

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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22 July - 28 July 2024

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Jamaat-e-Islami Crackdown
Gilgit-Baltistan POK
Land reform laws Burgay
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Charter of demands Public order
Administration



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

Refugee's 1989 demands 'AJK' govt to implement their charter of demands

Daily Parliament Times, 22 July 2024

Refugees of 1989 express regret over the exploitative attitude of the government of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) regarding their demand of resettlement, implementation of 6% quota, state domicile, ownership rights and allocation of 2 seats in the Legislative Assembly. According to details, a high level meeting of the central leadership of Refugees 1989 was held in Mirpur, Kotli, Bagh, Muzaffarabad and various other cities. They stated that base camp government should clarify its plan of action regarding Kashmir Freedom Movement. The meeting was attended by presidents, elected councillors, representatives and other important leaders of various refugee settlements established across 'Azad Kashmir.' The chief guest of the meeting was Ameer Refugees Jammu and Kashmir 1989 Uzair Ahmed Ghazali while the patron of Refugees Ittehad Forum Bagh Chaudhry Abdul Wahid presided over the meeting.

While addressing, speakers said that the government of 'Azad Kashmir' should refrain from the exploitative behavior as Kashmiri refugees have suffered a lot due to the carelessness and inattention of the current and past base camp governments. They said that 8500 Kashmiri families who sacrificed their lives for Kashmir freedom

movement are forced to live a life of poverty. They were of the view that 'Azad Kashmir' government established in the name of Kashmir freedom movement has completely ignored the annual budget for the heirs of Kashmiri refugees and martyrs, and has proved that the government of the base camp is actually not interested for the welfare of Refugees.

Despite the passage of 35 years, these Kashmiri families, whose total population consists of more than 45,000 people, have neither own a plot of land nor a roof to hide their heads in their own state, they lamented. Speakers said that it is pity that the base camp government makes loud claims regarding the Kashmir freedom movement, but the fact is that the refugees who sacrificed everything for this movement have been practically left helpless. Refugees' leaders said that the educated youth are unemployed due to non-implementation of the 6% quota allotted in government jobs. They said that despite the passage of three and a half decades, the domicile of the independent state is not being issued to the refugees who migrated from Srinagar, Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri and other districts of the occupied state.

They said that they have been demanding 2 seats for refugees in the legislative assembly from the last 10 years, but the government is not giving the right of representation to refugees to prove that they are 3rd class citizens. Refugees of 1989 has passed a

unanimous resolution in the meeting demanding the government of 'Azad Kashmir' to take the right direction for resettlement as per Charter of Demand. They reiterated for immediate approval of their demands such as property rights, allocation of 2 seats for refugees in the Legislative Assembly, consideration of two-person husband and wife as a family and issuance of migrant cards.

The resolution called for a referendum to be held by the United Nations for a fair and lasting solution to the Kashmir issue. The resolution described the 'Indian military occupation' of 'Occupied Kashmir' as an intolerable situation. They reject the actions of the Indian Lok Sabha on the dissolution of article 370 as an imperialist attack and the decision of the Indian Supreme Court regarding Jammu and Kashmir on 11 December 2023 as a biased and political decision. In the resolution, tributes have been paid to the Kashmiri people for their eternal struggle for freedom and to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for national freedom.

They said that Indian conspiracies and tactics cannot make the Kashmiri people withdraw from their demand for freedom. They also rejected the worst violations of human rights in 'Occupied Kashmir' and demanded the human rights organizations to take notice of the actions of Indian coercion in the occupied state. Kashmiri refugee leaders have demanded the human rights organizations to play role in

releasing the libertarian leaders and workers imprisoned in Indian jails.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/07/22/refugees-1989-demands-ajk-govt-for-the-implementation-of-their-charter-of-demand/>

YFK in collaboration with IRS, organized a seminar on Kashmir Accession to Pakistan Day

