

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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10 November - 16 November 2025

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Atabad Lake
arrest warrant
no-trust resolution
women-led enterprises
appointment process of judges
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sustainable tourism
Gilgit-Baltistan
landslide



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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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

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Political Developments

Court issues arrest warrant for former 'AJK' premier

Dawn, 11 November 2025

Judicial Magistrate Ahmed Shehzad Gondal on Monday issued an arrest warrant for former prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Sardar Tanveer Ilyas in the diplomatic passport case, directing law enforcement agencies to arrest and produce him before the court on November 24. During the hearing, the court took up the case filed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) against the former 'AJK' premier for retaining his diplomatic passport after stepping down from office. Ilyas, through his counsel, had submitted an application seeking exemption from personal appearance, which the court turned down. Subsequently, Magistrate Gondal issued his arrest warrant and adjourned further proceedings till November 24.

According to the case record, the FIA registered a case against Ilyas under provisions relating to the illegal possession and misuse of a diplomatic passport, which is reserved only for officials currently holding a constitutional or government office. It is pertinent to mention that an Islamabad sessions court had earlier granted bail to Sardar Tanveer Ilyas in the same case. Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah, after hearing arguments from both sides, had approved his bail against surety bonds worth Rs100,000.

During that earlier hearing, FIA officials presented the relevant record before the court, while the FIA prosecutor expressed reservations over granting bail to Ilyas. However, Ilyas's counsel argued that the maximum punishment under the relevant law was three years, contending that his client was entitled to bail. He further informed the court that Ilyas's confiscated passport had already been returned.

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas served as the prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' until his disqualification in 2023. The FIA initiated the inquiry after it was revealed that he continued to retain his diplomatic passport despite no longer holding public office.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1954302/court-issues-arrest-warrant-for-former-ajk-premier>

Six vehicles buried under earth as landslide hits Chilas

Express Tribune, 12 November 2025

A massive landslide struck the Ghandlo area of Chilas on Tuesday, burying six passenger vehicles under tons of debris and trapping several people, officials said. According to Faizullah Faraq, spokesperson for the Gilgit-Baltistan government, some passengers remain trapped as rescue efforts continue. An emergency was declared at Chilas Hospital, while Deputy Commissioner Diamer, Attaur-Rehman Kakar, directed the RHQ Hospital to take urgent measures to assist the victims. Rescue teams comprising seven personnel and three

vehicles were working at the site to clear the debris and provide medical aid to those affected.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2577036/six-vehicles-buried-under-earth-as-landslide-hits-chilas>

Consultations begin in Gilgit-Baltistan for caretaker chief minister

Dawn, 12 November 2025

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan and Opposition Leader in GB Assembly Kazim Mesum will meet Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB Amir Muqam to nominate the caretaker chief minister, as the legislative body complete its five-year tenure on November 24.

Under GB Order 2018, if the GB chief minister, the opposition leader, and the federal minister fail to reach a consensus on the nomination of a caretaker chief minister, the prime minister of Pakistan, as chairman of the GB Council, has the authority to appoint a caretaker chief minister at his discretion.

Earlier, through a letter, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB Amir Muqam invited the GB chief minister and opposition leader for a consultation meeting to reach a consensus on nominating a candidate for the caretaker GB chief minister's position. The meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday (today) in Islamabad.

Talking to *Dawn*, Mr Muqam said that the five-year term of the current GB Assembly will expire on Nov 24 and

under the GB Order 2018, elections must be held within 60 days. He added that, according to the Order, the GB chief minister, the opposition leader, and the federal minister should agree on one name for the caretaker chief minister.

Replying to a question, Mr Muqam said that in the meeting, efforts would be made to reach a consensus on nominating a suitable person for the post of caretaker chief minister. "If we cannot agree on a single name, the proposed names will be sent to prime minister, who, as chairman of the GB Council, has the discretion to nominate any suitable person for the position," he added.

Before consultation with federal minister, the GB chief minister and the opposition leader had failed to agree on a suitable candidate, as both had proposed different names.

Source said it would be difficult to reach a consensus in the upcoming consultation meeting, and the matter would likely be referred to the prime minister.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1954581/consultations-begin-in-gilgit-baltistan-for-caretaker-chief-minister>

PPP names Faisal Rathore as nominee for 'AJK' PM

Dawn, 14 November 2025

The PPP on Friday put forward the name of Faisal Rathore as their nominee for the position of the Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'

(AJK), its 'AJK' party president said. On October 27, PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira announced that his party and the PML-N had agreed on bringing a no-confidence motion against the government in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'. The 'AJK' Legislative Assembly has 52 members, and to achieve a simple majority, a party requires the support of 27 members. Earlier in October, PPP's ranks swelled to 27 after ten lawmakers from the forward bloc joined the party.

