

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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legal status subsidised GB protests
wheat Mangla dam
Gilgit-Baltistan POK
social Protection Fund
welfare diaspora



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Political Developments

India's policy of oppression and suppression against the people of Kashmir cannot diminish their spirit: PM of 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times, 8 January 2024

Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir', Ch. Anwarul Haq, while reaffirming his government's all-out political, diplomatic, and moral support to the people of 'occupied Kashmir', has said that the government and people of the liberated territory would never hesitate in rendering any or every sacrifice necessary to make the ongoing struggle to its logical conclusion. While terming accession to Pakistan as the ultimate goal of the Kashmiris' freedom struggle, he claimed that the people of Kashmir are continuously making sacrifices to achieve the desired goals. He said that India's policy of oppression and suppression against the people of Kashmir cannot diminish their spirit and passion for freedom.

While paying tributes to the Kashmiri martyrs, the PM said that the people of Kashmir would uphold the mission of martyrs who had lit the torch of freedom with their sacred blood. The 'AJK' premier, while denouncing the Indian government's nefarious designs to suppress the voice of freedom in 'occupied Kashmir', said that the Modi government was hell-bent on changing the region's demography and destroying its history and culture. Terming Kashmir as a natural part of Pakistan, he said that the people of Kashmir have made immense sacrifices

in this regard. He said that the international community should play its due role to help stop the atrocities being inflicted upon Kashmiris by the 'Indian occupation forces.' He said that it was high time that the international community should yield its political and diplomatic clout to find a durable solution to the Kashmir issue.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/01/08/indias-policy-of-oppression-and-suppression-against-the-people-of-kashmir-can-not-diminish-their-spirit-pm-ajk/>

COAS highlighted the Kashmir issue in America in the best way, Vejeuel Islam

Daily Parliament Times, 8 January 2024

Former staff member to the President of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), and Central Leader of Muslim League-N 'Azad Kashmir', Vejeuel Islam said that the Army Chief in his recent visit highlighted the Kashmir issue in America in the best way. Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir has informed the Secretary General of the United Nations that for sustainable peace in South Asia, the issue of Kashmir must be resolved by the resolutions of the United Nations and the aspirations of the Kashmiris. He added that India is continuously martyring innocent Kashmiris by carrying out a fake operation in Kashmir and that India is committing 'genocide' of Kashmiris. Vejeuel Islam said that India needs to stop the genocide of Kashmiris and that international powers and human rights organizations should pressure India to stop the acts of genocide and recognize

the birth rights of the people of Kashmir.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/01/08/coas-highlighted-kashmir-issue-in-america-in-the-best-way-vejeuel-islam/>

PM vows befitting response in case of 2019-like aggression from India

The Express Tribune, 9 January 2024

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar warned that with a renewed determination and defence capability, Pakistan would befittingly respond if India resorted to any 2019-like aggression, ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Pakistan will exactly do the same as it did in 2019. We will hit their planes. We will respond in the same coin. Neither our bullets nor determination are old. Our bullets are new and our determination is quite renewed and fresh, the prime minister said in the podcast with a digital media channel. He said that no one should be delusional about Pakistan's response as it had an entire defence mechanism in place to protect its people. He viewed that till the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, the potential for conflict would continue to exist and anything could trigger any sort of exchange.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2452717/pm-vows-befitting-response-in-case-of-2019-like-aggression-from-india>

Unresolved Kashmir may trigger nuclear war, Kashmiris warn UK, EU

Pakistan Observer, 9 January 2024

Kashmiris, Pakistanis, and their allies held various campaigns and events

over the weekend across the EU and the UK to mark the right to self-determination day for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, hosted by Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK and its EU chapters, rallies and conferences were held in Barcelona, Spain, Bologna, Italy, Birmingham, and the UK. Fahim Kayani, President of Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK, reminded the international community of its promise made to Kashmiris on 05 January 1949. Kashmiris were promised by the international community at the UN that they would be given the right to choose their future through a fair and free plebiscite. But the promise was never held as belligerent India unilaterally blocked any such move. The credibility of the UN and international rules-based order is at risk if Kashmiris are not granted their genuine, legal, and legitimate right, Kayani said.

