

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 2 | Issue 23

06 - 12 June 2022

Economic Transformation Initiative
State **HRC**P **POK**
Subject **CPEC** budget project
Di Amer Bhasha Dam
Gilgit-Baltistan
Karakoram Highway
Tatta
Pani
Provisional provincial status
Public Sector Development Program



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
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Political Developments

Human Rights Violation in 'IIOJK'

Editorial, The Nation, June 06, 2022

Since the death of Burhan Wani in 2016, while the nature of the Kashmir's independence movement has changed, the narrative of armed struggle and liberation from 'Indian coercion' has got strengthened. According to 'government figures', more than 1000 young and 'highly educated' people have joined militant groups. The current generation's hatred and dislike for India, which was considered to be the result of 'acts of violence' by the Indian Army during the 1990s, has intensified in this decade. International human rights organizations including the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have expressed concern that human rights activists in Kashmir are being framed in 'bogus cases' to stifle their voices. The Indian government has failed to protect 'religious minorities,' and has resorted to brutal counter-terrorism laws to silence peaceful dissent. The Indian 'repression' has further drawn criticism from the international community, including the US Congress, the European Parliament, and the United Nations Human Rights Council. The UN experts also have raised concerns over several issues in India including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, the displacement of tribal communities and forest dwellers, and the closure of communications in Kashmir.

In 'occupied Kashmir', India could not get the spirit of independence out of the hearts of Kashmiris as more than one lakh Kashmiri citizens have been martyred in the valley and thousands of women have been 'raped'. All forms

of violence have been tried but the spirit of Kashmiris' freedom has not been diminished. Pellet guns which are prohibited continue to be used indiscriminately, leaving thousands of children and adults blind. For the last 75 years, the Indian Army has been involved in massive human rights violations in 'occupied Kashmir' under the guise of curfew and lockdown. However, such measures cannot intimidate them and force them to give up their demands. Had that been the case, India would not have needed to impose a curfew in Kashmir. Kashmiris were victims of the longest lockdown in history from 5 August 2019 to 2 September 2021. Genocide of Kashmiris, mass graves, torture in custody, use of chemical weapons, violence against children and women, enforced disappearances, use of pellet guns, collective punishment, black laws, false flag operations, and fake police encounters are some of the 'Indian crimes.'

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/06/06/human-rights-violation-in-illegal-indian-occupied-jammu-and-kashmir-iiojk/>

'AJK' president seeks expatriate community's pro-active role in promoting Kashmir issue at the International level

Daily Parliament Times, June 6, 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while highlighted the 'worsening situation' in the 'Indian-occupied' Kashmir has said that it was high time that the Kashmiri expatriate community should redouble its efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at international level. While addressing a gathering at Manchester Airport, the president said that after the abolition of

article 370, the Indian government now wanted to take hold of the entire territory and grab it completely. He said that in a bid to change the region's demography, the 'Indian occupation' authorities have issued 'fake domiciles' to over 4.2 million non-state Hindus, whereas more than 4,000 Indian investors were allotted land in 'occupied Kashmir' under the guise of investment. While referring to redrawing of electoral maps in the region, he pointed out that the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government under the guise of delimitation has created additional constituencies in the Hindu-dominated Jammu region to pave the way for installing a Hindu Chief Minister in the state.

He further said that Yasin Malik's conviction and imprisonment in a 'dubiously manifested' and 'politically motivated' case was yet another 'atrocious attempt' on the part of the Indian judiciary to silence legitimate and genuine political voices in Kashmir. While stressing the need for sensitizing the international community about the 'ill-treatment' meted out to the Kashmiris by the Indian government, he said that time has come for all to join our hands and raise the issue of Kashmir with full vigour and sensitize the world about an amicable solution of Kashmir dispute.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/06/06/barrister-sultan-seeks-expatriate-communitys-pro-active-role-in-promoting-kashmir-issue-at-intl-level/>

Petition seeking GB speaker's appointment as governor dismissed

Dawn, June 8, 2022

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) disposed of a petition seeking

directives to the federal government to appoint a Gilgit Baltistan (GB) speaker as acting governor of GB. The post of governor GB fell vacant on April 19, 2022, after Raja Jalal Hussain Maqpoon resigned from the office. Since his resignation, the region is functioning without a governor. The petitioner's counsel advocate Waheedur Rehman Qureshi argued that 'the federal government is refusing to fulfil their obligations by notifying the speaker as the acting governor of GB'. In this regard, IHC chief justice Athar Minallah noted that in such an eventuality sub Article (2) of Article 33 is not attracted.

