

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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14 April - 20 April 2025

POK
tourism
water security
climate change
Gilgit-Baltistan
Dasu Hydropower Project
Diamer-Bhasha Dam
Honour Killing
Bofao festival
protest
CPEC



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Political Developments

GB lawyers vow to continue protest till acceptance of demands

Dawn, 15 April 2025

A protest rally organised by the High Court Bar Association was taken out from Kondas to the Chief Minister House on Monday. A large number of lawyers participated in the rally. The protesters were chanting slogans against the government and in support of their demands and holding banners inscribed with slogans such as “Ensure fulfilment of lawyers’ demands.”

Boycott court proceedings, rallies held in Gilgit, Astore, Skardu and Ghanche

The protesting lawyers said their demands couldn’t be fulfilled despite their five months of protests due to the negligence and incompetence of the GB government.

A five-member larger bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, on Wednesday heard a case pertaining to the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The GB government had challenged appointments of GB higher judiciary judges in the Supreme Court. Ultimately, the Supreme Court issued a stay order. However, on Thursday the Supreme Court lifted the stay order on appointments of GB judges in higher judiciary after the attorney general for Pakistan and the advocate general of Gilgit-Baltistan reached an

understanding on the procedure for appointments.

The Supreme Court was assured that two judges would be appointed on the vacant positions in GB Supreme Appellate Court and one judge in the GB Chief Court within one month. The lawyers’ leaders announced on Monday that the protest will be called off after fulfilment of all their demands.

Sultan Karim, a lawyer, told Dawn that the judicial system in GB was different from other provinces of Pakistan. He said the mechanism of appointments of judges in GB Supreme Appellate Court and the Chief Court through the administration was a big flaw in the judicial system. He said judges in the higher judiciary of GB should be appointed through the judicial commission.

Adnan Hussain Advocate said special courts, including, Labour Court, Consumer Court and Family Court had not been established in GB.

The cases related to these courts were referred to civil or sessions court. He said lawyers had also been demanding advertisements for vacant civil judge positions, adding judicial magistrate posts should be separated from civil judge posts as practiced in other parts of the country with their appointments made from the legal fraternity on merit.

Lawyers also demanded 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.

Islam Advocate said the GB government had not incorporated their recommendations for the proposed land reforms. The lawyers' objections were also ignored in the GB reforms draft while mineral and mining leases were awarded to outsiders.

They demanded the government to ensure plots for the lawyers.

They warned that if their demands were not fulfilled, the lawyers would decide to lock courts and spread the protest movement to other cities.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1904255>

The Army Chief's Narrative vs. the Ground Reality of 'AJK's' Leadership

Daily Parliament Times, 20 April 2025

In 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', it's been a tradition that every constitutional or administrative head who takes charge never misses a chance to praise Pakistan and the Pakistan Army. Every speech echoes with the slogan "Kashmir will become Pakistan" and every official statement reiterates the ideological bond with the state of Pakistan. But the real question remains: Beyond the rhetoric, what concrete actions have been taken? Have these slogans ever translated into real steps that strengthen the ideological, emotional, and practical connection of Kashmiris with Pakistan? Sadly, when we dig deeper into the reality behind these declarations, we find little more

than disappointment. Today, when the Chief of Army Staff delivers a clear and supportive message for Kashmiris in front of overseas Pakistanis, the political leadership of 'Azad Kashmir' responds once again with a flood of statements. Every minister and spokesperson competes to issue the most flattering press release, as if applause alone defines patriotism. But let's shift focus from words to deeds. If the President of 'Azad Kashmir', Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, were to merely survey his own constituency, he would find the graves of countless martyrs who laid down their lives defending Pakistan and the freedom of 'Azad Kashmir'. Among them is Lieutenant Colonel Imran Arshad Jarral Shaheed — a son of the soil. Have the families of these heroes been cared for? Are their sacrifices being honoured meaningfully? If the Prime Minister of 'AJK' turns his eyes toward his own district, he will find dozens of martyrs' graves. But what is the condition of their families today? Have they been provided with dignified education, employment, or recognition? The Ministers of School and Higher Education must also visit their respective districts and review the schools named after martyrs. Was the primary school they announced to dedicate to a martyr of the Jaffer Express tragedy ever officially renamed? What is the current state of the Government Secondary School Chikothi, named after Pakistan's first Nishan-e-Haider, Captain Sarwar Shaheed? What about the Boys High

