

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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POK
water management
Sost Dry port
Gilgit-Baltistan
protest demonstrations
drinking water
Diamer-Bhasha
Water Woes



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Political Developments

Mohsin Naqvi visits Shaheed Major Saad's family in 'AJK'

Daily Times, 31 March 2025

Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi visited the residence of Shaheed Major Saad bin Zubair in 'Azad Kashmir'. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Shaheed Major Saad's father, Muhammad Zubair Khan, mother, brother, and other family members and expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of their young son. He offered Fateha for Shaheed Major Saad and prayed for the bereaved family's patience. Mohsin Naqvi consoled Shaheed Major Saad's family and appreciated their high morale. The Interior Minister paid tribute to the bravery of Shaheed Major Saad bin Zubair in powerful words. He said martyr Major Saad bin Zubair attained the great status of martyrdom, and the nation is proud of his eternal sacrifice. Mohsin Naqvi said a brave son like Major Saad is an unforgettable asset of the nation. Our resolve has been further strengthened by seeing the high morale of Shaheed Major Saad's parents, Mohsin Naqvi said. He said the spirit of the parents of martyr Major Saad is commendable and a source of pride. We believe that martyrs always live, and martyr Major Saad will always live in our hearts, Mohsin Naqvi said. Major Saad bin Zubair was martyred a few days ago in Sambaza area of Zhob.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1281903/mohsin-naqvi-visits-shaheed-major-saads-family-in-ajk/>

Water Woes in Gilgit: How Governance Failures are parching a City

Friday Times, 4 April 2025

Gilgit is the capital of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region in northern Pakistan known for its breathtaking landscapes, towering mountains, and vast glaciers—earning it the title of the 'Land of Glaciers' – with more than 7,000 of them. Despite its natural abundance, the city is grappling with a severe water crisis due to outdated infrastructure, illegal water connections and weak regulatory oversight, leading to weak governance. Urban expansion and industrial pollution have further exacerbated the issue, forcing residents to rely on contaminated water sources. Without immediate action, this crisis threatens public health and the region's long-term sustainability.

As the commercial and business hub of Gilgit-Baltistan's ten districts, Gilgit City attracts people from surrounding areas seeking better livelihood opportunities. This growing population has placed immense pressure on the city's limited resources, particularly its water supply. Both locals and migrants in Gilgit rely on various natural water sources to meet their daily needs. The primary water supply for neighbourhoods such as Amphary, Majini Mohalla, Nagral and Kashrote comes from Kargah Nala, while Jutial and Khomer depend on Jutial Nala. Similarly, Sakwar relies on Sakwar Nala, Baseen and Napura draw their water from Baseen Napura Nala,

and Danyore sources its water from Danyore Nala. With much of the city dependent on these natural sources, ensuring sustainable water management has become a pressing challenge.

Despite its proximity to some of the world's largest glaciers, Gilgit is struggling with a severe water crisis, and clean drinking water is becoming increasingly scarce. The water supply system in Gilgit City was originally designed in 2007, based on population estimates at the time. Since then, the city's population has grown significantly, yet no substantial upgrades have been made to enhance water production and capacity. Most of the water supply is sourced from Kargah Nala, which was once a reliable source but has now become heavily contaminated due to the establishment of factories near the water source. These industrial units discharge waste that introduces harmful minerals and heavy metals into the water, making it unsafe for consumption. Reports indicate that nearly 70% of the drinking water in Gilgit City is contaminated and unfit for consumption (PCRWR, 2023).

The deteriorating supply network further exacerbates the crisis. Water is supplied through an aging pipeline system that is prone to leaks and breakages, allowing contamination to enter the supply. The water from Kargah Nala is stored in large tanks in the Barmas area before being distributed across the city. However, reports indicate that due to poor

maintenance, these storage tanks often accumulate debris, dead rodents, and other contaminants. The pipelines supplying water across the city have multiple leakages, allowing environmental pollutants to mix with the drinking water. Additionally, manholes and drainage systems frequently become clogged due to inadequate cleaning, further worsening water quality.

As a result, poor water management has led to concern over rising waterborne diseases in Gilgit. Hospitals are reporting an increasing number of cases of liver infections, kidney diseases, and even cancer, attributed to prolonged exposure to contaminated water. The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has declared that the drinking water quality in Gilgit-Baltistan is unsafe. Despite this alarming situation, authorities have made little effort to implement large-scale filtration and purification projects.