With awakening across the world regarding the need to liberate occupied lands, Kayani warned: if Kashmiris are not granted a chance to peacefully decide about their political future, which of course is freedom from 'illegal occupation' by India, then the day is not far when the UN and its Charter will serve no purpose. Recalling the sacrifices of Kashmiris to liberate their homeland from India, Tehreek-e-Kashmir Europe President Muhammad Ghalib said: it is a broad daylight testament that when rights of people are suppressed and people are persecuted, it triggers a genuine resistance. If the international

community does not take immediate steps to implement its resolutions on Kashmir, the day is not far when the tensions in Kashmir will grow which can trigger a nuclear war, he warned.

<https://pakobserver.net/unresolved-kashmir-may-trigger-nuclear-war-kashmiris-warn-uk-eu/>

Assembly session on GB protests sought

Dawn, 10 January 2024

Protests against the increase in subsidised wheat rates entered their 14th day, with scores of people blocking main roads in the region despite freezing temperatures. Meanwhile, opposition members in the GB Assembly have submitted a requisition for a session to discuss the region's financial and wheat crises. The Awami Action Committee, an alliance of various political and religious parties in the region, gave the call for protests against the decision to increase the subsidised wheat rate from Rs20 to Rs36 per kilogram and other issues. Demonstrations were recorded in all ten districts of GB, with protesters vowing to continue sit-ins till the acceptance of their demands. In the Khomar area of Gilgit, local women blocked Shahrah-i-Quaid-i-Azam to protest against flour shortage.

They accused the food department of decreasing the subsidised wheat quota for households. One protester alleged that only 20kg of flour was being provided per family, which was not enough for even a month. She said it was a 'double injustice' to cut the flour

quota and increase the subsidised wheat rate. A demonstration was also organised in the Jutial area of Gilgit, with protesters blocking a road and chanting slogans against the government.

GB assembly session

In the GB Assembly, opposition Leader Kazim Mesum and other members submitted a requisition for convening a session to discuss the financial crisis and subsidised wheat rate hike. The requisition, signed by 10 opposition parties' members, requested the GB Assembly speaker to convene the session on 11 January.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1804611/assembly-session-on-gb-protests-sought>

India plundering natural resources of 'IIOJK' for economic marginalization of Kashmiris

Pakistan Observer, 11 January 2024

Srinagar-based political and legal experts have said that India is plundering the natural resources of 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) as part of its systematic economic marginalization of Kashmiris. According to Kashmir Media Service, the political and legal experts in their interviews and statements said that India started exploiting the natural resources of Jammu and Kashmir immediately after it militarily 'occupied' the territory in 1947. They said India has been exploiting water, minerals, forest, and other resources of 'occupied Kashmir' as part of its larger conspiracy to make

the Kashmiris dependent and subject them to collective punishment. The political and legal experts pointed out that following the repeal of the special status of 'IIOJK', the Narendra Modi-led Indian government has intensified its drive to exploit the natural resources of the territory to benefit BJP's crony capitalists.

They said the occupation authorities recently leased out electricity from Kishtwar's Ratle Power Project to the Indian state of Rajasthan for 40 years. They said the Modi regime is supplying electricity generated from 'IIOJK's waters to Indian states while Kashmiris are living in darkness. The political and legal experts deplored that the Modi regime is depriving the 'IIOJK' people of their fair share in the wealth generated from its natural resources. They said India has kept 'IIOJK' underdeveloped intentionally despite being rich in natural resources.

People Democratic Party President, Mehbooba Mufti, criticized the occupation authorities' decision to supply electricity from the Ratle Power Project to Rajasthan. She argued that this move would add to the sufferings of the people of the territory amid the ongoing severe power crisis. Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Additional General Secretary, Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, said the Modi government has put the water, coal mining, mineral resources, and lithium reserves of 'occupied Kashmir' on sale. He said the Modi government does not care about the feelings, sentiments, and

aspirations of the people of the 'occupied' territory.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-plundering-natural-resources-of-iiojk-for-economic-marginalization-of-kashmiris/>

GB lawyer's body urges action on basic rights case

Dawn, 12 January 2024

The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Bar Council has urged Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Qazi Faez Isa for an early hearing on a pending case in the Supreme Court regarding the implementation of its verdict on the basic rights of the region. In a letter to CJP Isa and other judges, the GB Bar Council stated that the citizens of GB, as part of Pakistan, have filed various constitutional petitions to enforce their fundamental rights. It said that the Supreme Court had issued a verdict on 14 January 2019, giving the federal government two weeks to promulgate the 'Gilgit-Baltistan Reforms Order 2019.' The federal government filed a petition seeking more time for implementation.

