

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 3 | Issue 46

13 November - 19 November 2023

Shagharthang Wheat prices
Power Project Solar Power
sustainable debt subsidy
Mega Project green energy
Gilgit-Baltistan POK



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

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Contents

Political Developments

- APHC-‘AJK’ draws the UN's attention toward the plight of Kashmiri detainees
- Ex-‘AJK PM urges global action against Israeli aggression in Gaza
- Standing up against oppression in Kashmir and Palestine
- Indian army Captain involved in 2020 Shopian fake Encounter joins long March of impunity in ‘HIOJK’
- From Gaza to Kashmir: Can international law come to the rescue?
- Rehmani denounces banning of Juma prayers in Srinagar Jamia Masjid, Al-Aqsa

Economic Developments

- CM GB lays the foundation stone of the Shagharthang Power Project
- The President of ‘AJK’ laid the foundation stone of mega projects worth more than seven billion rupees for PU
- What does the proposed ‘Targeted Subsidy’ on wheat price in GB entail?
- The economics of wheat subsidy in Gilgit-Baltistan
- Public-Private Partnership: 1MW Solar Power project inaugurated in Hunza
- Wheat price hike sparks protests in GB

Vernacular Urdu Media

- Kashmiris reject ‘India's military occupation’ of Kashmir
- The Pasban Hurriyat launched the Free Palestine, Free Kashmir campaign against Israel's occupation of Palestine and India's ‘military occupation’ of Jammu and Kashmir

Political Developments

APHC-'AJK' draws the UN's attention toward the plight of Kashmiri detainees

Pakistan Observer, 15 November 2023

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), chapter has urged the United Nations and international human rights organizations to take notice of the plight of Hurriyat leaders and activists illegally detained in jails of India and 'Occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, the demand was raised at a meeting of APHC-'AJK', which was held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of its convener Mehmood Ahmed Saghar. In the meeting, the participants expressed concern over the prevailing situation in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir and the plight of illegally detained Hurriyat leaders and workers. They said that due to the non-provision of basic facilities like medical treatment in jails, Kashmiri detainees are suffering from fatal diseases.

The leaders reminded the Secretary General of the UN that the international organization has forgotten the inalienable right to self-determination of the Kashmiris. Addressing the participants, Saghar claimed that Kashmiri Muslims have no importance in the eyes of Indian rulers and New Delhi has ignored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention, and even the UN Human Rights Commission's 2018 and 2019 reports on Jammu and Kashmir.

On this occasion, special prayers were offered for the martyrs of the Kashmir liberation movement and the martyrs of Palestine.

<https://pakobserver.net/aphc-ajk-draws-uns-attention-towards-plight-of-kashmiri-detainees/>

Ex-'AJK' PM urges global action against Israeli aggression in Gaza

The Express Tribune, 15 November 2023

Former prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), and regional president of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, has called upon the Muslim Ummah and justice-loving Western nations to take decisive action to stop Israeli aggression in Gaza before it escalates further. He also asked the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to 'give a clear message to the Western world that if the Muslim states have to stay in the United Nations, the genocide and persecution of Muslims in different parts of the world must be brought to end with practical steps rather than mere lip service.' Addressing a gathering, Ilyas expressed deep concern over the continuous attacks on innocent Palestinians by the Israeli government. The rally, organized by the 'AJK' chapter of IPP, drew the participation of thousands of party workers carrying flags of Palestine, Pakistan, and 'Azad Kashmir', while chanting pro-Palestine and anti-Israel slogans.

During his address, Ilyas drew parallels between the ongoing Israeli brutalities against Palestinian Muslims

and Indian actions in ‘Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir’ (IIOJK), saying ‘the ongoing Israeli brutalities against the Palestinian Muslims and Indian brutalities against the Kashmiris have the same pattern, designed to eliminate and drive them out of their respective territories.’ He said the national parties of Pakistan should come out of the election cycle and raise their voice for the oppressed Palestinians at every forum. Islam is a religion of peace and security, but ironically, Muslims are being pushed to the wall in most parts of the world. Ilyas reminded the world that the first recorded suicide attack was carried out by a Jewish woman.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2446563/ex-ajk-pm-urges-global-action-against-israeli-aggression-in-gaza>

Standing up against oppression in Kashmir and Palestine

Pakistan Observer, 16 November 2023

The conflicts in Palestine and Kashmir rank among the most enduring and intricate of our time. Their complexity encompasses not only territorial disputes but also deep-seated ideological differences. The states occupying these regions assert historical and religious rights, perpetuating prolonged violence, oppressive rule, and human rights abuses. The parallels between these two struggles are stark. From 1947 to 1948, the United Nations made similar promises to the people of Palestine and Kashmir. Yet, the partitioning of their

lands, followed by wars and foreign interventions, shattered these hopes.

