

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 4 | Issue 49

02 December - 08 December 2024

POK
interim constitution
Presidential Ordinance
Khunjerab Pass Protest
abandoned industrial units
Gilgit-Baltistan
Education tax



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Contents

Political Developments

- Govt. determined to safeguard lives, properties of citizens as its foremost responsibility in the region: 'AJK' PM Anwar-ul-Haq
- Khunjerab Pass to remain open round the year
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Gilgit-Baltistan
- 'AJK' SC suspends controversial protest ordinance
- European Union can play an effective role in resolving the lingering Kashmir dispute peacefully: President 'AJK'
- 'AJK' observes complete strike against ordinance banning peaceful protests
- 'AJK' protesters agitate over 'delay' in repealing contentious law

Economic Developments

- 'AJK' business community seeks immediate formation of JIT to ensure survival of industrial sector in 'AJK'
- Supplemental charges: Pesco seeks revision of allocation criteria

Vernacular Urdu Media

- Presidential Ordinance is a Black law and we reject it: Rafiq Advocate
- In 'Azad Kashmir', work for developmental projects is in progress
- The climate of anxiety is emerging in the state: Qazi Nadeem Khalil
- 'Azad Kashmir' Supreme Court suspends controversial Presidential Ordinance

Political Developments

Govt. determined to safeguard lives, properties of citizens as its foremost responsibility in the region: 'AJK' PM Anwar-ul-Haq

Daily Parliament Times, 4 December 2024

'Azad Jammu Kashmir' Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that protecting lives and properties of citizens was the government's foremost responsibility.

The PM Haq said this while addressing a reception ceremony in the state metropolis on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, he said, development and progress in the state was inescapably linked to peace and stability in the liberated territory. "There is a dire need to reject this protest politics that not only undermine economy and development but also affect the citizens' lives and their livelihoods", he said, adding that the politics of adventurism and confrontation has to be stopped for the greater good of the people.

The PM said that protests and sit-ins were not only detrimental to law and order but they also adversely affect the livelihood of the common masses." Peaceful protest is the right of every citizen, however, the people of Muzaffarabad must rethink and decide whether they should become a part of the indefinite protest or adopt a judicious course that leads to progress and prosperity", the AJK premier. The PM said that the government has no plans to withdraw subsidies on flour and electricity.

"People should stop listening to rumours mongers", he remarked." Merit has been given priority, all possible measures have been taken to solve the problems being faced by the people", the PM said. Referring to his struggle to seek subsidy on electricity and wheat flour from the federal government, the PM said, "I presented my stand for cheap electricity and cheap flour in the Senate of Pakistan, which has benefited the people of the state". "Despite that, negative propaganda is being made that the government will withdraw subsidies", the PM maintained.

"Those who are hell bent on holding protest for an indefinite period of time should be asked the root causes of their protest", he said, adding that if presidential ordinance was the issue, then this protest call should have been withdrawn after it was suspended by the AJK supreme court.

The PM said that the Bar Council had been invited to provide guidance regarding the ordinance. "The consultation process aimed at seeking opinion from different sections of the society regarding the ordinance is still going on", he said.

"We must create facilities for each other instead of spreading chaos and anarchy by blocking roads and closing down shops and markets", the PM said, adding it was the responsibility of the government to open shops and defend those who reject this policy of confrontation.

On this occasion, the Most Senior Minister Colonel (retd) Waqar Ahmed

Noor, government ministers Mian Abdul Waheed, Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Abdul Majid Khan and Nisar Ansar Abdali were also present.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/12/04/govt-determined-to-safeguard-lives-properties-of-citizens-as-its-foremost-responsibility-in-the-region-ajk-pm-anwar-ul-haq/>

Khunjerab Pass to remain open round the year

The Dawn, 3 December 2024

The Pakistan-China border post on Khunjerab Pass opened for year-round trade and travel for the first time, with 40 Chinese containers loaded with goods and a bus carrying four passengers arriving at Sost (Pakistan) from Xinjiang on Monday.

A bus carrying five passengers left Sost for the Chinese region on the same day.

The locals welcomed the arrival of a bus and goods from China, expressing hopes that the year-round opening of the border would improve the region's economy and encourage people-to-people contacts.

