

# Weekly POK News Digest

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

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**power crisis** Gilgit-Baltistan Net POK royalty Hydel wheat subsidy Profits state subject provincial Charter of Demands status Diemer-Bhasha non-local **autonomy**



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## Political Developments

### **Justice continues to elude Gaw Kadal massacre victims in 'IIOJK'**

*Pakistan Today, 22 January 2024*

Justice continues to elude the victims of the Gaw Kadal massacre victims in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) despite the passage of 34 years. A report released by Kashmir Media Service said that over 50 people were martyred in the Gaw Kadal area of Srinagar on 21 January 1990 when Indian troops had resorted to indiscriminate firing on peaceful demonstrators who were protesting against the molestation of several women by troops, the previous night. Indian troops had committed scores of brutal massacres since 1989 in 'IIOJK', it said, adding that over 96,287 Kashmiris had fallen to the Indian bullets in the past 35 years and that the memories of Gaw Kadal like bloodbaths were still fresh in the minds of Kashmiris.

The report pointed out that the aim of committing massacres was to instill fear among the people of Kashmir, adding that the large-scale killings of the Kashmiris were also meant to change the demography of the territory by turning its Muslim majority status into a minority. The Gaw Kadal and other massacres are a reminder of the criminal face of the 'occupation' troops, the report deplored and added that the RSS-backed Indian regime had planned to carry out more Gaw Kadal-like carnages in the 'occupied' territory. It

lamented that the Hindutva-inspired Modi had broken all records of atrocities in the occupied territory.

However, the report said, wanton killings would not deter the Kashmiris from pursuing their struggle for the right to self-determination and they would not rest till achieving freedom from Indian yoke. The report urged the international rights bodies to probe massacres committed by Indian troops in 'IIOJK.' The world must play its role to punish the culprits of Gaw Kadal and other massacres in the territory, adding that the killing fields of Kashmir was a challenge to the so-called civilized world. Meanwhile, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK), including General Secretary Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Imtiyaz Ahmed Shah, among other prominent Hurriyat leaders have paid glowing tributes to the martyrs of Gaw Kadal massacre on their 34 martyrdom anniversary.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1163146/justice-continues-to-elude-gaw-kadal-massacre-victims-in-iiojk/>

### **Report on the state of religious freedom in 'IIOJK' exposes India's true face**

*Pakistan Today, 22 January 2024*

As World Religion Day is being observed globally, today, India continues to suppress religious freedom in 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK). A report compiled by Kashmir Media Service in connection with the Day said, the violation of the

sanctity of historic Jamia Masjid Srinagar during a military operation in August 1989, the desecration of Dargah Hazratbal during the worst military siege in November 1993, and the burning of Charar-e-Sharif in May 1995 are some of the glaring examples how India is treating the religion freedom in 'OJK.' Besides, the Jamia Masjid, Srinagar, was kept shut by the authorities for Friday prayers for three years following the 05 August 2019 move.

Eid and Shab-e-Qadr prayers were also not allowed in the Jamia Masjid on the holiest night of the year for Muslims, Shab-e-Qadr, last year. On this night during Ramadan, people from across the territory throng the mosque to pray throughout the night. The administration cited law and order problems for this ban and only a few days later it disallowed Eid prayers in the old town of Eidgah where they are held traditionally and asked for these prayers to be carried out inside the Jamia Masjid. Notably, 'praying in the open' is an important part of Eid prayers. There is no doubt that such tactics are not only violations of religious freedom but have also become a part of the psychological warfare that India is applying against the Kashmiri Muslims.

