

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

Volume 4 | Issue 18

29 April - 05 May 2024

State Subject Rule POK  
Schonter Tunnel Kohala Mangala  
Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project  
Gilgit-Baltistan Awami  
protest CPEC Committees  
boycott campaign Climate change  
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## Political Developments

### **Pakistan-based Kashmiri students announce their support for the Save Gaza campaign**

*Daily Parliament Times, 28 April 2024*

Pakistan-based Kashmiri students announced their support for the Save Gaza campaign and the protest demonstration in front of Bahawalpur Press Club. The protest was attended by a large number of students. Chaudhry Ahsan Hameed, the voice of the Students 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) team leader of the Save Gaza campaign, has started a communication campaign to express solidarity with Palestine and Gaza across the state. The atmosphere in front of the Bahawalpur Press Club echoed with slogans like 'Palestine is ours from the river to the sea' or 'Labaik Yaa Aqsa.' Protesters called for a boycott of Israeli products and suggested providing alternatives. Conscious students who have pain and humanity in the protest demonstration, former chairman of Jammu Kashmir Students Council Islamia University Bahawalpur Irfan Nazir Inqalabi, Jammu and Kashmir Council organization leaders among other students participated.

Pakistan-based Kashmiri students vowed to unite students across the state on a single platform to express solidarity with Palestine and Gaza and continue to strongly condemn the massacre of innocent Palestinian children, youth and elders. Addressing

the protestors on this occasion, protestors said that Israel and India are continuing brutal atrocities on civilians in Palestine and 'Occupied Kashmir.' Kashmiris and Palestinians have the right to resist till the liberation of their motherland from the occupying forces. The student community across the state has to play a key role by starting a joint campaign because the students are the guarantor of the future. It is our first priority to unite the students from any corner across the state for the sanctity of Al-Quds.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/04/28/pakistan-based-kashmiri-students-announce-their-support-for-the-save-gaza-campaign/>

### **Kashmiri students urged to pursue scholarships in Germany**

*Dawn, 29 April 2024*

A visiting German academician has urged Kashmiri students to avail themselves of a wonderful academic life in Germany by tapping scholarship opportunities, particularly those offered by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). In an interactive session with students at the University of Poonch (UoP) Rawalakot, Prof Peter Joseph Boeck, renowned for his expertise in economics and business education, elaborated on the process of direct admissions, which, he said, facilitated access for international students to German universities. This process simplifies the pathway for students from 'Azad Kashmir' and other regions to pursue higher education in Germany, he said.

In response, both the students and faculty expressed gratitude to Prof Boeck for his engagement and guidance. He announced plans for future workshops to further enhance cultural understanding and academic collaboration. Prof Zakir said the UoP was not only nurturing a generation of globally aware healthcare professionals but also fostering a community that celebrated diversity and embraced the richness of different cultures.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1830324/kashmiri-students-urged-to-pursue-scholarships-in-germany>

### **JKLF in Gilgit pays tributes to its supreme leader Late Amanullah Khan**

*Daily Parliament Times, 29 April 2024*

Rich tributes were paid to the late Amanullah Khan on the occasion of his eighth funeral day anniversary in Gilgit during a condolence conference named 'Fikr-e-Aman' held on 28th April in a local hotel by Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and Jammu Kashmir Students Liberation Front (JKSLF) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The chief spokesman of the central information office of JKLF, Muhammad Rafiq Dar said that over two dozen party delegations led by JKLF 'AJK'-GB Zonal President Sajid Siddiqi along with representatives of local political parties and hundreds of participants from Gilgit participated in the conference. The conference was presided over by JKLF GB President Sher Zaman Khan and conducted by Gen. Secretary Eng. Nasir Kapoot while Sajid Siddiqi was the chief guest of the conference. The others who spoke on

the occasion were Vice Chairman JKLF Zia-ul-Haq, Central Deputy Chief Organizer Sardar Muhammad Anwar Khan, Former Member Supreme Council Sardar Rashid Khan, besides representatives of other parties.

