

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Gilgit-Baltistan POK CPEC Karot Neelum Hydropower Jhelum Project



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Political Developments

Human Rights Violations in 'IIOJK': APHC leader urges UN, EU to Take India to Task

Business Recorder, 25 April 2023

The senior jailed All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, has strongly condemned the gross human rights violations by Indian 'brutal forces' in 'Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) and urged the United Nations (UN) European Union (EU) and rest of the world to take India to task for being involved in war crimes in the territory. Shabbir Ahmad Shah in a message from Tihar Jail while demanding the Kashmiris' right to self-determination said that the struggle of the people of 'IIOJK' for freedom could not be weakened through arrests and harassment. He termed the G-20 meeting in 'IIOJK', scheduled in Srinagar in the last week of May, as but a hoax and violation of International laws as 'IIOJK' is a disputed territory under the UN resolutions. He said India has kept the entire population of the territory hostage through military might. The 'IIOJK' is an internationally recognized disputed territory where the people have been deprived of their fundamental rights by India, the statement pointed out. The APHC leader said India has failed to hold its military accountable and perpetuated a 'state of impunity' for members of its forces personnel through the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Indian army troops and personnel of paramilitary and police agencies are

committing the 'worst atrocities' to silence the political voice and suppress the ongoing freedom movement. He maintained the resolution of the Kashmir dispute following the UN resolutions is imperative to bring an end to Indian 'state terrorism in IIOJK', create an atmosphere for cordial relations between Pakistan and India and establish permanent peace in South Asia. The leader said it is the responsibility of the world community particularly the United Nations to put pressure on New Delhi to peacefully settle the Kashmir dispute according to the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40238650/hr-violations-in-iiojk-aphc-leader-urges-un-eu-to-take-india-to-task>

Resolutions on Kashmir, Palestine: UN body urged to opt for bold moves to ensure enforcement

Business Recorder, 26 April 2023

Pakistan has called on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to take 'bold decisions' to secure the compliance of States with the U.N. Charter's principles and its own decisions such as to grant the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir and Palestine. The Council has various means available to it, under the Charter, to secure such compliance, Ambassador Munir Akram told the 15-member Council. While speaking in an open day-long debate on 'effective multilateralism', the Pakistani envoy suggested that the UN Secretary-General should prepare an annual

review of situations on the Council's agenda where its resolutions were being violated or remain unimplemented. Protestations of commitment to the UN Charter ring hollow when no action is taken to redress these blatant violations of the UN Charter and resolutions of the Security Council on the two issues on the agenda of the Security Council, he added. A prime illustration of derogation from the Charter and Security Council resolutions is the situation in 'Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK), where the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Kashmiri people, prescribed by the Security Council, has been subverted and suppressed by India through seven decades of 'force and fraud'; another is the situation in occupied Palestine, the Pakistani envoy added. The debate was sponsored by Russia, which holds the rotating Council presidency for April.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40238817/resolutions-on-kashmir-palestine-un-body-urged-to-opt-for-bold-moves-to-ensure-enforcement>

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas relieved of 'AJK' PTI's party presidency

The Nation, 26 April 2023

The former Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas was relieved of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) party presidency in 'AJK.' He was earlier ousted from 'AJK' premiership on contempt of court. The former Prime Minister Abdul Qayyum Niazi had been entrusted with the responsibility

of the chairmanship of PTI 'AJK.' Imran Khan chaired a meeting of the 'PTI' 'Azad Kashmir' Parliamentary Party in which only seven assembly members participated instead of 31. It was decided to sit on opposition benches in 'Azad Kashmir' during the meeting. Khawaja Farooq was nominated as the leader of the opposition in the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly by PTI.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Apr-2023/sardar-tanveer-ilyas-relieved-of-ajk-pti-s-party-presidency>

DG ISPR's reiteration of national stance on Kashmir boosts Kashmiris' morale: 'AJK' President

Pakistan Today, 26 April 2023

Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, the president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), claimed that Major General Ahmed Sharif, Director General of ISPR, had raised the morale of Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) by restating the nation's fundamental position on the Kashmir issue. He stated in a statement that the ISPR head had made it crystal clear to India that Kashmir was not a part of it but rather a conflict that needed to be settled peacefully while taking into account its legal and historical context. He reaffirmed the Kashmiris' intention to see their continuing liberation struggle through to its natural end and urged India to keep in mind that it could not stifle their spirit of freedom through the use of force. He said the people of Kashmir stood shoulder to shoulder with the valiant armed forces of the country.

