

# Weekly POK News Digest

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

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**Gilgit-Baltistan**  
**wheel-jam hydropower**  
**digitalisation POK**  
**violent clashes**  
**tourism**



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## Political Developments

### **OIC calls for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urges UN to implement resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir**

*The Nation, 6 may 2024*

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and cessation of the all-out aggression against the Palestinian people in Gaza. It also reaffirmed its continued political, moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people, and called upon United Nations Security Council to take effective measures to implement its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir to enable Kashmiri people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through a UN-supervised plebiscite. It underlined the urgent need to resolve the longstanding disputes including Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir as per United Nations' relevant resolutions and wishes of their people to avoid continuous threat to peace and security of the Middle East and South Asia. It also expressed deep concern over the increasing systematic persecution of Muslims and other minorities in India that had led to their political, economic and social marginalization and urged the Government of India to take necessary measures to protect their lives and properties and prevent any such acts in the future.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2024/oic-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza-urges-un-to-implement-resolutions-on-jammu-kashmir>

### **Ashraf Sehrai remembered on his 3rd martyrdom anniversary**

*Pakistan Observer, 6 may 2024*

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter organized a conference in Islamabad to pay tributes to senior Hurriyat leader and Chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai on his third martyrdom anniversary. According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), APHC-'AJK' Convener Mahmood Ahmed Saghar presided over the conference while former JI amir of 'AJK' Abdul Rasheed Tarabi was the special guest on the occasion. Tarabi, addressing the conference, highlighted the precious services of the martyred leader for the freedom struggle. Mahmood Ahmed Saghar on the occasion said that criminal negligence was done regarding the treatment of Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai during his detention, but the Hurriyat leader remained an embodiment of determination and sacrificed his life for the Kashmir cause.

Other speakers paid their respects to the martyred leader and said that the ugly face of India was exposed by his martyrdom and a new chapter of sacrifices was created in the history of the freedom movement. Referring to the statement of Pakistan Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir regarding Kashmir, they said that this statement raised the morale of the Kashmiri people engaged in the freedom struggle and gave a clear message to

the occupying power. They said now there is a need to implement this statement and make a strategy to stop Indian state terrorism, stop India from serious rights violations and take immediate steps to save the lives of illegally detained Hurriyat leaders.

The speakers emphasized the need to release all detainees, cancel all black laws in the 'occupied territory', withdraw Indian troops, stop false cases and fake encounters and resolve the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of the Kashmiris and the resolutions of the United Nations. In the conference, the deaths of Hurriyat activist Abdul Sattar Chacha and mother-in-law of Hurriyat leader Javed Iqbal Butt were condoled and solidarity was expressed with the bereaved families. The conference was attended by various hurriyat leaders in addition to other civil society members.

<https://pakobserver.net/ashraf-sehrai-remembered-on-his-3rd-martyrdom-anniversary/>

### **Mushaal lauds COAS**

*Daily Times, 6 may 2024*

Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation and wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader, Muhammad Yasin Malik, has hailed the Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's unwavering support to the people of 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) in their struggle for right to self-determination. Mullick in a statement in Islamabad said that the army chief's remarks on Kashmir that

Pakistan would continue to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmir brothers was a source of inspiration, as it would give a new impetus to the ongoing Kashmiri freedom struggle. The Hurriyat leader said that the Pakistani army chief's assertion was a reminder to the brave Kashmiri freedom fighters that they were not alone in their just fight, as entire Pakistan was firmly standing by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their pursuit for freedom to break the shackles of Indian slavery.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1192319/mushaal-lauds-coas/>

### **Gaza to Kashmir**

*The Nation, 6 may 2024*

Ashraf Sehrai is one of the many names who fearlessly spoke up for 'Indian-Occupied Kashmir' (IOK) for as long as he lived. Yesterday, his third death anniversary was observed. His death in Indian captivity is one grain in the desert of oppression 'Occupied Kashmir' has witnessed. Looking closer, the projection of 'all is well' turns out to be a masquerade only. The ruling BJP in India is perhaps well aware of what it has brought on Kashmir since Article 370 and hence the special status of the valley was revoked. And that is exactly why there is no single candidate of the BJP contesting elections from Kashmir.

