

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Digital Connectivity Tourism
Karakoram Highway CPEC
mega projects Gilgit- Baltistan
Shandur
GB integrated development plan
Raikote-Thakote Motorway POK



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

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Political Developments

Work on LOC package under full progress: PM of AJK

Daily Parliament Times, December 6, 2021

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Kashmir” Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that the protection of the rights of the people living near the Line of Control (LOC) will be ensured and the government will provide all basic facilities including health, education and infrastructure to the people. He expressed these views while addressing the inaugural function of a separate basic health unit for Dara Sher Khan and Buttal. The AJK PM said that brave people living on the LOC have been facing the “Indian firing” daily with determination. The PM said that the work on the LOC package is in full swing and added that we will not forget the “sacrifices of the soldiers and officers of Pakistan Army who have sacrificed their lives in defence of Kashmiri civilians” at the LOC. The PM further assured the people of “occupied Kashmir” that they are not alone in their struggle but the people of “Azad Kashmir and Pakistan” are with them in their struggle for achieving their “fundamental right to self-determination.”

He emphasized that the PM of Pakistan Imran Khan has “boldly exposed Modi’s fascist face” to the world and proved himself a true ambassador of the Kashmiri people and projected the Kashmir issue in its true perspective at the international level effectively. He added that a new era of construction and development in “Azad Kashmir” will be started with a package of 500 billion rupees. He noted that the main

responsibility of our government is the “liberation of occupied Kashmir from Indian clutches” and we will not leave the people of “occupied Kashmir” alone in this hour of trial.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/06/work-on-loc-package-under-full-progress-soon-could-complete-pm-ajk/>

‘UNSC apprised of the grave situation in Kashmir’

Dawn, December 07, 2021

The Foreign Minister (FM) of Pakistan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi apprised the president of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and UN secretary-general of the “continuing grave situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.” In his letter addressed to the president of UNSC and UN secretary-general, the FM pointed to the “deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in India held Kashmir” and the persistent “threats to international peace and security posed by India’s provocative rhetoric as well as its track record of orchestrating false flag operations.”

He demanded settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute under relevant resolutions of the UNSC which guarantee the Kashmiris “right to self-determination” through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the UN.

The FM further drew attention to the recent spate of “extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions in India-occupied Kashmir.” He highlighted the recent arrest of “renowned Kashmiri human rights activist” Khurram Parvez on

“trumped-up charges” in complete disregard for basic human rights principles, norms and international law.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1662322/un-sc-apprised-of-grave-situation-in-held-kashmir>

‘Kashmir body to work with Turkish artiste to project Kashmiris’ voice’

The Nation, December 07, 2021

The chairman of the parliamentary committee on Kashmir, Shehryar Khan Afridi said that the “Kashmir story” needs to be told to the world through innovative ways and the Kashmir committee would work with the Turkish and Pakistani artists to project the Kashmir cause. Shehryar Afridi expressed these views while talking with the Turkish rights activist and author Turgay Evren at the parliament house. The Kashmiri leader Altaf Bhat and All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) representative Khadim Hussain were also present on the occasion.

Afridi further noted that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan said that “Kashmir is core of Pakistan’s foreign policy” and all avenues would be explored to project the case of Kashmir. While lauding the contribution of Turgay Evren for the “Kashmir cause” Shehryar Afridi said that the Turkish artist had become a voice of the “unheard Kashmiri people” and noted that every Pakistani is in love with Turkey and its people.

The Turkish rights activist Turgay Evren highlighted the contributions from Muslims of the subcontinent to Turkey and noted that Muslims even

left India to take part in the struggle for the Ottomans. Shehryar Afridi further said that the “marginalized and oppressed people of Kashmir” need support from Turkey. He noted that “Turkey has raised Kashmir at all global forums” and maintained that “plebiscite is a fundamental right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the world must give the Kashmiris their basic right.” Turgay noted that he had already composed songs for the oppressed Palestinians, Yemenis and African people. He said that his songs on Kashmir had been translated into English, Arabic, Turkish and other languages.

