

# Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 1 | Issue 3

15-21 March 2021

interference  
Pakistan People's Party  
interim Province  
Great Game  
repercussion  
social media campaigns  
Gilgit-Balistan  
electoral reforms  
AJK upcoming election  
cottage industry  
Tehreek-e-Novjawan



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
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

- **Demands to replace campaigning with social media campaigns and physical voting with e-votes in the upcoming election.**
- **Protests in Muzaffarabad against Indian atrocities in Shopian.**
- **Speaker sets up panel for electoral reforms, GB status as interim province**
- **Justice Raja Shiraz Kiyani appointed as acting AJK High Court Chief Justice**
- **Pakistan People's Party decides to go solo in the upcoming AJK election**

### Economic Developments

- **FPCCI, NPO agree for promoting cottage industry in GB region**
- **AJK PM Inaugurates Mini Dam Worth Of Rs. 862 Million**
- **250 Billion Uplift plan to be announced for Gilgit-Baltistan**

### Vernacular Urdu Media

- **'Provisional Province' a part of the Great Game: Jamaat-e-Islami**
- **'Any interference in the AJK elections will see severe repercussions': PPP**
- **'Modi's policies are a threat humanity': Sardar Masood**
- **Tehreek-e-Novjawan announce full-fledged participation in the upcoming AJK election**
- **'Approval of the development package will start a new chapter of prosperity in Gilgit-Baltistan': Chief Minister**

## Political Developments

### **Demands to replace campaigning with social media campaigns and physical voting with e-votes in the upcoming election.**

*Parliament Times*, 15 March 2021

Daniyal Shahab Madni, Chief of Central Jamiat-e-Ahl-e-Hadith Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while speaking to delegations from different parts of the valley suggested that all the election processes this year should be conducted in online mode. In place of campaigns and rallies which have thousands of attendants, Daniyal suggested a social media campaign fully overseen by the Election Commission. He also suggested that the EC should be provided with enough funds to establish infrastructure which is good enough to replace physical voting by e-voting or digital voting. In the face of a third wave of the Covid pandemic which seems to have gripped AJK, these suggestions were made at the meeting. If the EC in collaboration with NADRA is able to put in a system where people can cast their votes online, it would also significantly increase the turnout and thus strengthen democracy

Daniyal Shahab Madni further said that the Central Jamiat-e-Ahl-e-Hadith is hopeful for a stable parliamentary system in the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and is also trying to bring all the units of the state on one platform for the benefit of the state.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/03/15/replace-e-voting-with-social-media-campaign-danial/#.YFBhAZ0zbIV>

### **Protests in Muzaffarabad against Indian atrocities in Shopian**

*Parliament Times*, 15 March 2021

Pasbaan-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir organised a protest in Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir against the excesses committed by the Indian Security forces in Shopian district of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). The sit-in protest was attended by thousands of citizens who raised slogans against the Indian government, accusing the Indian security forces of aggression against unarmed civilians and the Indian Prime Minister of fascism.

Chairman of Pasbaan-e-Hurriyat addressed the gathering and informed people about the situation in Rawalpura area of Shopian. He said that 3 Kashmiris were martyred while up to 200 unarmed civilians were injured by use of pellet guns. 17 of the wounded were shifted to Srinagar in a critical situation. The speakers on the occasion reiterated the age old demand of right to self-determination and called on the United Nations to end all sieges, operations and killings by Indian forces inside the disputed state. The speakers also said that India should know that it will never be able to crush the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people through cultural aggression and oppression.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/03/15/protest-in-kashmir-against-indian-atrocities-in-shopian/#.YFA-HJ0zbIU>