Nelson Mandela's words about the liberation of Palestine being integral to our freedom find echoes in Kashmir, where people fight for recognition and equality. Tragically, the international community and both India and Israel have disregarded UN resolutions that could have empowered these people to determine their futures. This neglect has bred war, instability, and suffering in both the Middle East and South Asia. Palestinians endure an apartheid-like existence, while Kashmiris face conflict, sieges, and atrocities. The human and material costs of these conflicts are incalculable. The consequences of these unresolved issues are profound. Palestinians and Kashmiris grapple with illegal military occupation, impunity of armed forces, human rights abuses verging on genocidal, psychological trauma, collective punishment, and economic hardship. Their resistance against foreign occupation is, therefore, unsurprising and justified.

In Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region, there is opposition to an Indian law seen as mirroring Israeli tactics, potentially altering the area's demography. India and Israel's close relationship is reflected in the considerable Israeli arms presence in Kashmir, with India being a major Israeli arms market. Furthermore, India and Israel's collaboration on security and counter-terrorism, including training Indian police in methods used against Palestinians, has resulted in

widespread human rights violations, including torture and extrajudicial killings.

After revoking Articles 370 and 35A, India implemented discriminatory policies in Kashmir, mirroring Israel's long-standing practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israeli plans to assume control over the Gaza Strip and India's approach to Kashmir threaten the rights of Palestinians and Kashmiris and jeopardize peace solutions. Pakistan advocates for the self-determination of Palestine and Kashmir, seeing their resolutions as intertwined. The nation calls for adherence to UNSC resolutions, demanding Israeli withdrawal from Jerusalem, and Indian troops' withdrawal from Kashmir. Pakistan champions Palestinian sovereignty within pre-1967 borders with Haram al-Sharif as the capital and supports the Kashmiri struggle for freedom and justice. The enduring human rights violations in Kashmir and Palestine underscore the oppressive actions of Israel and India, fueling indigenous freedom movements.

<https://pakobserver.net/standing-up-against-oppression-in-kashmir-and-palestine/>

Indian army Captain involved in 2020 Shopian fake Encounter joins long March of impunity in 'IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 17 November 2023

The recent 9 November order of the two-member tribunal, suspending the life sentence of Captain Bhoopendra Singh of the Rashtriya Rifles, who was

convicted of killing three Kashmiri laborers in the Shopian fake encounter case in 2020, will only serve to reinforce that Indian armed forces deployed in 'IIOJK' enjoy impunity, reported India-based online news portal *The Leaflet*. According to Kashmir Media Service, the Leaflet citing a 2012 report by the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) said that it (the JKCCS report) made a damning revelation about the impunity enjoyed by Indian armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir. The JKCCS documents human rights abuses by Indian troops in 'IIOJK.' As per *The Leaflet*, the JKCCS report said that the fact that not a single request for sanction for prosecution under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 (AFSPA) has been granted in 22 years strongly suggests an institutional intent to allow for the commission of crimes and protection of perpetrators.

The Leaflet stated that the order of the two-member tribunal headed by Justice Rajendra Menon, suspending the life sentence of Captain Bhoopendra Singh, will only serve to reinforce this indictment of impunity. Captain Singh had been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by an army's summary general court-martial last year. In his appeal before the tribunal, Captain Singh's counsel Major (Retd) Sudhanshu S. Pandey argued that such conviction of a young officer in this manner would have a very demoralising effect on other officers who are sacrificing their lives for the nation.

The tribunal found that the order of the general court-martial was 'perverse' and 'improper.' While granting bail to Singh, the tribunal also said that the evidence led by the prosecution was 'not convincing enough to hold the applicant guilty of the charges leveled against him.' The Indian news portal lamented that the JKCCS is currently under investigation for alleged pro-freedom activities in 'IIOJK', Captain Singh will walk as a free man.

