

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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10 April - 16 April 2023

summit
G20 Power Generation Diamir
forward block Bhasha
POK education Dam
Gilgit-Baltistan tax



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

India has again planned to stage a drama ahead of the G-20 event to malign the freedom movement: GA Gulzar

Pakistan Observer, 10 April 2023

In 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir', (IIOJK), All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) senior vice chairman Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar has said that 'Indian deceitful occupation' of Kashmir is replete with fraud and conspiracies and has again planned to stage a drama ahead of the proposed G-20 event to malign the Kashmir freedom movement. Gulzar in a statement issued in Srinagar said that the Kashmiris must remain vigilant to defeat the evil designs of the Indian agencies as, India, under the pretext of security, has deployed additional forces and has intensified siege, search, raids, and arrest sprees in the 'occupied territory.' While recalling the previous Indian record, he expressed apprehension that Indian agencies could conduct any false flag operation or target minorities on the occasion of the proposed G-20 event in Kashmir scheduled in May. He appealed to G-20 countries to boycott the event as India will use its presence in Kashmir to justify its 'illegal occupation' of the internationally disputed territory. He urged the G-20 countries to ask India that if normalcy has returned to Kashmir, then what are its five million trigger-happy troops doing in Kashmir? He also stated that by holding a G-20 meeting in Kashmir India is trying to hide its crimes against

humanity and those civilized countries who believe in the supremacy of human rights should not ignore blatant human rights violations and must make India accountable for its black deeds in Kashmir. He also expressed satisfaction over the recent statement of the Pakistani army chief, Syed Asim Munir, about Kashmir and said that this powerful message to the Kashmiri people will infuse a new spirit in the freedom movement. He thanked Pakistan for its consistent support of the just struggle of the Kashmir freedom movement and expressed hope that it would never leave Kashmiris alone.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-has-again-planned-to-stage-a-drama-ahead-of-g-20-event-to-malign-freedom-movement-ga-gulzar/>

G20 in Srinagar

The Nation, 11 April 2023

India has scheduled a G-20 meeting in Srinagar, a disputed territory, against international protests. This plan has been underway since June of last year when it was first reported. The Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) had already condemned the plan, reiterating that Kashmir was recognized to be disputed. Meanwhile, India claims 'illegal control' of the territory and has been responsible for widespread human rights violations and atrocities. While China and Pakistan have been vocal in their criticism of the move, we must continue to express our concerns. Since the revocation of Article 370 for the region and the indefinite security lockdown, the BJP has become unabashedly 'cruel and barbaric' in its

treatment of Kashmiris. The BJP defended the move to wipe out armed rebellion in the region when the limited autonomy was revoked in 2019. However, in 2023, the same government has been reported to instigate a civilian militia. The region is experiencing growing anti-India sentiments, and the BJP government justifies arming civilians in Kashmir to safeguard people. On the back end, the lives of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir are under assault, and on the forefront, India is pitching Srinagar to be a tourist destination for national interest. Pakistan should remain steadfast in its position regarding the G-20 meeting in India. Srinagar is a disputed area, and this is an internationally acclaimed fact. The United Nations Security Council has the issue on its agenda, so it does not make sense for the meeting to be conducted in the area. The Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum comprising the EU and 19 other countries. Their attendance in Srinagar will be seen to condone the 'illegal occupation' of the region. We must take it upon ourselves to highlight this issue on all international platforms and address the ongoing crisis in Kashmir on an international stage.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/11-Apr-2023/g20-in-srinagar>

APHC-'AJK' leaders express anger over blatant rights violations

Pakistan Observer, 11 April 2023

The All Party Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) leaders Syed Yousuf Naseem, and

Syed Aijaz Rehmani, among others have expressed anger over the surge in human rights violations by 'Indian troops' in the garb of cordon and search operations in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) even during the sacred month of Ramadan. The leaders in a joint statement issued in Islamabad lauded Pakistan Army Chief Syed Asim Munir for his clear message on Kashmir saying the statement is a source of encouragement and strength for the Kashmiris who are confronting the worst Indian 'state terrorism' for spearheading the struggle for right to self-determination. Pakistan, they said, is a real ambassador and benefactor of the Kashmiris and is effectively and successfully advocating the Kashmir cause at the international level. The leaders appealed to the UN, OIC, and human rights bodies to play their role in resolving the Kashmir dispute according to the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

