

# Weekly POK News Digest

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

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net hydel profit **D**ower outages **w**heat protests  
**P**rotest march  
**D**iamer-Bhasha Dam  
**G**ilgit-Baltistan **P**OK  
**S**ubsidy **C**PEC  
**S**ustainable development



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## Political Developments

### **Kashmir Day: Violation of Pakistan's territorial sovereignty to be dealt with full might, says COAS**

*Dawn, 5 February 2024*

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir said that any aggression or violation of Pakistan's territorial sovereignty would be responded to with 'full national resolve and military might.' His remarks came as the nation observes Kashmir Solidarity Day to reaffirm unwavering support for the relentless struggle of the Kashmiri people. The people and the government of Pakistan and 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) observe Solidarity Day every year to reiterate their commitment and dedication to the liberation of Kashmir from 'Indian subjugation.'

According to a press release issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the army chief laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Monument in Muzaffarabad and paid tribute to the supreme sacrifices of martyrs. It noted that the brewing humanitarian and security crises in the 'IIOJK' seriously threaten regional peace and stability. Pakistan would always stand with Kashmiris in their just struggle for the inalienable right to self-determination in light of UNSC resolutions, the military's media affairs wing said.

It further claimed that India is attempting to change the demography of 'IIOJK' through illegal administrative and unilaterally

imposed draconian laws and security clampdowns. Such machinations cannot suppress the will and the yearning of the Kashmiri people to attain their legitimate objectives. It stated that the COAS was also briefed about the latest situation along the Line of Control (LOC). He appreciated the 'operational readiness, high morale and effective response of troops to Indian ceasefire violations.' the ISPR quoted Gen Munir as saying.

COAS also mentioned the 'Indian state-sponsored terrorism' in Pakistan which now extended to the heinous targeting of individual Pakistani citizens on our soil. Such callous disregard for international law and norms of the international system was becoming a routine occurrence and India was now being called out openly by many countries in the world, exposing her sham credentials, the ISPR said, adding that Pakistan would continue to expose all such attempts.

*'Occasion to pay rich tribute to Kashmiris' sacrifices'*

The interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said that this was an occasion to pay rich tribute to the sacrifices made by the Kashmiris during the last 76 years. He said that the relevant UNSC resolutions provided that the final disposition of held Kashmir would be made as per the will of the people through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the UN. President Dr Arif Alvi said that the people of the occupied valley had

been struggling to realise their right to self-determination for 76 years.

He noted that the UN General Assembly annually adopted a resolution expressing unequivocal support for the realisation of the right to self-determination for people under foreign occupation. Regrettably, the Kashmiri people have not been able to exercise this inalienable right, Alvi said. The president said that following 5 August, 2019 – when India had revoked the region’s special autonomy – India’s efforts were aimed at ‘engineering demographic and political changes so that the Kashmiris are transformed into a disempowered community in their own land.’ PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said the party’s success on 8 February, when general elections are scheduled to take place, was essential for stopping Indian atrocities in held Kashmir. God willing, ‘I will advance the cause of Kashmir after being elected prime minister,’ Bilawal said in a statement posted by the party on social media platform X.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1811327/kashmir-day-violation-of-pakistans-territorial-sovereignty-to-be-dealt-with-full-might-says-coas>

### **Series of Kashmir solidarity events lined up**

*The Express Tribune, 5 February 2024*

A series of events has been organised by the Islamia University of Bahawalpur to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Painting and poster competitions were organised in

the University College of Art and Design on the eve of the Kashmir Solidarity Day marked on 5 February. Vice Chancellor Dr Naveed Akhtar said that Kashmir’s struggle for self-determination is recognised at the international level. Pakistanis have pledged to support Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom. The 700,000 soldiers deployed in ‘IIOJK’ cannot suppress the struggle of Kashmiris.