Kashmir's indigenous All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) under the chairmanship of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq survives as one key unified

symbol of the Kashmiri freedom struggle. India, after banning various factions of Hurriyat one after the other in recent months, will soon come for the remaining political leaders and parties that represent the actual will of the native Kashmiris. The similarities in India and Israel are striking when it comes to their years of history as perpetual oppressors. Tied otherwise in an unbreakable defence partnership, both countries converge on these morally indefensible tactics. It should not surprise us that India uses similar oppressive tactics in Kashmir as Israel does in Palestine and especially Gaza these days, right?

Mass graves in Kashmir and excessive use of rape to inflict moral damage are well-documented crimes India has committed in Kashmir. Not to mention the tying of civilians to military cars as human shields. While Omar Farooq reiterates the cause, it reminds each one of us that Kashmir is far from settled.. India's one-sided forced action does not settle it for the Kashmiris who have opened their eyes dreaming of nothing but freedom. This stance must be repeated at all times on all fora so that the world knows that this political issue requires a political settlement.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2024/gaza-to-kashmir>

### **Two suspected Kashmiri separatists killed in clash with Indian forces**

*The Express Tribune, 7 May 2024*

Two suspected separatists were killed in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir' (IIOJK) during a firefight with soldiers, police said, at a time when campaigning for national elections is underway in the disputed territory. Scores of soldiers besieged a residential area in southern Kulgam district, some 70 kilometres (43 miles) from 'IIOJK's biggest city Srinagar, after armed separatists were suspected to be present inside a house. Two bodies of the suspected separatists were recovered so far from the site, police said in a statement posted on social media platform X.

Separatist groups opposed to Indian rule have for decades waged an insurgency in 'IIOJK', demanding either independence or a merger with Pakistan. The conflict has left tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and separatists dead. Violence and anti-India protests have drastically reduced since 2019, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government cancelled the Muslim majority region's limited autonomy. But clashes between security forces and separatist groups have increased since voting began last month in India's six-week election.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2465563/two-suspected-kashmiri-separatists-killed-in-clash-with-indian-forces>

### **PM 'AJK' welcomes the 34-point declaration of OIC**

*Daily Parliament Times, 7 May 2024*

Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir', Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has welcomed the 34-point declaration of the OIC in which the Muslim body

reiterated its all-out support for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination and called for an early settlement of the dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions. Haq also welcomed the OIC conference's demand seeking the UN Security Council's role to implement its resolutions on Kashmir to help the Kashmiri people to determine their political future. He hailed Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar for raising the issue of Kashmir vociferously at the OIC summit held in Gambian capital.

He said that Mr. Dar's demand for an immediate end to Indian atrocities in 'Occupied Kashmir', release of political prisoners and withdrawal of the actions India took to forcibly integrate the occupied state into India were genuinely justified. The PM said that it was incumbent upon the international community to resolve the long pending dispute peacefully.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/05/07/pm-ajk-welcomes-the-34-point-declaration-of-the-oic-in-which-the-muslim-body-reiterated-its-all-out-support-for-the-kashmiris/>

### **Elections 2024: what's in it for Kashmiris?**

*Pakistan Observer, 9 May 2024*

The delimitation plan and new voting rules faced strong opposition from Kashmiris, raising doubts about the credibility of these elections. Delhi's use of force and deception in Kashmir has historically backfired, fueling resentment and resistance among the

local population. It is unlikely that this pattern will change in the foreseeable future. Although India has always viewed elections in 'Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK), either State Assembly or Lok Sabha, from a strategic and security point of view, with a couple of objectives; firstly to legitimize its rule in the territory and secondly and most importantly to portray participation of people of Kashmir in Delhi-backed polls as a proxy for their faith in Indian government and show the world that all is well.

