

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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A word cloud of terms related to POK news. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'Security' and 'Policy' being the largest. Other prominent words include 'Project', 'POK', 'Baltistan', 'Gilgit-', 'Karot Project', 'National', 'local bodies', 'elections', 'Kohala', 'Hydro', 'Power', 'development', 'tourism', and 'CPEC'.

Contents

Political Developments

- Chief Minister of GB Meet with the CM of Punjab
- 'Feb 27 long march will be the last nail in PTI Government's coffin'
- 'India can't succeed in hiding bitter facts about IIOJK from the external world by strangling media:' AJK PM
- CM of GB meets with the Governor of Punjab
- 'Pasban-e-Hurriyat appeal masses to join Anti-India protest on 26th January'
- 'National Security Policy reaffirms support for Kashmir'
- 'LG polls to be held in AJK on time:' AJK PM to Pakistan Diaspora in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Economic Developments

- 'If 370 billion rupees allocated for GB, then AJK deserves more:' Sardar Tanveer Ilyas
- 'Chinese firm wants tax issue settled'
- 'Karot Project declared among Top Performers by NEPRA'

Vernacular Urdu Media

- 'Pakistan is Kashmir's lawyer, the guarantor of independence:' AJK Forest Minister
- 'President of AJK meets with AJKMC leader to chalk out a strategy against Indian atrocities'

Political Developments

Chief Minister of GB Meet with the CM of Punjab

Daily Parliament Times, January 17, 2022

A delegation led by Chief Minister (CM) of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Khalid Khursheed meet CM of Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar. During the meeting, it was agreed to further expand the bilateral cooperation along with the promotion of inter-provincial harmony. The Punjab CM assured to collaborate with the GB government for “digitization of land record system” and establishment of a medical college there. He pointed out that the Punjab government has always extended technical assistance to other federating units. Khalid Khursheed thanked Usman Buzdar and invited him to visit GB. He noted that the Punjab government’s cooperation would enhance brotherhood and the passion for national unity. Both “condemned Indian atrocities” committed against the “oppressed Kashmiris in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir” (IOJK) and CM Usman Buzdar asserted that the Pakistani nation is standing with their Kashmiri brethren like a solid rock and stressed that no power in the world could “detach the immortal relationship.”

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/01/17/chief-minister-usman-buzdar-announces-to-visit-gilgit-baltistan-soon/>

‘Feb 27 long march will be the last nail in PTI Government's coffin’

The Express Tribune, January 18, 2022

The president of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) “Azad Jammu and

Kashmir” (AJK) chapter, Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin called on party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and former president of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari at Zardari House in Islamabad. The three leaders discussed the long march against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, the current situation of “Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir” (IIOJK) and AJK local body’s elections, which are scheduled to be held on July 25.

The PPP AJK president noted that the PTI government has failed to give any relief to the masses and stressed that unemployment is touching its peak and collectively Pakistan’s “economy is on the verge of collapse.” He went on to say that it is only the PPP that can bring the country out of the present economic crisis and the February 27 long march will be the “last nail in the coffin of Imran Khan-led government that has made the lives of common people hell”. He said that people from all 10 districts of AJK will join the long march to oust the incumbent government. He further noted that the PPP central leadership assured all kinds of support to the “IIOJK people in their fight of right to self-determination.” Both chairman Bilawal and co-chairman Zardari condemned the continued arrests of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders in Srinagar and urged the world community to take the notice of “rising human rights violations in IIOJK.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2339339/feb-27-long-march-will-be-last-nail-in-pti-govts-coffin>

'India can't succeed in hiding bitter facts about IIOJK from the external world by strangling media:' 'AJK' PM

Daily Parliament Times, January 18, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi "condemned the harassment of journalists and attacks on media in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir" (IIOJK). He stressed that "India could not succeed in hiding the bitter facts about Occupied Kashmir" from the world by "strangling the media." While addressing a reception hosted in his honour by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) based Kashmiri Diaspora community leader Sardar Waqas Inayat at Jeddah, the PM "condemned the grave situation of human rights in occupied Kashmir" and stressed that the "human rights" situation is not only "worsened in Occupied Kashmir" but in India as well. He referred to the New York-based Genocide Watch's alert regarding the growing "incidence of the genocide of Kashmiri Muslims by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir."

