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POK
climate volatility
Gilgit-Baltistan
provincial elections
Mansehra-Chilas Motorway
Glacial Lake Outburst Floods
shortage in electricity
NFC award



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Contents

Political Development

- ‘AJK’ PM assures timely polls, swift appointment of CEC
- PML-N’s Shah Ghulam Qadir replaces PTI lawmaker as ‘AJK’ opposition leader
- ‘AJK’ PM announces mega development projects of mass public welfare in Neelum Valley
- Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly: A Five-Year Journey of Political Ups and Downs
- Balochistan, ‘AJK’ and GB challenge NFC based on population
- The Polycrisis of GB
- The Role of Social Media in the Upcoming Election of Gilgit-Baltistan 2026
- PPP will never stop support for Kashmiris’ struggle, says Rathore
- Playing both sides

Economic Developments

- Pakistan, ‘AJK’, G-B: ZTBL disburses over Rs234bn loans to farmers within three years
- Work on all-weather Mansehra-Chilas Motorway to begin soon, says minister

Vernacular Urdu Media

- Having cheap electricity doesn’t mean people are to be left without electricity: Khawaja Farooq
- Gilgit-Baltistan Elections Schedule Announced, Polling on 24 January
- The government’s core objective is to highlight the Kashmir freedom Movement: Faisal Mumtaz Rathore

Political Developments

‘AJK’ PM assures timely polls, swift appointment of CEC

Dawn, 2 December 2025

‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on Monday assured that the appointment of the region’s chief election commissioner (CEC) would be made soon and that the next general elections would be held on schedule.

The post of CEC has been lying vacant since January. Under the law, the ‘AJK’ president appoints the CEC on the advice of the ‘AJK’ Council chairman — the prime minister of Pakistan — from among the nominees recommended by the ‘AJK’ prime minister after consulting the leader of the opposition. Former Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq had avoided initiating the process for reasons best known to him, fuelling doubts in different quarters about the timely conduct of the polls.

“We belong to a party that believes in democracy and strengthens the institutions that uphold it,” Mr Rathore said, adding that the PPP government, despite assuming office in difficult circumstances, was striving to restore public confidence. Mr Rathore, who arrived at the ceremony immediately on his return from a three-day tour of Neelum valley, said the purpose of his visit to the area—stretching along the Line of Control (LoC)—was to appreciate the resilience of local

residents and assess their problems first-hand for timely measures before snowfall compounded challenges.

He said that while resources were limited and challenges galore, the government was nevertheless taking serious steps to address public issues. “Although the previous coalition government had shared governance responsibility, it failed to win public confidence. Whereas the present administration is sincerely working to tackle the problems confronting the people and has begun pushing matters in the right direction.”

The prime minister stressed that improvements in key sectors such as health and tourism were indispensable. If these sectors were strengthened and made self-sustaining, issues such as unemployment could be effectively addressed, he said. Even the most difficult tasks, he added, could be achieved with the support of the people.

Highlighting the importance of a responsible, professional and forward-looking media, Mr Rathore said it played a crucial role in a nation’s development by informing public debate, strengthening accountability and building trust between the state and citizens.

“My government would welcome constructive criticism, as it helps us stay abreast of public sentiment,” he remarked. He expressed confidence that the PPP’s central leadership as well

as the federal government would extend full cooperation in addressing 'AJK's issues in line with their commitments.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1958635/ajk-pm-assures-timely-polls-swift-appointment-of-cec>

PML-N's Shah Ghulam Qadir replaces PTI lawmaker as 'AJK' opposition leader

Dawn, 2 December 2025

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) regional president Shah Ghulam Qadir was on Monday designated Leader of the Opposition in the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Legislative Assembly, replacing Khawaja Farooq Ahmed of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI).

Earlier in the day, senior PML-N leader and former prime minister Raja Farooq Haider visited the chamber of Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar to submit an application, signed by all nine PML-N lawmakers, proposing the name of their regional president for the opposition leader's slot, a position that carries perks and privileges equivalent to those of a cabinet member.

Later, a notification issued in the afternoon by a deputy secretary stated: "Under Rule 17(a) of the Rules of Procedure of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly, the Speaker has approved the appointment of Shah Ghulam Qadir as Leader of the Opposition on the basis of the opinion of the majority of opposition members."

Highly placed PML-N sources told Dawn that Mr Haider was also an aspirant for the office, but the party's top leadership — PM Shehbaz Sharif and his elder brother Nawaz Sharif — had approved Mr Qadir's name.

During the recent change of government, PML-N lawmakers had voted in favour of the no-trust resolution against Mr Haq, which subsequently brought PPP's Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore to power. However, they had made it clear that their support was limited to ousting Mr Haq and that they would not be part of the government.

Following the installation of the present assembly in August 2021, Mr Akbar — the incumbent Speaker — had been the first opposition leader on the joint recommendation of the PPP and PML-N.

Interestingly, even after both parties joined the coalition government led by Chaudhry Anwarul Haq — the leader of the PTI renegades — on April 20, 2023, Mr Akbar continued to hold the office until June 3, when he was elected Speaker. Mr Ahmed was subsequently designated Leader of the Opposition on July 11, the same year.