But contrary to Indian portrayal, Kashmiris have always perceived the state assembly elections in the 'occupied' territory as provision of an opportunity to address their day to day affairs. For them, polls in Kashmir have nothing to do with the disputed status of the 'occupied' territory. And as far as Lok Sabha polls are concerned Kashmiris have never shown enthusiasm in joining the bandwagon. They always believe that it is an opportunity for political stalwarts to have a seat in New Delhi, instead of aligning with the voters. Successive governments grappled with controlling the violence in the region. In August 2019, the Modi government, in line with a pledge to its right-wing supporters, unilaterally revoked the state's autonomy, dividing it into two territories under central government authority.

Since then, the BJP has opened up the state, allowing outsiders to purchase property and register to vote in

Kashmir for the first time. Over 2 million new voters have been registered, raising concerns among many who fear that the government is attempting to alter the demographic composition of the state, which currently has a Muslim majority. The redrawing of the electoral map has sparked accusations of gerrymandering, as the reshaped constituencies appear to divide the Muslim vote in Kashmir, potentially benefiting the BJP in elections. The constitutional changes made in 2019, coupled with the large military presence of around a million soldiers in the region, have sparked significant public discontent in Kashmir.

Many Kashmiris view the Modi government's actions as turning Kashmir into a 'police state' marked by arbitrary detentions, high incarceration rates, and pervasive surveillance, instilling a climate of fear. Beyond the military presence, the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 has eliminated the exclusive rights of local residents over land ownership and government jobs. Subsequent laws introduced by the central government have further fueled resentment, allowing non-locals to buy land, obtain residency, and apply for government positions in the region for the first time.

These changes have raised concerns among Kashmiris that the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led central government is seeking to alter the demographic composition of the only Muslim-majority region in

India. The perception among many Kashmiris is that the government is pursuing a 'civilizational project' to assimilate Kashmir into Hindu India. The lack of representation of the majority community in key administrative positions and the imposition of non-local officials have reinforced this belief, with former Chief Minister Abdullah highlighting the marginalization of local officers.

Political life in Jammu and Kashmir has stagnated, with no regional elections held since 2014 and the absence of a functioning elected government since 2018. The Modi government's crackdown on politicians and media in the region, including the arrest of mainstream politicians and journalists, has further stifled political activity. The arrests targeted not only Hurriyat leaders but also pro-India politicians, leading to a sense of betrayal among those who had engaged with the Indian democratic process.

One such politician, Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, a youth leader from the People's Democratic Party, was once seen as a potential chief minister but was arrested under anti-terror laws in 2020. His experience of being detained and tortured has shifted his perception of the Indian state, reflecting a broader disillusionment among Kashmiris. The absence of elected representatives has left Kashmiris feeling abandoned and powerless, with political party offices in Srinagar inundated with people seeking assistance despite the limited authority of the politicians there. Jammu and Kashmir is on the path to

regaining its statehood nearly five years after the revocation of Article 370. The region has undergone significant political changes, including the downgrading to two union territories and the reconfiguration of assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies.

The former state's six parliamentary seats have been reduced to five, with one seat allocated to Ladakh. Voting in Jammu and Kashmir will take place in five phases, with the results announced on 4 June, according to the Election Commission. In 2019, NDA won 2 seats and JKNC won 3 seats while the Ladakh (part of J&K at the time) seat was won by BJP.

The BJP has not yet clarified whether it will participate in the elections in Kashmir or support other candidates, creating uncertainty in the political landscape. The party's spokesperson in Jammu and Kashmir, Altaf Thakur, mentioned that they will announce their candidates for Srinagar and Anantnag seats soon. However, he did not disclose any potential names. Former Chief Minister of 'occupied Kashmir', Omar Abdullah, interpreted Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's recent statement as an indication that the BJP may not nominate candidates from Kashmir in the current Lok Sabha polls. Abdullah sees this as a sign of the BJP's waning support in the region since the events of 5 August 2019, and challenged the ruling party to field candidates from Kashmir.

The BJP is currently hesitant to announce its candidates, possibly due

to concerns about potential losses in the upcoming elections. The decisions made by the BJP on 5 August 2019, regarding the revocation of the special status of 'IIOJK' have increased resentment and alienation in the region, which could backfire on the BJP. The BJP's history of antagonizing Kashmiris and their state, coupled with their aspirations for a third term, puts the two regional parties of Kashmir, PDP and NC, in a difficult position. If they align with the BJP-led NDA, they risk losing their electoral base in the Valley. On the other hand, if they join the Congress-led alliance, their chances of power-sharing in a future administration of 'Occupied Kashmir', should the BJP return to power, may diminish significantly.