Along with the Pakistan Army, Kashmiris were ready to respond to any aggression and to defend every inch of the country in case of any misadventure by the enemy, he added.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/04/26/dg-isprs-reiteration-of-national-stance-on-kashmir-boosts-kashmiris-morale-sultan/>

India's G-20 Presidency: 2023 Summit in Jammu and Kashmir

Pakistan Observer, 27 April 2023

The G-20 leaders had previously announced in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in November 2020 that India would host the high-profile grouping's summit in 2023, with a one-year delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, India officially assumed the presidency of the G-20 in December 2022. Prime Minister Modi has been representing India at G-20 summits since 2014. The choice of venue for G-20 summits is typically in scenic resort locations, and Kashmir fits the bill. Kashmir will be hosting one of the largest multilateral events in 2023 under India's presidency. The government has formed a special five-member committee to oversee the process, which will be chaired by the secretary of Kashmir's Housing and Urban Development department. The other four members will be from the departments of tourism, culture, transport, and hospitality. Pakistan has opposed India's role as a G20 host and has raised objections to the plan. A statement was released by the Pakistani Foreign Office saying, 'India's irresponsible move is the latest in a

series of self-serving measures to perpetuate its illegal occupation of Jammu and 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.'

Holding any G20-related meeting or event in J&K, in utter disregard of the globally acknowledged disputed status of the territory, is a travesty that the international community cannot accept under any circumstances. Pakistan has appealed to the global community to call upon India to uphold the rights of the Kashmiri people and oppose human rights violations in the Kashmir valley. India has been oppressing Kashmiri women, children, and men through its massive deployment of its forces' personnel working under the draconian law of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, of 1990. The human rights situation has worsened following the revocation of Kashmir's special status.

Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory, China has also expressed objections to India's plans to hold the G20 leaders' meeting in Jammu and Kashmir. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said that 'China's position on Kashmir is consistent and clear-cut. It is a legacy issue between India and Pakistan. It should be properly resolved following the relevant UN resolutions and bilateral agreements.' As part of its diplomatic offensive, Pakistan is currently appealing to its close allies,

such as Saudi Arabia, China, and Turkey, to convey its apprehensions. It will also communicate with the UK and the US, along with other G20 members, to thwart India's plans. Many Muslim nations have backed Pakistan on the Jammu and Kashmir issue, and the BJP's anti-Muslim policies since it came to power have triggered formal diplomatic protests from several Muslim countries. India wants the world community to acknowledge its control and even sovereignty over the disputed territory by organizing this event. The inclusion of Jammu and Kashmir in this crucial international conference might also be portrayed as a diplomatic win for India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is expected to increase its domestic support.

<https://pakobserver.net/indias-g20-presidency-2023-summit-in-jammu-and-kashmir/>

G-20 meeting in a Srinagar ploy to project fake normalcy in 'IIOJK:' APHC

Pakistan Observer, 28 April 2023

The incarcerated Chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Masarrat Alam Butt has said that the Narendra Modi-led 'Hindutva government' of India is hosting a G-20 meeting in Srinagar to mislead the world about the real situation in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). In a message from the Tihar jail in New Delhi, Masarrat Alam Butt said Modi's 'fascist' Indian government wants to bolster its normalcy claims by

conducting G-20 event in the 'occupied territory.' He said the G20 event in 'IIOJK' is also intended to divert attention from India's 'state-sponsored terrorism' and massive violations of human rights in the territory as well as to give legitimacy to its 5 August 2019 illegal actions. He claimed that the reputation and credibility of the G20 forum would take a hit if it accepted Modi's 'mala fide' invite to hold the bloc meeting in 'IIOJK.' Butt urged the G20 countries that instead of accepting 'fascist' Modi's invitation, they must ask him to allow foreign fact-finding missions to 'IIOJK' and resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute as per the United Nations resolutions. Meanwhile, hailing the recent statement of the Pakistan Army regarding Jammu and Kashmir, the APHC Chairman termed it encouraging and a kind of morale-booster for the struggling people of the 'occupied territory.' He said Pakistan is an important party to the Kashmir dispute and is making every effort to ensure that the Kashmiris be given their internationally recognized right to self-determination.

