

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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31 October - 06 November 2022

Di^{tourism}amer Bhasha hydel self-governance
POK electricity
Gilgit-Baltistan
representation CPEC
Shounter Hydro-power
Saudi Development Fund
Chilghoza pine nuts



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

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Political Developments

Kashmiris fighting a war for completion of Pakistan: APHC-'AJK' leaders

Pakistan Observer, 31 October 2022

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter leaders Sheikh Abdul Mateen and Imtiyaz Wani have said that Kashmiris are 'fighting the war' for the 'completion' of Pakistan and are 'sacrificing' their lives for it. While addressing a press conference in Quetta, both the leaders said that the 'love of Kashmiris' for Pakistan can be gauged from the fact that 'martyrs' are buried in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) in the 'flag' of Pakistan. They said the Indian 'forces' are using all kinds of 'atrocities' and tactics to keep Kashmiris away from the 'freedom movement.' They claimed that 'Indian troops' had 'martyred over 400,000' Kashmiris during the last 75 years and thousands of people were still languishing in different jails in India. They further claimed that the unilateral and 'illegal' actions taken by the PM Modi government to revoke the special status of Kashmir on 05 August 2019, was another step towards making 'IIOJK' a 'colony' of India which was a dream of 'Hindu extremist' organizations, 'Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh' (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). They claimed that India was systematically trying to change the demography of the 'occupied territory' so that the Muslim majority could be converted into a

minority. It is for this purpose, they claimed, the 'Modi regime' also repealed the special status of Kashmir.

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmiris-fighting-war-for-completion-of-pakistan-aphc-ajk-leaders/>

Meeting of Supreme Council JKLF presided by acting Chairman Raja Haq Nawaz Khan

Daily Parliament Times, 31 October 2022

A meeting of the Supreme Council of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), presided over by the acting chairman Raja Haq Nawaz Khan, in which the head of the diplomatic department, professor Raja Zafar Khan (UK), vice chairman Saleem Haroon (Belgium, Europe), chief organizer, Sabir Gul (UK), newly elected chairman Jammu Kashmir Students Liberation Front (JKSLF), Obaid Shabbir among others participated in the meeting. The leadership from Srinagar also presented their views. The Central Information Office in its statement said that given the current situation of the ongoing 'freedom movement' for the right to self-determination and the continuing 'violations' of human rights in the state it is important to draw the attention of the international community towards the release of Yasin Malik and others from Indian jails. JKLF will host an International Kashmir Conference in London under the auspices of the JKLF UK Zone. The spokesman said that given the circumstances the conference will be a very important and unique and is likely to further the freedom movement.

The meeting also clarified its stand that the Freedom Movement is the first and foremost priority of JKLF. The spokesman further noted that in addition to decisions such as speeding up the process of re-organization within the State and abroad, re-establishing links with inactive organizational leaders and workers, and conducting training workshops at the grassroots level, the meeting also decided to commemorate November 6 (Martyrs Day of Jammu) and December 10 (International Human Rights Day) by organizing protests, rallies, seminars, and conferences to highlight the Indian 'state terrorism' and the plight of 'freedom loving' imprisoned political leaders including Mr. Yasin Malik. The meeting decided to cancel the basic membership of Zahoor Ahmed Butt of Kupwara after the JKLF acting chairman Raja Haqnawaz Khan provided the details about his repeated actions of indiscipline. Similarly, Muhammad Yasin Butt of Srinagar has himself left JKLF a few months before and joined some other political party. Therefore, the chairman clarifies that they both do not belong to JKLF.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/10/31/jklf-will-host-an-international-conference-on-kashmir-and-release-of-yasin-malik-in-london/>

