

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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POK Tourism Promotion Act
tourism load-shedding **Skardu road**
Tehreek-e-Labbaik Mangla
Gilgit-Baltistan Dam
hydel power projects



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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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

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Political Developments

PM of AJK congratulates Imran Khan for bringing the attention of OIC participants to the Kashmir dispute

Daily Parliament Times, December 20, 2021

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that the holding of the 17th extraordinary meeting of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers in Pakistan was a historic achievement and the PM of Pakistan Imran Khan has successfully drawn the world’s attention towards the “crisis in Afghanistan and Kashmir issue.” While addressing a press conference at Jammu and Kashmir House, he said the forces isolating Pakistan have themselves become isolated. The PM of Pakistan has also drawn the attention of the participants of the conference towards the “unsolved Kashmir dispute” which demonstrates his feelings and emotions for the Pakistani and Kashmiri people. He said that an OIC meeting should also be convened on the Kashmir issue for resolving the lingering “Kashmir dispute” for establishing lasting peace in the region. He said that the PM of Pakistan has projected the Kashmir issue in its true perspective at an international level and invited the attention of the international community towards “gruesome human right violations by the brute Indian forces on Kashmiri people in occupied Kashmir.”

He said that India had planned to “change the demography” of the state and has also intensified the reign of “terror in occupied Kashmir” to

suppress the freedom movement launched by the people of “occupied Kashmir” for attaining their internationally recognized right to self-determinations. He stressed that the PM of AJK and the Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) were specially invited to the meeting of the OIC foreign ministers. He said that the Kashmir issue is very important and it needs to be addressed for establishing durable and lasting peace in the region.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/20/pm-ajk-congratulates-khan-for-bringing-attention-of-oic-participants-at-kashmir-dispute/>

‘Entry of PashtoonTahafuz Movement chief banned in AJK’

Dawn, December 23, 2021

The government of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) has banned Manzoor Ahmed Pashteen of Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM)’s “entry and speech in the territorial jurisdiction”. The PTM leader was invited by a faction of the National Students Federation (NSF), a “pro-independence organization,” to address its convention in Kotli on Dec 25 as the chief guest. Earlier in the day, at a press conference in Kotli, some activists of an “obscure organization” by the name of “Tehreek-i-Jawanan-Kashmir” called upon the AJK government to ban the entry of Mr Pashteen “to arrest the propagation of India-sponsored narratives in the territory.”

However, on social media, the AJK government’s move drew instant criticism from a former information minister belonging to the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

(PML-N). He condemned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government for banning Manzoor Pashteen's entry and speech in "Azad Kashmir."

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1665257/entry-of-ptm-chief-banned-in-ajk>

'Hopeless visit to Skardu'

The Nation, December 23, 2021

Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan visited Skardu and inaugurated projects that were implemented by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), but did not announce any new package of his own. The airport and Skardu road were projects of the previous government which he now inaugurated. He did not announce any mega project related to power and water management. Presently Skardu is in the grip of severe load-shedding. Only two hours of power is supplied to consumers in Skardu. The people who attended the inauguration hoped that more infrastructure and facilities would be announced.

<https://nation.com.pk/23-Dec-2021/hopeless-visit-to-skardu>

'UN should implement recommendations of Russell Tribunal on Kashmir:' KCEU

Pakistan Observer, December 23, 2021

The chairman of Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU), Ali Raza Syed, has applauded the recommendations of the Russell Tribunal on Kashmir in Sarajevo and called upon the United Nations (UN) to implement them. The Russell Tribunal on Kashmir which was jointly initiated by Russell foundation London and Kashmir Civitas and other civil society

organizations in the Bosnian capital from 17-19 December, was attended by various experts of the region and global affairs, scholars and opinion makers from different parts of the world. The final statements of the judges of the tribunal emphasized that the situation in "Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir" is a serious matter of concern for the whole of humanity as "genocide and rape, unlawful detention and mass blinding" and other crimes against the humanity are being used as weapons of war by India.

<https://pakobserver.net/un-should-implement-recommendations-of-russell-tribunal-on-kashmir-kceu/>

'Army Chief briefed on-ground situation along Line of Control'

The Nation, December 24, 2021

The Pakistan Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC). According to a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate, COAS was briefed on-ground situation along the LoC and operational preparedness of the formation. During his visit, COAS interacted with the troops deployed along LoC in Kot Kotera sector and appreciated their combat readiness and high state of morale. He stressed that continuous vigil and readiness to counter all threats and contingencies is vital for ensuring security along the LoC.

