

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Gilgit-Baltistan
Kishanganga POK
CPEC Dasu bus
Neelum-Jhelum attack
Information Technology



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Contents

Political Developments

- FO says verdict in Dasu bus attack demonstrates Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism
- 'AJK' President warns India against any misadventure in liberated territory
- Kashmir EU Week begins in Brussels
- China welcomes verdict in Dasu attack case
- Saghar urges G20 countries to play role in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute
- New transformative approach of India in 'IOJK' and relevance of Gupkar Alliance
- Intolerance towards Muslims on the rise in 'IIOJK'

Economic Developments

- Neelum-Jhelum is to be operational in six months
- GB Education Department and Aga Khan Foundation sign MoU
- Pakistan's efforts to stop Indian water aggression have been successful at the international level

Vernacular Urdu Media

- 'AJK' President and JI leader discussed the current situation in 'occupied' Kashmir
- Pasban-e-Hurriyat held a protest against the 1200-day Indian 'military occupation' of Kashmir
- Pro-Pakistan Army demonstration organized by Baltistan University in Skardu
- Indian military's systematic killing of Kashmiri children constitutes both war crimes and acts of terrorism: Pasban-e-Hurriyat

Political Developments

FO says verdict in Dasu bus attack demonstrates Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism

Dawn, 14 November 2022

The Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) said that the verdict in the 2021 Dasu bus attack case had demonstrated Pakistan's abiding commitment to counter-terrorism. The FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that an anti-terrorism court in Hazara awarded a death sentence to two men after convicting them for planning the attack. Mohammad Hussain and Mohammad Ayaz of Matta tehsil in Swat district was charged with planning the bus bombing, which killed 13 people, including nine Chinese workers on July 14, 2021. The spokesperson said that Pakistan remains committed to the safety and security of Chinese workers, projects, and institutions in the country, and added that the ironclad Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership will never be undermined by hostile forces. The attack resulted in thirteen people, including nine Chinese nationals, two personnel of the Frontier Constabulary and two locals were killed and 28 others sustained injuries when a coach carrying them to an under-construction tunnel site of the 4,300-megawatt Dasu hydropower project fell into a ravine in the Upper Kohistan area after an explosion last year. Although the FO had initially termed the incident an accident, the government later said traces of

explosives had been found and that 'terrorism could not be ruled out.' The prosecution's records showed that a car carrying 100-120kg explosives hit the bus, while the bomber's body parts suggested that he was not a Pakistani national. The then foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, had said that the bombing was carried out by Pakistani Taliban militants backed by the 'Indian and Afghan intelligence' agencies and that Afghan soil was used for its planning and execution.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1720924/fo-says-verdict-in-dasu-bus-attack-demonstrates-pakistans-commitment-to-counter-terrorism>

'AJK' President warns India against any misadventure in liberated territory

Pakistan today, 15 November 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry while denouncing the Indian defense Minister's recent 'threatening statement', has warned the 'enemy' that any aggression against 'AJK' or misadventure by India would be responded to in the same manner. He expressed these views while addressing the first annual convocation of the University of Poonch Haveli Campus at Haveli in Forward Kahota in Poonch. He said that Kashmiris knew fully how to defend their motherland.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/11/15/ajk-president-warns-india-against-any-misadventure-in-liberated-territory/>

Kashmir EU Week begins in Brussels

Pakistan Observer, 16 November 2022

The Kashmir European Union Week under the auspices of Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU) has begun in Brussels. The Kashmir EU Week encompasses a photo exhibition, a conference, a press conference, and several meetings on the Kashmir issue. The photo exhibition depicting Indian 'brutalities' in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) will continue in the European Press Club, Brussels, for the next two weeks. These photos were taken by the Belgian photojournalist, Cédric Gerbehaye, during his visit to 'IIOJK.' Other programs of the Kashmir EU week such as an international conference on Kashmir in the EU parliament, a press conference in the EU press club, and meetings with the members of the EU parliament and representatives of organizations of human rights and civil society will be held during the week. The KCEU chairman, Ali Raza Syed said that the people of 'IIOJK' have been facing the worst Indian state terrorism since 1947. He appealed to the international community, particularly the European Union, to put pressure on India to immediately stop its 'atrocities' on the Kashmiris and give them their right to self-determination following the relevant UN resolutions.