The PTI had originally held 32 seats in the 53-member house, but its two-thirds majority splintered during the formation of the coalition government in April 2023. Of the remaining 22 PTI renegades, 12 have formally joined the PPP, three are aligned with the PPP

without formal induction, and one joined the PML-N. Five PTI dissidents appear to be operating as a separate group, while Pir Saeed's future political course remains unclear. A PML-N lawmaker claimed that two PTI "forward bloc" members from Mr Haq's group were likely to join the PML-N in the near future.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1958662/pml-ns-shah-ghulam-qadir-replaces-pti-lawmaker-as-ajk-opposition-leader>

'AJK' PM announces mega development projects of mass public welfare in Neelum Valley

The Nation, 1 December 2025

Under the spirit to furnish remote and far-flung areas' populations with the latest amenities of life, 'Azad Jammu Kashmir' Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on Sunday announced a series of development projects, including the construction of middle schools in Daurian, Seri Pine, and Dekhan Kot in the top mountainous Neelum Valley of the 'AJK' state, it was officially said.

Addressing a reception at Kaduarian, the Prime Minister said that the government would resolve the problems of the people to the best of its ability, APP 'AJK' Correspondent reports, quoting the authoritative 'AJK' government sources. The Prime Minister continued that since the formation of the PPP government, the political environment had become highly charged. The doors of the Prime

Minister's House, he said, "have been opened for the people," noting that his visit to Neelum Valley was aimed at gaining firsthand understanding of the challenges facing local residents.

The prime minister said the government would prioritize state resources to address the long-standing sense of deprivation in Neelum. He expressed confidence that the PPP would return to power in the next general elections. The Prime Minister also directed the Deputy Commissioner to resolve the graveyard issue of Paldi Seri without further delay.

Meanwhile, addressing a reception ceremony held in his honor at Lawat, the Prime Minister reiterated his government's commitment to removing the sense of deprivation among the people of Neelum. PM Rathore said that he was fully aware of the challenges faced by the local population. He said that a cabinet meeting has been convened to devise a comprehensive strategy for addressing long-pending issues in education, health, and infrastructure. The Prime Minister assured the audience that he, along with the Senior Minister, who also hails from the Neelum district, would work together to resolve all issues confronting the people of the area.

He said the government could not afford to waste time, given its limited tenure. "We have taken responsibility for this six-month government, but

there are many challenges before us,” he noted. The prime minister, however, maintained that he was confident the government would succeed in achieving its goals.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/01-Dec-2025/ajk-pm-announces-mega-development-projects-mass-public-welfare-neelum-valley>

Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly: A Five-Year Journey of Political Ups and Downs

Pamir Times, 1 December 2025

Another chapter in the political history of Gilgit-Baltistan has come to an end. At the stroke of midnight on 24 November 2025, when the clock struck twelve, the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly completed its constitutional five-year term and stood dissolved. These five years were filled with political turbulence, party switching, legislative activity, votes of confidence and no-confidence, changes in leadership, and the persistent echo of public grievances. It was a period when, on one hand, aspirations for development existed, while on the other, shadows of political instability loomed large.

With the dissolution of the Assembly, a new political debate has begun in the region: Will the next elections be possible in February 2026, or do the ground realities of a snow-bound Gilgit-Baltistan demand a different timeline? This article presents a detailed review of the region's political history over the past five years: legislative work, political tug-of-war,

changes of government, shifting loyalties of members, public expectations, and the emerging electoral scenario.

The three-day final session of the Assembly, chaired by Speaker Nazir Ahmad, was a reflection of both the active and inactive legislative activity witnessed over the previous five years. According to data from the Assembly Secretariat:

- 73 laws were passed by the House
- 6 federal laws were adapted for implementation in Gilgit-Baltistan
- 112 resolutions were adopted on various public and administrative issues
- 116 Call Attention Notices were submitted, raising concerns about delays in development projects, electricity crises, departmental negligence, deteriorating roads, lack of healthcare facilities, and other problems

These figures show that despite several storms of political instability, the pace of legislation somehow continued. After the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly elections held on 20 November 2020, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) formed the government with the support of independent members. Khalid Khurshid Khan, who won from Astore-1, was nominated as Chief Minister by the then-party chairman and Prime Minister Imran Khan. High hopes were attached to him, especially regarding

improvement in health, education, and infrastructure. However, after two years and six months, his tenure abruptly ended when he was disqualified in a fake degree case. His disqualification remained a major political topic from Balochistan to Gilgit, and even today political circles debate whether the decision was legal or politically motivated.

After Khalid Khurshid's removal, rifts emerged within PTI. Several members who were part of his own cabinet suddenly formed a forward bloc. Among them were former Home Minister Shams-ul-Haq Lone, Dilshad Bano, Suraiya Zaman, former Speaker Amjad Hussain Zaidi, Raja Nasir Ali Khan, Syed Sohail Abbas Shah, Mushtaq Hussain, Raja Azam, and Abdul Hameed. They recognized Haji Gulbar Khan as their parliamentary leader and, in coalition with PPP, PML-N, and JUI-F, formed a new mixed government led by Haji Gulbar Khan. Thus, the Assembly completed its remaining two-and-a-half years under a second Chief Minister.