<https://nation.com.pk/24-Dec-2021/army-chief-briefed-on-ground-situation-along-line-of-control-says-ispr>

‘Chairperson, Friends of Kashmir, Ghazala Habib meet with the President of AJK’

Daily Parliament Times, December 24, 2021

The chairperson of Friends of Kashmir, Ghazala Habib during his meeting with the president of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK) has said that the organization has always played an important role in highlighting the “Kashmir issue” in the United States (US) and other countries. During the meeting, the AJK president Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry said that at present the “Kashmir issue has entered a decisive stage” and now it is necessary to play our role aggressively on the Kashmir issue abroad. Kashmiris living abroad, especially in the US, have an important role to play in this regard. Ghazala Habib told AJK president, Friends of Kashmir organization is playing its crucial role in highlighting the Kashmir issue globally.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/24/president-of-ajk-meets-chairperson-friends-of-kashmir-ghazala-habib/>

Economic Developments

PM’s uplifts package for AJK transformation soon: Niazi

Daily Times, December 20, 2021

The Prime Minister (PM) of “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” (AJK), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi disclosed that PM Imran Khan was going to give a financial package of billions of rupees to transform AJK into a modern and developed state which would bring

historic changes in the administrative and economic structure of “Azad Kashmir.” While addressing a meeting of the central governing body of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) AJK unit, he urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers to make full preparations for the local bodies elections in “Azad Kashmir.” During the meeting, various issues including industrial development, hydel power projects were discussed to create new employment opportunities in AJK. While addressing the meeting, the president of PTI “Azad Kashmir”, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas said that the vision of Pakistan PM Imran Khan and five hundred billion Rupees special financial packages will change the fate of “Azad Kashmir.”

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/857067/pms-uplift-package-for-ajk-transformation-soon-niazi/>

‘Effective measures could work for boosting construction projects in AJK:’ Fayyaz Ali

Daily Parliament Times, December 21, 2021

The “Azad Kashmir” additional chief secretary of physical planning and housing, Fayyaz Ali Abbasi has said that according to the guidelines and priorities of the “Azad Kashmir” government, planning should be done to harmonize the quality and pace of development projects. He stressed that to make Prime Minister's new Pakistan housing and development program a success, effective measures will be taken for the implementation of the project in AJK. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting held during his visit to Mirpur. He

directed the management to prepare a complete report of various sites to ensure the implementation of the projects. On this occasion, all the issues related to the resettlement of additional families of the affected Mangla Dam will also be taken into consideration.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/21/effective-measures-could-work-for-boosting-construction-projects-in-ajk-fayyaz-ali/>

‘Sardar Tanveer meets with the UK Parliamentarian: Talks on Kashmir Issue’

Daily Parliament Times, December 21, 2021

The president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Azad Kashmir, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that with the help of overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris, we can expose “Indian barbarism” by presenting the Kashmir issue to the world in the best possible way. He was speaking to the media after a dinner hosted by the deputy leader of the Labor party of the United Kingdom (UK) Angela Rainer and Lord Wajid at his residence. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that Pakistan and “Azad Kashmir” are fortunate to have a strong representation of Kashmiris and Pakistanis in both the houses of the British House. He noted that the British House has an important status in the world and the last British elections, 368 Kashmiri and Pakistani people were elected, and by using this power, we can raise the issue of Kashmir before the world. While talking to the media on the occasion, Lord Wajid, a British parliamentarian, said that today’s meeting is of great importance to the

house of representatives of the UK and Pakistan.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/21/construction-of-it-parks-in-ajk-priority-of-government-sardar-tanveer/>

Promoting tourism

Business Recorder, December 21, 2021

It was an important step forward for Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan’s favourite project, i.e., promotion of tourism when he inaugurated an international airport at Skardu, capital of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), as well as a road connection between Skardu and Jaglot, which is situated at the junction of three major mountain ranges: the Karakorum, Hindu Kush and Himalayas. During his speech, PM said that he had never seen such magnificent mountain ranges as the ones in GB, adding that Pakistan like Switzerland, which earns \$ 70 billion annually from tourism, could earn billions by exploiting its immense tourism potential.

Indeed, Pakistan has plenty to offer from its great mountain ranges, including the world’s second-highest mountain, K2, and incredible scenic beauty of its northern areas to vast plains and deserts dotted with cultural heritage attractions, Indus civilisation’s archaeological sites that go back to 7000 years, a charming coastline and wildlife-rich wetlands. For the thrill-seekers, there is mountaineering, skiing, white water rafting, mountain biking, desert jeep safaris and camel and yak excursions. Then there are ancient religious sites, regional sports events, folk festivals, arts and crafts shows. Several international travel companies have ranked Pakistan as the

best holiday destination as well as one of the highest potential adventure destinations in the world. Forbes magazine also included Pakistan in its "best under the radar places to visit in 2020." With such impressive endorsements, foreign tourists should be flocking to this country; that thought has not happened as yet. The reason is obvious. As the PM noted a few months ago that promotion of tourism was not possible without peace; foreign tourists would come to Pakistan only if they feel safe and secure. Although terrorists have been defeated to a large extent, violent extremism remains a clear and present threat in this country. The government has taken some significant steps to stop the misuse of blasphemy laws. But the issue will not go away unless extremist elements, such as the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) are held to account. It is more important to check violent extremism than it is to improve and expand infrastructure facilities.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40141502/promoting-tourism>

'Meeting of AJK Cabinet Subcommittee on Tourism Promotion Act'

Daily Parliament Times, December 23, 2021

The government of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) held a cabinet subcommittee meeting on Tourism Promotion Act (TPA). The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), AJK. The meeting was attended by many local government officials and ministers. A detailed briefing was given to the chairman committee on the

final draft of the amendment to the Tourism Act.