But traders said they were not confident that arrangements and facilities were adequate on the Pakistan side for trade operations during winter.

Khunjerab Pass connects Gilgit-Baltistan with China's Xinjiang region and, at 15,500 feet above sea level, is the highest paved international border. Under a border agreement signed between Islamabad and Beijing in 1985,

the pass remains open for travel and trade from April 1 to Nov 30.

Under the current practice, trade and travel remain suspended from Dec 1 to March 31 due to snowfall. The snow is already six inches deep at some points.

But, according to a statement released by the Foreign Office in Islamabad, the Chinese government has agreed to keep the Khunjerab border open throughout the year.

"Operations at the Khunjerab-Sost border crossing are henceforth expanded to year-round operations, as stipulated under Article 2 (3) of the agreement between China and Pakistan on border ports and their management system signed in 2013," the statement said.

It requested the Federal Investigation Agency, the Frontier Works Organisation, the National Highway Authority and Pakistan Customs to continue their operations at Khunjerab.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1876341>

Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Gilgit-Baltistan

Pamir Times, 3 December 2024

Each year on December 3, the world observes the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), a day dedicated to recognizing the importance of empowering PWDs and promoting their inclusion in all aspects of society. The theme for 2024, "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future," calls for a stronger

leadership role for PWDs in shaping a more equitable world. Despite representing 16% of the global population, PWDs continue to face significant barriers to education, employment, and leadership positions,

primarily due to stigma, discrimination, and weak policy enforcement. To make real progress in health equity, sustainable development, and inclusivity, it is essential to amplify their voices and empower them to lead.

In Pakistan, nearly 6.2% of the population lives with disabilities, although some estimates suggest the number may be as high as 27 million. Over the years, there have been important legislative advancements, such as the Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance, 1981 (amended in 2015) and the Disabilities Rights Act, 2020, which provide legal protections for PWDs. Additionally, Pakistan's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a step toward ensuring the human rights of PWDs. Yet, despite these frameworks, implementation remains a challenge. For example, the federal government has set a 2% employment quota for PWDs, but it is seldom enforced. Accessibility to public spaces and services remains limited, and there is a lack of consistent support for assistive technologies.

In 2020, the Supreme Court of Pakistan issued rulings to emphasize the enforcement of PWD laws, call for

updated disability statistics, and ensure improved access to infrastructure and assistive technology. Unfortunately, tangible progress in these areas has been slow.

The Situation of PWDs in Gilgit-Baltistan

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), home to around 2 million people, is estimated to have 80,000 PWDs, making up 4% of the population, according to the BISP survey. However, only 16,000 of these individuals are officially certified by the Social Welfare Department, and just 7,000 possess CNICs. These statistics point to a larger issue of unregistered and unsupported PWDs in the region. Since 2009, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) office in Gilgit, led by disability rights advocate Irshad Kazmi, has been at the forefront of championing the rights of PWDs in the region. Through persistent advocacy, they have achieved key milestones, such as the passage of disability rights legislation in the GB Assembly, increased public sector recruitment quotas for PWDs, and the promotion of inclusive policies. Despite these victories, significant gaps persist, especially in the implementation of policies, accessibility to services, and the general social attitude toward people with disabilities.

As we approach the International Day of PWDs, it is essential to reflect on the key challenges and consider actionable solutions to create a more inclusive society in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Legislation and Policy Implementation:

The first critical issue is the enforcement of existing legislation. While the GB Rights of PWDs Act, 2019 provides essential legal protections, its implementation remains weak. There is an urgent need to develop the Rules of Business (RoBs) for this act and establish a provincial council for disability rights to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement. Additionally, PWDs must be included in local governance through the GB Local Bodies Act, 2014, and their political participation should be encouraged to ensure that their voices are represented in decision-making processes at the local level.

Infrastructure and Accessibility:

Accessibility must be a top priority in the development of an inclusive society. Public spaces, transportation, digital services, and healthcare facilities must be designed with PWDs in mind. This includes:

Communication accessibility through Braille, sign language interpreters, and plain language materials.

Educational accessibility by implementing inclusive curricula and providing assistive technologies in schools.

Economic accessibility through affordable healthcare and assistive devices.