Political observers say Khalid Khurshid's disqualification not only shook the government structure but also exposed deep internal divisions within PTI. Many ministers joined the forward bloc to retain their portfolios and reposition themselves in the changing political landscape. On the other hand, some members remained loyal to the party without any ministerial position. These included

Raja Zakaria Maqoon, Javed Ali Manwa, Kulsoom Farman, Wazir Saleem, and Colonel (Retd) Obaidullah Baig, who stood by the party even in difficult times.

Another interesting chapter was the successful no-confidence motion against former Speaker Amjad Zaidi, after which he had to step down. Nazir Ahmad was elected as the new Speaker, and Saadia Danish of the Pakistan Peoples Party became the first-ever female Deputy Speaker of Gilgit-Baltistan—a historic milestone for women's political participation in the region.

During Khalid Khurshid's tenure, the Assembly also passed a highly controversial bill that increased the salaries and privileges of the Chief Minister, ministers, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, parliamentary secretaries, and assembly members by 300%. For ordinary citizens, this decision was hard to understand, especially at a time when the electricity crisis continued steadily, wheat subsidy issues were mounting, government institutions were under scrutiny, and inflation had broken people's backs. Political analysts called it a decision contrary to public expectations.

The Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly consists of 33 members: 24 general seats, 6 reserved seats for women, and 3 technocrat seats. This is the same House that shaped the political, social, and administrative direction of the region over the past five years.

Chief Election Commissioner Raja Shahbaz Khan has announced that the next general elections will be held in February 2026. However, the announcement immediately sparked debate because February is the peak of the harsh winter in Gilgit-Baltistan. Upper areas receive several feet of snow, roads are blocked, movement becomes impossible in many places, and access to numerous polling stations is cut off. Political analysts therefore consider May or June 2026 more suitable, when the weather is better, roads are open, and voter turnout is likely to be higher. Holding elections in winter would adversely affect turnout, especially among women and elderly voters. All these factors pose a major challenge for the Election Commission.

The increase in the number of laws and resolutions passed during these five years is a positive development, but the real question remains: Were these laws actually implemented? Did they bring any real change in people's lives? These are areas that require further investigation.

Two Chief Ministers, forward blocs, no-confidence motions, and the distribution of ministries all proved that political leadership remained under pressure from personal and party loyalties rather than focusing on institutional strength. Many projects were initiated that will reach completion over time, but the government failed to reduce the

electricity crisis, road construction in several areas faced delays, the state of healthcare remained unsatisfactory, and the desired attention was not given to tourism infrastructure. These are the sectors where the next government will have to focus, especially.

Without better governance and institutional reforms, the dream of development in Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be realized. There is a need to improve governance standards and strengthen democratic processes within political parties. The culture of repeatedly switching loyalties must end.

The question of whether Gilgit-Baltistan will finally receive full constitutional representation and rights remains at the center of political debate. This five-year term of the Assembly was, in fact, a political classroom. It taught us that political stability is impossible without strong leadership; lack of party discipline proves damaging; legislation is only useful when it is implemented, and there must be harmony between public expectations and the actions of elected representatives.

Elections should be held when people can easily participate in the democratic process

Now that the Assembly has been dissolved, a new political race has begun across the region. Which party will come to power? Who will be the next Chief Minister? And in which direction will the politics of Gilgit-

Baltistan head in the next five years? The answers to these questions will be provided by the elections, whether they take place in freezing February or after the seasons change and spring arrives in the home of mountains.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/11/29/gilgit-baltistan-assembly-a-five-year-journey-of-political-ups-and-downs/>

Balochistan, 'AJK' and GB challenge NFC based on population

Dawn, 2 December 2025

Differences of opinion surfaced among the federating units over the issue of high population growth in the country, as Balochistan, 'AJK' and GB demanded an end to heavy allocations in the NFC award on the basis of population. Continuing with the overall narrative of various speakers at the 'Pakistan Population Summit 2025' held here on Monday by the *Dawn media* that Pakistan needed a stronger political will to counter the overgrowing population, the session focused on the performances of provinces, as well as 'AJK' and GB.

Speaking at their session, Dr Maleeha Lodhi and former Senator Raza Rabbani talked about the human development crisis in the wake of growing population in the country. They depicted a bleak picture of the future of the youth population in the country due to limited opportunities. Dr Lodhi said that the deficit in human development rarely comes up in parliamentary debate, and the broader

picture remains grim. She also referred to the latest Human Development Report of the UN Development Programme showing Pakistan's ranking drop to 168 out of 198 countries.

Mr Rabbani highlighted that while youth are a significant part of the population, they are excluded from decision-making. "It was like a pressure cooker environment for them." Meanwhile, speaking at the session titled 'Centre-Province Coordination on Population', Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, minister of state for National Health Services, expressed dismay that the situation in Punjab has not changed since the time he was Punjab's population minister and Shehbaz Sharif was the chief minister.