School Bandi Syedan, associated with Naib Syed Muhammad Hussain Shaheed of the 1971 war? Are these institutions upholding the legacy of the names they carry? The bitter truth is: If today's leadership truly acknowledges the sacrifices of these martyrs, stands with their families, and links their names to educational institutions, development projects, and public memory, it would not only reinforce the ideological bond between 'AJK' and Pakistan but would also send a strong message to the world — that this is a nation that never forgets its heroes. However, if we continue down the same path of token statements, photo ops, and ceremonial tributes, we must remember — history will not forgive. And more importantly, the people of Kashmir, whose blood, belief, and struggle are intertwined with Pakistan, will no longer be satisfied with mere words. Nations are not built on slogans — they are built on action. The Pakistan Army has always maintained a firm and clear narrative. Kashmiris trust that. The question is: how will the leadership of 'Azad Kashmir' translate this trust into action on the ground?

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2025/04/20/the-army-chiefs-narrative-vs-the-ground-reality-of-ajks-leadership/>

Govt to build airport in 'AJK'; first Overseas Pakistanis Convention begins

The Nation, 13 April 2025

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz-led federal government has decided to

construct an airport in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) in response to a long-standing demand from overseas Pakistanis.

The decision follows growing calls from the Pakistani diaspora, including a letter from British Members of Parliament of Kashmiri origin, urging Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to initiate the project.

Taking the first step, the Airports Authority has published an advertisement seeking to hire a consultancy firm for the project. According to the Authority, all eligible consultants may participate in the tender process as per the laid-down procedures.

Meanwhile, the first annual Overseas Pakistanis Convention begins in Islamabad today. The landmark event aims to recognize the vital contributions of overseas Pakistanis to the country's economy and provide them a platform for engagement with government representatives and institutions.

Overseas attendees have been granted the status of state guests for the convention. Special help desks from various government departments have also been set up to assist participants with information, guidance, and services under one roof.

In a video message, Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain reiterated the government's commitment to the welfare of overseas

Pakistanis, promising concrete steps to address their concerns.

Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Awn Chaudhry also lauded the patriotism and economic contributions of the Pakistani diaspora, saying, “The hearts of overseas Pakistanis beat for Pakistan.”

<https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Apr-2025/govt-to-build-airport-in-ajk-first-overseas-pakistanis-convention-begins>

Gulmit blossom festival celebrates spring

Dawn, 14 April 2025

A festival was held in Gulmit, Hunza, to celebrate spring and promote tourism in the region, featuring dance performances by elders in local attire, which attracted hundreds of tourists, including foreigners.

The event was organised by local village organisations in collaboration with the GB agriculture department. A large number of local people, including students, people affiliated with the tourism industry, and national and international tourists, besides officials, participated in the event. Locals wearing traditional attire danced to regional music, and artists performed and presented their poetry. School-going children also presented performances.

According to the organisers, the event was dedicated to above-70 elders, and they were invited to celebrate the day. They said the apricot, cherry and

almond blossom season was currently at its peak in the area, which made the celebrations more attractive. They said the event would highlight the tourism potential of the area for all seasons.

A woman entrepreneur said such events benefitted the local economy by promoting their products. A Japanese woman tourist said a group of 35 Japanese tourists were participating in the event. She said it was an interesting event to participate in, especially during the apricot and cherry blossom season.

Ijlal Hussain, an officer of the GB agriculture department, said the event had been a regular feature of Gulmit village in upper Hunza for the past many years to celebrate the arrival of the spring season. He said in old times people celebrated the ‘Bofao festival’ to welcome the spring season and start their agricultural activities.

“We had visited Japan some years ago and participated in their spring festival...it was an interesting experience, so we tried to copy the initiative here, he said.

He said it was a vibrant celebration of the blooming of flowers, especially cherry, apricot and almond blossoms, adding that it was commonly observed in regions with distinct spring seasons, such as Hunza in Pakistan, Japan, and parts of the United States.

The blossom festival in Gulmit, however, remains one of the top celebrations of the season, as more than

300 foreign tourists enjoyed the event besides the Pakistani nationals and locals.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1904046/gulmit-blossom-festival-celebrates-spring>

Hydel projects' crises

Business Recorder, 21 April 2025

The latest session of the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) became an exercise in exposing critical shortcomings and widespread financial mismanagement of major hydropower projects, raising urgent concerns over transparency, accountability and the responsible utilisation of public funds in the energy domain.