In Multan, citizens and government officials expressed solidarity with the Kashmiris struggling for their right to self-determination and facing Indian forces’ atrocities. Walks, rallies and seminars will be organised across the division and the flags of Kashmir will be displayed at key locations, including flyovers and offices. The divisional administration will also screen documentaries showcasing the struggle of the Kashmiris. Special prayers for the freedom of Kashmir and the wellbeing of the homeland will also be offered on Kashmir Day.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2455514/series-of-kashmir-solidarity-events-lined-up>

### **Students observe Kashmir Solidarity Day**

*The Nation, 6 February 2024*

Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) Lahore, organized a Kashmir Solidarity Walk followed by a declamation contest to express its unwavering support to the people of ‘Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir’ (IIOJK). The participants included PIFD Vice Chancellor Prof.

Hina Tayyaba Khalil, faculty members and a large number of students. The activities were aimed at highlighting the cruelties and colossal human rights violations being committed by the Indian military for suppressing the voice of millions of Kashmiris. She also lauded the government efforts for raising the Kashmir issue on every forum around the world. Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 organized a rally to express solidarity with Kashmiris on Kashmir Solidarity Day. District Emergency Officer (DEO) Engineer Naveed Iqbal led the rally. A large number of rescue officers and officials attended the rally. Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) Punjab, Chairperson Sarah Ahmed said that Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan. In her special message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, she added that atrocities by the Indian army on innocent Muslims living in 'IIOK' are condemnable.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Feb-2024/students-observe-kashmir-solidarity-day>

### **'Knowledge, technology linked with Kashmir freedom'**

*The Nation, 6 February 2024*

Punjab University (PU) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood has stressed the need to strengthen people in the field of knowledge and technology for the freedom of Kashmir. He was addressing a seminar organized by PU Directorate of Students Affairs in collaboration with Kashmiri students in connection with

Kashmir Solidarity Day. In his address, Dr Khalid Mahmood said, the sacrifices of Kashmiris are eternal and we pay homage to them. He said that India has always given a negative message about Kashmiris through its films, to counter which students should learn the skills of film making and script writing. He said that the oppression of Muslims in 'Occupied Kashmir', Ayodhya and Delhi under the Modi government has exposed the hidden face of India to the world. He said that Modi's atrocities towards minorities have once again proven the truthfulness of two-nation theory. He said, like Syed Ali Gillani, Afzal Guru and Burhan Wani, we should keep the yearning for freedom alive in our-selves.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Feb-2024/knowledge-technology-linked-with-kashmir-freedom>

### **Permanent Mission of Pakistan to OIC organizes special event to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day**

*Pakistan Observer, 6 February 2024*

Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) organized a 'Special Event and Photo Exhibition' to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day, at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah. The OIC Secretary General, Hissein Brahim Taha graced the event as the Chief Guest. Senior officers of the OIC General Secretariat, Permanent Representatives of the OIC Member States, diplomats and officials from the diplomatic corps in Jeddah, media persons, members of Kashmir

Committee Jeddah and a large number of people from Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora attended the event.

In his opening address, Ambassador Fawad Sher, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the OIC, stated that Pakistan and Kashmiris around the world observe Kashmir Solidarity Day every year on 5th February to express their unwavering political, moral, and diplomatic support for the just struggle of their Kashmiri brothers and sisters for their right of self-determination as enshrined in the UN Charter and the relevant OIC and UN Security Council Resolutions. He noted that this year, in the backdrop of the war in Gaza where innocent Palestinians were braving the worst forms of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the hands of the Israeli occupation force, the day was being observed with two-fold pain and anguish.

He appreciated the OIC for its long-standing principled position on Jammu and Kashmir and called on the OIC to redouble its efforts to project the voice of the Kashmiris. In his keynote address, Secretary-General OIC Hissein Brahim Taha reaffirmed the OIC's categorical and unequivocal support for the Kashmir cause and stressed that the OIC, through its various mechanisms including the OIC Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir, the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir and the Independent permanent Commission of Human rights (IPHRC) Standing Mechanism to monitor the human rights situation in the 'IIOJK', would continue to project

the Kashmir cause and hold India accountable for its usurpation of the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. The Chairman Kashmir Committee, Mr. Masood Puri, also spoke on the occasion and lamented India's growing highhandedness and intransigence in the 'IIOJK.'