<https://pakobserver.net/g20-meeting-in-srinagar-ploy-to-project-fake-normalcy-in-iiojk-aphc/>

Economic Developments

Karot Hydropower Project changing the lives of the local population

The Nation, 25 April 2023

The Karot Hydropower Project, which is the first power sector initiative completed under the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC), has significantly changed the lives of local communities. As the largest hydropower project in the private sector to generate 3.2 billion units of clean and green energy per year, the Karot hydel station has significantly improved the lives of the local people by providing better health and education facilities. It is a run-of-the-river project built on the Jhelum River in the peripheries of the Rawalpindi district by the Karot Power Company (KPCL), in which China Three Gorges South Asia Investment (CSAIL) holds a majority share. The power station is located near the villages of Karot in Rawalpindi and Hollar in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), roughly 55 kilometers southeast of Islamabad. More than 4,000 people have been employed in different roles, with 85% of them being hired from local communities.

Several health units have been upgraded in the area, including the Kahuta Emergency Hospital and some other basic health units. Similarly, dispensaries and road infrastructure have also been developed. A senior official of the CPEC Authority, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, said approximately 4,000-5,000 people were recruited during the construction of the Karot hydropower project. He said the project would help Pakistan in its efforts to achieve carbon neutrality by 2031. Muhammad Ayaz, a local said he used to teach in a single-room school situated at the site of the power station.

The Chinese company has rebuilt this school with five to six rooms and provided facilities such as water supply, furniture, washrooms, and a boundary wall, benefiting the local communities. Muhammad Yaseen, another resident of Kunan village, said the locals are thankful to the Chinese company for building a beautiful mosque in their village. We are particularly thankful to the construction company for building a carpeted road, linking our village to the main road and resolving our communication problems in this modern era.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/25-Apr-2023/karot-hydropower-project-changing-lives-of-local-population>

GB to cut special power supply lines for govt offices

Dawn, 25 April 2023

As locals face up to 18-hour-long power outages, the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) government has started an operation to remove illegal electricity connections and special transmission lines to government offices and official residences. The GB water and power department, in collaboration with district administrations, has started the action to overcome the power shortage. GB Chief Secretary Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani said government officers, including himself, have been provided with special power transmission lines to ensure 24-hour electricity supply to their offices and houses while the public was facing 18 to 20 hours of load shedding. According to the chief

secretary, directions have been issued to provide special transmission lines only to hospitals, mosques, schools, and government offices. The district administrations of Diamer, Hunza, Skardu, and Ghizer also removed special transmission lines, while district Nagar and Kharmang didn't have any special transmission lines. According to the GB chief secretary, the operation to remove special transmission lines will be carried out in three phases. In the first phase, special transmission lines to private residences, commercial settlements, and other establishments will be cut. In the second phase, special transmission lines to government offices and residences will be removed. The third phase will focus on special lines for mosques and seminaries.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1749145/gb-to-cut-special-power-supply-lines-for-govt-offices>

Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project to restart power generation by the end of July

The Nation, 25 April 2023

After the closure of almost a year, the 969-megawatt Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) will restart power generation by the end of July. The power generation from NJHP had to be discontinued on 4 July 2022, following a malfunction that occurred in the tunnel. The NJP plant has two tunnels and there was a blockage in one of the three and a half kilometers long tunnels. A spokesman for Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has said that a significant

development at the blockage in the tail race tunnel of 969 MW-NJHP has been achieved on Eid day. A tunnel collapse of 150 ft in length has been restored. Restoration works are continuing during Eid Holidays, the spokesman said. The chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen (r) Sajjad Ghani visited NJHP and witnessed construction activities on the remedial works. He appreciated the efforts of Project Team WAPDA, China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC), and the consultants of the project, he said. The chairman was briefed that the remedial works for the restoration of NJHP are underway in light of the report furnished by the international panel of experts, the spokesman maintained. The Hydraulic lining shutter is being installed inside the tail race tunnel for concrete lining, while the allied works are also continuing side by side. The chairman of WAPDA directed project authorities to resume electricity generation from the project by the end of July. The NJ power plant suffered a fault following the blockage of water in the tunnel area of 3.5 kilometers that led to the shutdown of the plant and termination of 969 MW of cheap electricity to the national grid.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/25-Apr-2023/neelum-jhelum-hydropower-project-to-restart-power-generation-by-end-of-july>

