

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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megaprojects **Gilgit-Baltistan** **POK**
D **Dasu** **Shisper** **Disaster**
Authority **glacier** **Management**
Pakistan-China



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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

Pakistan COAS spends Eidul Fitr with troops on LoC

The Express Tribune, May 03, 2022

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, the Pakistan Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), spent Eid ul Fitr with troops in the Dungi area of Kotli along the Line of Control (LoC). The Pakistan military's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in its statement noted that Bajwa offered Eid prayers with army personnel at the LoC and did special prayers for the security, peace, and stability of the country and paid tribute to all martyrs and their families for their contributions toward a peaceful Pakistan. It was the second visit by General Bajwa to the LoC within the two weeks, during the previous week, he visited the front-line troops deployed in the Padhar sector, where he was briefed about the latest situation on the LoC and the operational readiness of the formation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2355262/coas-spends-aidul-fitr-with-troops-on-loc>

Pakistan FM applauds Turkey for supporting Pakistan's stance on Kashmir

The Nation, May 03, 2022

The foreign minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari received a telephone call from his Turkish counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, who congratulated him on assuming office as foreign minister of Pakistan. Both the leaders discussed further strengthening of close brotherly cooperation between the two countries.

Bilawal Bhutto thanked his counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu for Turkey's support for "Pakistan's stance on Kashmir issue." They also agreed to celebrate the completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/05/03/fm-lauds-turkey-for-supporting-pakistans-stance-on-kashmir-2/>

PM of Pakistan condemns 'ban' on Eid Prayer congregations in 'IIOJK'

The Nation, May 4, 2022

Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has "strongly denounced the banning of Eid prayer" gatherings by "Indian occupation authorities" in the "Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). During a telephonic conversation with the PM of "Azad Kashmir", Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, he reiterated Pakistan's commitment to continue to extend "moral, political and diplomatic support" to the Kashmiri people until they get the "right to self-determination." Shehbaz Sharif also extended Eid greetings to the people of 'IIOJK.'

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/05/04/pm-condemns-ban-on-aid-prayer-congregations-in-iiojkl>

Redrawing electoral map, a 'malicious attempt to disempower Kashmiri Muslims:' 'AJK' president

Daily Parliament Times, May 6, 2022

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while 'rejecting' the Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission's report regarding the redrawing of the electoral map of the "occupied Kashmir" has described the

commission's move as a "vicious attempt to further disenfranchise and disempower the region's Muslim majority population." The 'AJK' president made these statements while talking to journalists at an Eid-Millan-Party. The delimitation commission, he noted, had shockingly ignored the geographical and demographic realities of the region, adding that the commission has proposed more seats to Jammu than Kashmir valley which happens to be larger in terms of population. The delimitation of constituencies speaks volumes about the "BJP government's anti-Kashmir and anti-Muslim policies", he added. The BJP's government motive behind this move, he said, was to install a "Hindu chief minister in the state" so that it could "legalize the actions" it had taken on Kashmir since 5th August 2019. While terming it a disastrous recipe to reduce the majority population powerless, the 'AJK', he said that "Kashmiris strongly condemn this wicked attempt aimed at minimizing the role of Muslims in the decision making process and granting political mileage to the ruling party-the BJP." While highlighting the role of Pakistan, 'AJK' president said that a strong and stable Pakistan was the guarantor of Kashmir's freedom.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/05/06/redrawing-electoral-map-a-malicious-attempt-to-disempower-kashmiri-muslims-president-ajk/>

'IOJK rights violations'

Editorial, The Express Tribune, May 06, 2022

Though the "military operations and detentions" have seen a rise since 2019, however, the "Indian Illegally

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK) had been witnessing "state terrorism" for a long. Kashmiri Muslims' human rights are being "violated after the Delhi government" refused to abide by its promise to the United Nations (UN), in 1948, to conduct a referendum in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, recognized by the UN Security Council as a disputed territory. Under international law, the Indian government was bound to hold a plebiscite to determine the wishes of Kashmiris and whether they want to stay with India or not. The government led by PM Modi ended the semi-autonomous status of the 'IIOJK' by scrapping Article 370 of the Indian constitution in August 2019, since then "rights violations in IIOJK have seen an unprecedented rise." This year "62 Kashmiri freedom fighters have been martyred by the Indian occupation forces," and as many as "193 Kashmiris were martyred in 2021", and in 2020, this number was as "high as 232." Meanwhile, these are the official figures, and therefore the actual number of killings in the "occupied territory" is understood to be much higher. In addition to the military operations and detentions, "draconian censorship laws" have been in place after the abrogation of Article 370. The UN, its Security Council, European Union (EU), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), British House of Commons, United States (US) congressmen and congresswomen, and many other countries and organisations have taken serious notice of the "continued rights violation in IIOJK", but they have failed to put a brake on the "reign of terror unleashed

by the Indian occupation forces on the innocent Kashmiris.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2355362/iiojk-rights-violations>