Cultural and social accessibility to ensure PWDs can participate in recreational and cultural activities.

Physical accessibility by ensuring that public spaces are barrier-free, with ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms.

Transportation accessibility by introducing low-floor buses, priority seating, and accessible transit systems.

Digital accessibility by ensuring government services are equipped with screen readers, captions, and high-contrast designs.

Health and Rehabilitation: There is an urgent need for psychiatric hospitals and independent living centers in every district of GB to support individuals with mental and developmental disabilities. Establishing shelter homes and rehabilitation centers would provide crucial services for those who require long-term care and support.

Education:

Inclusive education must be promoted by setting up specialized resource rooms in schools that are equipped with assistive technologies. The Special Education Complex in Gilgit should be upgraded to a degree college to enhance opportunities for higher education, and its hostel, currently occupied by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), should be evacuated to make space for students with disabilities.

Employment and Economic Empowerment:

Implementing and expanding the public sector employment quota for PWDs is essential. Moreover,

providing assistive devices, vocational training, and financial aid can help empower PWDs economically, enabling them to contribute to the workforce and their communities.

Awareness and Social Change:

Public awareness campaigns are critical to changing attitudes toward PWDs. These campaigns should target both the general public and service providers to increase understanding of PWD rights and needs. Additionally, special attention should be given to the unique vulnerabilities of women and children with disabilities, who often face multiple forms of discrimination.

Certification and Data Collection:

To ensure that all PWDs are recognized and supported, it is essential to simplify and expedite the certification and CNIC issuance process. The goal should be to certify all PWDs within next six months. Regularly updating disability statistics in GB will help to monitor progress and allocate resources effectively.

Support for the associations of PWDs:

It is imperative to support the rights-based and welfare NGOs working for the empowerment of PWDs in Gilgit-Baltistan. Some of these organizations include the Amjad Nadeem Foundation, Dar Ul Huner Foundation, Vision Welfare Foundation, Good Will Foundation, Tehmina Welfare Foundation, and the Association of PWDs Gilgit-Baltistan, among others.

Empowering PWDs is not just a moral imperative but also essential for achieving an inclusive and sustainable

future in Gilgit-Baltistan. While there have been some positive steps forward, the region still faces significant challenges in policy enforcement, infrastructure development, and social attitudes. By addressing these gaps, we can create a society that truly values the contributions of every individual, regardless of their abilities. For Gilgit-Baltistan to progress, the rights and inclusion of PWDs must be prioritized, enabling them to lead fulfilling lives and participate fully in society.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/12/02/rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

‘AJK’ SC suspends controversial protest ordinance

The Dawn, 4 December 2024

The ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) Supreme Court on Tuesday suspended the enforcement of ‘Peaceful Assembly and **Public Order Ordinance, 2024**’, while admitting two appeals against a high court ruling that had upheld the contentious law.

The ordinance was originally challenged in the ‘AJK’ high court by three members of the Central Bar Association, Muzaffarabad, and the ‘AJK’ Bar Council.

However, the high court dismissed the petitions in limine, prompting both parties to file petitions for leave to appeal in the SC to get the high court ruling overturned.

Representing both parties, senior lawyers Raja Sajjad Ahmed and Raja Amjad Ali Khan alleged that the high court had disregarded critical points

raised in the petitions questioning the legality of the ordinance.

They contended the legislature was not vested with powers to deprive the state subjects of the fundamental rights guaranteed under the 'AJK's' interim constitution and therefore the impugned ordinance amounted to violating the Constitution.

Furthermore, they maintained that existing laws were sufficient to regulate the exercise of these rights, making the new ordinance unnecessary and excessive.

Led by 'AJK' Chief Justice Raja Saeed Akram, the SC full bench granted interim relief by suspending the ordinance until the disposal of the case. Converting both leave to appeals into regular appeals, the SC clubbed them together to be heard as a single regular case and announced that a detailed judgement would follow after comprehensive hearings.

Strike call unchanged

The suspension of the ordinance came less than 48 hours before a state-wide strike planned by the Jammu & Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC), a coalition of civil society organisations, primarily representing traders.

Shaukat Nawaz Mir, a core committee member of the JKJAAC, welcomed the SC intervention, but announced that the strike would proceed unless the government formally repealed the ordinance and released activists detained for opposing it.