Moreover, in an incident of blatant breach of religious place, Indian soldiers led by an officer barged into Zadoora Jamia Masjid in Pulwama district on the intervening night of 23 June and 24 June in 2023 and forced the

worshippers to chant the Hindu slogan 'Jai Shri Ram' over the loudspeakers of the mosque. This desecration is part of the psychological warfare and is done with full knowledge of the consequences. In 2013, as the videos of an incident of the desecration of a mosque and Quran by the troops went viral, Muslims in the region protested and were met with brute force, leading to the death of four protesters. Muslim clerics from Kashmir have often been subjected to detention without charges. In 2022, 7 prominent religious leaders including Maulana Abdul Rashid Dawoodi, Maulana Mushtaq Ahmad Veeri, Fahim Ramzan, and Ghazi Moinul Islam were arrested from different areas of occupied Kashmir and sent to a jail in Jammu region.

Maulana Sarjan Barkati was arrested on 16 September 2023 and remains in jail. Ahead of the 05 August 2019 illegal action, the Modi government banned Jamaat-e-Islami and arrested about 300 members of the organization, including its Ameer, Dr Abdul Hameed Fayaz. The attacks by the 'Indian occupation' on Islam and Muslims in 'occupied Kashmir' have not only been blatant and evident but stealth and under cover too. While Friday sermons by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and other prominent religious leaders have been disallowed owing either to their house arrests or detentions, an 'Indianized' version of Friday sermons is being popularized.

<https://pakobserver.net/report-on-state-of-religious-freedom-in-iiojk-exposes-indias-true-face/>

## Haris Qadeer challenges the appointment of CPSC 'AJK'

*Daily Parliament Times, 23 January 2024*

The appointment of the newly appointed Chairman of the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Public Service Commission (PSC) Lt. Gen. (retd) Hidayatur Rehman has been challenged in the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has issued a notice to the parties and asked for an explanation within a week. The writ petition was filed by Haris Qadeer, a well-known senior journalist from Rawalkot, on whose behalf Syed Zulqarnain Naqvi Advocate is pursuing the case. The petitioner has taken the stand that the newly appointed Chairman of PSC is not a state subject and that he must be a state subject for this post.

Chief Justice Raja Sadaqat remarked that to be appointed Chairman of PSC it is necessary to be a state subject but it is not necessary to be a state subject holder. The petitioner's counsel argued that proof of being a state subject can only be given through the state subject certificate, and there is no record of the newly appointed chairman PSC with the Department of Services and General Administration. The Chief Justice has sought clarification from the parties in a week. It should be noted that Lieutenant General (R) Hidayatur Rehman was appointed as Chairman of PSC by the 'Azad Kashmir' government on 13 January. He belongs to the Astoor district of GB. He is the first three-star general of GB. It should

also be noted that GB is a part of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, for the past several decades, the Pakistan Citizenship Act has been implemented by suspending the state-subject role from GB. Due to this, not only the allegations of changing the demography of GB but also the allotment of lands to non-local people have been coming forward. Now that the state subject role does not exist in GB, in such circumstances, the citizens of GB have the right to buy and sell land including employment in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' or not. The decision of this also has to be decided through the said case. Similarly, it will also be decided by the court whether the citizens of GB can be called the state of Jammu and Kashmir despite the end of the state-subject rule or not.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/01/23/haris-qadeer-challenges-the-appointment-of-cpsc-ajk/>

## PML-N lawmaker takes oath in 'AJK' assembly

*Dawn, 23 January 2024*

Chaudhry Mohammad Ismail of PML-N took oath as a member of the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Legislative Assembly on Monday, hours after the 'AJK' Election Commission (EC) notified his victory from LA-35, Jammu-II, one of the 12 constituencies of Pakistan-based refugees from India that 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar administered the oath to him in his chamber. Speaking to reporters on the

occasion, Mr Ismail said that the 2021 elections to the 'AJK' assembly were manipulated by the then PTI governments in Islamabad and Punjab to create a 'fake majority' for their party, 'which stands nowhere now.'