<https://pakobserver.net/permanent-mission-of-pakistan-to-oic-organizes-special-event-to-mark-kashmir-solidarity-day/>

### **Lahore Hawks win title in LRFC Kashmir Solidarity Rugby 10s**

*The Nation, 6 February 2024*

The Lahore Rugby Football Club (LRFC), under the Pakistan Rugby Union's guidance and with support from Servis Tyres, successfully hosted the inaugural LRFC Kashmir Solidarity 10s Rugby Tournament at the Pakistan Rugby Academy. The one-day event saw fierce competition among four participating teams including LRFC, Lahore Hawks, Islamabad Jinns and Desert Camels Fort Abbas. The tournament culminated in a thrilling final, where Lahore Hawks outsmarted Islamabad Jinns by 26-5.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Feb-2024/lahore-hawks-win-title-in-lrhc-kashmir-solidarity-rugby-10s>

### **Pakistan's diplomatic missions observe Kashmir Solidarity Day**

*Pakistan Observer, 6 February 2024*

The diplomatic missions of Pakistan across the world observed the Kashmir Solidarity Day to express support the struggle of the people of 'Indian

Illegally Occupied Kashmir' (IIOJK) for their right to self-determination. The Friends of Kashmir in Dallas, United States, organized a seminar to show solidarity with the people of Kashmir that was attended by the Kashmiri diaspora, local dignitaries and Sikh community. Speakers at the seminar highlighted gross human rights violations in the 'IIOJK' and called upon international community to play its role in granting the right of self-determination to Kashmiris.

The Pakistan Consulate General in New York also arranged an event to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day. Speeches were delivered by Consulate General Aamer Ahmed Atozai, Dr. Asif Rehman, Carin J. Fischer, Dr. Sima Karetnaya among others. The Consulate General said that Pakistan stood committed to the acquisition of the right of self-determination for Kashmiri brethren in accordance with the UNSC resolutions.

Likewise, Pakistan's Embassy in China also observed the Kashmir Solidarity Day by hosting a ceremony to underscore the country's unwavering commitment to the Kashmir cause. The embassy also organized a panel discussion on the continued non-implementation of the United Nations Charter and international laws for the maintenance of world peace and security. The panelists stressed the centrality of multilateralism, with the UN at its core, for the resolution of disputes and prevention of conflicts. Similarly, the Embassy of Pakistan in

Abu Dhabi organized an event to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day. Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, in his remarks, paid tribute to the valiant people of the 'IIOJK' and lauded their more than seven decades long efforts for the realization of the right to self-determination.

An event was also organized at the Embassy of Pakistan in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day and to reaffirm solidarity with the Kashmiri people's struggle for realization of their right to self-determination. The Embassy of Pakistan in Hanoi, Vietnam also organized a seminar to observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day and to express Pakistan's unwavering support for the just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination.

Pakistan's High Commission in Dhaka, Bangladesh also organized an event to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day. High Commissioner Syed Ahmed Maroof read the statements of Pakistani leadership and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplomatic and political support for the people of 'IIOJK.' Pictures depicting the human rights violations by 'Indian occupation forces' in the 'IIOJK' were displayed at the venue as part of the photo exhibition. Digital videos exhibiting violence in 'IIOJK' were also played during the seminar.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistans-diplomatic-missions-observe-kashmir-solidarity-day/>

## **Anger in 'IIOJK' over Muslim man being coerced to chant 'Jay Shri Ram' by Indian soldier**

*Pakistan Observer, 8 February 2024*

A video circulating from the heart of the Kashmir Valley of 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK) has ignited a firestorm of anger wherein an Indian army soldier is seen compelling a Kashmiri Muslim civilian to recite a Hindu religious slogan-Jay Shri Ram. Amidst widespread dissemination on social media, the incident has triggered an outpouring of condemnation, with hashtags such as #Islamophobia and #HinduExtremist amplifying the outcry. Critics swiftly decry the Indian soldier's actions as a grave infringement on human rights and religious freedoms, demanding urgent investigation and accountability. Political and religious factions have pointed fingers at the influences from Hindutva organizations and broader political dynamics in India. As hashtags like #RSS, #VHP, and #BJP dominate online discourse, concerns about their impact on 'OJK' reverberate, intensifying the already volatile situation.