Question of Kashmir

Editorial, Pakistan Observer, 1 November 2022

Kashmiris all over the world, especially on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC), spared no effort as they took out

rallies and marches to observe 'Black Day' last week on October 27, marking 75 years since Indian troops 'invaded' their territory and triggered the longest lingering dispute in the subcontinent in 1947. The Pakistani state was also at the top of its game in criticism of the 'illegal Indian occupation', with diplomatic missions mobilizing prominent Kashmiris by arranging seminars and photo exhibitions. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also reiterated its 'full solidarity' with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their long fight for the right to self-determination. Yet all this has now been going on for so long that it is more like going through the motions than anything meant to deliver serious, tangible results. It seemed as if another generation of Kashmiris would come and go without anything happening to the status quo. The PM Modi administration in 2019, immediately after its re-election, revoked Kashmir's special status whose sanctity New Delhi had promised under Jawaharlal Nehru, no less to protect. Now the Indian establishment is going about a demographic 're-engineering' of the 'occupied valley' in front of the whole world and all the pro-Kashmir lobby has been able to do is add one more line to its condemnation of India's 'atrocities' and human rights violations.

All this begs the obvious question of what is the way forward for people who are waiting for the UN-mandated plebiscite to be held in Kashmir.

Former prime minister Imran Khan made a very interesting, and important point during an interview with a German TV channel recently. When asked why Pakistan should refrain from taking sides in the Russia-Ukraine war, which the West is pushing as a grave injustice by Moscow, he asked why they expected poor countries to fall in line behind their narrative when bigger and 'worse violations' are carried out by the 'Indian state' and 'military' every day in Kashmir. Much has changed since this conflict started, social media has changed everything, and the way it can bring out the truth from conflict-hit areas is also impacting how international diplomacy is carried out. This is perhaps one area where the people of Kashmir and the government of Pakistan can do a better job. All they need to do is feed facts to the international conscience to the point that voters in powerful countries start questioning their elected representatives about their silence on such things. It is one thing for Kashmiri representatives, and even Islamabad and OIC to tell the world about what is happening in the occupied valley, but it's another to make them see first-hand the trials and tribulations of the people there; only because India wants its troops and tanks in Kashmir to flex its muscles. There's no point in waiting for talks that are not going to happen, at least not while the 'RSS-BJP' combine is in power, and not going to deliver any results even if the occasional exchange does take place. Otherwise repeated

offers by Pakistan to sit down and resolve all outstanding issues would not have gone unheeded.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40206299/question-of-kashmir>

GB's struggle

Dawn, 1 November 2022

Today marks the 75th anniversary of Gilgit Baltistan's (GB) independence. The Gilgit Scouts ousted the Dogra ruler of Kashmir's administration on November 1st, 1947. When they learned that Kashmir had been admitted in October 1947, they rose in revolt against Ghansara Singh, the Dogra administrator of Gilgit. On November 1st, Gilgit received its declaration of independence, and a provisional administration was set up. After a few weeks of self-government, Pakistan took control. After taking control of Gilgit, Pakistan did not fully integrate it into the state. Instead, the region was placed under the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), a colonial law that the British imposed on the tribal areas. Since Pakistan wanted to secure GB's vote bank in an awaited plebiscite by the UN to resolve the Kashmir dispute, it maintained GB as part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was anticipated that GB being a Muslim-majority region would vote in favor of Pakistan, which would then be able to get the whole of Kashmir after the referendum. However, the plebiscite never took place, and GB ironically remains linked to the Kashmir dispute.

Pakistan also retained the feudal system of the Rajas and Mirs. The practice of exploitative taxation and beggar (forced labor without payment) was continued by the local rulers even after Pakistan took over. In the early years, discontent over the FCR started emerging. The population demanded its abolishment, an end to feudal rule, and the transfer of administrative powers at the local level. The first major reforms were introduced in the 1970s by the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who abolished the FCR, the feudal system, taxation, and beggar. However, the region was administered by the center, which maintained all administrative and financial powers. After the GB Empowerment and Self-Governance Order of 2009, some legislative powers were transferred to the local GB Assembly. However, a complete transfer of power from the center to GB, self-governance, and representation in the national legislature has not yet taken place. The matter of a provisional provincial status has stirred a debate among policymakers and locals. The recent provocative statement of Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh about India annexing GB has thrust GB into the limelight once again. Pakistan's Foreign Office has rightly condemned the statement as not just being farcical but also as reflective of India's characteristic hostility towards this country. GB lawmakers also slammed the incendiary remarks. However, the

constitutional limbo and GB's ambiguous status over the past 75 years need to be settled now.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1718126/gbs-struggle>

