

# Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 1 | Issue 7

12-18 April 2021

**AJK elections** **Kafalat**  
**P**atient capital **Judiciary crisis**  
**P**rotest sit-in **startup**  
**P**rovisional Province **package**  
**uplift package**  
**judicial crisis**  
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**K**arakoram Cooperative Bank



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## Political Developments

### **Provisional Province of Gilgit-Baltistan**

*Opinion, Gbee.pk, 13April 2021*

Gilgit-Baltistan has gone through a rigmarole of changes to finally come to a point when it can peacefully and deservedly become a province of Pakistan at par with the other four provinces. GB rose in rebellion against the Maharaja regime and acceded to Pakistan. But the administration and bureaucracy kept on using GB politically to leverage Pakistan's position vis-à-vis the Kashmir Conflict and due to this consideration, they forcibly kept GB as a part of the Kashmir Dispute in spite of the locals wanting to remain separate. There is no unanimity as to what was the agreed upon demand for Gilgit-Baltistan which was imperative for the bureaucrats to fulfill. And hence they used the classic divide and rule along the sectarian lines. For decades, the bureaucrats, ruled one after another, imposed black laws like FCR to bind the people of GB.

Even strong political movements against the bureaucratic rule and black laws were termed as rebellion and was suppressed. Kashmir's fate was deliberately entwined with that of GB and when the whole world stood watching in silent and India illegally swallowed large parts of Jammu and Kashmir first militarily and afterwards through unfair presidential orders, and even claimed Muzaffarad and GB as its 'integral part', Gilgit-Baltistan's future was combined with Kashmir as a matter of relief to Pakistan. Its strategic and geopolitical importance was renewed in the mind of all people.

People of GB have full sympathy with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and they are supportive of a lasting solution to the issue but to keep GB's relation with Pakistan undefined till now has not helped the Kashmir cause in any way. A provisional provincial status (provisional, pending the final disposal of the Kashmir issue) is the right way to go for political and economic development of GB and thus it is demanded that the territory of GB must be included in the territorial jurisdiction of Pakistan by a provisional amendment into Article 1 of the constitution.

<https://gbee.pk/2021/04/provisional-province-of-gilgit-baltistan/>

### **AJK Female Lawyers demand appointment of Chief Justices on a permanent basis**

*Urdu Point, 13 April 2021*

Weighing in is also is the Judiciary crisis that has been looming large in AJK. Azad Jammu and Kashmir female lawyers on Tuesday urged the government to appoint chief justices of High Court and Supreme Court on permanent basis. Speaking at a press conference at the Press Club, senior lawyer Bilqis Mehnaz, Kousar Awan Advocate, Mariyum Farooq Advocate and Mehwish Bashir Advocate said, since the retirement of chief justices, a crisis like situation has erupted here. Reiterating the demands of the AJK Supreme Court Bar Association, they said after the retirement of acting chief justice of high court Justice Azhar Saleem Babar; Justice

Shiraz Akhtar Kiyani was appointed as acting chief justice. But his health did not allow him to perform his duties and there was only one judge left in the high court. They said the litigants were suffering at large and dispensation of justice was being delayed in the region which was a matter of great concern for every citizen.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/ajk-female-lawyers-for-chief-justices-appoint-1222835.html>

### **AJK Govt Announces Rs 1.80 Billion Uplift Package for Public Servants**

*Parliament Times*, 14 April 2021

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister, Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan announced Rs 1.80 billion comprehensive financial and administrative uplift package for the State government employees. Soon after chairing the cabinet meeting at the State metropolis, he told the media persons that the cabinet had fulfilled the long awaited demands of the employees and approved the recommendations in that regard. He said the packages envisaged the up gradation of 15,000 Primary teachers, 8,400 junior and 5,500 senior teachers.

Haider said that the cabinet had approved the setting up of a health foundation and had accepted all the demands of the health employees including service condition of the paramedic. He said cabinet had also approved the police administration allowance, secretariat allowance and technical allowance to the employees.

The prime minister said that the government had announced the historical package for the employees which reflected the government's commitment to resolve the problems of the employees so that they could fully concentrate to discharge their duties. He said the government is now financially strengthened and taking all possible steps for the well-being of the people of the state.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/04/14/ajk-pm-announces-a-comprehensive-financial-package-of-rs-1-billion-and-eighty-crore-for-the-state-employees/#.YHfat-gzBIU>

### **PTI interviews 300 candidates for upcoming AJK elections**

*Business Recorder*, 18 April 2021

A 15-member parliamentary board of review will be deciding tickets for the upcoming general elections in AJK for the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf. The board will review and award all the tickets proposed by the primary parliamentary board as notified earlier by PTI Chief Organizer, Senator Saifullah Khan Niazi. So far, 300 people have been interviewed by the ruling PTI for awarding tickets in the upcoming AJK elections. After finalizing the names of the candidates, Prime Minister Imran Khan himself would chair the review board while federal ministers including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pervez Khattak, Shafqat Mehmood, Asad Umar, Senator Azam Swati, Ghulam Sarwar Khan and Ali Amin Ganadpur would be its members.

