

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

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**CDWP**  
Markhor Hunt  
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**Presidential Ordinance**  
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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES  
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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

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## Political Developments

### **Mass protests force 'AJK' govt to withdraw controversial law**

*Dawn, 9 December 2024*

After several days of protests that brought the territory to a standstill, the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) government on Sunday withdrew a controversial presidential ordinance and accepted several demands of the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC) coalition.

The demonstrations, which gained momentum on Saturday, saw thousands of people braving harsh weather to converge at several entry points, including Brarkot, Kohala, and Holar.

After deliberations, the protest leaders had announced plans to march towards the Legislative Assembly in Muzaffarabad's Chhattar neighbourhood on Sunday.

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

Sensing growing public resentment, the PPP, a coalition partner in the 'AJK' government, was the first to reject the ordinance during its meeting in Karachi. Shortly afterwards, Shah Ghulam Qadir, the regional president of the PML-N, echoed a similar stance.

Amid these developments, President Barrister Sultan Mahmood announced that he had already directed Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq to withdraw the ordinance, and the requisite steps were underway.

Late on Saturday night, Shaukat Nawaz Mir, a prominent JKJAAC leader from Muzaffarabad who had led a big rally to Brarkot, headed to Kohala for consultations with Sardar Umar Nazir Kashmiri and Imtiaz Aslam, who had mobilised thousands of protesters from Poonch, Bagh, and Haveli districts.

Sunday also saw the continuation of the shutter-down strike in most parts of 'AJK', particularly in Muzaffarabad.

#### Negotiations and agreement

At 9am on Sunday, an official team, comprising Health Minister Nisar Ansar Abdali, Information Secretary Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Poonch Commissioner Sardar Waheed Khan, and DIG Shehryar Sikander, arrived in Kohala for formal negotiations, resulting in a written agreement in which the government accepted not only the primary demands, but also several other points.

The agreement included a commitment to withdrawing all cases against activists within seven days to three months, reinstatement of dismissed teacher Sohaib Arif in Poonch, permanent employment for the brother of Azhar, who was killed in the May 13 firing incident, and compensation of Rs1 million each to four others who

were injured in the same incident, within a week.

Additionally, the agreement stipulated that houses affected by Mangla Dam upraising would have their electricity meters and bills waived. The Punjab and 'AJK' governments would take joint measures to restore the road damaged by the Azad Pattan Dam.

Moreover, flour quality would be improved with allocations adjusted according to population, and electricity meters procured via e-tendering in the next fiscal year.

Local representatives would be granted powers and funds, and a committee would be formed to establish a code of conduct for student union elections, the agreement added.

It also stated that a six-month dialogue would address the JKJAAC's separate 'Charter of Demands' without further amendments.

Mr Mir later told Dawn that the charter included reducing elite privileges, granting scheduled bank status to the Bank of 'AJK', improving cellular services, and implementing the AJK High Court decision on the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project.

On its part, the JKJAAC withdrew its call for the January 23 long march.

By noon, the government team handed over the Law Department's notification, officially withdrawing the Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Ordinance 2024.

Notifications were also issued for the release of all detainees, the reinstatement of teacher Arif, the payment of electricity arrears in 36 instalments instead of 24, and revised tariffs for 5KW commercial and general service categories.

After receiving the notifications, the convoy from Poonch returned, and Mr Mir drove to Brarkot to share the news amid sloganeering. Celebratory rallies were later held at Muzaffarabad's Lal Chowk, as well as in Supply Bazar Rawalakot, Bagh Kotli, and other areas.

Information Minister Pir Mazhar Saeed commended the JKJAAC for responsibly observing peaceful protests and thwarting the designs of disruptive elements. Accompanied by four cabinet colleagues, he also expressed gratitude to the president, judiciary, civil society, lawyer forums, media, and police for maintaining law and order during the protests. "Resolution through dialogue was our preference, and we succeeded in it," he said.