The PM urged the international community, especially the United Nations (UN) to send a special envoy to "Occupied Kashmir" to collect information regarding the "mass genocide of the Kashmiri people and gruesome human rights violations by the Indian forces" and submit its impartial report to the UN. The PM said that the Kashmiri living in "occupied Kashmir live in our hearts" and their struggle for attaining their "fundamental right to self-determination" will bring fruits. The PM highly lauded the role of Saudi

Arabia for extending all-out support to Pakistan in every difficult hour and expressed his indebtedness.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/01/18/lindia-cant-succeed-in-hiding-bitter-facts-about-bleeding-iiojk-vale-from-external-world-by-strangling-media-ajk-pm/>

CM of GB meets with the Governor of Punjab

Daily Parliament Times, January 18, 2022

The Chief Minister (CM) of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Khalid Khurshid Khan met with the governor of Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar. During their meeting, both the leaders discussed political and governmental affairs, the promotion of tourism in GB and other matters. The governor of Punjab said that uniform development is the mission of the incumbent government and stressed that "we will make the people of GB prosperous and strong." He said that the present government is pursuing a policy of moving the country in the right direction and with schemes like health cards, we will continue the journey of development in all corners of Pakistan. The CM of GB said that the people of GB also stand by the PM Imran Khan and his policies and stressed that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is ensuring the provision of health and education facilities to the people of GB.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/01/18/cm-of-gb-khurshid-khan-meets-governor-punjab/>

'Pasban-e-Hurriyat appeal masses to join Anti-India protest on 26th January'

Daily Parliament Times, January 18, 2022

The chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmad Ghazali announced to hold a statewide protest against "India's so-called fake democracy day (26th January)." In a statement, he said that the Kashmiri people will get "liberation from Indian illegal occupation" and maintained that "India has broken its promises of self-determination" to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that India has "deprived the people of Jammu and Kashmir of their basic human rights" by deploying 900,000 armed forces in Kashmir besides "black laws" against human rights activists. He said that the "Indian government is turning the Muslim majority into a minority by killing unarmed civilians under a designed conspiracy." Ghazali said that black day would be observed across "Azad Kashmir" on January 26, on the Republic Day of India and appealed to the people across the state and Kashmiri citizens around the world to observe black day on January 26 and expose the "fake democracy" of India all over the world.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/01/18/pasban-e-hurriyat-appeal-masses-to-join-anti-india-protest-on-26th-january/>

'National Security Policy reaffirms support for Kashmir'

Dawn, January 21, 2022

The Chairman of the parliamentary committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi said that the National Security Policy (NSP) is a timely and prudent

initiative and it has put "Kashmir dispute as a vital security interest" of Pakistan which is a "welcome sign." He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the in-camera meeting of the committee held at the parliament house. The Pakistan National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yousuf briefed the committee on the NSP and said that irrespective of the debate on the policy, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has been listed as a "separate entity" in the policy document and has been declared as "vital national security" interest of the country. It has been noted that identifying Kashmir as a "vital national security interest" means that any threat to vital national security interest would "evoke war." Moeed said the policy revolves around economic security and maintained that our target is "economic security" and ideally we want to normalise relations with India, Afghanistan and other neighbours without compromising our "core issues and vital national interests."

The Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Asim Iftikhar noted that the policy reaffirms political, moral support to Kashmiris. He said that the resolution of the J&K dispute was central to Pakistan's relations with India and it is for the first time Pakistan declared Kashmir as a "vital national security interest." He further said that the policy says that the people of J&K would decide their future through the right to self-determination as per United Nations (UN) resolutions. The onus is on India to create enabling environment for peace and development in the region. He stressed that "the international community is

increasingly criticizing India for atrocities and war crimes.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1670617/national-security-policy-reaffirms-support-for-kashmir>

‘LG polls to be held in ‘AJK’ on time:’ AJK PM to Pakistan Diaspora in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Nation, January 21, 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that his government was determined to hold local bodies elections in the state on time to transfer power to masses at the grassroots level. He expressed these views while talking to various delegations of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists in Saudi Arabia where he is currently on a personnel visit. The PM said that the holding of local body elections was a big challenge before his government and assured his government's resolve to hold the polls in mid of this year. He said Kashmiri living in Saudi Arabia are our assets and highly commended the vibrant role of the overseas for their contribution to the development of the country. The PM said that the people of “Azad Kashmir” uprooted the two-party alliance in the general elections and allowed PTI to serve the people and assured that the present government would fulfil its responsibility and utilize all its resources for the development of the state. While expressing confidence in the leadership of the PM, the delegation has termed the decision for holding the local bodies’ elections in the state as a historical step and to give the right of vote to overseas Kashmiris.

<https://nation.com.pk/21-Jan-2022/lg-polls-to-be-held-in-ajk-on-time-ajk-pm>

Economic Developments

‘If 370 billion rupees allocated for GB, then ‘AJK’ deserves more:’ Sardar Tanveer Ilyas

Daily Parliament Times, January 19, 2022

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) president and minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that with a little effort, ‘AJK’ could become a hub of construction and development in the country. He also said that building codes were being set up and construction would be banned without permission. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas further stated that the people of ‘AJK’ have high expectations from PTI as they were tired of traditional politics. While replying to a question, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas said that the package of 500 billion rupees to “Azad Kashmir” was not just an air announcement and noted that “if 370 billion rupees could be given in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) then ‘AJK’ deserves more.” He further said that major development projects will be started in “Azad Kashmir” from which we will get huge resources and added that it was a tragedy that there was no model hospital in ‘AJK’ in past, thus people were forced to come to Islamabad for their treatments.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/01/19/if-370-billion-rupees-allocated-for-gb-then-ajk-deserves-more-sardar-tanveer-ilyas/>

‘Chinese firm wants tax issue settled’

Dawn, January 21, 2022

A Chinese company has asked the government to immediately resolve the

issue related to the adoption of 01% fixed tax by the government of 'AJK' on the offshore procurement contract of the 1,124-Mega Watt (MW) Kohala Hydro Power Project (HPP) and imposition of 17 per cent sales tax on all imports as proposed in the Finance (Supplementary) Bill 2021. The company official requested the government to immediately take up and resolve this issue since it is a major hurdle in the way of launching construction of mega HPP agreed to be completed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The officials, while requesting not to be quoted, warned that "if the issue is not resolved, the Chinese may drop this project from the CPEC's list of projects."

According to China Three Gorges-Investment Corporation (CTGIC), a leading Chinese firm, which was registered in Pakistan as Kohala Hydro Company (KHC), is making the largest foreign direct investment of CPEC in 'AJK' with an estimated investment of USD 2.5 billion. All the principal documents of the project including the Government of Pakistan (GOP) and 'AJK' implementation agreements, power purchase and water use agreements have been signed. The Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) has also issued the Letter of Support (LOS), which is valid till 30 September 2022, to the company for the execution of the project. The government of 'AJK' has not yet adopted the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) decision of one per cent final and fixed tax on the offshore procurement contract for the Kohala HPP and the "board desires that the

issue of adoption by the government of AJK" of the ECC decision related to one per cent withholding tax on the offshore procurement contract for the project be resolved without any further delay so that the "project can move forward," explains a letter the KHC chief executive officer wrote to the PPIB managing director.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1670635/chinese-firm-wants-tax-issue-settled>

'Karat Project declared among Top Performers by NEPRA'

Daily Parliament Times, January 21, 2022

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) held its first 'NEPRA Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) awards' under its initiative of 'Power with Prosperity' (PwP) initiative to highlight and appreciate the tremendous achievements of Pakistan's major power producers and their community development initiatives. The Karot Power Company Limited, a subsidiary of China Three Gorges (CTG) South Asian Investment Limited, was awarded the NEPRA-CSR STALWART award due to its unwavering commitment to community development. The award was received by Deputy CEO, Mr Lu Dongsheng of the Karot Power Company Limited (KPCL). The Chairman of NEPRA Mr Farooqi in his opening remarks presented his vision about NEPRA's drive of "Power with Prosperity" in addition to its two other drives "Power with Safety" and "Power with Security." The Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) KPCL Mr Lu Dongsheng appreciated NEPRA for holding the CSR awards ceremony and said the

company's steadfast commitment to community development, social awareness, and stakeholder participation for the Karot project.