In April 2020, the Supreme Court directed the registrar to schedule the main case after the Eidul Fitr break, along with miscellaneous applications, it added. The letter requested the court to fix the case after winter vacations. Simultaneously, a resolution passed by the GB Bar Council urged the Supreme Court to set the case for an early hearing. A meeting of GB Bar Council office bearers was held in December 2023, chaired by former vice chairman Khursh-idul Hassan Advocate to

discuss various issues related to the enforcement of fundamental rights for the people and the independence of the judiciary.

The meeting addressed the pending adjudication of other constitutional petitions filed by the people of GB before the Supreme Court of Pakistan under Article 184(3) for the enforcement of their fundamental rights. The members unanimously requested CJP Isa to expedite the hearing on the implementation petition and other pending cases, including appointments in the GB Supreme Appellate Court. On 17 January 2019, a seven-judge bench, led by then Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, issued a judgment on petitions challenging the GB Order, 2018, and the GB Empowerment and Self-Governance Order, 2009.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1805113/gb-lawyers-body-urges-action-on-basic-rights-case>

India trying to crush Kashmiris' indigenous freedom struggle

Pakistan Observer, 12 January 2024

All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) and other Hurriyat leaders have said that India is trying to crush the indigenous freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people by state coercion and military force. The convener of the 'AJK' chapter of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, Altaf Hussain Wani, and Uzair Ahmed Ghazali Sheikh Yaqoob, in their separate statements, said that the

founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had declared Kashmir as jugular vein of Pakistan. In this regard, they said, people of 'India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) look towards the leadership of Pakistan besides their role regarding the Kashmir freedom movement.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-trying-to-crush-kashmiris-indigenous-freedom-struggle/>

Social welfare for GB

Dawn, 12 January 2024

Every November, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) commemorate their freedom and accession to Pakistan. The Pakistani state actively promotes the region as the most beautiful part of the country, highlighting its unique and breathtaking landscape to encourage tourism. However, when a student from GB questions the denial of constitutional rights and the territory's undefined legal status in conversation with the prime minister, the PM simply responds with the assertion that GB is an integral part of Pakistan and will continue to be so. A harsh reality emerges when the issue of this region's representation in parliament is brought before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The federal government challenges the court's jurisdiction, asserting that the region is not part of Pakistan but a disputed territory of Kashmir under de facto control of Pakistan. Adding to the complexity, national political parties have extended their influence in this area through local chapters and dominated the limited empowerment granted to locally elected governments.

Despite possessing substantial mineral resources and the potential for hydropower energy, the region suffers from energy deprivation due to this imposed control. The development of infrastructure is solely focused on meeting the strategic needs of the federation. A top-heavy governance structure consumes most of its limited budget grants, exacerbating the neglect. Amidst the prevailing gloom and adversity, the resilience of the people of GB is a silver lining. They continue to exhibit a unique ability to confront the harshest forces of nature and endure punishing winters with their limited resources. GB's diaspora communities not only thrive outside the region but consistently return, highlighting their unwavering bond with their homeland. The remarkable resilience of these people, despite the denial of essential resources, finds support in the NGO sector.

Over the past four decades, the Rural Support Programme initiated by the Aga Khan Foundation has emerged as a success story. This visionary initiative, conceived and implemented by Shoaib Sultan, a forward-thinking civil servant, has not only flourished in the GB region but has been replicated nationwide, earning international acclaim and adoption in other countries. Additionally, the Marafie family-funded NGO has played a pivotal role in the development of education, particularly for girls, and healthcare services, predominantly in the Baltistan division. Its impact has now expanded to encompass the entire

region. The Marafie Foundation's success is attributed to the active participation of the local community village and women groups organised by the Agha Khan Foundation, signifying a collaborative effort in promoting education and healthcare in the region.

The community's notable achievements, facilitated by the support of these two NGOs, have catalyzed the emergence of numerous NGOs initiated by the locals and comprised mostly of well-informed, educated youth. This trend ensures sustained grassroots development of community projects, promising macroeconomic development for the region despite years of governmental neglect. This same spirit propels GB to explore innovative avenues for poverty alleviation. In collaboration with Unicef Pakistan, the government of GB has formulated a forward-thinking and comprehensive Social Protection Policy, whose most interesting aspect is that it expands the frontiers of social protection by pioneering a novel approach. It has adopted the Initial Public Offering (IPO) framework to create a Social Protection Fund (SPF).