<https://nation.com.pk/07-Dec-2021/kashmir-body-to-work-with-turkish-artiste-to-project-kashmiris-voice>

Punjab Governor ‘underlines UN’s role to end the oppression of Kashmiris’

The Nation, December 08, 2021

The Governor of Punjab, Ch Sarwar, during his visit to Turkey, met former United Nations (UN) president Volkan Bozkir and discussed with him Kashmir, Afghanistan, Palestine and other issues. The governor urged the UN to play its role in “ending atrocities against Kashmiris and Palestinians.” During his visit, the governor briefed Volkan Bozkir about the steps being taken under the leadership of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan to restore peace in Afghanistan and the situation regarding the “atrocities committed by the Indian security forces against the Kashmiri people.” During the meeting, the former president of the UN reaffirmed his commitment to protect “human rights in Kashmir” and to play

a role in peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Ch Sarwar said that in Kashmir, 855 days had passed since the imposition of the worst lockdown by the Indian government and security forces. He further noted that the “Indian forces were killing innocent Kashmiris and the people of Kashmir do not even have basic human rights.” Ch Sarwar said that the “issue of Kashmir and a strong and stable Afghanistan” was the greatest need of the hour for peace in the region, which required the UN as well as all the world powers to play their role.

<https://nation.com.pk/08-Dec-2021/ch-sarwar-underlines-un-s-role-to-end-oppression-of-kashmiris>

Delegation of Dawat-e-Islamia Pakistan meets President of 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times -December 08, 2021

A delegation led by Dawat-e-Islami Pakistan members met with the president of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry. The delegation of Dawaat-e-Islami briefed the president about the “aims and objectives of the organization” and discussed the overall performance of Dawaat-e-Islami and ongoing projects in Pakistan and the world including “Azad Kashmir.” The president of ‘AJK’ assured the delegation that the “Azad Kashmir government” would extend all possible assistance and support to Daawat-e-Islami projects in ‘AJK’. On this occasion, the delegation invited the president of ‘AJK’ to visit

Karachi, the centre of Islamic Da'wah, which the president accepted.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/08/delegation-of-kpsc-meets-president-ajk/>

'EU closely monitoring IIOJK's human rights situation:' EU VP to Pakistan FM

The Express Tribune, December 09, 2021

The European Commission (EC) vice president, Josep Borrell, has said that European Union (EU) is “closely following the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir” and stressed resolution of the dispute through dialogue. He underscored the need for restraint, de-escalation of tensions and called for constructive political and diplomatic engagement. He made this statement while co-chairing the sixth round of the EU-Pak Strategic Dialogue along with the Foreign Minister (FM) of Pakistan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Brussels.

During the meeting, Qureshi reiterated Pakistan’s “deep concerns about human rights violations by India in Jammu and Kashmir, and efforts to change the demography of the disputed territory in violation of United Nation Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.” During the talk, Borrell welcomed the agreement of February 2021 between India and Pakistan for observance of ceasefire understanding at the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu and Kashmir as an important step in the interest of regional peace and stability.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2333122/eu-closely-monitoring-iiojks-human-rights-situation-vp>

'President of AJK urges world to take notice of Occupied Kashmir'

Daily Parliament Times, December 10, 2021

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while speaking on the occasion of international human rights day, organized by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell's think tank, Kashmir Research Institute said that the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan, Imran Khan has highlighted the Kashmir issue at the international level. He urged the world community to pay attention to the "dire human rights situation of occupied Kashmir." The 'AJK' president said that Pakistan PM Imran Khan had also said that if a better government is elected in India, then the Kashmir issue could be discussed with them. The former ambassador of Pakistan to India Abdul Basit, secretary liberation cell Ejaz Hussain Lone, Hurriyat leader Altaf Wani and others also addressed the gathering.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/10/president-ajk-urges-world-to-take-notice-of-occupied-kashmir-plight/>

'Academia and Social Media can add value to the national narrative on Kashmir dispute:' Shehryar

The Nation, December 10, 2021

The chairman of the parliamentary committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi urged the world community to take notice of the "travesty of justice being committed by Indian occupational forces" against the political prisoners of Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of a

seminar titled "The Iconic Prisoners of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" held at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). He said that India is "committing crime against iconic political prisoners" including Dr Qasim Faktoo, Syed Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Masarrat Alam Bhat, Dr Asiya Andrabi, Naheeda Nasreen, Fehmeeda Sofi, Yaseen Malick and others.