PPP 'AJK' President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, while speaking to the media today outside Zardari House in Islamabad, along with PPP leader Raja Pervez Ashraf, said, "Our chairman has decided... that Faisal Rathore, who is the General Secretary of our party in 'AJK', will be nominated for the position of PM." He detailed that "we are going to table the vote of no confidence today, so god willing, in the next few days, PPP will have its government in 'AJK'." "The voting will begin on Monday," he later said in response to a question.

"Faisal Rathore is an educated young man; he has a lot of experience and has been part of the assembly before," Raja Pervez said. Before announcing the nomination, Ashraf told the media that the party had taken an "excellent decision", reaffirming that the PPP "remains committed to the people of Kashmir". "Right now, we want to ease their hardships and pave the way for the next elections," he said. Chaudhry echoed similar thoughts, stating that

the generations of party leaders had "always taken a strong stance on Kashmir".

Before making the announcement, Chaudhry said, "We have the required number (in the legislative assembly), I feel that we have the golden number." Ashraf told the media that PPP was the "largest parliamentary party (in the legislative assembly) and we have the support of our allies." He expressed confidence that his party "is in the position to form the government," noting that they had the required "strength."

He continued: "PPP will bring peace to Kashmir and ease their hardships; the promises made to the Action Committee will be fulfilled as well." On October 28, sources had told Dawn that the names of Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Chaudhry Yasin, Rathore and Sardar Yaqub were under consideration for the top slot. Under the 'AJK' Constitution, the movers of a no-confidence resolution are required to name a successor to the sitting prime minister.

Who is Faisal Rathore?

A senior figure in PPP's 'AJK' chapter, Rathore has long been associated with the region's politics. Born on April 11, 1978, in Rawalpindi, he is the son of the late Raja Mumtaz Hussain Rathore, a former 'AJK' prime minister who also served as senior minister, leader of the opposition and speaker of the Legislative Assembly at various stages of his political career.

His mother, Begum Farhat Rathore, belonged to a migrant family from 'Indian-occupied Kashmir'; she was a member of the state legislature and headed the PPP Women's Wing. The Rathore family, based in 'AJK's remote Haveli district, is regarded among the founding political families of the PPP in 'Azad Kashmir'.

Rathore completed his early education in Rawalpindi and graduated from the University of the Punjab. After the death of his father, his elder brother Masood Mumtaz Rathore was elected to the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly in 1999 for the remainder of the term.

He first entered electoral politics in 2006 from LA-17 Haveli Kahuta. He won his first assembly seat in the 2011 general elections on a PPP ticket and later served in the cabinet of then prime minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed as minister for 'AJK' Logging and Sawmills Corporation and minister for electricity.

In 2016, he was arrested in what was widely viewed as a politically motivated case but was subsequently exonerated. The politician was appointed secretary general of the PPP 'AJK' chapter on March 23, 2017, a position he continues to hold.

In the 2021 elections, he returned to the assembly and remained an active voice on the opposition benches. In 2023, Rathore joined the coalition government led by Chaudhry Anwarul Haq as minister for Local Government and Rural Development and was also

tasked with heading the government's negotiation committee with the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee.

Known for his soft-spoken, conciliatory and non-controversial disposition, he is seen as a figure who maintains working relationships across political and administrative circles. He has also worked in national media, hosting a regular programme on a private TV channel.

Within the PPP, he is considered a trusted confidant of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Faryal Talpur and is viewed as a representative of the party's ideological and middle-class cadre.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1955055/ppp-names-faisal-rathore-as-nominee-for-ajk-pm>

NA, 'AJK' speakers pledge to boost parliamentary cooperation

Dawn, 14 November 2025

The speakers of the National Assembly and the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Legislative Assembly on Thursday agreed to promote parliamentary collaboration and exchange of experiences between the two legislatures. Speaker of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly, Chaudhry Latif Akbar, met National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at the Parliament House.

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, was also present during the meeting. Both leaders held a detailed discussion

on enhancing parliamentary cooperation, strengthening institutional linkages between the legislative bodies and other matters of mutual interest.

Speaker Sadiq said that the hearts of the people of Pakistan and 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' beat together. He emphasised that close coordination among legislative institutions is vital for strengthening democracy and ensuring effective public representation. The speaker added that promoting cooperation among legislative bodies remains one of his top priorities.