Right on the polling day, I raised my voice in all possible forums that I have been deceitfully deprived of my right to represent the voters of my constituency, but to no avail, he said. My victory in the recount has vindicated my stance on the one hand and reconfirmed the popularity of our party on the other, he added. Mr Ismail was declared the duly elected candidate by the returning officer on Sunday following the recounting of the votes polled in all 142 polling stations in his constituency on the orders of the 'AJK' Supreme Court. Earlier in July 2021, the Election Commission notified PTI's Chaudhry Maqbool Ahmed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1807924/pml-n-lawmaker-takes-oath-in-ajk-assembly>

### **Protests in Srinagar against sealing of mosque's bank accounts by Modi regime**

*Pakistan Observer, 24 January 2024*

The Narendra Modi-led Indian government while blatantly interfering in religious matters has sealed the bank accounts of a Masjid in Srinagar, triggering forceful anti-India protest demonstrations in the city. According to Kashmir Media Service, the bank accounts of the Masjid, named after prominent Sufi cleric Khawaja Habibullah Nowshahri, were frozen in

the Nowshehra area of Srinagar. The move triggered protests. Speaking to the media, the protesters said the authorities have sealed the accounts on the baseless charge of 'misappropriation' of funds at the historical mosque. They said that interference in religious matters has increased manifold since the Bharatiya Janata Party has taken charge of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board.

The protesters strongly denied the allegations and said that they have been asking for proof from authorities for the past many weeks, but they have failed to provide any proof. The protesters said that the act was part of the larger conspiracy to take over the charge of the Masjid and a dargah located adjacent to the Masjid.

<https://pakobserver.net/protests-in-srinagar-against-sealing-of-mosques-bank-accounts-by-modi-regime/>

### **India's Republic Day brings more miseries to 'IIOJK' people**

*Pakistan Observer, 25 January 2024*

India's Republic Day, the 26th of January, has brought more miseries to the oppressed people of 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir (OJK) as Indian troops have intensified checking and frisking in Srinagar city and other parts of the territory in the name of so-called security measures. According to Kashmir Media Service, Indian army, paramilitary and police personnel have been deployed in strength around two stadiums in Jammu and Srinagar cities, the main venues of the Republic Day



functions in Jammu region and Kashmir Valley. The so-called security around the venues of Republic Day functions at district headquarters has been beefed up with a multi-layer security apparatus put in place.

Indian troops and policemen are maintaining a close vigil on all vehicles, commuters, and pedestrians entering Srinagar and Jammu cities. Police personnel can be seen carrying out surprise checks of the vehicles at the entry and exit points and frisking motorcyclists and passengers of vehicles across the cities. Similar reports have emerged from other parts of the territory. Heavy deployment of Indian forces' personnel has been made across occupied Kashmir to keep a watch on the movement of people. The forces' personnel have set up checkpoints on every road and chowk where commuters and pedestrians are being frisked and vehicles are checked thoroughly. The occupation authorities have directed the employees of all government offices and schools to attend the Indian Republic Day functions.

<https://pakobserver.net/indias-republic-day-brings-more-miseries-to-iiojk-people-2/>

### **GB discontent**

*Dawn, 25 January 2024*

DISCONTENT is brewing once again in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), where locals have been demonstrating for more than a month over various issues. Topping the list of their grievances is the rise in the price of subsidised wheat for the

region. They are also agitating against lengthy power cuts and the Finance Act, of 2023. Organised by the Awami Action Committee (AAC), protests have been held across the region, accompanied by strikes, as people brave the cold weather to draw the state's attention to their demands. The local people say that the region's geography does not make it suitable for sufficient wheat production, hence there is resistance every time the federal government seeks to reduce the subsidy, which has been in place since the Bhutto era. Protesters also say that extensive power outages are crippling life, particularly during the unforgiving winter.

They are objecting to the Finance Act, of 2023, as according to them, if taxes are to be imposed on the region, it should have representation in the National Assembly. These protests in GB are not new. Yet, unfortunately, successive federal governments have not been able to resolve these problems satisfactorily; the region seems to be low on the priority list of those who rule this country. While it is true that the nation is facing an economic crisis, a workable solution needs to be found to the wheat subsidy issue, considering GB's specific conditions, while also keeping in mind the state's financial position. Lawmakers and civil society should be taken on board by the state to address this issue.

