

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Gilgit-Baltistan **POK**
Diamer-Bhasha **motorway**
Special **status** **CPEC**
economic zones
trade and tourism
Phander hydropower project



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

'Kashmiris have not accepted India's illegal occupation': AJK PM

Pakistan Observer, November 15, 2021

The Prime Minister (PM) of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that the brave people of 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) are facing atrocities at the hands of the Indian forces but have not accepted the unlawful Indian occupation of their motherland."

While addressing a ceremony hosted by the district bar association, Kotli, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that the Kashmiri people have been struggling for securing their "internationally recognized right to self-determination" with courage and determination and they will ultimately get their "fundamental right to self-determination". He said that the "liberation of occupied Kashmir" and development of the AJK was the priority of the government and all steps would be taken to achieve this goal.

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmiris-have-not-accepted-indias-illegal-occupation-ajk-pm/>

'Pakistan can't separate itself from Kashmir even for a moment': Punjab Governor

The Nation, November 16, 2021

Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has said that "Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and Pakistan can't separate itself from Kashmir even for a moment". He said these words during a special ceremony organized at governor house, Lahore

for awarding Allama Iqbal Award to Mashaal Malik, wife of Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, in recognition of her "contribution for raising voice for Kashmiris".

The governor of Punjab further said that Pakistan stands firm like a rock with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. He said that "Indian forces at the behest of Narendra Modi have unleashed a reign of terror in Kashmir, the Muslim community must unite and raise their voice against this". He said that the dream of peace in the region can never be materialized without the "resolution of the Kashmir issue."

Chaudhry Sarwar added that "one thing India must understand is that they cannot suppress the voice of Kashmiris with the power of guns and bullets". Punjab Governor said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, 220 million Pakistanis are with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. Speaking on the occasion, Mashaal Malik said that, "India is conspiring to make Kashmiris a minority by settling Hindus in Kashmir", adding that "all Islamic countries including Pakistan should unanimously raise their voice against this". Mashaal Malik said that India cannot suppress the "independence movement of Kashmiris" based on power. The Kashmiri people are still in high spirits. They are ready to face all the atrocities of India for their freedom. She said that "without Kashmir, Pakistan is incomplete".

<https://nation.com.pk/16-Nov-2021/pakistan-can-t-separate-itself-from-kashmir-even-for-a-moment-ch-sarwar>

'Lasting peace in region linked with Kashmir issue:' Pakistan Foreign Minister

The Nation, November 17, 2021

Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that "permanent peace in the region is linked to the resolution of the Kashmir issue". While addressing the participants of the national security and war course at the National Defence University, the foreign minister stressed that the "onus remained on India to create a conducive environment for meaningful and result-oriented engagement with Pakistan". The foreign minister's lecture on 'contours of Pakistan's foreign policy and challenges' was attended by the civil and military officers of the country besides the course participants from several friendly countries.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi further said that "following India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019" under Prime Minister Imran Khan's instructions, the government took up the Kashmir cause worldwide with renewed vigor and determination, and highlighted the "dire humanitarian and human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)". He further noted that "despite provocations from India, Pakistan opened up the Kartarpur Corridor in November 2019 giving Sikhs from India and all over the world, visa-free access to one of their holiest sites". He further added that their gesture is a manifestation of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan's vision for the region and

for Pakistan-India relations, which consists of peaceful co-existence, inter-faith harmony and peaceful resolution of disputes.

<https://nation.com.pk/17-Nov-2021/lasting-peace-in-region-linked-with-kashmir-issue-qureshi>

'India erasing cultural heritage of Muslims': Pakistan President

The Nation, November 18, 2021

The President of Pakistan, Arif Alvi met with the President of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. During the meeting, Pakistan President said that "India is erasing the cultural heritage of Muslims and the region was under threat of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's extremist policies."

The AJK President Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry briefed President Alvi about his recent foreign visit to Europe, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) where he "projected Kashmir cause and sufferings of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK). President Alvi said that Pakistan is effectively raising the "issue of Kashmir at every forum and categorically rejected India's unilateral move on August 5, 2019". The president said Pakistan would continue to support Kashmiris till their "right to self-determination was achieved". He said that as per the United Nations (UN) resolutions, the Kashmir issue was the only guarantee of peace in the region.