Both parties are facing a dilemma, as seen in their recent statements. Dr. Farooq Abdullah indicated in an interview with India Today (Feb 15, 2024) that his party would contest independently but hinted at a potential future alliance with the BJP-led NDA. However, his son and Vice President of NC, Omar Abdullah, quickly clarified the party's stance, ruling out any possibility of leaving India and aligning with the BJP-led NDA. It is worth noting that the NC was previously a coalition partner with Vajpayee's NDA, with Omar Abdullah serving as the union minister of state for external affairs from 2001 to 2002. India has long sought to colonize Kashmir, treating it as a colony to exploit its resources and control its people. The abrogation of



constitutional provisions in 2019 marked a shift towards settler-colonialism, enabling Indian settlers to take over Kashmiri lands.

<https://pakobserver.net/elections-2024-whats-in-it-for-kashmiris/>

### **Modi skips election in 'Indian-occupied Kashmir' as critics dispute integration claims**

*Dawn. 9 May 2024*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is criss-crossing the country in a marathon election campaign but, for the first time since 1996, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is not contesting in 'Indian-occupied Kashmir' (IoK), where a 35-year freedom movement against New Delhi's rule has killed tens of thousands of people. Instead, the main contenders for the three seats in the Muslim-majority region are powerful local parties, the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). They will contest against each other but both say they are opposed to the Hindu nationalist BJP and will align with the Congress party-led opposition alliance.

Analysts and opposition parties say the BJP decided to skip contesting the election because the outcome is likely to contradict Modi's narrative of a peaceful, more integrated 'IoK' since he removed the region's semi-autonomous status in 2019 and brought it under New Delhi's control. The BJP, along with allies, is contesting in every other part of India and is tipped to win a majority of parliament's 543 seats on

the back of its Hindu-first image. Why are they absent from the election? asked Omar Abdullah, a leader of the National Conference and a former chief minister of Jammu And Kashmir State. "Clearly there is a gap between what the BJP claims to have done and the reality on the ground," he said, speaking in his home in 'IoK's main city, Srinagar.

Modi says his 2019 decision brought normalcy to 'IoK' after decades of bloodshed and that he will bring investments and jobs soon. Home Minister Amit Shah backs up the government's position by claiming that youths now hold laptops in their hands instead of 'stones that they used to throw at security forces in the past.' As part of the move, the Jammu and Kashmir state was split into two federally ruled areas—the Muslim-dominated Kashmir valley with the Hindu-dominated Jammu plains, and mountainous, Buddhist-dominated Ladakh.

Ravinder Raina, the chief of the 'IoK' unit of the BJP, said the party's decision to skip the election was part of a broader strategy, although he declined to give specifics. The BJP will not fight, but support a candidate who will work for peace, happiness, brotherhood and democracy in each of the three seats, he said.

#### *Alienation, discontent*

Interviews with over a dozen residents, political leaders, security officials and analysts in 'IoK' and New Delhi indicate that discontent and alienation

continue to simmer in the heavily militarised Himalayan region.

Although there are fewer restrictions on people's movements compared to five years ago, there are still tens of thousands of troops in the valley to enforce the peace. For decades, residents and human rights groups have accused Indian security forces of atrocities against the mainly Muslim population. Indian military data shows there are over 100 active fighters in the region, who allegedly target security forces and workers from other parts of India. Fighters killed an air force soldier in an attack on a military convoy on Saturday, officials said.

The absence of an elected system over here is an indication of the fact that things are not as they are portrayed, said Sheikh Showkat Hussain, a retired law professor in Srinagar. 'They (the BJP) should have treated [this election] as a referendum in their favour. But they seem to be scared.' In the May 2019 general election, the BJP contested all three seats in 'IoK', losing them to Abdullah's National Conference. This year, BJP is contesting the two seats in Jammu and one in Ladakh, all of which it had won in 2019. Mehbooba Mufti, the chief of the PDP, is contesting from the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, which many believed might have been the BJP's best bet to enter 'IoK' in this election.