The KPCL is implementing a Community Investment Plan (CIP) for the social uplift of the local community around the Karot Project. Under the community CIP, the KPCL has completed 11 projects both in Punjab and 'AJK' for the shared benefit and welfare of the local community around the Karot Project. The KPCL is executing the first Hydro Power Project (HPP) under CPEC. The project has a total installed capacity of 720 Mega Watt (MW) and will lead to an expected reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 3.5 million tons per year to improve the proportion of clean energy and make a positive contribution towards optimization of the energy structure in Pakistan.

<https://www.dailyparliamentimes.com/2022/01/21/karot-project-declared-among-top-performers-by-nepra/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

'Pakistan is Kashmir's lawyer, the guarantor of independence:' AJK Forest Minister

Urdu point, January 18, 2022

The "Azad Kashmir" forest minister Chaudhry Muhammad Akmal has said that Pakistan is the "advocate of Kashmir, and Pakistan is the guarantor of Kashmir's independence." He noted that "Kashmiris have linked their future with Pakistan" and its foundation is very strong and stable. He said that "Pakistan is the only option for Kashmiris" because they have made "everlasting sacrifices to

achieve this goal" which is unprecedented. He said that the holy bloodshed for the "independence movement" will never be in vain and Kashmiris will "take independence from India" in any case. He said that "India should stop state terrorism in occupied Kashmir and ensure the withdrawal of occupying forces" and emphasized that "history has shown that Kashmiris have never bowed down to the occupiers."

He further said that "India's constitutional terrorism" in the state raises the issue of Kashmir more effectively at the international level. He stressed that "no constitutional amendment can affect the status of Kashmir" as "Kashmiris sacrificed their lives for independence" and despite curfew and "Indian aggression, Kashmiris bury the bodies of their martyred children in the Pakistani flag, which is an expression of their commitment and love for Pakistan." While talking to a delegation of journalists, he said that "India's attack on occupied Jammu and Kashmir" on August 5 was strategized to "deprive the people of the state their rights." He said that India adopted a "vicious attempt to give constitutional and legal justification to its aggressive occupation of Kashmir and annexed Kashmir to India itself" and stressed that "we did not recognize India's military occupation 75 years ago nor did we relinquish our position after the recent Indian aggression." He said that we are very grateful for whatever steps Pakistan has taken after the "Indian aggression" on August 5 and especially the way Prime Minister Imran Khan "fought the case of Kashmiris" before

the international community and the way Pakistani people raised their voice in favour of Kashmiris. He said that the world's media and international “civil society” is awake and ready to report “oppression of Kashmiris” to the world. He said that after August 5, leaders including Yasin Malik, Shabir Shah and Asiya Andrabi were put in jails while at the same time, the “pro-India leadership has been chained and they have now realized their mistake.”

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3022004.html>

‘President of ‘AJK’ meets with AJKMC leader to chalk out a strategy against Indian atrocities’

Jammu and Kashmir Times, January 20, 2022

The president of ‘AJK’ Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry met the former Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad” Kashmir and patron of all Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC) Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan. During the meeting, the two leaders agreed to adopt a “joint strategy to expose Indian atrocities and human rights violations in occupied Kashmir” globally. The ‘AJK’ president said that we have to play our full role from the “base camp of independence movement” and all political parties have to take a consensus stand on the “Kashmir issue.”

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/1-15.jpg>

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Compiled by
Mohd. Usman Bhatti

Edited By
Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

Disclaimer

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: www.idsa.in; Email: pokdigest@gmail.com