According to the spokesperson, the speakers termed Baba-e-Hurriyat and Quaid-e-Tehreek Amanullah Khan a true national hero and paid tribute to him for his valuable services and sacrifices he has rendered for the freedom movement. In their address, all the speakers while reiterating their commitment said that they will continue their struggle under the leadership of incarcerated party chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik in accordance with the guiding principles of the father of the nation Muhammad Maqbool Butt Shaheed and Quaid-e-Tehreek Amanullah Khan until the objective of national independence is achieved.

The chief guest of the condolence conference Mr. Sajid Siddiqi while paying glowing tribute to Quaid-e-Tehreek Amanullah Khan placed a special emphasis on the national unity among the masses in 'AJK' and GB including the diaspora so that their joint efforts can prove effective for the people of 'IOK' during the current suppressive measures undertaken by Modi led government of India. He further said that this may facilitate the release of Yasin Malik and other political prisoners languishing in different Indian jails.

Sajid Siddiqi termed the independence and sovereignty of the State of Jammu

Kashmir as the only dignified solution to the issue that guarantees the region peace. He suggested the government of Pakistan review its Kashmir policy accordingly and demanded the formation of a joint national revolutionary government of both 'AJK' and GB. He supported CPEC and involvement of the GB government as its equal partners. He demanded the termination of the Karachi Agreement and resumption of State Subject Rule in GB along with the opening of the Schonter Tunnel for the benefit of local people. He and all other speakers declared GB as an integral and indivisible part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

At the end of the condolence conference participants paid great tribute to all the martyrs of Jammu Kashmir including Quaid-e-Tehreek, Supreme Head JKLF late Amanullah Khan for their valuable services and sacrifices.

They unanimously demanded their immediate and unconditional release of the chairman JKLF Muhammad Yasin Malik and all other pro-freedom political prisoners. They reiterated that the State of Jammu Kashmir including GB, comprising 84,471 square miles of area and more than twenty-five million people of population, is an indivisible political entity. That the entire population of the State rejects any solution tantamount to the division of the State. The people of the State unanimously condemn the Indian aggression of 5th August 2019 and oppose the proposed plan of the

government of Pakistan to annex GB with Pakistan. Conference participants demand equal participation in CPEC.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/04/29/jklf-in-gilgit-pays-tributes-to-its-supreme-leader-late-amanullah-khan/>

### **GB still faces over 20 hours of outages**

*Dawn, 29 April 2024*

Majority of people in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), including the Gilgit city and Skardu, continue facing prolonged power outages. Over 20 hours' outages daily have paralysed the routine life of residents and business activities. Local residents said in the absence of electricity their activities in every sphere of life had been disturbed. Traders, students and civil society members have been protesting against the power crisis since November last year. Mohammad Ali, a resident of Gilgit, told Dawn that the power department had failed to provide electricity even for six hours daily. Officials had announced that power shortages emerged across GB in winter season owing to the decrease in water flow in the channels of powerhouses.

Government had assured us that electricity supply will increase when weather improved leading to a rise in water flow in streams and rivers, he said. However, so far Gilgit residents are faced with over 20 hours of outages daily. Imtiaz Hussain, another resident, said in the absence of electricity mobile internet also became dysfunctional. Business activities remained shut, education of students suffered and

work of government and non-government officials suspended,' he added. Students cannot prepare for their examination and take online classes while a large number of people affiliated with online business have become jobless.

The tourism activities also remained suspended as hotels, restaurants and camping sites are compelled to close owing to unavailability of electricity. The traders in the area had recently warned the government that they would take to the street if the power supply was not improved. Trade activities are closed in the town and people have become jobless. The communication system and internet are also shut. The residents said the GB government spends billions of rupees funds annually in the name of power generation, but people are without electricity.