JKLF urged ‘Pakistan to toughen line against Indian designs on held Kashmir’

Dawn, May 8, 2022

The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), urged Pakistan to have a “serious review of its policy” on the ‘disputed’ Himalayan region in the wake of India’s ‘unilateral’ Aug 5, 2019 actions. The JKLF in an open letter to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif stressed that “Pakistan should formally rescind” the Shimla Agreement of 1972 with India to “free itself as well as the Kashmiris from the futility of bilateralism and take the issue of Kashmir to the United Nation Security Council” (UNSC). The acting chairman of JKLF Raja Muhammed Haq Nawaz Khan signed the 2,200-word letter and further noted that “Pakistan’s failure to engage with the UN had enabled India to continue its aggression against the Kashmiris”, adding that the “lack of meaningful political and diplomatic measures on the part of Pakistan” to counter India’s “illegal unilateral action” of Aug 5, 2019, had subsequently intensified “serious apprehensions among the Kashmiris about Pakistan’s Kashmir policy, and policy on the status of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).”

The letter further stated that “for almost 75 years, the Kashmiris have come to expect Pakistan’s ardent support for their right to freely decide

on the status of their internationally disputed homeland. There is a painful realization, especially since August 2019, that Pakistan’s stated policy of support for the struggle and territorial integrity of Kashmir within the UN Charter and relevant UNSC resolutions has changed.” The JKLF in its letter further claims that the Indian move on August 05, was a fundamental departure from the historical context of the issue, which required a “robust political and diplomatic response” from Pakistan., adding that till now, “Islamabad’s response can hardly be considered appropriate, let alone robust.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1688536/pakistan-urged-to-toughen-line-against-indian-designs-on-held-kashmir>

Economic Developments

In GB, hope evaporates as glaciers melt faster and faster

Dawn, May 2, 2022

The residents in some areas of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) are constantly threatened by natural disasters as glaciers melt quicker than before. It has been noted that glaciers in the Himalayas, Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountain ranges have melted rapidly, creating thousands of glacial lakes in the country's northern areas. Consequently, around 30 of these lakes are at risk of sudden hazardous flooding, known as glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), the climate change ministry said earlier this week, adding that around seven million people were vulnerable. In the Hassanabad village of Hunza Valley, the vast Shisper glacier dominates the

landscape, heading towards villagers at an estimated speed of around four metres per day.

According to an assessment report of the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), the Shisper glacier started to surge in May 2018 and as per their assessment, the possible lake burst could submerge a portion of Karakoram Highway, a bridge, over 37 houses in Hassanabad, two powerhouses, a Frontier Works Organisation camp office and vast fertile lands. Shahzad Shigri, the head of GB Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said heatwaves could cause GLOFs or make active glaciers slip, leading to major disasters. Pakistan has more glaciers than any other country outside the polar region, including nearly 5,300 in the Karakoram, Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department. They feed the Indus River system, the country's water lifeline. But data gathered over the last 50 years shows that almost all glaciers exhibit signs of melting due to rising temperatures.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1687848/in-gb-hope-evaporates-as-glaciers-melt-faster-and-faster>

PM 'AJK' chairs high-level meeting of PPH, Highways Department

Daily Parliament Times, May 6, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan while directing the Physical Planning and Housing Department (PPH) and Highways Department officials to devise a comprehensive construction plan for major cities. The 'AJK' PM while

chairing a high-level meeting of the PPH and Highways Department issued directives to the concerned departments about the planning of major cities and stressed the need for the observance and full implementation of building codes both in rural and urban areas keeping in view the future challenges, adding that for better designing of buildings, private engineers should be appointed. The meeting also "mulled over the proposal for obtaining funds from Islamic Development Bank, Asian Bank and other institutions" if required for completion of megaprojects. The PM also said that the "plan for improvement of main highways connecting Azad Kashmir with Pakistan will be included in the next budget", adding that modern techniques should be used to prevent landslides and an effective monitoring system should be put in place. The 'AJK' PM also issued instructions to expedite inquiry into the Thorar Water supply scheme. During the meeting, the officials from both the departments briefed the PM regarding the forthcoming budget.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/05/06/pm-ajk-chairs-high-level-meeting-of-pph-highways-department/>

