

Weekly POK News Digest

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POK
emergency funds
Gilgit-Baltistan
food shortage
disaster management
Hydropower Project
Diamer-Basha
climate disasters
flashflood



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

The Pahalgam Massacre and India's TV War Circus

Friday Times, 5 May 2025

Picture a Delhi newsroom, all chrome and tickers, where anchors in sharp blazers howl about Pakistan like it's the neighbor who stole their bike. The Pahalgam massacre—26 civilians, mostly Hindu tourists, gunned down on April 22, 2025, in Baisaran Valley—has given India's TV news a tragedy to milk. From April 25 to May 4, the top 10 prime-time shows turned it into a pageant of war drums, CGI jets, and patriotic flexing. Are they itching for a fight with Pakistan? Or just chasing the next shampoo ad? Let's slice through the noise with a smirk and no time for sanctimony.

These are the 9 PM heavyweights: The Debate (Republic TV), Aaj Tak Prime Time (Aaj Tak), News Hour (Times Now), Left, Right & Centre (NDTV), India Upfront (India Today), DNA (Zee News), Taal Thok Ke (News18 India), Prime Time (India Today), The Big Fight (NDTV), Aar Paar (India TV). They're shaping how India processes the Pahalgam horror—a Lashkar-e-Taiba-linked attack that killed 26, targeted Hindus, and sparked trade bans, LoC clashes, and enough hot air to choke a valley.

Pahalgam was a gut-wrench: tourists herded, asked their religion, and shot, leaving 26 dead, one a local pony rider. It's the kind of tragedy that demands reflection, not a loudspeaker. But

Indian TV doesn't do subtle. By April 22, the narrative was set: Pakistan's behind it, and India's owed justice. Republic's Arnab Goswami, who could out-scream a banshee, led the charge. His April 25 show pushed hashtags like “#WeWantRevenge” and pinned the ISI to every Kashmir shadow, evidence optional. Survivors' tales—one gunman allegedly taunted, “Go tell Modi”—became war cries, though unverified. The visuals? Jets, red alerts, Pakistan maps screaming “target.” War hysteria? A roaring 9/10. Arnab's one rant from invading solo.

They're not starting a war, but they're banking on the idea of one

Aaj Tak's Sweta Singh, all somber sarees and steel, played the patriot's lament. Her April 25 episode mourned the “angels of paradise” lost, but by April 30, she was tying Pakistan to LoC ceasefire violations—nine nights of firing by May 3, a tenth likely, India retaliating. Her rhetoric, like calling Pakistan's actions a “reign of ruin” (illustrative), framed them as a snake to India's saint. Hysteria: 7/10. It's war talk in mourning clothes, with violins.

Times Now's Navika Kumar, who deals outrage like poker chips, went hawkish. Her May 1 show, echoing unverified intel on ISI cells, called Pahalgam “Pakistan's terror factory.” Guests mused about “surgical strikes 2.0” (paraphrased but plausible), while Navika nodded. The graphics—missiles, slo-mo troops—were pure Hollywood. Hysteria: 8/10. She's not drafting war plans, but she's gunning for a salute.

The Oddballs: A Pinch of Sense

Not everyone's baying for blood. NDTV's Left, Right & Centre with Nidhi Razdan, who seems perpetually over this circus, stayed calm. Her April 29 episode asked if talks with Pakistan were possible, citing its economic ruin. Guests screamed "no peace with terrorists," but Nidhi noted Pakistan's too broke for war. No jet montages here. Hysteria: 2/10. It's a memo in a mosh pit.

NDTV's The Big Fight (May 2) was just as tame, debating Kashmir's security with wonks who'd rather snooze than strike. Pakistan was a puzzle, not a piñata. Hysteria: 1/10. It's the show you watch to feel briefly sane before binging a rom-com.

The Hindi Heavyweights: Rage as Ritual

Hindi channels, chasing the aam aadmi's pulse, went loud. Zee's Sudhir Chaudhary, preaching on DNA, spun April 24 as history's verdict: "1947, 1965, 1971—Pakistan's always lost!" Pahalgam proved Pakistan's "terror DNA." His May 3 show waved Pakistan's missile test like a smoking gun. Hysteria: 6/10. Sudhir's less about war and more about playing prophet.

Pahalgam's Lessons: How Proxies Trap India And Pakistan

News18's Taal Thok Ke with Amish Devgan is a shouting match in debate's clothing. On April 25, guest host Rubika Liyaquat vowed "epic revenge." By May 3, Amish railed

about Pakistan's LoC firing. War's a reality show, India's the hero. Hysteria: 7/10. It's less strategy, more soap opera.