As we well know, the concept of an IPO comes from the corporate world, where companies invite the public to buy equity shares in their future profits. However, through its novel approach, the GB government is proposing investments in human capital, social resilience, and the very fabric of our society, which may one day be found relevant to the whole of Pakistan. The

SPF is designed to address the systemic challenges of poverty and inequality in GB by providing a sustainable financial base for social protection programmes. The GB government agreed to seed this initiative with Rs100 million, demonstrating a strong commitment to social protection. Since this idea was germinated through an interactive process with Unicef, it may also consider contributing to the SPF as a pilot. SPF will eventually be linked with a provincial Social Registry.

The SPF IPO is an open invitation to every citizen, business, philanthropist, and international development partner to take a stake in the future of this region's social welfare. Why is this important? The SPF will stabilise social welfare funding, protecting it from political shifts and economic downturns. It will ensure that essential services — from childcare to education and emergency support will always be available to those in need. Moreover, it will empower communities by providing the means for sustainable development, breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence. But the SPF will do more than just provide services; it will engender a new philosophy of social welfare that is participatory, inclusive, and democratic.

By buying into the SPF, investors are not just providing funds; they are taking ownership of the mission to protect and empower the most vulnerable members of society. The SPF aims to leverage the spirit of public ownership to create a fund that is

accountable to its stakeholders — the people. This is a call to action for all who share a commitment to social justice and equity. This call to action resonates with the ethos of social justice and equity. It is an appeal to every individual and organisation that aligns with these values to join hands in this pivotal movement. The SPF is not just a fund; it is a commitment to the idea that every individual deserves the opportunity to thrive — and that through collective investment, we can make this vision a reality for GB.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1805170/social-welfare-for-gb>

Kashmir Consultative Committees to raise awareness at the grassroots level: Mushaal

The Nation, 13 January 2024

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, said that the primary objective of the district-level consultative committees was to address the Kashmir issue at the grassroots level for comprehensive understanding, engagement with the community and to create a platform for meaningful discussions, advocacy, and actions that resonate with the local population. Speaking at the inaugural session of the Rawalpindi District-level Kashmir Consultative Committee, she highlighted the significance of such meetings and emphasized that similar gatherings would be organized in various districts.

Mullick announced that the inaugural sessions of the District-level Kashmir Consultative Committees in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala were in the preparation phase and would be convened shortly. She further said that District-level Committees comprise intellectuals spanning various age groups and diverse backgrounds. Mushaal emphasized that these gatherings would play a pivotal role in organizing and propagating the Kashmir cause at the grassroots level. She underscored that Kashmir stood as a symbol of unity for Pakistan, transcending diverse beliefs and affiliations.

She further said that people from all walks of life hold profound reverence for the Kashmir cause, and through these district-level consultations, the aim was to solidify this unity further. She urged students and academics to contribute by writing articles, research papers, and essays on the Jammu and Kashmir issue to raise local and global awareness. She expressed her commitment to personally lead door-to-door campaigns to unite people for the Kashmir cause and promote collective efforts to advocate for justice and the rights of the oppressed people of 'IIOJK.' Mushaal voiced deep concern over the ongoing demographic changes being implemented by India in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). She highlighted the persecution faced by peaceful leaders of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized that such actions were

intended to demoralize the Kashmiri people.

She claimed that these tactics employed by India would never diminish the unwavering zeal and courage of the Kashmiri people. She emphasized that the reach of RSS terror had extended globally as its tentacles were spreading across continents, including America, Canada, Australia, and Europe. She stated that 'RSS terrorists' were actively conducting operations to suppress voices worldwide. She urged the Kashmiri diaspora to become the eyes and ears of the world by playing a crucial role in exposing Indian atrocities in 'IIOJK' and raising awareness about RSS terror campaigns across the globe.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Jan-2024/kashmir-consultative-committees-to-raise-awareness-at-grassroots-level-mushaal>

Protest in Washington for Kashmir

The Nation, 14 January 2024

A meeting of like-minded persons took place at the residence of Sardar Aftab Roshan Khan to discuss the latest situation in 'Indian-occupied Kashmir' (IOK) and to exchange ideas to finalize the date to observe solidarity with the people of 'IOK'. It was agreed upon that the peace protest to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir will take place on Sunday, 4 February 2024, at the Embassy of India in Washington, DC. Sardar Amjad Jalil, Chairman, 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Board of Investments was the guest of honor. He said that the people

of 'Azad Kashmir', regardless of their political affiliations or ideology have always stood by the Kashmiris in their endeavor. They will never accept any solution for Kashmir other than the right to self-determination. He further said that the peaceful resolution of the longstanding Kashmir dispute will pave the way for the economic development of both India and Pakistan which are spending billions of dollars on defense.