Gilgit civil society must take a more active role in ensuring water security. Raising awareness about conservation, establishing community water management boards, promoting household solutions such as rainwater harvesting, advocating for policy reforms, and preserving traditional water distribution practices are crucial steps toward sustainable water management. Additionally, addressing governance failures is essential. There is no proper complaints office at the mohalla (neighbourhood) level where

citizens can report water-related issues. Moreover, some WASA's departmental staff, in collusion with contractors, are involved in distributing illegal connections for self-interest. These unauthorised connections contribute to supply shortages and unfair distribution. Water supply in Gilgit is also influenced by sectarian and political interests rather than being allocated based on actual need. The residents of Amphary, Kashrote, Majini Mohalla, and Sonikot have historical rights over Karga Nala's water, yet unauthorised diversion to other areas exacerbates shortages, further straining an already limited resource.

Gilgit's water infrastructure has not been upgraded since 2007. The Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) commissioned National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) to conduct a feasibility study for a project aimed at ensuring safe drinking water and upgrading the city's infrastructure. However, the study itself cost PKR 9.5 billion, and due to political and bureaucratic indifference, the project was never included in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Similarly, the Gilgit Development Authority (GDA) proposed a PKR 500 million project for a 12-inch pipeline from Kargah to the Barmas Complex to increase capacity, but it remains stuck in the planning department due to a lack of political will.

Gilgit's daily water demand stands at 1.2 million gallons, while its storage capacity is limited to just 500,000 gallons. This stark imbalance

highlights the urgent need for infrastructure expansion and sustainable water management solutions. Lessons from other high-altitude cities offer potential solutions. The implementation of artificial glaciers to store excess water during the winter months could help manage seasonal shortages, while urban planning must ensure construction avoids natural water channels. Additionally, rainwater harvesting should be scaled up, even in cold regions, to maximise water conservation. Community engagement in water monitoring and conservation efforts is equally crucial to ensuring long-term water security.

Other high-altitude cities have successfully addressed similar challenges. For example, Ladakh, India, uses an artificial glacier system to store excess winter water in ice reservoirs for use during dry months. Similarly, La Paz, Bolivia, has implemented rainwater harvesting and enforced strict urban zoning laws to protect its water sources. These models provide valuable insights that Gilgit can adopt to enhance its future water management and long-term sustainability.

The government and stakeholders must develop a comprehensive Water Security Plan (2025-2040) with clear milestones for infrastructure upgrades, contamination control, and sustainable water management to ensure long-term sustainability. Key measures should include the implementation of smart water meters to monitor and reduce

wastage, scaling up community-led models, introduction of pricing mechanisms and incentives to promote conservation. Similarly, securing donor funding for initiatives such as rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, and glacier-based storage solutions is essential for building a resilient and sustainable water supply.

The water crisis in Gilgit is not merely a resource issue but a failure of governance and planning. Without urgent action, the situation will worsen, triggering severe social, economic, and environmental consequences. A collaborative effort among government bodies, development partners, and an empowered civil society is crucial. By adopting global best practices, Gilgit can build a resilient and water-secure future.

<https://thefridaytimes.com/04-Apr-2025/water-woes-gilgit-how-governance-failures-are-parching-a-city>

Lawyers in Gilgit-Baltistan go on strike till 16th

Dawn, 6 April 2025

Legal fraternity in Gilgit-Baltistan has announced a boycott of all court proceedings and will hold protest demonstrations across the region until April 16, citing the non-fulfillment of their demands.

For the past five months, lawyers in Gilgit-Baltistan have been protesting and boycotting court proceedings, except for emergency cases, due to the unmet demands. However, this time,

lawyers have decided to not appear in courts even for emergency cases till April 16.

A meeting of GB High Court Bar Association (GBHCBA) under the chairmanship of Advocate Tanveer Akhtar passed a resolution and reviewed progress on the joint demands of GB Bar Council, GB Supreme Appellate Court Bar Association, GBHCBA and district bar associations.

According to a statement issued by the association on Saturday, the meeting expressed reservations over government's failure to implement lawyers' demands despite repeated strikes and protests. The lawyers termed not fulfillment of the demands "a conspiracy against GB people" for not giving access to justice.

The meeting asked lawyers to not appear in all court proceedings across GB, even in emergency cases, till April 16, to make the protest more effective. The meeting asked the GB judges to not decide cases in absence of counsel, as lawyers would hold protest demonstrations in all districts of the region.