India TV's Rajat Sharma, with his wise-uncle vibe, kept Aar Paar patriotic but grounded. His April 30 show linked Pahalgam to Pakistan's "proxy war," but focused on trade bans—ships, mail, rivers—over missiles. Hysteria: 5/10. Rajat loves a fight but won't start one.

The In-Betweeners: Hawks with Heart

India Today's duo split the script. Rahul Shivshankar's India Upfront (April 27) hyped "Pakistan's terror footprint," spotlighting ship bans. His May 3 show leaned on jets, per disinformation reports. Hysteria: 6/10. It's war talk with graphics. Rajdeep Sardesai's Prime Time showed restraint. On April 23, he aired Farooq Abdullah's grief; by May 1, he pushed justice, not airstrikes. Hysteria: 3/10. Rajdeep wants to be the adult but loves a close-up.

The Playbook: Same Old Song

Pahalgam's new, but the tricks are ancient:

Pakistan as Evil: Everyone, from the Republic to India TV, pinned it on Pakistan, citing LeT or ISI. Evidence? A shrug and a terrorist stock photo.

War as Spectacle: Republic, Times Now, Aaj Tak love slo-mo soldiers, missile loops, LoC maps—Kupwara, Poonch, Akhnoor—like a video game.

India the Victim: Zee, News18 cast India as saintly, Pakistan as rogue,

firing missiles to provoke. India's arms deals? Hush.

Grief as Fuel: Arnab, Sweta paraded widows' pain for ratings, not answers.

War Hysteria or Hot Air?

Pahalgam Attack: Kashmir Continues To Burn | Anuradha Bhasin On India-Pak Standoff

Are these shows pushing war? Not quite. They're pushing TRPs, relevance, or the thrill of noise. Arnab and Navika flirt with "revenge" and "strikes," but it's posture, not policy. The LoC's hot—nine nights of firing, a tenth likely—India's banned ships, mail, rivers, airspace. But the shows aren't drawing battle maps; they're staging drama. Hindi channels (Aaj Tak, Zee) feed heartland rage, English ones (NDTV) stroke urban egos. The result? A nation glued to screens, fuming, but not enlisting.

The Takeaway

Pahalgam deserved better—questions on intel failures, local complicity, or why tourists were easy prey. Instead, India's top 10 shows gave us a pantomime: Pakistan as villain, war as climax, anchors as heroes. They're not starting a war, but they're banking on the idea of one. Want the truth? Skip the remote. Read a paper or talk to Pahalgam's survivors. They'll tell you: grief doesn't need a jingle, and peace doesn't sell.

<https://thefridaytimes.com/05-May-2025/the-pahalgam-massacre-and-india-s-tv-war-circus>

Role of Community and NGOs in Education: Educational Diary of District Shigar

Pamir Times, 5 May 2025

Tucked within the mountainous terrain of Gilgit-Baltistan, District Shigar presents a dramatic blend of awe-inspiring beauty and challenging isolation. While the landscape inspires wonder, the remoteness of the region poses major obstacles for education. In a place where steep trails and extreme weather conditions can disconnect entire villages for weeks, the road to learning is far from easy. But the story of education in Shigar is not defined by its limitations; instead, it tells a tale of grit, cooperation, and innovation, driven largely by the persistent efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working at the grassroots level.

Although public sector initiatives have played a role in laying the foundation for education, they have not kept pace with the district's complex needs. Many government schools suffer from a lack of trained staff, poor infrastructure, and shortages of basic learning tools. In far-flung hamlets, students, particularly girls, must trek long distances, often along treacherous paths, simply to reach the nearest classroom. This has led to high dropout rates and widespread educational exclusion. In response, community and NGOs have stepped in, not to replace state institutions, but to strengthen and support them in meaningful and targeted ways.

A 2022 study by the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES) revealed that nearly four out of every ten children living in the high altitude areas of Shigar had no access to a school within walking distance. To bridge this gap, NGOs like Iqra Fund began building community-run schools in areas where formal institutions did not exist. More than 15 such schools with modest structures have been, since, set up in underserved villages bringing education to children who otherwise would have been left behind. These schools have helped reduce dropout rates and made it easier for families to send their daughters to class without fear.

