

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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04 October - 10 October 2021

hydropower **Diamer-Bhasha dam** Tarbela Dam
CPEC tourism
infrastructure **POK**
Mirpur-Mangla road
Jaglot-Skardu Road



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Political Developments

'JI chief urges govt to appoint deputy FM for Kashmir issue'

The Nation, October 04 2021

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader and legislator Siraj-ul-Haq said that the Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan led government has missed numerous opportunities for the independence of Kashmir. While speaking at a condolence meeting organised by JI for Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Geelani, Siraj-ul-Haq said that quitting the Kashmir cause is a betrayal of the ideology of Pakistan. He urged the present government to appoint a vice foreign minister, specifically for the Kashmir issue. The JI leader further urged the Muslim leaders across the globe to summon an urgent meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) over the Kashmir issue. He said that peace could not be restored in the region till the settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

He further stressed that if the Afghan Taliban can defeat United States (US) on Afghan soil then why India cannot be defeated in Kashmir, as Kashmiris have kept the torch of freedom lightened in the occupied valley. Siraj-ul-Haq claimed that due to the blockage of the Indian Army, Kashmir valley is deprived of basic necessities including medicines and food materials. He noted that Syed Ali Geelani was a real freedom fighter who sacrificed all his life for the freedom of the people of Kashmir. While praising Syed Ali Geelani, he noted that Geelani never bowed before Indian brutalities,

as his life's only slogan was to free the people of occupied Kashmir from the Indian brutalities.

<https://nation.com.pk/04-Oct-2021/ji-chief-urges-govt-to-appoint-deputy-fm-for-kashmir-issue>

'Hopefully, Kashmiris will get right to self-determination under PM Khan Leadership:' AJK PM

Daily Parliament Times, October 05 2021

The 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister (PM), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has highly commended the role of the Pakistan PM, Imran Khan for effectively projecting the plight of the oppressed Kashmiri people who are struggling for their fundamental right to self-determination at international level. In a statement on the birthday of Pakistan PM, Imran Khan, the 'AJK' PM said that Imran Khan is a dedicated and honest leader and under his dynamic leadership the dream of the socio-economic upliftment of the People of Pakistan and AJK will be realised. He expressed the hope that under the leadership of Imran Khan the Kashmiri people will get their long-awaited "right to self-determination."

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/05/hopefully-kashmiri-will-get-right-to-self-determination-under-pm-khan-leadership/>

'Rise of settler colonialism in IIOJK biggest threat to Kashmiris'

Pakistan Observer, October 07 2021

While raising apprehension over India's "hegemonic designs" towards

Kashmir, speakers at a webinar titled "The Impacts of Settler Colonialism in Indian occupied Jammu Kashmir" was organised by the World Muslim Congress (WMC) in collaboration with the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) in Islamabad. Speakers at the conference termed "Indian settler colonialism as the biggest threat the Kashmiris have faced" ever since India took control of the territory in 1947.

The webinar was participated by many human rights activists, international law experts, social activists, and academicians. The speakers said that the abrogation of Kashmir's special status proves that Kashmir has moved from Patrick Wolfe's conception of first to the second model of colonialism. The panelists observed that the repeal of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019, was purposely made to grant the Indian government the much-needed political and legal leverage to bring physical change in the region through the extensive "extermination of the indigenous populations."

While drawing parallels between "Indian apartheid regime's imperialistic policies on Kashmir" the speakers said that "marginalization of the majority population in Kashmir, policies of land-grab, the extermination of the locals, exploitation of natural resources, rampant aggression, killings, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances and systematic genocide of Kashmiri youth by the Indian forces" are clear manifestations of the present regime's vision towards Kashmir. Successive

Indian governments have always treated Kashmir as a 'colony and exploited its natural resources, killed and maimed its people' through heavy militarization, with complete immunity.

<https://pakobserver.net/rise-of-settler-colonialism-in-iiojk-biggest-threat-to-kashmiris/>

Pakistan to raise Kashmir issue with visiting US Officials

The News International, October 08 2021

During the weekly media briefing, Pakistan foreign office spokesman said that the United States (US) has a very special responsibility towards addressing the grave and continuing human rights violations in "Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJ&K), and stressed that the Kashmir issue will be raised with the visiting Deputy Secretary of State, Wendy R. Sherman.

