

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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12 December - 18 December 2022

Project NJHEP
Powerhouse
electricity
wheat shortfall
Gilgit-Baltistan
Hydropower POK
budget



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
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Political Developments

PM lauds OIC's stance on the Kashmir dispute

Pakistan Observer, 13 December 2022

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, while talking to Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) secretary general Hissein Brahim Taha, informed him about the grim human rights and humanitarian situation in the 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). He appreciated the OIC's principled position and consistent support for the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute following the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The OIC Secretary General is visiting Pakistan on his first country visit since he assumed office in November 2021. While welcoming the Secretary General's historic visit to 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and Line of Control, the Prime Minister underscored that his visit would send a strong message of support from OIC to the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the right of self-determination.

<https://pakobserver.net/pm-lauds-oics-stance-on-kashmir-dispute/>

Ankara Declaration rejects India's 'illegal occupation', denial of self-determination to Kashmiris

Pakistan Observer, 13 December 2022

The Legal Forum for Kashmir (LFK), in collaboration with the Centre for Economic and Social Research (ESAM),

organized a three-day 'International Kashmir Congress' in Ankara, Turkey. The conference titled 'the narrative of occupation and scopes of international law: A preview of Occupied Kashmir' was held from 9th December to 12th December 2022. A declaration released on the occasion said: We the 'representatives' of the people of 'Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK), along with those in solidarity in Ankara, Turkiye, as well as academicians and researchers and particularly victims of occupation, oppression and settler colonialism in Palestine and elsewhere, solemnly declare that: The international community has failed the people of 'IOK' for many decades and that India has deliberately violated international law, norms, conventions, and treaties in the course of implementation and its 'unlawful occupation', with the criminal intention of 'colonizing and annexing' Kashmir. The Indian state is aggressively pursuing a 'fascist agenda' in 'occupied Kashmir' and has been perpetrating 'war crimes,' crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression and doing so with total impunity and zero accountability. India, which is an electoral autocracy has been deceiving the world by adhering to the empty forms of democracy, peace, and justice without any intention of acting in conformity with these ideals, it has done this to hoodwink international community into believing that the fate of Kashmir is subject to India's legitimate authority which in reality is manipulated by its fake constitutionalism.

The declaration further claimed that India had long been 'brutally repressing' Kashmir's inalienable Right to Self-determination and that India has relied on intense coercion ever since 1947. These policies, it claimed, were intensified by the decrees put into effect by India in August 2019. It further said we reject India's aggression, 'illegal occupation', coercion, and denial of the sacred right of self-determination in all forms and that we, the Kashmiris, victims of India's aggression are duty bound to protect our land, people, culture and freedoms and uphold rights as guaranteed by international law. It further claimed that the indigenous population is under threat and has every right and duty to resist oppression and uphold the rights of self-defense against the perpetrators of 'Crimes against humanity', 'War crimes', and 'Crimes of aggression.' The UN Charter, the declaration stressed describes and mandates intervention in case of violation of international peace and security should abandon double standards and discriminatory enforcement and it is long overdue that the Charter be implemented in 'occupied Kashmir' to the full extent of the law.

The 'Ankara Declaration' was signed and adopted unanimously by all the participants of Congress. Professor Richard Falk, Professor Emeritus of International Law, Princeton University Dr. Hilal Elver, Fellow at the Resnick Center for Food Law and Policy, Zaid Shuaibi, Coordinator and Policy Member, Civil Society Palestine

Ustaaz, Executive Director, Legal Forum for Kashmir Dr. Ghulam N. Mir, President, World Kashmir Awareness Forum Ghulam Muhammad Safi, All Parties Hurriyat Conference Professor Dr. Niaz A Shah, Professor of Law, University of Hull, U.K., Shamim Shawl, All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Advocate Abdul Rashid Turabi, Parliamentarian, 'Azad Kashmir', Sheikh Abdul Mateen, All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, president, World Forum for Peace and Justice among others.

<https://pakobserver.net/ankara-declaration-rejects-indias-illegal-occupation-denial-of-self-determination-to-kashmiris/>

Why Kashmir irks India

Pakistan Observer, 14 December 2022

Since 5 Aug 2019, the Indian 'fascist regime of RSS' and 'terrorist Indian Army' have unleashed an unprecedented wave of 'oppression and violence' against innocent people of 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). While Pakistan has remained busy with managing a fledgling economy, the Modi government has tried its best to exploit the window of opportunity and alienate Kashmiris from their justified 'freedom struggle;' however, India has 'miserably failed.' Kashmiri diaspora and freedom advocacy groups have continued to highlight 'Indian atrocities' in 'IIOJK.' In a recent symposium on Kashmir Conflict organized by Kashmir Global Council and South Asia Democracy Watch in Frisco Texas, Congresswoman Terry Meza was the chief guest, with well-

known social activist Ms. Beverly Hill as well as various political leaders, academics, US media persons, and students also in attendance.

Meza stressed the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue in keeping with the legitimate aspirations of the people of Kashmir. At the international level, there is growing noticeable awareness regarding India's 'brutal acts' and 'atrocities' in 'IIOJK.' Almost all human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Genocide Watch, and US Commission on International Religious Freedom have continuously raised their voice against human rights abuses in 'IIOJK' and call for addressing the ongoing 'human rights violations' and delivering justice to the people of Kashmir. Another strong voice against Modi's fascist policies is Dr. Audrey Truschke, a historian of South Asia and an associate professor at Rutgers University. She had stated in the past that the 'atrocities committed by the RSS regime involve a form of corrosion that India will not survive. Kashmir may not defeat India, but it will consume India. In many ways, it already has.'

