

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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03 - 09 October 2022

Gilgit-Baltistan
local elections dry
POK tourism port
GB Women's Fair 2022



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Contents

Political Developments

- International Day of Non-Violence: Indian troops continue to commit war crimes in 'IIOJK'
- Extrajudicial Killings in 'IIOJK'
- Kashmiris must have the freedom to decide their fate: Iranian envoy
- Indo-Pak ties hostage to a 'regressive' ideology
- Complete shutdown to be observed in 'IIOJK' against Amit Shah's visit: JKSM Chairman
- Women's gala in GB
- At the UN, Pakistan reminds India of the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir

Economic Developments

- PM of 'AJK' holds one on one meeting with ambassador Donald Bloom
- SCO joined hands with Habib Bank Limited for MFS in 'AJK' and GB

Vernacular Urdu Media

- Pakistan Ambassador to the US and 'AJK' president discusses Kashmir issues
- India cannot use force to repress the resistance of Kashmiris: PM of 'AJK'
- The President of 'AJK' seeks US citizen's help to settle the Kashmir conflict
- The youth in Muzaffarabad turned the festivity into an anti-India event and voiced support for the people of 'occupied Kashmir'
- Jamaat-e-Islam demands that the date of the 'Azad Kashmir' local body elections be made public

Political Developments

International Day of Non-Violence: Indian troops continue to commit war crimes in 'IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 3 October 2022

Even while the world celebrates the International Day of Nonviolence, Indian troops are still committing 'war crimes' in 'Illegally occupied of Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). According to a report provided by the Kashmir media service, the Kashmiris have no link to the International Day of Non-Violence because they continue to suffer greatly at the hands of Indian 'state terrorism' and are subjected to an aggressive 'military occupation' by India. According to the report, 'brutal' Indian soldiers have been 'torturing' and 'killing innocent Kashmiri's for decades in 'IOJK.' The report claimed that 17 Kashmiris fell to Indian bullets in the last month of September 2022 and a total of 96131 since January 1989 in the 'occupied territory.' It said that Indian actions in the territory can well be defined as 'genocide', 'crimes against humanity', and 'war crimes' as per international law and the best way to mark International Day of Non-Violence is to censure India for its 'war crimes' against the Kashmiris.

<https://pakobserver.net/international-day-of-non-violence-indian-troops-continue-to-commit-war-crimes-in-iiojk/>

Extrajudicial Killings in 'IIOJK'

The Nation, 3 October 2022

Since the Indian government 'illegally' abrogated its constitution to forcibly

and 'illegally' acquire United Nations Security Council (UNSC)-recognized disputed territory in Jammu and Kashmir, a long path of violence, instability, and human rights violations has followed over the past three years. The 'massacres, extrajudicial killings,' censorship of the media, internet outages, arbitrary detentions, and media blackouts are only a few of the characteristics of 'Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) that have been noted repeatedly since the abolition of the status of 'occupied territory.' Despite international criticism, the Indian government continues to violate human rights, with last week being especially horrible as Indian 'occupation forces' have been openly committing 'extrajudicial killings' with impunity. In one incident near Kupwara, two 'innocent' Kashmiris were slain by Indian 'occupation forces.' The following day, during an 'alleged cordon and search operation' by Indian forces, another 'innocent Kashmiri' was slain in the Kulgam area. Similarly, police encounters in Kulgam and Baramulla resulted in the deaths of four additional Kashmiris. Pakistan has properly expressed concern over the horrifying events in 'IIOJK', which might be considered a global human rights issue.

In a statement, the Pakistan Foreign Office denounced the spate of 'extrajudicial executions' that Indian forces committed with impunity. The Indian government has repeatedly and blatantly demonstrated how 'ruthless' it is and how it will simply ignore international humanitarian law and

treaty obligations. Numerous unbiased organizations, NGOs, and think tanks from civil society have looked into the legality of the actions taken by the Indian government. Last year, a British law firm, the War Crimes Unit of the Metropolitan Police provided copious evidence showing that Indian forces led by Gen. Manoj Mukund Naravane and Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah were responsible for 'torture, war crimes, and human rights violations' in 'IIOJK' , including 'extrajudicial killings', 'torture', and 'pellet gun attacks.' Over 678 Kashmiris have been killed by Indian 'occupation troops', including at least 158 this year. How much more proof is required before the international community acts?