<https://pakobserver.net/anger-in-iiojk-over-muslim-man-being-coerced-to-chant-jay-shri-ram-by-indian-soldier/>

## **APPG stands with Kashmiris, calls for action on humanitarian crisis**

*Pakistan Today, 8 February 2024*

In a significant development, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Kashmir

(APPG) in the United Kingdom expressed solidarity with the people of 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) and urged the UK government to address the prevailing humanitarian crisis. The meeting, chaired by Member of the British Parliament (MP) Debbie Abrahams, underscored the pressing need for international attention and intervention in the region. Participants at the APPG meeting expressed grave concerns over the ongoing human rights violations in 'IIOJK', as highlighted by the Pakistan High Commission in London via a social media post. Pakistan High Commissioner Dr. Mohammad Faisal provided a comprehensive briefing to the parliamentarians on the dire situation in 'IIOJK', emphasizing the suffering endured by the Kashmiri populace due to 'gross human rights violations' perpetrated by 'Indian occupying forces.'

Dr. Faisal extended appreciation to the members of the APPG for their steadfast dedication to advocating for the right of self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. During the session, concerns were raised regarding the plight of millions of Kashmiri women, many of whom have become half-widows as a result of their husbands being forcibly disappeared in 'IIOJK.'

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/02/08/appg-stands-with-kashmiris-calls-for-action-on-humanitarian-crisis/>



## **Kashmir a ‘flashpoint’, points out Pakistan envoy to US**

*Business Recorder, 9 February 2024*

Pakistan’s Ambassador to the United States (US), Masood Khan, has called Kashmir a ‘flashpoint’ in tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, and said we should have talks not only on the future of Jammu and Kashmir and the aspirations of the people in accordance with international law and the UN Security Council, but we should also have nuclear confidence-building talks, so that we establish reliable communication channels, he told NEWSWEEK, a weekly American weekly magazine.

Newsweek correspondent Tom O’Connor, who interviewed the Ambassador amid the Israeli war on Gaza, wrote that the presence of weapons of mass destruction on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) adds another dimension to the conflict.

With India-Pakistan ties remaining virtually frozen, Newsweek pointed out that Pakistani officials have often lamented what they view as a lack of international attention being paid to the issue of Kashmir, where New Delhi carried out a mass crackdown since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked Jammu and Kashmir’s semi-autonomous status in August 2019. We would say that attention from Kashmir is moving away because of Ukraine or the preoccupation of the Western world with China as a competitor, as a challenger to the existing order, and so on, Masood Khan said.

Now, in addition to Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific politics, you have the Middle East. So, Kashmir is no more on the radar screen of the international community, and yet the oppression continues there, he added. Pakistani officials have also often drawn connections between the Kashmir dispute and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, owing to some common historical roots, it was pointed out.

Masood Khan made a reference to these commonalities, but also noted the ‘dissimilarity’, noting particularly how Palestinians, despite their ongoing struggle for self-determination, have garnered global support and even observer status at the United Nations as well as statehood recognition from the majority of UN member states. While dialogue remains stalled with India, the report said Pakistan has engaged in ongoing talks with Taliban-led Afghanistan in hopes of ushering in a sense of security and stability for the region. But the ambassador noted, for the rest of the world, the war on terror has come to an end, not for Pakistan.

