

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

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Skardu **POK fake degree**  
**CPEC Gilgit-Baltistan**  
**healthcare tourism**



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES  
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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## Contents

### Political Developments

- GB minister hails Chinese workers killed during KKH construction
- Pakistan stands firm with Kashmiris' struggle for freedom from India: Munir Akram
- India's status in Kashmir is nothing but of an aggressor: APHC
- Former GB chief minister Khalid Khurshid booked in fake degree case
- Saghar expresses concern over Kashmiri political prisoners' plight
- India asked to free Kashmiri human rights defenders
- Kashmir Indian Settler- Colonization
- Evolving Dimensions of Conflict in 'IIOJK'

### Economic Developments

- GB, Unicef ink deal to set up health facilities
- Skardu gets international airport status
- System to check smartphone smuggling in GB, 'AJK' from Sept 1
- Ahsan Iqbal meets CPC leader: Strong Xinjiang-GB link vital for CPEC success

### Vernacular Urdu Media

- Kashmiris boycotted and observed Independence Day as a 'black day'
- The resolution of the long-running Kashmir dispute is essential for the development and maintenance of durable peace in South Asia: 'AJK' PM
- Pakistan is willing to negotiate with India to resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir: Pakistan's ambassador to the US
- It is unfair that non-Kashmiris are occupying the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly: Muhammad Tahir Khokhar

## Political Developments

### **GB minister hails Chinese workers killed during KKH construction**

*Dawn, 15 August 2023*

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Minister of Planning Fathullah Khan has hailed Chinese engineers and workers who lost their lives during the construction of the Karakoram Highway (KKH). He was addressing a ceremony at Gilgit's Old Assembly Hall in honor of the victims' families who arrived from China to visit the graves of their loved ones. Mr. Khan welcomed the guests on behalf of GB Chief Minister Gulbar Khan. Chinese engineers who took part in the construction also attended the event. The minister said the One Belt One Road project became possible after the sacrifices of laborers and engineers during the KKH construction. The chief organiser of the Chinese delegation's visit said veteran engineers and workers are also part of the delegation who have come to 'honour our heroes.' The 42-member delegation arrived in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) through the Khunjerab Pass, the border crossing between Pakistan and China. They visited the Chinese memorial graveyard in the Danyor area of Gilgit and paid homage to the 200 Chinese engineers and labourers who died during the highway's construction from 1966 to 1978. They laid floral wreaths, placed candles, Chinese, gifts

and food at the graves and observed moments of silence.

The victims' families visit the graveyard every year in April. According to Chinese traditions, on 5 April, which heralds the arrival of the spring season, relatives lay flowers and other items on their loved ones' graves and pay their respects. However, in the last three years, Chinese citizens couldn't travel to GB due to the closure of the Khunjerab Pass as the Chinese government imposed restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. The visit was arranged by Mushtaq Hussain Khan, a representative of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The delegation was also accompanied by the officials of the GB government. Mr. Ahmed told Dawn that a total of 200 Chinese engineers and labourers lost their lives during the construction of KKH, of which 88 were buried in the Danyor graveyard. The bodies of other deceased workers were missing.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1770205/gb-minister-hails-chinese-workers-killed-during-kkh-construction>

### **Pakistan stands firm with Kashmiris' struggle for freedom from India: Munir Akram**

*Pakistan Observer, 15 August 2023*

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) Munir Akram in a

message to the UN community on the country's Independence Day, highlighted the struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination and freedom from India. Munir Akram said we will continue to raise Kashmir's call for liberation at the United Nations and in all forums. Freedom is never free, Ambassador Akram said, pointing out that our founding fathers faced vigorous opposition and secured Pakistan through determination, resolve, wisdom, and democratic struggle. He said that today, as we celebrate our independence, we stand firmly with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their struggle for the right to self-determination and freedom. As a resilient nation, he said, Pakistanis overcame security and economic challenges with strength and fortitude, as manifested in the nation's response to the massive floods of 2022.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-stands-firm-with-kashmiris-struggle-for-freedom-from-india-munir-akram/>