## **Speaker sets up panel for electoral reforms, GB status as interim province**

*The News*, 16 March 2021

A decision to form a parliamentary committee on the issues of electoral reform as well as the constitutional amendment to give GB a provincial status was taken by the speaker of the national assembly Asad Qaiser. In a meeting between the National Assembly speaker and the Advisor to the PM on parliamentary affairs, it was agreed that equal representation would be given to both the Opposition and Government members for their input for electoral reforms. The committee would also give input about bringing constitutional amendment to give Gilgit-Baltistan the status of an interim province keeping in view the aspirations of GB public representatives. The consensus of both the government and the opposition are imperative for bringing electoral reform. If however, reforms are brought in and the election process is made more transparent, faith of the people in the electoral process and the chosen representatives would be restored. Advisor to PM on Parliamentary Affairs Dr Babar Awan said that electoral reforms and making GB an interim province as per the vision of Imran Khan would strengthen democratic norms. He also proposed that parliamentary committee would be chaired by Speaker Asad Qaiser and this committee would deliberate upon pending electoral reform bill for making Gilgit-Baltistan an interim province.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/805074-speaker-sets-up-panel-for-electoral-reforms-gb-status-as-interim-province>

## **Justice Raja Shiraz Kiyani appointed as acting AJK High Court Chief Justice**

*Dawn*, 20 March 2021

President Sardar Masood Khan appointed the senior most judge of the AJK High Court, Justice Raja Shiraz as the acting Chief Justice after the retirement of Justice Azhar Saleem Babar. The Law department of Azad Jammu Kashmir issued a notice confirming the same.

The acting CJs are appointed by the President of AJK but the power to appoint permanent Chief Justice of the superior courts in AJK resides with the AJK Council Chairman and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Justice Babar was appointed as acting CJ on Nov 16, 2019 after the then CJ Justice Tabassam Aftab Alvi was nullified by a High Court bench - of which he was also a member as a referee judge. An alleged Lacuna in the AJK constitution caused by the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment prevented the Council Chairman from being in favour of making the appointment permanent. This lacuna was later removed by the AJK government on Dec 24 last year through the 14th constitutional amendment.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1613446>

## **Pakistan People's Party decides to go solo in the upcoming AJK election**

*Dawn*, 20 March 2021

Speaking at a Press Conference, Pakistan People's Party AJK Chapter Chairman Sardar Lateef Akbar has announced that PPP will contest the upcoming AJK elections in July by itself without getting into any pre poll alliances with any other political party. He also pointed to the fact that many people from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf who could be considered as 'notables' are now joining PPP. He said that this shift was mainly due the hiked prices and

unemployment which had popularised the PPP among the masses and causing erosion in the support base of the PTI. Mr Akbar accused the government of rigging the elections in GB and said that a similar act will not be allowed in AJK.

General Secretary of the PPP, AJK Chapter Dr Ahsan Iqbal also spoke to the media. Dr Iqbal took a dig at the Kashmir Committee Shehryar Afridi for calling Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani an ‘Indian agent’. He also accused the PTI of inaction with regard to the age old dispute of Jammu and Kashmir.

[https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=20\\_03\\_2021\\_002\\_004](https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=20_03_2021_002_004)

## Economic Developments

### **FPCCI, NPO agree for promoting cottage industry in GB region**

*The Nation*, 15 March 2021

In pursuance of a project assigned to NPO on “Developing and Promoting Cottage Industry of Gilgit-Baltistan” as a part of national development package for GB region, an important meeting was held in the NPO office. The Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and National Productivity Organisation (NPO) of Federal Ministry of Industries and Production agreed for promoting and developing Cottage Industry in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region. The move is aimed at increasing employment opportunities for the local population. In the meeting, the FPCCI and NPO agreed to commence various projects for trade promotion, agriculture, handicraft, stoneware, wooden craft and development of carpet industry in Gilgit-Baltistan.

NPO Chief executive Mohammad Alamgir said the GB package would bring economic revolution in GB leading to major developments in the region which will eventually improve the living standards of the local people. He also suggested promotion of agro-tourism in GB and said that NPOs and other government agencies should consider combining agriculture and tourism jointly as that would lead to better economic growth in GB.