This comes as concerns remain in Pakistan over the increasingly robust relations developing between the US and India. Khan said Pakistan was willing to put aside these uncertainties, however, just as he hoped to assuage Washington’s concerns over the strategic partnership forged between Islamabad and Beijing. The Ambassador said, at least, this is our endeavour that India’s close ties with the United States should not negatively impact our relations with the United

States, and similarly, we've been assuring Americans here that our relations with China are not at the expense of the United States.

As for the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and India, Masood Khan emphasized that he felt only engagement could overcome their deep-rooted dispute and the risks associated with it. As two civilized neighbours as two civilized nations, we should come to the negotiating table and try to resolve this issue through dialogue, through diplomacy, through multilateral diplomacy, bilaterally or through third-party mediation or some good-faith mediation, he added.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40288019/kashmir-a-flashpoint-points-out-pakistan-embassy-to-us>

## Economic Developments

### **GB wheat protests postponed after govt assurances**

*Dawn, 6 February 2024*

The Awami Action Committee (ACC), an alliance of political parties and traders' unions postponed its month-long protest sit-in and demonstrations for three weeks, following assurances from the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government to address their demands within this time frame. The AAC's demands include restoring subsidised wheat prices to the 2022 level, suspending the GB Revenue Act 2023, withdrawing various taxes, ensuring GB's share in the NFC award, and providing land ownership rights to locals. Negotiations took place between GB government representatives,

including Home Minister Shams Lone, GB Assembly Member Fatehullah Khan, advisers to CM Eman Shah and Hussain Shah, and ACC representatives.

Protesters had demanded the cancellation of leases granted to outsiders for mineral exploration, 80 per cent royalty of Diamer-Bhasha Dam under net hydel profit to GB people, provision of barren lands' ownership to local people, electricity supply to GB residents, end to the 22-hour power outages, establishment of medical and engineering colleges in the region, and restoration of traditional routes in GB. GB CM Haji Gulbar issued a notification for the restoration of subsidised wheat rate, down from Rs36 per kg to Rs20 per kg, and the annulment of taxes imposed through the GB Revenue Act 2023.

AAC and GB government representatives agreed to continue negotiations to address the remaining 13 points of the charter of demands. The GB chief minister formed a six-member cabinet committee to engage with stakeholders and resolve issues. Mr Fathullah emphasised that the GB government is committed to addressing genuine demands, and the formed committee will gather input from stakeholders, propose mechanisms to solve issues, and send recommendations to the chief minister. He clarified that the committee would determine the mechanism to solve issues based on whether it falls under GB's authority or is a federal subject.

Two demands have been met, and negotiations will continue on the remaining 13 points. Fathullah Khan stated that the GB government and ACC agreed to postpone the protest until the committee completes its work, and the notification regarding withholding taxes under the GB Revenue Act 2023 has been handed over to them. Massive protests erupted across GB on the issues. A 34-day-long protest sit-in in Skardu was postponed after the restoration of subsidised rates, and a protest march in district Nagar was also called off. ACC leaders declared it a success and stated that they would wait for the resolution of their demands under the agreement, with a warning of a massive-level protest if their demands are not met.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1811537/gb-wheat-protests-postponed-after-govt-assurances>

### **PIA's Gilgit-Islamabad flights grounded due to aircraft malfunction**

*Pakistan Observer, 6 February 2024*

In some bad news for patients, including residents, of Gilgit and adjoining areas, travelers between Gilgit and Islamabad are in for some disruptions as Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) suspends flights to the northern city from 03-07 February. This temporary grounding is due to a technical malfunction in the ATR aircraft that typically serves this route. The PIA operates one to two daily flights between the two cities using ATR aircraft that malfunctioned on 3 February, known for their ability to handle short runways and

mountainous terrain. Unfortunately, one of these planes has encountered a mechanical issue, necessitating immediate repairs.