### **India's status in Kashmir is nothing but of an aggressor: APHC**

*Pakistan Observer, 16 August 2023*

All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders and organizations in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) have said that India's status in Kashmir is nothing but an aggressor, so it has no

right to celebrate its Independence Day in the territory. APHC leaders Khadim Hussain and Syed Sibte Shabbir Qummi in a joint statement issued in Srinagar said that India had snatched the freedom of Kashmiri Muslims at gunpoint. The leaders said that India was taking their lands, houses, and business centers to make Kashmiri Muslims strangers in their homeland. APHC leader Advocate Devinder Singh Bahl in a statement said that Kashmiri people celebrate India's Independence Day as a black day every year, and every national day of India as a black day. He said that on 5 August 2019, the 'fascist' Modi government violated the rights of the Kashmiri people to turn the Muslim majority of the occupied territory into a minority.

<https://pakobserver.net/indias-status-in-kashmir-is-nothing-but-of-an-aggressor-aphc/>

### **Former GB chief minister Khalid Khurshid booked in fake degree case**

*Dawn, 17 August 2023*

Police registered a case against former Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) chief minister Khalid Khurshid Khan for allegedly possessing a fake law degree. Soon after the registration of the FIR at a Gilgit police station, a sessions court in Astore granted him bail before arrest till 11 September 11. The FIR has been registered on the complaint of former president GB Bar Association Rashid

Omar. Mr. Khan, who is also the president of the GB chapter of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), had been accused of obtaining a lawyer's license from the GB Bar Council after submitting a fake law degree from the University of London and an affidavit in the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad, to get equivalence certificate in 2011. He contested the GB Assembly elections from Astore and was later elected chief minister of the region in 2020. According to the FIR, when the HEC sent the degree for verification to the University of London, the university declared it fake. The HEC later withdrew the equivalence certificate issued to Mr Khan on 12 June, this year, blacklisted his name, and also blocked his Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC). On 4 July, the GB Chief Court disqualified Khalid Khurshid from membership in GB Assembly after his law degree proved to be fake.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1770543/former-gb-chief-minister-khalid-khurshid-booked-in-fake-degree-case>

### **Saghar expresses concern over Kashmiri political prisoners' plight**

*Pakistan Observer, 17 August 2023*

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter Convener, Mahmood Ahmed Saghar, has expressed serious

concern over the plight of 'illegally' detained Kashmiris lodged in different jails of 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) and India. Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad said thousands of Kashmiris including APHC leaders, activists, youth, Ulema, human rights defenders, and journalists have been put in different jails of 'IIOJK' and India for their political beliefs. He said that the jail authorities were not only treating these detainees inhumanely but also intentionally prolonging their illegal detention by not presenting them in courts on the days of hearing of the false cases registered against them. He said that there was no legal or moral justification to keep political leaders in prisons for a long period on fake charges leveled against them by the Indian authorities. He demanded their immediate and unconditional release.

<https://pakobserver.net/saghar-expresses-concern-over-kashmiri-political-prisoners-plight/>

### **India asked to free Kashmiri human rights defenders**

*Dawn, 18 August 2023*

Pakistan urged India to bring an end to the 'illegal' detention of Kashmiri human rights defenders Khurram Pervaiz and Irfan Mehraj and numerous other activists languishing in jails for raising their voices against Indian oppression. The call for the

Modi government was made by Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch at the weekly briefing in the wake of a communication sent to India by UN special procedures for human rights, expressing serious concerns at the arrest, detention, and charges against Mr. Pervaiz and Mr. Mehraj. Mr. Pervaiz, programme coordinator of the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), and Mr. Mehraj, a researcher with JKCCS are detained at Rohini prison in New Delhi. The UN special procedures have expressed concern that their detention is designed to delegitimise their human rights work and to obstruct monitoring of the human rights situation in 'India-held Kashmir.' The spokesperson said the communication by the UN special procedures is yet another indictment of the occupation authorities in India-held Jammu and Kashmir as Delhi continues to silence and harass Kashmiri human rights defenders.