Call for 'AJK' PM's resignation

Meanwhile, congratulating the people and the action committee's leadership on the success of the protest, PTI's regional president and former AJK premier Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi demanded immediate resignation of the coalition government, followed by fresh polls.

He alleged that due to the incompetence of the coalition government, the territory was facing one problem after another.

“Had they realised the sensitivity of the matter and withdrawn the black law on their own, they could have saved themselves from public resentment and disgrace,” Mr Niazi remarked.

PML-N leader and former premier Raja Farooq Haider also demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Haq.

“The withdrawal of the ordinance is like a post-mortem cure, apart from being evidence of the hybrid regime’s failure,” he said in a statement.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1877636/mass-protests-force-ajk-govt-to-withdraw-controversial-law>

### **Khunjerab Pass opens for winter travel**

*Dawn, 12 December 2024*

The Khunjerab Pass, which straddles the border between Pakistan and China, opened for winter tourism for the first time on Wednesday.

A colourful inaugural ceremony to mark the occasion was held at Tashkurgan, a city in China on the border with Tajikistan. Music, fireworks, traditional dances and national songs of both countries lent pomp and pageantry to the event.

Raja Nazeemul Ameen, an aide to the president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), led Pakistan’s delegation to the ceremony.

The delegation met Chinese government officials and travel agents to explore ways and means for

promotion of trade and tourism between GB and China’s north-west.

Speakers from both countries termed the opening of Khunjerab Pass to tourists round the year a “historic achievement” that would go a long way in promotion of tourism, particularly in GB and Xinjiang.

Iqbal Hussain, who heads GB’s tourism department, said even though Khunjerab Pass was opened to tourism in 1984, it was confined to summer due to adverse weather conditions during winter.

“Realising the potential of winter tourism, it was felt necessary to initiate opening of the border round the year,” he said.

The deputy commissioner of Tashkurgan expressed the hope that travel through Khunjerab Pass would improve the quality of life in the area.

After the ceremony, a tourist bus carrying 21 delegates left China for Pakistan amid fanfare and to the accompaniment of music.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1878230/khunjerab-pass-opens-for-winter-travel#:~:text=TASHKURGAN%3A%20The%20Khunjerab%20Pass%2C%20which,on%20the%20border%20with%20Tajikistan.>

### **Whopping \$271,000 paid for markhor hunt**

*Express Tribune, 10 December 2024*

After paying a whopping sum of \$271,000 a US citizen has hunted a markhor in a remote area of Chitral.

According to the Ministry of Climate Change, Forests, and Environment Spokesperson Latifur Rehman, this is the first hunt of the current season. American hunter Ronald Whitehead bid the highest amount of \$271,000 to hunt a Kashmir markhor in Chitral.

Whitehead obtained the permit for this hunt in October and hunted an 11-year-old markhor with 49-inch long horns in the Toshi Shasha Conservancy.

According to the spokesperson, another trophy hunt will be conducted in the same conservancy at the same price, while the third trophy hunt is expected to take place next March, with an estimated tag of \$231,000.

The trophy hunting programme, introduced in the 1990s, generates massive income. As much as 80% of it is distributed equally within the local community.

This revenue helps conserve the markhor species, and protection efforts against illegal hunting by locals. In addition, the funds go towards regional development.

The initiative has attracted international hunters to northern Pakistan, and local communities work hard to prevent illegal hunting.

Trophy hunting plays a significant role in empowering these local communities.

Foreign hunters, bidding for the opportunity to hunt Markhor, are strictly required to adhere to the regulations, and only older markhors are hunted.