<https://pakobserver.net/indian-army-captain-involved-in-2020-shopian-fake-encounter-joins-long-march-of-impunity-in-iiojk/>

From Gaza to Kashmir: Can international law come to the rescue?

The Express Tribune, 18 November 2023

The future of international law is somewhat daunting, and while every country, government, or regime is entitled to tell its own story, it appears that international law is perhaps in search of the requisite local support required for effective enforcement, without which there are far-reaching consequences, ultimately resulting in the abridgment of people's fundamental rights. I practice law in Pakistan, a country that has inherited a disputed border since the time of its post-colonial independence. The disputed territory of Kashmir itself embodies and encapsulates a humanitarian crisis, which has only intensified upon the revocation of its special status through an executive order of the government of India on 6 August 2019.

The aforementioned resulted in the displacement of people and their property rights, unwarranted violence, unlawful detention, and derailment of infrastructure and communication, all of which are ingredients of an existential humanitarian crisis, as well as contributors to the breakdown of law and order. There is one common factor here, however, and that is the ability of international law to come to the rescue. But are we looking in the right direction when calling for a consensus at the United Nations or other like-minded organisations? While Pakistan has representation at the United Nations, and several resolutions have been passed to put an end to the humanitarian crisis in 'Occupied Kashmir', the problem has only deepened without any fear of violation of international law.

From a day-to-day perspective and looking through the lens of my law practice, the Kashmir issue has put a damper on foreign investment for the less fortunate Pakistan, which is trying to find an international balance by joining other not-so-economical causes, such as the war on terror for Pakistan to align itself diplomatically and maintain its geopolitical relevance. The Pakistan entertainment industry that once thrived across the border in terms of performances and collaborations between Indian and Pakistani movie stars and artists has also suffered as a result of the Kashmir crisis. This manifested locally, resulting in the deprecation of the cinema industry in Pakistan, which was only viable

because of Indian films, especially since both countries share a common language.

Recently, despite a bilateral self-imposed ban, the Bombay High Court has clarified that there is no prohibition on the exchange of talent between countries. This demonstrates the significance of local law support, a positive step in the right direction for the future of international law, which is likely to be augmented by the shift in popular consensus vis-à-vis local celebrities and likable personalities flooding the Indo-Pakistan entertainment industry. So here I am, a decade-plus into my career as a commercial lawyer, yearning to be a part of something bigger and greater with aspirations to play a role in the future and development of international law and territorial disputes, perhaps bringing the Kashmir issue to the forefront of international adjudicating bodies to set an example for the ensuing humanitarian crises faced in Gaza and the West Bank today.

<https://tribune.com.pk/article/97770/from-gaza-to-kashmir-can-international-law-come-to-the-rescue>

Rehmani denounces banning of Juma prayers in Srinagar Jamia Masjid, Al-Aqsa

Pakistan Observer, 19 November 2023

Senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, has castigated Israel for banning Juma

prayers inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque, compelling the worshippers from offering prayers in the compound outside and forcibly bulldozing Palestinians' houses and killing protesters in Gaza and Al-Quds. According to Kashmir Media Service, Rehmani in a statement issued in Islamabad also urged the international community to take notice of the sealing of the Srinagar Jamia Masjid for the 6th consecutive Friday by the Indian authorities to stop the Muslims from offering Juma prayers in the grand mosque. He also condemned the continued house detention of senior APHC leader, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, to stop him from offering the Juma prayers. He claimed that India had sealed the Jamia Masjid to appease Israel and collaborate with the Zionist policies in Palestine. He added that the world should take note of such racist and neo-settler measures in both Kashmir and Palestine without delay to safeguard the interests of the indigenous populations in the two regions.