With only two ATR aircraft available for small-sector flights across the country, including Gilgit, PIA is unable to offer alternative services during the repair period. One of the two aircraft is engaged in flights in the north zone of Islamabad and in the south zone of Karachi. The spokesperson confirmed that the affected aircraft will be back in service on 8 February, resuming regular operations to Gilgit. This temporary suspension of flights creates inconvenience for passengers, particularly residents of Gilgit and surrounding areas, who rely on this air link for travel and essential services.

<https://pakobserver.net/pias-gilgit-islamabad-flights-grounded-due-to-aircraft-malfunction/>

### **Beyond Subsidised Wheat**

*The Nation, 7 February 2024*

The announcement by the Awami Action Committee (ACC) to postpone the protests in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) for three weeks is a welcome development. The agreement to call off protests and talk demonstrates the power of negotiation. Out of fifteen demands, two have already been met by the GB government; the restoration of subsidised wheat prices and the annulment of certain taxes. For the remaining demands, the Chief Minister of GB has formed a cabinet committee that will take up talks with the ACC. People of GB have been protesting for

month's altogether. And for everyone who was upset by the sit-in in harsh weather conditions, the negotiated agreement is a big relief. It also casts light on the power of democratically and peacefully demanding rights from the government. Blessed with enormous bounties of nature, the majestic mountainous region is an asset of Pakistan.

It is this very region that hosts the key routes of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). However, the increase in the price of subsidised wheat and the imposition of some additional taxes have been part of the overall economic challenges the whole country experienced in recent months. Nevertheless, the restoration of prices is a relief for the locals who lead tough lives amidst a lack of indigenously driven development. Some of these development concerns have been expressed in the fifteen points charter of demands as well, for example, the establishment of higher education institutions inside GB.

It is now crucial that the cabinet committee and the ACC take up the negotiation process smoothly. The cabinet committee must not become inactive now that the two major demands have been met. This charter is representative of the wishes of the people of GB and must be duly considered. It is high time that environment-friendly development makes inroads inside GB. It is also high time that the region does not experience prolonged power outages.

The region that has an enormous tourism revenue potential must be made tourism-friendly. But no tourists should be allowed to disrespect the heritage preservation as well as the healthy air and environment of the region.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Feb-2024/beyond-subsidised-wheat>

### **SCO revolutionizes information technology in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'**

*Pakistan observer, 7 February 2024*

Special Communication Organization (SCO), the largest telecom provider in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), has revolutionized information technology in the region. The state's first Software Technology Park (STP) in Mirpur will soon be inaugurated and it is a testament to SCO's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as it ushers in a new era of innovation and growth in the region. It will strengthen the economy of Pakistan by empowering the youth. Modern facilities have been provided in the park covering an area of 4000 square feet in the middle of Mirpur City. The park has a conference room with reception, a meeting room and a conference hall. Apart from the hall, and training facilities, there are social network facilities while separate rooms have been made for women. A cafeteria or kitchen, dedicated space for prayers, and full facilities for Zoom meetings are provided for guests.

SCO has made special arrangements to ensure the fastest internet. This project is poised to provide a lot of benefits by catering to the needs of freelancers, entrepreneurs, startups, and professionals in the region. SCO invites all local communities of Mirpur, 'AJK', to be a part of the future. It invites the public to embark together on this exciting journey of cooperation, innovation, and unlimited possibilities and play their role in the country's economic development.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/02/07/sco-revolutionizes-information-technology-in-azad-jammu-and-kashmir/>

### **Construction of key infrastructure vital for development of GB, says caretaker PM**

*The Nation, 7 February 2024*

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said that construction of proper communication system and other necessary infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) was important to ensure sustainable development of the area. Speaking with a 17-member delegation of Royal Foundation of GB, headed by Raja Nazimul Amin, the prime minister said that the construction of communication system and other necessary infrastructure could further promote the tourism sector in GB and create opportunities for economic development in the region. Kakar observed that GB was rich in natural resources and the people of the area were very hospitable. He said that a positive trend in tourism had been witnessed in the area after upgradation

of the Skardu airport to the international airport. He said a number of countries were showing keen interest in collaborating with Pakistan in the tourism sector.