He added that a fresh appointment has to be made after the office of governor falls vacant and it is the duty of the president of Pakistan on the advice of Prime Minister (PM) to appoint Governor of GB following the manner prescribed under the order of 2018.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1693669/petition-seeking-gb-speakers-appointment-as-governor-dismissed>

Federation must end GB's constitutional, political and economic deprivations: HRCP

Pamir Times, June 09, 2022

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has concluded a fact-finding mission to Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), comprising council members Salima Hashmi and Muzaffar Hussain, senior journalist Ghazi Salahuddin, and HRCP regional coordinator Israruddin. During its five-day visit to GB, the mission found that the human rights situation in the region had deteriorated, with political workers, rights activists, the legal fraternity and religious leadership expressing their

disappointment at the federation's failure to integrate GB with the rest of the country. The HRCP were of the view that GB should, at the very least, be granted provisional provincial status or, as the last option, granted a governance system similar to that of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK). The local political leadership while talking with the HRCP mission also demanded that GB should be made part of the electoral reforms process to ensure free and fair elections in the region. In addition, the fact that appointments to the higher judiciary are made by the prime minister puts a question mark over the independence, integrity and impartiality of the GB judiciary, eroding public confidence in the institution. The HRCP members noted that it is a matter of great concern that freedom of expression and peaceful assembly remain under threat in GB, noting that rights campaigners, political workers and students continue to be charged under anti-terrorism and cybercrime laws.

The HRCP mission believes that the abolition of State Subject Rule has paved the way for the exploitation of local natural resources by external private corporations and individuals not resident in GB. This has led to demographic changes in the region, to the dismay of residents, who also feel that GB is being excluded from development projects, primarily those being launched under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The fact-finding committee's report further says that during meetings with people affected by the Kargil War, the mission learnt that they had still not been compensated for the loss of their homes and livelihoods, further adding that the victims also claimed that

security forces had laid landmines in their area, preventing them from returning to their home.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2022/06/09/federation-must-end-gilgit-baltistan-constitutional-political-and-economic-deprivations-hrcp/>

Economic Developments

Old GB issue set to be solved as land tenure titles given to 322 households

Dawn, June 07, 2022

Under the policy reforms introduced by the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government with the assistance of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), secure land tenure titles were given to 322 households of Kharfaq village in Ghanche district. Under the Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI) of GB, secure land titles will be provided to about 30,000 households for a total of 50,000 acres of land. ETI is a seven-year initiative co-financed by the GB government and IFAD. Women-headed households also benefited and received the land titles. Accordingly, the secure land title has been a complex challenge, and for the last 36 years, land titling has remained pending in unsettled areas of GB and this has been a key constraint for the population regarding investment in land development, agribusiness and access to formal finance. The IFAD country director in Pakistan Hubert Boirard together with the commissioner of Baltistan Division Shuja Alam awarded the land tenure titles to the household at the regional office of the ETI at Skardu.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1693562/old-gb-issue-set-to-be-solved-as-land-tenure-titles-given-to-322-households>

Construction of the Tatta Pani alternative highway should be completed by December: GB CM

Dailyk2, June 07, 2022

The Chief Minister (CM) of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Khalid Khurshid while addressing a ceremony at Diamer has said that the Tatta Pani project costing 55 crores is very important and added that the construction of the Tatta Pani Alternative Highway should have been done earlier but it was not taken into consideration in the past. The construction of this highway will benefit the local population of the area. He added that the bridge will be constructed to connect Karakoram Highway and Tatta Pani Alternative Highway. He directed the construction department to complete the project by December 01 2022. He further said that the development of Diamer was one of the top priorities, and added that the government will set up a special economic zone in Diamer to improve the living standards of the people and create employment opportunities. He further said that Chilas Development Authority is being set up to speed up the process of construction and development of Diamer, and added that work on Diamer Bhasha Dam will also be started soon. He further said that in collaboration with Provincial Health Ministry, a medical, dental and nursing college will also be set up in Chilas. Special attention is being paid to solving the problems of road infrastructure, health and education. He further said that although for 70 years grants were being given, no attention was paid to the real development of GB, noting that GB was ignored due to lack of representation in the Senate and National Assembly. He further said that for the first time, the

Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Prime Minister Imran Khan paid special attention to the real development of GB, and added that Imran Khan provided a special package of 400 billion to bring GB on par with other provinces.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/6673>

CDWP approves power plant component of Diamir Bhasha Dam, Chashma Right Bank Canal

The Nation, June 08, 2022

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) has approved the power plant component of the Diamir Bhasha Dam and much delayed Chashma Right Bank Canal worth Rs 1150 billion. Due to delay, the cost of the Diamir Basha (Dam Component) has escalated by around 47 per cent from 480 billion to Rs 705 billion. The minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal while addressing a press conference said that CDWP has approved the power plant component of the Diamir Bhasha Dam project costing PKR 900 billion, and referred it to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for further consideration. The planning minister said that it was the PML-N government that had started the work on the Diamir Bhasha Dam project and even spent Rs 120 billion on acquiring land for the project. He said that in 2018, PKR 428 billion was sanctioned for this project but the previous government kept it in cold storage for three years and since the project has not been reviewed due to the devaluation of the rupee, now it is estimated to cost Pakistani rupees 705 billion an increase from the original price of Rs 480 billion. He further informed that the CDWP

has also approved the Rs 250 billion Chashma Right Bank Canal (lift cum gravity), and referred it to the ECNEC for further approval. The project that was lingering on for 30 years would help in irrigating 275,000 acres of land in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/06/08/cdwp-approves-power-plant-component-of-diamir-bhasha-dam-chashma-right-bank-canal/>

The federal government has decided to cut the budget of GB by 30 billion

Dailyk2, June 09, 2022

The federal government has decided to make major cuts in the budget of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) by 30 billion rupees for the next financial year. While expressing strong concerns over the decision of the federal government, GB Chief Minister, Khalid Khurshid said that the federal government is making cruel decisions, and added that he will raise his voice for the rights of GB in every forum and if the rights were not addressed, the people will take the path of protests. He said that former Prime Minister Imran Khan had increased the regular budget of GB in 2019 despite the difficult economic situation, and noted that the budget share of the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP), which was only 2 billion during the PML-N rule, has been increased to 10 billion, which had further increased to around 20 billion in 2021. He further said that Imran Khan increased the regular budget from 32 billion to 47 billion last year. He also said that wheat subsidy has been increased from 6 billion to 8 billion, and added that the current federal government has cut 7.5 billion from GB Annual Development Programme

(ADP) this year in addition to a 2 billion cut in the regular budget. He further said that for next year, PSDP has been reduced from 20 billion to 12 billion and ADP from 18 billion to Rs 12 billion. In total, the federal government has slashed the GB budget by 30 billion for the current and next financial years. The GB CM further said that after the reduction of wheat subsidy for GB by the federal government, PSDP projects have also been reduced by Rs 12.5 billion. Moreover, he noted that out of 12 projects for the current year, only one project has been included in the PSDP and no amount has been budgeted for 11 projects and no new plans have been added for GB. He said that GB has been the most affected province since the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government came to power at the Center. He stressed that the federal government is treating GB like a stepmother. He further said that GB and 'Azad Kashmir' were being represented in the Economic Forum every year but yesterday only four provinces were invited and both GB and 'Azad Kashmir' have been left out. He said that the government and the people of GB will protest for their rights, and added that if this trend continues, then the government has no choice but to take the people of GB into the streets.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/6691>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

PM of 'AJK' denounces BJP spokesperson's derogatory remarks

Nawairwaqt, June 07, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan while denouncing the 'blasphemous' remarks against the

Prophet by a spokesperson of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has said that such statements reflected the growing trend of Islamophobia in India. While expressing his anguish over the BJP spokesperson's insulting remarks against the Prophet, Tanveer Ilyas Khan termed this act not only an expression of hatred against Muslims but Islam itself. While urging the international community and the Muslim World to take effective notice of the matter, the 'AJK' PM said that the BJP leader's derogatory remarks had hurt the sentiments of Muslims all across the world, and added that PM Modi should punish the culprits immediately and tender an unconditional apology to the entire Muslim world. Such statements, he said, would lead to further prejudice, violence and hatred against Muslims within India and beyond its borders. He said that international organizations should take serious note of the growing Islamophobia and organized 'religious persecution' in India and take steps to curb it. He further said that the rising tide of xenophobia and Islamophobia in the Indian society posed a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. He said that the highly provocative statements being issued by the BJP leaders are a wicked attempt to push the region towards violent extremism, adding that under the hateful 'Hindutva ideology', the Indian government was undermining the religious freedom of religious minorities. He claimed that under the current government, no minority was safe in today's India.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/AJK/2022-06-07/page-1>

