

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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**Private Power and
Infrastructure Board**
POK Diamer-Bhasha
Gilgit-Baltistan
tourist authority
Azad Pattan Hydropower Project

dry port



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

Indian forces have converted 'IIOJK' into a military cantonment

Pakistan Observer, 22 August 2022

The convener of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Kashmir Affairs, Muhammad Iqbal Asad along with the delegation paid a visit to the office of All Parties Hurriyat Conference- 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-'AJK') chapter and met with Mehmood Ahmed Saghar and other Hurriyat representatives. Mahmood Ahmed Saghar said that the Indian forces have practically converted the 'occupied territory' into a 'military cantonment' and the Indian troops were 'committing' the 'worst' kind of 'brutalities' on innocent Kashmiris. He said that India is using every tactic to change the 'demography' of 'IIOJK' on the 'pattern of Israel', which it has done on Palestinians. The Hurriyat leaders said that the eyes of the Kashmiri people are on Pakistan so that it could convey the voice of Kashmiris to the international community. They said Pakistan is the advocate of Kashmiris and has raised the voice of Kashmiris at every forum. Iqbal Asad said that the people and government of Pakistan are behind the Kashmiri brothers and Pakistan will continue political, diplomatic, and moral support to Kashmiris until the Kashmir dispute is resolved added that Kashmiris are fighting for Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/indian-forces-have-converted-iiojk-into-military-cantonment/>

Kashmiri people will observe 1st September as Baba-e-Hurriyat Day

Daily Parliament Times, 24 August 2022

The chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat (PH) Jammu and Kashmir, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali appealed to the government of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) to commemorate 1st September as 'Baba-e-Hurriyat' day. He added that the people of Jammu and Kashmir will observe the first 'martyrdom' anniversary of Syed Ali Shah Geelani on 1st September. While referring to Geelani's 'struggle' for the 'freedom' movement, he said that his determination of Geelani will always be remembered. He claimed that Geelani spent his entire life working for the 'freedom' of Jammu and Kashmir, which was 'occupied' by India, and endured 'atrocities' at the hands of India but never 'bowed' to their 'state oppression.' According to Uzair, Geelani spent the last twelve years of his life under house arrest due to a chronic illness, and as a result of this situation, he eventually attained the status of 'martyrdom.'

He further said that the preparations to pay homage to the Hurriyat leader have been started and maintained that a public rally will be held in the capital on September 1, 2022, to pay tribute to the 'great struggle' for the right to 'self-determination' and the 'restoration' of the rights of the Kashmiri people. Uzair also demanded the government of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' to declare

1st September as 'Baba-e-Hurriyat Day' throughout the state.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/08/24/kashmiri-people-will-observe-1st-september-as-baba-e-hurriyat-day/>

ISSI launches 'Voices on Kashmir' report: All governments have passionately advocated the cause of Kashmir: FO

Pakistan Observer, 24 August 2022

Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Asim Iftikhar said that there is a political and national 'consensus' in Pakistan on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and all past and present political governments have passionately advocated the cause. While speaking as a chief guest at the India Study Centre (ISC) of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on the occasion of the launch of a 'special report' titled 'Voices on Kashmir.' He said that the key message about Kashmir is that it is a dispute from the past which must be resolved according to the United Nations Security Council resolutions and added that Pakistan is ready to provide all possible support to the Kashmiri people to enable them to exercise their right to 'self-determination.'

The chairman Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Khalid Rahman in his keynote address, stressed that the Kashmir issue has not been resolved due to the 'stubbornness' of India and also due to complications of the global political system which favors the powerful. He further emphasized that

all of us have a role to continue the discourse which favors the Kashmiris and added that one way of doing so is by framing the Kashmiri struggle as a 'political and indigenous movement.' Altaf Hussain Wani, chairman, Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) in his address said that there is a continuity of efforts to highlight the Kashmir cause and it is necessary especially, after the new domicile laws introduced by India. The report brought into light different 'war crimes committed by India' in the region.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40193437/issi-launches-voices-on-kashmir-report-all-govts-have-passionately-advocated-cause-of-kashmir-fo>

Mushaal Lauds SWI for highlighting the abuse of journalists, and activists in 'IIOJK'

The Nation, 24 August 2022

The Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization Mushaal Mullick appreciated London-based Stoke White Investigations (SWI) for highlighting the 'systemic abuse' that journalists and activists face in the 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).' She claimed that India was stifling journalists and human rights in 'IIOJK' because there were 2000 accounts of 'war crimes of torture, pellets, enforced disappearances, and sexual abuse by Indian Occupation forces.' She said that there are more than 2,000 documented cases, all of serious nature, the most glaring ones included 450 cases of 'torture', 1500 victims of pellet gun shootings, 100

‘enforced disappearances’, and 30 accounts of ‘sexual violence.’ She urged the Pakistani media to focus on research and evidence-based documentation of human rights violations in ‘Occupied Kashmir.’ Kashmiri journalists and human rights defenders are being intimidated and arbitrarily detained under black colonial laws, she added.

