

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Tourism Gilgit-Chitral expressway
agriculture
solar panels
POK irrigation CPEC
Astor-Neelum highway
Army welfare trust
special economic zones



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Contents

Political Developments

- 'Solution of Kashmir issue is essential for peace in South Asia:' Pasban-e-Hurriyat
- 'Pakistan Ambassador briefs UNSG on India's massive repression in IIOJK'
- 'Kashmir Liberation Cell Gets New Top Boss'
- 'Kashmiris seek an early peaceful settlement of dispute: AJK PM to Pakistan FSA Delegation'

Economic Developments

- Long-term projects in the AJK tourism sector to be launched
- Director-General of Federal Water Management Cell meets with AJK Secretary of Agriculture
- MTBC and Army Welfare Trust decide to take big steps for the promotion of Tourism in AJK
- Plans to build 2,500 water channels in GB at a cost of Rs 5 billion in Five Years
- GB Chief Minister meets with Pakistan Air Force Officials: Discussion on reforms to promote Investment, Tourism

Vernacular Urdu Media

- AJK PM calls on President Barrister Sultan Mehmood: Discussion on Kashmir Issue
- Peace is not possible without resolving the Kashmir issue, ready for confrontation: Chief of Pakistan Air Force
- Students and faculty members of GB educational institutions Spend a day with Pakistan Army
- Pakistan again raised the issue of 'Occupied Kashmir' in the UN

Political Developments

'Solution of Kashmir issue is essential for peace in South Asia:' Pasban-e-Hurriyat

Daily Parliament Times, October 18, 2021

Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair, Ahmad Ghazali has said that a just solution to Jammu and Kashmir issue is essential for the establishment of lasting peace in South Asia. He said that "Indian armed forces" killed several unarmed Kashmiri citizens in fake encounters while residential houses are also being destroyed. He termed the Indian government acts and armed forces actions as direct aggression in an "occupied state."

Ghazali lamented that the bloodshed of unarmed people in Kashmir is a challenge to the so-called human rights activists around the globe. Uzair expressed concern over that the arrest of hundreds of citizens in "occupied valley", saying that despite state repression and indiscriminate use of military force, India has completely failed to crush the spirit of Kashmiri people for freedom.

He said that the international community, besides the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) must resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir through an independent plebiscite following the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/18/solution-of-kashmir-issue-is-essential-for-peace-in-south-asia-pasban-e-hurriyat/>

'Pakistan Ambassador briefs UNSG on India's massive repression in IIOJK'

The Express Tribune, October 19, 2021

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Munir Akram, apprised United Nations (UN) secretary-general Antonio Guterres about the "worsening human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK) and the associated threat to regional peace and security. The Pakistani envoy expressed alarm at the "continuing extrajudicial killings in staged encounters and fake cordon and search operations", as well as arbitrary detentions of Kashmiris by Indian forces.

He further noted that "the recent arrest of over 1,400 Kashmiris on false charges in one of the biggest ever crackdowns in the disputed territory." He emphasized that such "mass-scale repression" is a reflection of New Delhi's frustration at its failure to realize the ominous "final solution" for the besieged valley.

Ambassador Akram also drew the attention of the secretary-general towards the Indian home minister's "callous" statement threatening to conduct so-called "surgical strikes" against Pakistan. He rejected Indian allegations of "cross border" infiltration and expressed concerns that India may once again conduct a "false flag" operation to justify aggression against Pakistan. The ambassador further urged the UNSG to make efforts to avoid the prospects of a deadly

conflict between India and Pakistan, lower tension and promote peace in South Asia.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2325511/ambassador-akram-briefs-unsg-on-indias-massive-repression-in-ijok>

‘Kashmir Liberation Cell Gets New Top Boss’

Daily Parliament Times, October 21, 2021

The Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) liberation cell and Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” government has appointed Muhammad Irshad as director-general of Kashmir liberation cell.

Ershad Mahmud is a keen follower of the Kashmir conflict and has been actively involved in Track II diplomacy on Kashmir between India and Pakistan since 2001. A native of Rawalakot, ‘Azad Jammu Kashmir’, he also served as Secretary information of ‘Azad’ Jammu Kashmir branch of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

Ershad Mahmud is also presently holding a key slot as executive director of the think tank, Center for Peace, Development, and Reforms (CPDR) which manages a series of the intra-Kashmir summits participated by diverse segments of the civil society from both sides of the Line of Control (LOC).

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/21/kashmir-liberation-cell-gets-new-top-boss-the-d-g-ershad-mahmud/>

‘Kashmiris seek an early peaceful settlement of dispute: ‘AJK’ PM to Pakistan FSA Delegation’

The Nation, October 22, 2021

Prime Minister (PM) of ‘Azad’ Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) wanted early settlement of the prolonged “Kashmir dispute” in accordance with the United Nations (UN) resolutions. He said that the priority of his government is the “liberation of occupied J&K from India’s unlawful subjugation” as well as the welfare and development of the people of the state. The PM of ‘AJK’ was talking to a delegation of the Foreign Services Academy (FSA) of Pakistan.