Shigar has a unique journey of education. 40% schools in the district are un-approved by the government and running on need basis to facilitate the scattered population, particularly a big chunk of females who have major travelling and access issues. There are many primary schools run by a single teacher. Being a newly established district, Shigar has major issues in terms of access, quality, retention and high student-teacher ratio. In Gilgit-Baltistan, Shigar stands at the 2nd position in terms of scarcity of human resource, one step behind Diamar district.

In such circumstances, the local community and a few NGOs are putting in efforts to cope with the challenges. For instance, Iqra Fund, Moawin Foundation, Al-Bayan Foundation, Saya e Kudrat e Ziljal

(SKZ), Momina Cheema Foundation, and several other donors are contributing to this noble cause, and students are receiving maximum benefit. Data reveals that around 430 regular teachers are deputed to facilitate 19,000 students in 114 schools, maintaining a student-teacher ratio of 1:45. On the other hand, the community is supporting the department by deploying more than 150 additional teachers, which is an exemplary step that can serve as a model for other regions.

Specifically, 70 teachers are provided by Iqra Fund, 26 by Moawin, 38 by Al-Bayan, 8 by the University of Lahore (UoL), 8 by SKZ, and 93 managed by AKU-PDCN Gilgit through the Education Fellows Project supported by the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan. Likewise, non-profit organizations and local committees are also playing a front-line role in disseminating knowledge in the region, such as Mouhammadia Trust, Aliya Education System, and Darul Irshad Organization.

One of Iqra Fund's most impactful strategies has been training and hiring female teachers from within local communities. This move has served dual purposes: it creates employment for women and also assures conservative households that their daughters will be taught in a culturally respectful environment. In many villages where male-led schools were avoided, the presence of women teachers has made all the difference.

Families who once hesitated are now sending their daughters to school with confidence. According to the organization's 2023 annual report, female enrollment in these communities increased by 20% over three years—a testament to the trust and acceptance these schools have built.

Of course, simply enrolling students is not enough; what they learn and how they learn matters just as much. Public school curricula are often rigid and disconnected from the realities of life in Shigar. In contrast, NGOs have developed teaching models that are more localized and adaptable. Aliya Education System, for instance, being the first ever English medium school for girls has launched a bilingual education approach that blends Urdu and English with Balti, the local language. This helps students understand lessons more clearly, improves their literacy, and keeps learning rooted in their culture.

In addition to these language-based strategies, technology is starting to play a role in reshaping the educational landscape in Shigar. One standout initiative has come from The Volunteers Society of Pakistan, which has installed IT laboratories in three schools across the district. For many students, this was their first time interacting with computers. These digital learning spaces are now being used to introduce basic computing, educational programs, and online learning resources. The presence of

these labs is not just symbolic—it represents a real leap toward future-oriented learning, narrowing the digital divide and opening new possibilities for children in this remote region.

What truly distinguishes NGOs in Shigar is how closely they work with the people they serve. Rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions, these organizations invest time in understanding each village's specific needs and cultural norms. A notable example is the Momina Cheema Foundation, which forms Village Education Committees made up of local leaders and parents. These committees do more than just meet—they actively oversee school operations, track teacher attendance, and organize events to boost student engagement. In Askole, one of the most remote villages, this community-driven model has shown impressive results, with the local school recording a 90% attendance rate, compared to the regional average of 65% as outlined in their 2023 report.

Poverty, of course, remains a persistent challenge. Many families in Shigar survive on subsistence farming or seasonal labor and cannot afford the hidden costs of schooling—uniforms, stationery, transportation. In such cases, organizations like the Baltistan Foundation have stepped in with timely interventions. They offer essentials like free school kits, winter clothing, and modest scholarships. These simple yet effective measures

reduce the financial strain on families and encourage consistent attendance. For older students, the foundation also provides vocational training in skills like tailoring, agriculture, and handicrafts, allowing them to contribute to their households while continuing their studies. As a result of these combined efforts, dropout rates in beneficiary communities have dropped by nearly 30%, according to the foundation's 2023 evaluation.

One of the most valuable aspects of NGO involvement is their flexibility. NGOs have the freedom to adjust school hours around farming seasons, set up classrooms in unconventional spaces, or design unique teaching materials. This responsiveness allows them to tailor their strategies to the realities on the ground, offering solutions that are both practical and sustainable.

Importantly, the success of these initiatives has not occurred in isolation. Many of the most impactful educational projects in Shigar are the result of collaboration among NGOs, local authorities, donors, and community members. This cooperative approach enhances the reach and resilience of the efforts being made.