It GBHCBA decided that licences of the lawyers, who would not boycott proceedings till April 16, would be cancelled by GB Bar Council and in case of appearances lawyers in district courts, chief court, Supreme Appellate Court and revenue and service tribunals, a fine ranging from Rs100,000 to Rs300,000 would be imposed on them.

The meeting also decided to consider locking courts and other actions in case their demands, including the long-delayed appointment of judges in the GB Supreme Appellate Court, remained unmet. Later, a GB Bar Council meeting endorsed the resolution and demanded that authorities resolve the issues of the legal fraternity.

The representatives of the lawyers' community said the GB chief minister had accepted their demands and issued directives to address the issues, yet relevant authorities failed to take any action.

One of the key demands is appointment on the vacant positions in the GB Supreme Appellate Court, the region's highest judicial forum, as around 8,000 cases were pending before the court due to the delay in the appointment.

Another major demand is the extension of the Lawyers Protection Act to GB by the federal government, a move they argued is essential for ensuring their safety and professional rights.

The proposed land reforms draft has also come under criticism from the legal community, who described it as ambiguous and flawed. They demanded that their recommendations be incorporated before it is passed in the GB Assembly, warning that failure to do so would be a violation of local people's rights. They urged the GB chief judge to take steps to appoint

judges to the vacant positions in labour, consumer, family and ATCs, and assistant registrar's office.

The lawyers called for the advertisement of vacant civil judge positions and demanded that judicial magistrate posts be separated from civil judge posts, as practised in other parts of the country, with appointments made from the legal fraternity on merit.

According to GBHCBA president Tanveer Khan, the GB Supreme Appellate Court has been operating with only one judge for past seven years. According to rules, a single judge cannot hear all cases, causing thousands of important cases to remain pending.

Commenting on the GB reforms draft, he criticised that lawyers' objections were ignored, and mineral and mining leases were being awarded to outsiders. He warned the GB government of severe consequences if their demands were not fulfilled.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1902430/lawyers-in-gilgit-baltistan-go-on-strike-till-16th>

Remembering the Brave: JKLF honors Hazratbal martyrs

Daily Times, 31 March 2025

JKLF remembers and pays tribute to Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Dr. Abdul Ahad Gooru, Jalil Andrabi Adv, Shabbir Siddiqui, Basharat Raza and the martyrs of Hazratbal on the occasion of their anniversaries.

Conspiracies against freedom movement from both sides of the ceasefire line are doomed to fail. 'Indian state terrorism' has strengthened the resolve of Kashmiris.

JKLF pays tributes to incarcerated party chairman and other prisoners. It terms the expulsion of Seed Asad from govt. services as condemnable. Acting Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Raja Haq Nawaz Khan, while remembering the party stalwarts and the pioneers of the current freedom movement on their anniversaries namely; Pride-of-Kashmir Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Shaheed-e-Hikmat Dr. Abdul Ahad Gooru, Shaheed-e-Insaf Jalil Ahmad Andrabi Advocate, Shaheed-e-Sadaqat Syed Shabir Ahmad Siddiqui, Commander Basharat Raza and the martyrs of Hazratbal termed the martyrs of Jammu Kashmir as national asset and the shining crown. He expressed his resolve to continue the struggle for independence of the state of Jammu Kashmir until it is achieved.

According to the statement issued from the party's Central Information Office, Raja Haq Nawaz Khan paid great tributes to the martyrs and said that Ashfaq Majeed Wani Shaheed was a brave, dynamic, visionary and talented young man who led the movement while following the footsteps of Shaheed Muhammad Maqbool Butt and late Amanullah Khan and performed his duties to the best of his abilities. On Friday March 30, the third day of the month of Ramadan in 1990,

Ashfaq Majeed Wani achieved the great rank of martyrdom in accordance with his long-standing wish and supplication, the statement read.

According to the statement, the intellectual face of the freedom movement, the famous and internationally renowned cardiologist and social activist Shaheed-e-Hikmat Dr. Abdul Ahad Gooru, in a well hatched Indian conspiracy, fell to the bullets of black sheeps on April 1, 1993 in Srinagar. Following the footsteps of Shaheed Dr. Gooru, the famous human rights activist Advocate Jalil Ahmed Andrabi was also arrested on March 8, 1996 by Indian military officer Major Avtar Singh. He was extra-judicially killed in custody and later on 27 March his body was found in the river Jhelum in Srinagar, he added. Shaheed Jalil Andrabi highlighted human rights violations perpetuated by Indian forces in Jammu Kashmir at local and international fora's, the statement read.

