

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Tourism developmental package
interim POK
constitutional province **hydroelectricity**



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Political Developments

'Regional peace linked to Kashmir resolution'

The Express Tribune, November 01 2021

Prime Minister (PM) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi in a meeting with the chairman of Kashmir Council-European Union (EU), Ali Raza Syed at the Jammu and Kashmir House said that regional peace is linked with the early resolution of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir under the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.

He stressed that the "unresolved Kashmir dispute" has jeopardized the peace of the entire region. PM Niazi said that Kashmiris have been rendering "unprecedented sacrifices" for the last seven decades and their struggle have no parallel in the history of the world. He urged the international community to exert pressure over India for the settlement of the longstanding Kashmir dispute for establishing lasting peace in the region.

The AJK PM also urged the overseas Kashmiris to "expose the ongoing atrocities of the Indian occupation forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK) that have been trying to crush the freedom movement. He further emphasized that Pakistan PM Imran Khan has effectively projected the Kashmir issue in its true perspective at the international level with courage and determination.

PM Niazi also applauded the services of Ali Raza Syed for projecting the Kashmir issue from the platform of Kashmir Council-EU. He noted that Kashmiri migrants living in Europe have done a great service in highlighting the Kashmir issue. During the meeting, the chairman of Kashmir Council-EU said that "the international community should take serious notice of "unabated human rights violations in the occupied valley."

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2327274/regional-peace-linked-to-kashmir-resolution>

'Pakistan's victory, a triumph of Kashmiris:' Pakistan Minister for Information and Broadcasting

Daily Times, November 01 2021

Pakistan minister for information and broadcasting, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, said that in the "Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK), criminal cases under a stringent anti-terror law have been registered against students of the government medical college and Sher Kashmir medical college for celebrating the Pakistan cricket team's victory in T20 world cup match.

He further said in a series of Tweets that "Pakistan's victory was the victory of Kashmiris, why should not they celebrate." Fawad said such "inhuman tactics of Modi regime" has increased the hope of freedom in Kashmiri masses.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/836067/pakistans-victory-triumph-of-kashmiris-fawad/>

'Ex-AJK president Masood Khan to be appointed ambassador to US'*The Nation, November 04 2021*

The former president of "Azad Jammu Kashmir" (AJK), Masood Khan will be appointed as Pakistan's ambassador to the United States (US). Masood was appointed as the 27th president of "Azad Kashmir" by former Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif in 2016. He was replaced by Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary following the "AJK" elections in August 2021. He is a career diplomat who has served the Pakistan ministry of foreign affairs in different capacities since 1980, before elevation as the AJK president.

A "vocal and strong advocate of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan", Masood effectively highlighted the sufferings of the "oppressed Kashmiris that warrant an effective strategy to end the never-ending holocaust." The former AJK president also served as the spokesperson of the Pakistan ministry of foreign affairs from August 2003 to March 2005, before becoming Pakistan's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) and International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2005 to 2008. He was also Pakistan's ambassador to China between September 2008 and September 2012.

<https://nation.com.pk/04-Nov-2021/ex-ajk-president-masood-khan-to-be-appointed-ambassador-to-us>

'AJK president, Pakistan PM discuss Kashmir dispute'*Pakistan Today, November 06 2021*

President of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mahmood met with the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan, Imran Khan, and briefed him on his recently concluded visits to the United States (US) and Europe, which was intended to motivate the Pakistan and Kashmir diaspora for highlighting the Kashmir dispute at the international level. During his meeting, the AJK president vowed to continue his mission to "expose India's ugly face" before the international community. During the meeting, both the leaders also discussed the matters pertaining to the development in Kashmir. The AJK president assured PM Imran Khan that the AJK government is effectively serving the people under his vision and guidelines.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/11/06/kashmir-president-pm-discuss-kashmir-dispute/>

'Organization of Islamic Cooperation's special envoy on Kashmir due today in Islamabad'*Dawn, November 07 2021*

The special envoy of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Jammu and Kashmir, Ambassador Yousef Aldobeay, will arrive here on Sunday (today) for a six-day visit to Pakistan and "Azad Kashmir." A delegation comprising OIC's assistant

secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, Ambassador Tarig Bakhit, and other senior officials will accompany the special envoy. Pakistan Foreign Office (PFO) said in a statement that during the visit, Mr. Aldobeay will hold discussions on peace and security in “occupied Kashmir” and the human rights and humanitarian situation. PFO in its statement noted that “his visit will reinforce the centrality of a just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to lasting peace in South Asia.”

