

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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POK infrastructure
hydropower province Gilgit-Baltistan
provisional transition plan
Fourth Schedule tourism



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Political Developments

‘Opposition parties hatching conspiracies to destabilize Pakistan:’ AJK PM

Dawn, March 08, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that at a time when Pakistan was facing “multiple challenges and threats”, opposition parties were “remorselessly engaged in hatching conspiracies to destabilise the country.” He further regretted that the “opposition parties” appear to be hell-bent upon “damaging vital national interests” by fomenting political instability in the country at a time when the situation at home as well as in our “neighbourhood strictly warrants greater national unity in our ranks and file.” He further added that PM Khan is the “ambassador of Kashmiris and Kashmir issue would see settlement under his leadership”. He emphasized that he is tirelessly working on the agenda spelt out by PM Imran Khan and the agenda includes accountability of institutions, eradication of corruption from the state and highlighting the “the longstanding Kashmir issue” at the international level. He added that a slew of development schemes and projects had already been initiated by his government and more would be initiated after the next budget. He stressed that PM Khan is shielding the country against “internal and external conspiracies” on the one hand and addressing the system on the other

hand and he will succeed in establishing a Madina-like state in Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1678835/opposition-parties-hatching-conspiracies-to-destabilise-pakistan-ajk-pm>

‘GB is part of Kashmir, support GB on constitutional rights:’ JKPP President

Daily Parliament Times, March 09, 2022

The president of Jammu Kashmir People’s Party (JKPP) and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sardar Hassan Ibrahim Khan said that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is an “indivisible unit” and the final decision on the future of the state rests solely with the “people of Kashmir.” He stressed that Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is “part of Kashmir” and if an attempt is made to make GB a province, we will be left with no option but a “strong resistance.” He further noted that the Karachi agreement is the historical document that proves GB as part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

He added that the people of “Azad Kashmir” have strong concern over the resolution being tabled in the senate regarding GB and therefore we expect that sane forces of Pakistan would play their role in this regard. He stressed that the attempts by the “government of Pakistan to tamper with the status of GB” would justify the Indian move taken on August 05, 2019, while the Kashmiris have the right to decide their future through a plebiscite following the resolutions of the United Nation

Security Council (UNSC). He added that changing the status of GB at this critical juncture is not only a blow to the Kashmiris' movement but is also against Pakistan's national interests. The government of Pakistan should take all parties including Kashmiris into confidence in this regard and we support GB to get full constitutional rights. He said that a complete governmental setup should be granted to GB like "Azad Kashmir" but making it a province would be a blow to Pakistan's legitimate and principled position on Kashmir and therefore we outrightly reject any such move that could damage the international nature of the Kashmir conflict.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/03/09/gb-is-part-of-kashmir-support-gb-on-constitutional-rights-sardar-hassan-ibrahim/>

'Fourth schedulers in GB to be kept under watch'

Dawn, March 10, 2022

The district administrations and the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) police have been directed to keep a close eye on the people placed on the "Fourth Schedule" to maintain the law and order situation in the region. The directives were issued at a high-level meeting chaired by GB home secretary Iqbal Hussain, the meeting was convened to ensure implementation of the decisions taken at a recently-held GB apex committee meeting to maintain the law and order situation in the region. The meeting decided that the "Fourth Schedulers" would have to take permission from the local

administration and police for moving from one district to another and were also directed to submit their collateral bonds immediately. The meeting was informed that currently there were 36 persons placed on the Fourth Schedule and that 54 cases had been registered under anti-terrorism laws in the region. The home secretary Iqbal Hussain directed the district administrations and the police department to take steps to "protect mosques, imambargahs, congregation halls and other places of worship", and also asked the secretary information to formulate a comprehensive social media policy in consultation with home and law departments to prevent the spread of hate content on social media platforms.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1679250/fourth-schedulers-in-gb-to-be-kept-under-watch>

'People of all provinces, AJK and GB stand by PM Khan:' Sardar Tanveer Ilyas

Daily Parliament Times, March 10, 2022

The president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that the special meeting of the 'AJK' cabinet was a sign of full confidence in the leadership of the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan, Imran Khan. He stressed that the cabinet approval proves that the people of "Azad Kashmir", in addition to all the provinces of Pakistan including Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) stood like a rock with the PM Imran Khan. He added that the PTI government had received immense love from the people of 'AJK' in recent

elections and the party is focusing on improving the health, infrastructure and communication system of the “Azad Kashmir” as per the vision of the PM of Pakistan. He added that there was no precedent in the past, the way PM Imran Khan had represented Kashmiris in international forums like a true Kashmir ambassador and said that the whole world came to know about the “oppression against the unarmed Kashmiris” only as a result of the successful foreign policy of the PTI government.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/03/10/people-of-all-provinces-ajk-and-gb-stand-by-pm-khan-sardar-tanveer-ilyas/>

‘AJK president urges masses to rise above party politics to join Kashmir rally’

Daily Parliament Times, March 13, 2022

The president of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has urged the masses to rise above party politics and join the upcoming Kashmir rally to express complete solidarity with their brethren in the “Indian occupied Kashmir.” The ‘AJK’ president expressed these views while speaking to party leaders and workers at Aiwan-e-Sadr Muzaffarabad. The ‘AJK’ president said that it was high time that the people should raise above their personal politics and attend the rally to express complete solidarity with the people of “occupied Kashmir” to convey them the message that Kashmiris living on this side of cease fire line would not leave them alone in

their struggle for “right to self-determination.”