<https://nation.com.pk/15-Mar-2021/fpcci-npo-agree-for-promoting-cottage-industry-in-gb-region>

### **AJK PM Inaugurates Mini Dam Worth Of Rs. 862 Million**

*Express Tribune*, 19 March 2021

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan laid the foundation stone of over Rs. 862 million Mini dam and flow metering system in the State metropolis on Thursday. The project will be completed within two years of stipulated period. Talking to media persons at the side-line of laying of the foundation stone ceremony, the Prime Minister said that the government attaches highest priority for the provision of basic amenities of life to the people. He said the people have given sacrifices in the form of two rivers to demonstrate their total commitment with Pakistan.

He said due to the Neelum-Jhelum power project, not only the temperature of the city has increased but people have been facing shortage of water.

Haider said this project will be completed in time and according to the set standard. He added that with the construction of this project, water bodies will help to cater to the shortage of water in the city and will also boost tourism activities. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister inaugurated a newly constructed Rs. 37 million city police station in the State capital city.

[https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Karachi/2021-03-](https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Karachi/2021-03-19/MjQyYzUxOWNhYmU1OTUyN2VkNGUyOWEwNjJlMwVINDIuanBIZw%3D%3D)

[19/MjQyYzUxOWNhYmU1OTUyN2VkNGUyOWEwNjJlMwVINDIuanBIZw%3D%3D](https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Karachi/2021-03-19/MjQyYzUxOWNhYmU1OTUyN2VkNGUyOWEwNjJlMwVINDIuanBIZw%3D%3D)

## **250 Billion Uplift plan to be announced for Gilgit-Baltistan**

*PT Profit, 18 March 2021*

Prime Minister Imran Khan is expected to announce a historic GB development package, worth over Rs250 billion soon, as the apex committee constituted by the federal government has completed its proposals for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) development plan. 57 development projects have been proposed to be complete between 2021 and 2026 which include some earlier, some on-going and some completely new projects. “The prime minister will soon approve the ‘Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-26)’ for GB, following which the details of the package would be shared. The apex committee has finalised the ground work on these projects and will submit the entire plan to the PM by next week. The PM may also visit Gilgit to announce the same,” the official source said while revealing the details of the apex committee meeting held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Minister Asad Umar.

<https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/03/18/pm-to-announce-rs250bn-uplift-plan-for-gb-soon/>

## **Vernacular Urdu Media**

### **‘Provisional Province’ a part of the Great Game: Jamaat-e-Islaami**

*Muhaasib, 15 March 2021*

Gilgit-Baltistan is historically a part of Jammu and Kashmir. An administrative and political system which is similar to that of AJK would be the best for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. These were some of the thoughts expressed by the head of Jamaat-e-Islaami Gilgit-Baltistan, Abdul Samee. He said that as a nation, all people of Gilgit-Baltistan were not on the same page. Ancestors of this nation fought and claimed independence from the *Dogras* so that the future generations of GB get to govern themselves. A provincial status lessens the autonomy of the region. Jamaat-e-Islaami has always held the belief that GB and AJK should have a joint Council with the Prime Minister as its chairperson. There should be a joint Judiciary as well. Only an AJK type of administrative structure will ensure the autonomy of GB that our ancestors fought for. Abdul Samee further said that the present time is very crucial for the region as Gilgit-Baltistan is also part of the Great Game. Therefore any decision regarding its future should be taken with great caution. A provisional provincial status will only increase the

vulnerability and volatility in the area and increase our problems. A Joint Council of AJK and GB with equal distribution of power is the best possible deal for the people.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=4&edition=gilgit&dt=15-03-2021>

### **‘Any interference in the AJK elections will see severe repercussions’: PPP**

*Daily Ausaaf*, 15 March 2021

Pakistan People’s Party Azad Jammu Kashmir President, Choudhary Lateef Akbar has warned against any kind of interference in the upcoming elections. He ordered the party workers to go about campaigning with all their strength and said that the People’s Party will make sure that the People’s right to choose their government is not fiddled with. If any puppet government is imposed on AJK against the wishes of the people, it would be unacceptable to both the PPP and the people. He urged his party workers to strengthen the party in all constituencies and also to be on the lookout for any kind of clandestine activities against the party nominees.

