

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Gilgit-Baltistan Karakoram POK
Highway WAPDA
Di Amer-Bhasha Dam
health infrastructure



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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

‘Concerted efforts needed to highlight Kashmir issue at a global level:’ AJK President

Daily Parliament Times, March 21, 2022

The president of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that “since the Kashmir issue has entered into a decisive phase”, concerted efforts on the part of all “political stakeholders” is required to highlight the issue at the world level. While talking to the media at Awan- Sadar Islamabad, he said that the government of AJK would continue to play its role in promoting the “Kashmir cause and raising voice against Indian brutalities in the Indian held territory.” Already several initiatives were taken to draw world’s attention on “human rights violations in the occupied Kashmir”. He visited many western and European Union (EU) countries to draw world attention towards the “fast deteriorating political and human rights in Kashmir.” He said that recently held “massive public rallies” under the aegis of all parties’ conferences were organized in Islamabad and Muzaffarabad to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/03/21/concerted-efforts-needed-to-highlight-kashmir-issue-at-global-level-barrister-sultan/>

‘OIC Contact Group on Kashmir Meets Today’

The Nation, March 22, 2022

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) contact group on Jammu and Kashmir would meet today on the sidelines of the OIC Council of foreign minister’s conference and are

expected to adopt an action plan on the Kashmir issue. The OIC contact group comprises Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Niger, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The group will consider the latest situation in “Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir” (IOJK) and would adopt a “strong resolution against Indian atrocities being committed against Kashmiri Muslims.” The OIC special envoy on Jammu and Kashmir report on ‘IOJK’ would also be tabled for discussion during the meeting. The president of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary and All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) representatives would also attend the meeting.

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/03/22/oic-contact-group-on-kashmir-meets-today/>

‘AJK PM seeks OIC pro-active role in resolving Kashmir, Palestine issues’

Daily Parliament Times, March 22, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should redouble its efforts to address the long-pending Kashmir and Palestine issues that have been hanging over for the past several decades. While talking to the media, he said that the Muslim body should fully support the “Kashmiris legitimate struggle against Indian occupation” and step up its efforts to address other issues including Palestine. While referring to the “rising tide of intolerance and Islamophobia within the Indian society”, the PM said the OIC needed to take tangible steps to stop “ill-treatment and persecution of Muslims” in India and other parts of the world. While welcoming the OIC foreign ministers’ moot, the AJK PM said that hosting the high-profile conference in

Islamabad was a major diplomatic achievement for Pakistan. He said that it was condemnable that the Hurriyat leaders of “occupied Kashmir” were not allowed to attend the historic conference. He said PM of Pakistan Imran Khan is a true ambassador of the people of Kashmir. Niazi said that “India was committing serious human rights violations” in “occupied Kashmir”. He said that after August 5, 2019, the Indian government had started using “unconstitutional and illegal tactics to destroy the Muslim identity of occupied Kashmir.” He appealed to the OIC foreign ministers to play their due role to stop “atrocities being inflicted upon the people of occupied Kashmir” and to raise an effective voice against the “Indian government’s illegal actions meant to change the region’s demography.”

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/03/22/ljk-pm-seeks-oic-pro-active-role-in-resolving-kashmir-palestine-issues/>

‘APHC-AJK leaders brief Malaysian delegation on India’s Hindutva acts in IIOJK’

Pakistan Observer, March 23, 2022

A delegation of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organization (CIO) comprising its president M. Azimi Bin Abd Hamid among others met with All-Party Hurriyat Conference-Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) convener Muhammad Farooq Rehmani and exchanged views on the latest political and human rights situation after 5 August 2019, due to India's repeal of 370 and 35A acts of the constitution of India. The Malaysian delegation expressed concern. The APHC leaders briefed the delegation on India’s laws that have been extended to Kashmir and said that “India was fast-moving

on the path of Hindutva state in India and murder of Kashmiri Muslims would change the demographic character. This is facilitated by “sweeping constitutional and legal transformation throughout the State.” The Malaysian Islamic council said that they would raise Kashmir issue as a humanitarian issue in different forums and apprise the government of the country and OIC members about the “plight of the Kashmiris under the Indian occupation.”

<https://pakobserver.net/aphc-ajk-leaders-brief-malaysian-delegation-on-indias-hindutva-acts-in-iiojk-2/>

‘Kashmir freedom struggle is a continuation of Pakistan Movement’

Pakistan Observer, March 24, 2022

The Kashmir Media Service (KMS) in its report said that the “Kashmir dispute” is the “unfinished agenda of the partition” of the sub-continent as Pakistanis and Kashmiris share strong religious, historical and cultural bonds. The resolution passed on 23 March 1940 is the main driving force behind the “Kashmir freedom struggle”, which is a continuation of the Pakistan movement. The report maintained that the Kashmiri delegation that had attended the 23 March 1940 public event at Lahore, where Pakistan Resolution was passed, had declared that the “people of Jammu and Kashmir would be a part of a future Muslim state in the region.” Pakistan is committed to continuing its support to the “Kashmiris’ struggle till they achieve freedom from Indian yoke.” The Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan, Imran Khan, in his address to the 48th session of the OIC’s Council of foreign ministers sought the Muslim body’s strong support for the resolution of the

Kashmir dispute. The foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in his address to the OIC conference said that India's August 05, 2019 actions are in "violation of the United Nations (UN) resolutions on Kashmir."