He further noted that the "violations of human rights in IIOJ&K" is an ongoing situation and Pakistan is taking it up at all levels, through bilateral and multilateral channels including the United Nations. He said that countries like the US have a very special responsibility. As a permanent member of the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) and as an advocator of human rights globally, it is a vital responsibility of the US to address the grave human rights violations in "occupied Kashmir."

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/89853-7-pakistan-to-raise-kashmir-issue-with-washington>

‘UN urged to end India’s terrorism in Pakistan, Kashmir’

The Nation, October 08 2021

Pakistan’s permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) Munir Akram, while participating in a debate on measures to combat international terrorism in the General Assembly’s sixth committee, he said that "Our major challenge has been the continued terrorist attacks, financed, sponsored, and supported by our neighbor, India, including from the territory of Afghanistan." Pakistan’s envoy further called for a comprehensive approach to deal with terrorism, addressing not only its symptoms but also its underlying root causes. These include prolonged unresolved conflict in Kashmir and denial of the right to self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine. He further maintained that Pakistan unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including state terrorism. "There can be no justification for the killing of innocent people, regardless of the cause or pretext." Ambassador Akram said that Pakistan is a victim of terrorism, having lost 80,000 civilians and soldiers in terrorist attacks, pointing out that its counter-terrorism operations since 2014 have cleared the country’s territory of all terrorist groups. The Pakistani diplomat spoke about India’s involvement in at least “four different types of terrorism.”

Conducting state terrorism against the people of "Occupied Kashmir" where since 1989, the "occupying forces" have killed over 96,000 Kashmiris, widowed

around 23,000 women, used rape as a weapon of war, and orphaned more than 108,000 children. India has intensified its terrorist acts since August 5, 2019, when it unilaterally changed the disputed state’s status and launched its ominous 'final solution' for Jammu and Kashmir. Funding and supporting UN Security Council-listed terrorist entities to carry out cross-border terrorist attacks against the Pakistani military and civilian targets, including on the Karachi Stock Exchange on 29 June 2020; in Lahore on 23 June 2021; and, most recently, the killing of Chinese and Pakistani engineers in Dasu on 14 July 2021. Apart from the confessions of the captured Indian spy, Commander Kulbushan Jadhav, Pakistan presented a complete dossier on India’s state-sponsored terrorism to the UN, financing and organizing mercenary terrorist organizations to destabilise Pakistan and impede the country’s economic growth. This was publicly admitted by India’s National Security Advisor (NSA), Ajit Doval.

<https://nation.com.pk/08-Oct-2021/un-urged-to-move-to-end-india-s-terrorism-in-pakistan-kashmir>

Economic Developments

‘Army assures Diamer dam contractors, workers of the secure environment’

Dawn, October 04 2021

Pakistan army’s commander, 10 Corps Lieutenant General, Sahir Shamshad Mirza and Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) chairman and retired Lieutenant

General, Muzammil Hussain visited the multi-purpose Diamer dam projects sites to review the construction work on the \$14bn Diamer-Bhasha dam. WAPDA's general manager of Land Acquisition and Resettlement, retired Brig Shoaib Taqi, Diamer-Bhasha dam project's general manager Muhammad Yusuf Rao and representatives of the consultants and contractors made presentations on development activities.

During the briefing on the Diamer-Bhasha dam, the project authorities reported that construction work was simultaneously being carried out in eight different sites. These included access roads, permanent access bridge across river Indus downstream of the main dam, 21 Mega Watt (MW), Tangir hydropower project, excavation of dam abutment from the top, diversion tunnel, diversion canal, diversion inlet, and power intake. Corps commander, Sahir Mirza reiterated the army's support for the construction of the dam and assured that his institution stood committed to providing a safe and secure environment in the project area to enable the project management to smoothly continue construction activities at all sites of the project.