"The ordinance was a targeted move to suppress the JKJAAC," he claimed. "We were not a party to the court petitions against it, nor has the Supreme Court restricted us from protesting. This time, an even larger number of people will take to the streets," he said.

The committee and other civil society groups hold the view that the ordinance infringes on the people's constitutional right to peaceful assembly and expression, raising questions about the balance between maintaining public order and safeguarding civil liberties in the liberated territory.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1876518/ajk-sc-suspends-controversial-protest-ordinance>

European Union can play an effective role in resolving the lingering Kashmir dispute peacefully: President 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times, 2 December 2024

President 'Azad Kashmir' Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that the European Union can play an effective role in resolving the lingering Kashmir dispute peacefully.

He expressed these views while speaking to Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed, Honorary Presidential Advisor for the European Union.

Terming settlement of the long pending disputes as a key to durable peace in South Asia, Barrister Chaudhry said that it was high time that the Kashmiris living in Europe should gear up their efforts to sensitize global community

about the early resolution of the Kashmir issue, which he said, was the root cause of tension and abuse of human rights in the region.

Appreciating the European parliament's role, he said that it was quite encouraging that the European Parliament keeps raising its voice from time to time on the ongoing human rights violations in 'occupied Kashmir'." The European Parliament had also presented the Emma Nicholson report on the human rights situation in 'occupied Kashmir', expressing EU countries' grave concern over the widespread human rights violations in the region including enforced disappearances and discovery of unnamed mass graves", the president added. He directed the Honorary Presidential Advisor for Europe Mr. Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed to play his proactive role to highlight the Kashmir issue and the ongoing atrocities in 'occupied Kashmir' in the EU and the European Parliament.

Stressing the need for early resolution of the Kashmir dispute, the 'AJK' president said that the world should not ignore this burning issue that poses a serious threat to peace and stability in South Asia." Any mishap, no matter how big or small, could trigger a nuclear confrontation between Pakistan and India because both countries are nuclear powers", the president remarked.

Honorary Presidential Advisor for the European Union Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed, on the occasion, invited the President to visit Brussels, which he

gladly accepted. The date for the visit would be announced soon.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/12/02/european-union-can-play-an-effective-role-in-resolving-the-lingering-kashmir-dispute-peacefully-president-ajk/>

'AJK' observes complete strike against ordinance banning peaceful protests

The Nation, 5 December 2024

'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) is witnessing a complete strike on Thursday in response to a presidential ordinance prohibiting peaceful protests.

Educational institutions and shops remain closed, and public transport is suspended across the region following a call for protest by the Jammu & Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC).

The ordinance imposes a seven-year jail term for individuals participating in protests in 'AJK'. Civil society groups and the JKJAAC argue that this measure violates constitutional rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, sparking concerns about balancing public order with civil liberties in the region.

Earlier this week, the 'AJK' Supreme Court temporarily suspended the implementation of the "Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Ordinance, 2024." This decision followed the admission of two appeals challenging a high court ruling that had upheld the controversial law.

In May, the JKJAAC had called off protests against rising inflation after the government agreed to their demands. However, violent clashes during these demonstrations led to the deaths of at least three people, with several others injured.

The current strike underscores ongoing tensions between authorities and civil society, as the debate over the ordinance's impact on fundamental rights continues.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/05-Dec-2024/ajk-observes-complete-strike-against-ordinance-banning-peaceful-protests>

'AJK' protesters agitate over 'delay' in repealing contentious law

The Dawn, 8 December 2024

Convoys of protesters gathered at the main entry points of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' on Saturday after the government "failed to fulfil their demands".

Though the 'AJK' president directed the prime minister to repeal the controversial law, the protesters announced plans to march on the capital on Sunday.

The protesters have been demanding the abrogation of the 'Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Ordinance, 2024', which barred unregistered organisations from holding gatherings or protests and mandates registered groups to seek permission a week before their planned gatherings.

'AJK' President Barrister Sultan Mahmood has written a letter to the prime minister to repeal the law,

according to a late-night press release issued by his office.

President Sultan also asked the regional government to release all protesters arrested under the law.