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has said that the "struggling Kashmiris" draw inspiration from the historic March 23, 1940 resolution and that a strong and stable Pakistan is very important for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The report said Pakistan and Kashmir are "incomplete without each other" and "pro-Pakistan slogans" raised in "Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK) show the oneness of Pakistan and Kashmir, added that "Kashmiris unfurl Pakistani flags" on Pakistan's national days to show their "attachment and love for the country." It further said that the "Kashmir Baney ga Pakistan" slogan is the voice of every "Kashmiri Muslim."

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmir-freedom-struggle-is-continuation-of-pakistan-movement/>

'OIC contact group on Kashmir takes stock of human rights violations in IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, March 25, 2022

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) contact group on Jammu and Kashmir in its meeting in Islamabad took stock of "gross and widespread human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)." The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the OIC council of foreign ministers. The OIC secretary-general, Hissein Brahim Taha chaired the meeting with the participation of foreign ministers and dignitaries of Azerbaijan, Niger, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Pakistan

delegation was led by foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The chairperson of OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), Dr Haci Ali Acikgul, president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir", representatives of the Kashmiri people and senior OIC officials also attended the meeting. Shah Mehmood Qureshi underscored OIC's principled position and resolute support to the "just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination." He stressed that since its "illegal and unilateral actions" of 5 August 2019, "India had accelerated the denial of rights and freedoms to Kashmiris, detained the legitimate Kashmiri leadership and killed, maimed and summarily executed and tortured Kashmiris on a massive scale." He said that "in violation of international law and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, India was seeking to change the demography of the occupied territory."

The OIC secretary-general and chairperson of the IPHRC presented their reports on the situation in 'IIOJK' and made recommendations for action. The participating foreign ministers spoke about the importance of Jammu and Kashmir on the "agenda of OIC and expressed support for the Kashmiri people." The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) and 'True Representatives of the Kashmiri people' briefed the contact group about the "gross violations of human rights in IIOJK" and called for OIC's continued support for the Kashmir cause. The meeting of the contact group concluded with the adoption of a comprehensive joint communiqué including an action plan, that "reaffirmed unequivocally" OIC's position and resolutions on the

Jammu and Kashmir dispute.” It declared that the final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute following UNSC resolutions and an UN-supervised plebiscite was indispensable for durable peace and stability in South Asia.

<https://pakobserver.net/oic-contact-group-on-kashmir-takes-stock-of-hr-violations-in-iiqjkl>

‘AJK PM lauds OIC for Its principled stance on Kashmir Dispute’

The Nation, March 26, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi, has lauded the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) for “reiterating its principled stance on the Kashmir dispute.” He said that the strong-worded resolution, adopted by the OIC’s Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting in Islamabad, asked the Indian government to reverse all the illegal actions it had taken on Kashmir since August 5, 2019, was a great diplomatic achievement of Pakistan. He said PM Imran Khan was a “true benefactor of the Kashmiri people” as he effectively projected their cause at the international level. The United Nations General Assembly’s landmark decision to declare March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia was yet another big achievement and the credit for it went to Imran Khan, he added.

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/03/26/ajk-pm-lauds-oic-for-its-principled-stance-on-kashmir-dispute/>

Economic Developments

‘CPSP to train postgraduate doctors from Gilgit-Baltistan’

Dawn, March 23, 2022

The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) chief minister Khalid Khurshid Khan said that his

government had created 1,354 posts of medical specialists and technical staff as part of plans to improve the health sector in the region. He was speaking during a special ceremony held here for the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan (CPSP) and the GB government to start a postgraduate training programme. The acting CPSP president Dr Mohammad Shoaib Shafi and director Dr Asghar and the GB health officials signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) attended the event. The CPSP will conduct training workshops in major hospitals of the region for postgraduate supervising doctors in Gilgit from March 29. The GB chief minister said for the first time, the GB government was focusing on the development of health infrastructure in GB under which the postgraduate training had begun in Gilgit, Skardu and Chilas.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1681422/cpsp-to-train-postgraduate-doctors-from-gilgit-baltistan>

‘25km long relocated KH opened for light traffic in the Diamer-Bhasha Dam area’

