raise-kashmir-issue-with-full-vigour-at-intl-level/>

India unjustly punished Yasin Malik to appease Hindutva warriors: 'AJK' PM

Pakistan Observer, July 08, 2022

The 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Prime Minister (PM) Tanveer Ilyas Khan stated that India had 'unjustly punished' Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik to 'appease Hindutva' warriors who have been calling shots on the ground. He said that it was unfortunate that Yasin Malik's daughter had not seen her father for eight years, and added that the whole Pakistani and Kashmiri nation stands with him. He said that everyone needs to be united on the Kashmir issue.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-unjustly-punished-yasin-malik-to-appease-hindutva-warriors-ajk-pm/>

Burhan Wani's 6th 'martyrdom' observed as Resistance Day

Daily Parliament Times, July 08, 2022

The sixth 'martyrdom day' of Kashmiri commander Burhan Wani was observed as 'Resistance Day' on 'both sides' of the ceasefire line. A rally led by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir pay homage to Burhan Wani and chant slogans in favor of Burhan Wani and 'freedom' from 'Indian occupation.' During the rally, a contingent of 313 Kashmiri youths saluted the flags of Pakistan and 'Azad Kashmir' besides Burhan Wani and other 'martyrs' of Jammu and Kashmir

by wearing ribbons on their foreheads with the written phrases of freedom and martyrdom. While addressing the 'Resistance Day' rally, the speakers said that the sacred blood of thousands of martyrs, including Burhan Wani, would not be wasted under any condition, and reiterated that 'Independence from India' is the life goal of the Kashmiri people.

The speakers stressed that the 'nefarious plans' of the Indian government could be stopped only by organizing and mobilizing the state-wide movements for the liberation of Kashmir from 'Indian military occupation.' The speakers further alleged that 'Indian forces' are 'killing unarmed civilians', 'imprisoning 'innocent people', 'looting houses' and 'creating settlements', violating all the 'religious, political and social rights' of the Kashmiri people., As a 'stakeholder' on the Kashmir issue, they urged the government of Pakistan to respond to India in the 'language it understands'. Speakers said that it is the 'constitutional' and 'national responsibility' of the state of Pakistan to save the 'historical 'and 'Islamic identity' of Jammu and Kashmir and 'force India' to hold a referendum. The rally was led by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen deputy Ameer Saifullah Khalid, chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Sheikh Aqeel-ur-Rehman, director Kashmir Liberation Cell Raja Sajjad Latif Khan, Pakistan People Party (PPP) leader Shaukat Javed Mir among others.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/07/08/burhan-wanis-6th-martyrdom-observed-as-resistance-day/>

Economic Developments

'AJK' PM urges investors to grab investment opportunities in 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times, July 04, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan urged investors to take full advantage of the 'AJK's conducive and business-friendly environment and noted that the government was ready to provide tax relief and other incentives to the investors. While highlighting the Pakistani investor's contribution to reviving the local economy, he said that investors from Faisalabad and other parts of the Punjab province have already been setting up industries in Mirpur and other areas of the state. He said that his government has chalked out a comprehensive mechanism to boost the tourism sector in the region, and added that local traders and industrialists would be invited soon to visit 'Azad Kashmir.'

He emphasized that the investors would be provided all possible support and no tax will be levied on the industrialists, noting that 'AJK' had a lot of opportunities in the cotton industry and seafood business. He maintained that we are setting up a special economic zone in which investors could be granted a minimum of ten kanals and a maximum of 100 kanals of land for setting up industries, adding that no tax whatsoever would be levied.