During the briefing, Ms. Baloch touched on various issues, including the security of the Pakistan cricket team in India, the political situation in the country, Afghanistan, terrorist attacks on Chinese engineers, etc. Responding to a question that there will be no separate security arrangement for the Pakistani cricket team during its stay in India for the World Cup matches, the spokesperson said Pakistan believes it

is their [India's] responsibility to provide foolproof security and the right environment for our team to participate, an environment in which our players can participate without fear for their safety and without undue harassment by the spectators in the stands". Asked if any talks are going on between Pakistan and the US on India and Afghanistan, she recalled Pakistan had always said that it would like to partner with all friendly countries to promote peace and dialogue in South Asia, Afghanistan, and in the context of Pakistan-India relations.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1770730/india-asked-to-free-kashmiri-human-rights-defenders>

### **Kashmir Indian Settler- Colonization**

*Daily Parliament Times, 20 August 2023*

Settler colonization is an impact of Indian hegemony, not a cause. The fundamental reason is the stony silence by the sane international community followed by rational Indians, who theoretically understand the stages of settler colonization because they have read the Homica Baba decolonization doctrine; India has consolidated the 'occupation in Kashmir' for seven decades and extended it to the annexation phase at the proper time. The powers who matter in geopolitics and geostrategic did not take sides with humanity bleeding in Kashmir, colonized by India, even though

Universal Human Rights were given mega hype as an achievement in post-WW-II. Kashmiri's sense of agency and dignity is in the precipitation phase; therefore narrative demands a new outlook as per the degree of suppression by India in Post 5th August 2019. Kashmiris race is on the brink of extinction; therefore, settler-colonization is a severe concern. One must not confuse it with the occupation when the internal arrangement was at least preventing the outside settlement, and the state subject was identity. The free hand to New Delhi in post-5 August 2019, no formidable tangible global outcome to halt the unilateral move had given the Indian agencies the extra teeth, accelerating colonization multi-folds while Modi took the political dividend from it.

India kept the considerable Kashmiri masses uninterruptedly in a pressure cooker to deepen the Indian unilateral decision after abrogating special provisions under 370 and 35/A. To abrogate 35/ A is a more lethal vis-à-vis double-barrel assault because it changed the state subject rules and paved the way for colonization by settler. It pretends to mention that Neutrality helped the oppressor and marred the victim. It is the cause behind the saga of the trajectory from 'occupation, annexation, and colonization.' Wlie Wisel rightly

quoted that silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. The rationale for India was that she tried her utmost while using lethal power to crush the resistance but could not, hence the formidable solution to change the majority into a minority. India upgraded an occupation, followed by annexation, and now the settler-colonization.

An Indian scholar Homi K Bhaba defines the critical concept of applying systematic policies when a colonizer wants to keep the geography intact by hook or crook. Ambivalence is the first step among them, generally called the double standard. The ambivalence is that the victim is given the wrong name as the aggressor, and the aggressed becomes the victim because enormous resources are pumped to consolidate this discourse. The Colonizer India has putting all efforts to prove that Kashmiris have no issue with India, but the Kashmiris are supported by outside, and this discourse works. Hence, the victim has little or no support because Homi Bhaba's discourse analysis once applied to the colonized Kashmir, is similar to what Brashers used in India, which India uses in Kashmir.