He said that the academia can play a pivotal role in spreading awareness about the "miserable conditions of the Kashmiri prisoners" who are kept in the jails in mainland India. He said that the silence over Indian steps taken after August 5, 2019, totally exposed the double standards of the global community. He noted that the "Indian occupational forces" were committing "war crimes" against the people of "occupied Jammu and Kashmir" but the world was silent. He said that academia can add value to the national narrative on the Kashmir dispute and they need to spread awareness among the youth on half widows, half-orphans, demographic terrorism and other issues faced by the Kashmiri people. He further said that India is distorting history by producing movies under its "nefarious design" to mislead the world and the younger generations by erasing the history of the Kashmiri freedom struggle.

He noted that the successful holding of the Kashmir Premier League (KPL) has proved to the world that in "Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), tyranny and oppression" is the order of the day while "Azad Kashmir" is a developing and thriving part of Kashmir. He urged the youths to

become bloggers and storytellers of Kashmir on social media and break “Indian shackles” on social media. During the meeting, Professor Khuram Elahi shared some verses from the poetry of Allama Iqbal on Kashmir and his vision about the Muslims of the subcontinent. Dr Nadeemul Haq, Vice-Chancellor of PIDE said that the youth is disillusioned and distracted and economic revival can pave the way for the revival of national pride.

<https://nation.com.pk/10-Dec-2021/academia-can-add-value-to-national-narrative-on-kashmir-dispute-shehryar>

‘Kashmir should be included in OIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting:’ Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan

Daily Parliament Times, December 12, 2021

The Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) head (Amir) Siraj-ul-Haq has said that Pakistan’s cowardly rulers are playing the role of silent spectator while India is “conspiring to change the Muslim majority demographics of Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir” (IOJK). He stressed that Kashmir should be included in the agenda of the OIC foreign ministers meeting, and urged the OIC member states to play their role to stop atrocities in ‘IOJK.’ He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the annual members of the general council of Jamaat-e-Islami, “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK). The central deputy Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Rashid Naseem, Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami “Azad Kashmir” Dr Khalid Mehmood Khan and other leaders also addressed on the occasion.

Sarajul Haq further said that why international organizations and human rights champions do not see the “game of Indian brutality in the occupied valley” and noted that mothers, sisters and daughters of Kashmir are looking towards Pakistan. He said that “Kashmir and Pakistan are inseparable” and JIP fully supports Kashmiri's in their struggle. He stressed that the people of “Occupied Kashmir” fought their case with bravery and courage and did not surrender to the “occupying Indian forces despite all the oppression.” While speaking on the occasion, Dr Khalid Mahmood Khan said that the government of Pakistan should play its due role in making the sacrifices of the martyrs of Kashmir fruitful. He stressed that Kashmir should be included in the OIC foreign ministers’ meeting. He emphasized that “Kashmiris are fighting for the survival and security of Pakistan and they will not accept any solution less than independence.”