Foremost among the projects under scrutiny was the Dasu Hydropower Project, where drastic revisions in project scope, weak oversight mechanisms and significant delays have led to a substantial escalation in costs, prompting serious questions regarding its planning processes and the competence of the executing agencies. As highlighted during the PAC session, more than a decade after the Dasu project's approval, fundamental issues like land acquisition and the resettlement of affected communities remain unresolved.

Although the Water Resources secretary pinned the blame for the land acquisition delays on the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government, the relevant authorities cannot run away

from answering a vital question: why was a project of such immense financial magnitude allowed to proceed when land ownership had not yet been secured, especially given that the Planning Division's guidelines mandate that no water project should commence without first completing land acquisition?

The fallout from this staggering mismanagement is that a project initially set to begin in 2014 and conclude by 2019 at an estimated cost of Rs486 billion only started in 2020, with completion now projected for 2029. Even more alarming is the explosive rise in its cost, which has surged to Rs1.7 trillion, a jaw-dropping 240 percent increase in projected expenditure, making it the most expensive hydropower venture in Pakistan's history.

The PAC also took up the case of the beleaguered Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHPP), which has remained non-operational since May 2024 due to the collapse of its headrace tunnel.

Uncertainty surrounds the project, with no clear indication of whether its persistent structural and technical challenges have been resolved or when it might resume operations. Like other large-scale projects, the NJHPP's story is also one marked by repeated delays in its completion, cost overruns, technical setbacks, design flaws and mismanagement in its construction and upkeep. Despite the prime minister

forming a committee in July to investigate its shutdown and apportion blame for the design and construction shortcomings, there has been little clarity regarding when the committee would be submitting its report.

Moreover, the sheer neglect in managing critical national projects became even more evident during the PAC session when it was revealed that used concrete testing equipment had been procured for the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, and that too from the very contractor tasked with conducting the tests. This highlights troubling lapses in procurement oversight and raises grave concerns about potential conflicts of interest, calling into question the integrity and credibility of the entire quality assurance process.

It is also important here to consider Nepra's 2024 State of Power Industry report, released in December, which apart from emphasising deep-rooted issues in large hydropower ventures also revealed the serious inefficiencies afflicting smaller plants – six of them operating at below 50 percent of their designed capacity. If even smaller projects cannot be efficiently managed, what confidence can we have in the successful operation of colossal undertakings like Diamer-Bhasha and Dasu, especially since the disastrous mismanagement of NJHPP post-completion is there for all to see?

It is clear, then, that the nation's hydropower operations are in need of an urgent overhaul. A systemic

transformation is required in how hydropower projects are planned, commissioned and executed. Transparent and competent planning processes, strict adherence to timelines and budgets, and stronger accountability mechanisms must become the norm. The repeated failures also reflect shortcomings in leadership within the water and power sector. There is, therefore, a critical need to assess whether the vision and capacity required to steer crucial national undertakings are truly in place.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40358624/hydel-projects-crises>

Honour Killing: A Persistent Threat to Women's Rights in Gilgit-Baltistan

Pamir Times, 19 April 2025

Honour killing, a brutal and heinous practice, continues to plague Gilgit-Baltistan, claiming the lives of number of women every year. The recent killing of a 17-year-old girl in Sultan Abad, Gilgit, has once again brought this issue to the forefront, highlighting the need for urgent attention and action from policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and civil society.

Around 500 honour killings are reported in Pakistan each year, according to advocacy groups. According to the Gilgit-Baltistan police, 18 cases of honour killing were reported in 2024, a stark reminder that this practice remains a serious threat to women's lives in the region. However, local experts believe that the actual

number of honour killings may be much higher, as many cases go unreported or are misclassified as suicides.

The issue of honour killing is deeply ingrained in societal attitudes and norms, making it a challenging task to eradicate. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of honour killing in Gilgit-Baltistan, including women's deprivation from education, which limits their awareness of their rights and makes them more vulnerable to violence. The lack of human rights education in schools and communities also perpetuates a culture of silence and acceptance of violence against women. Furthermore, women's lack of awareness about their rights and the legal recourse available to them makes it difficult for them to seek help and protection.