The meeting also agreed to set up a tourism authority in "Azad Kashmir" to provide a conducive environment for tourists. During the meeting, it was decided to build restrooms at every 15 km distance on all major highways in collaboration with the local government department, highways department and tourism department. It was decided at the meeting that "Azad Kashmir" would be made a tourism free zone while a unanimous proposal for setting up a tourism authority would be tabled at the next cabinet meeting. It has also been noted that the amendment to the tourism promotion act will be a significant step towards building state-of-the-art projects in "Azad Kashmir" by adapting tourism to modern requirements. The proposed TPA act 2021 will usher in a new era in the field of tourism. Thus to give tourism industry status in "Azad Kashmir," various legal barriers to tourism policy need to be removed.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2021/12/23/meeting-of-ajk-cabinet-subcommittee-holds-on-tourism-promotion-act/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

It is a shame not to talk about Kashmir in the OIC meeting: Sirajul-Haq

Jasarat, December 22, 2021

The head of Jamaat-e-Islami, Siraj-ul-Haq has said that the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting on Afghanistan is welcome but not talking about "Kashmir is a matter of concern." He stressed that "Kashmir is the lifeblood of Pakistan" and it is a shame

to remain silent on this at the OIC meeting. He further noted that the OIC meeting was held after 41 years in Pakistan, and the government's silence on the "Kashmir issue" is tantamount to sprinkling salt on the wounds of the Kashmiri people. Whom has the government tried to please by not including Kashmir in its agenda? He lamented that the "sacrifices of millions of martyrs in Kashmir" required that in this important meeting the difficulties faced by them be discussed and practical steps be taken. He said that after the defeat of the United State (US) in Afghanistan, the day is not far when the people of "Palestine and Kashmir will see the rising sun of freedom." He said that "occupied Kashmir" has witnessed the biggest human tragedy in history since August 5, 2019, in which no one has access to "basic human rights" and the media is not allowed access to it and therefore not including Kashmir in the agenda of OIC meeting by the government is disloyalty with the blood of millions of martyrs. He stressed that many expectations of Kashmiris were attached to the OIC meeting, but the fact that Kashmir was not even mentioned in the declaration of the meeting did not create a good impression.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2021/12/22/211222-01-21/>

'Kashmiris expect British Parliament to raise voice for self-determination of Kashmiris:' AJK President

Nawaiwaqt, December 23, 2021

The president of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK), Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the British parliament can play an important role

in raising the "issue of Kashmir." By using their influence, they can put pressure on European governments to stop the ongoing "human rights violations in occupied Kashmir." He noted that earlier, the Kashmir issue was included in the Labor Party's manifesto, which is no longer the case. Kashmiris have high expectations from the British parliament, so the parliament should play its role for the right of Kashmiris to "self-determination." He expressed these views in a meeting with Angela Rayner, a British member of parliament and deputy leader of the British Labor Party, and Lord Wajid, a member of the British House of Lords, at the Presidency, Kashmir House, Islamabad.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/AJK/2021-12-23/page-1>

'The time is not far when Kashmir will be free from Indian domination and become part of Pakistan'

Urdu Point, December 24, 2021

The "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK) minister for Information, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Sardar Fahim Akhtar Rabbani has said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a great leader. In just a short span of seven years after the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution on March 23, 1940, the establishment of the then-largest Islamic state was undoubtedly a great achievement and all the credit for it goes to the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of the birthday of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. He further said that today

“Kashmiris are fighting the war of independence of Kashmir and defence of Pakistan” in the light of the words of Quaid-e-Azam. He stressed that on the birthday of Quaid-e-Azam, we pledge that we will never hesitate to sacrifice our lives, property, honour and dignity for the defence of Pakistan and the independence of Kashmir. He noted that we will continue our struggle till we make “occupied Kashmir part of Pakistan” and the time is not far when Kashmir will be free from “Indian domination” and become part of Pakistan.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-2999141.html>

**‘OIC meeting should be convened to stop the genocide of Kashmiris:’
Mashaal Malik**

Jasarat, December 26, 2021

The chairperson of peace and culture organization and the wife of Muhammad Yaseen Malik, chairman, “Kashmir Liberation Front,” Mashaal Hussain Malik has called for a meeting of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) foreign ministers to stop the “genocide of unarmed and innocent Kashmiris in occupied Kashmir.” While talking to the media, Mashaal Malik said that the “Indian government has intensified its state terrorism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Indian forces are killing Kashmiris in fake encounters” daily. She urged the Muslim world to show unity and convene a meeting as they did on the issue of Afghanistan, to highlight the “genocide of Kashmiris” in the valley. She noted that the silence of the world

and the inattention of Muslim countries, in particular, has encouraged the Indian government to intensify its “senseless act of genocide in the occupied territories.” She urged the international community to hold “India accountable for serious human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.”

<https://www.jasarat.com/2021/12/26/mishal-malik-3/>

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Compiled by
Mohd. Usman Bhatti

Edited By
Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

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