### *Gerrymandering*

In 2022, a federal government-appointed commission changed the

borders of constituencies in 'IoK.' Anantnag, which had around 1.6 million largely Muslim votes in 2019, it added around 1m mostly Hindu voters from Jammu's Poonch and Rajouri districts. Mufti told Reuters that by clubbing them, the Modi administration was 'changing the balance of the voters.' The BJP, she said, wants to 'disempower and they want to divest, dispossess Muslims, especially the Kashmiris.' National Conference's Abdullah also claimed that the redrawing of the district was done to give BJP an 'advantage.' But they still didn't field a candidate, which tells you just how bad things must be for the BJP, Abdullah said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1832466/modi-skips-election-in-indian-occupied-kashmir-as-critics-dispute-integration-claims>

### **1 police officer dead, over 90 injured in 'AJK' clashes**

*Dawn, 12 May 2024*

'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) witnessed violent clashes on Saturday between the police and activists of a rights movement amid a wheel-jam and shutter-down strike across the territory, leaving at least one police official dead and more than 90 others injured, officials said. Mirpur Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kamran Ali told Dawn.com that Sub-inspector Adnan Qureshi succumbed to a gunshot wound in the chest in the town of Islamgarh where he was deployed along with other police personnel to stop a rally for Muzaffarabad via Kotli

and Poonch districts under the banner of the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC).

The JAAC, which has traders at the forefront in most parts of the state, has been seeking the provision of electricity as per hydropower generation cost in 'AJK', subsidised wheat flour and an end to the privileges of the elite class. Around 70 JAAC activists were arrested by police during raids at their residences and those of their relatives in Muzaffarabad and Mirpur divisions, triggering serious clashes in Dadyal. The committee had subsequently announced a shutter-down and wheel-jam strike on Friday, a day ahead of its planned long march towards Muzaffarabad today. Amid a crippling strike on Friday, fierce clashes between police and protesters were witnessed in different areas of Muzaffarabad. Authorities had placed mounds of earth on arteries leading to Muzaffarabad, apart from making more arrests, to prevent people from heading towards the state capital.

Witnesses said that Muzaffarabad division and Poonch division observed complete strikes. SSP Yasin Baig said at least one police officer and a young boy were injured as police resorted to teargas shelling and aerial firing in some neighbourhoods after being pelted with stones and bottles by protesters. Kotli SSP Mir Muhammad Abid said in a statement that at least 78 policemen were injured in the district in 'attacks of miscreants under the guise of protest.' The SSP said 59 policemen, including Deputy

Superintendent of Police Ilyas Janjua, and two revenue department officials were injured in Rehaan Galli while another 19 policemen were injured in Sehnsa Baroiyan. A press release from the District Headquarters Hospital Kotli said apart from the 59 wounded policemen, nine injured protesters were also brought to for treatment.

JAAC spokesperson Hafeez Hamdani made it clear while talking to Dawn.com that the action committee had nothing to do with violence. It seems that such elements have been purposely planted in the ranks of protesters to bring a bad name to a struggle that aims nothing but the legitimate rights of the people, he said. Addressing a press conference, 'AJK' Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan said that the government had exercised maximum restraint and is ready for talks to peacefully address all contentious issues. Issues have to be resolved through dialogue and our doors are always open for negotiations. But the offer should not be misconstrued as a weakness of the government, he said.

He regretted that 'AJK' was an ideal region in terms of peace and security and by destroying its peace, not only problems have been created for the locals but the tourism industry has also been badly affected. The minister said three vehicles of government officials in Kotli and Mirpur districts were torched while an assistant commissioner was beaten in Dodiya town by 'miscreants' and police officials were also made hostage at

different places that ‘prove the vested interests behind the protest call.’

He said the government had accepted all demands of the action committee after which an agreement was signed between the committee and government negotiators, including the provision of targeted subsidy on flour and freezing the electricity tariff on June 2022 levels, but the committee later deviated from the agreement and announced a protest on new demands. He said the law would take its course against the ‘miscreants’ and the government would bring out all its capabilities and resources to maintain order and peace in the region and the safety of the life and property of the people would be ensured.