He criticised certain outcomes of the 18th Amendment, adding that segregation of the lady health workers programme and the population ministry was the "worst thing" that happened to the population management programme. He added, "We are only addressing 60pc of the population of Punjab, while 40pc of the urban population is still being neglected because of the absence of the Lady Health Workers programme in the towns and cities."

Former Gilgit-Baltistan lawmaker Javaid Ali Manwa noted that the population segment contributed 82.5 per cent to the National Finance Commission (NFC) award, while

inverse population density made up 2.5 per cent. “This was actually encouraging population growth and GB was a sufferer due to low population. These imbalances needed to be addressed in order for a national framework on tackling the population crisis,” Mr Manwa said.

He pointed out the “contradiction” that, on the one hand, there was a need to manage population growth, but on the other hand, the same factor was a contributor to how many resources a region gets. Similar views were expressed by Raja Muhammad Razzaque, former secretary of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’s Population and Welfare Department, and Shakeel Qadir, chief secretary Balochistan.

“We have a scarce population spread over a very large area, but population welfare policies are formulated keeping in view the mainstream areas of the country,” Mr Qadir said. Mr Qadir as well as Dr Aneela Mehfooz Durrani, secretary Population Welfare Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, noted their provinces had traditional societies and acknowledged there were situations where population management was considered taboo, and women were not empowered enough to make decisions regarding it. Both Balochistan and KP faced terrorism restricting the movement of officials and experts related to service delivery.

Contrary to this narrative, Sindh Minister for Health and Population

Welfare Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, addressing the summit via video link, noted that population management programmes have suffered after devolution, because the federal government had to give Rs10billion to the provinces for population welfare services, but that money did not come through. She highlighted the achievements of Sindh in this regard and added that the province has ample stocks of contraceptives for one year, but sourcing stocks from India, specifically long-acting contraceptives, has been difficult due to worsening relations between the two countries. She suggested that all commodities should be manufactured locally, as it will save foreign exchange as well as ensure availability of stocks.

Nadia Saquib, secretary of Health and Population Department, Punjab, underscored the importance of increasing the coverage of primary healthcare services, but there were various problems, such as absenteeism, healthcare professionals’ non-availability and disgruntled workers. She detailed that the Punjab government had outsourced district hospitals and small clinics to doctors to address these issues.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1958641/balochistan-ajk-and-gb-challenge-nfc-based-on-population>

The Polycrisis of GB

The Nation, 4 December 2025

Gilgit Baltistan has garnered much attention and praise in recent years due

to its eye-catching natural beauty. CNN has put it in the global top 25 where to go list of 2025, which is an unexpected dose of happiness for the mass of GB. It possesses the world five eight-thousand mountains, also greater than 33 states of the world, nearly 733 villages are located within the mountains of GB. More astonishingly, Indus River and Shyoke River flow through these valleys. Such vastness is not common in any other place of the world. HKH has its own unique significance.

The region's geography is at the confluence of the Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindu Kush ranges and is now confronting a polycrisis of climate volatility, rapid urbanisation and an unprecedented tourism boom. These forces usually forecast prosperity, but they also threaten the fragile mountain environment and the social fabric that has held local communities together for centuries. What happens in the next decade will determine whether Gilgit-Baltistan emerges as a model of sustainable development or doom due to its own systemic and unheeded policies, coupled by unsustainable practices. The road ahead of GB would be rutted, rocky and slow if the current practices remained unchanged for the next couple of years.

Climate change has shackled the foundation of the contemporary era and fanned fear among residents of Gilgit Baltistan. In Skardu, which has

become the epicentre of the wider crisis, villagers speak of summers that have grown hotter, glaciers that thin visibly each year and rivers that surge without warning. Ravines like Burgeh Nullah, Sadpara, Basho and Tormik, which once carried modest flows of glacial melt, now unleash violent torrents every monsoon as in the case of recent five years was catastrophic in history. Glacial Lake Outburst Floods, once rare and feared, have become almost seasonal. The federal government's granted Rs. 4 billion relief package was solution for short duration, but the structural adjustment need demands for a modernised disaster-management architecture. The Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) remains under-equipped, reliant on outdated machinery and lacking real-time glacier monitoring systems. In many valleys, residents still rely on hand-dug channels, makeshift bunds and communal labour to protect their homes. Their resilience is admirable, but no match for a rapidly warming climate.

The picture outside Skardu is no less troubling. In Ghizer, repeated GLOFs have washed away farmland and displaced families. Hunza has witnessed entire slopes destabilise as permafrost melts. Astore's changing snowfall patterns threaten both irrigation and hydropower. In Diamer, erratic rainfall has disrupted agriculture and damaged key transport routes. Scientists warn that if these

patterns continue, the region's water cycle, agriculture and food security may face upheaval within two decades, with far-reaching consequences for Pakistan's downstream water economy. Yet climate adaptation remains piecemeal, reactive and chronically underfunded.