<https://pakobserver.net/rehmani-denounces-banning-of-juma-prayers-in-srinagar-jamia-masjid-al-aqsa/>

Economic Developments

CM GB lays the foundation stone of the Shagharthang Power Project

Pakistan Today, 12 November 2023

Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Gulbar Khan has laid the stone foundation of the Shagharthang Power Project in Skardu. The project will cost

about 18 billion and will provide 26MW of electricity. On the occasion Chief Minister said that after the completion of this project, power shortages will end in the region, especially in District Skardu. Meanwhile, the cabinet meeting of GB was held with the Chief Minister in the chair at Skardu, and different issues regarding provincial development were under discussion during the meeting. After meeting, and briefing media persons, provincial minister for Finance Engineer Muhammad Ismail said an agreement has been signed with the Norwegian government to generate electricity in Skardu. He said the cabinet also decided the tender for Shagharthing Road will not be tendered again and the works will start soon on this road.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/11/12/cm-gb-lays-foundation-stone-of-shagharthang-power-project/>

The President of 'AJK' laid the foundation stone of mega projects worth more than seven billion rupees for PU

Daily Parliament Times, 13 November 2023

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of mega projects worth more than seven billion rupees for Poonch University (PU). On this occasion, the president said that providing higher education opportunities to students has been a top priority of the government.

Referring to the inauguration of Mega Project Phase-1 under which academic block would be constructed for two billion and seventy crore rupees. Chaudhry while laying the foundation stone of Mega Project Phase 2, said that he is grateful to the Government of Pakistan for investing heavily in the education sector through the Higher Education Commission for the promotion of higher education in the 'Azad Kashmir.' He said that the government was going to start the tendering process for Jamia Poonch's Chhota Gullah Campus very soon. The completion of these projects, he said, would have a great impact not only on the academic life of Rawalkot but also on the entire 'Azad Kashmir.' The president said that he had recently inaugurated the King Abdullah Campus of 'AJK' University, which was built with the support of the Saudi Fund for 13.5 billion rupees in August this year.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/11/13/president-ajk-laid-the-foundation-stone-of-mega-projects-worth-more-than-seven-billion-rupees-for-pu/>

What does the proposed 'Targeted Subsidy' on wheat price in GB entail?

Pamir Times, 14 November 2023

The political temperature is rising in the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region of Pakistan. Calls for mass agitation are being made by certain political groups while efforts are underway to mobilize the populace. This fresh wave of political fury, which could get heated in the days ahead, was triggered by the

GB government's decision to introduce 'targeted subsidy' on Wheat prices in the region. GB is a disputed territory administered by Pakistan, and connected with the broader Kashmir issue, where sense of political disempowerment has been a thorny issue. Till now, the federal government in Islamabad was providing wheat to the people of GB at highly subsidized rates. However, faced with a financial crunch at the national level, Islamabad has been trying to withdraw the subsidy. Regional governments, seated in Gilgit, also consider the blanket subsidy to be an issue that leaves less money for development work, as every year around 10bn rupees are allocated to provide wheat at subsidized rates in the region. Recently, a cabinet member of the GB regional government, announced that from now on only people earning below a certain income threshold will be able to receive wheat at subsidized prices.

Government's Stance

GB government has in a press statement said that a 40kg bag of wheat grain costs the government around 4,900 rupees, while imported wheat costs around 6200 rupees per 40kg bag. The public in GB, however, gets a 40kg bag of wheat grain for almost 1100 rupees. Due to the increasing cost of wheat, the government is thus unable to buy enough wheat to meet the demand, says the Information Department's communique. According to a notification, issued after the announcement, Government officials above Basic Pay Scale 17 will not

receive subsidized wheat, among other relatively well-off segments of society. Officials having constitutional positions will also not receive subsidized wheat. Subsidized quotas allocated for government departments, 'dignitaries', and 'special institutions' have also been withdrawn and they will have to buy wheat at market prices, per the following notification. The GB government believes that these measures will reduce the demand for subsidized wheat in GB and enable it to use the 9bn rupees provided by Islamabad annually to buy and supply enough wheat to the 'deserving segments' of the society.

Opposition

The decision has, however, been met with stiff resistance from the Awami Action Committee, a coalition of numerous civil society organizations and political parties. They have announced mass agitation if the decision is not reversed. Opposition parties' political leaders have also rejected the decision. Opposers say that GB is a disputed territory with meager per capita landholding. The government and other state institutions are acquiring land at mass scales which further reduces the land available for cultivation in the future. Moreover, most of the region's land area is not suitable for cultivation.