The second phase is the diaspora because now a huge number of the Kashmiri people live there, and other Diasporas of India have the same issue,

so this is the exciting point where victims can unite. They feel the same connection. They share nostalgia, and they have an identity crisis. The third is Colonizer behaves as a hegemon. The colonizing authorities inculcate in the mind of the masses of the Kashmiris that Indian policy is in the interest of the people, so the education of the people is changed as per the Colonizer's interest as India had introduced the NCERT system. In the identity crisis, the occupier in uniform asks Kashmiris to prove their identity. This physiological trauma has severe consequences.

However, despite this mayhem, the strongest people are the ones who are still kind after the world tore them apart. Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said were core scholars who deconstructed the decolonization theory in Europe and the Middle East. Still, the points raised by Homi K Bhabha of India are relevant to Kashmir when India as Colonizer is in the final phase in Kashmir as psychological effects on colonized are more lethal than colonizers because the 5th August unilateral move with no tangible outcome to warn India had paved the way to publish the strategic map of Akhand Bharat on Walls of the Indian parliament is the strategic line for every ruler to fulfill in coming years. Still, permanent consensus can be reached by accommodating diverse

views and understanding while upholding the UN resolutions.

However, the time factor is vital. When settler-colonization is complete Jammu will also be separated from Kashmir. In the entire region which would be divided into three parts, Kashmiris will be in the minority. The doctrine of Akhand Bharat is not now the only threat to states digested by India from 1947-till date, but the all the SAARC nations have to face the wrath. This is why SAARC nations do not raise the real issues. If we take into account (a) what India did to the states which were independent up to 1974, (b) what is Indian policy when they provided arms to groups against Sri Lanka? What are Indian relations with Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh post their agreements with China? What is the meaning of the painting of Akhand Bharat Map in the newly constructed Indian Parliament? (c) How much India is spending on the military budget annually? Any and everybody can predict the implications of Indian action based on concrete empirical evidence. The SAARC member states need to be careful.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/08/20/kashmir-indian-settler-colonization/>

### **Evolving Dimensions of Conflict in 'HIOJK'**

*Pakistan Observer, 20 August 2023*

The Kashmir Valley's breathtaking scenery, frequently referred to as



'Paradise on Earth,' has been the center of a contentious conflict that has grown over time and assumed new dimensions. The Kashmir dispute is no more a case of territorial dispute. The Kashmir issue transformed from a territorial dispute to a case of human rights violation and international law. But, the revocation of Article 370 on 5th August 2019 by the Indian government has transformed the conflict into a new paradigm of 'Settler Colonialism.' The Kashmir conflict, a case of prolonged 'military occupation' by India, is now under a transitional phase of settler colonialism. The Indian government is now enforcing settler colonial laws to change Kashmir's demography and Muslim majority status. After the revocation of Article 370, there is an influx of non-permanent settlers in 'Indian Occupied Kashmir' (IOK). The Indian government is now fostering the settlement of Non-Kashmiris especially the Indian business community in 'IOK.' The Indian government has started demographic engineering in 'IOK' to demolish the cultural heritage of the Kashmiri Muslims.

The BJP-led Indian government under Modi is trying to portray a different image of the Kashmir conflict. In the era of cyber warfare, the Indian government is depicting an image of peace in 'IIOJK' through its media. By controlling communication and information in the 'occupied territory',

the Indian government is trying to alter the international community's viewpoints on Indian 'illegal occupation.' Modi's led Indian government is highlighting that the intensity of human rights violations in the 'IOK' is reduced but the military landscape of Kashmir shows that the violation is not reduced rather it has only changed its forms.

Before 2019, there were clear indications of organized violence by the Indian army. After 2019, the Indian army has changed the target selection and now their main target is Kashmiri youth. India has been trying to create a semblance of normalcy in Kashmir by promoting tourism. After 2019, India is utilizing the tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir by attracting tourists. India is doing all this to weaken the freedom movement and to strengthen the occupation. The introduction of UAE's Amman Group to 'IIOJK' as a foreign investor is now changing the situation and dimensions of conflict. The ownership of agricultural lands is taken from the Kashmiri tribes and the military has started to expropriate the land. Amman Group is investing trillions of dollars in the establishment of a 500 shops-based shopping mall in Kashmir. This mall will not be appealing to the average Kashmiri rather it is for the extremely wealthy settlers and military officials.