He appreciated the welfare and development initiatives undertaken by the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly for the well-being of its people, adding that strengthening inter-parliamentary relations would further consolidate cooperation between the two legislatures.

Speaker Akbar lauded Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for conducting the proceedings of the House in an efficient and impartial manner and commended his efforts in fostering parliamentary cooperation. He remarked that the Parliament of Pakistan has always been the true voice of the Kashmiri people, adding that the people of Kashmir take pride in their emotional and ideological bond with Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1955003/na-ajk-speakers-pledge-to-boost-parliamentary-cooperation>

Spike in appendicitis cases triggers panic in GB's Shimshal Valley

Dawn, 14 November 2025

A sudden increase in appendicitis cases in Shimshal Valley, Gilgit-Baltistan, has created fear among local residents. More than 30 patients, mostly children, have been shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital and Aga Khan Medical Centre in Aliabad, Hunza. Local residents said they faced serious difficulties in transporting patients to other areas due to a lack of medical facilities and transportation in the valley. They said most of the patients, mainly children, were referred to other areas as Shimshal is a remote valley without an ambulance service.

The area lacks proper medical facilities, has only one surgeon, and faces an acute shortage of medicines, they added. Locals noted that families with low-income backgrounds cannot afford the high cost of transport between Shimshal and central Hunza. Asif Sakhi, a local representative, said the rising number of appendicitis cases was alarming for such a remote area.

He said many patients referred to other areas could not be transported due to high costs. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) local leader Rehan Shah said that 21 children from Shimshal had been shifted to the Gulmit area of Gojal in critical condition, while nine others were sent from the same valley for treatment.

He demanded the appointment of doctors in the area and the provision of ambulances and other resources to control the situation. According to a statement issued by the GB Health Department, it has received reports of a sudden outbreak of appendicitis in Shimshal village of Hunza district.

It said that, according to initial information, more than 30 patients have been affected since July and were shifted to Gulmit, Aliabad, DHQ Hospital Aliabad, and Aga Khan Medical Centre Aliabad for examination and treatment. Measures taken include the deployment of a special medical team, free treatment for affected patients and assistance under the Health Insurance Scheme.

Political leaders and civil society activists have expressed concern over the rising number of appendicitis cases among locals in Shimshal, particularly children, and demanded the declaration of a health emergency in the area to control the situation.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1955012/spike-in-appendicitis-cases-triggers-panic-in-gbs-shimshal-valley>

Preserving Paradise

Business Recorder, 14 November 2025

Imagine standing on the border of Atabad Lake in Gilgit-Baltistan, where the dark green waters are framed by towering snow-capped mountains, gleaming in the sun. This breath taking view attracts thousands of tourists annually to Pakistan's northern

regions. However, as we write about its beauty, we must also acknowledge the environmental degradation happening before our eyes. Hotel waste, poor waste management, and unregulated commercial activities are gradually eroding this pristine lake.

The story of Atabad Lake mirrors a broader issue affecting tourism hotspots across Pakistan. From Fairy Meadows to Karachi's beaches, and from Naran to Kumrat valleys, it is crucial to protect these treasures before it's too late. Naran, for example, is experiencing a decline due to over-tourism, inadequate infrastructure, and poor waste management, resulting in both the loss of its former charm and environmental degradation. Tourist congestion has exacerbated pollution issues. Similarly, Kumrat Valley faces ecological threats from improper waste disposal linked to rising tourist numbers, jeopardizing its once serene environment.

Despite these challenges, Pakistan's tourism sector has enormous potential to enhance the economy, create jobs, and conserve heritage. However, for this potential to be realized, we must build a tourism sector that balances growth with environmental conservation. This is where holistic, integrated management of tourism becomes essential. While provincial authorities are primarily responsible for tourism management, the federal government, through the Tourism Development Corporation, should play

a more active role in ensuring that provinces and local authorities adopt well-articulated, uniform policies to protect the environment.

Tourism can be a powerful economic driver in Pakistan, creating jobs, boosting foreign exchange reserves, and helping communities emerge from poverty. Connecting remote areas such as Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan where employment opportunities are scarce tourism can become a vital source of income. As the number of tourists increases, local communities can engage in various services, including accommodation, transportation, local crafts, and food, providing jobs and boosting local businesses. This could uplift entire regions that have historically been economically disadvantaged.