PML-N regional president Shah Ghulam Qadir termed the entire situation ‘inappropriate’ and called on all actors to play their role in establishing peace. He said he had talked to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and alerted him about all demands of the protesters. PML-N regional secretary general Chaudhry Tariq Farooq said: If the powerful and responsible circles in Pakistan have any concern about the people of ‘AJK’, they should pay immediate attention before it’s too late. Former ‘AJK’ premier and senior PML-N leader Raja Farooq Haider urged the demonstrators to protest peacefully for resolution of their demands and not take the law into their hands and damage government properties.

Former president Arif Alvi said the imagery coming out of ‘AJK’ was the ‘real brutal input of those who think, believe and act on their rudimentary idea that: ‘Force is the only solution to all human problems.’ PTI senior leader Omar Ayub said: ‘The situation in ‘AJK’ is extremely serious. It has been created due to the mishandling of Shehbaz Sharif and the PML-N government. The PTI said that the continuous harassment and violence against peaceful protesters in ‘AJK’ is absolutely unacceptable and condemnable, adding that ‘such [policies] are dangerous for Pakistan and represent a direct threat to democracy.’ The party also shared videos, unverified by Dawn.com, of clashes between police and protesters.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1832886/1-police-officer-dead-over-90-injured-in-ajk-clashes>

## [Economic Developments](#)

### **Condition of KKH to be improved, GB assured**

*Dawn, 6 May 2024*

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem assured Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan at a meeting that dilapidated condition of Karakoram Highway (KKH) and Baltistan Road will be improved to stop frequent fatal accidents on the highway and to make travel completely safe for the people using it. He admitted difficulties being faced by the GB people owing to dilapidated road infrastructure and frequent blockades

due to landslides and accidents due to bad condition of KKH and Baltistan Road. The minister also announced construction of Motorway from Mansehra in KP to GB and said Motorway police will be deployed on KKH to ensure safety of people.

The meeting was also attended by GB Minister for Communication and Works Amjad Ali Zaidi, Minister for Finance Muhammad Ismail, Minister for Agriculture Muhammad Anwar, Minister for Power Mushtaq Ahmed, GB government spokesman Faizullah Faraq, Director General of Frontier Works Organization (FWO) Major General Abdul Sami and Federal Secretary Communications. The federal minister said that GB has vast tourism potential and millions of tourists will visit the region after condition of roads and highways is improved. Mr Aleem said there is a need to make GB safe for future generations and to achieve this objective unplanned construction must be stopped. He assured the GB chief minister that the federal government will provide all possible financial support to the GB government for speedy development of the area.

Later, the federal minister visited Skardu with officials concerned to inspect the dilapidated road condition himself and take steps to make travel of the people safe and secure on it. Speaking on the occasion, the GB chief minister said that several precious human lives were lost due to frequent landslides at several places on Baltistan Road and the road remains closed most

of the time due to which the people and tourists of Baltistan face great difficulties. The chief minister informed the federal minister that the KKH is often closed at Tatta Pani in Diamer area due to which people travelling on the road had to face extreme difficulties. The chief minister demanded the federal government to provide funds for building an alternative road and constructing bridge at the Tatta Pani area.

He said that due to frequent landslides, access of GB people with the rest of the country is blocked and there is a dire need to construct Shunter Tunnel and funds for it should be provided by the federal government as it will serve as an alternative route for the people of the area. The chief minister also suggested making Babusar Road safe for all-weather travel.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1831697/condition-of-kkh-to-be-improved-gb-assured>

### **GB raises record Rs3bn in July-March**

Dawn, 7 May 2024

For the first time, the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Finance Department collected a record Rs3 billion in the July-March period of the current fiscal year. GB Finance Secretary Aziz Ahmed Jamali said that a multi-pronged strategy has been developed to generate revenue from tourism, power, minerals and other sectors. The efforts aim to make the region financially self-sufficient since the GB government relies on the federal budget to meet its current and development expenditures. He said the

department recorded a 46 per cent increase in revenue collection over the same period last year. Another effort towards efficiency is the digitalisation of revenue receipts, which is being done in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan and 1-Link, he said. Massive recoveries, especially in the power sector and reduction in costs whereby reallocating 115 official vehicles including luxury land cruisers saved Rs500 million so far this fiscal year, Mr Jamali said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1832008/gb-raises-record-rs3bn-in-july-march>