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/12/kashmir-should-be-included-in-oic-foreign-ministers-meeting-khalid-mehmood/>

Economic Developments

‘The development of tourism and state-of-the-art projects in Azad Kashmir has made great improvements’

Daily Pakistan, December 07, 2021

A meeting regarding the Tourism Promotion Act Memorial Bill (TPAMB) 2021 was held under the chairmanship of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) president of “Azad Kashmir” Sardar

Tanveer Ilyas Khan. The meeting which was attended by many officials made significant progress towards building state-of-the-art projects in “Azad Kashmir” by adapting tourism to modern requirements. The meeting also reviewed TPAMB 2021 in the light of cabinet decision to rectify legal hurdles in initiating mega projects in the state. It was decided that a follow-up meeting on the tourism promotion act would be held again and the “Azad Kashmir” tourism policy would be harmonized with modern requirements and the doors of “Azad Kashmir” will be opened for international tourism. It has been noted during the meeting that most of the Rs 520 billion Kashmir development package proposed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan for “Azad Kashmir” is likely to be allocated for tourism.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/07-Dec-2021/1374980>

CM working on Digital and Aerial Connectivity Vision for GB

Pamir Times, December 09, 2021

The spokesperson (Ali Taj) of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister (CM) said that the GB CM Khalid Khurshid has a grand Land, Aerial and Digital Connectivity Vision to connect GB with the mainland country and the world. He noted that the GB CM made special efforts at the federal level to get the status of Skardu Airport upgraded as an International one. The GB CM also took special interest to finalize the feasibility of a new airport in Gilgit. It was due to the special efforts of the CM, that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) started direct flight operation

from the several major cities of the country to GB this year which was previously limited to Islamabad. He said that under the historic 370-billion GB integrated development plan, Khalid Khurshid had envisioned a 5-route land connectivity plan for GB. The GB's major land connectivity projects with the mainland country were Gilgit-Shandur Road, Astore Valley Road, Counter Tunnel Feasibility, Babusar and Tunnel Feasibility. One of the prospective plans for the improvement of land connectivity is to extend Karakoram Highway (KH) to both sides of the Indus River. The CM has already approved a project costing 41 crores for the construction of Alternate KH at the Tattapani section.

He further noted that the Raikote-Thakote Motorway project has been included in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Ali Taj said that to further improve the digital connectivity, the CM has got a 4G internet license and taken up the matter of extension of Ignite and Universal Service Fund Pakistan (USF) jurisdiction to GB at the highest level in the federal government. He further emphasized that the grand land, aerial and digital connectivity vision of CM Khalid Khurshid will be the backbone of the Naya (New) GB. It will massively boost tourism, heavily enhance trade and rapidly develop the Information Technology (IT) and service sector.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/12/09/cm-has-a-grand-vision-for-land-aerial-and-digital-connectivity-of-gilgit-baltistan-ali-taj/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Kashmir issue, not a border dispute: Raja Muhammad Farooq

Jammu and Kashmir Times, December 10, 2021

The president of PML-N “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) and former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan has said that the “Kashmir issue is not a border or land dispute between India and Pakistan. It is a fundamental right of a nation. There is the issue of self-determination for which Kashmiris have sacrificed millions of lives.” He noted that “Indian atrocities are on the rise in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir” (OJK) and maintained that India has issued a dubious state subject for the settlement of Indian nationals in ‘OJK.’ He further said that to change the demographics, India has issued a certificate to resettle 2.8 million Indian citizens in ‘OKJ.’ He stressed that in the next ten years, the current Kashmir demographics will not be what they are today. The government of Pakistan knew what the Indian government was going to do on August 5, 2019, but no concrete steps have been taken globally to stop it. He

said that India is currently the fifth-largest economy and is a natural ally of the West. Pakistan has no fee value due to its weak policies.

He stressed that Kashmiris will now have to go their way and find new ways in which the role of the diaspora is of utmost importance. The Kashmiri diaspora should involve the educated youth in this work and through them use the “weapon of social media” to make the world public and media aware of “Indian barbarism and oppression.” He further noted that the PML-N government had established the dignity of the people within the free zone, secured their rights and guarded the identity of the state. While Imran Khan used all unconstitutional, immoral tactics to derail the PML-N in Kashmir and bulldozed the constitution, law and regulations of “Azad Kashmir.” Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan was addressing a reception organized by PML-N’s Nottingham Branch in the UK.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Front-page-10.jpg>

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Disclaimer

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