What's happening in Shigar isn't just an isolated success story; it's a blueprint for what can be achieved in other marginalized regions.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/05/04/role-of-community-ngos-in-education-educational-diary-of-district-shigar/>

'AJK' government dumps 2 months food near LOC areas

The Nation, May 7 2025

'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) government has dumped two-month ration supply in areas near LoC to tackle any emergency situation. District food controller (DFC) Abrar Mir told that Muzaffarabad Division requires 5,300 tons of grain monthly, and currently, there are 7,800 tons of flour available besides routine daily supply. He said in the LoC region, three depots in Muzaffarabad district, six in Jhelum Valley, and 227 in Neelum district were fully operational and a mechanism was in placed between district administrations and food controllers across all districts to ensure the availability and supply of food items. All major market traders keep the administration informed about the status of their stores. He informed that under the special instructions of the Government of 'Azad Kashmir' and considering the current aggressive stance by India, a minimum two-month ration supply is secured in all three districts of Muzaffarabad Division including the LoC areas. "There is no risk of food shortage in areas near the LoC," he maintained. Considering weather conditions, the Food Department also stores grain supplies for four to six months in snowy regions during winters and the rainy season. In line with government policy, department officials, in collaboration with local administrations, have established a mechanism to ensure the

availability of food grains in all areas adjacent to the LoC.

“Overall, Muzaffarabad Division requires 5,300 tons of flour monthly, while around 7,800 tons are currently available in the department’s supply depots. Daily grain supply continues to meet everyday needs, and preemptive measures are already in place to tackle emergencies,” he assured.

District Food Controller Abrar Ahmed Mir, who is also the Chairman of the District Food Authority, told that modern technology was being used to ensure the sale and purchase of quality and healthy essential food items. Pure, adulteration-free milk is now being supplied to the citizens of Muzaffarabad. Drinking water and other items are being checked through the department’s mobile food lab.

He further told that in case of any complaints, citizens can contact the control room of the Food Authority. They can also get their drinking water and other items tested for free every Saturday through the mobile food testing lab. Currently, we have banned bringing milk and meat from outside Muzaffarabad, he added. He said sale of poor-quality and non-standard water has been banned, and 27 types of cooking oils have been declared unhealthy and their sale has been stopped. The department employs highly qualified food technologists and analysts who examine the quality of food items via the mobile food testing lab and prepare reports based on machine-generated data.

He said Pure and healthy food was essential for a healthy body. The official urged citizens to report any complaints regarding milk, honey, water, edible oils, and other food items to the Food Authority. In response to a question, Mir said that the Food Department procures wheat from PASCO. At present, the department has sufficient wheat stock, and new procurement is also underway. There is no possibility of a food shortage.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/07-May-2025/ajk-government-dumps-2-months-food-near-loc-areas>

Educational Institutions Remain Open across Gilgit-Baltistan as Hospitals Brace for High Alert

Pamir Times, 8 May 2025

In the wake of recent Indian strikes on civilian areas in ‘Azad Kashmir’ and Punjab, the Gilgit-Baltistan region remains on high alert. All flights to the area have been suspended as tensions continue to rise.

Earlier today, the National Security Council authorized the Pakistan Armed Forces to respond to the Indian strikes, emphasizing the right to self-defense under international law.

Hospitals in the region have been placed on high alert. The Provincial Headquarters Hospital in Gilgit has declared an emergency, cancelling staff leave and suspending non-essential surgeries to ensure maximum bed availability for potential casualties. A notification issued by the hospital advised admitting only critically ill

patients to preserve resources for emergency cases.

While schools across the 10 districts of Gilgit-Baltistan remain open, attendance has reportedly declined in several villages in the Ghanche district, including Thalay, Khaplu, Hushe, and Machlu.

Residents of these border villages, who experienced significant damage and casualties during the Kargil conflict, have expressed concerns about the potential impact of further hostilities.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/05/07/educational-institutions-remain-open-across-gilgit-baltistan-as-hospitals-brace-for-high-alert/>

‘AJK’ leadership calls for global response to Indian misadventure

Dawn, 8 May 2025

‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood on Wednesday condemned the unprovoked Indian aggression under the cover of darkness, saying it had once again exposed New Delhi’s “nefarious designs” and the true face of the Modi government before the international community.

Speaking to a group of journalists at the Aiwan-i-Sadr here, he said India’s recent attacks on unarmed civilians in ‘AJK’ were aimed at diverting attention from the core regional issue — the unresolved Kashmir dispute. “India is trying to distract the world with diversionary tactics, but the world must remain focused on the Kashmir

dispute, which is the key to regional stability,” he said.