GB development reflects Pak-China friendship

The Express Tribune, May 08, 2022

Most of the roads and highways towards the Khunjerab Pass were found to be very smooth and well-constructed for driving, though, a few patches of the highway between Dasu and Chilas were still under construction. Most impressive was the

scenic and natural beauty around northern areas along with well-built tourist resorts visited daily by lots of foreigners, including those from China, Korea, Malaysia and European countries. It was interesting to note that the entry gate of the Pakistan-China border was operated by only one security personnel. This was reflective of the fact that there is a lot of trust, peace and harmony between the two countries and that a huge contingent of security staff is not required to guard the border as there is no security threat on either side. The current border was closed but was likely to be opened around June 1 for trade activities between the two countries. It was also witnessed during the travel towards Khunjerab Pass that most parts of the roads were filled with Pak-China friendship signs and posters. The construction of Dasu Dam was in full swing while the Chinese management at a few sites looked very devoted and committed to its early completion. The Karakoram Highway, also known as N-35, with a total length of 1,300 km connects Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and G-B (Pakistan) with Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (China). The highway provides access to Gilgit and Skardu from Islamabad by road and now most tourists prefer this highway. Along the highway, the route comprises five tunnels and several bridges. The longest tunnel is 3,360 metres (11,020 feet), followed by 2,736 metres (8,976 feet), 435 metres (1,427 feet), 410 metres (1,350 feet) and 195 metres (640 feet), while the Shishkat Great Bridge on Hunza River is 480 metres (1,570 feet) long.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2355603/g-b-development-reflects-pak-china-friendship>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The Kashmiri nation will soon celebrate Eid in a free environment: Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Deputy Chief

Jasarat, May 02, 2022

While wishing the people of Kashmir Eid Mubarak, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen deputy Chief Saifullah Khalid claims that though the nation of Islamic Kashmir has been freed from mental slavery but is still being physically held hostage by the occupying country. He said that the conscience of the world in general and the conscience of the rulers of Islamic countries particularly needs to be reminded that even during the holy month of Ramadan, the blood of the youth, children and elders of the Kashmiri nation was continuously “shed by India.” He further alleged that the sanctity of the four walls was trampled and houses were blown up, but there are no protests, opposition or sympathy towards the Kashmiri people from any independent nation including the Muslim leaders, they did not show any signs of disgust and distress on their foreheads. He said that this indifference and disrespect towards the Kashmiris by the rulers of Islamic countries was a clear declaration of their mental slavery.

He said that history has shown that physically hostage and slave nations have seen the spring of freedom one day and will continuously see it in the future but the mental slaves have always been burning in the fire of

slavery and will never be able to get rid of it. Saifullah Khalid in his Eid message on behalf of the nation of Islamic Kashmir said that Insha'Allah the day will surely come when the entire Kashmiri nation will celebrate Eid in a completely free environment. He stressed that at the present, the Kashmiri nation is going through a period of severe weakness and trials, but this period will prove to be a mentally strengthening phase, added that the oppressive forces will surely face their terrible end sooner or later. Saifullah Khalid paid tribute to the courage and bravery of the heirs of Kashmiri martyrs and prisoners and said that these are the people who are playing an active role in the freedom struggle and first of all, deserve the Eid Mubarak.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/05/02/220502-08-9/>

'AJK' PM spent Eid-ul-Fitr on the LoC with soldiers and refugees

UrduPoint, May 04, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Kashmir", Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan spent Eid-ul-Fitr with the soldiers and refugees on the Line of Control (LoC) in the Chakoti sector. While addressing the people, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan added that we are proud of our brave armed forces who are always ready to ensure the integrity of our beloved homeland. While referring to India, he said that the entire nation stood by the Pakistan armed forces and any provocation would be met with a resounding response. He further said that the martyrs of the Pakistan Army are on our foreheads and the journey of sacrifices will continue till the independence of "Indian occupied

Kashmir." He urged India to stop the "ongoing atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir", and requested the United Nations (UN) to send a fact-finding mission to "occupied Jammu and Kashmir." In his message to the people of "occupied Kashmir", he claims that the hearts of the base camp government, Pakistan Army and government of Pakistan beat with you.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-3119085.html>

'AJK' PM urged the international community to take notice of the 'custodial killings in Kashmir'

UrduPoint, May 05, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Kashmir", Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has called on the international community to take notice of the "custodial killings by India" in Kashmir, and added that the assassination of Hurriyat leader Ashraf Sahrai is a clear example of the "killing in custody." While speaking to the journalists on the death anniversary of Hurriyat leader Ashraf Sahrai, he claims that the concentration killings and anonymous graves in "occupied Kashmir" are enough evidence of Indian democracy in Kashmir. He said that a complete strike by Kashmiri on the death anniversary of Hurriyat leader in "occupied Jammu and Kashmir" was a referendum in favour of Pakistan. He said that voices were being raised in favour of Pakistan from all over the valley, and added that the day is not far when "Kashmiris will break the chains of Indian slavery."