Sharp rise in airfare affects locals and tourists in GB

Pamir Times, 26 April 2023

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has increased its airfare for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) exponentially at the

onset of the tourism season in the highly mountainous and difficult-to-access region. The airfare for the 55-minute long one-way flight has risen to around 26,000 rupees. A one-way ticket in October 2022 would cost around 15,000 rupees. The airfare, thus, has almost doubled within six months. Tour operators and citizens have condemned the sharp increase in airfare and asked PIA to reconsider the sharp increase as locals with lesser means need to reach hospitals and other facilities in other parts of the country during road blockades and other mobility, as well as health-related, issues.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2023/04/27/sharp-rise-in-airfare-affects-locals-and-tourists-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Chinese govt allows the import of cherry from GB

Daily Times, 27 April 2023

The Chinese Government has allowed the import of cherry from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and other cities in Pakistan. In a letter to the Chinese embassy in Islamabad, the Chinese government requested the government of Pakistan to take necessary steps and deploy the resources for the timely import of fresh cherries. The Embassy requested the Ministry of food security of Pakistan to make arrangements for the virtual inspection of cherry orchards and cold treatment facilities. Cherry is a seasonal fruit with a limited lifetime grown throughout the lowlands of GB and it's a major source of cash for hundreds of families in GB.

Jilbaz Ali Khan, a trader of Cherry, says that with the approval of exporting cherry to China, it will be easy to introduce it worldwide as China has operationalized an international airport in Tashgughan, a neighboring city to the border. China Pakistan border has been opened for trade in April after a break of three years following Covid-19. Jilbaz said that the opening of the China border for cherries will help traders to sell cherries at better rates.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1087469/chinese-govt-allows-import-of-cherry-from-gilgit-baltistan-faheem-akhtar/>

Centre to release funds for GB uplift projects

Dawn, 29 April 2023

The federal government has decided to release funds for development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and determine a formula to provide a regular budget for the northern region on the same footing as the four provinces and 'Azad Kashmir.' A meeting was held at the Ministry of Finance in this regard to discuss the budgetary and financial issues of GB which was attended by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Finance Tariq Bajwa, GB Finance Minister Javaid Ali Manwa, GB Planning and Development Minister Fataullah Khan and other officials. The meeting decided to release the fourth quarter funds for GB's Annual Development Programme immediately and provide the funds for Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects on a priority basis. The

participants discussed financial and budgetary issues of the region and the difficulties faced by the government in funding development and non-development projects in the absence of a budget-share formula like the four provinces and 'AJK.' The meeting agreed to explore a formula for resource allocation to alleviate the region's financial issues. While the government agreed to approach the planning ministry to make space for additional authorization, it also urged the region's government to exercise austerity and use funds judiciously due to the current economic situation.

More flights to GB

In a separate development, the federal aviation ministry has decided to increase the frequency of Pakistan International Airlines flights to Gilgit and Skardu. The decision came after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered the ministry to increase the flights and authorize private airlines to fly to GB to promote tourism. This was decided in a meeting held at the Aviation Division on Friday to discuss the issue of flights to the region. The meeting also decided to start Haj special flights from GB to facilitate the pilgrims intending to take the journey from the region. It was also agreed to start special flights from Lahore to Gilgit, Lahore, and Karachi to Skardu.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1749930/centre-to-release-funds-for-gb-uplift-projects>

[From Vernacular Urdu Media](#)

Despite the Security Council's resolution on the Kashmir issue being in effect for 75 years, the horrible crimes continue in the 'occupied' region

Daily Pakistan, 24 April 2023

Even though it has been 75 years since the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted a resolution addressing the Kashmir conflict, the situation in 'occupied Kashmir' remains unchanged, with India still dominating the oppressed Kashmiris. A private TV Express-News reports that the Security Council Resolution No. 47, which was issued on 21 April 1948, mandates that India hold a referendum in 'occupied Kashmir' under the supervision of the UN, but despite the passage of 75 years, India continues to oppress Kashmiris, and denying people their freedom to decide for themselves. The inadequate plan for partitioning the continent, which leaves the Kashmir conflict unresolved and a potential nuclear South Asia flashpoint. Modi utilized it to score political points rather than settle India-Pakistan disputes. The 'occupied Kashmir' is home to some of the worst human rights abuses in the world as the Indian army has so far martyred about a lakh innocent Kashmiris. More than 11,000 pure women have been 'sexually assaulted', and there are more than 22,000 widowed mothers and more than 120,000 orphaned children.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/23-Apr-2023/1572657>

