

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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tourism **climate**
POK change **Sui Gas**
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Ghizer Khas
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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

'PTI nominee set to be elected AJK PM by a clear majority'

Dawn, April 18, 2022

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) selected Sardar Tanveer Ilyas as its nominee for the office of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) prime minister, by a clear majority in the Legislative Assembly of 'AJK.' The 19-member combined opposition, comprising "Legislative Assembly of AJK" members of Pakistan People Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), announced that they will "boycott the election of the prime minister without giving any reason for it immediately." Meanwhile, the opposition had nominated PPP's regional president Chaudhry Mohammad Yasin as their candidate for the prime minister's office. In response to a question posed by Dawn correspondent, leader of the opposition Chaudhry Latif Akbar "alleged that Imran Khan had sold out the 'AJK' premiership to Mr Ilyas."

The opposition leader noted that "not only has Mr Ilyas given money to PTI lawmakers but he also held them, hostage, at a local hotel for the past few days." It has also been noted that according to rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Assembly, any Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) "can propose the name of any other MLA for the office of prime minister two days before the day of voting while the nominee can himself withdraw from the election a

day before the voting day." It has also been observed that another opposition leader, Mr Yasin had "allegedly contacted some of the PTI legislators to support him in the election." It has been speculated that some "PTI legislators from Mr Yasin's tribe might have a soft corner for him," however, this was rejected by the "legislators from the Mirpur Division."

It has also been observed that a PTI lawmaker (name not disclosed) considered close to 'AJK' president Barrister Sultan Mahmood "naively disclosed that Mr Mahmood had suggested the names" of Sardar Faheem Rabbani and Chaudhry Mohammad Rasheed to chairman Imran Khan as the likely replacement for Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi. However, since the "chairman has given his blessing to Sardar Tanveer Ilyas we all stand by him wholeheartedly and there should not be any doubt in this regard." It was also observed that the former prime minister Mr Abdul Quyyum Niazi had "hinted that he too could poll his vote in favour of Mr Ilyas provided that no one booed him in the assembly." While responding to a question about Muslim Conference leader Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan and Jammu Kashmir People's Party chief Sardar Hassan Ibrahim, it has been said that "at least one of them would surely vote for Mr Ilyas," as both of them supported the previous Niazi led PTI government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1685474/pti-nominee-set-to-be-elected-ajk-pm-by-clear-majority>

'UN urged to take note of the demographic change in IIOJK': Pasban-e-Hurriyat

Dawn, April 18, 2022

The chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali has appealed to the United Nations (UN) to “stop India from the forced settlement of Indian citizens in the disputed state.” He stressed that the government of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Narendra Modi deliberately tried to convert the Muslim majority population in the state “into a minority”, and added that “domiciles are being issued to millions of Hindu citizens from all over India and Kashmiris’ land is being forcibly sold to Indian traders.” He further said that “citizens from across India are being placed in government jobs” on a priority basis and due to these “cruel measures,” the unemployment rate in the state has gone beyond 25 per cent. Ghazali said that the UN had passed 16 resolutions for the right to self-determination to resolve the Kashmir issue. He noted that the “Indian government is trampling the religious, political, social and civil liberties of the Kashmiri people through military force”, and added that, Kashmiri people are being “arrested and imprisoned in jails” under “inhumane and cruel laws” like Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (TADA). Ghazali called on the UN and the international community to play an effective role in preventing the “settlement of Indian citizens” in

Jammu and Kashmir. He also appealed to the people of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) to raise their voices against the “Indian government’s aggressive measures.”

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40167822/iiojk-un-urged-to-take-note-of-demographic-change>

'Kashmiri will stage a protest on Modi visit to occupied land'

Pakistan Observer, April 20, 2022

The chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali “appealed to the masses to join the resistance movement against Indian Illegal Military Occupation” (IIMO). He said that “protests will be held in the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) against the “visit of Indian Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi in an occupied state.” He said that the forthcoming visit of Indian PM to “occupied Jammu and Kashmir” on April 24 as a “heinous conspiracy to impose imperialist agenda against the Kashmiri people.” He said that Narendra Modi “usurped the basic rights of Kashmiri people” on August 05, 2019, adding that he is “once again visiting the state to show normalcy.” Ghazali said that “Modi is openly engaged in conspiracies against the Muslims’ systematic genocide in India, particularly in occupied Kashmir.” He further said that “Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party, Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Ajit Doval, have snatched the rights” of 15 million people of the “globally recognized disputed state.”