The absence of proactive measures, such as women police stations and adequate response to GBV complaints, also exacerbates the problem. Many women who are victims of violence do not have access to shelters or safe spaces, leaving them without a place to seek refuge. In some cases, the perpetrators are able to manipulate the system by registering the case as a normal murder or suicide, thereby avoiding accountability for their crimes. Furthermore, the fact that the complainant in honour killing cases is often a relative of the victim and the culprit is also a close relative, makes it even more difficult to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Due to the social acceptance of honour killing, in many cases, fake honour killings are arranged to remove an enemy or to settle scores. In some instances, women are killed in the name of honour for demanding their rightful share in property or for exercising their right to freedom of choice. Love marriages or court marriages often result in honour killings, highlighting the need for a broader understanding of this issue.

It is essential to investigate each case of honour killing properly, considering the complex motivations behind these crimes. Registering crimes against honour, including violence in the name of honour, killing in the name of honour, and other forms of victimization, can help to broaden the data and provide a more accurate understanding of the issue.

One of the major obstacles in tackling honour killing is the legal framework that allows the complainant to pardon the offender. This provision can often lead to perpetrators escaping punishment, perpetuating a culture of impunity. To address this issue, many experts and activists have demanded that honour killing be considered a crime against the state, rather than a personal matter, and that the complainant should be the state, not the victim's family.

While there have been debates and discussions on this issue in policy-making forums, including the Senate, no concrete action has been taken to

amend the law. However, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary can play a crucial role in sensitizing complainants and ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Awareness and sensitization are key to discouraging the social acceptance of honour killing. It is essential to educate people about the gravity of this crime and its devastating impact on women's lives and their generations. Honour killing is not just a matter of personal or family honour; it is a form of terrorism that instils fear and terror in the minds of women, restricting their freedom and autonomy.

The state has a critical role to play in preventing honour killings and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes. It is imperative that policymakers and law enforcement agencies take concrete steps to address this issue, including providing support and protection to victims' families and witnesses.

Recommendations

To address the issue of honour killing, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Amend the law: Honour killing should be considered a crime against the state, and the complainant should be the state, not the victim's family.
2. Sensitize law enforcement agencies and judiciary: Law enforcement agencies and the judiciary should be sensitized to the issue of honour killing and its impact on women's lives.
3. Awareness and sensitization: Awareness and sensitization campaigns should be conducted to educate people about the gravity of honour killing and its devastating impact on women's lives.
4. Support and protection: Support and protection should be provided to victims' families and witnesses.
5. Data collection: Accurate data on honour killings and other crimes in the name of honour should be collected and maintained to track the prevalence of this practice and to identify areas where interventions are needed.
6. Proactive women police stations: Establish proactive women police stations that can respond effectively to GBV complaints.
7. Shelters for victims: Establish shelters for victims of violence, providing a safe place for women to seek refuge.
8. Human rights education: Incorporate human rights education in schools and communities to promote awareness and understanding of women's rights.
9. Implement a multi-sectoral response mechanism to GBV: Ensure the implementation of the multi-sectoral coordination mechanism to respond to GBV in GB, developed by women development department GB in collaboration with AKF and AKRSP with the support of UNFPA in 2024.
10. Strengthen laws and policies: Strengthen laws and policies to protect women and girls from violence and discrimination.

11. Community engagement: Engage with local communities to promote a culture of respect for women's rights and to challenge societal attitudes and norms that perpetuate honour killing.

By implementing these recommendations, we can work towards creating a society where women's lives are valued and respected, and where honour killing is no longer tolerated.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/04/19/honour-killing-a-persistent-threat-to-womens-rights-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Two sisters die as rains trigger landslides across GB

Dawn, 20 April 2025

Two girls were killed when a wall collapsed due to intermittent rains across Gilgit-Baltistan on Saturday, which also triggered landslides blocking the Karakoram Highway (KKH) and Baltistan Road at multiple points, while flights between Islamabad, Skardu and Gilgit remained suspended for a second consecutive day.

According to Rescue 1122, intermittent rains continued on Friday and Saturday across GB, causing widespread disruption. According to police, two sisters, aged eight and nine years, residents of Pedandass Juglote in Gilgit, died when the wall of a compound collapsed following heavy rainfall on Saturday. The two girls were injured and shifted to Shaheed Saifur

Rehman Hospital in Gilgit, where both succumbed to injuries.

Landslides, mudflows and rockfalls blocked the KKH at several locations in Kohistan and Diamer. Police said the Gilgit-Baltistan-Kohistan section was blocked at six different points after mudflows and landslides began on Friday evening. However, light traffic movement on the KKH in the Kohistan area was restored on Saturday.