India brutally martyred these two legends for raising their voices against human rights abuses in Jammu Kashmir but the fact of the matter is that she could not stop their thoughts and ideology from reaching to the new heights. Raja Haq Nawaz Khan described the role played by martyr Dr. Gooru and martyr Andrabi in the freedom movement as exemplary and unforgettable.

According to the statement, Shaheed-e-Sadaqat Syed Shabbir Ahmad Siddiqui, a prominent Islamic scholar of the State and a fiery speaker of his time, fell

victim to Indian forces' bullets and mortar shells during the siege of Hazratbal Shrine on 30 March 1996. The Liberation Front office located near the Shrine was demolished in which about two dozen members of the party including Shabbir Siddiqui were martyred. A few days before this siege, on March 25, some important members of the Liberation Front, including Commander Basharat Raza, were also martyred on the spot.

According to the statement, acting JKLF Chairman Raja Haq Nawaz Khan cautioned the nation against the conspiracies being hatched from both sides of the ceasefire line against the national identity of Jammu Kashmir and the freedom movement. He expressed his resolve to continue the struggle until the goal of complete independence is achieved. He said that freedom has become the destiny of Kashmiris, which no big power in the world can stop now. Raja Haq Nawaz Khan, while condemning Indian state terrorism in 'Indian Occupied Jammu Kashmir' said that as a result of cruelty, oppression and brutality, the fear of death has disappeared from the hearts of Kashmiris and that Kashmiris will keep the candle of freedom struggle alive with their steadfastness and the sacrifices needed.

Raja Haq Nawaz Khan in his statement expressed his displeasure over the forcible retirement from government services of Mirpur based writer Saeed Asad and termed it as condemnable and injustice. He also condemned the

arrest of a local nationalist pro-freedom activist Sadaqat Mughul. Raja Haqnawaz Khan demanded reinstallation of Saeed Asad and release of Sadaqat.

While extending his heartiest congratulations to people, Raja Haqnawaz Khan appealed the Muslim Ummah to remember the oppressed and the martyrs on the Eve of Eid-ul-Fitr.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1281912/remembering-the-brave-jklf-honors-hazratbal-martyrs/>

Kashmiri leaders in jail vow to continue freedom struggle

Pakistan Today, 2 April 2025

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has praised the resilience, patience, stand, and determination of the Kashmiri people of 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' and asserted that their sacrifices for just freedom would not go in vain.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the jailed APHC Chairman Masarat Alam Butt and senior Hurriyat leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah, in their Eid messages from New Delhi's Tihar jail, reaffirmed the commitment of the Kashmiri people as well as the Hurriyat leadership to continue to pursue the legitimate aspirations for freedom and self-determination despite the challenges.

The leaders, while expressing concern over the ongoing state terrorism in Palestine and Kashmir, have extended their greetings to Muslims worldwide,

particularly those affected by alien ‘occupation’ and ‘oppression’. The messages, while condemning the ongoing deceitful tactics employed by the Indian BJP regime and its forces in ‘occupied Kashmir’, have cautioned that the Indian regime could stage a drama to defame the freedom movement and project false narratives on Kashmir resolution by showing so-called normalcy in the territory.

They prayed to Allah Almighty to alleviate their suffering and grant them freedom and peace. They hailed the people’s stance who have given sacrifices for the Kashmir cause. They also commended the efforts of Hurriyat leaders and activists, both in and out of jails, in advancing the right to self-determination demand.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/04/02/kashmiri-leaders-in-jail-vow-to-continue-freedom-struggle/>

Soldier martyred in accidental explosion in ‘AJK’

Dawn, 3 April 2025

A Pakistan army soldier was martyred, and two others were injured on Sunday when an “old explosive device” accidentally detonated along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Tetrinote Madarpur sector of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK), the military’s media affairs wing said.

According to a brief statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the incident occurred when the army personnel were patrolling the LoC as part of their routine duties. The

injured soldiers were taken to a hospital for medical treatment, it added.

The ISPR also noted that similar incidents had occurred in the past. Social media reports identified the soldier as Lance Naek Muhammad Naseer. Visuals shared on social media showed his funeral prayers were offered and he was laid to rest with full military honours in his village on Wednesday.

Tuesday’s casualties coincided with an exchange of fire between Pakistani and Indian troops in the same area, marking the first ceasefire violation of 2025. Assistant Commissioner Hajira Waleed Anwar told Dawn that Indian troops resorted to unprovoked firing from across the LoC at around 2pm with small arms, catching residents on the Pakistani side off-guard.