Daily Parliament Times, 22 July 2024

The Youth Forum for Kashmir (YFK) in collaboration with Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), organized a seminar on Kashmir Accession Day with Pakistan. This seminar featured an esteemed and expert panel, including Senator Zarqa Suhrawardy Taimur, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, Mr. Sheikh Abdul Mateen, former Secretary General APHC-'AJK', Mr. Altaf Wani, Senior Broadcast Journalists among others. The session aimed to highlight the significance of Kashmir accession to Pakistan, while keeping the discussion multi-faceted and shedding light on future of Kashmir. It provided deep insights of the region and highlighted the alarming human rights condition in 'Indian illegally occupied Kashmir' (IIOJK). The session had many young scholars, students and senior researchers in attendance. Each speaker enlightened the attendees with various aspects and particulars of the conflict. This session served as a moving reminder of ongoing struggles faced by the Kashmiri people.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/07/22/yfk-in-collaboration-with-irs-organized-a-seminar-on-kashmir-accession-with-pakistan-day/>

**Ruling parties should tell their performance for the freedom of Kashmir and prosperity of base camp:
Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Khan**

Daily Parliament Times, 22 July 2024

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'-Gilgit-Baltistan (AJK-GB) Leader Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Khan has said that the ruling parties should tell what they have done for the freedom of Kashmir and the prosperity of the base camp. The ruling parties of 'Azad Kashmir' have been winning the seat of Muzaffarabad by chanting the slogan of Kashmir will be Pakistan. Where was Kashmiri leadership, when the fence was being erected, our Kashmiri leadership except Syed Ali Geelani in 'Occupied Kashmir' and JI in 'Azad Kashmir', tell the nation where was the rest of the leadership, he asked. Our youth are disgusted not with Pakistaniness, but with the fake leadership that could not rise above their own self, he said.

Dr. Mushtaq said that wherever I go, people are crying about problems, complaining about the violation of merit, injustice in police stations and courts, construction works. They talk about corruption and bribery. This political mafia and hereditary group is looting instead of creating a system in the base camp. He said that the Muslim Conference won 20 out of 26 seats with the slogan that we will join with Pakistan while the National Conference which was pro-India lost, so Kashmiri people including Hindus, Sikh Pandits

and people of other religions voted for the pro-Pakistan party, he said.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/07/22/ruling-parties-should-tell-their-performance-for-the-freedom-of-kashmir-and-prosperity-of-base-camp-dr-muhammad-mushtaq-khan/>

Quelling Dissent; a Pyrrhic victory

Pamir Times, 24 July 2024

Detention of political activists in the hands of state machinery for having a difference of opinion is not a new phenomenon. States have been relying on Weber's theory of the state's monopoly over use of force. This principle, in general, has emboldened states to use force to crush dissents. Essentially, force is used by a legitimate authority to protect its citizens from any danger; may it stem from within or outside the state boundaries. The famous theory of social contract premises on the same principle. Unfortunately, in the contemporary era, the modern state system has been using force to tame its own citizens to keep their reins in its own hands.

Pakistan is no exception, and in a recent episode, in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), the authorities have detained a political activist, Yawar Abbas, under the West Pakistan Maintenance of Public order, accusing him of threatening the public peace and order and instigating the public against government institutions. The notification rolled out by the District Magistrate Nagar reads that he has been wittingly trying to sabotage the peace process through his social

media accounts, thus endangering public order. But it is out of question that the said authority did not quote any incident where he appeared to be provoking sentiments of people against any particular government institution. It is important to mention that Yawar Abbas has already been placed by the authorities in schedule IV, a clause of ATA which includes a person among the proscribed personals.

Unfortunately, there are more than hundreds of political activists who have been placed under schedule IV of ATA in GB. This law has added to the miseries of many educated people and few have contested their inclusion, in the list, in the courts of law, but in vain. The spree of suppression of political activists in a sensitive region has severe repercussions that is by no means in favor of the country and can dent its image at international level, let alone alienation of locals within the region. Differences of opinion and voicing of concerns by individuals against state institutions must be celebrated for its citizens have reached the highest level of political consciousness. Pakistan, being a democratic state, has enacted Article 19 in the constitution of 1973 to ensure freedom of expression.