During the hunt, representatives from the Wildlife Department, as well as members of the local community, accompany the hunters. The markhor, Pakistan's national animal, typically resides at altitudes between 8,000 to 11,000 feet, but comes lower during winter.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2514947/whopping-271000-paid-for-markhor-hunt>

### **Learning from 'AJK'**

*Dawn, 10 December 2024*

The recent events in 'Azad Kashmir' are a powerful example of how dialogue can play a constructive role in effectively responding to public dissent. Days of peaceful yet resolute protests against the controversial 'Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Ordinance, 2024' compelled the 'AJK' government to engage with the people, listen to their demands, and ultimately repeal the contentious law. Even after the 'AJK' Supreme Court suspended the ordinance, protesters amplified their call for accountability and justice. Remarkably, despite sporadic unrest, the government refrained from heavy-handed crackdowns, allowing citizens to exercise their right to assemble. Protests were recently held in Islamabad, too, by the PTI. But the party's march to the capital was met with an iron-fisted response. The protests were characterised by clashes with law enforcement, charges of excessive force against protesters and a wave of arrests. The tragic deaths of several security personnel and reports of PTI supporters killed highlight the



human cost of a confrontational approach. Instead of fostering dialogue, the government – and the PTI – chose force. And the choice was made well before time, with the kind of over-preparedness on the part of the government witnessed in the lead-up to the events.

‘AJK’s’ approach, while not without flaws, shows us the importance of upholding democratic principles. The government’s decision to form a consultative committee, release detained activists, and meet public demands reflects a recognition of the wisdom in civic engagement. By addressing grievances, ‘AJK’ defused tensions and reaffirmed faith in institutional processes. The political leadership must take a leaf out of ‘AJK’s’ experience. Engaging with dissenting voices, rather than suppressing them, can pave the way for meaningful resolution. Protests are not just acts of defiance – they are opportunities for growth. Heavy-handed responses only stifle this potential and risk alienating an already disillusioned citizenry. The path to a united nation lies in dialogue, tolerance, and respect for the people’s voice.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1877835>

**Mirpur-‘AJK’ civil society leaders calls for swift practical steps by ‘AJK’ government to discourage misuse of powers by District Administration**

*Daily Parliament Times, 9 December 2024*

Former President of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ Chamber of Commerce &

Industry and eminent businessman Chaudhry Faisal Manzoor while addressing a crowded joint press conference accompanied by prominent leaders of various walks of life at Kashmir Press Club Mirpur here on Monday, has demanded the transfer of Mirpur Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Yasir Riaz within next ten days.

“If the demand is not met by the ‘AJK’ government, thousands of people from all walks of life, including the business fraternity across the district will be constrained to take to street agitation to strongly protest against the incumbent forward block led coalition government of AJK”, he declared.

Former Presidents of Mirpur District Bar Association Imtiaz Hussain Raja Advocate and Raja Zulfiqar Ahmad Advocate. Central Deputy Information Secretary of PTI Arif Chaudhry, President of Anjuman Tajran Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, Raja Khalid Mehmood Khan, President Insaf Traders Wing ‘AJK’, President of PTI City Mirpur Mirza Iftikhar Qayyum, Puranian Hattian business leader Raja Muhammad Ali, Khawaja Rafiq Zargar and Asif Butt among others also addressed on this occasion.

Apart from a large number of citizens, Chaudhry Abdul Razzaq, Naser Farooq Mir, Councillor Nasir Bashir Tas, Wajahat Baig, Sajid Malik, President of Anjuman Tajaran Chowk Shaheedan Nasir Butt, businessman Qazi Arshad Mehmood, Councilor Chaudhry Abid Hussain, were also present.

The ex AJKCCI President continued that the local civil society will not allow to be blackmailed through false cases. The citizens will be constrained to get into the streets to protest strongly against the misuse of powers by the local administration against the law-abiding citizens", he maintained.

Faisal alleged that retaliatory actions were being taken against him and his associates. "The administration is blackmailing noble citizens through false cases by misusing their powers through retaliatory actions including against his self," he blamed adding was he a terrorist?

The 'AJK' business community leader said that the recent JAAC sponsored 'AJK'-wide mass public movement was for the people of the state.

"Deputy Commissioner took various wrong steps through mismanagement and incapable skills and strategies that led to igniting of violent attack on KFC Mirpur-'AJK' incident during his ongoing term in the office", Faisal observed.