Tourism also brings significant foreign exchange income, which can contribute greatly to Pakistan's economy. With its rich history, diverse landscapes, and heritage, Pakistan has the potential to attract international tourists, particularly those from neighboring countries such as Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Foreign tourists bring in valuable currency that can be reinvested into local economies, helping to develop infrastructure and public services.

Additionally, tourism can alleviate poverty, especially in remote regions. By engaging in business ventures related to tourism, local people can

improve their living standards. Tourism income can be used to develop local capacities, foster entrepreneurship, and create sustainable livelihoods, leading to improved access to education, healthcare, and other essential services.

Thailand, once primarily an agricultural country with minimal industrial development, leveraged its natural beauty, strong cultural heritage, and welcoming population to create a thriving tourism industry. Today, tourism is one of Thailand's largest GDP contributors, driving employment and foreign exchange earnings.

Thailand's success lies in its balance between development and preservation. The government has enforced strict environmental policies while promoting sustainable tourism practices. Thailand's focus on eco-tourism, community involvement, and maintaining well-preserved tourist destinations has contributed to the country's national growth, improved employment, and enhanced living standards.

Pakistan, too, has the opportunity to develop sustainable tourism that not only brings in foreign exchange but also creates long-term employment and improves the quality of life for local communities. By focusing on eco-friendly tourism and investing in community involvement, Pakistan can build a robust and sustainable tourism industry.

For too long, tourism expansion has come at the expense of environmental preservation. Pollution in areas such as Atabad Lake, Naran, and the beaches of Karachi results from inadequate waste management systems and insufficient monitoring. Local governments often struggle to enforce environmental regulations, and businesses continue to operate without proper environmental checks. Both local governments and tourism organizations must share responsibility for protecting the natural beauty that attracts visitors in the first place.

A scientifically motivated system of grading or scoring hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses can be an effective way to ensure environmental compliance. This system would assess businesses on their waste management practices, energy efficiency, and impact on local ecosystems.

High-scoring businesses could charge higher rates, incentivizing others to adopt more sustainable practices. Additionally, this grading system would allow tourists to make environmentally conscious decisions about where to stay and spend money. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into tourism management is another promising field. AI-powered sensors and drones can monitor pollution levels, assess the effectiveness of waste management systems, and predict environmental risks based on historical data. In remote areas like

Gilgit-Baltistan, where the terrain makes monitoring difficult, AI could help authorities remotely track the health of ecosystems. AI would enable data-driven decisions, allowing for more efficient environmental management and the promotion of sustainable tourism practices.

Countries like Costa Rica and Ecuador provide excellent models for sustainable tourism. Costa Rica has allocated 25% of its land to national parks and conservation areas, promoting environmentally friendly tourism businesses. Similarly, the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador restrict the number of tourists allowed each year and use the revenue to support conservation efforts. These examples show that tourism can thrive while preserving the environment, a model that Pakistan could adopt.

The role of local governments in ensuring the success of sustainable tourism cannot be overstated. To implement the environmental regulations established by provincial tourism bodies, local regulators such as tourism officers must be held accountable. They are responsible for monitoring waste management, overseeing the construction of environmentally friendly infrastructure, and ensuring that local businesses comply with environmental laws. If local governments fail to enforce these regulations, they should be held accountable for the degradation of natural resources.

For sustainable tourism infrastructure to develop, public-private partnerships (PPP) must be established. The government can collaborate with private investors to develop eco-friendly infrastructure, including waste management systems, renewable energy sources, and environmentally conscious hotels. These partnerships will create jobs, strengthen communities, and protect the environment, offering a mutually beneficial approach to sustainable development.

Effective PPPs will foster a balanced approach, ensuring that tourism development does not outpace environmental preservation. Involving both the government and private sector in planning and implementing sustainable tourism initiatives can help protect Pakistan's natural beauty while contributing to economic growth. To ensure sustainability, tourism infrastructure should be environmentally friendly. Investments in eco-friendly transport, waste management, and green hotels are essential. Waste treatment, recycling, and segregation systems should be developed to minimize the environmental impact of tourism activities. In delicate areas like Fairy Meadows, Atabad Lake, Naran, and Kumrat Valley, tourist traffic should be regulated to prevent overburdening these fragile ecosystems.