'AJK' govt needs 34,000 personnel to conduct LB polls

Pakistan Observer, 4 November 2022

The government of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) has requested the Federal government to provide 34,000 security personnel to conduct the local bodies election scheduled on 27 November which has been turned down on the ground that the latter was unable to provide due to emerging law and order situation and public rallies by political parties in the capital. The secretary of the election commission said that after the refusal, the regional government was exploring some other options to conduct elections on time in a peaceful and free, and fair manner and rejected the impression created by some circles about the postponement of the election. The total strength of 'AJK' police personnel is 7000 and the government always calls for additional security personnel from the federal government comprising paramilitary forces however, the army and paramilitary forces are already engaged in rehabilitation activities in flood-hit areas of the country.

<https://pakobserver.net/ajk-govt-needs-34000-personnel-to-conduct-lb-polls/>

Economic Developments

GB plans a project to facilitate the export of pine nuts

Pakistan Today, 30 October 2022

As Chilghoza, pine nuts produced in the Diamer region of Gilgit Baltistan (GB), the GB government would initiate a project of processing, packaging, and value addition to get access to a good international market. The GB Information Minister Fathullah Khan said that the project would facilitate hundreds of locals associated with the business to export their Chilghoza, and added that India was earning good revenue from the export of Chilghoza, which also ensures the protection of forests. With the support of the GB government, access to Chalghoza to the international market will be made. As per a report, China was the major importer of Chilghoza from Pakistan which last year had imported \$17.67 million worth of Pakistani Chilghoza pine nuts in April 2022 which was a record high. China was also one of the primary markets for pine nuts imported from Pakistan in the first two months of 2022, importing 1,606.51 tons worth \$17.67 million. China has imported \$42.35 million worth of pine nuts, with Pakistan accounting for 42% of the total. In the Chinese market, Pakistani pine nuts are also facing fierce competition from Afghanistan. In the first two months of this year, China purchased 201.2 tons of pine nuts for \$2.82 million from

Afghanistan, bringing total imports to 5,722 tons worth \$42.35 million.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/10/30/gb-plans-project-to-facilitate-export-of-pine-nuts/>

Diamer Basha Dam Project hits a snag due to a payment delay

Pakistan Today, 30 October 2022

The contractors of the Diamer Bhasha Dam Project (DBDP) while expressing grave concerns over the overdue payment of USD 60 million have expressed an inability to keep continue the normal pace of construction on the project if the 'long-due' payments are not cleared. The Ministry of Water Resources noted that the contractor (Power China-FWO Joint Venture) of DBDP has been facing undue delay in clearing the pending payments, especially the foreign component worth approximately USD 60 million despite repeated reminders to the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). However, now the contractor has warned the WAPDA that if payments are not made then it will not be possible to maintain the normal pace of construction on DBDP.

The contractors added that the DBDP project is in a very critical phase of diversion of the Indus River which is due in April 2024, after which the Dam construction will and if this gets delayed it will have a direct impact on the completion of the project by February-29 by a year, extending completion to 2030. It has been said that

DBDP with an estimated cost of around 14 billion US dollars, a year of delay apart from contractor and consultant cost claims will have a direct escalation impact of 15-20 percent roughly amounting to 400-500 million (with current inflation rate) while the country will also be deprived of cheap 4500 MW hydel electricity (roughly cost 300-400 billion) and a loss of 6.0 Million-Acre Feet (MAF) water reservoir for another one year. The government should clear the dues of the contractors at the earliest to save the national exchequer from further loss of time in the dam completion and additional cost.