Sardar Amjad Jalil, while focusing on investments said that 'AJK' is a trade-friendly and the best possible place for foreign investments. It offers enormous opportunities for foreign investors in the areas of mines, minerals, and tourism. 'Azad Kashmir' has Sapphire, Tourmaline, Marble, Granite, Gold, Silver, Copper, and the world's best Ruby, etc.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman of, the World Forum for Peace & Justice said that our objective of peaceful protest is to draw the attention of the United States to the situation in Kashmir and to exert pressure on the government of India to resolve the dispute and help stop human right violations in 'IOK'. Fai emphasized that the BJP/RSS-led Modi government has made Kashmir hell for its inhabitants. We also know that a person no less important than Dr. Gregory Stanton, Chairman, of Genocide Watch is on record to have said that Kashmir is on the brink of genocide. There is uncertainty, unpredictability, and anxiety about the unknown in Kashmir. Thousands have been brutally killed or cling to life in

hospitals, in jails, in secret torture cells. Time is not on the side of the people of Kashmir.

Fai reiterated that the people of Kashmir do not wish any-body, including the United States to take a partisan side. Kashmiris are convinced, nevertheless, that impartial observers would support the Kashmir cause based on universal principles, democratic values, the rule of law, and international justice. It is high time that all concerned parties – India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiri leadership – sit together and chalk out a strategy for the sake of peace and stability in the region of South Asia. Ultimately, the negotiations, not violence, are the only way to resolve the Kashmir conflict, and Kashmiris cannot be excluded from the negotiating table if a peace process is to be serious, meaningful, and result-oriented. Sardar Zarif Khan, Advisor to the President of Azad Kashmir thanked the participants for their willingness to be part of the organizing Committee and urged everybody to attend the peaceful protest along with their families and friends.

Shoaib Irshad, Secretary General of, the Kashmir American Welfare Association (KAWA) said that the people of 'IOK' have given unprecedented sacrifices, and our responsibility is not to let them down. Our message to the people of Kashmir is to continue the peaceful struggle, don't compromise on your basic principle of self-determination, and freedom will be ours. Sardar Aftab

Roshan Khan, the host said that the atrocities committed by the 'Indian occupation army' in Kashmir are continuing in an unabated manner. Unfortunately, India has felt no pressure whatsoever from the world powers to desist from its semi-genocidal campaign.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Jan-2024/protest-in-washington-for-kashmir>

Economic Developments

GB protests

Dawn, 9 January 2024

Massive protests held across Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) over the past several days have united the region's geographically and religiously diverse communities, as well as supporters of different political parties. Moreover, traders' bodies in the northern region have also backed the demonstrations. GB's people have taken to the streets in freezing temperatures for a raft of reasons, which include questions about land rights, taxation, extensive power cuts as well as a reduction in the amount of subsidised wheat the center provides the region. The fact is that GB's residents are protesting about many of the same things people in other parts of Pakistan also raise their voices against. However, GB's ambiguous constitutional status, as well as the lack of infrastructure compared to the rest of the country, makes this region's plight unique. The protesters are not in favor of the GB Revenue Authority Bill, which was passed by the region's assembly last year, as they say, it imposes additional

taxes on the region without giving it any representation in the federation.

Moreover, the locals also have serious reservations about the state taking over land in the region that they say belongs to the people. The state has been acquiring land in GB for CPEC as well as other projects. Considering that the people of GB have united over these issues, the state has to engage with them, listen to their concerns, and arrive at mutually agreed solutions. Ramming solutions down people's throats will only aggravate matters. The local people have a valid point when it comes to additional taxation. If the state is extracting revenue from the region, then it also has a responsibility to provide elected representation for GB in parliament. Of course, the constitutional status of the region has been kept vague due to the Kashmir dispute, but as has been argued in the past, a provisional provincial status can be considered for GB until that imbroglio is resolved.