The late-night development came on the back of day-long agitation, which paralysed life across AJK on Saturday.

The Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC), a civil society alliance holding the protests, had set the 11am deadline for the government to fulfil its two demands: repeal the contentious ordinance and unconditionally release its 14 detained activists.

After the deadline lapsed, thousands of activists started coordinated marches towards the main entry points in Brarkot, Kohala, Tain Dhalkot, Azad Pattan, Holar, and Mangla that connect 'AJK' to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

In Muzaffarabad, Shaukat Nawaz Mir, a JKJAAC core committee member, announced that rallies from the capital city and Neelum and Jhelum valley districts would march towards Brarkot, which borders KP's Mansehra district.

Similarly, activists from Bagh and Haveli were to converge at Kohala, while those in Poonch and Sudhnoti aimed for Azad Pattan and Tain Dhalkot.

In Mirpur division, protesters marched towards Holar in Kotli district and Mangla in Mirpur district.

Strikes and negotiations

Markets in most parts of 'AJK' remain closed on Saturday with sparse traffic

on streets. In Muzaffarabad, businesses closed early, with residents gathering at Lal Chowk by late morning.

By 3pm, a government delegation, including cabinet members Pir Mazhar Saeed, Abdul Majid Khan, Deevan Ali Khan Chughtai, and Taqdees Gillani, arrived at the Municipal Corporation building, a short distance from the protest site for negotiations.

The delegation informed the joint action committee that two detained activists, Khawaja Mujtaba Banday and Ali Shamraiz, had been released in Muzaffarabad.

They also pledged to withdraw the ordinance by Tuesday, but the response did not sit well with the protest leaders, who called for an immediate withdrawal, Fazal Mahmood Baig, a city councillor and prominent protest leader told Dawn.

Later, the government delegation sought an hour's time to withdraw the law.

With no official notification by the government, the JKJAAC leaders signalled the start of the march to Brarkot shortly before sunset.

Till the filing of this report, a sizable crowd had reached Brarkot, where a large canopy had been erected to house them.

In Poonch district, vehicles packed with activists streamed out of the district headquarters Rawalakot towards Kohala, led by Sardar Umar Nazir Kashmiri.

Witnesses reported a significant swell in numbers as hundreds of protesters from Bagh and Haveli districts joined the caravan.

According to a local journalist, around 10,000 people had converged in Kohala by 9:30pm, and more were coming in.

In Kotli, a large number of activists from different towns had gathered at Holar Bridge, one of the entry points into AJK from Punjab. They staged a sit-in despite the biting cold.

However, the response in Mirpur and Bhimber districts remained tepid as protest leaders in Mirpur announced plans to march to Mangla Bridge on Sunday instead.

Protest plans for today

JKJAAC sources confirmed that activists would spend the night at entry points before reconvening to march towards the Legislative Assembly in the capital in the morning.

As tensions escalated on the ground, political manoeuvring continued behind the scenes.

A 13-member parliamentary group of PPP met in Karachi, with Faryal Talpur in the chair. It urged the 'AJK' government to withdraw the ordinance immediately.

"After comprehensive deliberations, the parliamentary party has rejected the ordinance, declaring it counter to the aspirations and democratic rights of the people of the state," read a press release from Zardari House.

“...The PPP remains committed to ensuring justice, fairness, and the preservation of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people,” it added.

Raja Faisal Rathore, PPP regional secretary general, told Dawn over the telephone that their decision would be conveyed to ‘AJK’ Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq.

Interestingly, of the 13-member PPP parliamentary group, 10 are ministers in PM Haq’s cabinet, which is believed to have approved the ordinance before its promulgation.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1877414/ajk-protesters-agitate-over-delay-in-repealing-contentious-law>

Economic Developments

‘AJK’ business community seeks immediate formation of JIT to ensure survival of industrial sector in ‘AJK’

Daily Parliament Times, 4 December 2024

‘Azad Jammu Kashmir’ business community emphasized the need of formation of the Joint Action Committee (JIT) by the State government to probe into the causes of the gradually collapsed infrastructure of the Industrial sector in ‘Azad Jammu Kashmir’ – with prime focus for survival of the industrial development in prevailing absolutely conducive environment in the ‘liberated territory of AJK’.