An office bearer of the PTI's Central Secretariat said that the review board has been formed following some differences over the tickets as proposed by the parliamentary board.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40085405>

## Economic Developments

### **GB contractual employees seek regularization**

*Dawn*, 13 April 2021

The contract and contingent employees of different government departments in Gilgit-Baltistan staged a protest sit-in outside the chief secretary's office in Gilgit, demanding regularization of services. The employees pointed out that the PML-N government had passed the GB Contingent and Contractual Employees Regularization Act in GB Assembly in 2020. Time and again the government has assured them of implementation of the act and issuance of appointment letters to all the contingent and contractual employees, but to no avail.

Protestors said the GB Contingent and Employees Regularization Act, 2020, which was passed by the GB Assembly and later also published by the Gazette of Pakistan, is not being implemented. This was an insult to the August house and the parliamentary procedure.

The protesters vowed to continue the agitation till acceptance of their demands. Representatives of many political outfits like the JUI-F and PPP were also present to express solidarity with the protestors

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1617873>

### **AJK youths stage demo against counterfeit cigarette factory**

*Business Recorder*, 13 April 2021

Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club, Islamabad, a large number of youths from Rowani, a village in the outskirts of Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir demanded that the authorities to take notice of the illegal counterfeit cigarette factory, "Wayward", by forming a commission to probe the issue and take the owner of the factory and his facilitators to task.

A man named Babar Taj established the said cigarette factory two years ago in the residential area, allegedly without fulfilling the legal requirements.

The producers accused that this factory was manufacturing illegal counterfeit cigarettes and then selling them across AJK and the rest of Pakistan using trademarks of other registered cigarettes.

On March 11, a major operation was launched against the factory in which four trucks full of cigarettes were stopped from crossing Kohala Bridge and a heavy consignment of loaded goods (cigarettes) were confiscated.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40083724/ajk-youths-stage-demo-against-counterfeit-cigarette-factory>

## **Karakoram Cooperative Bank approves first ‘credit, compliance and risk’ policy**

*Pamir Times*, 14 April 2021

For the first time in almost 50 year long history, the Karakoram Co-Operative Bank Limited has approved a formal Credit, Compliance and Risk policy. On 13 April 2021, Waqar Abbas Mondoq, Chairman Credit, Risk and Compliance Board’s committee, Karakoram Cooperative Bank Limited GB, formally approved three new policies to be implemented across the bank “to make the system more efficient, transparent, and to facilitate more loaning in a transparent way”, said a press release. The bank will start providing patient capital and startup financing in order to boost the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Gilgit Baltistan,

The Chairman further added that the bank’s transformation is in progress and more quality frameworks and systems will be in place. Karakoram Cooperative bank is the largest State owned bank in Gilgit Baltistan and has presence in almost all districts of GB. The bank will introduce new MSME and SME friendly products, the press release further read. More loans will be offered to startups and new ideas. Tourism, Agriculture and service industries will be special focus for next five years. The bank has huge potential for growth and with the strong team we will further strengthen Bank presence all over Gilgit Baltistan.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/04/14/karakoram-cooperative-bank-approves-first-credit-compliance-and-risk-policy/>

## **Vernacular Urdu Media**

### **Contractual employees protest continue in Ramazan**

*Daily K2*, 14 April 2021

The sit-in of the contractual employees continues in the holy month of Ramazan. The contractual employees laid out their *dastarkhwaans* (dining sheets) outside the office of the Chief Secretary and arranged Sehri and Iftar. However, a three-member government committee comprising Finance Minister Javed Manwa, Information Minister Fatehullah Khan and Law Minister Syed Sohail Abbas held talks with the employees and requested them to cancel their plans of marching to the Chief Minister’s House and requested the contractual employees to give the government twenty days to try and resolve the issues. Further deliberations continued at the office of the Assistant Commissioner where the representatives of the government argued that they were short on data to get the implementation underway.

To this, the employees responded with a demand of release of a notification of implementation of the assembly act which directed to regularization of the contractual employees. They said that they will continue to sit-in for the 20 days while the government does its job.