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3119500.html>

Tribute to Mohammad Ashraf Sahrai by 'AJK' branch of Hurriyat Conference

UrduPoint, May 05, 2022

The All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), "Azad Kashmir" branch convener Mohammad Farooq Rahmani presided over a conference in Islamabad to pay homage to the senior leader of APHC and former chairman of Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Muhammad Ashraf Sahrai on the first anniversary of his 'martyrdom.' He said that the Hurriyat leader was arrested under a planned conspiracy, added that despite being seriously ill, he has been deprived of medical treatment in jail which resulted in his death. Farooq Rahmani further claims that criminal negligence was shown in the treatment of Ashraf Sahrai during his arrest and detention but the passionate leader remained a statue of determination and perseverance and therefore finally sacrificed his life for the sake of "free Kashmir." He urged the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies to stop India from "committing atrocities and serious human rights violations" against "unarmed and illegally detained Kashmiris" in the "occupied territory." He also stressed the need for the release of all detainees, repeal of all black laws in the "occupied territory" withdrawal of Indian troops, and prevention of fake trials and fake encounters. The speakers and conference participants reiterated the commitment of Kashmiris to continue the mission of the martyrs to its logical conclusion at all costs.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/important-news/live-news-3119492.html>

Pakistan 'categorically rejects' report of 'delimitation commission' for 'IOJK'

UrduPoint, May 06, 2022

Pakistan's ministry of foreign affairs has summoned India's charge d' Affaires to Pakistan and handed over a demarche conveying that the government of Pakistan's "categorical reject" the "delimitation commission" report which Pakistan believe was "aimed at disenfranchising and disempowering" the Muslim majority population of "Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" (IIOJK). Pakistan further conveyed that the entire delimitation commission exercise was 'farcical' and had already been "rejected by the cross-section of political parties in IIOJK." The Pakistan foreign office in a statement further noted that "through this effort, India only wanted to lend legitimacy to its illegal actions" of August 5, 2019. The foreign office said that the "ulterior motive" of the Indian government was evident from the fact that, under the "garb of so-called delimitation", the representation of Muslims in the re-designated constituencies had been "reduced to their disadvantage", adding that this "shattered" the rationale pressed by the "Indian government" that the delimitation effort was aimed to "empower" the local population. The foreign office further claims that in reality, the new electoral boundaries would further "disempower, marginalise and divide the people of the occupied territory" and it would particularly pave the way for "installing yet another puppet regime backed by the BJP-RSS combine." The foreign office further

noted in its statement that the Jammu and Kashmir issue was an “internationally recognised dispute” and a long-standing item on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and therefore, the “Indian government must refrain from bringing about any illegal demographic changes in the occupied territory”, and let the Kashmiri people determine their future through a free and fair plebiscite under the UNSC resolutions.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3120179.html>

Delimitation in ‘IOK’, a deep-rooted conspiracy to turn the Muslim majority into a minority: ‘AJK’ govt Minister

Jammu and Kashmir Times, May 8, 2022

Abdul Majid Khan, a minister of the government of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) has said that the delimitation of constituencies in the “Indian occupied territory” of Jammu and Kashmir was a “deep-rooted conspiracy” to turn the Muslim majority into a minority. While terming the delimitation commission’s report as a “brazen violation of the United Nations (UN) resolutions” on Kashmir, he said that the “government of the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir strongly condemn and reject the report

in which demographic realities have been grossly ignored and overlooked”. While addressing a press conference, he urged the “federal government to bring a resolution in the National Assembly against the move and launch a strong protest against India all over the world.” The foreign office, he stressed, must raise the issue with friendly countries and diplomatic missions abroad should redouble their efforts to expose “India’s evil designs in the Indian Occupied Kashmir” (IOK). He further said that “India is hell-bent on changing the region’s demography”, adding that the “Modi government wants to influence the future referendum by adding six Assembly seats to Hindu dominated province (Jammu), which has less population than the Kashmir valley.” While expressing concern over the issue he said that the Indian government had started implementing the August 5, 2019 agenda by setting up new constituencies, while the Jammu and Kashmir is an UN-recognised “disputed territory” whose future is yet to be decided in line with the UN resolutions, adding that any “attempt to alter the region’s demography” amounts to a serious violation of the international law.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/1-1.jpg>

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Disclaimer

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