He further said that the government was planning to set up Information Technology (IT) parks to boost the local economy and create job opportunities

for the educated youth. He also praised the Pakistan army for its unparalleled sacrifices and contribution to eliminating the menace of 'terrorism' from the country. While 'denouncing' India's 'state terrorism' in the 'Indian occupied Kashmir', he said that 'Indian occupation forces have wreaked havoc in the occupied Kashmir' and that the world community was silent. He noted that it was 'high time' that the Indian government should accept the ground reality and allow the people of Kashmir to decide their political future peacefully in line with the UNSC resolutions. While terming Kashmir as an 'inseparable part' of Pakistan, he said that 'I believe that Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir', adding that 'Kashmiris' consider themselves as Pakistanis.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/07/04/pm-sardar-tanveer-ilyas-urges-investors-to-grab-investment-opportunities-in-ajk/>

After PIA, Airblue commences Skardu operations

Business Recorder, July 05, 2022

Airblue became the second air carrier after Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to start operations at the celebrated tourist spot Skardu. The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) welcomes the first regular passenger flight of Airblue at Skardu International Airport, which carried a total of 340 passengers. The PCAA spokesperson Saifullah said that for the first time in the history of Skardu, an airline other than PIA has started its commercial operation at Skardu International Airport, added that this will further boost the tourism industry and economy of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)

and will help to reduce the scarcity of flights. The Skardu is the key hub for tourism, trekking, and expedition in GB as it is located at an altitude of 8,202 feet at the confluence of the Indus and Shigar Rivers.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40184483/after-pia-airblue-commences-skardu-operations>

969 MW project shut after damage detected

Dawn, July 07, 2022

Following the countrywide electricity shortages, the 969-megawatt Neelum-Jhelum hydro-power project which has been completed at an estimated cost of about 508 billion has been closed due to major ‘cracks’ in its ‘tailrace tunnel.’ During a press conference, Pakistan power minister Khurram Dastgir Khan confirmed that Neelum-Jhelum is unfortunately offline, however, the details of its suspension or fault have not been concluded yet, adding that thorough investigations were currently underway of all its channels, which are deep and long, some of them under huge mountains. The project’s construction was taken in hand in 2002 after 21 years of delay and completed in April 2018, again with repeated cost overruns and missed deadlines. The major construction involving about 58 kilometers of tunnels was done by Chinese contractor CGGC-CMEC (Gezhouba Group), hired in December 2007.

Despite its installed capacity of 969 MW, the project has often exceeded its production level, touching 1,040 MW. It was providing more than five billion units of electricity to the national grid a year at an average tariff of about 9 per unit with no fuel cost. The Water and

Power Development Authority (WAPDA), which operates hydropower stations, also confirmed that the project’s ‘tailrace tunnel’ has been ‘blocked’ and as a result, the power station has been closed for safety reasons, added that all relevant institutions had been informed of the closure of one of the country’s top hydropower plants through the Ministry of Water Resources.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1698642/969mw-project-shut-after-damage-detected>

Karakoram Highway blocked over mining lease row

Dawn, July 07, 2022

The local residents of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Nasirabad and Hunza region, staged a sit-in protest by blocking Karakoram Highway for the fifth consecutive day to protest against the GB minerals department for apparently providing mining lease to an outsider company. The protesters demanded ownership rights on the local natural resources, claimed that locals owned the mountain situated in Nasirabad, and acquired the lease from the government in 1989 to mine marble from there. However, they noted that the minerals department later suspended the lease and granted it to an external mining company. The protesters have also accused the minerals department of colluding with the investors, depriving the locals of their rights. The tourists, and local passengers suffered due to the blockade of the Karakoram Highway at Nasirabad.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1698597/karakoram-highway-blocked-over-mining-lease-row>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Indian troops have 'intensified killings' of Kashmiri youths in 'IIOJK:' APHC-'AJK' leader

UrduPoint, July 05, 2022

The convener of the All Party Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter, Mahmood Ahmad Saghar has said that Indian troops have 'intensified' the 'killing of unarmed Kashmiri youth' during the so-called 'cordon and search operations' in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). He said in a statement that the 'sacrifices' of 'Kashmiri martyrs' would not go waste. India would have to 'submit itself' to the 'genuine' demand of 'right to self-determination' of the Kashmiri people. He further said that Indian troops were 'committing genocide' of Kashmiri Muslims to turn the Muslim-majority identity of 'occupied Kashmir' into a minority. Despite 'Indian brutalities,' New Delhi has failed to suppress the freedom movement in 'IIOJK.' He urged India to release detained leaders of APHC, including Masarrat Alam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Aasiya Andrabi, and thousands of Kashmiri youth from Indian jails. He also paid homage to the 'martyred youths' by declaring July 8 as the day of resistance of youth leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani and his associates, added that the sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs would not go in vain.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3193611.html>