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/03/13/ajk-president-urges-masses-to-rise-above-party-politics-to-join-kashmir-rally/>

‘Decision on No-Trust move against AJK PM Likely in April’

The Nation, March 13, 2022

It has been observed that the decision to bring a no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) is likely to be taken in April before the local bodies elections. It has been noted that a forward bloc comprising members not happy with Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi’s government might be formed. The forward bloc represented by Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has decided to move ahead unconditionally for the no-confidence motion. It is expected that senior ministry will be given to the PPP while the PML-N will get a speakership. While on the one hand, PPP “Azad Kashmir” president Chaudhry Yasin and former ‘AJK’ president Haji Muhammad Yaqoob are trying to become PM and on the other hand, the leaders of the Jat family have increased pressure on the president of ‘AJK’ Sultan Choudhury that in case of no confidence, Choudhary Yasin should be appointed PM. It has also been said that ‘AJK’ PM Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has come to know about the “Azad Kashmir”, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader who met Asif Ali Zardari. He has requested Imran Khan to remove Sardar Tanvir Ilyas from party president in ‘AJK’ and stressed

that irrespective of circumstances, he would not resign and in case of a no-confidence motion, the assembly will be dissolved.

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/03/13/decision-on-no-trust-move-against-ajk-pm-likely-in-april/>

'International community must take notice of India's defective missile programme:' PTI 'AJK' President

Daily Parliament Times, March 13, 2022

The president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas said that the fall of Indian missile into Pakistani territory was proof that "India was an irresponsible country" and its "nuclear and missile technology program was only flawed." He said that the government of Pakistan had shown great patience and perseverance in the face of Indian missiles falling in Mian Channu. He said that the expertise shown by the Pakistan Army on the Mian Channu missile was exemplary as the missile was spotted on Pakistani radar as soon as it entered Pakistani territory and was pursued. He stated that in response to an Indian missile, "dozens of missiles could have been fired on Indian soil" but Pakistani forces demonstrated that they were peace-loving. He further said that the international community should take notice of India's "irresponsible behaviour" and its "defective missile programme" and ban it so that no such incident could happen in future. He added that the Pakistani forces were not only vigilant but also ready to make any sacrifice for the defence of the country and stressed that Pakistan's defence program is equipped with the world's most advanced and state-of-

the-art technology. A glimpse of this has been seen by the "Indian forces and the Indian government" on February 27, 2019."

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/03/13/intl-community-must-take-notice-of-indias-defective-missile-programme-sardar-tanveer-ilyas-khan/>

Economic Developments

'PIA style Azad Kashmir Air Line announcement soon:' President of AJK

Jasarat, March 08, 2022

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that "Azad Kashmir Airlines" will be built on the pattern of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). He stressed that there are vast investment opportunities in other sectors including hydraulics, minerals, tourism. He noted that airports will be built in Mirpur and Rawalpindi for this purpose and helicopter service should be started for the promotion of tourism in "Azad Kashmir." He further said that the "independence movement" of Kashmir would make the region economically prosperous and self-sufficient. He noted that leaders of all political parties of "Azad Kashmir" were holding Kashmir rally on March 17 in Muzaffarabad, so that the base camp can send a message to the people of "occupied Kashmir" that they are not alone in the "struggle for independence", as the government and people of the base camp are with them.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/03/08/220308-08-20/>

‘Transition Plan: 500 billion rupees for the development of Gilgit-Baltistan proposed’

Pamir Times, March 09, 2022

Pakistan’s federal government has been asked to allocate 500 billion development funds for the next 10 years, under a proposed “transition plan” focused on Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). It has been said that 380 billion of the 500 billion financial proposals, if approved, will be spent on the “development of small and medium-sized hydropower projects/dams.” It has been said that under the transition plan, the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in GB will be allowed to complete its “five-year term”, by amending article 232-A of Pakistan’s constitution, to honour “the mandate of the people.” The plan has been developed by a team of experts under the guidance of the political leadership of GB led by the Chief Minister (CM) of GB. It has been noted that initially, the committee had names of 9 public representatives and 9 bureaucrats, excluding members of opposition parties, however, after many hues and cries, the committee was expanded and 4 members from opposition parties were also added. The “transition plan”, is a part of the efforts aimed at making GB a “provisional province” of Pakistan, through amendments in the constitution of Pakistan. The Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan had promised the previous year that the federation of Pakistan wants to give a “provisional province” status to GB to address political grievances and the plan also envisages numerous major “administrative and constitutional”

reforms in GB to empower the regional government.