Even as climate pressures mount, Gilgit-Baltistan is experiencing a tourism boom unprecedented in its history. Skardu has emerged as the new capital of this mountain economy, thanks largely to the transformation of its airport. Fourteen flights a day now ferry tourists from Islamabad to the valley, turning what was once a multi-day journey into a short visitation. Hotels, cafés and adventure companies have mushroomed, invigorating the local economy and creating new jobs. Airport expansion is underway and, along with planned cargo-handling facilities, points toward deeper integration with national and global markets. Meanwhile, Hunza has become an aspirational brand in itself; the “Hunza view” and “Hunza lifestyle” circulate endlessly on social media. Ghizer's rivers attract anglers, Shigar and Khaplu draw heritage tourists, and Astore, specifically Domail, Minimarag & Ratti has become a favourite for trekkers and families alike.

But prosperity has arrived faster than the institutions designed to manage it. Roads built for local traffic now choke under the weight of thousands of

vehicles. Towns like Kachura has bumpy roads usually remain rushed in summer with a one-way traffic flow, it concomitantly leads to resentments, conflicts and wastage of precious times of tourist and public as well. Meadows and lakes like Sheosar, Ribo, Jharba Xho, Kachura, once crystal now bear the scars of careless tourism. Rents have soared. In some towns, locals fear they may soon be priced out of their own land as the case of Italy and some European countries faced in recent years. Without a coherent tourism master plan, Gilgit-Baltistan risks the fate seen in other over-built mountain regions: a boom followed by ecological degradation, declining visitor quality and deep social frustration.

The construction frenzy is perhaps the most visible sign of this imbalance. Land in Skardu, much of it held by families for generations, is being sold at breakneck speed to outside investors eager to capitalise on tourism growth. The resulting patchwork of unplanned hotels and guest houses has given rise to land disputes, chaotic development and new environmental risks. To its credit, the government has halted the issuance of NOCs for hotels lacking sewage treatment plants or dedicated parking, and has paused construction in particularly fragile zones. Yet enforcement remains inconsistent, hindered by political pressure, administrative capacity and the sheer pace of development.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Dec-2025/polycrisis-gb>

The Role of Social Media in the Upcoming Election of Gilgit-Baltistan 2026

Pamir Times, 3 December 2025

Social media has become one of the most influential forces shaping political behavior in Gilgit-Baltistan as the region prepares for the 2026 elections. Historically relying mainly on traditional gatherings, local radio, and face-to-face campaigning, GB now undergoes a digital transformation driven by Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, and X. These platforms have connected even remote valleys, turning online spaces into active arenas of political debate, campaigning, and public influence.

A major factor behind this shift is the rise of young, digitally literate voters. In areas like Gilgit, Skardu, Hunza, Diamer, Ghizer, and Astore, thousands of youth rely on social media for political news, candidate updates, and discussion forums. Candidates and parties now understand that winning the digital space is as important as holding a public rally. Short-form videos, live sessions, campaign clips, and targeted messages can reach more people in minutes than traditional methods can achieve in days.

The influence of social media on politics is no longer limited to developed nations; it is a global phenomenon. In the United States, social media has been central to both the 2016 and 2020 presidential

elections, influencing national debates, voter mobilization, and campaign messaging, and in the 2024 U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump maintained a powerful grip on platforms like X (formerly Twitter), using rapid messaging, viral narratives, and direct audience engagement to shape public opinion, ultimately contributing to his electoral success. This transformation mirrors trends across the world. In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) built one of the world's largest digital political machines, using WhatsApp groups and viral videos to mobilize distant communities. In the Philippines, platforms like TikTok played a decisive role in the 2022 elections, where influencers shaped public narratives more strongly than traditional media. These international examples show how social media has become a global political battleground, and Gilgit-Baltistan is now part of this worldwide shift.

In Pakistan's context, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) each have distinct digital strategies that are already shaping the political environment of Gilgit-Baltistan. PTI remains one of the strongest digital forces in Pakistan: its large online community, rapid content creation, hashtag trends, and strong youth engagement give it significant influence in GB's online spaces. During earlier GB elections, PTI's social-media teams played a major role in shaping

narratives, highlighting party achievements, and mobilizing young voters. As the 2024 general election approached, PTI increasingly relied on social media instead of traditional campaign methods such as large rallies, especially after restrictions on public gatherings and arrests of its leaders. Its virtual rallies, short-form videos, AI-generated speeches (even used when the party's leadership was incarcerated), and continuous online presence helped maintain its visibility across Pakistan. These online strategies reportedly paid off: many analyses attribute PTI's resurgence to youth turnout, digital mobilization, and social-media campaigning. As a result, PTI made significant gains in several provinces, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), where it formed the government after the 2024 election, while at the national level and in other provincial assemblies, it assumed the role of a major opposition force.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, these developments suggest a growing importance of digital outreach: as PTI's nationwide influence expands via social media, its political messaging, voter mobilization tactics, and narrative framing could increasingly shape local political dynamics. This trend signals how GB is being drawn into a broader shift in which social media, more than traditional campaigning, becomes central to electoral politics across Pakistan.