The contractor also has to import various equipment from foreign countries and delays in payments have been affecting the pace of construction, especially the diversion work. The DBD will have a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 MAF to irrigate 1.23 million acres of additional land while it will have a live storage capacity of 6.1 Million Acre Feet (MAF) and it will generate 18,100-Gigawatt hours (GWh) power annually after completion by February 2029. The DBD is being constructed on River Indus – a 40-kilometer downstream of Chilas town. The project is of paramount importance for the water, food, and energy security of the country. The installed capacity of Diamer Bhasha Dam will be 4,500 MegaWatt (MW) and a live storage capacity of 6.4 MAF. The total estimated cost of the DBD project is around 14 billion US dollars which includes dam and powerhouse

construction, land acquisition, resettlement, and other associated costs.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/10/30/diamer-basha-dam-project-hits-a-snag-due-to-payment-delay/>

Shounter hydropower project: Saudi Fund's financing available, ECNEC told

Business Recorder, 3 November 2022

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has been informed that financing for the 48MW Shounter Hydro-power project is available from Saudi Development Fund (SDF). The ECNEC has approved the project after it was informed that the project is established in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) District, Neelum Valley is proposed to be financed 85 percent from SDF and 15 percent through 'AJK' Annual Development Programme (ADP). The cost of the project is 11.274 billion with a foreign exchange component of 9.575 billion and a local component of 1.698 billion.

The project was considered by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on 04-06-2022 with a completion period of four years or 48 months. The meeting was further informed that the 'AJK' government has developed a strategy and is giving priority to hydropower generation projects both in the public and private sectors. Following the huge potential of water resources in the area for power generation and other irrigation

purposes, the 'AJK' government is taking full interest to use this potential for the benefit of the people. The proposed project will help to add 48 MW capacity to the system and will assist in meeting power demand in the country and will help in the reduction of load shedding.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40206783/shout-er-hydropower-project-saudi-funds-financing-available-ecmec-told>

Sultan Mehmood urges American investors to invest in 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times, 3 November 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while encouraging American investors to invest their capital in 'Azad Kashmir' has said that the 'AJK' has immense investment potential, especially in the tourism sector. While talking to a delegation of investors led by Nick Tuma, the 'AJK' president said that 'Azad Kashmir' offers massive investment opportunities to foreign investors in different sectors, including the hydropower, construction sector, industry, and other sectors, adding that the US investors should take advantage of the business-friendly environment and investment opportunities available in 'Azad Kashmir.' He said that the AJK government would provide fool-proof security and other support and facilities to American investors in 'Azad Kashmir.'

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/11/03/president-barrister-sultan-urges-american-investors-to-invest-in-ajk/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The voice should be vigorously raised at the international level over the Kashmir issue: 'AJK' President

Mahasib, 31 October 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, while talking to 'Kashmiri leader', Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai in Washington has stated that following the 'worsening' situation of human and political rights in 'occupied Kashmir', the Kashmir issue needs to be pursued aggressively at international level. He also stated that Kashmiris living abroad, particularly in the United States (US) should play a role in effectively bringing the Kashmir issue to the attention of the world at every forum. He said that Kashmiri living in America should also tell the story of the Kashmiris who make sure to India that its weapons and use of force cannot kill their passion for the right to self-determination. He said that this fight of ours won't stop until India's 'repressive occupation' of Kashmir is lifted. Fai said that it was high time that the international community should come forward to help resolve the Kashmir issue following the UNSC resolutions that call for holding a referendum in the region.