The contractual workers have been demanding regularization for long. An act was passed in the assembly for regularization of these employs last year but that has not been acted upon till

now. The workers are demanding an immediate implementation of the Act passed in the assembly.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/?q=%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%DB%8C-%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%86-%DA%A9%D8%A7-%D8%AF%DA%BE%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%AA%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%B1%DB%92-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D9%85%DB%8C%DA%BA-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84>

### **Javed Kiyani alleges plot to make changes in the voters list in AJK**

*Jammu Kashmir Times*, 14 April 2021

A prominent political and social figure of Azad Jammu Kashmir, Javed Kiyani has accused the authorities of attempts to rig the upcoming AJK elections. He said that efforts are on to make the upcoming election controversial and large scale arbitrary changes are being made in the voters list across all constituencies of the AJK. Certain ministers of the government are getting their own people to be enlisted in the constituencies of their choice to improve their vote bank. The voters normally get themselves enlisted in the constituency of their permanent residence. Their voter cards also carry the same address. However, recently certain ministers are getting outsiders (meaning people who are not permanent residents of that constituency) enlisted as local voters. This highly compromises the sanctity of the election process in the state. Javed Kiyani demanded that the Election Commission takes up the issue and try to implement proper rules and regulations for registering voters. He said that if these elements are allowed to continue what they are doing, the upcoming election will have no credibility.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Resize-of-4-8.jpg>

### **AJK govt launches program to facilitate affectees of Indian firing at LoC**

*Daily Ausaaf*, 16 April 2021

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government launched ‘Kafalat’ sponsorship programme for the families of martyrs of the unprovoked Indian troops firing from across the line of control. AJK Prime Minister, Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, while launching the programme, disbursed cheques of the relief amount among the families of the martyrs of the unprovoked Indian firing at a special ceremony hosted at the Prime Minister House in the State metropolis.

Elaborating the Kafalat programme, the prime minister said that under this programme Rs 3,000 monthly stipend will be given to every person of the martyr family while the widow of the martyr will be able to get this financial assistance till her second marriage. Underage children will also get financial assistance of Rs 3,000 per month till they reach the age of 21.

Haider said the government was determined to facilitate the masses and the launching of the Kafalat programme was a clear vindication of government’s commitment to mitigate the suffering of the families of martyrs.

[https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newsrc=issues/2021-04-16/133519/p1\\_34.gif](https://www.dailyausaf.com/epaper/popup.php?newsrc=issues/2021-04-16/133519/p1_34.gif)

**‘Judicial crisis being deliberately created in AJK’: Supreme Court Bar***Daily Muhaasib*, 16 April 2021

The Azad Jammu Kashmir Supreme Court Bar Association has criticized Prime Minister Pakistan, Azad Jammu Kashmir Government and various other institutions for complacency during the ongoing judicial crisis. The association claimed that the ongoing crisis had been created deliberately and condemned it in the strictest of terms. The Bar Association of AJK Supreme Court warned against any unconstitutional ‘set-up’ in the courts and said that the lawyers would defend the sanctity of courts like a wall. They demanded that the Acting Azad Jammu Kashmir Supreme Court Chief Justice be declared permanent. Also, they demanded that the Senior Judge of AJK High Court, Justice Sadaqat Hussain Raja be given the charge of chief justiceship till the acting-in Chief Justice of the AJK High Court Shiraz Gilani recovers from his health problems.

The Association argued that the lack of a proper functional judiciary will disillusion the people of AJK and their relationship with Pakistan will be hampered. The AJK Supreme Court Bar Association repeatedly called on the Kashmir Committee, the Prime Minister and all concerned departments to resolve the crisis of AJK Courts immediately and effectively.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/muzaffarabbad.php>

**AJK Prime Minister inaugurates gigantic cath Lab***Jammu Kashmir Times*, 18 April 2021

Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan inaugurated a 135 million rupee cath Laboratory in the State-run Kashmir Institute of Cardiology at the Mirpur Division. Headquarters Teaching Hospital, opening the much awaited avenue of angiography and angioplasty for cardiac patients from AJK and the adjoining parts of the country.

Medical Superintendent Divisional Head Quarter Hospital, Dr Farooq Ahmed Noor briefed about the salient features of the gigantic project, first of its kind set up in any State-run hospital in Azad Jammu Kashmir and termed the project a major breakthrough in the health sector in AJK

Speaking on the occasion the AJK Prime Minister said Mirpur Divisional teaching hospital is the leading hospital where the first ever cath laboratory has been established. He said a similar laboratory will also be set up in Muzaffarabad to extend health facilities to the cardiac patients hailing from the area. Farooq Haider said the government is taking concrete steps to extend modern health facilities to the masses close to their doorstep.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/1-2.jpg>

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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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