They said despite protests, the government paid no heed to resolve the issue. Majority of the residents in Hunza, Shigar, Ghanche, Kharmang, Astore, Nagar and Diamer also have no availability of electricity. The opposition members in GB Assembly also raised the issue but the government failed to settle the prolonged power outages. Local people demanded that the prime minister of Pakistan should take notice of the issue. They also demanded an investigation into alleged financial corruption in the name of power generation.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1830319/gb-still-faces-over-20-hours-of-outages>

## **Gilgit-Baltistan cut off as rains trigger landslides**

*Dawn, 1 April 2024*

A fresh rain and snowfall spell brought life in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) to a standstill, leaving thousands of people stranded on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) after it was blocked at various points due to landslides triggered by the deluge. According to rescue officials, intermittent rain continued across GB and adjoining areas with KKH blocked at two locations in Basari and Lotter in Kohistan due to landslides. The Gilgit-Nagar section of the Karakoram Highway was also blocked along with blockades in Gandlo Nullah and Tatapani (Chilas). The Baltistan Road was also blocked at two points in Roundu, Skardu, due to mudslides. The Chilas section, however, was opened to traffic by the time this report went to press.

Some parts of the region, including areas in the Gilgit city, also faced communication outages due to untimely snowfall received in the upper areas of Astore, Skardu, Hunza, Nagar, Ghanche, Kharmang, Shigar, and Ghizer. Likewise, the flight link of the GB region remained suspended due to bad weather conditions. At least 143 people died in Pakistan from lightning strikes and other storm-related incidents in April, with the country receiving more than twice as much rain as usual for the month.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1830735/gb-cut-off-as-rains-trigger-landslides>

## **Ex-'AJK' PM booked for forcibly trying to take over Centaurus office**

*The Express Tribune, 2 May 2026*

A case has been registered against former Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, for trying to seize the central offices and important documents of Centaurus Mall. The First Information Report (FIR) was filed by Colonel (retd) Tipu Sultan, Deputy Security in-charge of the Centaurus Mall, naming Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Muhammad Ali, Anil Sultan, Rizwan, and other unknown individuals as accused. As per the FIR, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, accompanied by an armed group of 20 to 25 individuals, entered office 1708 of Centaurus Mall by breaking the lock, with intentions to take control of the premises. However, their attempt was thwarted by the vigilant security guards. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas allegedly issued threats to kill Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and Sardar Dr Rashid Ilyas Khan, along with their colleagues. The FIR further states that these individuals subjected the security officer to physical assault, and upon receiving information about the incident, law enforcement officials arrived at the scene, where Sardar Tanveer Ilyas allegedly fired at Colonel (retd) Tipu Sultan, narrowly missing him. It is noted in the FIR that such actions have been perpetrated by the accused in the past.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2464768/ex-ajk-pm-booked-for-forcibly-trying-to-take-over-centaurus-office>

## **Economic Developments**

### **'AJK' minster for industries, trade visits TDAP**

*The Nation, 28 April 2024*

Ms Kausar Taqadus Gilani, Minister for Industries, Trade and Travel, 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) visited Trade Development Authority (TDA), Government of Pakistan, Mirpur. Purpose of the visit was to develop an understanding with stakeholders and create business friendly environment in the region. The meeting was attended by Divisional Officer, 'AJK' small industries corporation Deputy Director, Mirpur Development Authority and representatives from local business community. The Director TDAP, Mirpur (AJK) welcomed the distinguished minister in the office of TDAP. During the meeting, the director, TDA, Mirpur informed the minister about TDA's mandate, facilitation, promotional activities undertaken under the TDA's Annual Business Plan and the upcoming national and international exhibitions.

The minister informed that 'AJK' region has potential in different sectors like handicrafts, medical herbs, tourism, gems and minerals and wooden furniture. She desired that TDA shall organize training sessions and local exhibitions to provide opportunities to the local entrepreneurs to development their business and enter into the profitable business of exports to play their due role in the overall economic development of the 'AJK' and the

country. She has informed that a large number of the 'AJK' citizens are working abroad. These overseas Pakistanis have a great contribution in earning foreign exchange for the country. Policies shall be devised at 'AJK' government level and federal level to attract investment from the overseas Pakistanis. The Ministry of Small Industries and Trade has planned an exhibition to be held in the month of May, 2024 at Islamabad to provide an opportunity to the 'AJK' traders to showcase their products and develop their linkages and promote their business.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Apr-2024/ajk-minister-for-industries-trade-visits-tdap>

### **Reckless behavior of 'AJK' govt major reason of non-payment of power bills: LSDF**

*Pakistan Today, 29 April 2024*

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Life Skills Development Foundation (LSDF) working for public awareness in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), has issued a detailed report on the protest movement of public action committees, public demands and measures taken by the government in the last one year. According to the report, reckless behaviour of the coalition government was major reason behind non-payment of electricity bills by a large number of people in 'Azad Kashmir.' During the boycott campaign of electricity bills, in all major cities including Muzaffarabad, Rawalkot, Mirpur, Kotli, thousands of people took out

processions including wheel jams, shutter down strikes, hundreds of people were arrested.