The government machinery, therefore, before taking any measure of crackdown must take into account the democratic and constitutional compulsions. The state needs to revisit its repressive policies and must bear in mind that this is not mainstream

Pakistan but a unit of a disputed area. This may trigger a mass protest leading to resounding voices of separation as in 'Indian Occupied Kashmir' (IOK). Pakistan is in no way soothing the injured people but adding salt to the injuries of the constitutionally deprived people of GB. Both Islamabad and Rawalpindi should realize to the core that the people have unconditionally acceded to Pakistan and they have been waiting to get their rewards in return for the love they expressed to the nascent Pakistan. Instead of returning love in the same coin, the state is using brute force to intimidate dissents at large. Such tactics would cost a Pyrrhic victory for Pakistan and may lead to civil unrest in the region.

The consequent void may be filled by an evil eye. Geographical significance has turned GB into a golden bird and, at the same time, the region has been made vulnerable; many global and regional powers have eyes upon the region. A large scale protest leading to civil conflict may invite powerful players as uninvited guests under the pretext of Human Rights violations and peaceful settlement. The authorities concerned, particularly the establishment, should not tread on the path of invaders but a custodian and deal with the dissenting voice in a peaceful manner. Suppression of dissenting activists may bring a Pyrrhic victory but not a convincing victory.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/07/24/quelling-dissent-a-pyrrhic-victory/>

British MPs call for holding moot to resolve Kashmir dispute

The Express Tribune, 26 July 2026

The British lawmakers urged their government to hold a multilateral conference on Kashmir for ending the conflict in the UN-designated disputed territory. At a conference held at the British parliament, the participants, including the British lawmakers, expressed concern over settler colonialism being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir by India. The lawmakers, including Debbie Abrahams, Andrew Pakes, Emma Reynolds, Yuan Yang, Iqbal Mohammed, Sarah Smith, Rachel Hopkins, Paulette Hamilton, Clive Betts and Afzal Khan attended the conference chaired by Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK President Fahim Kayani.

Among others include Muzzamil Ayub Takhur from 'Indian occupied Kashmir' (IoK), Muhammad Ghalib, president Tehreek-e-Kashmir Europe; Rehana Ali, Advocate and info secretary of TeK UK; Sadaf Abbas Cheema from King's College London Students Union; and Khawajah Suleman and Naila Azmat, human rights activists. Reiterating their support to Kashmiris' right to self-determination as enshrined in various UN resolutions, the conference lamented the inaction by the international community on Kashmir front. We note with heavy heart the grave human rights situation in the 'IoK', especially after August 2019 when India re-annexed the UN-designated disputed territory, and is

engaged in occupying military-backed settler colonialism, said a resolution adopted at the conference. The conference called on the ruling Labour Party to bring a resolution to the House of Commons on situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2483027/british-mps-call-for-holding-moot-to-resolve-kashmir-dispute>

Pakistan rejects Modi's belligerent remarks

The Nation, 27 July 2024

Pakistan rejected the Indian Prime Minister's belligerent remarks made in Drass, Ladakh on 26 July. Bravado and jingoism undermine regional peace, and are totally counter-productive for resolution of long-standing disputes between Pakistan and India, especially the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, a foreign ministry statement said. The Indian leaders' rhetorical statements cannot deflect international attention from India's heavy-handed approach to suppress the Kashmiri people's just struggle for realization of their fundamental rights and freedoms, particularly their inalienable right to self-determination.

It added: Instead of maligning others for terrorism, India should reflect on its own campaign of orchestrating targeted assassinations, subversion and terrorism in foreign territories. Pakistan stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty against any aggression, as exemplified by its robust response to India's reckless incursion in February 2019. The statement said while Pakistan is

ready to counter India's aggressive actions, it remains committed to promoting peace and stability in the region.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jul-2024/pakistan-rejects-modi-s-belligerent-remarks>

Economic Developments

G-B court's order: Over Rs3bn per annum revenue through imports from China at stake?