PML-N has strengthened its online activity as well, particularly by highlighting its development-oriented narrative. The party frequently shares content about past infrastructure projects, governance claims, and national-level performance to connect with GB voters. Their digital approach centers around projecting stability, experience, and leadership, messages that often resonate with older and middle-aged voters who are now increasingly active online.

PPP maintains a strong organic base in many parts of GB, and its social media presence reflects this grassroots character. The party uses digital platforms to highlight its historical connection with the region, share updates from local leadership, and mobilize supporters through emotional and cultural messaging. PPP's youth wings in Gilgit Baltistan are active online, amplifying the party's visibility as the election approaches.

Beyond the parties, social media empowers ordinary citizens. With a smartphone, residents of GB can highlight local problems, water shortages, broken roads, electricity failures, environmental damages, or administrative issues. These videos often go viral and pressure authorities to take quick action. This rise of citizen journalism has increased political accountability and ensured that local voices reach beyond their valleys. However, social media also brings risks. Misinformation, fake news,

edited videos, and biased narratives can mislead voters and fuel unnecessary hostility between supporters of different parties. Online polarization sometimes spills into communities, harming social harmony. There is also a digital divide: villages without stable internet access remain excluded from online campaigns, creating an imbalance in political outreach.

Despite these challenges, social media is empowering voters, especially youth, women, and people from remote areas. It gives them a platform to question leaders, demand transparency, and engage in political discussions that were previously limited to select groups. Candidates now must stay active online, respond to public concerns, and build trust through visible digital engagement.

As Gilgit-Baltistan heads toward the 2026 elections, social media will play a decisive role in shaping narratives, influencing voter choices, and determining which party can communicate most effectively with the public. Digital platforms have brought GB into the global era of online politics, where public opinion can shift with a single video, post, or viral message. Whether used responsibly or misused, social media will remain at the center of political activity throughout the election season.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/12/02/the-role-of-social-media-in-the-upcoming-election-of-gilgit-baltistan-2026/>

PPP will never stop support for Kashmiris' struggle, says Rathore

Dawn, 7 December 2025

The bond between Pakistan and Kashmir is extremely solid and strong and, as such, streets of the entire Kashmir always echo with the slogan of 'We are Pakistanis'. This was stated by Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu & Kashmir' Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore while speaking to media at the Bhuttos' mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto on Saturday. He reaffirmed PPP's unwavering support for the cause of Kashmiris. He pointed out that although PPP government's tenures in 'AJK' remained short, but whenever it got the opportunity, it always raised a strong voice for the rights of Kashmiri people.

"We are the people who live along the Line of Control (LoC) with the Indian 'occupation forces' standing on the other side, yet the people of 'Azad Kashmir' have always stood as a strong wall against the enemy," he said.

He recalled that [executed prime minister of Pakistan] Zulfikar Ali Bhutto fought for the rights of Kashmiris and he had remarked that "even if Pakistan has to fight against India for a thousand years, it will continue to back Kashmiris' struggle until they achieved freedom". Following this vision, Rathore said, former Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto also continued her government's support for Kashmiris'

struggle. Under the same commitment, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is also supporting the Kashmir cause, he added.

The 'AJK' premier also acknowledged: "The credit for PPP's coming to power again in 'Azad Jammu & Kashmir' goes to President Asif Ali Zardari, who has always stood by Kashmiri people". He said that the journey of PPP's electoral politics in 'AJK' had begun with just 11 seats in 2021, and now the number has reached 29, "which is the result of people's trust in its leadership and the hard work it had done." "The next general elections will be held in 2026, and this government will prove to be a trailer for the upcoming elections."

He expressed his confidence that PPP would form its government during the entire period of 2026-2031 in 'AJK' and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is going to become the next prime minister of Pakistan. He noted that the 'AJK' recently faced many issues; movements were launched and people had taken to the street, but Bilawal showed confidence and succeeded in forming his party's government. "Now public sentiments have changed," he added.

The 'AJK' premier said that soon after coming to power, his government introduced the 'health card' for people, and promised that several development projects would also be announced soon. Earlier, the 'AJK' premier paid his respects to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shahnawaz

Bhutto at the mausoleum. He showered rose petals on their graves and offered fateha.

Members of his cabinet, as well as MPA Sohail Anwar Siyal, Larkana Commissioner Tahir Hussain Sangi, DC Dr Sharjeel Noor Channa, District Council Chairman Aijaz Ahmed Leghari, officials of different departments and a large number of party workers were also present.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1959627/ppp-will-never-stop-support-for-kashmiris-struggle-says-rathore>

Playing both sides

Dawn, 4 December 2025

There has been yet another change in the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' Legislative Assembly. The PML-N's regional president, Shah Ghulam Qadir, has replaced Khawaja Farooq Ahmed of the PTI as leader of the opposition. With the 'AJK' government recently passing to the PPP after a carefully orchestrated no-confidence motion against erstwhile 'AJK' Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, both the opposition and treasury benches in the legislature are now in control of parties that are solidly allied at the centre. The question naturally arises: what can be expected from such a House? The opposition is supposed to use its mandate to scrutinise the government and its decisions. By its very nature, it is supposed to be antagonistic: it must challenge, debate and demand transparency in

legislation and budgets. How can a friendly opposition deliver on that front?