The special envoy will interact with a cross-section of people from the Kashmiri society and the delegation will visit a model village housing Kashmiris who are “forced to flee their homes by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir and meet victims of India’s cross-Line of Control (LoC) ceasefire violations.” The OIC special envoy on Jammu and Kashmir was established by the 14th OIC summit in Makkah in 2019 and since then has played an important leadership role in steering the organization’s principled position on this issue. The OIC special envoy earlier visited Pakistan and ‘AJK’ in March last year and presented his first report to the 47th Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), in Niamey. The report reaffirmed the OIC’s support to the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination and recommended intensifying coordination between OIC member states to support the Kashmir dispute at international forums. POF stressed that Pakistan greatly values the OIC’s principled and steadfast stance on the Kashmir dispute. As a collective voice of over 1.2 billion

Muslims across the world, the OIC has led the way on this critical issue for the Ummah.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1656439>

Economic Developments

‘Imran Khan Okays Rs 5 billion upliftment package for AJK’

Daily Times, November 01 2021

Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that PM of Pakistan Imran Khan has given 5 billion historic development package for the overall socio-economic uplift and development of AJK.

While talking to various delegations from different parts of the country at Jammu and Kashmir House, he said that the PM of Pakistan is projecting the Kashmir issue at every international forum to expose the “Indian atrocities” on innocent Kashmiri people who have been “struggling for attaining their fundamental right to self-determination.”

He stressed that the PM of Pakistan, “on the one hand was effectively highlighting the Kashmir issue at the international level and on the other, his entire focus is on the development and the prosperity of the people of AJK.” He further noted that the PM of Pakistan wants to see tourism and industrial development in AJK to bring the state on a road to progress and prosperity, and he is taking practical steps for the rapid development of the state. AJK PM said that Imran Khan would soon announce a historic mega developmental package of 500 billion

rupees which would bring about a revolutionary development in tourism, infrastructure, Hydel, health, education, and other sectors and added that this historical package will make the state and its people prosperous. He further stressed that “if Azad Kashmir was prosperous then it will have an impact on occupied Kashmir.”

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/835787/imran-khan-okays-rs-5bn-uplift-package-for-ajk/>

‘Delegation of Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir and GB Affairs visit Muzaffarabad’

Daily Parliament Times, November 01 2021

A delegation of the Senate standing committee on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Affairs held a meeting in Muzaffarabad. The delegation was led by the chairman of the committee, Senator Sajid Mir among others. The additional chief secretary (Development) “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) Dr. Sajid Mehmood Chauhan briefed the delegation on Kashmir and GB affairs and also the development projects in AJK during the last three years and future plans.

While briefing the delegation, additional chief secretary Dr. Sajid Mahmood said that AJK is in a better position than all other provinces of Pakistan in terms of achieving sustainable development goals. These include the construction of parks, walkways, model cemeteries, beautification of cities, lighting arrangements on major squares and streets, model altars, vegetable markets, bus stands, and disposal

projects. He said that for the development of the tourism sector, a development program is also under consideration through which projects in the tourism sector would be initiated through public-private partnership so that tourism could be promoted. He said that the total budget of AJK is 141 billion out of which the development budget is Rs. 28 billion and the normal budget is Rs. 113 billion. In the annual development program, 67% is allocated for the infrastructure sector and 23% for the social sector, while 10% is allocated for the manufacturing sector.

He also emphasized that AJK has vast potential in the fields of tourism, hydroelectricity, and minerals. At present 2700 MW power is being generated in AJK. While responding to a query, the additional chief secretary of development said that given the importance of media, the digital media project of the information department has been initiated, so that government initiatives and the Kashmir issue can be internationalized. He also noted that 125 km of highways and 2,165 km of link roads will be constructed in AJK. Meanwhile, additional chief secretary-general Dr. Syed Asif Hussain briefed the Senate committee regarding the last general election in AJK. He noted that a coordination cell was set up which conducted the elections in the best possible manner with the support of all the departments. Elections were held in consultation with the leaders of all political parties, national leadership, and other relevant institutions. He informed the delegation that the turnout in the recent elections was 65% while the total number of voters was 3.2

million including about 17.5 million male voters and 14.5 million female voters. He said that they were also working on facilitating Kashmiris abroad to cast their votes.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/11/01/delegation-of-senate-standing-committee-on-kashmir-and-gb-affairs-visit-muzaffarabad/>

‘Rs 370 billion development projects being carried out in GB:’ Gandapur

Daily Times, November 02 2021

On the occasion of Gilgit-Baltistan’s (GB) “Independence Day”, minister for Kashmir and GB affairs Ali Amin Khan Gandapur said that the government led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has launched mega schemes worth Rs 370 billion, and that these development projects are being carried out for development and prosperity of the GB. He said that the people of GB have gained independence from Dogra rule by making great sacrifices. He said that the GB people always expressed their deep commitment to Pakistan, adding that the area has been blessed with immense natural resources; and it (GB) would prove to be the country’s economic hub and the ‘Base Camp’ of the flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/836246/rs370b-development-projects-being-carried-out-in-gb-gandapur/>

‘Asad Umar reviews progress of GB development Plan’

Pakistan Observer, November 02 2021

Asad Umar, minister for planning, development, and special initiatives

reviewed the progress on Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) development plan. The progress review meeting on the GB development plan was attended by the additional secretary of development and special initiatives, additional chief secretary GB, and other senior officers.