He said that the implementation of the UN resolutions on the Kashmir issue is the only way for the settlement of the long-standing “Kashmir dispute.” He stressed that the Kashmir issue is at the forefront of Pakistan’s foreign policy. He further said that India had abolished the special status of “occupied Kashmir” by repealing Article 370 and 35A to change the “demography of occupied Kashmir.” He said that PM Imran Khan is the real ambassador of Kashmir and has been continuing his efforts to project the Kashmir issue in its true perspective at the international level.

He said the people of ‘AJK’ have been inspired by the policies taken by PM Imran Khan regarding the provision of health cards and other welfare projects for the wellbeing of the people. He said

the literacy rate in 'Azad' Kashmir is much higher than in other provinces of the country. The PM of 'AJK' urged the delegation to "expose the Indian atrocities" and the Kashmir issue before the world community effectively.

<https://nation.com.pk/22-Oct-2021/kashmiris-seek-early-peaceful-settlement-of-dispute-ajk-pm>

Economic Developments

Long-term projects in the 'AJK' tourism sector to be launched

Pakistan Observer, October 19, 2021

President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) "Azad Kashmir" and senior minister of the 'AJK' government, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that long-term projects in the tourism sector in 'AJK' will be launched in cooperation with the federal government. He said that special economic zones (SEZs) will be set up for the investors in the tourism sector and work has been initiated to declare various tourist destinations as tourism zones. He said that as per directives of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan, Model Tourism Town will be established in "Azad Kashmir."

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas during his visit to Poonch said that the weather of 'AJK' is very suitable for tourism and it offers a variety of tourist destinations at a distance of a few kilometers.

He said that PM Imran Khan is very much interested to promote tourism in Kashmir in line with his directions, the

'AJK' will be turned into a state-of-the-art model of tourism. The Senior Minister of 'AJK' said that four sites in the valley have been identified along with experts for the implementation of the historic tourism project. The government of 'AJK' will provide all possible assistance including logistics for new tourism projects. He further said that tourism is the only sector from which the government gets direct and indirect revenue while millions of jobs can be created in this sector.

<https://pakobserver.net/long-term-projects-in-ajk-tourism-sector-to-be-launched/>

Director-General of Federal Water Management Cell meets with 'AJK' Secretary of Agriculture

Daily Parliament Times, October 21, 2021

Director General (DG) of Federal Water Management Cell, Kafait Zaman met with the Secretary of Agriculture, Live Stock, and Irrigation Shahid Mohiuddin Qadri during his visit to "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK).

Speaking at the occasion, DG of the Federal Water Management Cell, said that 'AJK' has rich potential in the agriculture sector. The federal government is trying to utilize this potential for promoting agriculture as a model by equipping it with the latest means of technology. He noted that 'AJK' will witness an agricultural revolution by better management of water, and the latest means of agriculture. The federal government has a plan to commercialize the

agriculture sector of 'AJK' so that the agricultural production of the state can be introduced at the national and international levels.

Secretary of Agriculture, Shahid Mohiuddin Qadri said that the cooperation of the federal government for the improvement of the 'AJK' agriculture sector is a good step. He stressed that 'AJK' is already included in the national program regarding agriculture. Further cooperation from the federal government will boost the progress in 'AJK's agriculture sector.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/10/21/197716/>

MTBC and Army Welfare Trust decide to take big steps for the promotion of Tourism in AJK

Daily Pakistan, October 21, 2021

Medical Transcription and Billing Company (MTBC) chairman Mahmoodul Haq met with Pakistan army brigade commander Sajjad Amin. Both the officials agreed that MTBC and Army Welfare Trust will work together in the field of tourism promotion and poultry and a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed in this regard. Chairman of MTBC Mahmoodul Haq told the brigade commander that MTBC is also working with the AJK government in various sectors under public-private partnership. These projects include the promotion of tourism in the state as well as for the betterment of the education and Information Technology (IT) sector. He

emphasized that all the projects leased from the government are going well. He further emphasized that his company is looking forward to starting work on new projects soon with the help of the Pakistan army welfare trust to improve tourism.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/21-Oct-2021/1355688>

Plans to build 2,500 water channels in GB at a cost of Rs 5 billion in Five Years