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmir-eu-week-begins-in-brussels/>

China welcomes verdict in Dasu attack case

The Express Tribune, 16 November 2022

Chinese foreign ministry appreciated Pakistan's efforts to get to the bottom of the terrorist attack in Dasu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa last year, and bring the perpetrators to full justice, a Chinese foreign ministry. The spokesperson Mao Ning in her regular media briefing at the International Press Centre (IPC) said that Pakistan carried out the investigations into the July 14, 2021 attack with utmost seriousness. A court in Pakistan awarded capital punishment to two accused over the Dasu terror attacks, recently. The foreign ministry spokesperson remarked that China would remain firmly supportive of Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts and expressed the hope that the safety of Chinese nationals, institutions, and projects in Pakistan would be duly protected. She emphasized that the Chinese side would further increase inputs in improving risk alerts, enhance emergency response capabilities and work with relevant countries in resolutely protecting the security of overseas Chinese nationals, institutions, and projects.

While responding to a question, she termed untrue the reports of a protest in Gwadar against CPEC projects and added that the 'organizers have said in public that the protests are not targeting the Chinese side or the CPEC.

She said that the Gwadar port was a flagship port of CPEC, with a focus on people's livelihood, noting that China had assisted in building primary schools, training academies, hospitals, and also the solar panels donated by China, improving the lives of people. She said that China is ready to work with Pakistan for the high-quality development of CPEC and to ensure the smooth running of all projects in Gwadar port to deliver more benefits to the people.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2386594/china-welcomes-verdict-in-dasu-attack-case>

Saghar urges G20 countries to play role in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute

Pakistan Observer, 17 November 2022

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter convener, Mehmood Ahmad Saghar, has urged the G20 countries to play their role in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. He said the G20 leaders who are meeting for a two-day summit hosted by the Indonesian G20 presidency in Bali must realize the fact that the grouping's strategic role in securing future global economic cooperation, growth, and prosperity was not possible without the resolution of disputes. He said that permanent peace was possible only if the lingering disputes such as the Kashmir conflict were resolved in a just and peaceful manner. While referring to his recent letter addressed to the

heads of G20 countries, he said that India, which has 'usurped' the Kashmiris' fundamental political and human rights, is planning to hold the next G20 summit in Kashmir, an internationally-recognized disputed territory. He said the Indian government's plan to conduct the next G20 summit in 'occupied' Kashmir is aimed at deflecting world attention away from the real issue of Kashmir. He claimed that by holding the high-profile summit in the disputed territory India wanted to lend 'legitimacy' to the 'illegal actions' it had taken since 5th August 2019. He urged the G20 nations not to become a part of any such exercise. He claimed to the people of Kashmir that the G20 countries which had voted in favor of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir would not get 'swayed' by the Indian 'propaganda' and instead ask India to resolve the dispute following the UN resolutions.

<https://pakobserver.net/saghar-urges-g20-countries-to-play-role-in-resolution-of-kashmir-dispute/>

New Transformative Approach of India in 'IOJK' and relevance of Gupkar Alliance

Daily Parliament Times, 17 November 2022

After merging state completely and 'illegally', India is trying to normalize the situation in Kashmir in her favor by hooks and crooks. India doesn't want any voice of dissent to rise and for that,