Business Recorder, 24 July 2024

The Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) tax collection of over Rs 3 billion per annum from imports from China is at stake as Chief Court Gilgit Baltistan (GB) has stopped FBR from collecting sales tax/income tax from Sost Border. The Collectorate of Customs (GB) has written a letter to the FBR on restraining order on collection of sales tax and income tax on import stage by Chief Court – GB. According to the communication of the Collector of Customs to the FBR, Chief Court – GB on 20 July 2024, in writ petition number 201 of 2024, has passed an ex-parte restraining order at admission stage without issuing notices to the FBR and other respondents: "to not collect sales tax, income tax and additional sales tax from importers and exporters at Sost Dry Port, declaring that GB is exempt from these taxes.

Data revealed that the sales tax and income tax at the import stage at Sost Dry Port were collected last year equal to Rs 2.798 billion and Rs 0.979 billion respectively, according to the Collector of Customs. The Sales Tax Act 1990 and

Income Tax Ordinance 2001 have not been extended to GB as per GB Constitution Order 2018 and its predecessor constitutional orders. However, under Constitution Order 2018, the Prime Minister is empowered to do so. The issue has long historic background since 1981, in fact Income Tax Ordinance 2001 was extended to GB in 2012 and later withdrawn as a result of discussions and decisions in FBR and Prime Minister office.

The matter involves important constitutional issues, if the Board reaches to conclusion that the subject restraining order needs to be contested in the court then it is proposed that the Board may hire a constitutional lawyer from Islamabad, as no suitable lawyer is available here. In such a situation, the office of Attorney General of Pakistan may also be engaged if deemed necessary, Collector of Customs added. The order of the Chief Court GB revealed that admittedly, the territory of GB is exempted from imposition of all kinds of taxes, which has already been decided in a plethora of judgements. The points raised by the petitioners (importers and exporters associations) need further consideration. Hence petition is admitted for regular hearing. In the meantime, the FBR is restrained from collection/deduction of income tax, sales tax and additional sales tax from the importers and exporters of GB on import stage at Sost Station, order of the Chief Court GB added.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40314052/g-b-courts-order-over-rs3bn-per-annum-revenue-through-imports-from-china-at-stake>

Melting Glaciers: The Ticking Time Bombs in Gilgit-Baltistan

Pamir Times, 24 July 2024

The alarming rate of glaciers melting in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has reached a critical point, posing a significant threat to the region's ecosystem and inhabitants. The ticking time bomb of climate change is starting to burst, and the consequences are devastating. Rising temperatures are causing glaciers to melt rapidly, leading to flash floods, landslides, and other climate-related disasters. The region's critical infrastructure, including homes, bridges, and roads, is at risk of being destroyed, displacing thousands of people. The melting glaciers also threaten the water supply, agriculture, and biodiversity.

The melting glaciers in GB have been a longstanding concern, and the recent disaster in Burgay Nallah is a stark reminder of the consequences of climate change and the urgent need for action. The government of GB has a critical responsibility to take proactive measures for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk management. The urgency to address disaster risk management in GB is a pressing trust placed upon the government, as the region is increasingly vulnerable to climate-related disasters, such as flash floods, landslides, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). The recent damages due to the outburst of floods from Burgay Nallah highlight the Skardu

Administration's complete failure to ensure earlier warnings to alert communities at risk.

The GB government is not taking climate change seriously, and there are no appropriate actions to reduce disaster risks. In Skardu, there are larger populations living in disaster-prone areas, including Hargisa, Shigari Kalan, Shigari Bala, Rigayool, and many more. These areas have suffered greatly, with homes and crops destroyed multiple times by flash floods, yet residents continue to rebuild the same in vulnerable areas. The buying and selling of property in disaster-prone areas continues unabated, with people constructing homes in water passages, despite the Skardu administration's knowledge of these activities. The administration's inaction is alarming, as flash floods have rapidly occurred in areas like Shigari Kalan, and Shigari Bala Nallah, destroying crops and homes built in the way of water.

Instead of relocating, people have chosen to reconstruct their homes in the same vulnerable locations, despite knowing the risk of flash floods. This cycle of destruction and reconstruction has repeated itself multiple times, with people wasting their money and time on homes that are likely to be destroyed again. The GB government must take immediate action to stop the buying and selling of properties in disaster-risk areas, halt the reconstruction of homes located in water passages, and relocate the population living in disaster-prone

areas to safer zones. This is crucial to save lives and further damage to the property.