Daily K2, October 21, 2021

The coordinator of the National Program for Improvement of Water Courses (NPIWC), Tahir Anwar said that steps were being taken for agricultural development in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) like other parts of the country in the light of special instructions of the Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan. Under this program, 2500 water channels are being constructed in GB at a cost of 5 billion in five years. He further noted that through this project, agricultural farms would be set up in which besides fruit trees, high quality grass would be grown for livestock and one hundred and fifty solar panels would be installed for this purpose. Tahir Anwar said that repairing existing water channels and construction of new channels would increase the area under cultivation by 20 to 30 percent. He stressed that water for irrigation has reached more than 30% of the area, which is allowing cultivation of barren lands. During the meeting, the director of water management Sher Jahan said that lands

in the area would now be irrigated with the PM program for water courses. He said that projects are being finalized in remote areas with the participation of the community so that all the projects are completed on time.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/3854>

GB Chief Minister meets with Pakistan Air Force Officials: Discussion on reforms to promote Investment, Tourism

Daily Baade-Shimal, October 22, 2021

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister (CM) Khalid Khurshid while talking to the trainee officers of the Pakistan Air War Course, who called on him under the chairmanship of Air Vice Marshal Hussain Ahmed Siddiqui has said that GB is a geographically important. He emphasized that GB is a gateway to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. He noted that GB has vast investment opportunities in tourism, clean energy, and minerals, and to further promote tourism, the survey process for the construction of an international airport in Gilgit is in the final stages. The CM further stressed that the people of GB had been demanding for the past 70 years that the region be included in the national mainstream and for the first time, GB is being mainstreamed without affecting the Kashmir issue.

He further noted that the government has launched a scholarship scheme to provide education to the youth in international and also in reputed educational institutions of the country.

He noted that to link GB with other provinces of the country, projects of Gilgit-Chitral expressway and Astor-Neelum highway are being launched. The projects will boost tourism and create new jobs. Khalid Khurshid said that for the first time, the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan has approved a sum of 370 billion development package for the construction and development of GB, which will change the destiny of the region. With the special interest of the PM of Pakistan, 3G and 4G spectrum have been auctioned which will boost the Information Technology (IT) sector.

<http://dailybaadeshimal.com/epaper/?page=cGFnZS0x&dt=MTAtMjltMjAyMQ==>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

'AJK' PM calls on President Barrister Sultan Mehmood: Discussion on Kashmir Issue

Mahasib, October 19, 2021

Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi meet with the president of AJK, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry at Aiwan-e-Sadr Kashmir House. During the meeting, the two leaders emphasized effective measures that are needed to be taken for the welfare of the people in 'Azad Kashmir.' Both the leaders stressed that highlighting the ongoing "human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir" and raising the issue of "Kashmir independence" aggressively from the base camp would be important.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=1&edition=muzzaffarabad&dt=19-10-2021>

Peace is not possible without resolving the Kashmir issue, Pakistan ready for confrontation: Chief of Pakistan Air Force

Daily Baade-Shimal, October 19, 2021

Chief Marshal of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Zaheer Ahmad Babar has said that we are always ready to face any challenge. Addressing the function at PAF Academy Risalpur, the Air Chief Marshal said that PAF is always ready to protect the homeland. Pakistanis are a peace-loving nation and they want to establish friendly relations with all countries. But the desire for peace should not be considered as our weakness. The chief of air staff said that "peace in the region is essential but it is not possible without a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue. We strongly condemn the human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir." He further noted that the United Nations (UN) must play its part in ending human rights violations in "occupied Jammu and Kashmir."

<http://dailybaadeshimal.com/epaper/?page=cGFnZS0y&dt=MTAtMTktMjAyMQm>

Students and faculty members of GB educational institutions spend a day with Pakistan Army

Nawai Waqt, October 20, 2021

Pakistan Army's Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) department, in its

statement, noted that students and faculty members of the University of Baltistan and other educational institutions have spent a day with the Pakistan Army at Field Firing Range, Ghanche district, and Skardu. According to ISPR, the students and faculty members witnessed the firepower demonstration while they also got experience of firing with small arms. On this occasion, faculty members and students from different educational institutions praised the morale and professionalism of the officers and men of the Pakistan army. The purpose of the event was to make the students aware of the performance and capabilities of the Pakistan army.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/20-Oct-2021/1435767>

Pakistan again raised the issue of 'Occupied Kashmir' in the UN

Jasarat, October 20, 2021

Pakistan has once again raised the issue of "enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and unmarked graves in occupied Kashmir" at the United Nations (UN). During a working group dialogue on enforced disappearances in New York, Pakistani envoy Saima Saleem said in a statement that several "graves of enforced missing persons" have been found in the "occupied valley" over the past few years. She further called for compensation for the missing persons and their families in "Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir."

She said that in addition to enforced disappearances in “Indian-occupied Kashmir,” the “incidence of torture, killings in custody, desecration of women, illegal arrests and extrajudicial killings were increasing” day by day. Saima Saleem also said that the investigation so far has revealed that the “occupying Indian forces” first pick up the victims and then torture them to death during their detention.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2021/10/20/10202103/>

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Disclaimer

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