He demanded of the 'AJK' Prime Minister to immediately transfer the Deputy Commissioner from the district. The furious business community elder allege that his honour was attacked and abused by the local district administration with the connivance of the sitting DC", he blamed.

On this occasion, former 'AJK' minister Chaudhry Akhsar Ahmed said while addressing the news conference alleged

that Deputy Commissioner was treating local residents as viceroy through the massive misuse of powers. "I know what is being done inside the electoral constituency LA-4:, the furious former 'AJK' minister maintained and declared that he will bring four thousand people from the constituency's area in the proposed street protest as and when managed", the basic human right of the local population against the alleged injustice on the part of the local district administration, he blamed. Rukhsar expressed full solidarity with Faseel Manzoor to whom he described as a brother.

Former president of District Bar Association Zulfiqar Ahmed Raja, Advocate, said that if the people of Mirpur become brave like Faisal Manzoor, then there would not be such incidents of alleged mishandling of the people in Mirpur. Raja Zulfiqar said that the recent movement has been going on for one and a half years in 'AJK' including this district. He said that every law abiding local has played a positive role for the prosperity of the people's rights.

Other speakers said while addressing the news conference that in the inquiry report of the chairman of the high-level committee of the 'AJK' government, headed by most senior minister Col. (Retd) Waqar Ahmed Noor, the deputy commissioner had also been held responsible for the alleged KFC attack, and a recommendation had been allegedly issued for his immediate transfer.



“The ‘AJK’ government should take practical measures to resolve the anxiety among the people of Mirpur and implement good governance in letter and spirit according to its vision.

Expressing their concerns, the civil society leaders maintained that as the situation in Mirpur was getting much worsened, the government must take timely measures to ensure true normalcy in the district, they urged.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/12/09/mirpur-ajk-civil-society-leaders-calls-for-swift-practical-steps-by-ajk-government-to-discourage-misuse-of-powers-by-district-administration/>

### **‘AJK’ Deadlock**

*The Nation, 8 December 2024*

The protests in ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK), stemming from disagreements over resource allocation and governance, are a grim reminder of the fragile state of affairs across Pakistan’s provinces. With deadlocked negotiations fuelling public frustration, protesters are now threatening to blockade key routes—an action that could escalate an already precarious situation.

In a country already grappling with crises in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, the last thing Pakistan needs is the opening of a third front in ‘AJK’. These simmering provincial issues have the potential to snowball into a nationwide crisis, destabilising macroeconomic stability and disrupting daily life for ordinary citizens. Ignoring these grievances risks

turning a local protest into a national emergency.

At a time when the government might have exercised its authority and taken a firm stance, prudence dictates otherwise. This is a moment for conciliation, not confrontation. With tensions running high, the government must act swiftly yet cautiously to address the protesters’ concerns, ensuring that dialogues remain open and constructive. It is also worth noting that these protests are not just about ‘AJK’; they are symptomatic of broader governance issues that plague Pakistan’s federal structure. From fiscal mismanagement to a lack of equitable resource distribution, the state’s inability to meet provincial needs is eroding trust.

Failure to defuse the ‘AJK’ crisis could have far-reaching consequences, not just for the region but for the nation as a whole. Proactive governance and a genuine commitment to addressing grievances are essential to prevent this tinderbox from igniting. Anything less risks plunging the country deeper into turmoil—a luxury Pakistan can no longer afford.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/08-Dec-2024/ajk-deadlock>

### **Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan calls on ‘AJK’ President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry**

*Daily Parliament Times, 11 December 2024*

Former Prime Minister of ‘Azad Kashmir’ Raja Muhammad Farooq

Haider Khan called on 'AJK' President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.

During the meeting the duo discussed in detail the issues of mutual concern with particular focus on dire human rights situation in the 'Indian occupied' territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Voicing their grave concern over the stepping human rights violations in the region, both the leaders agreed to launch a comprehensive campaign from the base camp to highlight the Kashmir issue effectively at international level.