<https://pakobserver.net/aphc-ajk-leaders-express-anger-over-blatant-rights-violations/>

GB CM slams India for violating UN resolutions

Dawn, 12 April 2023

The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Khalid Khurshid Khan has lashed out at India for violating the United Nations (UN) resolutions and said the neighboring country had no right to speak against foreign countries' funding in GB. While speaking at a press conference, Khurshid said India has made Srinagar the largest jail in the world, adding that New Delhi has

made it a routine to raise objections over foreign donations given to GB. He said that India says GB is a disputed area. If GB is a disputed area, India should clarify what is the status of 'Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir' (IIOK). Whenever the Indian defense minister visits 'IIOK', he speaks against GB. He urged Foreign Minister Bilawal to take a position on this matter rather than focusing on international travel. He also criticized the federal government for not giving any share to GB from the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award and said the region was facing financial difficulties because of it. He added that the people of GB have given sacrifices for Pakistan and they don't deserve the treatment they are getting.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1747227/gb-cm-slams-india-for-violating-un-resolutions>

Pakistan calls India's move to hold tourism moot in 'IIOJK' a violation of the UN Charter

The Nation, 12 April 2023

Pakistan expressed its strong indignation over India's decision to hold the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Srinagar on 22-24 May 2023. The Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the scheduling of two other meetings of a consultative forum on youth affairs (Y-20) in Leh and Srinagar in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) was equally disconcerting. She claimed that India's irresponsible move is the latest in a series of self-serving measures to

perpetuate its 'illegal occupation' of Kashmir in sheer disregard of the UN Security Council resolutions and violation of the principles of the UN Charter and international law. Pakistan vehemently condemns these moves, she said. Such events, Baloch claimed, cannot hide the reality of Jammu and Kashmir being an internationally recognized dispute that has remained on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council for over seven decades. Nor could such activities divert the international community's attention from India's 'brutal suppression' of the people of 'IIOJK' including illegal attempts to change the demographic composition of the 'occupied territory,' she added.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Apr-2023/pakistan-calls-india-s-move-to-hold-tourism-moot-in-iiojk-a-violation-of-un-charter>

Khawaja Farooq Ahmed notified interim 'AJK' PM

The Nation, 12 April 2023

Senior minister Khawaja Farooq Ahmed notified the interim prime minister of the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) after Sardar Tanveer Ilyas was disqualified by the high court in a contempt case. The 'AJK' President, Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry signed a summary of entrusting powers of the leader of the house to Khawaja Farooq Ahmed. A notification in this regard was released and he will continue to act as interim 'AJK' PM until the election of the new leader of the house.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Apr-2023/khawaja-farooq-ahmed-notified-interim-ajk-pm>

G-20 countries should not participate in the meeting of India until the issue of Jammu & Kashmir is resolved: 'AJK' Legislative Assembly Opposition Leader

Daily Parliament Times, 12 April 2023

The leader of the opposition in 'Azad Kashmir' Legislative Assembly, Chaudhry Latif Akbar has said that G-20 countries should not participate in any mock meeting of India until the long-standing issue of Jammu and Kashmir is resolved fairly. While talking to the media, he said that the G-20 countries should be aware of the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir, and should also know that by convening the G-20 meeting in Srinagar, the capital of 'occupied Kashmir', the 'Indian occupying' authorities are trying to change the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. India has announced to hold a meeting of the working group of G20 on tourism in Srinagar in May. Kashmiris consider it a part of India's 'nefarious conspiracy.' Akbar has declared India's announcement of convening an international meeting in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir as 'illegal' and expressed his deep reservations over it. He said that by convening an international meeting in a disputed area, India is not only violating the UN resolutions, but by taking such steps it is defying international norms. He has called on the international community, especially the member countries of the G-20, to resolve the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir and the killings of