The government must strictly enforce disaster risk reduction, halting the sale, purchase, and construction of homes in high-risk areas. Additionally, the government of GB should leverage its potential to secure funding from the federal budget, particularly from the federal Green budget for climate change and disaster risk management in the fiscal year 2024-2025. As a climate-sensitive region, GB should be a top priority for the federal government, considering the region's vulnerability to climate-related disasters and its contribution to the country's economy and ecosystem. Hence the fiscal allocations for climate change and disaster risk management in climate-sensitive areas, offer a glimmer of hope. GB government must utilize this opportunity to implement sustainable development initiatives, enhance climate resilience infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction measures, and protect the livelihoods of its people. The time for complacency has long passed; the GB government must act now to enforce strict regulations on climate change and high-risk areas and secure funds for climate resilience. The sustainable future of GB depends on the decisions made today to protect its people and natural resources.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/07/24/melting-glaciers-the-ticking-time-bombs-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

GB CM chaired a special committee tasked with drafting the final land reform laws

UrduPoint, 23 July 2024

During the 11th meeting of the Provincial Cabinet, the Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Haji Gulbar Khan chaired a special committee which has been tasked to draft the final law for land reforms. Among those who will be reviewing the drafts of land reforms are Ghulam Muhammad, the provincial minister of law and tourism; Mohammad Ismail, the minister of finance; and Amjad Zaidi, the minister of construction and communications among others. After comparing and analyzing the draft land reform bills from various perspectives, the special committee will work with all interested parties to prepare the final draft of the land reform legislation. It will then submit the final draft bill for approval to the upcoming cabinet meeting within the next 30 days.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-4093372.html>

Sardar Abdul Qaum Niazi issued a call for protest throughout 'Azad Kashmir' on 26 July

UrduPoint, 25 July 2024

As directed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder chairman Imran Khan, the PTI 'Azad Kashmir' president Sardar Abdul Qayum Niazi issued a call for a demonstration

throughout 'Azad Kashmir' on 26 July against the detention of PTI leadership. The PTI's 'Azad Kashmir's Central Deputy Information Secretary and other locals leaders and workers have been urged by Raja Farrukh Mumtaz to make sure they show up in front of the Central Press Club Muzaffarabad on 26 July at 11 a.m. All of the local party workers, including those in the central, district, tehsil, and circle levels have received orders from Raja Farrukh Mumtaz to guarantee their attendance at the protests rally.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4095253.html>

Gilgit-Baltistan Government is notified that Pakistan Television will open a bureau office in Gilgit

Urdupoint, 25 July 2024

Pakistan Television (PTV) will establish a bureau office in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) upon the provincial government's request. A formal letter from Pakistan Television Corporation to the GB government has been received, according to a statement released by the Departments of Information in GB. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has formally approved the opening of the PTV Bureau Office in GB, according to a letter from Director News PTV, citing the region's unique interest and demand. A team from PTV Islamabad will visit Gilgit to evaluate the situation and carry out the project.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-4095786.html>

From Social Media

Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan_Din

25 July 2024

The main gate of Sost National Logistics Corporation (NLC) port was closed by the traders. The start of the sit-in. Conversation between Colonel NLC and traders at the border.

#gilgitbaltistan

Video link:

https://twitter.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1816432370872176907

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

29 July 2024

If we are not allowed to trade (sost border) on our land, we will set everything fire and no one will be safe.

#gilgitbaltistan #sost #traders #strike #cpec #Pakistan #china #trade

Video link:

<https://twitter.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1817668383317565871>

Rahat Ali Dikhan @Rahatal81291566

29 July 2024

Baloch is moving towards Gwadar port while Gilgit-Baltistan is moving towards Sost port. Pakistan state should thinking about real voice of the notions.

The state have suppressed the indigenous population since 76 years united nations take action against dual policy.

<https://twitter.com/Rahatal81291566/status/1817870640638242943>

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Disclaimer

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