Given the volatile situation in the region they said that it was high time that Kashmiris particularly the diaspora community should play their role to sensitize the world about the early resolution of the long running Kashmir dispute and its devastating impacts on the Kashmiri society. "It is the responsibility of every Kashmiri to expose the India dual face before the world ", they said, adding that Kashmiris should unite and join their forces to expose the war crimes the 'Indian occupation' forces have been committing against unarmed civilians in 'Indian occupied Kashmir'. On this occasion, President 'Azad Kashmir' Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, while citing extraterritorial killings by Indian secret agents said that India has emerged as a global terrorist. Killing of Sikh activist in Canada by the Indian secret agents, he said, serves as clear

proof of their involvement in terrorist activities abroad.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/12/11/raja-muhammad-farooq-haider-khan-calls-on-ajk-president-barrister-sultan-mahmood-chaudhry/>

## Economic Developments

### **CPEC slowdown**

*Dawn, 9 December 2024*

Islamabad has reached out to Beijing to expedite a visit of China's technical and finance teams to Pakistan to conclude agreements on the implementation of the first phase of the upgradation of the ML-I rail project from Peshawar to Karachi.

It has also been asked to convert Islamabad and Karachi SEZs into model industrial estates, which can be replicated by the authorities here in the remaining seven SEZs. The request was made by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal during a meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Islamabad recently. On the margins of the SCO summit in Islamabad in October, the Chinese premier had agreed to send a technical team of railway experts to study and finalise the first phase of ML-1, costing \$1.1bn, between Karachi and Hyderabad.

During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing earlier this year, China had agreed to expedite work on the second leg of the upgraded multi-billion-dollar CPEC initiative for what the finance minister calls the "monetisation phase" of the project.

Months after the meeting, the promised Chinese investments are yet to arrive in Pakistan.

It is not surprising that the slowing CPEC momentum, particularly the delays in the start of work on ML-I upgradation and relocation of Chinese factories here, is being questioned in Pakistan. The reasons for the slowdown of the CPEC projects are obvious: Beijing is concerned for the safety of its nationals working on CPEC schemes here, as they have been targeted by terrorists. Besides, it is worried about its investments in the first phase of the work on account of the criticism of the projects, which are seen as a big reason for Pakistan's high debt.

Moreover, it is not surprising that, like other lenders, China, which is Pakistan's biggest creditor, is worried about regular requests from Islamabad for more loans, and the rescheduling and rollover of existing ones. Beijing has more than its share of troubles on other fronts too, especially growing trade tensions with the US, which is keeping it from making any new investments in the CPEC scheme.

Although the chances of China resuming its CPEC investments anytime soon remain slim, the current pause does not mean that it has lost interest in the connectivity project or in Pakistan for that matter. As soon as conditions improve and firm steps towards foolproof security for its nationals are taken, fresh investments can be expected.

Meanwhile, Pakistan must put its own house in order and do its part of the work rather than wait for the resumption of Chinese financing. The expected dissolution of the dysfunctional CPEC Authority should also settle the issue of dichotomy of power in CPEC-related decision-making, making it easier for the planning ministry to fast-track the implementation of its decisions.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1877603>

### **Dar meets current, former PMs of 'AJK'**

*Business Recorder, 10 December 2024*

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Monday, met with the current and former Prime Ministers of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'.

Development projects in 'AJK' were discussed. The Deputy Prime Minister expressed the government's full support for socio-economic development of 'AJK'.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40336743/dar-meets-current-former-pms-of-ajk>

### **CDWP approves 15 uplift projects worth Rs422.704 billion**

*Business Recorder, 15 December 2024*

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Sunday approved 15 development projects worth Rs 422.704 billion during its meeting chaired by Minister PDSI and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Ahsan Iqbal.

Out of these, the CDWP forum has approved six projects totalling Rs 17.95 billion, while the forum has recommended nine projects totalling Rs 404.754 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for review, according to a statement from the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Awais Manzoor Sumra, Joint Chief Economist (Ops), Members of the Planning Commission, as well as respective Federal Secretaries heads of Provincial and representatives from Federal Ministries and Provincial Governments.