While visiting various sites, the WAPDA's chairman and the army's commander expressed satisfaction over construction activities and noted the great national importance of the projects. In addition to the water storage-cum-power generation project which is being constructed on river Indus 40 km downstream of Chilas town and 180 km upstream of Tarbela

Dam, the WAPDA chairman told the army's commander that the Diamer-Bhasha dam was one of the most significant projects for sustainable development in Pakistan as it would provide water for agriculture, mitigate floods and generate low-cost electricity.

He further noted that the project would change the destiny of the nation by stabilizing the economy and alleviating poverty. He further emphasized that the project was already turning out to be a game-changer for the locals as an amount of Rs78.5 billion was being spent on various development schemes, as confidence-building measure (CBMs) in the project area.

The project authorities told the visitors that CBMs relating to health, education, tourism, and infrastructure development were being taken for the well-being of the locals in the project area. Diamer-Bhasha dam will have a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 million acre-feet (MAF) to irrigate 1.23 million acres of additional land. With an installed power generation capacity of 4500 MW, the project will provide more than 18 billion units per annum to the national grid. Construction of the project will also have a positive impact on the annual energy generation of the existing hydel power stations, including Tarbela and Ghazi Barotha, which will increase by another 2.5 billion units.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1649986/army-assures-dam-contractors-workers-of-secure-environment>

'Construction work on Jaglot-Skardu Road to be completed by Oct 30'

The Nation, October 04 2021

Murad Saeed, Pakistan Minister for Communications and Postal Services, said that construction work on Jaglot-Skardu Road in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) would be completed by October 30. The minister further noted that Prime Minister Imran Khan has also approved the construction of Chitral and GB highways for the promotion of tourism along with public welfare projects. He stressed that this major highway will boost tourism in the area and start economic activities. He emphasizes that GB is the gateway to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is the guarantor of the region's development. Murad further maintained that the National Highway Authority (NHA) of Pakistan has been launching new projects on time and advancing CPEC in a better way. He stressed that the recently concluded Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting of the China-Pakistan, the largest forum of CPEC, promised development of these areas by including Chitral, Dir, Swat Motorway, and Peshawar Dera Ismail Khan Motorway in CPEC. The decisions regarding last week's JCC CPEC will usher in a new era of development and prosperity in Pakistan.

<https://nation.com.pk/04-Oct-2021/construction-work-on-jaglot-skardu-road-to-be-completed-by-oct-30-murad>

Pakistan Govt. is taking concrete steps for development, the prosperity of AJK: Fawad Hussain

Radio Pakistan, October 09 2021

Pakistan Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain says his government is taking particular steps for the development and prosperity of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). While talking with the President of 'AJK', Barrister Sultan Mahmood in Islamabad, he further emphasized that steps are also being taken for the promotion of tourism and infrastructure development in the region. The minister said that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan is taking special interest in the development of "Azad Kashmir" and the welfare of the people of the region.

Chaudhry Fawad Hussain further noted that Mirpur-Mangla road is at the brink of completion, and this will resolve the connectivity issue of the area. He said that plans to link the two-lane road from Lilla to Jhelum with AJK via Mangla are also under consideration, which will usher in a new era of communication with Kashmir. The project will reduce time taken to travel from Kashmir to Islamabad to one hour and will also boost tourism activities in the area. The minister further said that the voice of the Kashmiri people will be heard all over the world by launching regular Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) broadcasts in "Azad Kashmir."

<https://www.radio.gov.pk/09-10-2021/govt-taking-concrete-steps-for-development-prosperity-of-ajk-fawad>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

If Kashmiris' struggle ends, Pakistan will not get a drop of water: Jamaat-e-Islami chief

Jasarat, October 04 2021

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief, Siraj-ul-Haq said that without the independence of Kashmir, tensions with India could not be resolved. He stressed that for peace in the region, the Kashmir issue must be resolved following United Nations (UN) resolutions. He stressed that all the rivers flow from Kashmir, and if the struggle for the independence of Kashmir receive set back, Pakistan will not even get a drop of water. He expressed these views while speaking at a condolence meet in the memory of Syed Ali Geelani. He noted that Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) should not be made a transitional province of Pakistan and further maintained that the Pakistan rulers might have a future agenda to make "Azad Kashmir" also a province, which would not be allowed. Siraj-ul-Haq said that given the critical situation in Kashmir, a special conference of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should be convened in Islamabad. A chapter on Syed Ali Geelani should be included in the curriculum and one of the major roads in the provincial capitals should be named after Geelani.