India is now adopting a new conflict transformative approach by engaging people in issues like the economy, health security, tourism, etc. Elections in Kashmir are expected next year. These elections are held for the first time after the revocation of autonomy. Although there is no significant enthusiasm for these elections in the atmosphere of Kashmir, the reality is that these elections will help India's new transformative approach in Kashmir to succeed. The delimitation commission formed a week after the revocation of autonomy has proposed to increase seven seats for Jammu and only one seat for Kashmir valley. Now Kashmir valley has a total of 47 seats for a population of about 7 million (1 constituency per 1 lac 46 thousand people) while Jammu has 43 seats (1 constituency per 1 lac 30 thousand people) for 5 million. Such allocation of constituencies especially adding scheduled castes supports demographic change. Furthermore, the new constituency allocation will facilitate the selection of a chief minister from Jammu on the Muslim majority population of Kashmir valley. All local parties are contesting elections. Although they are voicing and promising to voice for the restoration of autonomy, the emphasis is on the development and governance reforms.

Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah are not contesting the elections, but that is not because of any principal stance on the revocation of autonomy. It is

more because of the protocol. Both party chiefs have worked as chief ministers, but in the new status of the union territory, they will have to work under Governor. Altaf Bukhari, with his newly formed Apni Party, also added the restoration of autonomy as the party's objective, but it seems a stunt just like Sheikh Abdullah used to keep a green handkerchief to gain the sympathies of the public. Mainstream and social media mainly addresses and reports the local administrative and governance issues. This focus shifting is more because of fear of 'Indian oppression' against any dissenting voice but this is an essential step towards narrative building around domestic issues rather than politics, especially politics of conflict. Pumping money to transform the political situation has always been used by India. A few weeks before the election in 2014, PM Modi visited Kashmir and announced a package of 80,000 crores for the development of 'IOJK.' This factor complemented the struggle of BJP workers, and first time in 50 years of its existence in 'IOJK', BJP bagged 28 seats in the legislative assembly.

People's Alliance on Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) in this situation seems to have lost all its relevance and strength. Founded by 7 local parties, the objective of PAGD was to fight for the restoration of autonomy but initially, during District Development Council (DDC) elections, Sajjad Lone of PC isolated his party from Gupkar Alliance and then the differences

between NC and PDP. Anti-India sloganeering by different political parties in 'IOJK' as a political stunt is nothing new. Neither does any leader of the so-called PAGD have the spine to stand firm in such a situation. This is a fact that this kind of transformative approach only works for a short time unless the grievances of grass root level stakeholders are addressed. The long-lasting solution cannot rely on such attention-diverting things. Instead, it will create a pressure cooker situation that will blast if the heat continues.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/11/17/new-transformative-approach-of-india-in-iojk-and-relevance-of-gupkar-alliance/>

Intolerance towards Muslims on the rise in 'IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 17 November 2022

A report released by Kashmir Media Service (KMS) said that 'intolerance' toward Muslims and other minority groups is on the rise in PM Narendra Modi-led India and in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir with 'Hindu groups' using violence, intimidation, and harassment against the minorities on daily basis in the country and Indian military waging a war against the civilian population in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). The report said that when International Day of Tolerance is being observed across the world today, PM Modi's India is becoming more openly and violently intolerant towards religious minorities. It said that the

Kashmiri people are subjected to the worst kind of 'state terrorism' for demanding their inalienable right to self-determination, adding hate crimes against Muslims and other minorities have alarmingly increased since Modi became India's prime minister in 2014.

The report claimed that Muslims, Christians, and low-caste Hindus are treated as second-class citizens in the so-called largest democracy. The right-wing Hindus have become a threat to Muslims which is manifested in the killing of hundreds of Muslims on charges of eating/slaughtering beef, opposing the veil of Muslim girl students, banning the sale of halal meat, removing the Islamic names of cities, villages, and streets and placing Hindu names instead. It further alleged that anti-Christian vigilantes are sweeping through villages, storming churches, burning Christian literature, attacking schools, and assaulting worshipers. The very act of worship has become dangerous despite constitutional protections for freedom of religion.