It bears remembering that 'AJK' witnessed widespread sociopolitical upheaval in recent months, and its public will be expecting a meaningful pivot in state policy. The issues raised by the Joint Awami Action Committee and echoed by public protesters concerned poor governance, economic distress, the need for structural reforms, questions of representation and improved delivery of justice. The erstwhile government was shown the door following the protests. It would have been natural to expect big, positive changes. However, many will eye with trepidation the wheeling-dealing and politicking seen in the days since, with politicians simply swapping parties and allegiances to align themselves better with the shift in power. The public would have wanted the new government to immediately take visible steps to address their issues. Instead, what they are seeing in its creation is politicians cynically jockeying for positions rather than taking principled positions. Now that the 'AJK' legislature has been reshuffled, both the government and opposition must focus on the task at hand. The people of 'AJK' have already signalled that their patience has run out. They should not be tested further.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1959092/playing-both-sides>

Economic Developments

Pakistan, 'AJK', G-B: ZTBL disburses over Rs234bn loans to farmers within three years

Business Recorder, 6 December 2025

The Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) disbursed loans of over 234 billion rupees to farmers across Pakistan, 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan in less than three years, the Ministry of Finance said in a written reply to the Senate. Of these loans, around Rs 91 billion were disbursed to farmers in the year 2023, Rs 72 billion last year, and Rs 71 billion this year (till 26 November), according to a written reply from the Finance Ministry shared in the Senate session. Shahadat Awan from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) presided over the Senate session.

Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gilani, Deputy Chairman Syedaal Khan, and Leader of the House in the Senate Ishaq Dar did not attend. Zeeshan Khanzada from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had sought from the finance minister the details of loans given to farmers by the ZTBL in the last three years, along with the province-wise break-up.

The Finance Ministry's reply revealed that loans of around Rs 197 billion were disbursed to farmers in less than three years in Punjab, Rs 24 billion in Sindh, Rs 8.3 billion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Rs 1.5 billion in Balochistan, around Rs 3 billion in GB, and Rs 0.3 billion in 'AJK'.

Later, the Senate passed the National Agri-trade and Food Safety Authority Bill, 2025, a government's legislative draft that aims to establish the National Agri-Trade and Food Safety Authority (NAFSA). Law Minister AzamTara presented the bill. The Statement of Objects and Reasons of this bill read that NAFSA will serve as a strategic, and take necessary steps in modernising Pakistan's regulatory infrastructure. "This reform is expected to enhance agro-based trade, improve access to high-end international markets, and ensure the protection of local biodiversity, including both flora and fauna," it says.

Speaking on his calling attention notice regarding text messages being sent to filers by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) "containing bank balance and transacted amount causing breach of financial privacy and data protection," independent Senator Asad Qasim said the FBR can only collect information of the tax payers. But, he said, they cannot "broadcast" it.

He said that the FBR is bound to follow due process of law, send notices to taxpayers, and give them opportunities for explanations before sharing their bank balance. "Which television channel is broadcasting the information of taxpayers?" asked Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry in response.

"If there is any discrepancy in my account, and I am informed about it through a text message, this is not

broadcast—the information of taxpayers is shared only with them," he said. The law minister said the issues involving the taxpayers and the regulator need to be seen from a legal perspective.

He added that the FBR has the authority to ask certain details from the taxpayers. "As long as it is between the taxpayer and the FBR, nobody should object," Tara said. Prime Minister's Political Advisor Rana Sanaullah said that the government is ready for dialogue with the opposition parties to "take the country forward." The Senate has been prorogued.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40396036/pakistan-ajk-g-b-ztbl-disburses-over-rs234bn-loans-to-farmers-within-three-years>

Work on all-weather Mansehra-Chilas Motorway to begin soon, says minister

Dawn, 8 December 2025

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Mohammad Yusuf on Sunday said that work on the all-weather Mansehra-Chilas Motorway, which will pass through Kaghan Valley, would soon be launched. "This artery will be completed within two years and will significantly cut the travel time between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan," Mr Yusuf told reporters.

The federal minister said the motorway, aimed at boosting tourism and rapid connectivity between KP and

GB, was made possible because of the personal interest of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, and Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Haleem Khan.” This artery will not only boost economic and tourism activities within the country but also boost trade with China,” Mr Yusuf said. Yusuf says artery will help boost economic, tourism activities in region

He said the Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhad Road, the only artery connecting KP with GB, remains closed for almost half of the year owing to snowfall from Naran to Babusar Top. “This four-lane motorway will also shift the traffic burden from the Karakoram Highway, making travel more convenient and speedy,” he added.

He said the motorway would bring significant momentum to the tourism industry in both KP and GB. “We want to launch winter tourism in Kaghan Valley through this motorway as the MNJ Road remains closed in winter due to snowfall,” Mr Yusuf said.