<https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2022/extrajudicial-killings-in-iiojk>

Kashmiris must have the freedom to decide their fate: Iranian envoy

The Nation, 5 October 2022

Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Mohammad Ali Hosseini has 'supported' the Kashmiris' right to self-determination saying that Kashmiris must have 'freedom' to decide their fate. During an interaction with a select group of journalists at his office, the envoy said that since Iran has good ties with both Pakistan and India, hence 'we are always of the view that Iran has the potential and relations with both India and Pakistan and we may use this potential positively to resolve the issue, and we strongly believe that the Kashmiri nation must have the liberty to decide their fate, and should have

the right both politically and as a nation as other nations of the world have.' He said that Iran always stresses that both nations are nuclear powers, and they must resolve the issue with positive diplomatic dialogue because any kind of conflict will result in irreversible destruction.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/05-Oct-2022/kashmiris-must-have-freedom-to-decide-their-fate-iranian-envoy>

Indo-Pak ties hostage to a 'regressive' ideology

Business Recorder, 6 October 2022

While addressing a large gathering in the 'Azad Kashmir' capital Muzaffarabad, former prime minister Imran Khan said that every country derives benefits from trade, noting that India is a big country and Pakistan would also have benefited from trade with it, however, it had to be 'stopped' due to India's August 2019 'illegal revocation of occupied' Jammu and Kashmir's 'autonomous status.' Every time tensions rise between the two neighbors over the Kashmir issue, trade becomes the first causality; either restricted or suspended altogether. On the contrary, despite a prolonged standoff along India's north-eastern border with China that at one point caused several casualties, their bilateral trade is growing. Between January and July of this year, it hit \$79.77 billion mark. The nature of this conflict and the one over Kashmir, however, is very different; one is about 'territory' and the other about a 'people's right to self-determination.'

He stressed that the late Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his successor, Dr. Manmohan Singh, understood conflict resolution's benefits. Looking for a durable solution to all outstanding issues of discord, including Kashmir, Congress party's Dr. Singh, an economist by training, tried to take forward the peace process initiated by BJP's Vajpayee. While speaking at an event hosted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, he expressed his desire to make the Indian economy 'more closely' integrated with our immediate and distant neighbors (Central Asian states via the shorter and low-cost route through Pakistan). He said that he dreamt of a day when 'one can have breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore, and dinner in Kabul.' Unfortunately, that dream has since been supplanted by that country's new rulers with their 'Hindu Rashtra vision', which seeks to establish 'Hindu hegemony' not only inside India but also over Pakistan by stoking tensions. This is not in the interest of the people on either side of the border. India, of course, is far ahead of Pakistan in terms of economic progress. Yet, like this country, nearly half of its population lives under the poverty line. Both sides have a lot to gain from geographical proximity and cheap factors of production.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40201580/indopak-ties-hostage-to-a-regressive-ideology>

Complete shutdown to be observed in 'IIOJK' against Amit Shah's visit: JKSM Chairman

The Express Tribune, October 05, 2022

The Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM) chairman Altaf Ahmad Bhat 'denounced' the visit of India's Home Minister Amit Shah to 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), announcing that the 'occupied valley' will observe a complete shutdown tomorrow (Wednesday). The JKSM chief in its statement said that Amit Shah and company "unleashed a reign of terror upon the besieged and oppressed Kashmiris after abrogating the semi-autonomous status of the IIOJK by revoking Articles 370 and 35-A in 2019. He further said that Amit Shah's visit is aimed at 'rubbing salt' on the wounds of Kashmiris who have been living in 'misery' under the 'occupation of one million Indian forces.' He claimed that every sector including education, business, health, tourism, and social welfare was hit hard to 'paralyze' the Kashmiris economically and financially, in a bid to punish the brave people for 'not submitting' before India's 'military might.'