Local communities must also be involved in the tourism business. They

should share in the economic benefits while also taking responsibility for the environmental impact of tourism. This ownership will foster a culture of sustainability, where the well-being of the environment is as important as economic growth. Additionally, environmental education should be provided to tourists, local businesses, and tour guides to raise awareness about sustainable practices. Monitoring systems for environmental well-being should be implemented to detect and address potential problems early on. By embracing these strategies, Pakistan can position itself as a global leader in sustainable tourism, ensuring that future generations can experience its natural beauty and cultural heritage.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40392341/preserving-paradise>

The Law is Above You

Pamir Times, 14 November 2025

Three years ago, Justice Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan took oath as the Chief Judge of Supreme Appellate Court of Gilgit-Baltistan for a term of three years as envisaged under Article 75(8) of the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018. With his retirement due on 4th November 2025, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently approved an extension in his tenure.

The notification stated: "In exercise of powers conferred under Article 75(5) of the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order, 2018, the Prime Minister of Pakistan/Chairman of Gilgit-Baltistan

Council, on the advice of Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, has been pleased to appoint Justice Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan as the Chief Judge of the Supreme Appellate Court, Gilgit-Baltistan, with effect from November 5 till attaining the age of 70 years in terms of Article 75(8) of the GB Order 2018.”

The purpose of this article is to examine the legality of the decision of the Federal Government whether such exercise of power is permissible under the law. To understand this issue, we must first revisit the long standing controversy surrounding judicial appointments in Gilgit-Baltistan. The conundrum of appointment of judges in G-B is as old as the GB Order itself but the matter was taken up to the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2022 on a petition filed by the then Government of Gilgit Baltistan, where after, the appointment process of judges of the Superior Judiciary was stayed on March 2023. After the enactment of 26th Constitutional Amendment and the formation of a Constitutional Bench, the matter was transferred to a five-member Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. The bench subsequently lifted the stay imposed on appointment of judges in April this year and held that the appointments to superior courts of Gilgit-Baltistan would be made under the GB Order 2018.

The conclusion reached may sound quite obvious to many as if the GB Order of 2018 is the governing law,

why was such a ruling necessary? The question surfaced from arguments urging the Court to implement the 2019 Framework, which was a result of challenge to GB Order 2018 at the time of its enactment. A five-member bench of Supreme Court headed by the then Chief Justice Saqib Nisar in case titled “Civil Aviation Authority Vs. Supreme Appellate Court of Gilgit Baltistan, PLD 2019 SC 357”, formulated recommendations on how judges should be appointed and proposed a framework called “Gilgit-Baltistan Governance Reforms 2019”. The proposed framework of 2019 is part of the judgment and without question was a better and more transparent mechanism for appointment of judges but it is not the domain of the Courts to legislate. The Courts are to interpret the law and strike down a law if they think it infringes upon any salient features, therefore, the request made to the Supreme Court to implement the proposed frame work of 2019 was not a legally sound request. It is a settled principle of law that right thing has to be done by the right authority alone. Even a right thing done by a wrong authority is nullity in the eyes of law. Similarly, no matter how better, transparent and progressive the 2019 frame work may be, since it was never enacted by the Legislature, the same could not be given the status of law. Therefore, to give clarity to this cloud surrounding 2018 vs. 2019 controversy, the Constitutional bench settled this issue once and for all.

Now the core question, whether extension can be granted to the Chief Judge under the framework of GB Order 2018. To answer this question and for ease of readers, the said provisions relied upon by the Federal Government are reproduced below.

Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court

(5) The Chief Judge of Supreme Appellate Court shall be appointed by the Prime Minister on the advice of the Governor and other Judges shall be appointed by the Chairman on the advice of Governor after seeking views of the Chief Judge.

(8) The Chief Judge and Judges of the Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court shall be appointed for a term of three years and shall hold office until he attains the age of 65 years, or unless he sooner resigns or is removed from office in accordance with law.

A plain reading of Article 75(5) provides that the Prime Minister is to act on the advice of the Governor for the appointment of Chief Judge. It cannot go unnoticed that the said articles referred to, only deal with the appointment, not “extension” or “reappointment”. In fact, there is no provision in the GB Order 2018, that caters the question of extension in the tenure of Chief Judge. One may wonder if the terms “appointment” or “reappointment/extension” could be interchangeably used. To our relief, it is not a matter of first impression. Our