<https://pakobserver.net/intolerance-towards-muslims-on-rise-in-iiojk/>

Economic Developments

Neelum-Jhelum is to be operational in six months

The Express Tribune, 15 November 2022

The federal minister Qamar Zaman Kaira informed the National Assembly (NA) that the fault in 969-megawatt

Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Plant Project (NJHPP) would be fixed in six months. The minister was replying in the NA on behalf of the minister for Water Resources Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah. Kaira said that the project is located in the mountains area of Kashmir where rock sliding is common, adding that cracks emerged from inside the mountains which damaged the main tunnel, subsequently, the powerhouse became dysfunctional. He further noted that the NJHPP project has a 68 km of tunneling system, out of which the length of the water tunnel is 51 km (48 km headrace tunnel and 3.5 km tailrace tunnel). In the tailrace tunnel at one location from 251m to 293m from the powerhouse, there is a blockage of about 42m in length due to tunnel collapse. China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC), the contractor for the construction of Civil Works was engaged for carrying out the remedial works. The contractor started the mobilization at the site and subsequently, a contract agreement was signed with the firm on August 25, 2022, and as per the instruction of the prime minister, work on restoration is going on.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2386424/neelum-jhelum-to-be-operational-in-six-months>

GB Education Department and Aga Khan Foundation sign MoU

Pamir Times, 17 November 2022

The Directorate of Education (DoE), the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB),

and the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan (AKF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for achieving the GB Education Strategy (GBES) 2015-2030 vision. Rana Muhammad Saleem, secretary of education, the government of GB said that AKF Pakistan and other related agencies of AKF have rendered valuable services for education improvement in GB. He emphasized working together with AKF on the implementation plan of the GB education strategy and including Information Technology (IT) skills and entrepreneurship opportunities for the students in the future. The chairman of the national committee AKF, Pakistan, Iqbal Walji said that AKF has been working in close partnership with the government departments of education in GB for decades, and added that the agreement will strengthen the collaboration between the Department of Education, AKF, Pakistan and its sister agencies. He emphasized the long-term commitment of AKDN to education in the region and gave an example of the first school in Gwadar that was established in 1905. He highlighted the importance of girls' education and expressed an interest to work more with the government on promoting girls' education in different areas of GB.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2022/11/17/gb-education-department-and-aga-khan-foundation-sign-mou-for-strengthened-partnerships/>

Pakistan's efforts to stop Indian water aggression have been successful at the international level

Jasarat, 19 November 2022

Pakistan's complaint against India's Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project and Rathi Hydro Projects will be heard by the World Bank. Pakistan's efforts to stop India's 'water aggression' have been very successful at the international level. On November 21, the World Bank will present the designs of both projects to the arbitration court. A group from Pakistan that includes water and legal specialists has departed for Washington. The Secretary of Water Resources, the Indus Water Commissioner, and specialists will be part of the delegation, and the Indian delegation will also take part in the discussions over design and objectionable paperwork. The disputed design was brought up by Pakistan to the World Bank in 2016, and the World Bank established an arbitration tribunal in October 2021, five years later. India has proposed an informal mutual agreement, but Pakistan rejected the Indian proposal due to India's contested track record on the issue in the past.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/11/19/great-success-for-pakistan/>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

'AJK' President and JI leader discussed the current situation in 'occupied' Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 16 November 2022

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mohammed Choudhary, discussed with the former leader of Jamaat-e-Islamia (JI), Abdur Rasheed Turabi on the current situation in 'occupied' Kashmir. Sultan briefed the JI leader on his recent trip to the US, which he described as successful and constructive. He stressed that during his tour, he met with representatives of the US administration, held protests, and participated in events and programs related to the Kashmir issue. He said that the Kashmir issue is being brought to the attention of the world, notably in the US, by people of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage. He claimed that to bring peace to the region, the current Hindutva government must stop its violence in the 'occupied Kashmir' and reverse its illegal actions since August 2019. He claimed that the diaspora community living in the US is playing a key role in drawing attention to the 'atrocities' of the PM Narendra Modi government in 'occupied Kashmir.' JI leader suggested that all political parties and civil society members need to work together and

develop a comprehensive plan of action to pursue the Kashmir issue, adding that to highlight the Kashmir issue and to counter Indian plans, the government and members of civil society must take aggressive measures and engage in diplomatic lobbying with powerful nations and international organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-16.jpg>