### **‘UAJK’ launches landmark Economic Conference to Shape Region’s Future**

*Daily Parliament Times, 8 May 2024*

The University of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (UAJK) is set to inaugurate a pioneering conference focusing on the economic landscape of ‘AJK’. Titled; ‘The Economy of ‘AJK’: Unlocking the Potential,’ the event commences on 9 May at the scenic King Abdullah Campus at Chatter Kallas. Distinguished attendees from academia, research, industry, and national and regional economists, will convene to delve into critical economic discourse during the two-day conference. Organized in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), the conference’s opening ceremony will take place at the King Abdullah Campus Chatter. The ceremony aims to foster collaboration and chart a sustainable economic trajectory for

‘AJK’, with discussions spanning tourism, skill development, industrial policies, investment promotion, and infrastructure development.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/05/08/ujk-launches-landmark-economic-conference-to-shape-regions-future/>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

#### **GB CM has written a letter to the Prime Minister requesting that the Motorway Police be deployed on KKH**

*Urdu point, 6 May 2024*

The Chief Minister (CM) of Gilgit Baltistan (GB), Gulbar Khan, has appealed to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to send highway police to the Karakoram Highway (KKH). In light of the recent spate of deadly accidents on the KKH, Chief Minister Gulbar Khan emphasized the necessity of highway police deployment for safe travel. Gulbar declared that he has commanded the taking of steps to avert similar tragedies in the future as well as an inquiry into the recent disaster that occurred close to Chilas. Along with taking lives, the Chief Minister pointed out that these mishaps are hurting GB’s tourism industry as well.

This is an appropriate time to recall that in December of last year, unknown assailants started fire at the bus heading towards Rawalpindi from surrounding hills in Chilas, resulting in the vehicle colliding with a cargo truck and at least 10 casualties, including two soldiers. Deputy Commissioner

Diamer Captain (Rtd) Arif Ahmad provided details of the incident, stating that it happened in the Chilas district and involved an unidentified assailant shooting a passenger before the out-of-control bus crashed into a vehicle.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-4006046.html>

### **It is no longer possible for Kashmiris to coexist with India: Speakers at a Conference**

*Urdupoint, 7 May 2024*

The Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed District Press Club held a conference recently in Khursheed Hasan Khursheed Hall, with the topic being the history and current state of the Kashmir liberation movement. A large number of dignitaries and civil society members attended the meeting. Chaudhry Ibrahim Zia, the former Chief Justice, Minister Chaudhry Rasheed, and the District President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf were also present during the conference. Syed Yasir Naqvi Advocate, Agha Safir Kazmi, Malik Muzamil Aslam, Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, Mushtaqul Islam, Syed Adil Abbas Naqvi, Raja Muhammad Aslam, DG Liberation Cell, Raja Azhar Ali Geelani, and others also spoke.

The conference presenters while bringing up the Kashmir issue, reminded people that when a nation harbors such intense animosity toward a specific authority (India), it spirals out of control. He emphasized that

Kashmiris had no possibility left to live in harmony with India and that the duration of this enforced domination would soon come to pass. The Burhan Wani District Press Club was established on 3 July 2023, as announced by Press Club President Sardar Younis Niazi during the function. Its main objective is to raise awareness of Pakistani ideology, the liberation movement in Kashmir, and the welfare of journalists.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4008726.html>