<https://nation.com.pk/18-Nov-2021/india-erasing-cultural-heritage-of-muslims-alvi>

The world can't remain indifferent to the ugly situation in Kashmir: PM Niazi

Pakistan Today, November 20, 2021

The Prime Minister (PM) of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that the world could not remain indifferent for a long time to the "grave situation prevailing in the Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IOJK). He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of senior Kashmiri journalists which called on him under the leadership of the "Azad Kashmir Newspaper Society" (AKNS) President, Sardar Zahid Tabbasum at Jammu and Kashmir house. AJK information minister, Faheem Rabbani and director-general of Jammu Kashmir liberation cell Ershad Mahmud were also present on the occasion.

Qayyum Niazi further said that recently "we have presented the case of Kashmir issue before the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)" delegation calling upon the OIC to raise its voice for resolving the Kashmir dispute without further loss of time.

The PM appreciated the role of state media in projecting the "Kashmir issue at international level" and added that state newspapers were playing a vital role in projecting the "voices of Kashmiri people against Indian forces' repressions."

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/11/20/world-cant-remain-indifferent-to-ugly-situation-in-bleeding-iojk-niazi/>

Economic Developments

CPEC and Gilgit-Baltistan

Editorial, Pamir Times, November 15, 2021

China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) is a game-changer for the four provinces of Pakistan as well as for the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK). It will become the main channel connecting both the states through transport, industry, power (electricity), promotion of trade and tourism. The people of GB have some apprehensions about the unequal distribution of rights but the government of Pakistan ensured the people of the region, that in this project they will receive equal rights like others provinces.

There are numerous benefits of CPEC for the GB region as it is the gateway for both Pakistan and China. There are some possible benefits in future for the people of the region, such as, the corridor will create job opportunities for the peoples of GB; CPEC will be significant for the peoples of GB for the optic fiber connection; under CPEC nine special economic zones will be created all over Pakistan, one of the economic zone will be for the GB region which will be constructed in Magpoondas area.

Future development is expected in the region as people are learning Chinese language and professional skills. The Karakorum highway expansion took place because of CPEC, the construction of Gilgit to Chitral Road, the establishment of the Phander hydropower project in Ghizer,

Karakoram International University and the hydropower project in Gilgit city are some of the major CPEC led benefits to the local people. Similarly, under the CPEC, the Bunji-Roundo Dam will be built. Moreover, the Diamer-Bhasha dam would produce 4800 megawatts of electricity through hydropower generation, with the total cost of the project is 14 billion US dollar. The dam will help in storing an extra 10.5 cubic kilometers of water for Pakistan that would be used for irrigation and drinking; extend the life of Tarbela Dam located downstream by 35 years, control flood damage by the River Indus downstream during high floods. In the future, it can be possible for a train service to begin between China and Pakistan, which would be vital for the GB region because the railway track will be started from China to Gilgit to Gwadar port.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/11/15/cpec-and-gilgit-baltistan-2/>

‘Work on CPEC to GB from next week’

Pakistan Observer, November 15, 2021

Pakistan federal minister for communications and postal services, Mr. Murad Saeed has said that under the determined leadership of Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan, work will commence on projects of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) by next week. While addressing a public gathering at Karak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Murad Saeed said that project of the Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan motorway will also be started soon. He further noted that the PM of Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan always

thought about the welfare of the poor and the needy. He further maintained that PM Imran Khan won elections in GB and ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK), and he will also form government in Sindh Province in the next elections.

<https://pakobserver.net/work-on-cpec-to-g-b-from-next-week/>

‘Federal Government committed for the economic development of AJK:’ Pakistan President

Radio Pakistan, November 17, 2021

Pakistan President Dr. Arif Alvi while talking to President of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry in Islamabad has said that the federal government is fully committed to the economic development of AJK and resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The President further said that there are huge tourism opportunities that exist in AJK and the government is paying special attention to the promotion of tourism in the country. He stressed that Pakistan will continue its political, moral and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir till the achievement of their “inalienable right to self-determination”. Dr. Arif Alvi said that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute is the only guarantee for regional peace according to the resolutions passed by the United Nations (UN). Both the leaders also discussed the development of Kashmir and the overall situation of the Kashmir issue in the meeting.