Thousands of passengers, including tourists travelling between GB and other parts of the country, who had been stranded for hours, were finally able to resume their journeys. Many passengers faced hardships, spending long hours in remote areas without basic facilities.

Meanwhile, police said the Baltistan Road was blocked at two points — Shahtot and Tariko in Gilgit — due to ongoing landslides. Continued rainfall has hampered restoration work, and the road remains inaccessible.

The disruption has cut off all four districts of Baltistan from the rest of the region, stranding thousands of passengers, including foreign tourists, on either side of the road.

Owing to the prevailing weather conditions, all flights between Islamabad, Skardu, and Gilgit remained suspended for the second consecutive day. The rain also disrupted electricity supply in several areas, while mobile and internet connectivity has been reported down in many locations.

Meanwhile, upper parts of the region, including Astore district, received snowfall, further worsening conditions. Rockfalls and landslides also blocked various link roads, particularly in Kharmang district.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1905394/two-sisters-die-as-rains-trigger-landslides-across-gb>

Pakistan Parliamentary Kashmir Committee to discuss current Kashmir situation in its meeting in Mirpur 'AJK' on Monday

Daily Parliament Times, 20 April 2025

Parliamentary Kashmir Committee in the National Assembly will meet in Mirpur 'AJK' on Monday – April 21 to discuss and review the current Kashmir situation, it was officially said. Unveiling the details, a spokesperson of the Mirpur District Administration said that all the arrangements for the Kashmir Committee meeting to be held in Mirpur under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Rana Qasim Noon have been completed after the arrangements for all the programs were finalized as per the schedule.

The spokesperson continued that in this regard, Commissioner Mirpur Division Chaudhry Mukhtar Hussain was personally supervising the programs. "The scheduled meeting of the Parliamentary Kashmir Committee in Mirpur is stated to highlight the strategy for the early success of the Kashmir freedom movement, the solutions to the important problems of

the Kashmiri people and their position at the national level in Pakistan in an effective manner", the spokesperson said.

The holding of the meeting on the soil of Jammu and Kashmir is viewed and being lauded by the people of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'. The official spokesperson of the district administration categorically denied a baseless news social media report allegedly by handpicked disgruntled elements, which the spokesperson described part of their abortive attempt to create a rift in the eternal relations between authorities in 'Azad Jammu Kashmir' and Pakistan, the spokesperson added.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2025/04/20/pakistan-parliamentary-kashmir-committee-to-discuss-current-kashmir-situation-in-its-meeting-in-mirpur-ajk-on-monday/>

Pakistan's Cryosphere: Unlocking Climate Secrets and Safeguarding our Future

Friday Times, 18 April 2025

When we speak of the Earth's atmosphere and climate system, we often focus on the air, oceans, and land. Yet there's a fourth, often overlooked but incredibly critical component: the cryosphere—the frozen parts of our planet, including glaciers, ice caps, snow cover, permafrost, and frozen ground. This icy realm doesn't just help regulate the planet's temperature by reflecting sunlight and keeping Earth cool—it also serves as a time capsule,

storing atmospheric gases, including carbon content from thousands of years ago, offering scientists vital clues about Earth's climate history.

What's truly fascinating—and deeply relevant for Pakistan—is that our country possesses one of the world's most unique and strategically important cryospheric systems. From the towering peaks of the Karakoram and Himalayas to the vast glaciers feeding the mighty Indus River, Pakistan's cryosphere is not only ecologically and hydrologically vital, but also geopolitically significant, especially in the context of climate change and water security along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

It was with this background that I had the honor of participating in the International Training Workshop on Climate Change and Water Safety Effects along CPEC, held from April 9 to 14, 2024, at the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) in Islamabad. This intensive, five-day event brought together top cryosphere scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Pakistani climate experts to delve into the changing dynamics of our frozen frontiers.

As someone who has worked in climate and environmental fields for over two decades, I thought I had seen most of the climate-related challenges. But this training was an eye-opener. I was in awe—I had no idea how deeply the cryosphere influences our climate, ecosystems, and water systems. The

team of highly learned scientists from China shared in-depth, cutting-edge knowledge with great clarity and passion. It was an overwhelmingly rich experience, intellectually and professionally.