Similarly, the problem of power cuts needs to be resolved, while the taxation issue is tied to the region's long-standing demands for provincial

status. The state is hesitant to make GB a province, pending a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute with India. This can be addressed by increasing GB's autonomy and giving it a provisional voice in the national legislature short of full provincial status. It is, indeed, unfair for the center to benefit from GB, and not pay heed to its people's legitimate demands. The state should engage the protesters and promise to look into their demands, while the next federal government should work on a long-term plan to address GB's problems. Ultimately, the vast region should not be run via remote control from Islamabad, but by an empowered local legislature.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1808429/gb-discontent>

### **'AJK's Mirpur Division sees mass anti-India rallies as people observed Indian Republic Day as Black Day**

*Daily Parliament Times, 26 January 2024*

People from all three districts of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), including the largest Mirpur division, representing all aspects of civil society, commemorated Indian Republic Day as a black day, urging the world community to take prompt action to ensure an early peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. While repeating strong animosity for India and demanding the immediate grant of the right to self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which has been denied by India to the people of Kashmir for the past 76 years due to India's unlawful 'military occupation'

of 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' state. The protest rallies followed by mammoth anti-India demonstrations were held in the Mirpur, Kotli, and Bhimber districts. In lakeside Mirpur, a mass protest rally was staged by civil society to mark 26 January 'India's Yome Jamuria' as Black Day, in collaboration with district administration, lawyers, traders, social and political activists from district Court premises to Chowk Shaheedan.

Chairman of national events organizing committee, deputy commissioner Mirpur Ch. Yasir Riaz, SSP Kamran Ali, tehsildar Ch. Imran Yousaf, trade union leaders Raja Rasheed and Tariq Mallick, District Bar Association Secretary General Fazal e Raziq Advocate, and leaders of various social and political groups led the rally from from District court's compound, which passed through major city streets and culminated at central Shaheed chowk. Participants, wearing Black bands around their arms, chanted anti-India slogans and against Indian 'occupational forces' for committing massive human rights violations in the bleeding vale of 'IIOJK.' The demonstrating mob displayed banners inscribed with slogans of freedom. The demonstrations and rallies were also held across the top educational institutions including the local colleges.

In Mirpur city elders representing all segments of the civil society highlighted the importance of early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem besides registering protest against the continued forcible and



‘illegal Indian occupation’ of a major part of Jammu And Kashmir State. Addressing the rally at Shaheed Chowk, speakers called upon the world community to ensure a peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute by the UN Resolutions and Kashmiri people's wishes. They said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir would continue their struggle till the freedom of ‘OJK’ from ‘Indian illegal occupation.’

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/01/26/ajks-mirpur-division-bangs-with-mass-anti-india-rallies-as-people-observed-indian-republic-day-as-black-day/>

### **What are the 15 demands of the Awami Action Committee?**

*Pamir Times, 27 January 2024*

The Awami Action Committee (AAC) has joined hands with religious and political organizations, to mobilize tens of thousands of people across Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) to press the governments in Islamabad and Gilgit for resolution of long-standing issues plaguing the masses. A translated version of the 15 points Charter of Demands presented by the Awami Action Committee is as follows:

Freeze wheat subsidy at 2022 rates. Provide each person with 9 kilograms of wheat a month.

Cancel GB Finance Act 2023 and end all taxes imposed in GB.

End the successive governments’ ‘artificially created power crisis’ in the region and increase electricity production.

Sign an agreement with the federal govt on the lines of the National Finance Commission to get financial resources for GB.

Accept ownership of locals over all uncultivated and bare land through the GB Reforms Bill.

Replace GB Assembly with a constituent assembly.

Provide free electricity to GB from the Diamer-Bhasha Dam and give 80% royalty to GB instead of Water User Rights and Net Hydel Profits.

Cancel all mining leases given to non-locals and award the leases to locals of GB.

Declare Tourism and Transportation as Industries in GB.