The Indian leadership's irrational claims and allegations are evidence of a specific political agenda: Pakistan Army spokesperson

UrduPoint, 26 April 2023

The snarls and allegations coming from the Indian government are a manifestation of a certain political objective, according to Director General-Inter-Services Public Relations (DG-ISPR) Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry. He stated at a press conference that Pakistan has fully complied with the 2003 cease-fire agreement between Pakistan and India's Director General Military Operations (DGMO) on the Eastern Borders and that as part of that agreement, there has been a fair amount of calm along the Line of Control (LoC) since the 2021 cease-fire agreement. He claimed that the Indian leadership's snarls and constant charges that Pakistan is involved in infiltration and technical air violations on the LoC, among other allegations, are only false propaganda and represent a special political purpose of India. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, which the UN formed, he claimed, has always had Pakistan's complete cooperation. He claimed that Pakistan adhered strictly to the UN agreement to keep the LoC peaceful, but that India had not provided the same assurance to UN monitors.

He said that in the last few years, Pakistan has facilitated 16 visits to the LoC in 'Azad Kashmir,' of which the

visit of the Secretary General of the OIC and the international media is of particular importance. However, he asserted that India is keeping the public in the dark about the atrocities committed in the 'occupied' region by forbidding even media representatives from traveling there to learn about the current state of affairs in the 'occupied Kashmir.' He further claimed that India had broken the ceasefire 56 times this year so far, including creating fictitious incidents on LoC. There were three airspace violations, six minor ceasefire violations, and 25 technical airspace violations. He claimed that at the time when India was breaking the cease-fire agreement along the LoC, the Pakistani Army simultaneously demolished six Indian spies' quarters. He declared that the Pakistani army is prepared and committed to repel any aggression.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/rawalpindi/important-news/live-news-3558170.html>

Protests and anti-Indian chants against the G20 summit in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir in Muzaffarabad

UrduPoint, 27 April 2023

A protest sit-in and demonstration were organized in Muzaffarabad to urge the G-20 nations to skip the next summit, which India is hosting in the internationally acknowledged disputed portion of Jammu and Kashmir. Many people from civil society showed up to the protest that Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir organized. The protesters

chanted phrases like 'Go, Modi, Go Back,','Go India, Go Back,' and 'Boycott G-20.' The protestors marched from Burhan Wani Chowk to Ghari Pan Chowk while carrying banners with messages urging G-20 members Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Indonesia to skip the contentious summit. While addressing the protesters, Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Uzair Ahmed Ghazali said that the G-20 countries should understand the 'nefarious designs' of India behind the holding of the event in the disputed territory. He said the G-20 countries should not forget that India is committing serious 'war crimes' and human rights abuses in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. Usman Ali Hashim on the occasion said that the G-20 countries should remember that if they accept Narendra Modi's invitation for the proposed meeting in Kashmir, they will be considered as siding with the 'oppressor.' Hurriyat leader Mushtaq-ul-Islam in his address said that instead of participating in the meeting in Srinagar, the G-20 countries should highlight the Indian atrocities in 'IIOJK.' He claimed that the Modi government is plotting to cover up its 'war crimes' against Kashmiris through this G-20 meeting.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3558614.html>

The Army Chief's passing out parade speech has boosted Kashmiris' spirits: Leader of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly

Urdupoint, 29 April 2023

According to Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, president of the Pakistan People's Party-'Azad Kashmir' (PPP-AJK) and member of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly, the passing out parade speech by the Army Chief, Asim Munir, has bolstered the morale of Kashmiris. He praised Asim Munir's comments on the Kashmir issue and noted that Kashmiris and the Pakistani Army have a long history of friendship. He said that the Pakistan Army chief's attitude to the Kashmir issue had lifted the spirits of Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control. He further stated that Pakistan must participate in the long-term resolution of the Kashmir conflict as Kashmir will soon be freed from Indian 'occupation.' He emphasized that the Pakistan Army has consistently taken a direct stand on the Kashmir dispute and that no force in the world can separate Kashmiris' undying love for the Pakistani Army. He claimed that, like the Pakistan Army, Pakistani citizens would not compromise on the Kashmir issue.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-3563418.html>

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Disclaimer

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