<https://nation.com.pk/2022/08/24/mushaal-lauds-swi-for-highlighting-abuse-journalists-activists-face-in-iiojk/>

‘AJK’ PM denounces India’s decision to grant voting rights to outsiders in ‘IIOJK’

Pakistan Observer, 25 August 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan has ‘condemned’ the Indian government’s decision to grant the ‘right to vote’ to ‘non-local’ students, workers, employees and military personnel living in ‘Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).’ He said that PM Modi’s government was pursuing a plan to ‘change the identity of the Muslim-majority state the way Israeli did in the Palestinian territories and added that the Indian government has already modified the region’s age-old domicile law that had been in force since 1927. While citing the ‘massive’ bureaucratic reshuffle in the ‘IoK’, he said, that the PM Modi government had already cleared a way for ‘outsiders’ by transferring Kashmiri Muslim officers out of Kashmir Valley and added that India’s motive behind this move was to ‘disempower’

Kashmiris and to ‘wipe off’ their political identity. He said that though the non-state and non-Muslims have been appointed to the highest posts in police and administration, however, he stressed that Kashmiris who have always ‘foiled’ India’s ‘nefarious designs’, would fight the move tooth and nail.

<https://pakobserver.net/ajk-pm-denounces-indias-decision-to-grant-voting-rights-to-outsiders-in-iiojk/>

Economic Developments

The federal government was accused of denying ‘AJK’s share in fiscal grants

Dawn, 22 August 2022

The Prime Minister (PM) of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan at a press conference criticized the PML-N-led federal government harshly and charged that it had treated the liberated region ‘malevolently’ by ‘withholding’ its fair share of fiscal grants, and added that the PML-N government in Islamabad has been treating us inconsiderately and selfishly ever since it took office. He claimed that while the PTI administration of Imran Khan has provided Muzaffarabad greater funding, the current federal setup has been depriving us even of our due rights. He noted that under a 2018 financial agreement between Islamabad and Muzaffarabad, ‘AJK’ was to receive a 3.64 percent part of the federal taxation pool as a ‘variable grant’ because it was not a recipient of

the National Finance Commission award. He said that even though our actual share, according to predictions of expected income collection, is more than 225 billion, they only committed about 74 billion as a variable grant for the current year. He vowed to uphold his people's honor, dignity, and grace, saying that if they believed they could make us submit via such treatment, they were incorrect.

He dismissed an 'organized propaganda operation' that suggested his government wanted to give up the authority it had earned through the 13th amendment and made it plain that the proposed 15th amendment's primary goal was to abolish the restriction on cabinet size, which the opposition PPP supported as well. He said that, ironically, some individuals benefit from the destabilization of 'Azad Kashmir', and they are the ones driving such vindictive campaigns. He further said that the proposed 'tourist authority' which had attracted much criticism, was intended to alter the course of the 'liberated territory' by generating a significant amount of private sector jobs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1706057/federal-govt-accused-of-denying-ajks-share-in-fiscal-grants>

700 MW hydropower project: LOS has given the fourth extension

Business Recorder, 23 August 2022

The 700 MW Azad Pattan Hydropower Project has received a fourth Letter of Support (LOS) extension from the

Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) for an additional year beginning on January 1, 2022. Letters of Support were given to the company on June 30, 2016, and they were updated on September 19, 2018, September 27, 2019, and April 26, 2021. The company requested an extension of the financial closing date, and the appropriate authority granted it, extending it by 12 months, through December 31, 2022. The Project Company submitted Bank Guarantee on March 30, 2022, amounting to \$3,503,500/- and its amendment of April 15, 2022, valid up to March 31, 2023, issued by Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Limited, Islamabad Branch as per the requirements of PPIB. The performance guarantee was paid as a non-refundable processing fee to PPIB along with a detailed Bar Chart to the satisfaction of PPIB identifying major milestones and specifying timelines of various activities to be performed and delivered during the extended period for achieving Financial Closing.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40193244/700mw-hydropower-project-los-given-fourth-extension>

Mirpur Dry Port to open new vistas of industrial uplift and economic prosperity in 'AJK': Barrister Sultan