He directed the relevant authorities to devise a strategy to find out a sustainable solution to the issue of electricity in GB. Kakar also directed the authorities to devise a plan to increase the quota of GB students in the higher education and technical education sectors of all provinces of the country. He said overall, the development of GB depended on the social integration across the area. He also appreciated the services of Royal Foundation of GB in various sectors in the area. The delegation presented proposals to the prime minister to improve the working of various sectors of GB. He was apprised that some 1.6 million tourists visited GB last year.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Feb-2024/construction-of-key-infrastructure-vital-for-development-of-gb-says-caretaker-pm>

### **Vernacular Media**

#### **The nation should hold accountable those who traded on the Kashmir issue: JI Amir Sirajul Haque**

*Jasarat, 5 February 2024*

The Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Pakistan Siraj-ul-Haq has stated that he and his party will fight for the liberation of 'occupied Kashmir' until his last breath and drop of blood. Addressing the protesters on Kashmir solidarity day, Haque stated that for years, Kashmiri mothers, sisters, and

daughters have been standing firm for the freedom, while the youth, and Hurriyat leaders have been tortured in jail. On the one hand, Kashmiris profess their love for Pakistan even in their distress time, and on the other hand, Pakistan's rulers desire to extend friendship to India, with Rajiv Gandhi, Vajpayee, and Modi all receiving warm welcomes. He stated that the nation should take into account those dealing with Kashmir, and that people should reject those who do not even utter the name of Palestinians. He said that the Line of Control's (LoC) future will be similar to that of the Berlin Wall.

Siraj-ul-Haq claimed that the mountains of oppression on the people of Palestine and Kashmir are collapsing, but Pakistani rulers are sleeping; they have not said a word against the Israeli tyranny in Gaza owing to fear of America. He stated that Modi had proclaimed the construction of a temple in place of the Babri Masjid and that he now want to 'occupy Azad Kashmir.' He claimed that Pakistan's authorities are cowards since they released the killer of Pakistanis, Raymond Davis, when the JI demanded his punishment, and they also turned over the nation's daughter, Aafia, to the Americans.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2024/02/05/siraj-ul-haq-633/>

### **A strong and stable Pakistan ensures the success of the 'Kashmir Azadi' Movement: Khawaja Farooq Ahmed**

*UrduPoint, 5 February 2024*

While speaking at a special session of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK),

Legislative Assembly on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, leader of opposition Khawaja Farooq Ahmed stated that the people and governments of Pakistan observe this day in sympathy with Kashmiris. Despite Pakistan's financial, political, and diplomatic difficulties, it has consistently reiterated its commitment to the Kashmiris and provided moral, political, and diplomatic support. He claimed that the success of the 'Kashmir Azadi movement' is dependent on Pakistan's strength and stability. He stressed that only a strong Pakistan can speak openly with India, and that Pakistan has done so for the past 75 years. He stated that all political parties and groups in 'Azad Kashmir' are unified on the issue of Kashmir. Today, we want to put aside our political disagreements and convey a message to the Kashmiri people across the Line of Control (LoC) that the government of Base Camp and the people are with them in their quest for independence. He claimed that we will soon hang the Pakistani flag in Srinagar's Lal Chowk.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3906299.html>

### **Kashmiris will not be abandoned: GB Chief Minister**

*Dailyk2, 5 February 2024*

Haji Gulbar Khan, Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) in a special message on the Kashmir Solidarity Day said that the 05 February is a day to pay honour to Kashmiris' enduring desire to obtain the right to self-

determination. According to the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the demands of the Kashmiri people, resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is critical to the long-term peace in South Asia. He said that Pakistan reiterates its complete support and solidarity for its Kashmiri brothers and sisters and that we will continue to help Kashmiris in any way we can until they attain their obvious right to self-determination. Today, Pakistani citizens honour their Kashmiri brethren for their ongoing struggle for the right to self-determination. On 5 August 2019, India altered the internationally recognised contested status of 'occupied Kashmir' and the demography of the 'occupied' territory. He said that in order to alter the administrative and demographic structures, one-sided and illegal actions were implemented.