'innocent Kashmiris' at the hands of the Indian 'occupation forces' and the serious violations of human rights and India's duplicity.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/04/12/chaudhry-latif-akbar-says-g-20-countries-should-not-participate-in-meeting-of-india-until-issue-of-jammu-kashmir-is-resolved/>

'AJK' PM's election was deferred, again

Dawn, 16 April 2023

The Political crisis in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) persisted, with the ruling PTI and the combined opposition still unable to make a final decision about their respective prime ministerial candidate. As a result, the Legislative Assembly session was adjourned by Speaker Anwarul Haq without holding the election process over three consecutive days, to meet again. Throughout the day, the PM's house and the presidency in the upscale Jalalabad area of the state capital remained the hub of political maneuvers and machinations. Of the 31 members of the ruling party, initially, five had camped in the presidency but the number gradually swelled to eight by Sunday evening. Ironically, they included three lawmakers the PTI had blessed with special seats after sweeping the July 2021 general elections. However, none of them was accessible to the media. As per the Dawn newspaper, there were 24 PTI lawmakers in the PM's house, but one slipped into the rival camp in the afternoon, amid rumors that 'he had been abducted.' Acting premier

Khawaja Farooq Ahmed said at a press talk in PM House that the ‘sudden disappearance of a colleague was the reason they could not make it to the Assembly in time.’

During the day, leaders of the PPP and PML-N had confirmed to reporters that they had surrendered the position of prime minister to the PTI’s so-called ‘forward block’ backed by President Sultan Mahmood who had nominated Chaudhry Rasheed for the office. While the majority of PML-N legislators were eager to become part of the government, their colleagues outside the Assembly had reservations about the decision. As long as the PTI lawmakers in the president’s basket do not openly announce the formation of a forward block, how can our colleagues in the Assembly vote for one of them [for the premiership], said a PML-N leader on condition of anonymity.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1748074/ajk-pms-election-deferred-again>

Economic Development

Locals feel ‘marginalized’ as ‘outsiders’ dominate key administrative posts in GB

Pakistan Today, 10 April 2023

A large number of officers from the down country are presently holding key administrative positions in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), the local officers have started feeling ‘marginalized’, seeing a violation of the vacancy sharing formula with the center. A group of local civil service men has come out to show their concerns that they are not

being given due positions in administrative slots of GB where most of them are held/ occupied by those posted from the center or other provinces. The GB Civil Service Association (CSA), a representative body of the local officers, submitted a petition to GB Chief Minister Muhammad Khalid Khurshid to ‘remove the discriminatory clause’ from GB Rules of Business. The clause reserves the exclusive right of Federal officers on slots of Additional Chief Secretary (Development), Secretary Home, and Secretary Finance, which has no precedent in any other province. This has led to a sense of discrimination and frustration among local officers who feel that they are being restricted to remote areas with limited chances for progression and exposure.

According to the GB CSA, officers from the down country are occupying at least seven Assistant Commissioner positions, three Deputy Commissioner positions, and one Commissioner position in excess while depriving local officers of such positions. Out of the 10 districts in GB, only two Assistant Commissioners from the local service are posted in headquarters, while eight headquarters slots are held by federal officers. Furthermore, out of 23 subdivisions, 11 are occupied by federal officers. In addition, the GB CSA has demanded that the tenure protection of at least two years on each posting must be ensured while discontinuing the practice of making frequent and premature postings of local officers. The association has

claimed that the posts of Deputy Commissioner Gilgit and Deputy Commissioner Skardu have practically been reserved for federal officers, and no local officer has been posted against these positions of Divisional Headquarters for quite some time.