Construct Shounter Tunnel to promote tourism in GB.

Construct medical and engineering colleges in GB.

Establish a university for women in GB.

Restore all ancient trade routes and roads.

Award Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) contracts to local contractors in GB.

Make Northern Areas Transport Corporation (NATCO) profitable by giving it a transportation contract for wheat supply.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/01/27/what-are-the-15-demands-of-the-awami-action-committee/>

## Pressure mounts on authorities as GB protests widen

*Dawn, 28 January 2024*

Life in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) remained paralysed for a second consecutive day as protests grew against the hike in wheat prices and other grievances. Demonstrations were staged in various districts of the region including Astore, Diamer, Ghizer, Hunza, Nagar, Skardu, Shigar, Kharmang, and Ghanche districts. Main roads including Karakoram Highway, Skardu Road, and Ghizer Road wore a deserted look as protests were staged on various sections of these roads. People faced challenges in purchasing daily commodities and traveling to their destinations. The Awami Action Committee (ACC) had given the protest call as part of Plan B under the protest movement that had been underway for the past month.

Hundreds of people on motorbikes took out rallies from Hunza district and Ghizer district to reach Gilgit before joining the central protest demonstration at Ittehad Chowk. The rally participants were accorded a warm welcome by locals at various points along the route. Protest rallies will move towards Gilgit from Nagar, Astore, and Diamer districts (today) on Sunday. Likewise, rallies took place from various areas of Skardu and travelled to join the main Protest venue Yadgar-i-Shuhada Skardu where 32th day daily protest sit-in continued on Saturday. According to experts, it was a successful strike and protest in the

history of GB as thousands of people participated in protest rallies. Routine life in GB remained paralysed across the region in two days.

The protesters said they would call off the strike after the authorities meet their 15 demands, including the restoration of subsidised wheat rate at the 2022 level, suspension of the Finance Act 2022, withdrawal of various taxes, ensuring GB's share in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, and provision of land ownership rights to locals. The charter of demands said all leases granted to the outsiders for the exploration of minerals should be canceled, 80 percent royalty of Diamer-Bhasha Dam under net hydel profit should be given to GB people, ensure electricity supply to GB residents ending power outages, establishing medical and engineering and colleges in the region.

While addressing the crowd at Etihad Chowk, Advocate Ehsan Ali, the ACC chief organiser, said it was decided to call off the protest after fulfillment of the 15-point charter of demands. GB has been getting subsidies on 10 items since the 1970s, they were removed one by one, now the only subsidy on wheat for GB people was also being removed, it is an injustice, he said. He said it was a universal principle that for people who had no constitutional rights and facilities, the state provided subsidies to the residents and could not impose taxes.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1809202/pressure-mounts-on-authorities-as-gb-protests-widen>

## Economic Developments

### **GB wheat protests set to intensify from today**

*Dawn, 24 January 2024*

The ongoing protests against a hike in the subsidised wheat prices in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) are set to intensify, with the Awami Action Committee (AAC) announcing the next phase of demonstrations involving a complete shutter-down strike in Skardu today (Wednesday) and region-wide protests from Friday. Under the strike, shops, markets, trade centers, hotels, and other businesses will remain closed from 2 pm onwards, creating a standstill in the area's commercial activities. Residents have already been facing challenges in buying essentials due to the closure of stores. Thousands of people have participated in three-hour daily sit-ins at Skardu's Yadgar-i-Shuhada. The protesters have vowed that their demonstrations would continue until the decision to hike subsidised wheat prices is revoked. They have also demanded the government improve the electricity supply and repeal the finance bill.

On Tuesday, a protest march started from Hoper Valley in Nagar and was directed towards the Gilgit district. The participants, carrying banners and chanting slogans against the government and in favor of their demands, were on foot, with many protesters joining them on the way. The protesters passed through Nagar Khas and entered the Karakoram Highway, reaching Gulmat, Nagar, near the

Rakaposhi viewpoint by evening. The group planned to stay at Ghumat for the night before continuing their march towards Gilgit on Wednesday. Protesters from Sikandar-abad, Chalt, and other villages blocked the Karakoram Highway at Harspodas, the district headquarters of Nagar.