The transition plan has received mixed reactions with some calling it a “game-changer” for the region, while others calling it another “futile attempt.” The “progressive and nationalist” forces have “rejected the provisional province status”, demanding internal autonomy with an independent constituent assembly. They believe that interim reforms cannot address the constitutional question of GB and that the parliament of Pakistan, where GB is not represented, cannot decide the future of GB. However, major political parties, including the ruling PTI, as well as Pakistan People Party (PPP), have welcomed the provisional province status, calling it the most feasible option. While the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), has said that the PTI government is not “serious in implementing” constitutional reforms. They have also accused the incumbent government of not “consulting all stakeholders.”

<https://pamirtimes.net/2022/03/09/transition-plan-500bn-rupees-for-development-of-gilgit-baltistan-proposed-current-govt-to-stay/>

‘Construction of 46 km long road to Kalash Valley started: 4.6 billion rupees allocated for the project’

Pamir Times, March 09, 2022

A 46-kilometres road will be constructed at the cost of 4.6 billion rupees to connect Kalash Valley with Chitral town. It is the first major project, since the independence of Pakistan, aimed at increasing connectivity for the valley located adjacent to the Nooristan province of

Afghanistan, home to the indigenous Kalasha people. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of lower Chitral, Anwarul Haq inaugurated the construction work, along with district and National Highway Authority (NHA) officials. He said that the project includes the construction of nine bridges, culverts, shoulders, drainage system, and blacktopping. He further added that NHA has allocated 4.6 billion for this road while compensation for the owners of land coming under this road would be paid by the provincial government. The DC said that construction of the road was a long-awaited demand of the people of the area and it would not only provide employment to 2,000 people but also boost tourism in the region.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2022/03/12/construction-of-46km-long-road-to-kalash-valley-started-4-6bn-rupees-allocated-for-project/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

‘AJK cabinet expresses solidarity with Prime Minister Imran Khan’

Mahasib, March 10, 2022

While expressing its full faith and confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan, the PM of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) conveyed a cabinet meeting and said that “the opposition parties” gamble to dislodge PM Khan was bound to backfire as the entire nation stands like a rock with Imran Khan. He said that the opposition was hell-bent on disrupting Pakistan's development and scuttling the process of progress and prosperity by fomenting political instability in the country. While reposing faith in PM Khan's leadership,

the cabinet meeting adopted a unanimous resolution and expressed complete solidarity with the PM of Pakistan. The cabinet members noted that the manner in which PM Imran Khan had represented Kashmiris in international forums finds no precedent in recent history. While referring to Imran Khan's commitment towards the development and prosperity of “Azad Kashmir”, the cabinet meeting observed that the PM had proved his commitment to Kashmiris by ensuring timely disbursement of required development funds to the government of “Azad Kashmir.” The cabinet meeting noted that PM Khan had raised the prestige and stature of the country and established himself as the leader of the entire Muslim Ummah. The cabinet also congratulated Imran Khan for his “successful visit to Russia and China” and expressed the hope that these visits would further improve the relations between the three countries and further enhance mutual understanding including trade.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/muzaffarabad.php>

‘Indian domination of occupied Kashmir is the worst example of colonization:’ JIP Leader

Jasarat, March 10, 2022

The Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) has invited the leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) for an important national consultation on the “worst situation in occupied Kashmir.” The conference was led by JI Lahore leader, Mian Zikrullah Mujahid and the heads of many other social and religious organizations. The leader of JI, Zikrullah Mujahid, while addressing

the conference said that “Indian domination over occupied Kashmir is the worst example of colonialism.” He stressed that the current and former rulers of Pakistan are also responsible for the current “situation in Kashmir.” He noted that the JI will continue to play a “supporting role” of moral, diplomatic and financial support for the “independence of Kashmir.”

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/03/10/220310-11-7/>

‘Imran Khan committed criminal negligence regarding Kashmir:’ Raja Farooq Haider Khan

Urdupoint, March 11, 2022

The former Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Kashmir”, Raja Muhammad

Farooq Haider Khan while reacting to the “Azad Kashmir” cabinet resolution in favour of Imran Khan, said that PM Imran Khan committed “criminal negligence” regarding Kashmir after August 05 August 2019. He stressed that after 05 August Imran Khan did not even convene a meeting of the national leadership to discuss the issue which was an insult to the “sacrifices of Kashmiris.” He said that after the Peshawar tragedy, Nawaz Sharif united the entire nation while Imran Khan did his best to tear apart the unity and solidarity of the country. He said that history will remember Imran Khan as the “culprit of Kashmiris.”

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/kashmir/live-news-3069389.html>

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Disclaimer

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