<http://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/news.php?id=802>

Gilgit-Baltistanis are capable of self-defense: Kaira

Dailyk2, 1 November 2022

On the occasion of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Independence Day, Qamar Zaman

Kaira, the prime minister's advisor on Kashmir and GB affairs said that since the defeat of Dogra's Raj at the hands of the GB nation, the people of GB have had a close bond with Pakistan for the past 75 years and have consistently shown their selfless love and dedication to the country. He claimed that the affection and dedication shown by the people of GB make the entire Pakistani nation proud and salutes its sisters and brothers. He said that the GB has a key place in the CPEC project, and added that geography has provided GB with unlimited scope of tourism, hydel electricity, minerals, and a promising economic future blessed with vast riches. By correctly utilizing it, GB can become the most prosperous area of Pakistan. He said that the current federal government places a high priority on the development of GB, and added that despite dire financial circumstances, the government has continued to fund the region.

He claimed that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was the organization that originally granted GB administrative rights in 2009. He declared that the PPP is dedicated to granting full constitutional rights to GB and that it supports the devolution of authority to the local level. He said that PM Shahbaz Sharif visited GB during the recent flood and directed the concerned authorities to prioritize relief and recovery efforts. He claimed that India has no legal position in the Kashmir conflict and that India has been

continually misleading its people and the international community. He asserted that the people of Pakistan and GB are capable of self-defense and that the day will soon arrive when the natives of Jammu and Kashmir will get independence from India.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/9848>

US should utilize its influence to help resolve the Kashmir issue: 'AJK' President

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 03 November 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry during his meeting with Thomas Richard Suozzi, an American congressman, in New York, said that resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute is essential to the lasting peace and stability in South Asia. He suggested that the United States (US) should designate a special representative for Kashmir and utilize its influence to bring a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir dispute. He appreciated the US for helping Pakistan's flood victims and noted that congressman Suozzi was the first to travel to Pakistan and interact with the flood victims. He also praised the US administration's commitment to providing additional funding to assist Pakistan's flood-affected citizens.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-03.jpg>

European Parliament delegation was briefed by the 'AJK' PM on the recent developments in 'Occupied Kashmir'

UrduPoint, 4 November 2022

The recent situation in 'Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), was discussed when a two-person delegation from the European Parliament met with the PM of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas in Muzaffarabad. Tanveer claimed that India was committing 'grave human rights violations' in 'occupied Kashmir' and that there were attempts to reduce the Muslim majority to a minority by giving citizenship to millions of non-state residents. He claimed that by repealing Articles 370 and 35A on 05 August 2019, the PM Modi government violated the fundamental rights of the residents of 'occupied Kashmir.' He also lamented the lack of response from the world community to India's continuous refusal to find a solution to the protracted Kashmir conflict. He claimed that Indian troops stationed in 'occupied Kashmir' are 'killing Kashmiris' and our sisters and mothers are being 'violated.' Mr. Herve Juvin and Mrs. Virginie Joron were a part of the European Parliament delegation.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-3342321.html>

India is actively pushing to tighten its grip over 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir: Former PM of 'AJK'

UrduPoint, 6 November 2022

Raja Mohammad Farooq Haider Khan, a former prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and vice president of the Pakistan Muslim League-N, has claimed that India is making systematic efforts to bolster its grip on the 'occupied territory' of Jammu and Kashmir, where millions of people have also been martyred. He claimed that PM Modi's government is differentiating between Muslims, and non-Muslims to fulfill its nefarious agenda of making the 'occupied state' a Hindu versus Muslim issue. He made these remarks at a rally held for Jammu Martyrs' Day that Pasban-e- Hurriyat arranged and a seminar was also being organized. The rally was attended by the chairman of Pasban-e- Hurriyat, Uzair Ghazali among others. He said that those who are in power in 'Azad Kashmir' should now consider what we are doing for the residents of 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. He asserted that he had served as Muslim League-N president, the leader of the opposition, and the prime minister twice and therefore no longer need anything else, thus, I have decided to speak for the Kashmiri people, and added that he has always had a strong affection for Kashmir.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-3344560.html>

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Disclaimer

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