Pamir Times, March 26, 2022

A 25-km long patch of the “realigned” Karakoram Highway (KH) has been opened for light traffic in the Diamer-Bhasha Dam project vicinity. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) chairman and retired General Muzamil Hussain, said that the 25 kilometres long section of the newly constructed road will be opened for heavy traffic within two weeks. The KH is being realigned and relocated in this part of the Diamer district because the existing road will be submerged by the Diamer-Bhasha Dam project. The

realigned/relocated section of KH lies between Shatial and Minar Nala. The WADPA chairman said that after the resumption of traffic, tourists and locals coming to Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) will be able to continue their journey on the relocated KH without stopping at the dam site. The carriageway of the highway, constructed at a cost of over 5.78 billion, is between 7.3 and 9.8 meters wide. At present, construction work on eight sites on Diamer Bhasha Dam is in full swing. The height of the Roller Compact Concrete (RCC) dam, which is being constructed for water storage and access to cheap energy, is 272 meters. The dam has a total storage capacity of 8.1 million acre-feet. The dam will generate 4,500 Megawatt (MW) of affordable and environmentally friendly electricity, says the WAPDA communique.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2022/03/26/25km-long-relocated-kkh-opened-for-light-traffic-in-the-diamer-bhasha-dam-areal>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

'We have failed Kashmiris and Palestinians:' PM Imran to OIC moot

Dailyk2, March 22, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan, Imran Khan in his keynote address at the inaugural session of the 48th Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the parliament house in Islamabad said that we "have failed both the Palestinians and the people of Kashmir. I am sad to say that we have been able to make no impact at all." The PM said that western countries did "not take the OIC seriously" because "we are a divided house and those powers know it." He stressed that "We (Muslims) are 1.5 billion people and yet

our voice to stop this blatant injustice is insignificant." PM Imran said international law was on the "side of the people of Palestine and Kashmir", adding that the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) resolutions backed the "right of the Kashmiris to self-determination through a plebiscite." While referring to India's "stripping of occupied Kashmir's" special status in August 2019, he said that "nothing happened because they (India) feels no pressure." He further cautioned that unless the OIC was united on core issues, "human rights abuses" would keep happening such as the "daylight robbery in Palestine." He said India was "changing the demography in occupied Kashmir" by bringing in settlers from outside but "no one has pushed about it because they think we are ineffective."

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/5846>

'OIC states urged to boycott India on Human Rights Violations:' Jamaat-e-Islami Chief

UrduPoint, March 21, 2022

While welcoming the foreign ministers and delegates of various nations to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) conference in Islamabad, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan chief Sirajul Haq said that the member countries must "boycott India over human rights violations in Indian occupied Kashmir (IoK)." He further said that we look forward to the OIC's deliberation on contemporary challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah today from "Kashmir to Palestine and Afghanistan," added that the "people of Kashmir and Palestine" are eagerly waiting for the OIC's ministers to raise their plight from the prestigious forum. Haq said that the people of Kashmir were facing

"Indian atrocities for the past 74 years" and during this period almost "500,000 people lost their lives" in their "struggle for independence from Indian occupation", "125,000 children became orphans, 24,000 Kashmiri women were raped by the Indian forces, and 164,000 people were jailed." He stressed that despite the violence against them, the Kashmiri people never called off their struggle, adding that India and Pakistan over the time inked various agreements to settle the dispute peacefully but every time "India violated the set agreements." He urged the OIC member states to force the Indian government to revert to the August 5, 2019 position, free all the political prisoners and respect the will of the Kashmiri people as per the United Nations (UN) resolutions.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/important-news/live-news-3079696.html>

'A just solution to the Kashmir issue is essential for lasting peace and stability in the region:' Pakistan FM

Daily Pakistan, March 22, 2022

The foreign minister of Pakistan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that the "Kashmir issue" is a major obstacle to lasting peace and therefore a just solution to the "Kashmir issue" is essential for lasting peace and stability in the region. While addressing the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting, he said that unity in the Muslim world is needed, adding that the OIC conference would help tackle the challenges facing the Muslim world. While talking about the Kashmir issue, the foreign minister said that "Indian atrocities are continuing in occupied Kashmir," with "constant violation of human rights" and killings of "unarmed innocent Kashmiris"

under the "guise of the so-called search operation." He said that the "genocide of Kashmiris" was being carried out and "India was constantly violating" the United Nations (UN) resolution, while Pakistan is trying to resolve the Kashmir issue following the UN resolutions. He said that India should immediately withdraw the August 05 move-in "occupied Kashmir" as "India's illegal and oppressive measures" are a big threat to the security of the region.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/22-Mar-2022/1417648>

'OIC Secretary-General issued statement against India's action to end the special status of occupied Kashmir'

Daily Pakistan, March 22, 2022

The secretary-general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Hissein Brahim Taha while addressing the 48th session of the OIC council of foreign ministers in Islamabad said that the Indian government's action of August 5, 2019, that changed the special status of "occupied Jammu and Kashmir" was in violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR). He reiterated the OIC's call to support the "rights of the Kashmiri people to self-determination" in line with the UNSC resolutions. The foreign minister of Saudi Arabia (OIC summit chair) prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, in his statement, also reaffirmed his country's support to the OIC efforts for the "just resolution of the Palestinian and Jammu and Kashmir issues."

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/22-Mar-2022/1417604>

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Disclaimer

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