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmiri-will-stage-protest-on-modi-visit-to-occupied-land/>

'Effective diplomatic campaign to be launched to promote Kashmir cause:' 'AJK' President

Pakistan Radio, April 19, 2022

The "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) president, Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the government would take all possible measures to address the problems being faced by the "Kashmiri journalist community." While addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the members of the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the central press club in Muzaffarabad. He said that "Azad Kashmir" would be turned into a "base camp of freedom" in the true sense, adding that a "strong and effective diplomatic campaign" would be launched to "promote the Kashmir's cause" and "expose India's ugly face" at the international level. While referring to his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, Barrister Sultan said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) chief reiterating the "organization's full support for Kashmir cause" said that the "Muslim body" had always supported "Kashmiris' legitimate struggle" and "condemned the human rights violations being committed against Kashmiris."

<https://www.radio.gov.pk/19-04-2022/effective-diplomatic-campaign-to-be-launched-to-promote-kashmir-cause-ajk-president>

'Kashmir Dispute Is Not as Much Talked as It Should Be:' Ilhan Omar

The Nation, April 22, 2022

The United States (US) congresswoman Ilhan Omar said that "she would brief"

the United States Congress and the Biden administration about the "human rights violations being committed by the Narendra Modi government in the Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IIOJK)." While talking to the media after meeting with the president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) Sultan Mehmood, she said that the "issue of human rights abuses in Kashmir was less talked about in the US" and she would try to take up the issue with both the congress and the Biden administration.

She said that "we are engaged through a Foreign Office Committee about the question of Kashmir and this question is not as much talked about as it should be." Ilhan Omar said that she was "visiting the Azad Kashmir to collect the facts" and the tour is helping "her to understand the issue." She said that "she was optimistic that more conversation would be held in the Congress on the question of Kashmir and anti-Muslim acts of the Indian government" on her return and she would be "able to get issued condemnations" by the US administration and raising the issue with India. During her visit, 'AJK' president Sultan Mehmood briefed the congresswoman about the "human rights abuses being committed by the Indian government in the IIOJK", and expressed the optimism that the Biden administration would take a "cognizance of the post-August 5, 2019 acts." She also visited refugee camps in the 'AJK's capital to assess the situation

in 'IIOJK' as these camps house the people displaced from the "Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir due to Indian atrocities."

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/04/22/kashmir-dispute-is-not-as-much-talked-as-it-should-be/>

'India nervous over US congresswoman's visit to AJK: President of 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times, April 24, 2022

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the "Indian government was nervous because of the diplomatic offence being launched to expose Indian brutalities in Indian occupied Kashmir" at the international level. While talking to "various delegations", he said that the United States (US) congresswoman Ilhan Umar's recent visit to 'AJK' to "hold a press conference at Muzaffarabad had perturbed the Indian government." He further said that "India has been uselessly raising a lot of hues and cry over Ilhan's visit and her press talk with me at Muzaffarabad even though Kashmiris' struggle is now being acknowledged all over the world." He stressed that "since the AJK government has decided to take up the Kashmir issue vigorously" at the international level, "India's uneasiness was quite understandable." He further alleged that "India was perpetrating atrocities in occupied Kashmir daily and especially after the abolition of the special status of occupied Kashmir" on August 5, 2019, the "human rights

situation in the region had further worsened."

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/04/24/india-nervous-over-us-congresswomans-visit-to-ajk-barrister-sultan/>

'Modi's IoK visit is a failed attempt to raise his defeated army's morale: 'AJK' PM

Daily Parliament Times, April 24, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, while addressing protesters outside the Indian Embassy in Islamabad has said that "Modi's visit to occupied Kashmir was a failed attempt to raise the morale of Indian armed forces who after losing the war in Kashmir have been committing suicides day in and day out." The protest demonstration was held by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) AJK chapter, which was attended and addressed by "Kashmiri leaders hailing from both sides of the "Line of Control" (LoC). During the occasion, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas said that the "purpose of Modi's visit was a ploy to mislead the international community and deflect its attention away from the real issue." He further said that the "Indian PM had no moral justification whatsoever to visit the region that continues to bleed under its forcible occupation for the past seven decades." He further said that "the sacrifices being rendered by the Kashmiri nation are scripting a new history of resistance and bravery." He said that "India through its settler colonialism policies, wants to change the region's