Addressing an interaction gathering of the stakeholders besides elders of all segments of the civil society hosted here Wednesday jointly by Mirpur-‘AJK’ Chamber of Commerce and

Walton Tobacco Industry to discuss the serious problems faced by the Industrial sector in ‘AJK’s’ largest business hub of Mirpur division. Speakers including former President FPCCI and AJKCCI and ex ‘AJK’ minister Ch. Muhammad Saeed, ex ‘AJK’ minister Ch. Rukhsar Ahmad, President MCCI Omar Shehzad Jirral, Chairman District Council Mirpur-AJK Raha Naveed Akhter Goga, representatives of Walton Tobacco industry and others addressed the ceremony and called for early redressal of the grievances of the local industrial sector about the approach of red tapism by the stake holders causing a stumbling block in the industrial progress in ‘Azad Jammu Kashmir’.

Besides all segments of the civil society, former presidents of the ‘AJK’ Chamber of Commerce including Zulfiqar Abbasi, sohaib Saeed Chaudhry and Syed Sabir Shah, KPC President Syed Abid Hussain Shah, Secretary General Raja Sohrab Ahmed Khan, senior Kashmiri journalist Altaf Hamid Rao, ex DG MDHA Zulfiqar Azam, political, social, business, legal and business fraternities and journalistic circles participated in the event.

Speaking on this occasion, key speakers including Arif Zia, special representative of the Walton Tobacco Industry, which had been closed for the past 8 months, gave a detailed briefing about the problems faced by the industry in the backdrop of the irrelevant actions of the state-sponsored stake holders and local administration, he added.

Mirpur AJKCCI President Chamber of Omar Shahzad Jaral said that the industries in 'Azad Jammu Kashmir' were suffering from serious problems. "The problems of the local industries are directly causing the problems for the people including the major issue of unemployment in the area as a whole", he observed.

Jirral continued that none of the political figures in AJK power corridors heard the grievances about the collapsed 'AJK' industrial sector where, during the last three years, 133 units have been closed down due to the lack of interest by the stakeholders from the 'AJK' government. He revealed that among the abandoned industrial units in Mirpur industrial estates, 22 mobile assembling units have been completely closed, leaving hundreds of young people jobless.

Currently, he continued, around 33 units are getting close to complete shutdown, since Investors have informed authorities about the closure of units.

He asserted that factories' owners in 'Azad Jammu Kashmir' were paying much more taxes as compared to the entrepreneurs in Pakistan. "Education tax which is not applicable in Pakistan is being collected by 'Azad Jammu Kashmir' government which has no policy on sustainable small scaled industry which the MCCI President described a big tragedy.

Omar Shehzad Jirral said that recommendations have been given to the 'AJK' Chief Secretary for the survival of industrial sector in 'AJK' –

since now the only solution is to close down the factories in 'AJK' and hand over the keys to the 'AJK' government, he declared.

The MCCI President asserted that 'AJK' industrial sector was playing their role in CSR funds according to the rules. CSR funds cannot be invested in any building or club, he added.

Jirral further said it was not ever considered to ask the owners that who was responsible of the closure of the factories. He underlined that many industrial units in Mirpur 'AJK' industrial estates were lying operational while the 'AJK' state government authorities were cancelling the industrial plots in small and major industrial estates for their lack of apathy and slackness. " If this hostile trend of the 'AJK' state stakeholders continued Mirpur industrial estates will turn into the graveyards of the local industry, the MCCI President warned.

Concluding, Omar Shehzad Jirral recalled that Azad Textiles mills, one of the largest business unit of its time in this region was closed due to immense problems faced by the owners because of the alleged bottlenecks caused by the concerned 'AJK' state bodies despite the business group had been the annual contributors of heavy volume of levies to the tune of over Rs. 18 billion when it remained operational for years in Mirpur 'AJK' till recent past, he concluded.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/12/04/ajk-business-community-seeks-immediate->

[formation-of-jit-to-ensure-survival-of-industrial-sector-in-ajk-2/](#)

Supplemental charges: Pesco seeks revision of allocation criteria

Business Recorder, 6 December 2024

Terming the current mechanism of allocation of supplemental charges unjustified, Peshawar Electric Power Company (Pesco) has sought revision of the criteria for allocation of supplemental charges by adjusting the amount receivables from GoP because of subsidy/supplies to 'AJ&K'/Tesco share as well as IDTR.

