

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Lockdown
Gilgit Baltistan Nagar
cricket stadium Al-Quds
Tourism Khunjerab Sost Dry Port
tourist destinations
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf
Hydel power



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Contents

Political Developments

- AJK Assembly adopts resolution against killing of Kashmiris in IIOJK
- All set to impose lockdown in AJK
- PAL hosts poetry recital in G-B languages
- Protest rally in Muzaffarabad against Ashraf Sehrai’s custodial killing in IIOJK jail
- PM expresses deep grief over death of Ashraf Sehrai

Economic Developments

- GB govt and PCB to collaborate in building a world class cricket stadium in Pissan, Nagar
- “Pak-China border to open soon”
- Chinese textile firm to train and employ 2000 workers
- Govt to introduce new tourist destinations in Gilgit Baltistan

Vernacular Urdu Media

- Acting CJ AJK HC Justice Muhammad Shiraz Kiyani passes away
- All Political groups should be taken into confidence before Constitutional amendment: Choudhary Yaseen
- Gilgit-Baltistan observes Al-Quds (Palestine Solidarity day)
- “PTI will take special steps for youth after coming to power in AJK”

Political Developments

AJK Assembly adopts resolution against killing of Kashmiris in IIOJK

The News, 05 May 2021

Four similar resolutions were adopted by the AJK Assembly in its session at Muzaffarabad. The four resolutions were moved by four different members of the Legislative Assembly and all expressed deep concern over the continued killing in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The four resolutions moved by the leader of opposition Ch. Mohammad Yaseen, opposition member Abdul Rashid Turabi, MLA Pir Syed Ali Raza Bukhari and MLA Rafit Aziz were almost identical in terms of how they condemned the violence of the Indian armed forces against innocent Kashmiris and urging International organisations especially the UN to implement its agreed resolutions in Jammu and Kashmir. Ch. Mohammad Yaseen also expressed concern about the deteriorating health of the many Hurriyat leaders who were languishing in jails and demanded to extend medical facilities besides their immediate release from jails.

In these resolutions, there were also mentions of the Illegal Abrogation of the special autonomous status of the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and attempts at the demographic change that are systematically being made by the Indian authorities.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/830878-ajk-assembly-adopts-resolutions-against-kashmiris-killings-in-iioj-k>

All set to impose lockdown in AJK

Dawn, 06 May 2021

With the surge in Corona virus cases which is showing no signs of slowing down, AJK along with the rest of Pakistan is set for a lockdown around *Eid-ul-fitr*. The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government on Wednesday announced imposition of lockdown in the name of “mobility control measures” from May 8 to May 16 in the light of the decisions made by National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) late last month. All businesses except essential services will remain closed on these days.

According to the notification, there would also be a complete ban on inter-provincial, inter and intra city public transport. However, goods transport, private vehicles, cabs and rickshaws would be allowed on roads with 50% occupancy. There would be a total ban on tourism both local and outsiders and all recreational places would be closed and all recreational activities banned. This decision came in the wake of growing infections over the last week. The positivity ratio has gone up to 14 percent and another 25 people lost their lives to the deadly virus this past week in AJK.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1622204/ajk-also-imposes-restrictions-on-eid>

PAL hosts poetry recital in G-B languages*Express Tribune*, 06 May 2021

Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) organised an online *Sheena-Balti-Khuwar-Broshiski-Wokhi* (Gilgit-Baltistan languages) poetry recitation. Keeping in view that the holy month of Ramazan is going on, the poetry was read in praise of God Almighty and his beloved prophet (PBUH). This was in keeping with PAL's tradition of making sure that all regional languages get coverage from its literary platform.

PAL Chairman Dr Yousuf Khushk in his introductory speech praised the beauty of Gilgit-Baltistan and also gave a brief history of the five languages which are spoken in the region. He also pointed to the fact that the five languages of the region i.e. *Sheena, Balti Broshiski, Wokhi and Khuwar* are also enlisted among the national languages of Pakistan. The diversity and cultural richness of Gilgit-Baltistan's culture and tradition is evident from the diversity and richness of its languages. Persian poetry was also customarily read at the session signifying the historical importance of Persian language in the region.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2298554/pal-hosts-poetry-recital-in-g-b-languages>

Protest rally in Muzaffarabad against Ashraf Sahrai's custodial killing in IIOJK jail*Urdu Point*, 06 May 2021

The capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir hosted a massive protest demonstration against the alleged custodial killing of senior Hurriyat leader Muhammad Ashraf Sahrai while under preventive detention in Occupied Kashmir. The protest was organized under the aegis of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir and International Forum for Justice and Human Rights. Large number of people gathered at Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk and blocked the main road by burning tires.

