

# Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 1 | Issue 15

07- 13 June 2021

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11<sup>th</sup> electoral reforms  
general election  
developmental projects  
divided families  
interim  
provincial  
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unemployment  
Mayor  
system  
anti-terrorism watch list  
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re-employment



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## Political Developments

### **36 individuals included in Schedule IV (anti-terrorism watch list) in Gilgit-Baltistan**

*Pamir Times*, 09 June 2021

36 people from GB including religious leaders, former and current legislators, as well as progressive and nationalist activists from many districts have been included in the newly updated Schedule IV (anti-terrorism watch list) of Pakistan. Among the list of 36 individuals of GB, 24 are from Gilgit district. The list includes clerics like Sheikh Mirza Ali, Bilal Summairi and Agha Syed Ali Rizvi, ex GB MLA Didar Ali, Present MLA Ghulam Shahzad (Agha), along with other well-known personalities and activists. According to NACTA website, “Any individual about whom either there is a credible intelligence-information or who has a history of being linked to a Proscribed Organization can be proscribed by Home Department of a Province and can be subjected to restrictions on travel, speech and business, under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

Possible action against the “4th Schedulers” includes passport embargo, freezing of bank accounts, ban on financial support loan and credit card, arms license embargo as well as granting/blocking clearance for recruitment in Federal/Provincial Governments/ Agencies through monitoring.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/06/09/36-individuals-included-in-schedule-iv-anti-terrorism-watchlist-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

### **GB Police to create 3500 new posts**

*Dawn*, 10 June 2021

As par GB CM Khalid Khursheed, a summary has been sent to the federal government for approval of 3500 new posts in the region’s police department. The CM also announced issuance of annual uniform allowance and monthly risk allowance to various ranks of the GB Police department.

Putting the various developments in the police department on record, the CM said that the record of the GB Police stations is being computerized. The families of the martyred policemen from the ranks of constable to inspector would get Rs10 million, from DSP/ASP rank Rs15 million and Rs20 million would be paid to the families of the martyred SPs and other senior officers. Also, sons of police martyrs would be offered jobs in the police department. New vehicles will also be provided to improve the efficiency and mobility of the police.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1628569/3500-new-posts-to-be-created-in-gb-police>

## **Gandapur, German Envoy discuss regional security situation with particular reference to Kashmir.**

*Daily Times*, 10 June 2021

While talking to Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan H.E Bernhard Schlagheck who called on him in Islamabad to discuss the overall security situation of the region, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur expressed his concerns about Kashmir saying that India is changing the demography of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir by killing innocent Kashmiri youth in fake encounters.

Gandapur highlighted the horrible human rights condition in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and reminded the German Ambassador of the moral and legal obligation of the world community and human rights organizations to stop India from committing heinous crimes against humanity in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. German Ambassador expressed his concerns on human rights violations in IIOJK and said that Germany supports the peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute through a meaningful dialogue process.

AJK and GB regions were also discussed where political developments especially the upcoming elections in AJK were discussed along with the many new economic developments in the soon-to-be province of Gilgit-Baltistan

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/770202/gandapur-german-envoy-discuss-regional-security-situation-with-particular-reference-to-kashmir/>

## **Elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir to take place on July 25**

*The News*, 10 June 2021

The Elections in 33 constituencies of Azad Kashmir and 12 constituencies of Muhajireen Jammu and Kashmir will be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July as per the announcement made by the Election Commission Azad Kashmir. This election which will be the 11<sup>th</sup> general election in AJK has a total of 2.82 million potential voters of which 1.59 million are male while 1.297 million are female voters. It should be noted that the term of the present government ends on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July.

The nominations can be submitted till the 21<sup>st</sup> of June while the same would be scrutinized by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Objections and Appeals can be lodged by the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of June respectively.

Earlier, the NCOC had suggested that the AJK polls should be postponed till a time when a significant number of people living in AJK had been vaccinated. This suggestion however, caused a political storm in the region and soon the motives of such a suggestion were questioned by many groups and individuals. Till now, the election commission has given no official response to the NCOC suggestion.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/847552-elections-in-azad-kashmir-to-take-place-on-july-25>

**PPP delegation meets CEC ECP on AJK elections***ARY News*, 11 June 2021

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) delegation met the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and conveyed their reservations on elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and electronic voting machines (EVMs). Earlier, the federal ministers had on June 07 held a second round of talks with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the use of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and internet voting.