Daily Parliament Times, 24 August 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, described the establishment of the dry port in Mirpur as a significant milestone and added that the development of a dry port in Lake View City was a long-standing demand

of the 'Azad Kashmir' administration, people, industrialists, and Kashmiris living abroad. The dry port, he said, would help industrial development in Mirpur besides creating more employment opportunities for educated youth and aspiring entrepreneurs. He stressed that the establishment of a dry port will also increase the revenue of the 'Azad Kashmir' government. While stressing the need for linking the dry port to the railway line in Deena, he said that the Government of 'AJK' must raise the issue with the federal government so that a rail track could be laid for easy transportation of goods within and outside the country.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/08/24/mirpur-dry-port-to-open-new-vistas-of-industrial-uplift-and-economic-prosperity-in-ajk-barrister-sultan/>

Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams Fund: Ex-CJP Saqib Nisar 'summoned' by PAC

Pakistan Observer, 24 August 2022

The former chief justice of Pakistan (CJP), Mian Saqib Nisar, was summoned by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), a leading parliamentary watchdog, to address the committee over the Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams Fund, which was created when he served the nation's top court. In July 2018, the then PM Imran Khan joined the fund started by the former chief judge Nisar to raise money for the Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams, creating a partnership to address the country's water shortage. Noor

Alam Khan a dissident of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who has been handpicked as chairman of PAC by the current ruling coalition, referred to Justice (ret'd) Nisar as a 'controversial figure.' The PAC member and the PML-N MNA Birjees Tahir claimed that 14 billion was spent on ads against an overall collection of 9 billion as he called for an explanation on why the funds were not used on the construction of dams.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40193469/diamer-bhashaand-mohmand-dams-fund-ex-cjp-saqib-nisar-summoned-by-pac>

Dry port will prove to be a milestone in the path of development: Wajahat Rashid Baig

Daily Parliament Times, 23 August 2022

Under the direction of bureaucrat Wajahat Rashid Baig, the long-awaited construction of the state's dry port at Mirpur is now ready for the foundation to be laid. The dry port will prove to be a significant turning point in the industrial development process. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, the current PM of 'Azad Kashmir', assumed office intending to promote tourism and industrial growth in the region, and to that end, he looked favorably upon an experienced bureaucrat named Wajahat Rashid Baig, who was named Secretary of Industry and Commerce and given the task of implementing emergency measures for industrial development. Finally, Mirpur dry port have been completed in a month on an emergency basis and consequently soon the PM of 'Azad Kashmir' will lay

the dry port's foundation stone, which will put an end to unemployment in the region and mark an important turning point for the industry development.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/08/23/dry-port-will-prove-to-be-a-milestone-in-the-path-of-development-wajahat-rashid-baig/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

An OIC meeting should be summoned regarding the 'critical situation' in 'occupied' Kashmir: Khalid Mahmood

Jasarat, 22 August 2022

Khalid Mahmood Khan, while addressing an all-party convention convened by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League claimed that Kashmiris have been fighting for state independence since 1832. He claimed that we are sure of both the 'supremacy' of Islam and the 'freedom of Kashmir', and that the 'holy blood of 5 lakh martyrs' will not be wasted. He emphasized that we adore Pakistan, the motherland of Maulana Maududi, Allama Iqbal, and Quaid-e-Azam, and added that nobody in Pakistan is allowed to betray the sacrifice of its martyrs. He asserted that the governments of 'Azad Kashmir' and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) serve as the people's representatives and must carry out their duties. Khalid further said that the right to self-determination and the unity of Kashmir would not be compromised and emphasized that an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting should be summoned regarding the critical situation in

'occupied' Kashmir. He said that the Kashmir issue needs to be resolved according to the UN Charter and Security Council resolutions, and added that Ph.D. scholars, engineers, doctors, and highly educated youth have been sacrificed in the Kashmir 'Azadi movement.'

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/08/22/oic-meeting-should-be-called-on-the-serious-situation-of-occupied-kashmir-dr-khalid-mahmood/>

Mirza Khalid Mahmood, a member of the British Parliament, meets with 'AJK' President

Urdupoint, 22 August 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, and British Parliamentarian Mirza Khalid Mahmood met at Kashmir House in Islamabad. The 'AJK' president said it is vitally crucial to take aggressive measures to promote the Kashmir issue at the international level and urged the United Kingdom (UK) to play its role in resolving the Kashmir issue. During the event, Mirza Khalid extended an invitation to the 'AJK' president to address the British Members of Parliament in the British Parliament on his impending visit to the UK. The 'AJK' president said that he will soon travel to the UK, where he plans to inform the British Parliament on the Kashmir issue and the prevailing circumstances in 'occupied Kashmir.'