He added that a complete shutdown will be observed against the 'Hindutva leader' and the Indian home minister's visit to the 'occupied territory', stressing that a strong and vivid message should be sent to the world by shutting down and halting everything

that Kashmiris reject 'Indian occupation', its policies and its hegemony. He claimed that Kashmiri people are suffering since 1989 under the Indian 'occupation forces' that have 'killed' more than 96,114 innocent people among them 7,254 killed in custody. He further alleged that over the years 165,120 civilians were arrested, 110,490 structures torched/destroyed, 22,950 women widowed, 107,880 children orphaned, and 1,125 women 'gang-raped / molested.' He claimed that Kashmiris will send a clear message by observing a complete shutdown that the 'barbaric, killers and neo-colonist settlers' who are 'jeopardizing' the peace of the whole of South Asia are 'forcefully visiting' the Muslim-majority region.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2380101/complete-shutdown-to-be-observed-in-ijok-against-amit-shahs-visit-bhat>

Women's gala in GB

Dawn, 7 October 2022

The 'regressive' forces' once again, nearly had their way in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). A three-day sporting gala for women in GB was almost canceled after local religious leaders, brimming with self-righteous indignation, accused the government and the administration of 'spreading vulgarity' by organizing the event, even though no men, not even male officials, were allowed to enter the venue. The commendable effort to promote healthy activities among the women of the area by the government with the support of opposition parties nearly came to naught when conservative elements belonging to

different sects united on the issue and began staging protests.

Though the local administration officials negotiated with the religious leaders to let the gala go ahead as planned, however, the negotiations ended when the name of the event was changed to the more innocuous 'GB Women's Fair 2022.' While the officials held their ground and did not cancel the program, reportedly it was the enthusiasm of the women themselves who descended in droves at the venue that proved decisive. That the event has gotten off to such a resounding start is evidence of the dearth of wholesome competitive activities for women in GB.

One wonders why women playing sports even in segregated venues is such a trigger for regressive elements in society. Is it yet another manifestation of their conviction that the public space is an exclusively male domain from which women must be kept out on the pretext of preserving culture and morality? That hackneyed phrase is habitually resorted to whenever the religious lobby seeks to assert its relevance and exert control over society. The same specious pretext is used to disenfranchise women in some parts of the country, to foil legislation against domestic abuse, and even to justify child marriage. It is not too difficult to discern that claims about cultural values being in peril are almost always animated by political motives or by a misogynistic desire to keep women disempowered.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1713894/womens-gala-in-gb>

At the UN, Pakistan reminds India of the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir

Pakistan Observer, 7 October 2022

Pakistan has claimed at United Nations (UN) that Jammu and Kashmir is an UN-mandated 'disputed territory' and its final disposition is to be determined by the Kashmiri people through a plebiscite supervised by the World Body. This was stated by Pakistan's delegate to the UN, Gul Qaiser Sarwani while exercising the right to reply after the speech of the Indian representative. Gul while 'rejecting India's claim' that Jammu and Kashmir is its part, said that the UN maps show Kashmir as a 'disputed territory,' and added that the biggest 'falsehood' that we just heard is that Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India. This is a 'legal fiction', added that under the terms of the UN resolutions, the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir is to be determined by the Kashmiri people through an UN-supervised plebiscite. He claimed that India had accepted these resolutions and was bound to comply with them following UN Charter's Article 25.

The Pakistani envoy said if India has any respect for international law and moral courage, it will end its 'reign of terror', withdraw its troops, and let the Kashmiris freely decide their future following the Security Council resolutions. He said Pakistan has been and will continue to highlight India's 'state terrorism' against the people of 'India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). Pakistan envoy make

these statements in response to the Indian delegate, argument who 'parroted the typical Indian mantra' that Jammu and Kashmir is an internal matter of India. She made these remarks while reacting to Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Akram's statement during a debate in the UN General Assembly's First Committee that deals with disarmament and international security matters, in which he highlighted the grave human rights violations being perpetrated by 'Indian troops in IIOJK.'