Sit-ins were also observed in Garibagh, Gilgit, with additional demonstrations taking place in the Yasin Valley of Ghizer, as well as in the Shigar and Ghanche districts. Meanwhile, the AAC has outlined the next phase of its protest strategy. At a core committee meeting in Gilgit, led by AAC chief organiser Ehsan Ali Advocate, the members decided to implement 'Plan B' of their movement. Mr Ali, addressing the protesters in Garibagh, announced a region-wide shutter-down and wheel-jam strike across all 10 districts of Gilgit-Baltistan on 26 January and 27 January. He emphasised that massive protest demonstrations are scheduled across the region on these dates, with a central protest planned at Garibagh. He also cautioned that if the government fails to retract its decision, a more intensified 'Plan C' will be announced on Saturday. The GB's transporters association and drivers' union leaders also participated in the protest sit-ins.

Protesters, braving harsh weather, have been on the roads for over a month, expressing frustration over the government's reluctance to address their demands. They warned that any delay in meeting their demands would lead to an expansion of the protest

movement. Furthermore, they held the government accountable for any adverse incidents that might occur during the demonstrations. The protesters have also highlighted that the current demonstrations in Gilgit-Baltistan are being organised on a bigger scale than the gatherings by political parties in other parts of the country. They expressed disappointment over the lack of response from both the caretakers at the helm in Pakistan and the GB's government, emphasising that their demands are not limited to the reversal of the wheat price hike but also include the fulfillment of other critical needs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1808168/gb-wheat-protests-set-to-intensify-from-today>

### **Worries are mounting as snowfall decreases in Gilgit-Baltistan this winter**

*Pamir Times, 24 January 2024*

Residents of the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region, probably the coldest area in Pakistan, are startled by the sharp decrease in snowfall in the region this winter. 92% of 857 respondents, during a survey conducted by Pamir Times, said that they were worried about the lack of snowfall in GB. Only 8 percent of the respondents thought snow will return next year. Reduction in snowfall, however, is not the only trend observed in GB this year. Overall, the temperatures have been up across the region, compared to last year and the year before. GB Tourism Department had to reschedule and relocate a major winter sports event because the water

didn't freeze enough to build durable ice rinks, said Tourism Secretary Asif Ullah Khan while talking to the media two days back.

Reports of early almond bloom are also being received from different parts of the region, indicating early thaw due to higher-than-normal temperatures. Fears of the impact of global warming and the resultant climate change on Gilgit-Baltistan, which is home to some of the biggest glaciers in the world, have been mounting for years. A few weeks ago, while talking to Pamir Times, the Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Shehzad Shigri, said that data spanning 30 years indicates an annual average temperature rise of 0.5 degrees Celsius and a precipitation decrease of 8.5 mm per year in GB, resulting in a noticeable seasonal shift. While many believe that the change in weather patterns is caused by climate change, others argue that such cycles of warmer winters often happen, and it might not indicate a permanent change in the climate conditions.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/01/23/worries-are-mounting-as-snowfall-decreases-in-gilgit-baltistan-this-winter/>

### **Winter Fest begins in Ghizer**

*Dawn, 24 January 2024*

The seven-day Winter Fest 2024 kicked off on Tuesday at the frozen Khalti Lake in Ghizer district, aiming to highlight the region's potential for winter tourism. The second edition of the much-awaited festival officially

commenced with ice hockey competitions. Organised by the GB Tourism Department, the participants, adorned in traditional dresses and caps, danced to the beat of local music, while artists performed songs. A total of 16 ice hockey teams, out of which four were female teams, from various parts of GB, participated in the competition, with athletes also taking part in skating and other local games.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1808162/winter-fest-begins-in-ghizer>