Over 8 months have passed since the ongoing public sit-ins in many cities. The government before joint public action committee, held dialogues after prolonged delay and then negotiated frivolously. There was no concrete practical progress made to solve important demands, including subsidizing flour at par with GB, providing electricity according to local production costs, reducing the privileges of the ruling class and bureaucrats, and giving powers to local representatives. It was feared that strong protest demonstrations and rallies from platform of Public Action Committees and public march of legislative assembly members in the capital and protest demonstrations on 11 May, would worsen the situation further.

As per LSDF report, the series of public protests in 'AJK' has been going on ever since the Neelum River was diverted from Muzaffarabad, the capital of 'Azad Kashmir', to the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project. However, during the current coalition government, last year organized public protest movements were conducted in an unprecedented manner by public action committees at the city, district, regional and central levels. A Central Joint People's Action Committee was formed, with representatives from all districts, empowered to conduct the movement, including negotiations with the government. The report said that



this public protest movement was also unique in 'Azad Kashmir' because for the past 76 years, no public movement of this type could be started by claiming the resources of 'Azad Kashmir' and the right of ownership over them, in which the entire Azad Kashmir was organized at the public level.

Meanwhile, during the reign of former Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan, through the thirteenth amendment to the interim constitution of 'Azad Kashmir', the right of ownership of the resources of 'Azad Kashmiris' was legally recognized for the first time. On 22 September 2018, Justice (Retd) Manzoor Hussain Gilani and others filed a writ petition filed in 'Azad Kashmir' High Court on behalf of the Government of Pakistan and others in which Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project and Kohala Hydropower Project as well as Mangala Hydropower Project and Mangala Raising Agreement were also discussed. The case was advocated by the well-known lawyer Raja Amjad Ali Khan and Haroon Riaz Mughal Advocate, and the decision was given in favor of the plaintiffs on 15 November 2019.

In addition, the various taxes levied by the Department of Electronics, especially fuel price adjustment charges and Neelum Jhelum project charges were also challenged in the Supreme Court by Shaukat Nawaz Munir and others on behalf of the Government of 'Azad Kashmir' and others through a writ petition. In which

the Supreme Court stopped the Department of Electronics from taking Fuel Price Adjustment.

In the same writ petition, during cross-examination, it was revealed that the Government of Pakistan has been selling electricity to the Power Department at Rs2.59 paisa per unit since 2007, which has created a lot of anxiety in the entire 'Azad Kashmir' because the Power Department has been receiving the NEPRA's decided rate of Rs40 per unit. According to the report, the Awami Action Committees came into being after the protests started in Rawalkot on 8 May 2023 as a result of the flour crisis, which was initially named as Poonch Awami Action Committee. This movement which started from Rawalkot spread all over 'AJK' when the Power Department distributed electricity bills for the month of August.

The government actually dropped a power bomb on the people by introducing two new terms of protected and unprotected in electricity bills and the people who consumed more than 200 units of electricity were left screaming when they received double the electricity bill. Students started a protest in Muzaffarabad against this move of the government, in which businessmen also threw their weight and called for shutter down and wheel jam on 31 August 2024 across Muzaffarabad. In Poonch, the Action Committee made electricity as a topic of discussion along with flour and also included Mirpur where they gave calls for shutter down and wheel jam with

the full support of the lawyer community in both the divisions. During this time, the government of Azad Kashmir increased the price of electricity in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the 'AJK' government refused to implement Pakistan's rising electricity rates in 'Azad Kashmir' and the tariff was frozen after June 2023. Realizing the direction of the situation, the government reached out to the Joint Public Action Committee for negotiations and for this purpose a committee consisting of nine ministers was formed which will hold detailed negotiations with the Public Action Committee. Nine people were selected by the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Public Action Committee for talks with the concerned ministers and the government. During the talks, the Joint Public Action Committee presented ten demands to the government team. Subsidy equal to that of GB should be given on flour. The electricity tariff should be fixed according to the production cost of electricity generated from Mangala Hydropower Project in 'Azad Kashmir.'