Courts have already dealt with a similar question in the case titled “Jurists Foundation through Chairman V Federal Government through Secretary, Ministry of Defence, PLD 2020 SC 52”, the case concerning the extension of General Qamar Javed Bajwa. The Supreme Court held that in the absence of legal provision for extension or reappointment, such action had no legal effect and suspended the notification of extension in the tenure of General Bajwa. By the same reasoning, the extension in the tenure of Chief Judge (SAC) GB by the Prime Minister is of no legal basis. The government has granted extension of tenure despite the fact that there is no provision of extension in the GB Order 2018. The government has granted extension despite the fact that the Prime Minister has no power to grant extension under GB Order 2018, in fact under Article 46 of the Order, the powers of the Prime Minister are limited to those expressly conferred by law as may be prescribed by rules. It has been over and again held by the Superior Courts and is a general rule of interpretation that the rules framed under any law cannot go beyond parent statute under which those rules are framed. But let’s assume for a moment that there exist rules which allow such an extension, still such rules would be declared ultra vires as the parent law i.e. GB ORDER 2018 is silent about the same and rules cannot supersede the parent law. Such rules would be declared ultra vires if they do

not draw their power from the parent law and is a ground for judicial review.

Now the entire problem, as far as I understand, is about the competence of Federal government to grant extension. It is about the illegitimate exercise of governmental power. The Prime Minister is not competent to grant an extension as his powers are subject to the powers so conferred under the law. The government has the option to achieve the same outcome but they chose to do so with disregard to the law. What is more troubling is that the GB Assembly remains a silent spectator as the very law from where they derive their powers and swore an oath to uphold, is being rewritten by a handful of men in Islamabad. Our history is filled with instances that whenever laws were given narrow interpretations, the result was the erosion of constitutional principles. But the present case is quite different. No matter if we give the relevant provisions a reading in isolation or give it a holistic reading considering the overall scheme of GB Order, still it is as clear as day that the decision of extension/reappointment has no legal basis and is unlawful and amounts to a fraud on the law. If one looks at the scheme of law, even the appointing authority, the Prime Minister has a fixed tenure in the office. The Governor on whose advice the Prime Minister issues extension serves at the pleasure of the President under Article 33(4) of the Order. The same Governor is obligated under

Article 34(1) to act on the advice of the Cabinet and Chief Minister who also have fixed tenures. If the appointing authorities who themselves do not enjoy the benefit of extension, how could they exercise such power over a constitutional office, especially without any backing of law?

It is crystal clear that under the current framework of GB Order 2018, there can be granted no extension or reappointment as the relevant provisions regarding appointment set the retirement age of Chief Judge as 65 years under Article 75(8). The executive notification of extension in the absence of law also goes against the principle of separation of powers. In any constitutional framework, the Legislature is to make laws, the Executive is to execute the laws and the Judiciary is to interpret the laws. Chief Justice Marshall of the US Supreme Court summed it up as, “the legislature makes, the executive executes and the judiciary construes the law.” No organ of a state can resign from the functions it is assigned under the law. If through an Executive order, the tenure of a constitutional office is determined, it would be deemed as the legislature has resigned to perform their functions and it would be a betrayal of the “Will of the People”. I will repeat myself to be loud and clear that it is not the domain of the Executive to determine extension and tenure of constitutional offices without any legal backing. The principle is settled that when law requires a thing to be done in a particular manner, it has

to be done in that manner alone and not doing so would be unlawful.

The current extension of tenure of Honourable Chief Judge has no legal backing. If the government wishes to provide legal cover to their action, the only lawful course is to amend Article 75 of the GB Order 2018 to include the expression “extension” or “reappointment” or “fresh appointment” and to get away with the age limit of 65 years in Article 75(8). Guidance can be sought from the case titled “Jurist Foundation through Chairman Vs. Federal Government through Secretary, Ministry of Defense, PLD 2020 Supreme Court 1” where His Lordship Justice Mansoor Ali Shah speaking for the three-member bench dealing with the question of extension of tenure of General Qamar Javed Bajwa held the extension granted to be of no legal effect and the government of the time had to pass legislation by amending the Army Act to give effect to the extension of tenure of General Bajwa. The government at that time tried to give effect to the extension and relied on the amended Army Rules. The Supreme Court held that there was no provision dealing with “extension” or “reappointment” in the parent law and declared rules to be of no legal cover. The parent law i.e. The Army Act did not include provisions related to extension. The Army Rules which are made under the Army Act were amended to legitimize the extension of tenure. Since the rules cannot go beyond the scheme of parent law,

therefore, the Court didn’t accept the same and ultimately the government had to bring an amendment to the Army Act.