In a letter to Chief Executive Officer, Central Power Purchasing Agency-Guaranteed (CPPA-G), Chief Executive Officer, Pesco, stated that CPPA-G has charged supplemental charges amounting to Rs. 4.664 billion to Pesco for the month of September 2024. The cumulative amount charged by CPPA-G to Pesco on account of supplemental charges stood at Rs. 184.952 billion for the period up to Sep-2024.

According to Pesco, as per its Board Resolution and despite repeated requests, CPPA-G had not provided party wise details of the supplemental charges charged to Pesco. However, it was conveyed that the supplemental charges are allocated on the basis of "Month-end Payables".

Pesco emphasized that any amount charged to it on account of power purchase is regulated under NEPRA Rules & Regulation and any decisions in this regard must be aligned with the Regulatory Frameworks. Furthermore, Nepra has not allowed the

supplemental charges in various determinations of Pesco rather during hearing of Pesco tariff petition for FY2015-16, Nepra advised CPPA-G to file a separate petition for supplemental charges for the entire sector.

Pesco maintains that subsidy is an integral component of the pricing structure, and any delays or non-payment by the Government of Pakistan (GoP) are entirely dependent upon the Finance Division and GoP budgetary provision. PESCO lodges its monthly subsidy claims on timely basis and despite the fact that these claims have been verified but still Rs. 33.943 billion (up to Sep-24) is receivable on account of subsidy from the Government of Pakistan. Moreover, in current scenario of Inter-DISCO Tariff Rationalization (IDTR), the due credit on account of it also impacts the payment position resulting in overstatement of payables of certain Discos and understatement of the remaining Discos, hence the basis of allocating supplemental charges without adjustment of 'AJK' subsidy, TDS and IDTR needs re-consideration.

As per Board resolution, Pesco has already requested to consider subsidy and 'AJ&K' receivables in calculation of the supplemental charges, as these are part of the cost and its due credit of outstanding amount may be allowed to Pesco as the onus of delay in payment of subsidy and 'AJ&K' receivables is not on Pesco.

PESCO further emphasized that CPPA-G has issued cumulative invoices for power purchases and supplemental

charges to Pesco, including charges related to Tesco, for the period up to FY 2014-15. Accordingly, the Supplemental Charges may be revised, to segregate the Tesco share separately.

Sharing the details of supplemental charges, Pesco emphasized that the statement is prepared for the sake of understanding only and a mechanism for its recovery is required, and in this regard Nepra has already directed CPPA-G during PESCO Tariff Petition hearing of FY 2015-16 to file a separate petition for supplemental charges.

“Although Nepra has allowed offsetting the said charges against the Late Payment Charges recovered from consumers, however this is not enough to cover the said charges. Pesco “collection” of Supplemental Charges is only Rs. 19.179 billion, against Rs. 159.322 billion billed by CPPA-G for the period FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25 (up to Sep-24),” said CEO Pesco.

The Disco claimed that CPPA-G charged supplemental charges totaling Rs 10.682 billion for July 2024, as conveyed by the Additional Manager Finance (billing) of CPPA-G, these charges reflect an abnormal increase compared to the supplemental charges of the previous months. However, it is difficult to comprehend why CPPA-G made a significant deviation in delay payment charges, raising concerns about the rationale behind this substantial adjustment. Further clarification from CPPA-G on this matter may be required.

“Complete detail of supplemental charges being charged/allocated to

Pesco be provided along with party-wise breakup of the amount recorded by CPPA-G on account of Supplemental Charges/Interest Charges/ Markup Payable/ paid to power producers/generators,” Pesco said requesting to revise the criteria for allocation of Supplemental Charges by adjusting the amount receivables from GoP because of subsidy/supplies to AJ&K/Tesco share as well as IDTR and revised calculations along with details of the charges to be shared with PESCO as per resolution of Pesco BOD,” Pesco stated.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40336155>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Presidential Ordinance is a Black law and we reject it: Rafiq Advocate