“People were celebrating the second day of Eid, with some picnicking along the banks of River Poonch, when suddenly, firing started from across the divide,” he said. He said that Pakistani troops responded and the exchange of fire ended by 3pm. Military sources confirmed that the Pakistan army swiftly responded to India’s small arms fire following the accidental explosion.

While the ISPR statement did not mention the exchange of fire, it reaffirmed the army’s capability to counter any threat and respond to aggression with full preparedness.

“Pakistan Army possesses the full capability to effectively fulfill its

professional responsibilities in any emergency situation and remains fully prepared to deliver a resolute response to any aggression,” the ISPR said.

In February 2021, the armies of both countries had issued a rare joint statement reaffirming their commitment to upholding the ceasefire along the disputed border in Kashmir, an agreement they had originally signed in November 2003.

Barring some sporadic ceasefire violations by Indian troops, the truce has largely held after the renewed commitment.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1901721/soldier-martyred-in-accidental-explosion-in-ajk>

Phander residents marooned for over a week

Dawn, 4 April 2025

For the past eight days, thousands of people residing in Phander Valley (near Shandur Top) in Ghizer district have been cut off from the rest of Gilgit-Baltistan after a snow avalanche severed the road connecting the remote valley to other parts of the region.

According to officials, a snow avalanche occurred near Khalti village, which blocked the link road, leaving almost 20 thousand people stranded. The inability of the administration to clear the road also prompted a protest outside the Gilgit Press Club organised by the Ghizer Students Organisation. A large number of people from Phander residing in Gilgit town participated in the protest. They said that residents

could not travel even in emergency cases due to the avalanche and that the area lacked medical facilities.

Besides, the local population was also facing disruptions in the power supply and communications. They were also holding banners and placards with slogans, such as ‘light and road are our rights’ and ‘justice for the stranded people’. According to protesters, a large number of people could not travel for Eid because the road was blocked.

The protesters urged the Gilgit-Baltistan government to take immediate action for the restoration of the road. Fida Khan, a former member of the GB assembly from the affected area, said the route was supposed to be opened in one or two days, but due to the negligence of the relevant authorities, it could not be opened even after one week.

According to the local administration, heavy machinery has been deployed in the area to remove the debris, but the avalanche was massive and it would take a few days to clear the area. Officials said six snow avalanches were triggered on the Phander Road, from Ghupis to Phander, and the administration had cleared four of them.

They further said that avalanches also hit several parts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Snow avalanches have damaged properties and land communications in Astore, Shigar, Nagar, Ghizer, Skardu and Ghanche districts, due to which people were facing difficulties.

A press release issued on Thursday said that GB Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan had taken notice of roadblocks due to rain and snowfall and ordered the immediate restoration of inter-district roads affected by recent rains.

The Department of Communications and Works, as well as the district administration, has been directed to ensure the restoration of road links in remote areas, including Phander Road in Ghizer district.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1901941/phander-residents-marooned-for-over-a-week>

Kashmir dispute in the light of international law

Pakistan Observer, 4 April 2025

Indian aggression and 'occupation' of a major part of Jammu and Kashmir on October 27, 1947 was a blatant violation of International Law and Charter of United Nations.

India continued its 'occupation' and violations of human rights in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) as a constant feature.

The basic provision of the international law is that: "individuals should not be arbitrarily deprived of their lives and homicide should be deterred, prevented and punished. "This is further secured and protected by 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948'. Its Article-1 emphasizes on 'innate freedom and equality, whereas Article-2 puts a ban on discrimination. Article-3 of this declaration, however, very clearly

states, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

"Unfortunately, with all these safeguards and guarantees for the human beings, through various agreements, declarations and covenants, the people of 'IIOJK' are being humiliated, discriminated, tortured and killed as if there is no law meant for their protection and safeguard.

Ever since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations Organization (UNO) has regulated and managed many regional and global conflicts. During the Cold War, this international regulating body has been quite effective in ensuring global peace through forestalling many impending wars and conflicts.

Kashmir and Palestine are two such issues, where this international regulating body (UN) could do nothing in practical terms. Indeed, among the contemporary global disputes, Kashmir is the longest unresolved dispute on the agenda of the United Nations.

India brought the dispute to the United Nations on January 1, 1948.