The sessions covered everything from glacial change and permafrost dynamics to cryospheric chemistry and space-based monitoring of glaciers. Prof. Dr. Kang Shichang initiated the training with a powerful talk on "Climate and Cryospheric Changes," followed by experts like Dr. Zhang Yaonan, Dr. Wu Xiaodong, and Dr. Zhang Yulan, who took us deep into topics such as cryospheric disasters, hydrology, glacier retreat, and chemical processes within the ice. One of the standout lessons for me was the idea that cryospheric change is not isolated—it ripples across entire ecosystems and river basins, directly influencing water availability, agriculture, disaster risks, and long-term sustainability.

The significance of the training was heightened by its direct relevance to Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities. Our glaciers are among the fastest-melting in the world. The Indus River—lifeline to Pakistan's agriculture and population—is fed by these glaciers and snowpacks. Yet, until now, cryosphere science has received limited attention in national climate planning.

Sessions by Pakistani experts like Dr. Muhammad Naveed Anjum and Dr. Gulraiz Akhter connected the dots between extreme climate events,

changing river flows, and the urgent need to integrate cryospheric data into our climate adaptation and water governance frameworks.

The training emphasised the need for regional cooperation, cross-border data sharing, and enhanced local capacity to monitor and manage our cryospheric resources. As part of the CPEC initiative, this becomes even more crucial, given the infrastructure development occurring in environmentally fragile mountain areas.

I returned from the training not only with a notebook full of scientific insights but also with new ideas, renewed curiosity, and a strong sense of responsibility. Cryospheric knowledge must be mainstreamed—not just within scientific circles but also in policymaking, education, and public discourse.

Our glaciers are melting. Our rivers are shifting. But with knowledge, collaboration, and swift action, we can still protect what remains. The cryosphere is not just frozen water—it is our memory, our future, and our warning.

“My heart trembled, hearing centuries of stories buried in the ice;

Knowledge revealed a vision my eyes had never imagined.”

<https://thefridaytimes.com/18-Apr-2025/pakistan-s-cryosphere-unlocking-climate-secrets-and-safeguarding-our-future>

Economic Developments

Economic progress: PM says enemies feel threatened

Business Recorder, 19 April 2025

In a bold move to reassure the nation, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday declared that the government is “absolutely, positively” committed to wiping out the menace of terrorism, vowing to fight on until every last terrorist is defeated.

The prime minister while chairing a high-level review of the national security situation, he said that the enemies of the country, threatened by the country’s economic progress, are attempting to destabilise the nation.

Sharif lauded the efforts of both federal and provincial governments in their ongoing counter-terrorism operations, calling their work commendable.

He emphasised that the federal government would continue to support provincial governments in enhancing their capabilities to combat terrorism and extremism.

“Our brave security forces are fighting terrorists relentlessly, sacrificing their lives for the safety of our people,” he added.

Sharif stressed the need for national unity in addressing the terrorism threat, urging political and regional leaders to put aside differences and cooperate to defeat terrorism.

Additionally, he ordered a strengthened crackdown on smuggling and human trafficking, directing authorities to tighten the noose around criminal networks and ensure that perpetrators face justice.

Sharif also highlighted the urgent need to accelerate the implementation of Safe City projects, which aim to enhance security and surveillance in major urban centres.

“It is encouraging that federal and provincial governments are working together effectively on the counter-terrorism narrative,” he added.

During the meeting, Sharif was briefed on current and upcoming security initiatives. A key development was the establishment of the National and Provincial Intelligence Fusion and Threat Assessment Centre at the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) to improve intelligence coordination.

Safe City projects are currently operational in 10 cities across Punjab, with additional projects underway in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, and Nawabshah.

A Safe City project for Peshawar has been approved, and further expansions are planned for Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, and Lakki Marwat.

In Gwadar, a Safe City initiative is about to be completed, with additional projects planned along National Highways 25-N and 40-N, the meeting was told.

The officials also told the meeting about the creation of digital enforcement stations at key locations, including highways and bridges, to combat smuggling and further tighten security across the country.