The agenda included discussion on projects of Health, Agriculture, Environment, Manpower, Governance, Water Resources, Transport & Communication and Science & Technology

A project titled “Economic Transformation Initiative, Gilgit-Baltistan Planning and Development Department, GoGB (Revised)”, worth Rs26,763.880 million, has been referred to ECNEC for further consideration. Proposed to be financed through foreign funding, the programme aims to improve incomes and reduce poverty and malnutrition in rural Gilgit-Baltistan.

Its primary objective is to increase agriculture incomes and employment for at least 100,000 rural households. The initiative focuses on developing

50,000 acres of irrigated land, constructing 400 km of farm-to-market roads, and enhancing the value chain of apricots and potatoes, with scope for more products after a mid-term review. The programme encompasses the entire Gilgit-Baltistan region.

The project “Sindh Coastal Resilience Project (SCRIP)”, worth Rs. 45,792.325 million, was presented and referred to ECNEC for further consideration. Financed through foreign funding, the project aims to build climate resilience, improve livelihoods, and reduce poverty in Sindh’s coastal districts: Badin, Sujawal, and Thatta.

Climate-smart agriculture and fisheries to enhance productivity and integrate smallholder farmers and fisher folk into value chains. 2. Improved assets and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups, including youth, women, and the landless and 3. Community participation to ensure sustainable outcomes.

A project related to the Governance sector presented in the meeting namely “Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Mobilization and Public Resource Management Program (Technical Assistance) (Revised)” worth Rs. 4713.606 million approved by the CDWP forum. The project is proposed to be financed through foreign funding.

The meeting approved the “Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Center (PCU part)” project, worth Rs. 3110.4 million, under the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations &

Coordination. This phase-2 project aligns with the 5Es Framework to provide specialized healthcare at national and international levels.

While discussing the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), DCPC Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the need for a dedicated Program Management Unit with technical and administrative expertise to ensure timely completion. To this end, a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be established to oversee the project lifecycle, ensuring efficient planning, execution, and adherence to international standards.

The meeting approved the “Social Sector Accelerator (SSA) for Health, Nutrition, Education, Youth & Gender (HNEYG) - Prime Minister’s Youth Internship Programme (Revised)” worth Rs. 7499.804 million after detail discussion. Executed by MoPDSI and financed through PSDP, the program offers 30,000 paid internships to fresh graduates for six months. Interns will receive stipends of PKR 25,000 or PKR 40,000 per month, based on the revised PC-1. Upon completion, participants will be awarded certificates by their host organizations and the Ministry.

The project “Procurement/Manufacture of 820 High-Capacity Bogie Wagons and 230 Passenger Coaches (Revised),” worth Rs. 70,967.944 million, was referred to ECNEC for further consideration. Financed through PSDP, the project addresses Pakistan Railways’ outdated rolling stock by procuring wagons and

passenger coaches to enhance freight and passenger services. This initiative aims to improve service delivery, boost operational efficiency, reduce the national budget burden, and support economic growth by offering fast, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly transportation.

A project related to T&C sector presented namely “Rehabilitation of Multan-Vehari Road” worth Rs. 12,886.777 million, was referred to ECNEC for further consideration. It involves rehabilitating 93.5 km of the Multan-Vehari Road to a 24ft-wide single carriageway, with partial dualization, passing through key towns like Tibba Sultanpur and Makhdoom Rasheed. Financed through the provincial ADP, the project aims to enhance connectivity in Punjab.

A project related to T& C sector presented namely “Construction of Rawalpindi Ring Road” the revised project, worth Rs. 32,997.054 million, was referred to ECNEC. It includes constructing a 38.3 km main carriageway from Banth (N-5) to Thalian (M-2), with interchanges, bridges, flyovers, subways, fencing, toll plazas, and weigh stations. The design adheres to AASHTO highway standards and is financed through the provincial ADP.