Kashmir Premier League second edition schedule Announced

Jasarat, July 05, 2022

As per the Kashmir Premier League (KPL) spokesperson, 25 T20 Day and

Night matches will be played in Kashmir Premier League from August 11 to 25. The spokesperson said that the broadcasting of the Kashmir Premier League would be like the standard of the Pakistan Super League (PSL). The Muzaffarabad cricket stadium will host the second edition of the KPL and added that KPL would be covered with the help of spy cameras, hawkeye, and buggy cameras. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has added one new franchise to the KPL season 2. The PCB has issued to No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the inclusion of one new franchise to the KPL. The new franchise added to the league would be Jammu Jaanbaaz.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/07/05/kashmir-premier-league-second-edition-schedule-announced/>

Mushaal Mullick appeals world for the safe release of Yasin Malik

Nawairwaqt, July 06, 2022

A South Korean delegation of the International Interchange Development Association (IIDA) led by president Mun, Yong-Jo meet Mushaal Hussein Mullick and assured them they would raise voices to the free jailed Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik in every form globally. During the talk, Mushaal thanked the IIDA president for the support and stated that PM Narendra Modi's regime was 'scared' of Yasin's rising popularity and therefore they were using all 'brutal tactics' to silence him, added that Yasin was the most 'effective' and 'powerful voice' of the Kashmir freedom struggle. She said that Yasin was kept in a 'death cell' and neither his family nor his counsel was allowed to meet him, adding that the 'barbarity' could be judged from the fact that the 'occupation authorities' even did not allow him much-needed medicines

despite his fast deteriorating health. Mushaal also informed the delegation that despite using all 'brutal tactics,' the Indian government could not shake his resolve, as he conveyed to the Kashmiri people that he would fight for their rights till the last drop of his blood. She urged the delegation that they should play their role to ensure his release because his only crime was to 'raise a peaceful voice' for the right of Kashmiri people who have been living under the 'unconstitutional' and 'unlawful subjugation' of the Indian government. During the talk, the president and the delegation extended 'unconditional support' for 'Kashmir's cause' and expressed 'deep concerns' over the imprisonment of Yasin Malik, his health, and security. They 'pledged' that they would 'raise voices' for him all over the world especially by launching a free Yasin Malik campaign in South Korea and all over the world.

<https://www.nawawaqat.com.pk/06-Jul-2022/1578473>

Federal advisor on 'AJK' and GB affairs pays homage to Burhan Wani on eve of his 'martyrdom anniversary'

UrduPoint, July 08, 2022

The advisor to the Pakistan Prime Minister (PM) on 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira has paid homage to 'popular Kashmiri youth' leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani on the eve of his sixth 'martyrdom anniversary.' Kaira in a statement said that Burhan Wani is a 'symbol of resistance' against the 'Indian cruelty' in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). He said that Burhan Wani fought against India's 'illegal hold' on Jammu and Kashmir and infused a new passion in the educated youth of the 'occupied

territory' to carry forward their struggle for their right to self-determination. He further said that the sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of 'great martyrs' like Burhan Wani reflect the fact that today's Kashmiri youth is fighting with a great passion like their forefathers and that's why the Indian 'occupational forces' are 'ruthlessly massacring Kashmiri people' especially youths. He said that Pakistan continues to extend full support to the Kashmiri brethren at the international level, noting that the present government, especially Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, has raised his voice in all the forums of the world for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3197689.html>

Pakistan pays tribute to Burhan Wani for his sacrifices in the struggle for Kashmir's right to self-determination: Pakistan FO

UrduPoint, July 08, 2022

Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson, Asim Iftikhar in a statement paid tribute to 'prominent' Kashmiri youth leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani on the sixth anniversary of his 'martyrdom' and urged the international community to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir dispute under relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The statement further noted that Burhan Wani is the face of Kashmir's independence movement and urged the Indian government to refrain from 'indiscriminate' use of force and continued targeting of Kashmiris, especially the youth.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3197688.html>

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Disclaimer

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