He urged countries interested in mediation to press for the immediate resolution of the conflict, noting that both Pakistan and India were nuclear-armed states and any further escalation could endanger global peace.

GB CM condemns attack on civilians

Highlighting the human rights situation in ‘India-occupied Kashmir’, Mr Mahmood said that over 4,000 Kashmiris had been arrested and detained in torture cells after Pahalgam incident, while more than 2,500 homes had been demolished.

“The international community must take immediate notice of these atrocities and stop the Modi government from endangering the regional peace,” he said. He said India, which projected itself as a secular democracy, had revealed its true face as a Hindu authoritarian state persecuting Muslims and other minorities.

‘Criminal act’

Former President of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ Sardar Masood Khan on Wednesday strongly condemned the unprovoked and unjustified Indian shelling on civilians in ‘AJK’, branding it a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and international law. “This is a criminal and unprovoked act of war. Pakistan has responded with just and proportionate force,” he said while speaking to reporters during a visit to Bilal Mosque and the adjoining

residential area in Shawai Nullah, which was hit by Indian shelling late Tuesday night.

GB CM slams attack

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Gulbar Khan on Wednesday condemned India's cowardly attack on civilians in the night. In a statement, he said that Pakistan's brave armed forces responded effectively to the cowardly aggression of India with full vigilance and force. He said the Indian leadership has once again failed in their nefarious designs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1909289/ajk-leadership-calls-for-global-response-to-indian-misadventure>

India's Water Terrorism

The Nation, May 7 2025

In response to the recent Pahalgam Attack in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), India suspended the World Bank-mediated Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, and declared that it would remain in force until "Pakistan credibly and irrevocably renounces its support for cross-border terrorism." This is certainly not the first time that New Delhi has threatened to breach or unilaterally abandon the Indus Water Treaty. In fact, time and again, Indian government officials have made provocative and offensive statements about diverting water resources which have been legally allocated to Pakistan as part of the Indus Water Treaty.

And to be honest, in light of the recent events, I consider such actions by the Indian government to be nothing short of water terrorism. The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) due to unsubstantiated allegations by India blatantly violates Article 26 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which states that treaties "must be performed in good faith."

Islamabad, in response, has rightfully termed these actions by New Delhi as hostile and tantamount to a declaration of war. Pakistan's National Security Committee (NSC) has consistently presented strong and evidence-based counterarguments, describing such steps as grave violations of international law and serious threats to regional peace and stability. More importantly, it is crucial to note that the Indus Water Treaty does not contain any provision allowing unilateral withdrawal by either party. The only legally permissible options which are recognized, includes its continuation or its modification or termination by the mutual consent of both parties.

Not to mention how this highlights a crucial legal reality: while the treaty allows for negotiated reforms, it clearly prohibits unilateralism. Therefore, any Indian claim or action suggesting a unilateral withdrawal from the treaty directly violates its express provisions and the principles of international law. Similarly, a unilateral suspension of the treaty by India would not only violate established mechanisms such as the

Permanent Indus Commission, neutral experts or the arbitration tribunal for dispute settlement, but would also run counter to the spirit of the agreement itself. It must not be forgotten that this treaty has survived several wars and periods of political tension, further strengthening its legal and moral strength.

Additionally, I feel obliged to mention here that Pakistan will also consider this unilateral suspension of the IWT by India as a *casus belli* and a step contrary to its vital national interests. Pakistan's agriculture, the backbone of the country's economy, is heavily dependent on the Indus River system. More than 80 percent of Pakistan's irrigation depends on water from the Indus Basin. And as a result, disruptions to the water supply will inevitably exacerbate existing water shortages, reduce crop yields, and lead to domestic unrest, particularly in the water-scarce provinces of Punjab and Sindh.

Therefore, given the World Bank's role as a third-party guarantor, Pakistan has numerous options under international law to challenge India's conduct in the current scenario. These include the dispute settlement mechanisms enshrined in the treaty, recourse to the International Court of Justice, and other international arbitration tribunals.

Armed Forces authorised to avenge martyrs blood at a time, place of own choosing.

At this point in time, Pakistan must pursue a proactive legal strategy to

defend its water rights. This includes applying the dispute settlement provisions in Annexures F and G of the Indus Water Treaty, whether through the appointment of a neutral expert or the initiation of arbitration proceedings before an International Court of Arbitration. In light of India's repeated violations of international law, Pakistan also has the right to involve the United Nations (UN) and request the World Bank to ensure compliance with the treaty's provisions.