India is also in the process of setting up 42 industrial units in Kashmir. These industries, if established, will bring more militarisation to the region in the shape of security and more and more Kashmir land will be taken by settlers from the Kashmiri. India is trying to engineer and merge Kashmir's traditional industry into a large-scale industry. Dubai would try to produce cheap things by exploiting the labor of Kashmir to appeal to foreign markets. They are building industrial terminals in Srinagar. These policies are extremely threatening and it is adjunct to Indian colonialism in Kashmir. There is a need to understand the Kashmir conflict in multitudinous ways. Pakistan should try to internationalize this conflict. Pakistan should engage international players to highlight the dispute and should work diplomatically to provide Kashmiris with their right to self-determination. Pakistan needs to develop strong economic and diplomatic ties with other states through which Pakistan can influence them to talk about the Kashmir issue and resolve it. The use of hard power and war would never result in the resolution of the Kashmir conflict, rather it would create problems for both countries and the people of Kashmir.

<https://pakobserver.net/evolving-dimensions-of-conflict-in-iiobjk/>

## [Economic Developments](#)

### **GB, Unicef ink deal to set up health facilities**

*Dawn, 13 August 2023*

Gilgit-Baltistan government and Unicef have signed an agreement to establish essential healthcare facilities, according to a press release issued by the region's chief secretary. The initiative also includes the provision of mobile maternity clinics in remote valleys. Under the project, early childhood healthcare facilities will be set up and expanded in 120 schools while sanitation facilities under the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene programme will be established in 100 girls' schools. The project will cost \$5 million. The chief secretary, Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani, called the collaboration 'groundbreaking', and added that it reflected the shared commitment of Unicef and the GB government to improve the health and well-being of children and mothers in the region. The programme also includes the establishment of a social registry in GB which, the chief secretary said will play a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of social welfare programs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1769859/gb-unicef-ink-deal-to-set-up-health-facilities>

## **Skardu gets international airport status**

*The Nation, 13 August 2023*

After the landing of the first international flight of Pakistan International Airline (PIA), Skardu got the status of an international airport. On the occasion of Pakistan's 76th Independence Day, the first international flight of PIA – flight 234 – from Dubai landed in Skardu. The passengers on board were welcomed with the iconic traditional caps of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and thoughtful gifts. The airport authorities paid a vibrant tribute to the historic moment by presenting a water cannon salute to the aircraft upon its arrival. The captain of the flight ceremoniously opened the cockpit window and unfurled the national flag, in celebration of Pakistan's Independence Day. This gesture encapsulated the spirit of unity and pride that defines the nation on this historic day.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Aug-2023/skardu-gets-international-airport-status>

## **System to check smartphone smuggling in GB, AJK from Sept 1**

*Dawn, 15 August 2023*

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has announced that the Device Identification, Registration, and Blocking System (DIRBS) will be launched in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and

'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) next month. The state-owned Special Communications Organisation (SCO) and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) have settled all legal hitches for the enforcement of DIRBS to end the smuggling of smartphones in these areas. The PTA has announced that after 1 September, the non-registered devices will have to go through the registration process by paying taxes and complying with standards. PTA spokesperson added that all available devices will be paired with their numbers and the device will be registered. All mobile devices must be registered with the PTA, failing which local SIMs will be deactivated and the unregistered devices will stop functioning. The PTA and FBR launched DIRBS in June 2018 and the FBR collected taxes on the unregistered mobile phone sets brought into the country by individuals or through illegal channels.