The electoral reforms bill was discussed as it was presented before the National Assembly in October last year and so far 49 amendments have been suggested by the government. Smooth functioning of Electronic voting machines were also discussed as mostly the allegations of rigging are based on irregularities during the culmination of voting process and announcement of results. Issues regarding biometric voting and internet voting were also discussed as providing voting rights to 9 million overseas Pakistanis has become a priority for the Pakistan government

<https://arynews.tv/en/ppp-delegation-to-meet-cec-ecp-on-ajk-elections-evms-today/>

**Economic Developments****AJK's Developmental Budget Jumps to Volume of Rs. 28 Billion: PM Farooq***Urdu Point*, 09 June 2021

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan praised the incumbent government for changing the fate of the people of the state with the completion of thousands of developmental projects for the socio economic uplift of the people. He claimed that after 24 years, for the first time, proper financial agreement was reached at between Azad Jammu Kashmir and the government of Pakistan as a result of which the share of financial aid for the Azad Jammu Kashmir government increased. This has helped the government to earmark maximum developmental funds for the completion of projects of national importance. He added that developmental budget of the state has now jumped to Rs. 28 billion. The government has also taken up welfare schemes due to the increased funds that was made available. AJK government is now sponsoring orphans, widows and downtrodden segment of society by awarding them with monthly stipends to mitigate their sufferings.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/ajks-developmental-budget-jumps-to-volume-of-1273338.html>

**Angora rabbit scheme launched in GB to improve people's income***Global Village Space*, 11 June 2021

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Food Security Jamshed Iqbal Cheema has launched Angora rabbit scheme in Gilgit-Baltistan to help the people, especially the

women to earn a decent living by making wool products. The scheme is being undertaken by Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC).

Under the scheme, Angora wool, made from the Angora rabbit's fur, will be used for weaving shawls, thereby increasing the production of wool products in GB. On the occasion, PARC chairman Dr Mohammad Azeem Khan said the rabbits would be distributed among all the districts of GB. It is estimated that wool from the fur of one Angora rabbit could be used for weaving four to six high quality shawls every year. Dr Khan said the breeding of Angora rabbits could help reduce poverty in GB as it would contribute to increasing the production of wool products and creating employment for women

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/angora-rabbit-farming-launched-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

### **Govt proposes Rs37.9b budget for G-B**

*Express Tribune*, 12 June 2021

A 37.9 billion rupee development outlay for GB was proposed by the federal government for the fiscal year 2021-22. From the 37.9 billion, 18 billion are proposed to be earmarked for G-B's Annual Development Programme (ADP), while the remaining 19.9 will go to 10 uplift projects. It is pertinent to mention that G-B – a mountainous region in the north of the country – is one of the important parts of the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. In addition to that, the region's economic potential has prompted the government to start planning for giving a provincial status to G-B – a long standing demand of the people from the region.

The federal government has proposed the development of a regional grid after the recent complaint by the GB CM regarding the state being cut-off from the national grid. Along with that many connectivity projects and health infrastructure projects have been proposed.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2304770/govt-proposes-rs379b-budget-for-g-b>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

**“AJK elections should be held under the supervision of Army”: Tanveer Ilyas Khan**

*Daily Ausaaf*, 09 June 2021

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab and senior PTI leader, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas has said that the elections in Azad Kashmir should be held under the supervision of the army and troops should be deployed inside and outside the polling stations. It is feared that the Azad Kashmir government is involved in pre-poll rigging. This he said while talking to reporters. He said that Farooq Haider was trying to provoke people by seeing the worst defeat of PML-N in Azad Kashmir. He added that the

formula for partition of Kashmir was not under consideration at any level and the future of Kashmir would be decided only according to the will of the Kashmiris.

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas further said that PTI Azad Kashmir had become a strong force and PTI would form government with a two-thirds majority in the elections that is scheduled to be held in July. He further stated that PTI would freeze the accounts of those who looted state resources, and spend that money on development of the state and create an effective system of accountability in Azad Kashmir.