In the meantime, Pakistan must continue its legal efforts, strategic diplomacy, and principled resistance to preserve its sovereignty and ensure peace in the region. The international community must urgently recognize that India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty is a clear violation not only of a bilateral obligation but also of the principles of peace, sustainability, and justice. It must not allow water—the most basic human right—to be used by India as a weapon of war. We hope that the Office of the UN Secretary-General will intervene as soon as possible before the situation escalates further.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/07-May-2025/india-s-water-terrorism>

Reforming GB's disaster management for a safer tomorrow

Business Recorder, 8 May 2025

The breath-taking landscapes of Gilgit-Baltistan, which are referred to as the water tower of Pakistan, are under severe threat due to rising global

carbon emissions and consequently climate change.

Almost 30 percent of GB's terrain is dominated by the glacial mountains and another 40 percent is blanketed by the seasonal snow. GB serves as the primary freshwater resource of the country. However, accelerating glacier melt has triggered a surge in climate-induced disasters such as landslides, devastating flash floods, glacial lake outbursts, avalanches, etc., putting both lives and infrastructure at risk.

The frozen reservoirs of GB are shrinking at an alarming rate and this melting has not only disrupted the supplies of water but intensified the frequency and severity of disaster events. The real worry is not that glaciers are melting, they are melting faster than anticipations. This seriously calls for urgent action otherwise consequences will be catastrophic for GB as well as for downstream Pakistan.

Spotting the mounting threats, the GB Disaster Management Authority was established some 8 years ago in 2017 to streamline the response efforts and disaster risk reduction. However, the region continues to suffer from natural calamities, and victims of recent landslides, and floods claim that disaster-handling efforts remain sluggish and uncoordinated. Structural and non-structural inefficiencies both have hampered the GB-DMA effectiveness, leaving communities highly vulnerable.

Although disaster risk insurance is an effective soft intervention, however, despite high demand the insurance market is virtually non-functional in GB, which means residents are without financial safeguards. Therefore, a strong and efficient administrative setup can only help climate and disaster-resilient GB. However, GB-DMA is struggling with limited funding, outdated early warning systems, and a lack of trained personnel.

While dealing with disaster vulnerability, GB struggles with inadequate disaster preparedness largely due to the systemic gaps. While early warning systems exist, their insufficient coverage restricts real-time data collection, which means GB-DMA forcefully depends on outdated historical records. This undermines accurate risk assessments and timely responses.

Trained human resource deficiency further cripples effectiveness and efficacy. Only two Assistant Directors oversee four districts of Baltistan, compromising oversight. Disaster planning is rudimentary, limited to two contingency plans rather than holistic strategies covering prevention, response, and recovery.

Unfortunately, even after 77 years of independence, most of the public sector administrative setup in Pakistan follows the British colonizer's practices. Therefore, inherited bureaucratic bottlenecks worsen this crisis, as emergency funds remain under the

control of senior officials such as the chief secretary, Commission of Division, and Deputy Commission of District, delaying critical allocations during disasters. This top-down approach, coupled with interdepartmental delays, hurts the emergency responses which was evident by the recent Nalter GLOF in July 2024 where poor coordination exacerbated the infrastructure loss, agricultural losses spanning thousands of acres, destroyed power infrastructure, and numerous road infrastructures due to flashflood from Baltoro glaciers.

Moreover, GB's vulnerability to climate disasters is outpacing its capacity to respond. GB-DMA remains critically under-resourced, inadequate staffing and with outdated machinery. For example, Skardu District, which spans over 10,186 km, has just two wheel dozers, four road rollers, five tractors, and two excavators; none of which meets modern standards. This lack of equipment, combined with bureaucratic hurdles and untrained staff, severely limits disaster response.

To build resilience, GB must modernize early warning networks, train dedicated staff, and decentralize decision-making. Without these reforms, climate disasters will continue to outpace the region's capacity to respond.

The government of Gilgit-Baltistan should adopt internationally recognized practices to strengthen the administrative framework of the GB-DMA. Capacity building and technical

human resources are vital elements of any administrative structure to deliver its dedicated assignment. The Philippines' National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council is the best case. Under this programme, the government provides continuous professional training along with the recruitment of well-qualified staff. GB-DMA should follow this programme.

The GB government should develop a Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, aligned with the Sendai Framework's four priorities, mandating risk assessments for all infrastructure projects, allocating a minimum of 5 percent of the provincial budget for DRR initiatives, and conducting third-party audits for accountability and transparency. This approach mirrors Chile's National Policy for Disaster Risk Management, which integrates risk governance, financing mechanisms, and community participation.