He said that God had provided the opportunity for the independence of Kashmir many times in the past but unfortunately the rulers wasted these opportunities. Siraj-ul-Haq said that if South Sudan and East Timor can get independence then why can't Kashmir?

He emphasised that the cowardice and mismanagement of our governments is also an obstacle to Kashmir's independence. He said that the candle of hope for the independence in Kashmir is because of the sacrifices of the Kashmiris and Pakistan should continue to provide political, diplomatic, and military support for the independence of Kashmir.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2021/10/04/1062095/>

Baseless Indian propaganda only reflects their frustration: Pakistan COAS

Nawai Waqt, October 06 2021

Pakistan Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Qamar Javed Bajwa, during the 244th Corps Commanders Conference held at the general headquarters in Rawalpindi, said that the Indian army's mischievous and unfounded propagandas, "only reflects their frustration and an attempt to divert attention from their internal contradictions, especially gross human rights violations being committed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK). The high-level military huddle which was also attended by Pakistan Army's top commanders has expressed their resolve to continue thwarting "India's nefarious designs to destabilise Pakistan and spoil the hard-earned peace and stability."

The military forum took a broad review of developing security situations in the region with a particular focus on border management and internal

security. Taking serious note of the "malicious propaganda" by the Indian military, the forum stressed taking all necessary measures to safeguard "Pakistan's territorial integrity." The COAS further appreciated operational preparedness of the military establishment and emphasised focusing on training including enhanced collaboration with foreign militaries and conduct of joint exercises in the operational and counter-terrorism domain.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/06-Oct-2021/1427710>

'AJK' President Chaired an Important Meeting

Jammu and Kashmir Times, October 06 2021

'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), President, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry chaired an important meeting at the Presidency Shamir House. The meeting was attended by 'AJK' Prime Minister (PM), Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi, Chief Secretary of 'AJK', Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Niazuddin Khan among others. During the meeting, it was decided that immediate steps should be taken for the resettlement of Kashmiri refugees of 1989. It was noted during the meeting that following the direction of the PM of Pakistan, Imran Khan, Kashmiri refugees would be provided better housing facilities and this scheme would be implemented immediately. The meeting further appraised the situation in "Occupied Kashmir" and decided to move the

Kashmir issue forward in an organised manner. The leaders also discussed the organising "Kashmir Liberation Cell", so that comprehensive steps could be taken to raise the issue of Kashmir aggressively at home and abroad.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP....06.jpg>

Pakistan stands firmly behind Kashmiris: Pakistan FM to AJK PM

Nawai Waqt, October 07 2021

Pakistan Foreign Affairs Minister (FAM) Shah Mehmood Qureshi while speaking with Prime Minister (PM) of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that Pakistan stands firmly behind the Kashmiris in their struggle for self-determination. During the meeting, the overall situation in 'AJK' and the development agenda were also discussed. The 'AJK' PM apprised Qureshi of the future course of action related to the construction and development activities in the region and emphasised that his government is taking all steps to highlight the plight of the people of 'Occupied' Kashmir who are facing the atrocities of the Indian occupying forces.' The PM emphasised that it was due to the successful foreign policy of the government of Pakistan that the long-standing issue of Kashmir is being effectively highlighted at the international level. The 'AJK' PM thanked the Foreign Minister for his efforts in exposing Indian regime atrocities on the Kashmiri people. Pakistan FM reiterated that they are committed to continuing the political,

diplomatic, and moral support to the Kashmiris people in attaining their fundamental right to self-determination. He further maintained that Pakistan has presented documentary evidence about the Indian forces' repressions in Kashmir and in this regard, a well-documented dossier has also been presented to the world.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/AJK/2021-10-07/page-1>

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Disclaimer

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