Pasban-e-Hurriyat held a protest against the 1200-day Indian ‘military occupation’ of Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir Times, 16 November 2022

The Pasban-e-Hurriyat organized an anti-India demonstration to mark the 1200 days of the ‘siege’ and forced division of ‘Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir’ (IOJK) by the Indian military forces from August 5, 2019. The protestors were yelling anti-Indian military chants, including ‘go back, India, go back’; ‘Kashmir is bleeding; Kashmir is ours,’ and ‘we will seize freedom from India, freedom is our right.’ Speakers at the event claimed that the Indian government in violation of the United Nations (UN) resolutions forcibly split Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019, adding that India cannot unilaterally change the status of the disputed state through constitutional revisions because it is an

internationally acknowledged dispute between India and Pakistan. Speakers further claimed that the world has seen that India has entirely failed to suppress the resistance movement despite the ‘longest military siege of 1200 days.’ They said that residents of the whole state, from Jammu, Ladakh, and the Kashmir Valley, oppose Indian ‘colonial rule.’ Speakers alleged that Indian military actions in ‘IOJK’ are an open act of ‘state terrorism’ in which ‘armed forces’ killed children’s and youths in ‘fictitious encounters’, destroyed their homes, and detained thousands of innocent people. The participants urged UNSC and other human rights organizations to take notice of the Indian military siege in Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resize-of-page-02.....16.jpg>

Pro-Pakistan Army demonstration organized by Baltistan University in Skardu

Dailyk2, 18 November 2022

A protest demonstration was held in Skardu in support of the Pakistan Army led by the registrar of the University of Baltistan, Wasimullah Jan Malik, students, and teachers. While addressing the participants, who were chanting ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ slogans, Malik said that the three aspects are important for national security: political stability, a strong economy, and a strong defense, adding that the

defense of the country is in capable hands. He said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) have always made sacrifices for the nation's defense and are actively participating in the economic development of Pakistan, stressing that the locals have always supported the Pakistani Army and will do so in the future. He claimed that the courageous men of the Pakistan Army always hit the enemy's jaws and their bad intentions, whenever our enemy attempted to challenge us or stare at us. He said that the Pakistani Army's soldiers have consistently given their lives for the sake of the beloved country's security and these sacrifices will continue whenever required. Musa Ali, the deputy registrar, stated that the Pakistan Army is our red line, our border guard, and the reason we are currently sleeping in peace, adding that the Pakistani Army is our backbone, and we stand behind them.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/10303>

Indian military's systematic killing of Kashmiri children constitutes both war crimes and acts of terrorism: Pasban-e-Hurriyat

UrduPoint, 20 November 2022

Pasban-e-Hurriyat chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali claimed that children in 'Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) are calling for international attention to the 'atrocities' committed by the Indian 'armed forces', particularly against children and teenagers. On the occasion of

International Children's Day, Uzair stated that the innocent children of Kashmir are the biggest victims of India's 'brutal occupation' and that Kashmiri children are being killed by Indian soldiers as part of a systematic plan. He bemoaned that since 1989, more than 107,890 children, including Tufail Mattu, have become orphans in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir while more than 1,100 innocent kids have been killed by the Indian army. He said that the fatal pellet gun attacks by the Indian army caused the blindness of hundreds of Kashmiri youngsters. He further claimed that the Indian military's 'malicious intentions' are clear and that they are attempting to make the state with a majority of Muslims into a minority. He urged the international community and human rights groups to exert pressure on the PM Modi administration to defend the rights of Kashmiri children in conformity with international laws and norms. He also urged the UN and other international institutions including OIC to pay attention to the 'war crimes' carried out by the Indian army against the helpless Kashmiri children.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/international-news/live-news-3361197.html>

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Disclaimer

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