If a similar amendment is not brought to the GB Order 2018, a public interest petition before the Supreme Court of Pakistan would be sufficient strike down this executive notification of the government because however high you may be, the law is above you.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/11/14/the-law-is-above-you/>

‘AJK’ power games

Dawn, 16 November 2025

It appears that Chaudhry Anwarul Haq’s tenure as prime minister of ‘Azad Kashmir’ is about to come to a close, as a no-trust resolution against him has been submitted, and in keeping with the region’s constitution, Faisal Rathore has been proposed as the new leader of the house. Efforts to dislodge Mr Haq had been ongoing for weeks, and a ‘breakthrough’ was achieved after the PPP announced Mr Rathore’s name on Friday. Mr Haq, initially a PTI member, had been elected PM in April 2023 after his predecessor was disqualified and he received the support of a ‘forward bloc’ from within his old party, as well as the then opposition in the ‘AJK’ parliament. However, deadly protests last month, led by the Jammu Kashmir Joint Action Committee, appeared to spell the beginning of the end for the Haq ministry. The protesters had

demanded, among other things, a halt to 'elite privileges' for the region's ministers and officials. Matters turned so serious that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had to dispatch a high-powered team from Islamabad to quell the unrest. There were also complaints that Mr Haq had called very few sessions of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly, while crucially, it was being said that he had lost the confidence of powerful quarters within the Pakistani state.

Mr Rathore, who comes from a political family, is said to have a 'conciliatory' nature. He will need to exercise all his political prowess to address the issues of the region. The unfortunate fact is that power in 'AJK' has become a game of musical chairs, with the various political tribes taking turns at the helm of the region's administration, only to be ousted by their opponents when public frustration boils over, or when powerful players in Islamabad and Rawalpindi decide there needs to be a change in Muzaffarabad. This political paralysis results in public discontent, as last month's protests showed. People of the region want genuine good governance and their basic issues to be resolved. When democratic institutions fail to address their demands, and when political actors are too busy fighting amongst themselves, the people hit the streets to air their grievances. This debilitating cycle must be broken, and the genuine issues of 'AJK's' citizens be addressed immediately. The incoming

administration must prioritise service delivery and responsive governance over politicking.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1955399/ajk-power-games>

Economic Developments

Gilgit-Baltistan: Samarkar launched to boost women-led enterprises

Business Recorder, 14 November 2025

Karandaaz Pakistan, in partnership with Karakoram Cooperative Bank Limited (KCBL) and the National Credit Guarantee Company Limited (NCGCL), has launched Samarkar – a pioneering de-risking facility designed to expand access to finance for women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The initiative targets women entrepreneurs operating in agriculture, handicrafts, tourism, and small-scale trade, who often face limited financial literacy and minimal access to institutional credit.

Under the program, KCBL – the largest cooperative bank in GB with over 50 branches and 16,000 MSME borrowers – will mobilize financing for women-led businesses, while Karandaaz will provide credit risk coverage through NCGCL to de-risk lending. This structure blends market-based liquidity with concessional risk-sharing, enabling affordable financing for women entrepreneurs at scale. Beyond direct lending, Samarkar aims to strengthen KCBL's gender finance

portfolio, identify high-potential business clusters, establish a replicable risk-sharing model, and generate data-driven insights to inform future financial inclusion policies.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Abrar Ahmed Mirza said: “Women in GB play a crucial role in sustaining households and communities, yet their potential as entrepreneurs remains underutilized. Samarkar is a landmark initiative to unlock inclusive growth where women are not just participants but drivers of regional prosperity.”

Karandaaz CEO Waqas ul Hasan added: “Inclusive growth begins with equitable access to finance. Samarkar enables women entrepreneurs in Gilgit-Baltistan to turn their ideas into enterprise and their enterprise into lasting impact.”

KCBL CEO Maqсад Ali highlighted the transformative role of financial inclusion, saying the initiative allows women with skills and ambition to access the finance they need, supporting stronger families, communities, and a resilient local economy. NCGCL Company Secretary Falak Raja emphasized the importance of risk-sharing mechanisms in unlocking credit for underserved segments, enabling women entrepreneurs to access capital and drive economic growth.

Through this collaboration, Karandaaz, KCBL, and NCGCL aim to create a

scalable, gender-focused financing model that can be replicated across Pakistan, empowering women to lead local economic transformation.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40392377/gilgit-baltistan-samarkar-launched-to-boost-women-led-enterprises>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

PPP Mobilizes Support for Immediate No-Confidence Motion Against ‘AJK’ Prime Minister

Urdu Point, 14 November 2025

The Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) appears to be employing efforts to move an immediate no-confidence motion against the ‘Azad Kashmir’ Prime Minister, Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq. According to media reports, the no-confidence motion was delayed due to the 27th Constitutional Amendment. The top PPP leadership has directed all assembly members to reach Muzaffarabad without further delay.