It was stated that a Forensic Science Agency has been established in Islamabad, while the Punjab Forensic Science Agency is undergoing further upgrades to enhance its capabilities.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Mohsin Naqvi, Ahad Cheema and Ataullah Tarar, advisor to the prime minister Rana Sanaullah, state minister for interior Tallal Chaudhry, adviser to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Barrister Saif, Gilgit-Baltistan Home Minister Shamsul Haq Lone, ‘AJK’ Interior Minister Col (retired) Waqar Noon, chief secretaries and inspectors general of police from all provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, ‘AJK’ and Islamabad, as well as the chief commissioner Islamabad.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40358460/economic-progress-pm-says-enemies-feel-threatened>

Raja Shabir Ahmed welcomes PM Pakistan’s announcement regarding the establishment of Mirpur International Airport

Daily Parliament Times, 20 April 2025

Senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party UK, Raja Shabir Ahmed, has welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister of Pakistan regarding the establishment of Mirpur International

Airport. He noted that former Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and former Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu & Kashmir' Chaudhry Abdul Majeed had jointly pledged to build this airport back in 2013.

He stated that the construction of the Mirpur International Airport has long been a key demand of overseas Kashmiris around the world, and expressed hope that the project will now finally be realized. Raja Shabir Ahmed expressed confidence that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif would utilize his trademark "Shehbaz Speed" to complete this important project swiftly. He emphasized that this airport would ease the travel challenges faced by overseas Kashmiris and help them connect more easily with their homeland in 'Azad Kashmir'. He also acknowledged the commendable efforts of British High Commissioner Dr. Mohammad Faisal, British MPs Mohammad Yasin, Lord Qurban Hussain, Naz Shah, and other notable figures who have consistently advocated for the establishment of the Mirpur International Airport. Welcoming the announcement of the airport's feasibility report, Raja Shabir emphasized that the airport should be constructed at a location that benefits the entire Mirpur Division and helps alleviate local issues. He concluded with optimism, stating that the construction work on Mirpur International Airport will begin very soon, and the people of 'Azad Jammu & Kashmir' will witness a

transformative change through the successful execution of this major project.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2025/04/20/raja-shabir-ahmed-welcomes-the-announcement-by-the-pm-regarding-the-establishment-of-mirpur-international-airport/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq condemns actions against Hurriyat leaders Syed Salahuddin, Farooq Rehmani and others

Urdu Point, 18 April 2025

'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' Prime Minister Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq has condemned in strongest words the actions of the Indian government in the 'occupied Kashmir', that saw tough action from the government against the Hurriyat leaders, Syed Salahuddin, Farooq Rehmani and other Kashmiris, including seizing of their properties. In his special speech, Anwar ul Haq said that Kashmiris have raised their voices and rebelled against the India's unethical and military occupation in the region. Taking actions against the Kashmiri people and seizing their properties goes against the rulings of the United Nations because this issue is with the United Nations, which has considered it as a dispute and gave the Kashmiris the right to self-determination, which is yet to be implemented.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4396895.html>

After slaughtering in the ‘occupied Kashmir’, Indian government’s target remains the minorities’ community, especially the Muslims: Peer Mazhar Sayeed

Urdu Point, 18 April 2025

Information minister ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’, Maulana Peer Mohammad Mzahar Shah has said that after committing slaughtering on a daily basis in the ‘occupied Kashmir’, India’s target are the minorities living inside the country, especially the Muslims. India’s extremist liking has deeply dented the prospectus of peace in the region. Extremist and anti-Muslim, the Bhartiya Janta Party’s government through the passing of Waqf bill has gone one step further to snatch the Muslim rights. The basic motive behind the passing of Waqaf bill was to grab properties of the Muslims. In his statement, Mazhar Sayeed said that the region’s peace could be imperiled through the Modi’s extremism.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4396903.html>

From Social Media

AMMAR ALI JAN @ammaralijan

15 April 2025

Mineral bills in Balochistan & Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, 6 canal issue in Sindh, corporate farming in Punjab & "green tourism" in GB show ruling classes have run out of ideas beyond loot & plunder. These disasters are being

imposed without consent, proving we live under neocolonialism.

<https://x.com/ammalaralijan/status/1912183885363818679>

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

17 April 2025

Another step towards promoting tourism. With the mutual consent of stakeholders, the decision has been made to open the famous tourist destinations of Mini Marg and Domicile for tourists.

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1912934433029497173>

JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri

15 April 2025

lawyers in #GilgitBaltistan are on a strike for the past five months, they says, judicial system in GB is different from other provinces of Pakistan, judges positions in Supreme Appellate Court are vacant, special courts had not been established here.

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1912126904045289560>

PAMIR TIMES @pamirtimes

19 April 2025

Honour Killing: A Persistent Threat to Women's Rights in Gilgit-Baltistan

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/pamirtimes/status/1913624729665020209>

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Disclaimer

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