For more collective action towards climate-resilient GB, a participatory approach should be aligned with DRR policies and measures. All government departments, NGOs, and the local community should collaborate to facilitate real-time data sharing, joint response planning, and resource mobilization. Furthermore, each of them appoints a focal person who meets regularly and aligns their activities under one umbrella of the GB-DMA.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40361572/reforming-gbs-disaster-management-for-a-safer-tomorrow>

Wapda takes stock of damage to Neelum-Jhelum dam

Dawn, 9 May 2025

Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman retired Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani on Thursday visited the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) dam site to assess damage from Indian shelling and to boost the morale of the staff deployed on-site.

The chairman was informed during a detailed inspection of the weir, de-sanders, and intake that the shelling began at 1:15am on May 7 and continued for approximately six hours, ending at 7:15am.

The bombardment damaged a hydraulic power unit of an intake gate and reinforced concrete structures at de-sanders 1 and 3. A residential camp and a medical facility, including an ambulance, were also targeted, according to officials. Mr Ghani “strongly condemned the Indian attack on the power project,” saying international law, including an additional protocol to the Geneva Conventions of Aug 12, 1949, prohibited attacks on water infrastructure, even during full-scale wars between states.

“The coward enemy’s attack is unacceptable and it will be taken up with the respective forums,” he told media at the project site. “It is an act of war which is not acceptable for Pakistan. Even in World War I, World War II and other wars, no one targeted

water reservoirs, projects, etc., under norms.” He said damage to the project’s automated systems could have caused “massive flooding from Muzaffarabad to Mangla”. “Thank God, our project’s automated system remained safe,” he said. “And had these been affected, there would have been a flood situation from Muzaffarabad to Mangla. Our country escaped a big disaster.”

The Wapda chairman praised the project staff for their “dedication and courage” in taking timely action to protect vital installations. He was accompanied by Muhammad Arfan Miana, acting member for power and chief executive officer of the NJHP Company, as well as the chief engineer and project director, and the chief engineer for operations and maintenance of the project. A day earlier, ISPR Director General, Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry also condemned the attack, describing it as a “flagrant violation of international law and conventions”. He said targeting Pakistan’s water infrastructure “represented a dangerous escalation and posed serious humanitarian and environmental risks.”

The 969MW project completely halted power production at 6am on May 1, 2024, after its remaining two turbines were shut down due to deteriorating conditions in its Headrace Tunnel. The first two turbines had been shut down in early April 2024 following a reduction in tunnel pressure, just days

after the project had briefly achieved full generation capacity.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1909582/wapda-takes-stock-of-damage-to-neelum-jhelum-dam>

‘AJK’, Balochistan assemblies condemn Indian aggression

Dawn, 9 May 2025

The assemblies in ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) and Balochistan unanimously passed strongly worded resolutions condemning India for alleged cowardly and unprovoked attacks on unarmed civilians, sacred religious sites including mosques, and violations of international law.

The ‘AJK’ Legislative Assembly, presided over by Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, saw lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, including Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq and former premiers Raja Farooq Haider and Sardar Yaqoob Khan, move resolutions that paid tribute to the “martyrs of Indian aggression” and expressed heartfelt condolences to their bereaved families.

The attacks on mosques and civilian populations by extremist India are not only a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, but also a blatant violation of the UN Charter,” the house declared.

The assembly also decried the purported targeting of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project at Nauseri, calling it “water aggression” and a violation of international law,

which prohibits attacks on water infrastructure even during wartime.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1909580/ajk-balochistan-assemblies-condemn-indian-aggression>

Economic Developments

Diamer-Basha dam now a top priority

Express Tribune, 10 May 2025

The government on Friday decided to proceed with its plan to present a full fiscal year 2025-26 budget amid a suggestion to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to unveil a short-term budget and also get provincial contributions to meet increased defense expenses.

The participants of a budget preparation meeting on Friday also urged the government to allocate substantial funds for national defense and expedite the completion of the Diamer-Basha dam, citing India's move to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance. During the meeting, the prime minister also asked the Federal Board of Revenue to tax the income of Islamabad Club, which is the recreational venue for the country's bureaucrats, foreign diplomats and richest persons of society.