Ireland should play a role in resolving the Kashmir issue: 'AJK' president

UrduPopint, June 08, 2022

While urging the Kashmiri and Pakistani communities settled in Ireland to put their efforts to create international support for the Kashmir cause, the president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while addressing a reception hosted in his honour by the Pakistani Overseas Community settled in Dublin, he said that Kashmiris living abroad have an important role to play at this 'crucial phase' of the 'freedom movement.' The people of 'occupied Kashmir', he said, were going through a difficult situation at the moment as India has unleashed a 'reign of terror' in the territory. While referring to the similarities between the conflict in Northern Ireland and Kashmir, the president said that there are so many similarities between Ireland and the Kashmir issue and that is why the people of Ireland can better understand the Kashmir problem. He said that the purpose of his visit to Ireland was to expose the 'ugly face' of India in the Irish Parliament and other forums and to present the position of 1.5 crore Kashmiri people. He said that under the given situation there was an urgent need that the Kashmiri community settled in Ireland should make efforts and raise their voice in favour of the 'oppressed people' of Kashmir and urge the international community to resolve the prolonged dispute peacefully to stop ongoing bloodshed and Indian 'state terrorism' in the region. He said that Kashmiris and Pakistanis settled in Ireland should play their role in conveying the position of the Kashmiri people to the government and people of Ireland. The

president also meets with the Irish member of parliament, Shane Moynihan and briefed him about the latest situation in the 'Indian occupied Kashmir.' He also apprised Shane Moynihan regarding the life imprisonment awarded to Yasin Malik by an Indian court and said that the judgement against Malik was a 'flagrant violation' of basic human rights.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3160423.html>

The government should immediately deport the Indian ambassador and boycott Indian products: Religious Scholars

Urdupoint, June 09, 2022

Many religious leaders held demonstrations in Sargodha, Punjab against the blasphemous remarks by BJP's leaders and urged the government to immediately sever diplomatic relations with India. The protest rally was led by Qazi Mustafa, Maulana Abdul Rashid, and Mufti Muhammad Shahid Masood, among others. The Ulemas said that the government should immediately deport the Indian ambassador from Pakistan and boycott Indian products while a joint strategy should also be worked out by holding an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) conference.

The protesting Ulema's said that on the one hand PM Modi's government was ruthlessly 'oppressing Muslims' both in Kashmir and India, while on the other hand, they are also abusing our Prophet.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/sargodha/national-news/live-news-3161626.html>

Defense Committee formed to take legal action for release of Yasin Malik: 'AJK' President

Mahasib, June 12, 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has set up a defence committee that will take legal action to secure the release of Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik who was convicted and sentenced by an Indian court in a 'politically motivated' case. The committee comprising of a team of Barristers, including Barrister Tariq Mehmood, Barrister Karamat, Barrister Hasnat, Barrister Hafeez, Barrister Asad and Barrister Imran Khurshid from Ireland will also approach legal experts in the United Kingdom (UK) and India to seek further advice on the matter. The 'AJK' president while briefing the media about his idea of establishing a committee of legal experts, said that in 1960's when Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was in jail, at that time my father Chaudhry Noor Hussain sought the services of Dingle Foot, brother of prominent Labour leader Michal Foot for the Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah release from an Indian jail. He said that Dingle Foot had played an important role in the release of Sheikh Abdullah and stressed that he is confident that this committee will also play a similar role to secure an early release of Muhammad Yasin Malik, adding that besides seeking legal advice from other world bodies, including the Human Rights Commission, the committee would also approach the Indian government for grant of access to Yasin Malik so that legal action can be taken to secure his release.

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

Weekly POK News Digest

Volume 2 | Issue 23

06 - 12 June 2022

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Disclaimer

PoK weekly News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. MP-IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.



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