<https://radio.gov.pk/17-11-2021/federal-govt-fully-committed-for-economic-development-of-ajk-resolution-of-kashmir-dispute>

'PTDC to lease out AJK, GB properties'

The Express Tribune, November 20, 2021

The federal government has approved the leasing out of properties of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) which are located in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Two meetings were held with the 'AJK' and GB governments on October 7, 2019, and February 13, 2020, under the chairmanship of special assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Overseas Pakistanis/ PTDC chairman and the federal minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB concerning the PTDC properties. During the meetings, the special status of AJK and GB was also discussed. It was proposed that the properties located in their areas may not be transferred to AJK and GB, instead, they may be leased out by PTDC to the well-established hospitality chains for the long term, in a competitive and transparent manner. Subsequently, the AJK government and the GB government conveyed their consent for leasing out the PTDC properties through open and competitive bidding as per the agreed arrangements.

While considering the proposal of 'AJK' and GB governments, the PTDC board, in its 89th meeting held on July 2, 2020, resolved to keep its properties located in 'AJK' and GB and lease them out to reputed companies related to the hospitality sector on a long-term basis, a 20-year lease extendable for a similar term on satisfactory performance. It was agreed that revenue proceeds from the leasing of properties should first be used for clearing liabilities related to

these properties, human resources while 50% of net revenue/ profit would be transferred annually to the 'AJK' and GB governments, which would be utilized for the promotion of tourism in the two regions.

The remaining 50% of the net proceeds of the lease would be retained and utilized by PTDC for the promotion of tourism across Pakistan. PTDC engaged a consultancy firm (consortium) for carrying out a business advisory study of the properties and preparing lease documents. After a detailed discussion, the cabinet approved the proposal of leasing out PTDC properties located in AJK and GB to the private sector through open and competitive bidding.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2330246/ptdc-to-lease-out-ajk-g-b-properties>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

'India is violating religious and political rights of Kashmiri': AJK PM to Chairman of Kashmir Committee

Daily Ausaf, November 17, 2021

The 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Prime Minister (PM) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that "India is violating the political and religious rights of Kashmiris and massive human rights violations have been taking place in occupied Kashmir". The PM expressed these views while talking to the chairman of the Kashmir committee, Shehryar Afridi who called on him at Jammu and Kashmir House. He said that the Jama Masjid Srinagar has been closed for a long time and the "Indian army is terrorizing the Kashmiris". He said that the PM of

Pakistan Imran Khan has projected the Kashmir issue effectively in its true perspective internationally and has also mobilized the Islamic Ummah for resolving the Kashmir dispute for establishing lasting and durable peace in the region. He further said that more than “one hundred youths were martyred by the brute Indian forces” while many “innocent civilians” have gone missing during the search operations conducted by the “Indian army”. He further maintained that “India was constantly violating human rights in occupied Kashmir” and attempts were being made to “promote Hindutva” on which the United Nations (UN) and human rights organizations are silent.

The chairman of the Kashmir committee, Shehryar Afridi reiterated his commitment that Pakistan would continue to provide political, moral and diplomatic support to “Kashmiris in attaining their right to self-determination”. He commended the “supreme sacrifices offered by the Kashmiri people for the liberation of occupied Kashmir from Indian clutches” and expressed the hope that the prolonged “terror and repressions would soon end and Kashmiri will ultimately get their fundamental right to self-determination.”

https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/page?station_id=7

PM AJK meets Federal Minister for Kashmir affairs Ali Amin Gandapur

Mahasib, November 18, 2021

The federal minister for Kashmir affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur called on

the Prime Minister (PM) of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi in Islamabad. The meeting discussed issues relating to the Kashmir council, construction of bunkers on Line of Control (LoC), party affairs and issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, the PM of AJK Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that India has intensified the reign of terror in occupied Kashmir and is also targeting the civil population at the LoC. He said that the people of LoC have been offering sacrifices for the defense of the country along with the armed forces of Pakistan. The PM stressed the need for the completion of bunkers for the people living near LoC. He noted that special plans for the development and prosperity of the people of this area would be included in the Kashmir development package.

During the meeting, federal minister for Kashmir Affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur assured full cooperation from the federal government for the construction of bunkers on the LoC and said that Pakistan PM, Imran Khan has a special interest in the development of ‘Azad Kashmir’. He said PM Imran Khan has “exposed the Indian forces brutalities and gruesome human rights violations by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir”. The government and people of Pakistan will continue to provide political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris people for attaining their “fundamental right to self-determination”.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=1&edition=muzzaffarabad&dt=18-11-2021>

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Disclaimer

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