However, due to FBR's jurisdiction issue, DIRBS could not be launched in the GB and the 'AJK', as a result, the usage of unregistered phones using SIMs issued by SCO became widespread in those areas. Manzar Hussain, a mobile phone businessman in Gilgit, said that non-duty paid phones either coming from China or even from Pakistan itself had higher profit margins. Since SCO is primarily functioning in GB and 'AJK', the non-

duty paid phones to operate at SCO, and due to tax saving a large number of users obtain such phones and get the SCO numbers too, Mr. Hussain said, adding that the SCO numbers operate in mainstream Pakistan too as the SCO has network sharing business deal with Ufone. Under these conditions, the sale of unregistered phones in GB and 'AJK' had become a booming business in recent years, whereas the Pakistan Mobile Phone Manufacturers Association (PMPMA) had expressed its concerns to former minister for IT and telecom Syed Amin ul Haque. To address this discrepancy, the IT Ministry reached out to the federal cabinet and got integration of SCO into the DIRBS system. DIRBS system was introduced to safeguard local mobile device manufacturing and discourage the import and smuggling of mobile sets, said PMPMA vice-chairman Muzaffar Paracha. With DIRBS in GB and 'AJK' local industry will grab at least 20 percent of that market by the year-end, he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1770235/system-to-check-smartphone-smuggling-in-gb-ajk-from-sept-1>

### **Ahsan Iqbal meets CPC leader: Strong Xinjiang-GB link vital for CPEC success**

*Pakistan today, 20 August 2023*

Former federal minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal called on Ma Xingrui, a

Member of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Xinjiang Uyghurs Autonomous Regional Committee. He was accompanied by Senator Mahmood-ul-Hassan and other officials of the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, a news release said. The Chinese side also included Erkin Tuniyas, Governor of Xinjiang, Chen Weijun, Executive Vice-Chairman of the People's Government of Xinjiang, Kaysar Abdukerin, Vice Chairman of the People's Government of Xinjiang and other high-ranking officials from Xinjiang. While warmly welcoming the Pakistani side, party secretary Ma Xingrui remarked that both countries have withstood the vicissitudes of times, despite the global political landscape. He conveyed President Xi Jinping's strong commitment to further solidify Pakistan-China strategic cooperative partnerships in diverse fields. Party Secretary Ma lauded the statesmanship, professionalism, and educational background of Prof Ahsan Iqbal which enabled valuable contribution towards the development and success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He called him a seasoned and accomplished politician to make more contributions toward the success of CPEC in the future. He remarked that President Xi Jinping desired to make

CPEC an 'exemplary' Project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with Xinjiang playing a central role in regional and economic development. The Party Secretary reaffirmed his Government's strong commitment to fully realize the potential of the Khunjab-Sost-Kashgar border market. Ahsan Iqbal congratulated the senior leadership of Xinjiang on the successful hosting of the China-Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo-2023 in Urumqi.

He praised the CPC leadership for achieving significant industrial growth and economic development besides addressing terrorism and extremism issues in Xinjiang. While underlying that Xinjiang is strategically located on the map of the world, Iqbal termed Xinjiang as a 'gateway' to Pakistan and proposed to establish a Border Market across Khunjab Pass to promote trade, development, and investment across both countries. He shared his vision to connect Xinjiang with Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Gwadar regions through the development of road and railway networks, which could provide Xinjiang shortest route to the seaport. He also proposed to establish a dedicated Joint Working Group on the promotion of trade, development, and cultural cooperation between GB and Xinjiang, under the framework of CPEC. He stressed that 'Strong links between Xinjiang and GB are vital for the success of CPEC.