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/04/29/record-kless-behavior-of-ajk-govt-major-reason-of-non-payment-of-power-bills-1sdf/>

### **Threats to GB's Ecosystem**

*The Nation, 1 May 2024*

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is a scenic region that lies in the northernmost part of Pakistan. GB nestles a spectacular natural landscape including three mountain ranges, Glaciers, waterfalls,

streams, cold deserts, historical assets, and mesmerizing meadows. The region possesses rich mineral deposits, including precious and semi-precious gemstones, metallic minerals, industrial minerals, and building stones. Gemstones such as ruby, aquamarine, topaz, emerald, and tourmaline have been found in various parts of the region. Additionally, deposits of gold, copper, lead, zinc, limestone, marble, and granite offer immense opportunities for mining operations. GB's geo-strategic location further heightens its significance as this region is the only gateway to China i.e. Pakistan's all-weather friend and crucial geo-strategic and defence partner.

The region shares its border with Pakistan's historic arch-rival and prominent economic power in South Asia i.e. India. It lies close to Central Asian countries, which are landlocked countries and rich in natural resources like oil, gas, and other minerals, through land. GB could provide exclusive and easy access for China, and Pakistan to reach Central Asia by land and expand its market to Central Asia. Beyond all the natural blessings and the region's geopolitical and economic importance, GB suffers from two basic challenges i.e. changing climate and fundamental constitutional rights. GB's quest for identity has never-ending sacrifices and struggles that have remained alive for a long to till date. Climate change is a matter of utmost challenge that is a survival risk to mountain communities.

The region hosts more than 7000 glaciers and according to a UNDP report, there are around 3,044 new glacier lakes that have been formed as a result of glaciers melting at an unprecedented rate due to human activities contributing to global warming. Flash floods, mudflow, and unprecedented and unusual rain and snow patterns have been devastating for the region's human, food, water, and community security. Natural great calamities are worsening life in the mountains where due to any natural calamities local communities and their belongings come under devastation. Infrastructure and people-to-people connectivity by land are damaged and disrupted. People living at high altitudes remain disconnected by land as well as by technology as many mountain communities are still forced to live in stone ages with no network, internet or technologies.

In 2023 flash floods wreaked havoc across GB, causing damage to standing crops and corn fields, cherry and apricot orchards, damages to irrigation channels or hydropower stations have been also recorded which worsened the already vulnerable communities suffering a lot under poverty, least technological and infrastructure development. High floods in various nullahs in Ghizer, Nagar, Hunza, Skardu, Ghanche, and Shigar districts frequently result in total irreparable damages.

The region has no financial structure to adopt climate mitigation strategies and work to raise awareness programs

locally and as well as nationally to alert stakeholders about the consequences of climate change to the mountain communities. The region budget for FY 2023-24 with a total outlay of over 116 billion rupees, 74 billion rupees have been allocated for non-development expenditures while over 28 billion rupees have been allocated for developmental expenditures. Less than 15% budget for the development budget is a huge concern and a signal that authorities and policymakers are slumbering with no focus on getting the mountain communities out of trouble as a result of climate change triggering flash floods, mudslides and unusual snow and rain patterns challenging local farmers.

GB tourism is now at its peak during spring and summer times when local and international tourists in bulk amount visit the region. Currently, according to a report more than half of the GB population is directly or indirectly dependent upon tourism. With access to regional fruits and dry fruits in national and export markets, the region has been witnessing progress in the living conditions of people, getting employment opportunities in the tourism industry. However, the rise in the tourism industry leaves a region prone to more environmental hazards. Tens of thousands of tourists visit the region which in some way is appealing but at the other end is gradually retarding the ecosystem. GB geo strategic importance is deeply rooted in China's One Belt One Road initiative aims to connect

more than 145 countries' markets with China via road channels and infrastructure like railways, highways, dry ports etc. In 2013 President of China announced China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) valued at \$46 billion initially but now it is estimated around \$65 Bn.