Signatures of members have been obtained on the no-confidence resolution; the name of the new Leader of the House will be written on the motion at the last moment. ‘Azad Kashmir’ Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has also started farewell meetings with his staff, while the PPP ‘Azad Kashmir’ President Chaudhry Yasin is being considered the preferred candidate for the premiership. The Muslim League-N will support the PPP in the no-confidence motion, and there is a strong possibility that the motion

will be submitted today. A simple majority of 27 votes is required to pass the no-confidence motion. However, the PPP claims the support of more than 36 members in the 'Azad Kashmir' Assembly for the motion.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/important-news/live-news-4617561.html>

Pasban-e-Hurriyat Calls for Protest Against Raids, Arrests in 'Occupied Kashmir'

Urdu Point, 13 November 2025

The Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir has called for a protest on Friday against the Indian forces' raids, arbitrary arrests, and violence on civilians in 'occupied Kashmir'. In a statement, Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali strongly condemned the ongoing raids, unlawful detentions, and brutality against unarmed civilians by Indian forces in 'occupied Kashmir'. He said that over the past few days, Indian forces have raided homes in various cities, towns, and villages across the Valley—including Srinagar, Kupwara, Pulwama, Anantnag, Sopore, Kulgam, Shopian, and Bandipora—and arrested hundreds of Kashmiri youth, including six doctors. In several areas, women, youth, and elderly are being subjected to torture.

Uzair Ghazali stated that India, which is forcibly 'occupying' Jammu and Kashmir, cannot break the morale of the Kashmiri people through state oppression. The Kashmiri people will

continue their struggle for freedom, right to self-determination, and justice. He appealed to international human rights organizations to step in immediately and take notice of the ongoing state terrorism and grave human rights violations in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir.

He announced that a protest sit-in (dharna) will be held on Friday, November 14, at the Central Press Club, Muzaffarabad, against the arbitrary arrests of unarmed civilians and Indian oppression in occupied Kashmir. He urged all political and social organizations, students, lawyers, traders, refugees and locals (Ansar), journalists, and the general public to participate in the dharna and raise their voice against Indian tyranny and the suffering of the oppressed Kashmiri people.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4616561.html>

"Kashmir will become Pakistan", still the most popular slogan in the valley today: Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan

Urdu Point, 14 November 2025

Former Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir' and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan, has said that "Kashmir will become Pakistan" remains the most popular slogan in the valley even today. Operation Bunyan al Marsoos has changed the map of the world, and the entire world has acknowledged Pakistan's military

capabilities. While addressing the closing ceremony of Martyrs of Jammu Week organized by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at the Gujranwala Chamber Hall in Gujranwala, former Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir', Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan, stated that Kashmiri youth stand like a lead-plastered wall in front of one million Indian troops and are writing new tales of freedom with their blood.

The former Prime Minister said that there is no village in Pakistan where one or two of its youth are not buried in the cemeteries of Srinagar. More than 600,000 Pakistani youth have sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Kashmir. "Kashmir will become Pakistan" is still the most popular slogan in the valley, resonating throughout the region.

The passion of Kashmiri youth remains exemplary even today. If you look at the watch of any Kashmiri youth in the 'occupied valley', it is set to Pakistan Standard Time, which is a manifestation of the Kashmiris' deep love and devotion to Pakistan. Sardar Atiq reaffirmed his resolve that the day is not far when Kashmir will become part of Pakistan. He said that the international community must take notice of Indian atrocities in 'occupied Kashmir' and grant the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination and freedom.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4617690.html>

From Social Media

MANZAR SHIGRI @ManzarShigri

10 November 2025

27 Constitutional Amendments in 52 Years, on Average Once Every 2 Years: A Travelogue from 1973 to 2025.

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/ManzarShigri/status/1987939040696623508>

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

14 November 2025

Demanding one's rights is not an anti-state act: Chairman determined Youth Gilgit-Baltistan Azhan Rajput

Link to the video:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1989324578490126611>

JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri

15 November 2025

A sudden increase in appendicitis cases in #Shimshal Valley, #GilgitBaltistan, has created fear among local residents.

Link to the tweet

<https://x.com/jamilnagri/status/1989418994332570043>

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Compiled by

Mohd. Usman Bhatti and Muneeb Yousuf

Edited By

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

Disclaimer

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

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

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: www.idsa.in; Email: pokdigest@gmail.com