He urged the need for exchange programmes between Xinjiang and GB universities for promoting youth engagement. Senator Mahmood-ul-Hassan proposed to streamline custom clearance procedures at Tashgurkan and Urumqi airports to facilitate trade and commercial activities. Party Secretary Ma Xingrui accepted the proposal to establish a border market at the Pak-China border and directed to establish a team to work out details. Both sides agreed to establish a Joint Working Group to develop a long-term Collaboration Plan through structured engagement between GB and Xinjiang for the enhancement of trade, development, investment, and connectivity. It was termed necessary to strengthen people-to-people contacts, cultural and educational exchange programmes between the two sides.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/08/20/ahsan-iqbal-meets-cpc-leader-strong-xinjiang-gb-link-vital-for-cpec-success/>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

#### **Kashmiris boycotted and observed Independence Day as a 'black day'**

*Nawaiwaqat, 16 August 2023*

Kashmiris in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and 'Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) commemorated India's Independence Day as a dark day in protest of India's forcible and illegal possession of Jammu

and Kashmir State. A protest march was held in district Mirpur to mark the black day, and a unanimous resolution was also voted to advise India to refrain from initiating any attack against Pakistan or 'AJK.' Slogans were raised during the protests, which read, 'If India dared to launch any attack against Pakistan or 'AJK', every individual is fully prepared to defend inch by inch of the motherland-shoulder to shoulder with valiant armed forces of Pakistan.' The Pakistani people were praised by the protesters for their steadfast support of Kashmiris' right to self-determination. India's Independence Day was observed as a 'black day' across all major and minor towns in the liberated territory, including the capital city of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimbher, Rawalakot, Bagh, Palandri, Neelam Valley, Jhelum Valley, Havaili, and other towns and villages.

Through another resolution, the rally urged the international community, in particular the UN, to promptly assist in restoring the special status of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir to find a peaceful solution under the UN resolutions. It urged the world body to intervene to end India's state terrorism and brutality against helpless civilians in 'OJK'. The rally, through yet another unanimously approved resolution, urged international human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International, Red Cross, Human Rights

Watch, and others, to take immediate action to ensure the supply of food and medications to save the lives of those who were being held in their homes in the 'OJK.' The protesters further urged the UN, the United States, and other civilised nations to act immediately to prevent the 'extremist' Indian Prime Minister Modi from carrying out an act of 'state terrorism' because India was preparing to carry out the largest staged massacre of Muslim-majority 'OJK.' It emphasised that if the international community failed to stop India, the entire world, and South Asia in particular, may suffer from an endless world war.

<https://www.nawairwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/AJK/2023-08-16/page-1>

**The resolution of the long-running Kashmir dispute is essential for the development and maintenance of durable peace in South Asia: 'AJK' PM**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 16 August 2023*

The settlement of the protracted Kashmir conflict is inextricably tied to long-term peace and development in South Asia, according to Prime Minister 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq. The 'AJK' premier in a statement claimed that Kashmiris across the world and on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) had commemorated India's Independence Day as a 'black day' in protest of its unlawful and

‘forcible occupation’ of their motherland. He claimed that Kashmiris have repeatedly demonstrated their opposition to India's ‘illegitimate occupation’ of the region. He expressed concerns over the devastating effects of conflict on the lives of the Kashmiri people and expressed regret that the long-standing issue still outstanding on the UN agenda remained unresolved and that the future of the Kashmiri nation had been hanging for the last 76 years. He stressed that it was high time for the UN to take action to carry out its resolutions on Kashmir.

He claimed that despite employing every form of oppression and repression available, India had been unable to quell the Kashmiris' legitimate fight for the right to self-determination that had been promised to them by the international community. He claimed that the Kashmir dispute is an internationally recognised issue and that the illegal measures taken by the Indian government on and after 5 August 2019, will not alter the status of the conflict. He claimed that India cannot force its will on the people of Kashmir and added that Kashmiris will keep fighting until they succeed in freeing themselves from ‘India's occupation.’