Choudhary Lateef said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto will himself campaign in all constituencies of AJK for this election. He also took a jab at the government while referring to the recent Senate elections saying that the drama that unfolded during the Senate elections has undermined Pakistani democracy in the eyes of the world. He also suggested that Yousuf Raza Geelani had actually won the election and the truth about that will come out soon. He encouraged his party workers by saying that the mood of the nation is changing and the People’s Party is bound to come to power in Azad Jammu Kashmir.

[https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-03-15/131235/p1\\_39.gif](https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2021-03-15/131235/p1_39.gif)

### **‘Modi’s policies are a threat to humanity’: Sardar Masood**

*Jasaarat*, 15 March 2021

Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan has said that Narendra Modi’s policies are a threat to humanity. Lauding the efforts of the common people of Occupied Kashmir who continue their struggle despite the aggressive and inhuman policies of Indian government, the President said that the truth will eventually come out, perpetrators of unjust oppression will be brought to justice and the ugly face of India is being exposed. Commenting on a report of the V Dem institute of Sweden which wrote about the ill treatment of minorities in India and Jammu and Kashmir, Masood Khan said that India has now become an electoral dictatorship rather than an electoral democracy.

President Masood said that Indian government’s aggression and stomping on human rights might be a new thing in India but it has been doing much worse in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir for decades. People have been tortured, murdered, disappeared, blinded; women have suffered sexual violence at the hands of the Indian security forces. However, with time, the world is taking notice of how India is treating its minorities especially the Muslims and how they are violating human rights in IIOJK. It is high time that the world realises that Narendra Modi’s policies pose a danger not only to the security of South Asia but also that of the world.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2021/03/15/210315-08-6/>

## **Tehreek-e-Novjawanan announce full-fledged participation in the upcoming AJK election**

*Muhaasib*, 16 March 2021

With the message of dissevering all relations except for one's relationship with the Quran and to bring about a change not only in faces but also in the system, Tehreek-e-Novjawanan announced their participation in the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. They have already nominated candidates who will be contesting in four electoral constituencies. Other candidates will be nominated soon. Speaking to the media along with other important leaders of the organisation, the Chairperson of the Tehreek-e-Novjawanan Pakistan Abdullah Hameed Gul said that they are working to gain Kashmir's affiliation to Pakistan by making it part of the Pakistan's constitution. He further said that India had attacked the *Shah-rag* (Arteries) of Pakistan and everyone needs to unite under national and state flag to repel this attack. He said that countries need to engage their youth if they want to grow successfully and thus the party of youth, i.e. Tehreek-e-Novjawanan would contest the upcoming election. He also announced that the party would soon build the cadre with strong women representation and also would include members from different walks of life like journalists and traders.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=4&edition=muzaffarabad&dt=16-03-2021>

## **'Approval of the development package will start a new chapter of prosperity in Gilgit-Baltistan': Chief Minister**

*Daily K2*, 16 March 2021

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid held a meeting with Federal Minister for Planning, Asad Umar. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Planning, Asad Umar said that in order to promote tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, it was necessary to improve the road infrastructure and communication system and expand the Gilgit Airport. He also said that work to prepare the historic development package for Gilgit-Baltistan is in full swing. An MoU will be signed between the Planning Division and the concerned departments of the Gilgit-Baltistan so that a Public Private Partnership Authority can be set up in Gilgit-Baltistan with the full cooperation of the Federal Government. Under the Gilgit-Baltistan Development Plan, funding of Rs. 210 billion will be ensured. Considering the importance and usefulness of the *Shonter* tunnel, this project will be a CPEC project.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Khalid Khurshid said that for the first time a mega development package is being received for the construction and development of Gilgit-Baltistan. The people will see real change. Tourism will be promoted. Economic activity will rise. Quality of life will improve. He also thanked Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umar for taking special interest in the development package for Gilgit-Baltistan.

<https://cutt.ly/czNmiBg>

Compiled by  
Bilal Ahmad Tantray

**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.*



**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](http://www.idsa.in); Email: [pokdigest@gmail.com](mailto:pokdigest@gmail.com)