The premier chaired the meeting of his cabinet ministers and top-ranking business leaders of the country to discuss the 2025-26 budget, to be unveiled in the first week of June. There was a suggestion in the meeting that due to the prevailing tensions with India, the government should provide maximum possible money for the defence and also consider the option of

giving a shorter than one-year budget, according to multiple participants of the meeting.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif did not immediately share his mind on the proposal. The Constitution provides a room for giving a four-month budget. But a finance ministry official said that the government's plan to present the entire fiscal year 2025-26 budget remained intact. The Ministry of Finance has assured full provision of the resources to deal with the India-created conflict situation and has proposed at least 18% increase in the allocation for the next fiscal year over this year's spending.

There was also a proposal in the meeting that the government should freeze next fiscal year's development budget at this year's actual spending, which may not cross Rs600 billion due to low spending so far. The sources said that some cabinet members also suggested giving maximum money for the completion of the Diamer-Basha dam so that the reservoir is completed at the earliest to store water.

The participants urged to build sufficient foreign exchange reserves for meeting any unexpected import needs during the tension times. One of Pakistan's richest persons suggested the premier to reduce the bloated size of the government. The private sector participants also asked the PM to reduce taxes on textile exports and also suspend the Export Development

Surcharge being collected from exporters.

One of the participants urged the government to ban economic transactions by non-filers, including banning trading of grains by them. An official press statement underlined that the Prime Minister said that providing relief to the common man in the upcoming budget was the government's priority, and all-out resources will be utilized to reduce the financial difficulties of the poor and middle class.

The prime minister directed that the upcoming budget should be prepared with a focus on sustainable export-driven growth and considering the projects to promote industries and increase production. The budget should also focus extensively on the creation of jobs, agriculture, information technology, small and medium enterprises, and the housing sector, said Sharif.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545036/diamer-basha-dam-now-a-top-priority>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir' Chaudhry Anwarul Haq visits Bilal Mosque affected by India's 'cowardly attack'

Urdu point, 8 May 2025

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, visited the Bilal Mosque,

which was damaged in a devastating and coward Indian airstrike. He assessed the destruction caused by the attack and offered Maghrib (evening) prayers in a neighboring house that was also destroyed. To evaluate the potential threat of an Indian water assault, he visited the Neelum River and personally inspected the situation. Accompanying him were government ministers Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Abdul Majid Khan, Akbar Ibrahim, Muhammad Akmal Sargala, and other senior officials. At the Municipal Hall, the Prime Minister met with those affected by the Indian attack, commending their resilience and receiving a briefing on government support for the victims.

He later visited nearby areas and offered prayers at the shrine of Shah Inayat. The Prime Minister engaged with the local community, who expressed their joy at his visit. During the occasion, slogans such as 'Tehreek-e-Azadi Kashmir Zindabad,' 'Pakistan Zindabad,' and 'Pakistan Army Zindabad' were chanted. He also directed the Sports Complex authorities to install badminton courts and modern exercise equipment. Meanwhile, concerned about a possible Indian attack on the water flow, the Prime Minister returned to the Neelum River, stood on its banks, examined the river's flow, and issued instructions to prepare for any potential disaster.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaf-farabad/national-news/live-news-4419348.html>

The Maharaja's agreement which India showcases is fake and I am the Prime Minister of united Kashmir: Anwar ul Haq

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 6 May 2025

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' Anwar ul Haq Chaudhary has said that he is the Prime Minister of united Kashmir and the Maharaja's agreement which India shows is fake, India scrapped 35A and Article 370 and with that goes the fake agreement. We are strong and if India made any move, we will respond with resolute force. Modi doesn't have courage to cross the international border. In presence of brave Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir India can't even think of making such moves. In 2019, India in the dread of the night cowardly attacked while we in the broad day light shoot down two of their planes.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Resize-of-IMG-20250505-WA0112.jpg>

From Social Media

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

11 May 2025

Rally and gathering of Muslim League-N in Gilgit to celebrate the victory in the war against India

#PakistanIndiaWar

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1921579194716193004>

JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri*10 May 2025*

Prince Rahim Aga Khan has written to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the United Nations chief, offering his assistance in de-escalation between #PakistanZindabad and #India.

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1921181558305673710>

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti*10 May 2025*

Full dress mock drill held in Gilgit to deal with war-like situations

#Pakistan #India #war #PAF

Link to the video:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1921145256126337393>

JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri*10 May 2025*

Gilgit-Baltistan is ready to combat any aggression from India, areas near the line of control put on high alert, security of bridges and roads enhanced.

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1920914744602423641>

PAMIR TIMES @pamirtimes*7 May 2025*

Educational Institutions Remain Open across Gilgit-Baltistan as Hospitals Brace for High Alert

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/pamirtimes/status/1920107832843665666>

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Disclaimer

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