He said the country needed such mega projects to bring socioeconomic change to people’s lives, and that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government was pursuing this agenda in letter and spirit.

Schools Rehabilitated

As many as 33 government schools destroyed in the deadly 2005 earthquake and left incomplete by the now defunct Earthquake

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority have now been completed in Oghi tehsil. “We have completed reconstruction of 33 primary, middle and high schools through provincial government funds, and classes will soon begin,” District Development Advisory Committee chairman Akramulla Ghazi said.

Erra had excluded hundreds of earthquake-hit schools from its reconstruction strategy, affecting the education of boys and girls across the Hazara division. “The provincial government released funds for the reconstruction of these 33 schools in Oghi, and students will shortly be shifted to these buildings,” Mr Ghazi said.

The MPA said Rs87 million had been released for the repair of Shergar-Oghi-Mansehra and College roads. “Due to the dilapidated condition of these arteries, people were suffering greatly,” he added. He said the Manchora Dam Road would be re-carpeted as civic agencies had declared the recently completed work substandard.

“People should monitor development schemes in their areas. If contractors are found using substandard material, the matter should be brought into the notice of the relevant quarters,” Mr Ghazi said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1959770/work-on-all-weather-mansehra-chilas-motorway-to-begin-soon-says-minister>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Having cheap electricity doesn't mean people are to be left without electricity: Khawaja Farooq

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 6 December 2025

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central opposition leader 'Azad Kashmir' Assembly, Khawaja Farooq Ahmed spoke about the considerable shortage in electricity supplies and load shedding in Muzaffarabad. Ahmed sked the government to take measures so that people are taken out from such woes. Offering electricity at cheap rates never meant that public will be kept without electricity.

<https://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-06.jpg>

Gilgit-Baltistan Elections Schedule Announced, Polling on 24 January

Urdu Point, 03 December 2025

The Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan has issued the schedule for the provincial elections, according to which polling for the elections will be held on 24 January 2026. According to the notification, candidates can submit their nomination papers from 3 to 8 December 2025, while the preliminary list of candidates will be released on 9 December. The scrutiny of nomination papers will be completed by 16 December. The last date for filing objections has been set as 20 December 2025, and decisions on these objections will be announced on 27 December. The

final list of candidates will be published on 28 December, candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nomination papers on 29 December 2025, and election symbols will be allotted to candidates on 30 December 2025.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-4638348.html>

The government's core objective is to highlight the Kashmir freedom Movement: Faisal Mumtaz Rathore

Urdu Point, 04 December 2025

Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir', Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the primary objective of his government is to bring the Kashmir freedom movement into the global spotlight. He stated that Kashmiris have never accepted India's 'oppressive occupation' and continue their resistance against it. Success in the righteous struggle has given Pakistan a new stature and role in international politics, and the Kashmiri diaspora has consistently kept the Kashmir dispute alive on the world stage. He expressed these views while speaking to a delegation led by Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman of the World Forum for Peace and Justice and a prominent Kashmiri leader based in the United States. The delegation included Sardar Zulfiqar Khan, Sardar Zareen Khan, Dr. Waleed Rasool, Nadeem Khokhar, and others.

Present on the occasion were Senior Most Minister Mian Abdul Waheed, government ministers Sardar Javed

Ayub, Syed Bazl Ali Naqvi, Chaudhry Rafique Nayyar, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Javed Iqbal Budhanvi, Nabila Ayub Khan, former minister Prof. Taqdees Gilani, Secretary Government Muhammad Rafiq Khan, and Director Dr. Raja Sajjad Khan.

The delegation congratulated Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on assuming office and extended their best wishes. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai briefed the Prime Minister on global developments regarding the Kashmir issue and the impact of the government of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts.

The 'AJK' Prime Minister said that India is changing the demographic composition of 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir', all pro-freedom leadership remains imprisoned, complete restrictions have been imposed on freedom of expression, and no voice from Kashmir is being allowed to reach the outside world. In the current situation, the role of the 'Azad Kashmir' government and the diaspora has become even more significant; the real situation in 'occupied Kashmir' must be conveyed to the world.

He further stated that in this just struggle, Allah has blessed Pakistan with numerous successes. Under the wise and courageous leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, the Pakistan Armed Forces have defeated India on every front. The Kashmir issue has once again become a global flashpoint, and the 'Azad Kashmir'

government will fully play its role in supporting the freedom movement.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4639254.html>

From Social Media

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

4 December 2025

Protests at Zameer Abbas Chowk over the kidnapping of a Burmese boy at KKH Chilas location; road closed for all kinds of traffic

#Gilgitbaltistan

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1996578349049934158>

PAMIR TIMES @pamirtimes

2 December 2025

The Role of Social Media in the Upcoming Election of Gilgit-Baltistan 2026

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/pamirtimes/status/1995883363878797849>

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

4 December 2025

Treatment of patients has been stopped at Cancer Hospital Gilgit. They will protest outside the Chief Secretary and Chief Minister's House. Comrade Baba Jan

##gilgitbaltistan

Link to the video:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1996535673634087300>

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Disclaimer

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