<https://pakobserver.net/at-un-pakistan-reminds-india-of-disputed-status-of-jammu-and-kashmir/>

Economic Developments

PM of 'AJK' holds one on one meeting with Ambassador Donald Bloom

Daily Parliament Times, 4 October 2022

Donald Bloom, the American ambassador to Pakistan, and Tanvir Ilyas Khan, the prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), had a detailed meeting at the 'AJK' Premier's house in Rawalakot on a wide-ranging subject, including the Kashmir issue and the development of the 'AJK' among others. During the meeting, a presentation was made regarding the creation of a special economic zone, a dry port, investments in tourism, and the hydroelectric sector in 'Azad Kashmir. The presentation highlighted that there was a large scope of human resources in 'Azad Kashmir', which can be utilized to provide outsourcing services, consultancy, and Information

Technology (IT) services. The presentation further mentioned the role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Arts and Crafts in improving the region's economy.

The ambassador was told that SMEs account for the majority of business around the world, stressing that 'Azad Kashmir' has a huge scope within this sector (SMEs), which if implemented can be very effective for increasing the GDP of the state. While referring to the region's highest literacy rate the presentation stressed the need for starting academic exchange programs between 'AJK' and American universities under which students after studying two years in the 'AJK' universities can get a chance to study in the US for a year and then complete the final year or last semester in their respective institutions. The American ambassador was also informed about the scope of tourism in 'Azad Kashmir' and it also sought US cooperation in the fields of agriculture, energy, and power generation. Ambassador Bloom was assured that the government of 'Azad Kashmir' would provide full assistance to investors.

The 'AJK' PM further drew the attention of the American ambassador towards the 'worsening situation' in the 'Indian-occupied Kashmir' and said that the US should play its much-needed role to resolve the lingering conflict, which he said has been the main cause and consequence of rights violations in the region. The PM also expressed his gratitude to the US

government for the aid and assistance it had provided in relief and rehabilitation to the earthquake victims in 2005. The government of 'Azad Kashmir' also appealed for an increase in the USAID program and assistance to the recent flood victims, protection of the archeological sites in 'Azad Kashmir' and the damage caused by climate change.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/10/04/pm-ajk-holds-one-on-one-meeting-with-ambassador-donald-bloom/>

SCO joined hands with Habib Bank Limited for MFS in 'AJK' and GB

Daily Parliament Times, 5 October 2022

A contract signing ceremony was held between the Special Communications Organization (SCO) and Habib Bank Limited (HBL) for the Interoperable Mobile Financial Services (MFS) in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Both organizations will jointly create the required financial services economy system in the regions. The contract signing ceremony was performed by DG SCO, Maj Gen Muhammad Shahid Sideeq, and Chairman HBL, Mr. Sultan Ali Allana. The SCO is already providing Digital Financial Services with the brand name of 'S-Paisa' in 'AJK' and GB since 2019. The 'S-Paisa' scheme is exclusively disbursing cash for beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in 'AJK' and GB and also affected populations along the Line of control (LoC). This agreement will extend the financial

outreach and convenience to more than 6 million people in the region through state-of-the-art, convenient, and secure branchless banking services. During the event, the SCO DG stressed that the venture is an initiative for the Digital Transformation of communities, adding that this initiative will also open the window for E-commerce activities by providing a secure payment gateway. The HBL chairman said that we must provide a digital ecosystem that offers more avenues of banking to the unbanked population of Pakistan, stressing that financial inclusion through strategic partnerships, such as with the SCO, is a key focus area for HBL.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/10/05/sco-joined-hands-with-hbl-for-mfs-in-ajk-gb/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Pakistan Ambassador to the US and 'AJK' president discusses Kashmir issues

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 03 October 2022

The ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, Sardar Masood Khan, and the president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, meet in New York. Both leaders engaged in in-depth conversations about how to advance the Kashmir cause in the international arena, particularly at the United Nations (UN), to ensure an early and peaceful resolution of the much-delayed issue of Kashmir. The two leaders acknowledged the significance

of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC's) joint statement, which emphasized their 'grave concerns' about the ongoing violence, 'bloodshed', and 'human rights violations' committed by the 'Indian occupation' troops in 'occupied Kashmir.' Both the leaders reiterated their commitment to further amplify their efforts to sensitize the world about the 'worsening' human rights situation in Kashmir and the importance of the early resolution of the protracted conflict.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Resize-of-FRONTPAGE-03.jpg>