The association is of the view that in districts where the Deputy Commissioner is from the Federal services, the Assistant Commissioner may be placed from provincial service, and vice versa in district headquarters. The GB CSA has also claimed that many intruders have managed their way onto different posts and portfolios through breach of rules and procedure, hence all such appointments may be undone through a policy decision by the cabinet, and all such individuals be repatriated to their parent departments. Apart from the reservations shown regarding postings of outsiders in key positions, the association has also demanded that local officers be posted in federal government departments/ministries to gain more experience and excellence. The government of GB may also launch a project with the specific objectives of providing foreign exposure and training to the cadre officers of the GB government, on the pattern of Punjab and Sindh. The concerns raised by the GB CSA have also highlighted the issues related to the deprivation that GB faces as a region that is constitutionally disputed. GB, under the existing rule/position, is neither a province nor an independent entity like 'AJK', for being linked with the

longstanding dispute of Kashmir. Therefore, the GB CSA has urged the government to take immediate steps to address the concerns of local officers and ensure that they are not discriminated against in matters of postings and transfers.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/04/09/locals-feel-marginalized-as-outsiders-dominate-key-administrative-posts-in-gb/>

Diamir Bhasha Dam project cost goes up by Rs 1000 billion

The Nation, 10 April 2023

The cost of the 4500 Mega Watt (MW) Diamir Bhasha Dam (DBD) project has gone up by over Rs 1000 billion from the initial estimated Rs 894 billion to over Rs 1,936 billion. The cost of DBD power generation facilities has increased by Rs 203 billion from the earlier Rs 933 billion to Rs 1,236 billion. The main reason for the increase is the devaluation of the Pakistani rupee vis-à-vis US dollar. The earlier cost of the power generation project of the dam was calculated based on the exchange rate of Rs 160/USD, while the new cost has been calculated at Rs 234/USD exchange rate, said the documents accessed by The Nation. Similarly, the total cost of both components (Dam component and Power Generation facilities) has also increased by more than double during the last 14 years. In 2009, the total cost of the DBD (Including dam and power generation components) was Rs 894 billion. However, now the cost for both portions has gone up to over Rs 1934 billion. The Executive Committee of the

National Economic Council (ECNEC) had approved DBS Project-Power Generation facilities (4500MW) at a total cost of Rs 1,236.10 billion including a Foreign Exchange Component (FEC) of Rs 598.19 billion.

In June 2009, the capital cost estimate of the entire project amounted to Rs 894.26 billion, which comprised the dam part as well as power generation facilities. However, it was decided by the then Ministry of Water and Power (MoW&P) to implement the project by splitting the construction into two phases i.e. Dam Part and Power Generation Facilities. Accordingly, PC-I for Dam Part was separately prepared which is now in the implementation phase and major construction works are underway. The cost of the dam portion has already topped Rs 700 billion. In June 2022, the cost of the second component of Power Generation Facilities of the DBD was Rs 933.584 billion including the FEC of Rs 409 billion. The cost of the project was updated on the average floating exchange rate of January, 2023 i.e. 1 USD = Rs. 234.13 and the updated cost comes as Rs 1,236.10 billion.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/10-Apr-2023/diamir-bhasha-dam-project-cost-goes-up-by-rs1000b>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

China and Pakistan concerns have been ignored as India hosts the G20 meeting in Srinagar

Daily Pakistan, 11 April 2023

India convened the G20 meeting in Srinagar, ignoring concerns raised by China and Pakistan. The G20 summit is

scheduled to take place in Srinagar, the capital of occupied Kashmir, from 22-24 May. According to Indian media, China and Pakistan objected to the G20 summit being held in Srinagar. The G20 summit that took place in Arunachal Pradesh last month reportedly drew criticism from China as well.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/10-Apr-2023/1567898>

The PM of 'Azad Kashmir' was disqualified by the Muzaffarabad High Court

Dailyk2, 11 April 2023

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas has been barred from serving in the legislative assembly by the full court bench of the 'AJK' High Court for contempt of court. Earlier, Ilyas had been separately called by the 'AJK' Supreme Court and High Court to explain his stance on his disparaging remarks about the top court in his speeches at public gatherings. Ilyas had subtly accused the court at a gathering in Islamabad over the weekend of interfering with the executive branch's authority by issuing stay orders and interfering with the operation of his government. Ilyas had claimed that a multi-million Saudi-funded education project was incomplete due to a court stay order. He also spoke against the court orders to reopen tobacco factories that were involved in tax evasion worth billions. Justice Chaudhry Khalid Rasheed read out the judgment of the 'AJK' High Court full bench, sentencing the 'AJK' premier till the rising of the court.