In response to complaints and counter complaints, the UNO asked for the ceasefire and later it passed 23 resolutions, emphasizing for the solution of this dispute. The basic criteria fixed by the UN for the resolution of Kashmir dispute was the right of self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir through

a neutral mechanism of plebiscite under UN Administrator.

Unfortunately, despite accepting the UN resolutions and promises made by Lord Mountbatten, the then Indian Governor General and the first Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India is constantly obstructing the conduct of plebiscite for the last seventy-seven years.

In the light of UN resolutions, people of the state have been demanding their right of self-determination from the successive Indian governments. Since 1990, India has unleashed a reign of terror on the unarmed innocent Kashmiri people.

There have been massive human rights violations by Indian security forces in 'IIOJK'.

In August 2019, India unilaterally and 'illegally annexed IIOJK' into its union as two union territories.

Through discriminatory laws like the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA) and Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) Indian security forces have been constantly killing the Kashmiris with complete impunity. Indeed, through these laws, Indian security forces were given sweeping powers of arrest and detention, even shoot to kill with virtual immunity.

As per Amnesty International, "The AFSPA violates India's international legal obligations and several fundamental rights, including the right to life, the right to liberty and security and the right to remedy. This law has

alienated people and is an impediment to achieving peace and an obstacle to justice." Today Kashmiris of 'IIOJK' are spending their life in a state of total fright and insecurity from the Indian security forces.

This fear is felt alike among the larger Kashmiri community as well as any single individual. Human security is the most significant aspect of international law and is an extension of the logic of the social contract of liberal school of thought and specifically covers the security of individuals and generally security of communities and societies.

The right to live is explicitly sanctioned in international law, to every individual, regardless of caste, creed, faith or geographic identity. The provision of human rights and security are categorically stated both in international law and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

But the human security situation in 'India-occupied Jammu & Kashmir' is ironically an ignored issue by the international community. The ICCPR clearly spells that: no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

There are constant incidents of killing, torture and rape in 'IIOJK' by Indian Army. This all has been happening despite having a global prohibition on torture even during the times of national emergencies. India is a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)-1948. According to Article-5 of UDHR-1948,

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

“The factual position however is that, torture, hostage-taking and rape has been a regular feature in ‘IIOJK’ for the last more than three decades, after Kashmiris started mass struggle against ‘Indian occupation’ of their state in 1990.

For the last seven decades, Kashmiri masses have been exploited to an extent that they became slaves in their own homeland. The forced demographic changes being made after August 2019 is aimed to change the political and demographic landscape of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Indeed, as per provisions of international conventions on human security and human rights, India is violating the international law and relevant covenants while being a signatory of all these pacts and treaties. UNO and other international forums should pressure India for adherence to international law and restoration of the special status of ‘IIOJK’ to create an environment for ultimate solution of the state as desired by its masses through a UN sponsored plebiscite.

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmir-dispute-in-the-light-of-international-law/>

Tributes paid to Chinese engineers who died during KKH construction

Dawn, 5 April 2025

Tributes were paid to Chinese engineers and workers who sacrificed

their lives during the construction of Karakoram Highway (KKH) which connects Pakistan and China through Khunjerab Pass at a ceremony held at Chinese memorial graveyard in Danyor of Gilgit on Friday.

Every year on April 4, a ceremony is organised at Chinese memorial graveyard in the Danyor area of Gilgit in memory of Chinese engineers and workers.

The ceremony was organised by Overseas Chinese Association, Gilgit-Baltistan police in collaboration with Chinese embassy. A delegation of Chinese citizens, relatives of the Chinese martyrs, officials of Chinese embassy, overseas Chinese association, police officials and local people participated in the ceremony.

According to the Chinese tradition, relatives of the Chinese victims visited the graveyard to perform rituals at their graveyard. The participants paid homage to Chinese engineers and labourers who died during the KKH's construction from 1966 to 1978. They laid floral wreaths, placed candles, Chinese gifts and food at the graves and observed silence.

On the occasion, a contingent of police presented salute to the Chinese martyrs, national anthems of both the countries played. A total of 200 Chinese engineers and workers lost their lives during the construction of KKH from 1966 to 1989, of which 88 were buried in the Danyor graveyard.

The bodies of other deceased workers were missing. KKH is now part of

1,300-km China-Pakistan Friendship Highway, which passes through GB and areas of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, stretches from Hasanabdal in Punjab to Xinjiang of China.

Speaking on the occasion DIG Gilgit Headquarters Khawaja Naveed Ahmed, said every year this day is commemorated to pay tributes to Chinese martyrs for their bravery and dedication.