### **A rally was held to pay homage to the Pakistan Army organized by the Refugee Youth Alliance of 'Azad Kashmir'**

*Urdupoint, 8 May 2024*

In remembrance of the Pakistan Army and their sacrifice, the Refugee Youth Alliance of 'Azad Kashmir' conducted a rally. In addition to expressing gratitude, the speakers recognized the unparalleled sacrifices made by the Pakistan Army martyrs for the nation. A considerable number of locals and youth attended the demonstration. Chants of 'Long live Pakistan, Long live the martyrs of Pakistan Army' and 'General Asim Munir step forward, we are with you', were raised during the event, along with banners and slogans supporting Kashmir Azadi, the Pakistan Army, and its unsung heroes. Leaders of the Hurriyat, including Aamir Abbasi, the chairman of the Refugees Youth Union in 'Azad Kashmir', Sardar Khursheed Awan, the

chief organizer, President Refugees Camp Zero Point Chaudhry Shah Wali, MD Burhan College Hamza Shaheen, Chairman Refugee Youth Siddique Dawood among others were present at the rally.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4011249.html>

**On May 11, everyone should leave their homes in a coordinated manner to participate in peaceful protests: Advocate Zahid Amin**

*Urdupoint, 9 May 2024*

Former chairman of the Prime Minister's inspection and Import Commission Zahid Amin Advocate has declared that on 11 May, people should quietly congregate in harmony and unison outside their homes. He vowed that he would stand by the brave people who fought for civil rights in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) on 11 May. After wasting three more months, the government is now making the historic mistake of deploying force to suppress the nonviolent civilian movement. The haughty leaders of the independent government executed a plan that was mercifully delayed by ten months, and they paid no attention whatsoever to the legitimate demands of the people. The independent government has the authority to give the people inexpensive flour and cheap electricity. However, according to him, the 'AJK's current rulers' malice is now apparent since they have eroded the moral,

democratic, and legal foundation of free government by using force and coercion against citizens who are demonstrating for their constitutionally guaranteed rights.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4011248.html>

**The Indian and Israeli agenda is to create instability in 'Azad Kashmir': Ali Qamar Zaman Awan**

*Urdupoint, 11 May 2024*

According to Ali Qamar Zaman Awan, the Additional Secretary General of the Tehreek-e-Insaf Muzaffarabad Division, traders, political parties, and transporters have sent a message that Kashmiri people should be granted their rights, and people have taken to the streets to voice their justifiable demands. In his statement, he advocated for genuine public demands, condemned the use of force against peaceful protestors, and stressed that individuals and institutions should refrain from battling one another. According to him, all disputes should be settled through discussion because some people want to use the pretext of issues to destroy 'Azad Kashmir's tranquil environment. The speaker asserted that the goal of India and Israel is to cause instability in 'Azad Kashmir'. India wants to exploit the situation, thus we must always protect and defend our borders, our geographic location, and our ideology.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4013416.html>



## From Social Media

**Shabbir Mayar @ShabbirMayar**

11 May 2024

Gilgit: A protest rally was taken out from Gilgit Palace Hotel to Etihad Chowk in favor of Jammu Kashmir Public Action Committee, which was led by Ehsan Advocate Najaf Ali Comrade Babajan.

Video link:

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1789346198165336560](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1789346198165336560)

**Aasim Sajjad Akhtar @AasimSajjadA**

11 May 2024

Pakistan- land of the pure where profiteers run riot, working people starve & Khaki Raj makes a mockery of democracy. Protestors in 'Azad' Kashmir speak for all masses & ethnic peripheries who want socioeconomic justice. Repression will breed more resistance. #RightsMovementAJK

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1789304185726320993](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1789304185726320993)

**Mohammad Zubair Khan @HazaraZubair**

12 May 2024

Kashmir March has reached Poonch and remained active late night. They have heavy machines who is removing different hurdles obstacles.

Video link:

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1789393910252388569](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1789393910252388569)

**Nida Kirmani @NidaKirmani**

12 May 2024

The massive protests in Pakistan-administered Kashmir for economic justice demonstrate just how 'azad' it is. True azadi would mean actually having a say in how one is governed, not being used merely as symbolic pawns with no rights. #rightsmovementajk.

Video link:

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1789561468767052048](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1789561468767052048)

**Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan\_Din**

13 May 2024

The Chairman Action Committee in 'AJK' informed all the protestors in March that our movement is a movement for cheap flour and cheap electricity.

#kashmir #ajkprotest

Video link:

[https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post\\_id=1789875868988264835](https://twitter.com/i/bookmarks?post_id=1789875868988264835)

# Weekly POK News Digest

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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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