Additional chief secretary, GB briefed the minister on the GB projects funded through Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and non-PSDP sources, as well as in the Public-Private Partnership (PPP). He further noted that various priority sectors were included in the GB development package like clean energy/Hydropower, skill development, tourism, and private sector development.

It was informed that 19 new projects were already included in the GB plan, out of which PC-Is and PC-IIs of 10 projects had been approved, wherein nine projects were under preparation for PSDP 2022-23 and 11 non-PSDP projects at various stages of implementation.

Asad Umar said that the aim of the GB development package was not only to produce energy but also to build the right institutional and regulatory framework, and generation, transmission, and distribution of capacity as well. He directed the GB government to expedite work on the transaction structure and feasibility studies of the P3 Power projects. He further instructed the PPP authority to assist the GB government in strengthening the GB-PPP unit and also help identify private-sector partners. The minister emphasized the need for

the promotion and development of the tourism sector and stresses that accessibility, tourist facilitation, information about sites should be improved.

<https://pakobserver.net/asad-umar-reviews-progress-of-gb-development-plan/>

Licenses issued to four new airlines: flights allowed for Gilgit-Skardu

Dailyk2, November 04 2021

Pakistan civil aviation has issued 4 new airline licenses to private companies to promote tourism and domestic flights as per the plan of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan to promote domestic tourism. These Licenses were issued to Kashmir Air, Alvier Airways, Aircraft Sales and Services Limited (ASSL) Air, North Air. All four private airlines have announced the launch of domestic flights soon. In the first phase, flights from Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad will be considered while flights to Gwadar, Turbat, Mohenjo-Daro, Gilgit, Skardu, Hunza, and Gandhara will be operated. The airlines will use helicopters, fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft for tourist destinations.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/4074>

'Telenor Pakistan launches 4G services to empower people of AJK'

The Nation, November 04 2021

Telenor Pakistan has launched its 4G services in "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK). Irfan Wahab Khan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Telenor Pakistan said that Telenor Pakistan's investment and network expansion in the region is a testament to the

company's commitment towards its promise to continue empowering the people of AJK by opening doors to opportunities through enhanced connectivity. He further noted that Telenor Pakistan is a market leader in the region and the highly anticipated upgrade and expansion into 4G services will enable access to online services like e-education, e-health, e-governance, ride-hailing, and food ordering apps, and much more. This enhanced connectivity will also boost tourism in the region and uplift the overall socio-economic conditions by bringing the world of opportunities just a tap away. Telenor Pakistan recently acquired 16.2 megahertz, (MHz) spectrum in the auction held in September 2021; making it the largest spectrum holder in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

<https://nation.com.pk/04-Nov-2021/telenor-launches-4g-services-to-empower-people-of-ajk>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

EU and French Parliaments should play role in resolving Kashmir dispute: AJK President

Mahasib, November 02 2021

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while addressing a protest rally in Paris to mark the Black Day (27 October 1947), said that the people of Kashmir earnestly hope that France and European Union (EU) can play an enormous role in resolving the "Kashmir issue." He urged EU members to take viable steps at the United Nations (UN) for the implementation of the United Nations

Security Council (UNSC) resolution on Kashmir. The AJK president said that the present govt of India is promoting the “Hindutva agenda in the whole of India in general and in Jammu and Kashmir State in particular.” He further appealed to the EU and French Parliaments to send their representatives to comprehend the real ground reality in “occupied Kashmir” as the Indian government is taking measures to change the “demography of the disputed state” which is predominantly Muslim populated. He noted that “the only crime” Kashmiris are committing is demanding their inalienable right to self-determination. He further urged the Kashmir-Pakistani diaspora to take interest in local politics and trade unions in the EU countries and muster support for the issue of Kashmir.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=1&edit ion=muzzaffarabad&dt=02-11-2021>

Gilgit-Baltistan will become Pakistan's fifth interim constitutional province under our rule: Fatehullah Khan

Dailyk2, October 03 2021

Provincial Minister for Information, Planning, and Development, Fatehullah Khan while talking to media after a cultural function on the occasion of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Independence Day celebrations said that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan has alleviated the 74-year deprivation of GB during his tenure. He stressed that under the rule of the present government in Pakistan, GB will become the fifth interim constitutional

province of Pakistan. He further said that GB is a beautiful and peaceful region of Pakistan and its civilization, culture, and hospitality are an important part of the promotion of both domestic and foreign tourism. He stressed that the GB government is keen to do a lot for the promotion of tourism and is going to provide all kinds of opportunities. For tourists, special attention is being paid to food and accommodation and communication system, particularly on Karakoram Highway so that tourists and passengers do not face any difficulty. He further said that the youth of GB celebrate the independence of Pakistan with the same enthusiasm and fervor as the independence day of GB on November 1. He noted that the people of GB are very fortunate to celebrate two freedoms a year and urged the youths to never hesitate to make any sacrifice to brighten the name of Pakistan and GB.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/4021>

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Disclaimer

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