“KKH is great testament to Pakistan and China friendship. We can’t forget the sacrifices of Chinese engineers and workers, this highway facilitated trade, tourism, people to people contact between both the countries, he said.

He said after the construction of the KKH, the relations between the two countries cemented. He said the construction of this important highway has ushered in a new era of development and progress in the country, including Gilgit-Baltistan. He also acknowledged the sacrifices of 900 Pakistani workers during construction of KKH.

A Chinese citizen said April 4 is ritual day in China. He said every year Chinese relatives of KKH martyrs visit GB to commemorate the day. He said according to Chinese traditions, on April 4, relatives of victims lay flowers and other items on their loved ones’ graves and pay their respects.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1902137/tributes-paid-to-chinese-engineers-who-died-during-kkh-construction>

Customs clerk in GB booked for phone smuggling

Dawn, 6 April 2025

The Pakistan Customs, Gilgit-Baltistan region has concluded its investigation into the smuggling of banned goods, including mobile phones and identified one of its officials and his brother as culprits.

Subsequently, an FIR was registered against Upper Division Clerk Mohammad Abu Bakr and his brother, while the Customs authorities issued a show-cause notice to him before dismissal with a seven-day deadline as per rules. The investigation was launched after Upper Division Clerk Abu Bakr along with his brother Abdul Rehman and Appraising Officer Hafiz Muhammad Nazim Butt met with an accident near Bisham city on their way to Islamabad on March 30 and police found 210 mobile phones and other banned items from their rented vehicle. A formal seizure report was also prepared and placed on official record.

Both Abu Bakr and Hafiz Nazim were serving at Sost Dry port, according to a press release issued on Friday by Pakistan Customs. In the accident, Abu Bakr remained unhurt while Hafiz Nazim sustained serious injuries and was shifted to Islamabad’s Pims hospital where he is still under treatment.

Investigators found that Abu Bakr was actively facilitating the transportation of smuggled goods of his brother who was allegedly involved in smuggling

and was present with him at the time of the accident.

As Abu Bakr's involvement was confirmed, no further inquiry was required into his role, but the appraising officer's role remains unclear as he is currently in ICU at Pims and unable to record a statement.

The authorities claimed that appropriate action would be taken against the appraising officer if he was found guilty, as his role would be determined during criminal proceedings.

Initially, when GB traders and civil society members had alleged that "thousands of mobile phones seized at Sost Dry port were found from possession of the Custom officials", Pakistan Customs denied the allegations and asserted that the mobile phones and other items had been purchased from the black market.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1902424/customs-clerk-in-gb-booked-for-phone-smuggling>

Economic Developments

The sit-in by victims of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam has reached its 49th day, with the government still unwilling to meet their demands, prompting protesters to plan a robust response

Urdu Point, 3 April 2025

The sit-in by victims of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam has now lasted 49 days, with the government still refusing to meet their demands. The protesters have resolved to mount a forceful response in the coming days. Maulana

Hazratullah, leader of the 'Huqoq Do Dam Banao Tehreek', addressed the media after a meeting with religious leaders and youths, stating that they had set a deadline for the provincial and federal governments to act by the end of the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, a deadline that has now passed. He added, the day the leaders decide whether we should head toward the dam, block the roads, or take to the mountains, we are fully prepared. He also noted that an important meeting is scheduled tomorrow in Tagir Valley, which the leaders will attend. Maulana Hazratullah warned that the authorities have a brief window left to accept their Charter of Demands and sign a new agreement in 2025. Otherwise, he cautioned, the district administration, provincial government, and federal government will bear responsibility for any damage or unrest following the victims' strong reaction. He urged the people of Diamer district to await further instructions.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-4381116.html>

Artificial glaciers boost water supply in northern Pakistan

Business Recorder, April 6 2025

At the foot of Pakistan's impossibly high mountains whitened by frost all year round, farmers grappling with a lack of water have created their own ice towers. Warmer winters as a result of climate change has reduced the snow fall and subsequent seasonal snowmelt that feeds the valleys of Gilgit-

Baltistan, a remote region home to K2, the world's second-highest peak.

Farmers in the Skardu valley, at an altitude of up to 2,600 metres (8,200 feet) in the shadow of the Karakoram mountain range, searched online for help in how to irrigate their apple and apricot orchards. "We discovered artificial glaciers on YouTube," Ghulam Haider Hashmi told.