India cannot use force to repress the resistance of Kashmiris: PM of 'AJK'

Urdu point, 6 October 2022

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan, said that PM Narendra Modi's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) influenced government has used unprecedented levels of 'state terrorism' and 'brutality' to 'repress' the genuine aspirations of Kashmiris for self-determination. While praising the Kashmiris' for their protracted 'resistance', the prime minister stated that India must keep in mind the fact that it cannot stifle the ongoing 'freedom struggle' by use of force. He claimed that the shutdown and protests during Amit Shah's visit to the 'occupied Kashmir' speak about the people of Kashmir's dedication to the noble cause of 'freedom' and their vehement opposition to India's 'illegal

acts' in the region. The PM stated that the brave people of the Indian 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' have repeatedly rejected the purported economic packages put forth by Indian rulers and made it abundantly clear that these packages is not a substitute for their guaranteed right to self-determination from the international community.

The PM further claimed that Kashmiris' lives were made miserable by the 'occupation authorities', saying that people are being humiliated and harassed by police and intelligence agencies, civil society activists, rights defenders, and politicians are being jailed under black laws, and thousands of Kashmiris are enduring the hardships of imprisonment. The PM cited a letter that appeared in the New York Times to claim that American citizens had denounced PM Modi's government for its 'violent persecution' of a 'religious minority' in India. He asserted that the letter was adequate to awaken the world's consciousness about what is happening in India.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3306882.html>

The President of 'AJK' seeks US citizen's help to settle the Kashmir conflict

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 6 October 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry expressed hope that the

American people should play their proper part to find a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir conflict. While speaking at an event in New York, he said that we hope that the people of America who believe in equality, justice, and human rights will help the people of Kashmir in achieving their promised right, the right to self-determination, and utilize their resources generously to help rebuild the lives of millions of flood-affected people in Pakistan. The event was attended by political and social figures, including the mayors of some American cities, the director of the Islamic Center, and the Consul General of Pakistan. The 'AJK' president said that the world has become a global village and that individuals may now cooperate to find solutions to globally contested issues.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Resize-of-front-page-06.jpg>

Youth in Muzaffarabad turned the festivity into an anti-India event and voiced support for the people of 'occupied Kashmir'

UrduPoint, 7 October 2022

Tehreek Shabab-ul-Muslimeen 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), the student wing of All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) staged a demonstration against the 'rising atrocities' committed by 'Indian soldiers' in the 'illegally occupied' Jammu and Kashmir. Zubair Ahmad

Khan Durrani, the general secretary of the Students Wing, transformed the occasion of his Walima (wedding reception) into an anti-India demonstration. During the event, he declared that the joys and moments of his life are dedicated to the family members of 'Kashmiri martyrs', Hurriyat leaders who have spent years behind bars in Indian prisons, workers, and young Kashmiri who have given their lives in the 'struggle for Kashmir's freedom.' He further claimed that Indian soldiers are 'murdering innocent Kashmiri youth' to alter 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir's population composition, but they will never succeed in their 'nefarious' goals, and Kashmiris will not give up on their struggle, which will proceed to its inevitable conclusion.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-3308761.html>

Jamaat-e-Islami demands that the date of the 'Azad Kashmir' local body elections be made public

Jasarat, 8 October 2022

The leader of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sheikh Aqeel-ur-Rehman said that JI is happy with the Election Commission's announcement that local elections will take place across 'Azad Kashmir', added that the election commissioner must also disclose the date of the municipal elections. He said that all political parties in power for 30 years prevented the youth from voting and denied them a promising future, which

is a grave injustice. To provide solutions to the people's concerns at their doorsteps and encourage the emergence of educated young leaders, he suggested that local body elections be held in 'Azad Kashmir' following the model of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/10/07/jamaat-e-islami-pakistan-5/>

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Disclaimer

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