CPEC is welcomed and considered as Game changer for Pakistan's economy. GB is the only road to link China and Pakistan and hence it is a gateway for CPEC. Also, the region began hosting international flights direct from Dubai in 2023. This year international flight is scheduled from 29th April 2024, with two flights every week between Skardu and Dubai. This is a landmark and historic to further boost the tourism sector of the region and improve livelihood while generating more job opportunities and markets.

GB's ecosystem is at risk from growing commercial and trade activities between borders. Trade and commercial activities are welcoming but strategies and measures are necessary to cope with the consequences that these trade and commercial activities imprint on the region's ecosystem. Sustainable Policies and financial structures are necessary to ensure sustainable trade and human activities which is the need of the hour to save generations and ecosystems from further devastations and calamities.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/01-May-2024/threats-to-gb-s-ecosystem>

### **'AJK' Legislature approves Rs. 9.120 billion supplementary grant for 'AJK' Social Protection Endowment Fund**

*Daily Parliament Times, 2 May 2024*

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Chaudhry Anwar Haq, while reiterating his commitment to hold corrupt mafia accountable, has said that the government would never compromise on its agenda of across the board accountability. Responding to parliamentarians' queries during the question hour, the PM assured the House that an official inquiry would be conducted regarding the alleged irregularities made in the allotment of plots in Langarpura and Thotha Satellite Towns. Guilty will be sent to the Accountability Bureau, PM said and added that no allotment of plots was made in the said housing colonies during our time.

Responding to the opposition leader's attention notice, the Prime Minister said that rehabilitation and resettlement of migrants and providing them the provision of basic necessities of life was among the top most priorities of the coalition government. He said that the government was trying hard to solve the problems of the refugees on priority basis. Responding to the attention notice of PML-N President Shah Ghulam Qadir, the Prime Minister said that environmental changes has become a global challenge. He that it need an effective plan to deal and that there was a complete ban on tree-cutting and any kind of activities leading to deforestation.

He said that data was being collected in order to compensate victims for the damages caused by the recent rains and snowfall and that an endowment fund was being established under the social protection program under which financial support would be provided to widows, orphans, destitute, divorced and disabled persons. He said that after the implementation of this act, assistance will be given to the destitute people.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/05/02/ajk-legislature-approves-rs-9-120-billion-supplementary-grant-for-ajk-social-protection-endowment-fund/>

### **Safety concerns prompt shutdown of Neelum-Jhelum power plant**

*Dawn, 3 May 2024*

The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) announced that the 969-megawatt Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-power Project (NJHPP), valued at over Rs500 billion, has been completely shut down for inspection. The decision follows a major operational issue detected a month ago, leading to significant pressure fluctuations in the project's headrace tunnel, WAPDA said in a statement. It said that a comprehensive plan would be chalked out in coordination with project consultants and international experts to undertake remedial works to rectify the issue once the problem is traced. A sudden change in the headrace tunnel pressure was observed on April 2. As per the consultants' advice for the tunnel's safety, the project management started operating

the plant at a restricted generation of 530MW on April 6 to monitor fluctuation in the headrace tunnel pressure.

The plant, located in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), continued to operate smoothly at this reduced capacity until 29 April, when further instability in the tunnel pressure necessitated a gradual reduction in power generation. At around 11pm on 29 April, 'further change in the headrace tunnel pressure was observed. Subsequently, the generation was gradually reduced, but the pressure could not sustain within the safe limits as per the advice of the project consultants', Wapda said. Therefore, keeping in view the safety of the headrace tunnel and the powerhouse, the plant was thus shut down at 6am on 1 May for physical inspection of the tunnel to identify the problem leading to reduced pressure.