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/national-news/live-news-3249429.html>

World peace is in jeopardy with Modi's 'Hindutva agenda:' JI Leader

Jasarat, 22 August 2022

According to Sheikh Aqeel-ur-Rehman, Vice-Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), PM Modi's 'Hindutva' agenda 'threatens' the peace in 'occupied Kashmir' as well as international peace. He said that giving the Indian army the right to vote in 'occupied' Kashmir is a 'blatant breach' of a resolution passed by the UN Security Council. He claimed that by pushing forward the 'Hindutva agenda', PM Narendra Modi is putting the world's peace at peril. He alleged that the population ratio is changing as a result of PM Modi's 'regressive' actions in Kashmir. He added that the Indian Army, which is 'occupying' the region, is allowed to vote with the non-state Hindus to elect a Hindu Chief Minister. He suggested that Pakistan's leadership should go beyond platitudes and put into practice practical measures to build a comprehensive strategy and policy, adding that the rest of the world should also take notice.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/08/22/modi-is-endangering-world-peace-with-hindutva-agenda-sheikh-aqeel-ur-rehman/>

Nobody has the power to change the status of Kashmir; our ancestors liberated 'Azad Kashmir' and we will safeguard it: Sardar Ahsan Ibrahim Khan

Urdupoint, 23 August 2022

The president of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Party (JKPP) and a

member of the Legislative Assembly, Sardar Ahsan Ibrahim Khan has stated that nobody can change the status of Kashmir and added that our ancestors 'liberated Azad Kashmir', and we will defend it. He made these remarks as the chief guest at the JKPP district body's swearing-in event in Bagh. During the event, he stated that the late Sardar Khalid Ibrahim Khan left his seat for the rights of the people of 'Azad Kashmir'. He also said that there will be no compromise on the rights of the 'Azad Kashmir' people and added that the 15th amendment had to be withdrawn due to the protests of the people of 'Azad Kashmir' and they will not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the honor of Kashmir.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3250701.html>

Release of review report on 'AJK' president's first year in office

Mahasib, 26 August 2022

A review of Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry's first year in office as president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) was published. According to the report, Mahmood performed a variety of actions during his one-year presidency to advance the Kashmir cause and 'expose' Indian 'brutality' in 'Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IoJK). His main focus during his tenure was the base camp's ongoing independence struggle, and he devised a clear and consistent strategy to draw attention to the Kashmir issue on a global scale. In the final week of September 2021, he paid an

'exceptional' visit to the United States. During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the UN General Assembly, he organized a sizable demonstration of Kashmiris in front of the UN. Later, he attended the UN general assembly session, where he was the first elected president from "Azad Kashmir" to take part in the assembly's 75-year history. Additionally, he met with several significant figures, including the UN Secretary-General, members of the US Congress, senior UN officials, and representatives of different US-based think tanks. During the final week of October 2021, the president also paid visits to Belgium, France, Holland, and the United Kingdom (UK). More than 50 members of the British Parliament participated in the president's large anti-India demonstration in front of the Indian Embassy in London on October 27 (Black Day). The president briefed EU members and British and Irish lawmakers during his June 2022 visit to Britain, Ireland, and Brussels and held multiple meetings with them to discuss the most recent developments in Kashmir. At the special request of OIC General Secretary Hassan Ibrahim Talha, the 'AJK' president also traveled to the OIC headquarters in Jeddah. He also made the most significant trip to Dubai to draw attention to the Kashmir problem at the international level.

He continued to highlight the Kashmir issue by holding meetings with

ambassadors, diplomats, and international delegations of different countries including his meeting and a joint press conference with Ilhan Umar on the issue of Kashmir. Recently when Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik was sentenced to life imprisonment by an Indian court, he raised his voice against the 'unfair trial' and 'injustices' meted out to him in the prison. The president of "AJK" once again declared plans to conduct a protest in New York to "expose" India's 'naked aggression' in 'IOK' on the occasion of PM Modi's scheduled speech to the General Assembly in September. On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York next month, he is anticipated to see the OIC General Secretary and attend the OIC's Kashmir contact group meeting. On the domestic level, the president organized a series of forums, marches, and seminars on Kashmir. He also played a significant part in breaking the impasse over the selection of judges for the 'AJK' High Court. He also took action to address the financial issues the 'AJK' universities were having, and he paid particular attention to finding a solution to the issue of how to relocate the affected families of the Mangla Dam. He worked hard to get the Mansehra-Muzaffarabad-Mirpur Motorway approved as part of the CPEC project.

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

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Disclaimer

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