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Resize-of-FRONT-PGE-16.jpg>

### **Pakistan is willing to negotiate with India to resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir: Pakistan's ambassador to the US**

*Urdupoint, 16 August 2023*

The ambassador of Pakistan to the United States (US), Sardar Masood Khan, emphasised that the US can help resolve the crisis in Jammu and Kashmir. The envoy stated on a private TV network that Pakistan is willing to engage in negotiations with India to resolve all differences, including the Kashmir issue. In response to a question about China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), He responded that the US should join the CPEC programmes since there is nothing wrong with it. In response to another question, he stated that the terrorists are purportedly using Afghan territory to jeopardise the stability of Pakistan.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3690879.html>

### **It is unfair that non-Kashmiris are occupying the ‘AJK’ Legislative Assembly: Muhammad Tahir Khokhar**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 18 August 2023*

Former Tourism and Transport Minister and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Central Leader Muhammad Tahir Khokhar in a media

briefing said that the 'Azad Kashmir' Legislative Assembly has been occupied by a few non-Kashmiri members and that the Prime Minister should remove them from the cabinet. He said that it is unfair to the state's citizens to have non-state residents join the cabinet. He said that PTI members Ghulam Mohiuddin, Riyaz Ahmed, Asim Butt, and Javed Ahmed are not Kashmiri refugees; rather, they are non-state and non-Kashmiri individuals who created fictitious state subjects to prevent Kashmiri refugees living in Pakistan to enter the corridors of power and, based on that, non-state individuals entered the revered chambers of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly. He said that we appeal to the higher institutions to investigate how fake state subjects were issued to these non-state persons with the connivance of the local bureaucracy.

He stated that in addition to removing non-state and non-Kashmiri members from his cabinet, Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq ought to pass stringent resolutions governing residency, issue a computerised resident status, and revoke the citizenship of all fictitious state subjects of non-Kashmiri descent. He claimed that despite the local citizens already experiencing challenges such as inflation, unemployment, and other issues, the non-state citizens were stripping the

Kashmiri citizens of their rights by assimilating into the state.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Resize-of-page-4-17.jpg>

### [Social Media \(tweets\)](#)

**Information Department, Gilgit-Baltistan** @infogbgovt

14 August 2023

Skardu: The first international flight from Dubai landed at Skardu Airport with 80 passengers. #DubaitoSkarduflight #Gilgit #Pakistan #IndependenceDayPakistan #PIA #IncredibleGB.

<https://twitter.com/infogbgovt/status/1690942895589879809>

**Information Department, Gilgit-Baltistan** @infogbgovt

16 August 2023

#Gilgit: 30 MW Ghuwari HPP bid opened today by P&DD, Finance & CMIT GB reps. A step towards ending power crisis in #Skardu & boosting electricity for #Ghanche District. #GhuwariHPP #GBPower@csgbpbk.

<https://twitter.com/infogbgovt/status/1691766407241884004>

**Basharat Issa** @BasharatIssa

17 August 2023

The locals are getting greedier & the tourists are getting nastier in Gilgit-



Baltistan. There is a tough competition between the both to ruin everything up in the mountains, from the fragile ecology, culture to peace. This is further fuelled by capitalist investors.

<https://twitter.com/BasharatIssa/status/1692137651422245063>

**Daily K2 @Dailyk2\_GB**

*17 August 2023*

PIA's only ATR aircraft for Gilgit entered the engineering complex. The plane had faced a technical problem yesterday. The captain left the empty plane from Gilgit to Islamabad this morning. The flights were eventually canceled after the plane was inspected in Islamabad.

[https://twitter.com/Dailyk2\\_GB/status/1692082771454542246](https://twitter.com/Dailyk2_GB/status/1692082771454542246)

**ILYAS @ilyas\_siachen**

*20 August 2023*

History repeats itself. In 1950, Karachi Agreement was falsely signed with the signature of President Kashmir, resulting in #GilgitBaltistan coming under the direct control of Pakistan. President Kashmir Sardar Ibrahim later denied signing this agreement. @HamidMirPAK.

[https://twitter.com/ilyas\\_siachen/status/1693213016123216090](https://twitter.com/ilyas_siachen/status/1693213016123216090)

# Weekly POK News Digest

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**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.*



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