demographics by settling non-state subjects in occupied Kashmir.” He said that the day was not far when “Kashmir will become a part of Pakistan”, adding that “Quaid-e-Azam had termed Kashmir as jugular vein of Pakistan.” He also expressed “concern over serious human rights violations of Kashmiris by Indian forces.” In addition to the APHC convener Muhammad Farooq Rahmani, the protest demonstration was addressed by deputy speaker Chaudhry Riaz Gujjar, members of assembly Abdul Majeed Khan, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, deputy secretary-general Sardar Murtaza Ali Ahmed, chairman Kashmir cultural academy Dr Irfan Ashraf among others. The protest demonstrations were held all across “Azad Kashmir including major cities and towns of Pakistan as a mark of protest against the Indian premier’s visit to occupied Kashmir.”

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/04/24/iok-visit-modis-failed-attempt-to-raise-his-defeated-armys-morale-ajk-pml/>

Economic Developments

Youths in Ghizer Khas protest against construction mafia

Pamir Times, April 18, 2022

The young people in Ghizer Khas protested against the “construction mafias” for digging up playgrounds. It was observed that people related to the construction industry in connivance with some other individuals had started digging up “available lands that include playgrounds to collect gravel,

stone, silt, clay and sand.” It has been said that “booming construction” has boosted the demand for the said materials (gravel, stone, silt, clay, sand) but the absence of rules and regulations paved the way for individuals related to the construction industry to benefit from whatever is available for free on the ground.

The protestors noted that the practice has not only damaged land and public properties but is also posing a great threat to the natural habitat and environment in Ghizer Khas. The protestors also highlighted that due to climate change glaciers release extra water which results in erosion of river banks thus permanently damaging the existing historical natural-golf-courses in Ghizer, and added that now bad practices by individuals related to the construction industry have added to the calamity. They (protestors) requested the deputy commissioner of Ghizer and chief secretary of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) to take notice of the situation and protect playgrounds as well as the environment and natural habitat. Members of the community have requested the government to protect lands and save natural habitats by building a levee system around the river banks. The government was urged to find rules and regulations for people related to the construction industry especially contractors in the region.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2022/04/18/youth-protest-against-construction-mafia-for-digging-football-ground/>

Newly elected 'AJK' PM vows to turn the region into a self-reliant state

Daily Times, April 19, 2021

The newly elected Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas while reiterating his party's vision to turn "Azad Kashmir" into a self-reliant state has said that the welfare of the people and development was among his topmost priorities. During his first speech to the assembly as the PM of 'AJK', Ilyas said that government funds would be utilized for the welfare of the people through a government action plan, added that besides initiating mega development projects in the region the government would particularly focus on improving the road infrastructure, promoting tourism and small industries. He emphasized that there was a huge potential in the tourism sector the government would take all possible measures for the promotion of tourism as it also would generate economic activities besides creating job opportunities for the youth, adding that ministers and secretaries will be given a target of three months to show their performance. He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman PTI Imran Khan's vision would be put into practice and the workers will be given their rightful place. He also said that his government will also focus on infrastructure-related activities and stressed that the government will take up the matter with the federal government for extending the Murree Expressway to

Kohala and will install roadside safety barriers that will reduce accidents. He said that Sui Gas would be supplied to Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot and a feasibility report regarding the laying of a railway track from Rawalpindi up to Muzaffarabad will be prepared soon. He further said that the government would start its airline through a public-private partnership and added that the efforts would be made to create special business opportunities for women.

He said that the PTI government would bring real change and transform Kashmir into a self-reliant state, and added that the government will provide quality accommodation to the refugees residing in different camps of "Azad Kashmir." The PM also expressed his desire to rename the University of Muzaffarabad after the Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Gilani "owing to his selfless services for Kashmir cause." He also urged India to "shun its traditional policy of intransigence and resolve the lingering dispute in line with wishes and aspirations of Kashmiri people", added that "India could not deprive the Kashmiris of their basic rights for long." He said that "sooner or later India will have to hold a referendum in Kashmir," adding that the "ruling government's dream of an Akhand Bharat will never come true." He instructed his party workers not to be a part of any negative propaganda regarding Pakistan, added that the "enemy wants to turn us against our army," and that it was our responsibility to foil such conspiracies.