A Project related to T& C presented in the meeting namely “Construction of Khawazakhela-Besham Expressway” The revised project, worth Rs. 137,711.391 million, was referred to ECNEC. Financed through PSDP, it



includes constructing a 48 km expressway with bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, drainage systems, toll plazas, and roadside facilities to improve regional connectivity and infrastructure.

The “Extension of Klm Start Point to Saggian Road and Main Ravi Bridge (Revised)” project, worth Rs. 12,069.7 million, was referred to ECNEC. Financed through PSDP, it involves modifying one existing interchange, constructing two new interchanges, and adding culverts, subways, drainage, erosion control, and toll plazas. Additional work includes utility shifting, land acquisition, and road furniture.

A project related to T &C sector presented in the meeting namely “Consultancy Services for Design and Construction Supervision of New Air Traffic Control Tower and Fire Station at Jiap Karachi” worth Rs. 465.500 and “Hiring of Consultant for RNP-AR for all-weather flight operations at Skardu, Gilgit and Chitral airports” worth Rs. 832.015 approved by the forum. Both projects are proposed to be financed through CAA own resources.

The “Construction of Mangi Dam and Water Conveyance System (Revised)” project, worth Rs. 18,994.65 million, was referred to ECNEC for further consideration. Financed through a 50:50 split between Federal PSDP and Provincial ADP, the project involves building a 61m high dam with a reservoir capacity of 36.43 MCM.

Water will be conveyed to Quetta City via a 40km pumping main and 20km gravity main, with treatment at a plant before being distributed through an additional 10km pipeline. The dam is located 60km east of Quetta on the Khost River.

A Sind Government project presented in the meeting namely “Sindh Early Learning Enhancement through Classroom Transformation (Revised)” worth Rs. 46570.56 million referred to ECNEC for further consideration. The project is proposed to be financed from Annual Development Plan, Gov. of Sindh.

Another project related to IT sector presented in the meeting namely “Strengthening of MoPDSI in IT” worth Rs. 1334.554 approved by the forum.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40337681>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

#### **The hearts of Pakistani people beat with Kashmiris: Nawaz Sharif**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 13 December 2024*

All issues faced by the people of ‘Azad Kashmir’ and their solution remains among the priority list of the Pakistan Muslim League-(N). Furthermore, the PML-N is dutiful upon the people living in the ‘Azad-region’, and every possible step will be taken for the welfare, development, and prosperity, and for providing aid to the region. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz



Sharif met with President Pakistan Muslim League (N) 'Azad Kashmir', Shah Ghulam Qadir. On this occasion, Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and Governor Balochistan, Haji Sheikh Jaffar Mandwakhel were also present.

During the meeting, the political situation of 'Azad Kashmir' and community leaders were discussed. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistani people's hearts beats with Kashmiri's and the development and welfare remain the priority of the PML-N party. On this occasion, Shah Ghulam Qadir briefed about Prime Minister about the political situation in 'AJK', and underscored that the PML-N has again become the people's strength in the region. The workers of the PML-N are ready to support any statement of the country's Prime Minister. Shah Ghulam Qadir thanked the Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif for giving a package of 23 million to the public of 'AJK', and also mentioned that earlier, Nawaz Sharif would come to rescue the people of the region. Shah Ghulam Qadir also gave Shehbaz Sharif an invitation to visit 'AJK', which he accepted, and soon he will be visiting the 'AJK' and also meeting the workers of the PML-N.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-13.jpg>

**A thorough meeting occurred between Barrister Sultan, the President of**

**'Azad Kashmir', and former Prime Minister Farooq Haider Khan.**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 12 December 2024*

Modi's concealed agenda in 'Occupied Kashmir' has reached its peak – Barrister Sultan. The world must be made aware of India's true nature, as it is engaged in terrorist activities not only in 'Occupied Kashmir' but also in India itself, Canada, and other regions worldwide.

Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary and Raja Mohammad Farooq Haider held an in-depth meeting at the President's House in Islamabad, where both leaders agreed that the Kashmir issue should be jointly highlighted from the Freedom Base Camps.