Coming to the land issue, this is a very sensitive matter and only through engaging with the local people politically can it be resolved amicably. While the state has a right to acquire the land it feels is essential in the national interest, the people need to be taken on board and compensated accordingly, and no forced takeovers of land should take place. It is hoped that representatives of the government engage with the people of GB and democratically resolve these issues.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1730696>

A high-level delegation led by Mr. Lee calls on the PM of 'AJK'

Daily Parliament Times, 10 January 2024

A high-level delegation led by the president of the Chinese Mineral and Mining Department, Mr. Lee called on Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Chaudhry Anwarul Haq. During the meeting, the Chinese delegation expressed its interest in investing in different mineral deposit areas in Azad Kashmir. While speaking on the occasion, the 'AJK' premier, while referring to the investment-friendly atmosphere in the region, said that 'Azad Kashmir' is a very safe and peaceful region for foreign investment. He said that Chinese engineers and workers have been working alongside the local workers at different hydel-power generation projects in different areas of 'Azad Kashmir.'

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/01/10/a-high-level-delegation-led-by-mr-lee-calls-on-pm-ajk/>

The water level in Mangla Dam is at a rapid decline

Pakistan Observer, 11 January 2024

The country's second-largest reservoir – Mangla dam found to constantly dry following continued intermittent heavy snowfall on the upper reaches of the Himalayan belt and consequent decline in the flow of water in the rivers, falling in the reservoir – where the water level has decreased to a considerable extent. The water level in Mangla dam, located in the Mirpur district of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), was reported as 1156.60 feet on Wednesday against a

maximum conservation level of 1242 feet with the live storage capacity of 2.052 Million Acre-Feet (MAF) in the reservoir. The water level in the dam is gradually reducing furthermore, the sources said.

<https://pakobserver.net/water-level-in-mangla-dam-at-rapid-decline/>

GB wheat protests enter 15th day

Dawn, 12 January 2024

Thousands of people participated in demonstrations throughout Gilgit Baltistan (GB) for the 15th consecutive day against the subsidised wheat price increase and other issues. Protests were held in Hunza, Astore, and Shigar, while the sit-ins continued in Skardu, Gilgit, and Ghizer. Thousands of people participated in the protest sit-in at Yadgar-i-Shuhada in Gilgit. The Awami Action Committee (ACC) declared its intention to escalate the protest in the next phase if their demands were not addressed. The protesters have pledged to continue the protests until their demands are met. In Garibagh, Gilgit, a protest sit-in continued with a notable turnout from political and religious parties. The protesters chanted slogans against the government. An official from the AAC, addressing the protesters, stated that they would conclude the protest only when their demands are fulfilled. In Aliabad, Hunza, a large group of women organised a protest, blocking the Karakoram Highway. They refused to accept the subsidised wheat price hike.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1805106/gb-wheat-protests-enter-15th-day>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The spirit of the entire Kashmiri nation has risen as a result of the Army Chief's comments on the Kashmir issue: Tabinda Munir

UrduPoint, 9 January 2024

Tabinda Munir, a prominent educationist, and political and social figure in Pakistan, stated that the Pakistan Army Chief's remark on the issue of Kashmir has boosted the morale of the entire Kashmiri nation. She said that the army chief not only highlighted the Kashmir issue but also presented Pakistan's position firmly and assertively in front of the world. She stated that all enemies' goals against the motherland have failed and that the Pakistan Army has always backed the Kashmiris' viewpoint and played a full part in raising the Kashmir issue at the world level as well as preserving the national frontiers.

The protection of the lives and property of Kashmiris has also been regarded as their first duty, which is why the Kashmiri nation is also standing by the side of the Pakistan Army and will cooperate with Pakistan forces to respond to any aggression from the enemy. The Kashmiri people applaud the Pakistan Army's sacrifices in defence of the homeland. She claimed that during his visit to the US, the Army Chief has made world leaders and other international organisations recognise the gravity of the Kashmir issue. She stated that the Kashmir issue should be settled by Security Council

resolutions as well as the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. There can be no peace in South Asia unless the long-standing Kashmir problem is settled.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3874707.html>

The British High Commissioner meets with the president of 'Azad Kashmir'