### **‘AJK’ Mirpur legal fraternity, civil society announces to take to street agitation on February 03**

*Daily Parliament Times, 28 January 2024*

Power consumers from all walks of life, including the legal fraternity, have announced that they will stage a street agitation on 03 February to pressure the government of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) to issue revised power tariffs by the categorical commitment made by the 'AJK' Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Chaudhry, to relieve consumers of the intolerable price hike in electricity across 'Azad Kashmir.' Since the 'AJK' administration appears not sincere in getting power consumers rid of the high power tariffs in the state, including in the Mangla Lake district of Mirpur, despite the 'AJK' premier's categorical commitment to the locals, power consumers will leave no stone unturned to get their long-cherished demand acceded to until the achievement of the cherished goal, said Kamran Tariq Chaudhry Advocate,

president Mirpur-'AJK' district bar association.

Kamran stated that despite the 'AJK' state administration's announcement to provide electricity bills following the June 2022 discounted power pricing. The 'AJK' Prime Minister reportedly ordered the removal of all undue heavy taxes and the reduction of heavy power tariffs for the locals in recognition of the area's significant contribution to the national grid through various hydropower projects such as the Mangla powerhouse, the Neelam Jhelum power project, and others. Local civil society elders, particularly legal fraternity leaders, stated that the 'AJK' government, particularly the ruling elite, must reduce its luxurious expenditures and lifestyle from current resources derived from the income and taxes collected from 'AJK'-based mega power generation projects operating in 'Azad Kashmir.'

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/01/28/mirpur-ajk-legal-fraternity-civil-society-announces-to-take-to-street-agitation-on-february-03/>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

#### **Kashmiris should commemorate India's Republic Day as Black Day: Altaf Wani**

*Urdu point, 23 January 2024*

Altaf Hussain Wani, a prominent Hurriyat leader, and Vice Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir National Front, has urged Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) to commemorate India's Republic Day as



Black Day in protest of 'India's illegal occupation' of their homeland. In a statement, Wani, while emphasising India's colonial legacy, said it was unfortunate that a country that had crushed the political and human rights of the people of Kashmir under jackboots was openly projecting itself as a democratic state. For Indian rulers, Kashmir has been nothing more than a colony, he alleged, adding that despite international commitments and obligations, every Indian ruler, from Nehru to Modi, has played a villainous role in erasing Kashmir's distinct identity, culture, and history. India did not hesitate to use military might to suppress the Kashmiris' legitimate demands, Wani said, adding that the current regime, driven by Hindutva ideology, had broken all records of depravity and brutality in Kashmir in recent years.

While condemning the Modi government's ruthless and barbaric strategy against Kashmiris, he stated that the government has allowed the 'occupying troops' wide rein to smash the Kashmiri movement by hook or crook. The sustained occupation and sledgehammer strategy pursued by New Delhi since 1947 has transformed Kashmir into a burning volcano, he said, adding that Indian leaders must recognize that they cannot hold Kashmiris prisoner for an extended period through force. He urged the international community to take serious notice of India's unlawful and aggressive occupation of Kashmir, which he said has been a key cause and

consequence of regional turmoil. Reiterating his party's support for the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) call for a complete strike on 26 January, Wani called to the people of Kashmir to commemorate the day as Black Day to send a message to the world.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/mirpur/kashmir/live-news-3890725.html>

### **Pakistan is the ultimate destination for Kashmiris, and the UN should play a responsible role in resolving the Kashmir conflict: Abdul Majid Khan**

*Urdupoint, 23 January 2024*

Abdul Majid Khan, the 'Azad Kashmir Government spokesman, and Finance Minister, has stated that Kashmiris all across the world, including 'Azad Kashmir', will observe the so-called Indian Republic Day as a black day. On 5 February, during Kashmir Solidarity Day, the world would be convinced that Pakistan is the ultimate destination for Kashmiris. In one of his speeches, he stated that all human rights organisations should alert the world about the situation in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the government, led by Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq, would use all available resources to expose the Modi government's ruthlessness. He further stressed that the young should use social media to raise awareness of the crimes committed by the Indian military in the 'occupied valley.'