Based on the detailed discussion with consultants regarding dewatering the 48km-long tunnel, the intake gates at the dam site were lowered for the flushing of de-sanders. Dewatering started from the powerhouse side on the same day and will be executed at intervals to ensure the tunnel's safety. WAPDA said the project had a 51.5km tunnel system constructed in a weak geological and seismic-prone area. Its headrace tunnel is 48km long, while the tailrace tunnel is 3.5km long. About 90pc of the project is underground. The project was earlier closed completely in July 2022 due to major cracks in its 3.5km tailrace tunnel, which were repaired over the next 13 months.

Power generation started again in August-September 2023, attaining its maximum capacity of 969MW on 28 March, according to Wapda.

Within a week, on 2 April, the headrace tunnel's pressure dropped and power production fell to about 400MW, soon after the project was restored to full capacity by international contractors because of debris or cracks in the headrace tunnel. They said the project authorities and contractors, in consultation with Wapda's management, tried in-house emergency measures to restore the project, but the job was greater than anticipated. The authorities did not disclose the fault even to the government until Dawn sought confirmation of the incident, which led to a drop in the tailrace tunnel pressure. On 14 April, however, it was confirmed that generation from the plant had been curtailed due to reduced tailrace tunnel pressure as a precautionary measure to observe the behaviour of pressure fluctuation.

Previous repairs of the tailrace tunnel cost the nation about Rs6bn in addition to about Rs37bn in energy loss during repairs, maintenance and testing over the following 20 months. Wapda has filed about Rs43bn insurance claims for the losses and is reported to have already held a series of high-level meetings on the subject. Since its commissioning in 2018, the NJHPP has so far generated 19.83bn billion units of electricity, including 1.54bn units since the resumption of electricity generation after the rehabilitation of the tailrace

tunnel in August last year. The project's construction began in 2002 after a 21-year delay and was completed in April 2018 — with repeated cost overruns and missed deadlines. The China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC), which was hired in December 2007, performed major construction work, involving about 58 km of tunnels.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1831120/safety-concerns-prompt-shutdown-of-neelum-jhelum-power-plant>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

#### **Action on the wheat issue is being planned: GB Assembly Opposition leader**

*Dailyk2, 29 April 2024*

The opposition leader in the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Assembly, Kazim Maysam, asserted that despite the federal government giving GB wheat, the people are still not getting the requisite seven kilograms of wheat per person. He added that wheat distribution and delivery variations have reportedly surfaced in GB. He claims that since wheat output has expanded and mafias are now involved in black marketing, the people who were supposed to get the required wheat are affected. He said that institutions should not disregard the supply and distribution of wheat and that they would soon share the specifics of the incident in response to a question concerning why the actions against black marketing and irregularities of wheat and flour have been terminated.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/21909>

## **Like Israel, India wants to change the demographics of occupied Kashmir: Vice Chancellor of 'AJK' University**

*UrduPoint, 30 April 2024*

Vice-Chancellor of the University of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (UJK), Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, has criticized India's actions in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. He has called attention to India's use of Israeli-style tactics to change the demographic makeup of areas with a majority of Muslims. Prof. Abbasi stressed the serious consequences of India's actions, calling them an assault on the right to self-determination and a breach of international law, during his speech at the 5th Inter-University English Debate Competition. Speaking to participants in the discussion competition co-hosted by the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Commission (JKLC) and U'AJK', Prof. Abbasi emphasized the similarities between Israel's and India's efforts to influence future plebiscite results by manipulating population ratios in disputed territory.

He emphasized that education has a role to play in educating young people about the Kashmir issue and the significance of viewing it from its real perspective. Abbasi denounced 'water terrorism,' charging India with squandering essential resources to advance its agenda in the region. India's attempts to manipulate water sources and demographics, he

claimed, demonstrate its evil intentions and disdain for the rights of Kashmiris. The director of the Kashmir Policy Research Institute (KPRI), Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan, echoed similar thoughts, stressing the need to teach students about the struggle in Kashmir and giving them a forum on which to express their opinions. He clarified the legal standing of the Kashmir dispute and advised students to exercise caution in their word choice when speaking about it.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/muzafarabad/kashmir/live-news-4000983.html>