[https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-06-09/137245/p1\\_38.gif](https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-06-09/137245/p1_38.gif)

### **Awami Action Committee demands opening of Kargil-Skardu Road**

*Daily K2*, 10 June 2021

Awami Action Committee Gilgit-Baltistan leadership held a meeting which was attended by senior members of the cabinet including former chairman Awami Action Committee Maulana Sultan Raees, Jahanzeb Inqalabi, Aqeel Khan, Afraz Gul and Zaheer Qasmi. Former caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Afzal, welcomed the guests from Baltistan and welcomed the participation of senior political leaders of Baltistan in the Public Action Committee. He said that Baltistan is a great example of peace and unity for all people of GB. The people of Gilgit should also maintain an atmosphere of unity and brotherhood beyond sectarian differences by imitating the people of Baltistan. The role of the Public Action Committee in maintaining law and order in Gilgit-Baltistan is commendable. Former Chairman Maulana Sultan Raees and Awami Action Committee Baltistan Region Coordinator, Najaf Ali, said that the government should take immediate steps to open Skardu Kargil Road to reunite the divided families of Skardu Kargil. Every incoming government is misleading the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. They keep vacillating between a constitutional province and an interim province. If Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be made a province, then a Kashmir-style setup should be given to the people of GB, which is our basic right.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/2305>

### **GB Cabinet grants approval for holding Municipal Elections**

*Daily AUSAAF*, 10 June 2021

The Gilgit-Baltistan Cabinet held its sixth meeting after which Minister of Information Gilgit, Fataullah Khan, Minister of Finance Javed Munwa and the Representative of the CM Imtiyaz Ali Taj briefed the media. As per the brief, 24 different agendas were discussed in the meeting out of which 22 were approved. The most important of the 22 being holding of municipal elections in GB this year. The ministers told the media that the decision to hold the municipal elections was aimed at delegating power to the locals to resolve local issues at the local level which will strengthen the whole administration. They also announced the implementation of the 'Mayor system' in the three major cities of *Gilgit*, *Skardu* and *Chillaas*.

The cabinet has also decided on constituting village councils which will take the necessary decisions at the village level and provide representation. 30 percent of the budget expenditures would be carried out through the municipal councils to take the decision making process closer to the masses.

[https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-06-10/137313/p1\\_01.gif](https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-06-10/137313/p1_01.gif)

## **Raging unemployment among the educated youth of AJK**

*Editorial, Daily Muhaasib, 10 June 2021*

The failure to provide employment opportunities to the youth of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has reached such an epic proportion that even the highly educated and skilled youngsters are finding themselves unable to get a job. There is a great sense of helplessness amongst the youth which has begun to affect the mental health of the young populations. Among the many possible reasons for this dire situation, one of the obvious reasons is the increment in the retirement age of various employees or their 're-employment' citing their vast experience. This re-employment creates a double burden of providing pension and new salaries to these 'experienced' employees. This also has been used by the politicians as providing a reward to those employees who carry out their legal or illegal orders, and this increases corruption. It also leads to a general aging of the young working people without employment opportunities or career prospects. Therefore demography with the greatest potential suffers wastage due to joblessness. The increasing crime rate among young people also cannot be looked and this is linked to this phenomenon of re-employment.

Whichever government comes to power next, needs to make sure that such measures which support re-employment of retired employees keeping the young potential workforce out of work are not taken again and the huge potential of the state's youth needs to be properly utilised.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=2&edition=muzaffarabad&dt=10-06-2021>

## **AJK Police faces crisis as senior officers refuse to turn for duty after IGP appointment**

*Jammu Kashmir Times, 10 June 2021*

The AJK has run into a sizeable crisis ahead of the upcoming elections as 4 senior officers have applied for a 3 month absence of leave protesting the appointment of a junior grade officer as the IGP.

Sohail Tajik, A BS-20 police repatriated from Punjab under federal government's new rotation policy had been posted as the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) inspector general of police (IGP), a BS-22 office. His posting is significant ahead of upcoming general election in AJK. Four senior most officers of AJK Police including 22 grade AIG of AJK Police Sardar Faheem Khan, 21 grade DG Tahir Mehmood Qureshi, 21 grade DG Yaseen Qureshi and 21 grade IG headquarters Liaquat Hussain have also submitted leaves of absence for 3 months. This puts the AJK administration in a huge

fix at a time when Covid restrictions are still under place and the state is gearing up for general assembly elections next month. This is the second time this month that appointment of a junior officer over senior officers has caused a stir in AJK. Last month Qadir Khan, a grade 21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, has been posted as new Chief Secretary AJK. A decision which was not very well received by senior officers employed in the state.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Resize-of-fpjktimes-10-6-021.jpg>

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Volume 1 | Issue 15

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*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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