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 3 December 2024

Socio-political personality, Advocate Muhammad Rafiq Awaan has said that the Presidential Ordinance is a black law and we reject it. Prime Minister ‘Azad Kashmir’, Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq should not impose such black laws on the people, which will result in anxieties among them. He said that today’s world is a world of social media and now-a-days nothing remains concealed. The government shall quickly order for revoking black laws and we in any circumstances are not ready to accept any laws forcibly imposed on us.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Resize-of-PAGE03.jpg>

In ‘Azad Kashmir’, work for developmental projects is in progress

Urdu Point, 5 December 2024

Minister for Information, ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) Maulana Peer Mazhar Sayeed Shah said that the work for development projects is in progress. Public relation officer, Saradar Naushaad took an inspection of the progress of the work. On this occasion, officer Naushaad said that there will be no compromise on the quality of the work. He instructed that all projects be completed in due course of time.

He said that on the orders of the Prime Minister ‘Azad Kashmir’, that the information minister ‘AJK’ Peer Sayeed Mazhar Shah has taken interest in the developmental work. In particular Neelum, so many developmental works were executed. He met with Assistant Commissioner Sharda and also Tehsildar Sharda. He expected that for the developmental related initiatives, there is a need for cooperation between the government and the people.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4252517.html>

The climate of anxiety is emerging in the state: Qazi Nadeem Khalil

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 4 December 2024

The climate of politics is emerging in the state and peaceful protest is the fundamental right of every individual. Such thoughts were shared by Qazi Nadeem Khalil, president of *Rah-e-Haq* party, while interacting with the media

persons. He further said that we should pay attention to the courts, where injustice is being meted out. We opt for the path of protests when our rights are denied. In Islamic states, Islamic laws should be implemented so that justice becomes readily available to every citizen of the state. He said that right now, the political environment of the ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ has turned entirely ugly. The government should as soon as possible remove the Presidential ordinance and seeking permission for the peaceful protest goes against the very principles of justice. *Rah-e-Haq* party stands with the Awami Action Party. He further said that in ‘AJK’, availability of cheap flour, cheap electricity to every home has been made possible by the efforts of the Awami Action Party, and we appreciate their efforts towards this end. Pointing at the Presidential Ordinance, he said that in our state, there is no space for such kind of black laws.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Resize-of-PAGE-03-1.jpg>

‘Azad Kashmir’ Supreme Court suspends controversial Presidential Ordinance

Nawai Waqat, 3 December 2024

‘Azad Kashmir’ Supreme Court suspended government’s controversial Presidential Ordinance. In ‘Azad Kashmir’ Supreme Court, a full bench led by the Chief Justice Raja Sayeed Akram heard the case. After initial hearing by the full court, Presidential ordinance was suspended. The court upon the appeal by the Bar council and

Civil society, has put a stop over the government's implementation of the ordinance.

It needs to be brought into the notice that as per the Presidential Ordinance, planning to protest must first seek permission for the same, that too ahead of a week from the District Commissioner. As per ordinance, any unregistered organization or for that matter any registered trust had no right to fill application for seeking approval for the protest.

Against this controversial ordinance, the Awami Action Committee gave a call for complete shutdown on 5 December. Besides this, all political organizations of the 'AJK' have rejected this Presidential ordinance.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/03-Dec-2024/1847361>

Social Media

JAMIL NAGRI @wjamilnagri

3 December 2024

The Pakistan-China border post on Khun-jerab Pass opened for year-round trade and travel for the first time on Monday, with 40 Chinese containers loaded with goods and a bus carrying four passengers arriving at Sost

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1863908383880823147>

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

5 December 2024

Illegal transfer of 5400 kanal land in Gilgit cancelled

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1864678867237261666>

JAMIL NAGRI @wjamilnagri

3 December 2024

Feel like minus 30 temperature, shortage of oxygen, harsh weather, between snow-capped mountains, in the absence of electricity, limited Internet, I am staying in such freezing environment today, near Khunjerab Pass.

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1863704658952265830>

PAMIR Times @pamirtimes

2 December 2024

Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Gilgit-Baltistan

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/pamirtimes/status/1863630207397032213>

Weekly POK News Digest

Volume 4 | Issue 49

02 December - 08 December 2024

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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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