## **The Ashraf Sehrai family's sacrifice will always be remembered by 'AJK:' Pasban-e-Hurriyat**

*UrduPoint, 1 May 2024*

A large-scale demonstration in honor of the 'great martyr' Shaheed Ashraf Sehrai is scheduled to take place on his death anniversary, according to Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir. The Sehrai family's efforts for the Kashmir liberation fight, he remarked, will always be remembered by the people of Kashmir. The well-liked leader of the Kashmiri people, he said, has dedicated his seventy years of life to fighting for Islam, the rights of the Kashmiri people, and state independence. The martyr, Ashraf Sehrai, according to Ghazali, battled ceaselessly and forever for Kashmir's liberation. He believed Sehrai had given his life in the resistance effort, and that his son, Junaid Ahmar Sehrai, had likewise achieved martyrdom.

A large number of their family's youth, who are the offspring of martyrs, have committed themselves to either jihad or escaping the 'occupied state', Ghazali insisted. Uzair bemoaned, Sehrai endured the trials of captivity from time to time as well as repeated tyranny and torture at the hands of the Indian rulers. Ashraf Khan Sehrai fought a historic battle for the state's freedom and died in Indian prisons, he continued. He claimed that Sehrai was a courageous leader who chose to be imprisoned rather than submit to Indian authority.

He announced that a huge number of people from various societal segments are expected to attend the memorial rally for Ashraf Sehrai, which would take place in Muzaffarabad on 5 May. In July 2020, Ashraf Sehrai, the Chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, was arrested under the PSA and detained in Udhampur jail. He later complained of dyspnoea on 4 May 2021, as his health began to decline. Following his admission, he passed away in the Government Medical College in Jammu the following day. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association and Sehrai's family both claimed that Sehrai was killed in custody, while the Indian government was also accused of the murder.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4001625.html>

## **21 people have lost their lives in the horrifying bus accident on the Karakoram Highway**

*Pamir Times, 3 May 2024*

According to Faiz Ullah Faraq, the spokesperson of the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), at least 15 people have died in a tragic bus accident that happened close to the Gonar Farm neighborhood of Diamer. Thirteen male and three female passengers have been verified to have died, according to District Commissioner Diamer, Fiaz Ahmed. Five of the injured were reportedly in 'critical condition' after being moved to RHQ Hospital. Bus number LES 8831, run by the Marcopolo Company, plunged into a deep ravine near Yashukhal at approximately five in the morning, causing a sad catastrophe. An emergency has been declared at Chilas Hospital. Haji Gulbar Khan, the chief minister of GB, has given the administration and rescue personnel instructions to treat the injured people as soon as possible.

<https://urdu.pamirtimes.net/2024/05/03/asd-2890/>

### **From Social Media**

**Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan\_Din**

*02 May 2024*

Civil Society Diamer has started a public communication campaign against the occupation of Chilas Hospital and Children's Park by Fuji Foundation's. Members of the civil



society are also meeting with Ulema.  
#GILGITBALTISTAN.

*Images link:*

[https://twitter.com/Rohshan\\_Din/status/1785940951401464317](https://twitter.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1785940951401464317)

**Jamil Nagri** @jamilnagri

2 May 2024

Baltistan Highway is blocked due to landslides at Roundu area of #Skardu, leaving thousands of passengers stranded on both sides. The region has been cut off from the rest of the area for the past two days. A patient is being transported from the blockade site.

*Images link:*

[https://twitter.com/il/bookmarks?post\\_id=1785960474573435002](https://twitter.com/il/bookmarks?post_id=1785960474573435002)

**Basharat Issa** @BasharatIssa

3 May 2024

From the British Empire to the current Chinese & Mainland Pakistani imperialism, Gilgit-Baltistan has been limited to a strategic & exotic estate by completely dehumanising the inhabitants using oppressive state apparatus & policies resulting in an ongoing disenfranchisement.

<https://twitter.com/BasharatIssa/status/1786388193031405590>

# Weekly POK News Digest

Volume 4 | Issue 18

29 April - 05 May 2024

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**Disclaimer**

*PoK weekly News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. MP-IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.*



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