Due to a lack of industries and other opportunities, the majority of the population is poor and needs affirmative action to be able to feed their families. A segment of the

opposers also believe that Pakistan is duty-bound to provide wheat to the region at subsidized rates because GB does not have any constitutional rights and the regional government does not have any real legislative powers. Many quote political and constitutional disempowerment as a reason for the region receiving subsidies on wheat prices.

History

In the past, the Awami Action Committee had mobilised tens of thousands of people across GB against the withdrawal of subsidies on wheat. Thousands of protesters had, for several days, gone on a strike, forcing the federal government to reconsider the decision. Awami Action Committee and other political and civil society organizations have again said that they will mobilize the masses to resist the decision. Whether this fresh wave of resentment results in another wave of agitation remains to be seen.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2023/11/13/what-does-the-proposed-targeted-subsidy-on-wheat-price-in-gilgit-baltistan-entail/>

The economics of wheat subsidy in Gilgit-Baltistan

Pamir Times, 17 November 2023

Wheat has been the major food staple of people living in the Indus Basin. In Pakistan for example, the consumption of wheat is 125 kg per capita which fulfills nearly 70% of daily caloric intake. Particularly, in the Upper Indus Basin and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), wheat is hailed as the most essential

ingredient of every traditional dish and local cuisine. But this penchant for taste gets distasteful when we look into the ongoing social, political, and economic dynamics around wheat in GB. It was during the early 1970s when a new constitution was being promulgated in Pakistan, and the people of GB were eyeing for a formal integration under the new constitution. But to the dismay of GB people, instead of constitutional rights, they were offered a very affordable subsidy on wheat, at one-fourth of the market price. Nearly five decades on, this subsidized wheat on one hand, arguably has catered to the needs of food security in GB, but on the other, it has gravely morphed the subsistent and self-sufficient local farming systems. It has disincentivized the local production of cereal crops as subsidized wheat is cheaper to buy than grow in GB.

A look at a few key statistics would help us know the context of the ongoing debate on wheat subsidy. The total annual wheat consumption demand is nearly 180,000 tons in GB. Approximately, 30,000 tons of this demand is met from local produce. Thus, GB is deficient by 150,000 tons of cereals annually. This outstanding demand is mostly met through the imported subsidized wheat from the down country. Until the past few years, the price of wheat flour was roughly stable at PKR. 50 per kg and it would need approximately PKR 7.5 billion to purchase and supply 150,000 tons of wheat in GB. This corresponds with annual budget allocations of the GB

government for subsidized wheat (PKR 7 to 8 billion) in recent years. However, the prices of wheat-related commodities in domestic and global markets have soared tremendously to PKR 150 per kg. It is thus no longer possible to purchase and supply the same demanded quantity of subsidized wheat within the same budget and price, as well as due to the possible loopholes or leakages along the supply chain.

Under the current situation, two scenarios develop before us. Firstly, to continue subsidizing the wheat at the same rate, the GB government would have to have an annual budget of at least PKR. 24 billion to purchase and supply subsidized wheat henceforth. However, this is very unlikely to happen, given the fiscal constraints being faced by the GB and federal governments. Alternatively, if the government is unable to increase the budget provisions for wheat subsidy and it remains the same, then only one-third or 50,000 tons of wheat will be available annually in the supply chain for subsidized distribution in the region. This is sufficient only to cater to the food security needs of the neediest in GB. The recent wheat price set at PKR 52 per kg by the GB government is justified on these grounds, which is still much lower than the current wheat flour market price of PKR.160 per kg in major cities of Pakistan.

The impact of subsidized wheat on GB's economy, its agriculture systems, and food security needs to be viewed more broadly. However, given the

circumstances, the targeted subsidy approach is the way to go and let go of the current blanket subsidy approach. If we roughly divide the population of GB into three socio-economic strata of high, mid, and low; then it is the one-third at the bottom that deserves the subsidy. Qualifications can be made about those in the middle, but the top one-third should be excluded from subsidy, due also to the fact that the government is the biggest employer in GB which employs at least one person in every third household in the region.