After the verdict was announced, Ilyas, who was supposed to appear before the 'AJK' apex court drove straight to the Prime Minister's House along with members of his cabinet. Producing the clipping of the premier's speech in its order, the 'AJK' court said that the matter was discussed in a meeting of the judges' council given its seriousness and it was unanimously decided it could not be overlooked because the dignity and authority of the courts was on stake and nobody could be allowed to undermine it. With the PM's disqualification, the entire 'AJK' cabinet now stands dissolved. The move comes amid heightened political tensions across Pakistan due to the crisis relating to elections in Punjab and Khyber-Pa-khtunkhwa after assemblies in both provinces were dissolved. Ilyas, affiliated with Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), served as premier of 'AJK' for less than a year. He was elected unopposed as the 14th prime minister of the region on 18 April 2022.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Apr-2023/ajk-pm-tanveer-disqualified-for-contempt-of-court>

Pasban Hurriyat-organized protest against the Indian government's distorting of the demographic ratio in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir

Urdupoint, 12 April 2023

A protest march has been held by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir against India's 'distorting' of the population ratio in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir'

(IIOJK). A substantial number of residents protested the Indian government's 'unlawful acts' in 'IIOJK.' The protesters carried posters and banners pleading with the UN to take notice of the illegal influx of Indian citizens who are skewing the population ratio in the 'occupied region.' While speaking during the event, Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, among others claimed that Jammu and Kashmir was 'illegally acquired' by India and that its 'occupation' is a clear violation of the approved resolutions and international laws of the United Nations Security Council. The speakers further claimed that the Indian government has brought its residents to Jammu and Kashmir by military power and black laws like the Israelis did in occupied Palestine. They also expressed concern over the 'illegal issuance' of state domiciles to 'Indian citizens' and the worst actions taken by PM Narendra Modi to skew Jammu and Kashmir's demographic statistics. Concerning the scenario, Ghazali warned that if the world does not step in to prevent the Bharatiya Janata Party from committing these 'terrible crimes', Kashmiri civilians will soon have to deal with situations much worse than Palestine. Ghazali urged the governments of Pakistan, the OIC, and other nations to take decisive action to prevent the Indian government from changing the population ratio in 'IIOJK.'

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3546136.html>

Pakistan should discuss with its ally about the G20 conference being held in 'occupied Kashmir:' GB CM

Dailyk2, 13 April 2023

According to Khalid Khurshid, the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), India is convening a G20 summit in 'occupied Kashmir,' and other countries that are friendly to Pakistan are also in attendance. He asserted that while we have no issues with India hosting the G20 meeting anywhere on its territory, it cannot be held in 'occupied Kashmir,' which is a disputed area whose territorial question has not yet been resolved. He said that India would oppose if any foreign investor entered GB which is none of its concern as no one forcefully occupied GB but India has forcefully 'occupied Kashmir' and therefore how is it conceivable for India to host a conference there? He said that the foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari must express his position on this conference and he should stop visiting abroad, and focus on Kashmir. The Pakistan Foreign Office must also wake up from its dream, he added. In addition, he emphasized that we have addressed letters to the foreign office; as a result of our correspondence with them, the foreign office today released a statement.

He claimed that Pakistan could discuss the G20 meeting in 'occupied Kashmir' with friendly countries and that Kashmiris were looking to Pakistan for support because India had turned the area into the largest prison in the

world. Khurshid suggested that a plan should be put in place for the divided relatives of both sides of the Line of Control to reunite until the conflict over 'occupied Kashmir' is resolved. Additionally, in response to the 'offensive comments' made by the Indian Defense Minister, he stated that our ancestors sacrificed their lives for GB and that our future has been established and fixed with Pakistan.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/13521>

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Disclaimer

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