People with visible anguish on their faces waved black flags and raised slogans against Indian oppression in Occupied Kashmir. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmad Ghazali called India is a savage country which kills Kashmiris in jails. He maintained that the senior Hurriyat leader had been assassinated. Vice Chairman of International Forum for Justice and Human Rights Mushtaq-ul-Islam pointed out the fact that Mr. Sahrai had been deliberately kept away from medical treatment by the Indian government despite his serious illness. Protestors on the occasion appealed to the United Nations along with other international organisations to demand an investigation into Sahrai's death and to demand the release of thousands of Kashmiri prisoners languishing in Indian jails.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/protest-rally-held-against-custodial-killing-1244317.html>

PM expresses deep grief over death of Ashraf Sehrai*Daily Heights*, 07 May 2021

Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over demise of Kashmiri Tehreek-e-Hurriyat leader Ashraf Sahrai in illegal Indian custody. On his Twitter handle, the prime minister posted "Deeply saddened by demise of Kashmiri ldr (leader) Ashraf

Sahrai in illegal Indian custody.” The prime minister further said that India’s oppression of Kashmiris was a blot on international community’s collective conscience. “We will continue to support Kashmiris’ just struggle for right to self-determination in acc (accordance) with UNSC Resolutions,” he said in the tweet.

Sehrai passed away after months of incarceration in Udhampur under the draconian Public Safety Act. Sehrai was suffering from multiple ailments but was not allowed any medical treatment while he was in jail. Even his family was kept unaware of his deteriorating health condition. The death of the senior Hurriyat leader has drawn a strong reaction from all sects of the Pakistani society and especially from Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

<https://heights.com.pk/>

Economic Developments

GB govt and PCB to collaborate in building a world class cricket stadium in Pissan, Nagar

Pamir Times, 04 May 2021

The Nagar constituency which was vacated by PPP President Amjad Hussain Advocate on account of having won from two seats is going for poll. Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid made important visits and promised significant developments. The Chief Minister put his weight behind construction of a “world-class” cricket stadium in Pissan village of District Nagar. He visited the site of the stadium after paying his respects to veteran politician and community leader, Syed Yahya Shah, who passed away a couple of weeks back. The CM announced that the GB government will collaborate with the Pakistan Cricket Board and construct a magnificent stadium at the site and that will have world class facilities.

The Chief Minister also lauded his own government’s work in addressing the longstanding demand of constructing Shahra-e-Nagar, a major road envisaged as part of the recently announced “integrated development plan for Gilgit-Baltistan.” The demand for construction of Cricket stadiums became a rage, couple of months back when photographs of picturesque potential sites for Cricket stadiums in GB went viral online. Some prominent personalities like former cricketer Umar Gul had also contributed to this viral campaign

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/05/04/gb-government-pcb-to-build-world-class-cricket-stadium-in-pissan-nagar/>

“Pak-China border to open soon”

Pamir Times, 06 May 2021

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Hunza *Fiaz Ahmad* said that Pak-China *Khunjerab* border would be open soon after establishing four different health desks and deployment of essential health workers. After repeated requests, pleads and protests by the local traders and multiple failed attempts to open the *Khunjerab* border, Pakistan and the Chinese authorities have finally come close to a functional arrangement which can enable the permeability through the border.

While talking to media, DC announced that the Pakistan and Chinese governments have decided to open *Khunjerab* border soon. Acknowledging the dreadful effect the closure has had on the local traders as the main incentive for opening of the pass, He said Coronavirus SOP corridor is being established from *Khunjerab* Pass to *Sost* Dry Port. Fifty personnel including health workers will be deployed from *Khunjerab* Top to *Sost* Dry Port. He further said that vaccination centre, walk-through gate, screening centers and four different health desks have already been established. These arrangements are expected to be finalized after Eid. Deputy Commissioner also said that many of the affected traders had been provided relief through *Ehsaas* and other programs.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/05/06/pak-china-border-to-open-soon/>

Chinese textile firm to train and employ 2000 workers

The Nation, 08 May 2021

Lahore based Chinese textile company *Challenge* has signed an agreement with the Gilgit-Baltistan government to train 2,000 workers and provide them jobs in its factory in Lahore. The agreement was signed in Islamabad by Karen Chen, the Managing Director of Chinese Company *Challenge* and the representative of the government of Gilgit-Baltistan. Qamar Bobi, a significant business figure in enhancing China and Pakistan's business relations was also present on the occasion. Karen Chen said that as per the agreement, 2,000 workers would be selected from Gilgit-Baltistan and after training, would be employed in textile establishments in Lahore where the employees would be provided accommodation and food free of cost. Karen said the textile unit is employing 3000 people. Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid thanked Karen Chen and his company for providing employment opportunities to the people of the region.

Karen Chen used the opportunity to highlight other investments of the company in Pakistan. He pointed to the combined 600 million dollar investment that the company had in the development of Lahore-Multan and Lahore-Kasur roads.

<https://nation.com.pk/08-May-2021/chinese-textile-firm-to-train-and-employee-2000-workers>

Govt to introduce new tourist destinations in Gilgit Baltistan

ARY News, 09 May 2021

A phone call between Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar and Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan revealed that federal government was planning to introduce new tourist points in Gilgit Baltistan to promote Tourism.

Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid in return thanked Asad Umar for cooperating with GB Government and announcing historic comprehensive development package. This plan to introduce and develop new tourist points comes as a follow up to the Prime Minister's announcement of a package of 370 billion rupees for the development of GB. Tourism comprised of a significant part of that development plan and a good part of that package is expected to be dedicated to the promotion and development of tourism the region.

The development package also envisages Hydel power generation and transmission projects, connectivity projects, youth skill and scholarship program, up-gradation of health system and water and sanitation projects.

<https://arynews.tv/en/govt-new-tourist-destinations-gilgit-baltistan/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Acting CJ AJK HC Justice Muhammad Shiraz Kiyani passes away

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 04 May 2021

Acting Chief Justice of Azad Jammu Kashmir High Court Justice Muhammad Shiraz Kiyani died at the age of 56 in an Islamabad hospital on Monday after prolonged illness. He was shifted to *Shifa* International Hospital Islamabad a couple of months ago following precarious health condition. He will be laid to rest in his ancestral town of *Dadyal* in *Mirpur* district.

Late Justice Shiraz Kiyani had long and distinguished career in the judicial history of Azad Jammu Kashmir. He had started his judicial service as Civil Judge in AJK in 1995 and was then promoted as Sr. Civil Judge in 2003. Late Justice Kiyani had been awarded pride of performance by the AJK High Court for year 2003 / 2004. He was promoted as Judge of AJK High Court in September 23, 2015. He, as the senior most judge of the AJK High Court had been appointed as acting chief justice of the AJK High Court on March 20 this year after the retirement of Justice Azhar Saleem Babar.

http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Resize-of-Front_4.jpg

All Political groups should be taken into confidence before Constitutional amendment: Choudhary Yaseen

Muhaasib, 04 May 2021

Leader of the Opposition in the AJK assembly, Choudhary Yaseen has accused the government of trying to accumulate greater power for itself towards the end of its tenure by trying to push through constitutional amendments. Mr. Yaseen said that even if some constitutional amendments are absolutely necessary, then all political groups should be taken into confidence before the introduction of any amendment. Haste in such matters can lead to a disaster. Choudhary Yaseen said that Martyr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto worked very hard to construct a political system in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, but now that political system is under threat as the present day government tries to accumulate more and more powers. He also pointed out that certain media reports are suggesting that very significant changes in the constitution are expected in the assembly session that has been called. He said that significant decisions as important as constitutional amendments require detailed deliberations and consensus building and that too not just within the assembly but also with every significant political groups out there.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=1&edition=muzaffarabad&dt=04-05-2021>

Gilgit-Baltistan observes Al-Quds (Palestine Solidarity day)*Daily K2*, 07 May 2021

Thousands of people marched across Pakistan on Friday to mark Jerusalem Day and express solidarity with Palestinians. Al-Quds or Jerusalem Day rallies were taken out by different political and religious organizations, mainly Shia groups across Pakistan including the northern province of Gilgit-Baltistan. Thousands of people marched in rallies to express solidarity with the people of Palestine. A large rally was held in Skardu region where thousands of people marched in protest against the recent aggression of the Israeli forces against the Palestinians in the *Sheikh Jarrah* region.

Carrying Palestinian flags and raising anti-Israel slogans, the marchers vowed to continue to support the Palestinians in their struggle. Addressing the rally, the speakers condemned the eviction of hundreds of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem in a fresh wave of violence against them by the "Zionist" state. They also criticized the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the Arab world for their "cosmetic protest" over the Israeli move.

Earlier, the Israeli Central Court in East Jerusalem approved a decision to evict seven Palestinian families from their homes in favour of Israeli settlers as of the beginning of this year.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/1896>

“PTI will take special steps for youth after coming to power in AJK”*Daily Ausaaf*, 08 May 2021

Jammu Kashmir Peoples Students Organization’s former chairman Sardar Saqib Nayeem along with his many companions joined the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf Azad Jammu Kashmir Cadre. This induction was announced from the PTI Central office *Gulbarg* at an Iftar dinner organised by senior party leader and former Prime Minister Barrister Sultan. On this occasion, many important leaders of the party like Sardar Imtiyaz Khan, Raja Qadeer, Raja Masood Advocate and many others were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Barrister Sultan said that PTI is a natural choice for youth of Azad Jammu and Kashmir as it is a party that focuses on youth development. He said that after coming to power, PTI will take various steps especially for the youths of Jammu and Kashmir. New employment opportunities will be created for the youth. Also, loans will be handed out to youths so that they can start their own businesses and create employment for others. He urged the party members to gear up in the view of the fast approaching assembly elections and help take the message of Imran Khan’s vision to every household in AJK.

https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-05-08/135082/p1_41.gif

Compiled by

Bilal Ahmad Tantray

Edited By

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

Project Team

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

Dr. Ashok K Behuria

Dr. Priyanka Singh

Bilal Ahmad Tantray

Disclaimer

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: www.idsa.in; Email: pokdigest@gmail.com