He said that India must agree that the 'occupied' Kashmir issue must be



resolved following UN and Security Council resolutions. He claimed that Indian actions have made it evident that India's Indo-Imperialism has no limits to attain its ruthless aim in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. He alleged that the 'Azad Kashmir' government strongly condemns the Indian army's actions to oppress Kashmiris and that they will not allow Hindu imperialism to establish a stronghold in 'occupied Kashmir.' He encouraged the youth to come out of their homes on 5 February and remind the world that the government and people of 'Azad Kashmir' support the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and that the UN must take tangible steps to liberate the oppressed Kashmiris from 'India's barbaric persecution.'

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3891027.html>

### **Deputy Commissioner Kotli chairs a meeting to commemorate Kashmir Solidarity Day in a dignified way**

*Urdupoint, 27 January 2024*

An important meeting was conducted under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Haq Nawaz to commemorate Kashmir Solidarity Day in a dignified manner and to ensure that all segments of society participate fully in the celebrations of this national day. Chairman of Senior Citizens Welfare Forum Chaudhry Muhammad Ishaq, local mayors, General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Habib-ur-Rehman Afaqi, Vice-President of All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA), Malik Mustafa

Tahir, Hurriyat Leader Mahmoud Akhtar Qureshi Advocate, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Muhammad Mushtaq Nawaz, president of the Muslim League-N, as well as several journalists and others, attended the meeting. The meeting's participants reaffirmed their commitment to better celebrating Kashmir Solidarity Day on 5 February. The conference attendees expressed sympathy with the brothers of 'Occupied Kashmir' and affirmed their desire to play a part in the freedom of Kashmir. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Haq Nawaz stated that inhabitants from all schools of thought are committed to celebrating Kashmir Unity Day on 5 February with excitement. He claimed that people in 'occupied Kashmir' will not be terrified of India's persecution, and they will die for the freedom of their region.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/kotli/kashmir/live-news-3896245.html>

### **From Social Media**

**Basharat Issa@BasharatIssa**

*23 January 2024*

Winter sports and other such activities shouldn't turn into weapons of mass distraction in Gilgit-Baltistan when people are out on roads for wheat subsidy and other rights which the region deserves for its constitutional and political status.

#GilgitBaltistan.

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1749812673896915310](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1749812673896915310)

**Ashfaq Ahmed Advocate.**  
@ashfaqonegl

23 January 2024

My comment on wheat crisis issue in Gilgit-Baltistan and mass protest in Gilgit-Baltistan. This is what exactly happening in Gilgit-Baltistan.

#gilgitbaltistan #politics #Human rights.

Video link:

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1749842744535863650](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1749842744535863650)

**HafizUllah Chilasi @Hafiz\_Qureshii**

26 January 2024

The Karakoram Highway #Chilas is set to be #blocked from #Tuesday until the federal govt reverses the Anti-GB Finance Act & adjusts wheat subsidy rates. Multiple groups, including the Ulema Council, will rally people across the entire Diamer district for a sit-in protest in Chilas.

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1750885816619147286](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1750885816619147286)

**PAMIR TIMES ® @pamirtimes**

27 January 2024

Awami Action Committee's call for closure of markets and suspension of traffic has brought #Gilgit city to a standstill. Rallies of protesters are expected to march towards Gilgit from many districts in support of their demands.

The charter of demands, developed by the Awami Action Committee, has 15

points, including restoration of wheat subsidy, cancellation of minerals exploration leases giving to non-locals, cancellation of taxes in GB, among other demands.

Images link:

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1751240643970465855](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1751240643970465855)

**Basharat Issa @BasharatIssa**

27 January 2024

It is sad & worrying that women are completely absent from the protests in Gilgit-Baltistan. The participation of women can give the protests a whole different strength. Politics of resistance is incomplete without the participation of women.

What's stopping them?

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1751149520673468475](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1751149520673468475)

# 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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