Kashmiris, both in the region and abroad, must play their active role in exposing the Indian government's atrocities on all forums and work towards resolving the long-standing Kashmir issue.

The Kashmiri people have faced oppression for decades, and it is now our duty to expose the true face of India to the global community. India's terrorist activities extend beyond 'Occupied Kashmir', reaching other parts of the world like Canada and India itself, positioning the country as a rising global terrorist state.

At this critical time, it is essential for the Kashmiri people to unite and push for a resolution to the Kashmir issue while

highlighting India's human rights violations in Kashmir over the years.

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

### **The Law Minister has been ineffective in fostering development within his constituency**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 15 December 2024*

Mian Waheed has relocated funds from Lower Neelum to Upper Neelum, exposing his policies that harm the public. The movement of funds to another assembly segment implies an effort to sway voters.

The Law Minister has utterly failed in the development of his assembly constituency, leaving the people of the area in great distress – Shafiq Jhagvi

Mian Shafiq Jhagvi, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf 'Azad Kashmir', has criticized the Law Minister for transferring funds from the Lower Neelum segment to Upper Neelum, calling it a clear indication of his anti-people policies. He added that shifting MLA funds between segments is a deliberate attempt to influence voters. Despite being elected from Segment LA 26, the Law Minister has entirely overlooked the needs of the people in that constituency.

Mian Abdul Waheed is making ineffective attempts to restore his image, trying to manipulate the

political situation by distributing funds through the local government in an effort to buy the people's support. The law Minister, aware of the worsening conditions in his constituency, is avoiding the reality and shifting funds to Upper Neelum to build a personal vote bank. The difficulties faced by the people of LA 26 are intensifying every day.

He urges the local government not to cooperate with the Law Minister in transferring funds to Upper Neelum, insisting that these funds should be used for their intended purpose—development. The Prime Minister should also monitor the anti-people policies of his ministers and take action to eliminate corruption.

<https://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/1-5.jpg>

### **From Social Media**

**JAMIL NAGRI** @jamilnagri

*12 December 2024*

The Khunjerab Pass, which straddles the border between Pakistan and #China, opened for winter tourism for the first time on Wednesday.

A colourful inaugural ceremony to mark the occasion was held at Tashkurgan.

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1867070605389893788>

**WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti***14 December 2024*

Karakoram University teachers have been protesting for 3 days. What are their demands? Video report

#KIU

#KarakoramInternationalUniversity

#ASA #protest

Link to the video:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1867924327980777660>

**JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri***12 December 2024*

On World Tourism Day, the inaugural ceremony of Pakistan\_China border, Khunjerab Pass for winter tourism held in Tashkurgan city of China, I am proud to be part of the event, both sides people were excited, they were hope for a new era.

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1866920733881889192>

**PAMIR Times @pamirtimes***15 December 2024*

At least five people tragically lost their lives when a vehicle was buried under a massive landslide near the Malupa area of Rondu, Baltistan. The vehicle, traveling from Skardu to Shingus, was engulfed by debris from the landslide, according to Assistant Commissioner

Rondu, Muhammad Hussain Butt. Rescue operations are underway to recover the victims and clear the route.  
#skardu #Baltistan #malupa

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/pamirtimes/status/1868213524066976072>

**WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti***14 December 2024*

Everyone knows how former CM Hafeez-ur-Rehman, the king of sectarianism and corruption, went from a house of five dead to a five-kanal bungalow. This is the revelation of GB Assembly member Jamil Ahmed.

#ppp #BilawalBhuttoZardari  
#exchiefminister #gilgitbaltistan  
#corruption #scandal

Link to the video:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1867924807154913389>

# Weekly POK News Digest

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**Compiled by**

Mohd. Usman Bhatti and Muneeb Yousuf

**Edited By**

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

**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.*



**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](http://www.idsa.in); Email: [pokdigest@gmail.com](mailto:pokdigest@gmail.com)