He further stated that the denial of this right to Kashmiris in 'illegally occupied' Kashmir is a violation of human dignity. He said that the Kashmir dispute is one of the oldest conflicts on the UNSC agenda and that this conflict could not be addressed because of India's stubbornness, failure to honour agreements, and disdain for basic human rights and international norms. He claimed that the 'occupying Indian forces' are reducing the majority of Kashmiris to a minority status in 'OJK' through alteration of the demography of the region. This is an obvious breach of international law and that we call on the world

community to hold India accountable for its heinous crimes against humanity. He said that as per the UNSC resolution and the demands of the Kashmiri people, resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is critical to the long-term peace in South Asia. He said that 'State terrorism' committed by 'Indian occupation forces' cannot shatter the will of Kashmiris or undermine their lawful struggle. Thousands of Kashmiris have died at the hands of 'Indian occupation forces' and have been subjected to countless crimes. On behalf of the whole Pakistani population, I want to reassure our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that we are with them. We shall continue to assist them morally and politically till they are liberated from Indian domination.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/20104>

### **India is culpable for the instability in the region: Mushaal Hussein Mullick**

*Jasarat, 7 February 2024*

Mushaal Hussein Mullick, special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women's Development, underlined India's role in regional instability, describing it as a major hindrance to regional economic growth. She highlighted the 'heinous violations' of human rights and atrocities committed by India against innocent Kashmiris in the 'illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) over the last seven decades. She denounced India's use of restrictive legislation to silence the voices of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which

India ‘occupies illegally.’ She criticized world leaders for remaining silent on the deteriorating human rights situation in ‘IOJK’ and Palestine, despite widespread global sympathy for the suffering Kashmiris and Palestinians.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2024/02/07/mahal-malick/>

## **From Social Media**

**PAMIR TIMES ® @pamirtimes**

6 February 2024

Ittehad Chowk Dharna in Gilgit postponed, after some gains and many promises!

<https://twitter.com/pamirtimes/status/1754930410025279817>

**Zeeshan Beyg @Zeeshanbercha**

11 February 2024

The Gilgit Baltistan police arrested four rights activists from a recent peaceful protest, exemplifying Mainland Pakistan’s brutal suppression of the genuine voices advocating for Gilgit Baltistan’s rights. #GilgitBaltistan

<https://twitter.com/Zeehanbercha/status/1756642903504363838>

**Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan\_Din**

10 February 2024

Thank you very much, Chitral. No one will ask why I am thanking the people of Chitral. Only those people of Gilgit-Baltistan who travel on KKH will

understand what I am saying. #Chitral #GilgitBaltistan

[https://twitter.com/Rohshan\\_Din/status/1756303645723824419](https://twitter.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1756303645723824419)

**Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan\_Din**

10 February 2024

Chakwal situation Chaudhry Ayaz Ameer had gone to the RO office to collect his results so that there could be no rigging but was forcibly removed by the police.

Tweet Link:

[https://twitter.com/Rohshan\\_Din/status/1756300624956625166](https://twitter.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1756300624956625166)

**Fouaad barcha @fouaadbarcha**

10 February 2024

While mainland Pakistan is busy with the circus of elections, #GilgitBaltistan continues to suffer. PHQ hospital in Gilgit does not have the most basic healthcare facilities. Secretarty health is not releasing funds. Continuous neglect and alienation of 2.5 million people of GB is shameful.

<https://twitter.com/fouaadbarcha/status/1756271273611550810>

**Shereenkarim @shereenkarim22**

5 February 2024

Negotiations between the government and the People’s Action Committee successfully postponed the dharna @Rohshan\_Din @geonews\_urdu

<https://twitter.com/shereenkarim22/status/1754559251933278584>



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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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