While reiterating “Kashmiri's unconditional love for Pakistan”, he said that Pakistan was the centre of our hopes.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/921731/newly-elected-ajk-pm-vows-to-turn-region-into-self-reliant-state/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

India should leave its bigotry and give Kashmiris the right to self-determination: ‘AJK’ president

Jasarat, April 18, 2022

The president of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that “India should give up its stubbornness and give Kashmiris the right to self-determination.” He said that the present government is continuing its efforts in the international forum to “highlight the Kashmir issue” which will prove fruitful. He expressed these views in his statement on the occasion of the death anniversary of Mirwaiz Kashmir Maulana Muhammad Yousuf Shah, added that Mirwaiz Kashmir, besides highlighting the Kashmir issue at the international level, took a keen interest in the construction and development of ‘AJK’. He said that his translation and interpretation of the Holy Quran in the Kashmiri language is one of his great deeds which will be remembered till the day of resurrection. He further stressed that all resources would be utilized for the completion of the mission of Mirwaiz Kashmir, adding that the “struggle of Kashmiris is for their legitimate

position” and they will surely achieve their destination.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/04/18/220418-08-30/>

Modi’s IIOJK visit equivalent to rubbing salt on Kashmiris’ wounds: ‘AJK’ PM

UrduPoint, April 21, 2022

The newly-elected Prime Minister (PM), of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that Indian PM "Narendra Modi's visit to Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK) was equal to "rubbing salt on the wounds of Kashmiris." He said that "Kashmiris would mark the PM Modi's visit as a black day", adding that the due to the "continued violence in the restive region", it was incumbent upon the United Nations (UN) to play its much-needed role to "stop systematic genocide of Kashmiris." While referring to "enforced disappearances, killing of a youth in fake encounters," he said that "thousands of Kashmiris had been buried in mass graves" stretched all across the territory speaks volumes about "Indian repression and brutalities against Kashmiris." He further said that at a time when "Indian occupation forces" were engaged in the "genocide of Kashmiris, Modi's visit was a part of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government's ploy to hoodwink the international community thereby creating a false impression that all is well in Kashmir." He stressed that a "black day would be observed on both

sides of the Line of Control" (LoC) during the "Indian PM visit to the valley." He said that "Kashmiris would continue their struggle until they achieve their cherished goal of freedom from Indian occupation." He thanked the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan for "nominating him and expressing confidence in him", adding that he would intensify the agenda of serving the people of Kashmir in the light of Imran Khan's vision. He also stressed for the implementation of a "comprehensive plan" for the development of the people of Kashmir, with special focus on the promotion of tourism and investment.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3106614.html>

India's intransigence biggest hurdle in the peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute: 'AJK' President

Urdupoint, April 22, 2022

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary, while talking to a United States (US) delegation led by congresswoman Ilhan Abdullah Omar, Timothy Mynett, Nicholas Lampson and Tahir Javed has said that "India's traditional intransigence was the stumbling block in the way of resolving the long-drawn Kashmir conflict" that has now assumed dangerous proportions. During the meeting, the US congresswoman said that she had voiced her "serious concern over the human rights violations in Occupied

Kashmir", and added that "we are deeply worried about India's 5th August 2019 action." During the occasion, the 'AJK' president thanked the US delegates for their visit and appreciated Ilhan Abdullah Omar for taking a "strong stance on human rights violations being committed by the Indian forces in the Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir." While talking to her, he said that "the manner in which you have condemned the human rights violation in the occupied Kashmir by India" is a source of strength to us. While referring to the "unresolved Kashmir dispute", 'AJK' president told the visiting delegation that due to "Indian stubbornness no progress whatsoever has been made on the issue since 1947", added that instead of resolving the dispute peacefully, India had deployed over 900,000 troops in the "disputed territory." He further said to the delegation that the "Indian troops" deployed in length and breadth of Kashmir have been "involved in the systematic genocide of Kashmiris", adding that to change the region's demography, "India has issued fake domiciles to 4.2 million non-state Hindus to change the proportion of the population in occupied Kashmir." He said that under the given circumstances there was a dire need that the international community, especially the US, must come forward and help "resolve this dispute between the two nuclear powers."

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3106611.html>

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Disclaimer

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