UrduPoint, 10 January 2024

The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott along with a high-level delegation met with the president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry at his family home in Chechian Mirpur. On this occasion, the delegation included Richard Lindsay, Head of the Pakistan and Afghanistan Security Operations Department in the British Foreign Ministry, Sam Sherman, and Head of the Regional Security Team of the British High Commission, Albert David, Head of Council of British High Commission, and Russ McPartland, Second Secretary of British High Commission. Sneha Lala Head of Communication at the British High Commission, and Adela Khan, political advisor at the British High Commission were among those present. On this occasion, the president of 'AJK' and Jane Marriott met one-on-one to discuss the British government's ongoing plans in 'Azad Kashmir', and the problems faced by overseas Kashmiris living in the UK among other issues. A detailed debate was held on investments, the effects of

climate change in 'Azad Kashmir', and how to deal with them.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/mirpur/kashmir/live-news-3875693.html>

**National political parties should include the Kashmir Freedom Movement in their electoral manifestos in the coming elections:
Uzair Ahmed Ghazali**

Urdupoint, 11 January 2024

Chairman of the Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, Uzair Ahmed Ghazali stated that because Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, considered Kashmir to be the country's jugular vein, all political parties must include the Kashmir freedom movement in their manifestos for the upcoming elections. He claimed that India is attempting to crush the Kashmiri people's freedom struggle through state pressure and military force. As a consequence, people in 'Indian-occupied Kashmir' (IOK) look to Pakistan's leadership. Ghazali claimed that the Indian government's illegal fencing along the internationally recognised disputed state's cease-fire line, the cruel actions of the Indian Lok Sabha on 5 August 2019, and the biased political decisions of the Indian Supreme Court on 11 December 2023 are the worst atrocities committed by the Bharatiya Janata Party government against millions of 'Occupied Kashmir citizens.'

He alleged that such Indian actions have caused numerous concerns for the

Pakistani government, and political and religious parties and that all the political parties of Pakistan including Pakistan People's Party, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Muslim League-N, Tehreek-e-Insaf, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan, Awami National Party, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and others must include Kashmir issue and their unflinching support in their manifesto. He went on to say that millions of new Pakistani voters might be aware of their duties in the Kashmir liberation fight.

For the last four elections, it has been observed that political parties have ignored the most important and sensitive issue of Kashmir in their election activities, adding that neither a voice was raised against 'Indian terrorism' nor public support was obtained for Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He said that it is a clear deviation from Pakistan's national Kashmir policy and the sayings of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah regarding the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He further claimed that the people of 'occupied Kashmir' are struggling against one million Indian forces, brutal black laws, and governmental persecution. In these conditions, it is Pakistan's constitutional, national, and religious responsibility to resurrect the national Kashmir policy to liberate the oppressed Kashmiri people.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3876678.html>

From Social Media

PAMIR TIMES ® @pamirtimes

9 January 2024

Officials of a Chinese company, CGGC, surveying areas around the Attabad Lake. The survey, reportedly, is related construction of a proposed 54MW hydroelectric power project in the area. #CPEC #GilgitBaltistan

<https://twitter.com/pamirtimes/status/1744758816250433905>

Jane Marriott @JaneMarriottUK

10 January 2024

Salaam from Mirpur, the heart of the UK and Pakistan's people to people ties! 70% of British Pakistani roots are from Mirpur, making our work together crucial for diaspora interests. Thank you for your hospitality!

Images link:

<https://twitter.com/JaneMarriottUK/status/1745078793989956042>

Sakhi Asif @AsifSaeedSakhi

11 January 2024

Saluting the fearless women of Hunza as they stand strong in protest against the wheat subsidy cut. These brave mothers are the heartbeat of resilience and determination. #HunzaProtest #BraveWomen.

<https://twitter.com/AsifSaeedSakhi/status/1745421629872898452>

Basharat Issa @BasharatIssa

12 January 2024

People in Gilgit-Baltistan are protesting in freezing temperatures for wheat subsidy and mainland Pakistani media is completely ignoring the protests but don't worry soon the winter sports in GB will be all over the media!!

This is marginalisation!!

<https://twitter.com/BasharatIssa/status/1745869831940047004>

Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan_Din

15 January 2024

The 21st day of the protest at Yadgar Skardu against the increase in wheat prices, the abolition of the health card and the lack of internet electricity due to the finance bill, the people chanted loudly and chanted slogans.

Video link:

https://twitter.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1746752755375698220

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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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