One of the ills of subsidized wheat is that it has stifled innovation and growth in the agriculture and cropping systems of the region. With only 2% of the total land mass, the cultivable land is scarce in GB. It is therefore all important to make the most efficient use of the available productive land. Though mass cultivation of cereal crops is not feasible in GB due to various ecological factors, there is an option to opt for high-value horticulture and agroforestry. For example, there is tremendous scope to apply innovative ways to turn the barren lands of GB into productive green biomass systems. Food security is primarily a matter of income security that comes with the diversification of the local economy. All the policies geared towards increasing the size of the economic pie should therefore be on the priority list of all stakeholders, alongside the efforts for greater political and constitutional justice for the people of GB.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2023/11/16/the-economics-of-wheat-subsidy-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Public-Private Partnership: 1MW Solar Power project inaugurated in Hunza

Pamir Times, 18 November 2023

NPAK Energy Limited, a subsidiary of the Industrial Promotion Services (IPS), the industrial and infrastructure development arm of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), commissioned a 1MW solar photovoltaic power plant (SPP) with 600 kWh Battery Storage in Hunza district of Gilgit Baltistan (GB). This project sets a unique precedent as the first public-private partnership (PPP) project in GB, producing clean energy and actively contributing to the global agenda to mitigate climate change. The inauguration ceremony held on 17 November 2023 was attended by Haji Gulbar Khan, Chief Minister of GB, and other representatives of the Government as well as the local community leaders and NPAK Energy Management. During the event, the GB Chief Minister said that the Government of GB highly encourages clean and green energy solutions and he appreciated Aga Khan Development Network on commissioning the 1 MW solar power plant.

This landmark project was financed and implemented by NPAK Energy and is the first comparable scale, privately developed and operated SPP in GB. The plant's 2,376 photovoltaic panels at an altitude of 2800 m above sea level, started feeding power to the Hunza district grid. It will produce

1,600 MWh per year of electricity from solar energy resources, which will power local households and businesses, addressing the acute energy deficit in Hunza District and avoiding approximately 1,134 metric tons of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) equivalent annually. NPAK Energy has signed a 30-year Concession Agreement with the Government of GB which aims to develop sufficient generation capacity, business, and utility operations, ensuring a self-sustaining supply of clean, reliable, and affordable electricity to every household in the Hunza district. Mr. Mansoor Dhanani, CEO of NPAK Energy Limited stated that having a strong track record in rural electrification through Aga Khan Development Network's renewable energy programmes in the region, we are proud to foster our work in GB. NPAK Energy developed a financial model with a blended finance investment vehicle that crowds in equity, sustainable debt, and grant financing.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2023/11/17/public-private-partnership-1mw-solar-power-project-inaugurated-in-hunza/>

Wheat price hike sparks protests in GB

Dawn, 18 November 2023

People protested in various areas of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) against the government's decision to increase the prices of subsidised wheat in the region. Lawyers observed a strike and

boycotted court proceedings across the region against the decision in response to the call from the GB High Court Bar Association and district bar association, while opposition members in the GB Assembly had already announced plans for a protest. The GB government recently announced an increase in the subsidised wheat rate from Rs20 per kg to Rs52 per kg, targeting subsidised wheat to poor people only. Earlier in June, the rate was raised from Rs7.5 to Rs20, leading to numerous protest demonstrations in GB.

A large number of residents gathered at the main bazaar of Khaplu, the district headquarters of Ghanche, after Friday prayers, staged a protest demonstration, chanted slogans against the government's decision, and blocked roads. Similarly, a large number of protesters in Juglot village of Tabgir valley in Diamer district, the constituency of GB Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan, held a demonstration criticising the GB government for failing to address people's issues and increasing their miseries. Public gatherings were also held in Yasin Valley of Ghizer district, where local elders decided to start protests against the decision. Meanwhile, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar directed the relevant authorities to ensure adequate wheat supply to GB in response to a briefing on the wheat crisis in GB.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1790319/wheat-price-hike-sparks-protests-in-gb>

[From Vernacular Urdu Media](#)

Kashmiris reject 'India's military occupation' of Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 14 November 2023

The chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat, Uzair Ahmed Ghazali has claimed that India's 'military occupation' of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is a barrier to long-term peace and development in the region. He claimed that India is attempting to eliminate Kashmiri Muslim's ties to Islamic civilization in the 'occupied' territory and that India's 'illegitimate military occupation' of Kashmir is causing discontent throughout South Asia. Ghazali claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party government, led by PM Narendra Modi, not only attempting to destroy all traces of Islamic civilization in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir but from the past ten years, the Modi government has effectively declared a war against Kashmiri Muslims. Indian imperialist activities like converting the Muslim majority into a minority, taking land from local inhabitants, imprisoning innocent Kashmiri civilians, and rendering the Kashmiri people helpless in their state, he continued, are open testimony. He stated that the people of Kashmir reject Indian military occupation and, like Palestine, demand worldwide community attention.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Resize-of-back-page-2.jpg>

The Pasban Hurriyat launched the Free Palestine, Free Kashmir campaign against Israel's occupation of Palestine and India's 'military occupation' of Jammu and Kashmir

Urdupoint, 17 November 2023

Pasban-e-Hurriyat (PH) Jammu and Kashmir declared to launch the 'Free Palestine Free Kashmir Campaign' from 17th November to highlight the plight of Palestinians and Kashmiris in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). While addressing a press conference, Chairman of PH Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, and Vice Chairman Usman Ali Hashim said that protest rallies and demonstrations will be held against the Israeli military occupation and aggression on Palestine and 'Indian military occupation' of Jammu and Kashmir. Speakers strongly condemned the systematic genocide of Muslims, terrorist attacks, and operations by both India and Israel in the holy land of Palestine and the 'IOJK.' They said that India is also a partner of Israel, involved in similar crimes and conspiracies that Israel has committed in Palestine.

The speakers further appealed to the citizens of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to understand the war intentions of India and the criminal acts and intentions of usurping the state behind the so-called peace. They also appealed to the citizens to prepare themselves fully for the defense of their homeland and the freedom of the

occupied state. Speakers appealed to the youth of 'Azad Kashmir' to support the 'Free Palestine Free Kashmir Campaign' against Israel and India and raise their voices for the freedom of both the subjugated states through social media. They demanded the people and the government of Pakistan raise their voices against the war crimes of the aggressor forces in Palestine and Kashmir. Speakers further declared that the campaign will be launched from Neelum district headquarters on 17 November, where a sit-in will be held at Bantal Chowk. Later, a protest rally will be held after Friday prayers.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3810720.html>

From Social Media

PAMIR TIMES ® @pamirtimes

12 November 2023

Awami Action Committee rejects the government's plan of targeted subsidy on wheat in Gilgit-Baltistan. #GilgitBaltistan

Video link:

<https://twitter.com/pamirtimes/status/1723573725117730865>

Mehnaz Parveen @parveen_mehnaz

15 November 2023

Yesterday we created the 1st women-led civil society org in Bunar Das Diامر. The women democratically elected their 1st female president. They'll meet every Friday to deposit

their weekly savings. They agreed that women's financial independence could be the best 1st step forward.

Images in the link:

https://twitter.com/parveen_mehnaz/status/1724784329304465787

Hasnain Ramal @nisarhasnain4

16 November 2023

If November 1, 1947 is the day of independence and recognition of Gilgit-Baltistan Ladakh, then November 16, 1947 is the day when the Pakistani political agent took control of the Republic of Gilgit-Baltistan Ladakh through deception, fraud, political and economic blackmailing.

<https://twitter.com/nisarhasnain4/status/1725176487089713511>

PAMIR TIMES ® @pamirtimes

16 November 2023

The #Diamer #Basha Dam is poised to reach a significant milestone with the diversion of the River Indus for the project by the end of this month. The dam, set for completion in 2028, aims to store 8.1 MAF of water and generate 4500 MW of clean, green, and affordable electricity.

Source: WAPDA

<https://twitter.com/pamirtimes/status/1725038310488191184>

israruddin israr @israruddinisrar

17 November 2017

Civil society Khapulo district Ghanche GB staged a protest against the recent decision of the Govt. regarding hike in rates of wheat. Protestors blocked the main road in Khapulo and demanded the restoration of subsidy on wheat.

<https://twitter.com/israruddinisrar>

Weekly POK News Digest

Volume 3 | Issue 46

13 November - 19 November 2023

Compiled by

Mohd. Usman Bhatti and Muneeb Yousuf

Edited By

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

Disclaimer

PoK weekly News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. MP-IDSa is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: www.idsa.in; Email: pokdigest@gmail.com