They watched the videos of Sonam Wangchuk, an environmental activist and engineer in the Indian region of Ladakh, less than 200 kilometres away across a heavily patrolled border, who developed the technique about 10 years ago.

Water is piped from streams into the village, and sprayed into the air during the freezing winter temperatures. "The water must be propelled so that it freezes in the air when temperatures drop below zero, creating ice towers," said Zakir Hussain Zakir, a professor at the University of Baltistan. The ice forms in the shape of cones that resemble Buddhist stupas, and act as a storage system – steadily melting throughout spring when temperatures rise.

'Ice stupas'

Gilgit-Baltistan has 13,000 glaciers – more than any other country on Earth outside the polar regions. Their beauty has made the region one of the country's top tourist destinations – towering peaks loom over the Old Silk Road, still visible from a highway

transporting tourists between cherry orchards, glaciers and ice-blue lakes.

Sher Muhammad, a specialist in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountain range that stretches from Afghanistan to Myanmar, however said most of the region's water supply comes from snow melt in spring, with a fraction from annual glacial melt in summers.

"From late October until early April, we were receiving heavy snowfall. But in the past few years, it's quite dry," Muhammad, a researcher at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), told.

The first "ice stupas" in Gilgit-Baltistan were created in 2018. Now, more than 20 villages make them every winter, and "more than 16,000 residents have access to water without having to build reservoirs or tanks", said Rashid-ud-Din, provincial head of GLOF-2, a UN-Pakistan plan to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Farmer Muhammad Raza told that eight stupas were built in his village of Hussainabad this winter, trapping approximately 20 million litres of water in the ice.

"We no longer have water shortages during planting," he said, since the open-air reservoirs appeared on the slopes of the valley.

"Before, we had to wait for the glaciers to melt in June to get water, but the stupas saved our fields," said Ali Kazim, also a farmer in the valley.

Harvest seasons multiply

Before the stupas, “we planted our crops in May”, said 26-year-old Bashir Ahmed who grows potatoes, wheat and barley in nearby Pari village which has also adopted the method.

And “we only had one growing season, whereas now we can plant two or three times” a year.

Temperatures in Pakistan rose twice as fast between 1981 and 2005 compared to the global average, putting the country on the front line of climate change impacts, including water scarcity.

Its 240 million inhabitants live in a territory that is 80 percent arid or semi-arid and depends on rivers and streams originating in neighbouring countries for more than three-quarters of its water.

Glaciers are melting rapidly in Pakistan and across the world, with a few exceptions including the Karakoram mountain range, increasing the risk of flooding and reducing water supply over the long term.

“Faced with climate change, there are neither rich nor poor, neither urban nor rural; the whole world has become vulnerable,” said 24-year-old Yasir Parvi.

“In our village, with the ice stupas, we decided to take a chance.”

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40356195>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

An FIR has been filed against a civilian in Muzaffarabad for posting hateful content targeting the Pakistan Army on Facebook

Urdu point, 3 April 2025

An FIR has been lodged against a civilian for disseminating hateful content against the Pakistan Army on Facebook, though no arrest has been made due to political support. Public and social circles are increasingly calling for action against anti-national elements. The FIR was filed at the City Police Station in Aathmaqam against Usman Tariq Chughtai, son of Tariq Chughtai, a resident of the Kundal Shahi area in Neelum Valley. He is accused of posting inflammatory content daily on Facebook, targeting the Pakistan Army and the nation, and inciting youth against the military. The FIR, registered on March 4 under sections 31/TA-APC-489Y/489P-504/505-500/501, has not led to any action due to political interference.

Political and social groups have intensified their efforts to curb anti-national activities and are demanding that such individuals be brought to justice. Sources indicate that, under the pretext of political journalism, anti-army and anti-national elements in ‘Azad Kashmir’ are actively fostering hatred among the youth. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PICA) Ordinance remains ineffective in ‘Azad Kashmir’, limiting

enforcement to cybercrime laws. However, political backing continues to shield those spreading anti-Pakistan and anti-military sentiments.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-4381058.html>

From Social Media

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

5 April 2025

s many abuses as there have been, so much hatred has not yet been created.
Iman Shah, Information Advisor

#Advisor #information #GilgitBaltistan
#Hunza #shimshalvalley

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1908268258865594767>

JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri

6 April 2025

The Pakistan Customs, Gilgit-Baltistan region has concluded its investigation into the smuggling of banned goods, including mobile phones and identified one of its officials and his brother as culprits.

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1908795091612823624>

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Disclaimer

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