As reported by Al Jazeera on 29 November, an Israeli filmmaker has triggered controversy in India after he denounced a film on the Kashmir as 'propaganda' and a 'vulgar movie' at a government-sponsored film festival in Goa. Nadav Lapid, who headed the jury at the week-long International Film Festival of India (IFFI), said he was 'disturbed and shocked' by the

inclusion of The Kashmir Files in the event. In his concluding address at a ceremony, he said that the film, seemed to us like a 'propaganda, vulgar movie, inappropriate for an artistic competitive section of such a prestigious film festival.' More recently, Indian politico-military leadership resorted to hollow rhetoric of marching onto 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' as well as Gilgit-Baltistan. The timings of the current saber-rattling by the Indian leadership may have something to do with Pakistan's political scene and mudslinging by political parties.

However, the change of command in the Pakistani military and the strong message given by Gen Asim Munir, during his visit to Line of Control, has doused the fires of rhetoric ignited by Rajnath Singh and the 'jokers of South Block.' Anuradha Bhasin, Executive Editor of Kashmir Times and a commentator in her piece published in Al Jazeera in 2020 gives an insight into why Modi is following the Israeli model in 'IIOJK'. She feels that Hindu right-wing groups are shaping the sociopolitical environment by openly calling for changing the demography of Kashmir and integrationist politics. A pathway is being paved for replicating the Israeli model of occupation and colonization of the West Bank in Kashmir towards disempowerment and dispossession of the locals, particularly Kashmiri Muslims, to exercise hegemonic control through new settlers.

<https://pakobserver.net/why-kashmir-irks-india-2/>

FM urges UNSC to implement resolutions on the Kashmir issue

The Nation, 15 December 2022

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stressed upon the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to implement its resolutions over the Kashmir issue and deliver upon its commitment to peace in the region and 'prove that multilateralism can succeed'. While speaking on 'International peace and security: Reformed Multilateralism' in the Security Council, Bilawal said that there was an agenda item left unaddressed by the UNSC, the issue of Kashmir. He opined that 'we believe it a multinational agenda, an agenda of this UNSC and if you want to see the success of the multilateral institution or multilateralism and the success of this very Council, surely you can aid in this process; allow the implementation of the resolutions of the UNSC when it comes to the question of Kashmir, prove the multilateralism can succeed, prove that the UNSC can succeed and deliver peace in the region.' He said that Pakistan believed that further democratization of the UN and the UNSC and the General Assembly would empower this institution and provide it with a moral authority to act. He added that it would serve the institution to further democratize and to allow the sovereign quality of all and not the superiority of some, emphasizing that it does not serve the purposes of the UN to add more

members to its elitist club and to expand the tyrannical power of veto.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Dec-2022/fm-urges-uns-c-to-implement-resolutions-on-kashmir-issue>

Economic Developments

Provinces seek 'rightful share' in funds

The Express Tribune, 12 December 2022

The provincial governments of Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) heaped complaints on the federal government, demanding the release of 'rightful share' in funds. While addressing a joint news conference along with officials from Punjab, KP, and 'AJK', KP Chief Minister (CM) Mahmood Khan lamented that we are faced with 'financial problems', and despite having repeatedly complained, they have not been resolved. He said that a budget of 1.3 trillion has been allotted to K-P, adding that the large budget had been granted on the instruction of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief and former premier Imran Khan. Unfortunately, he said, they could not acquire that amount, accusing the federal government of Shehbaz Sharif of trying to 'put our backs against the wall.' The K-P CM said he was raising his voice for his people, stressing that this is our right and that we are not begging from the federal government. During the news conference, it was also claimed that funds intended for the

uplift of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas region were also not released. He noted that how can we progress if we do not get the funds? And added that all the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects have been washed out.

Mahmood threatened that we will mobilize the public and will protest outside the National Assembly if we are not given our rights, and added that the opposition in the provincial assembly had also been asked to prepare. Similarly, GB CM Khalid Khurshid Khan also chimed in complaining that our block allocation was 18 billion while our government's portfolio went up to 48 billion, added that the GB's budget was reduced from 40 billion to 25 billion, and regretted the display of 'animosity' by the PDM-led federal government. It has been six months today, and only 2.8 billion of the Annual Development Plan (ADP) has been released, Khurshid Khan added, questioning how the Centre expected them to continue running things when every day we are being faced with natural calamities. Skardu city faces load-shedding of 21 to 22 hours, he added, while questioning, how we should meet the electricity and wheat shortfall. Punjab Finance Minister Mohsin Leghari said that 167.4 billion belong to Punjab which the federal government is not releasing, and added that the announcements were made but not a single rupee was given to Punjab for flood relief. While decrying discriminatory policies of the Centre, he said, Imran Khan gave 14

billion after raising funds through a telethon. The minister regretted that there was very little cooperation between the provinces and the federal government, especially on the financial front. The 'AJK' finance minister Abdul Majid Khan informed the media that as soon as they [the incumbent government] came to power, they targeted Kashmir, adding that they will have to give us our share at all costs. He said, Imran Khan was the first one to start the health card project for the people living along the Line of Control and added that the present federal government finished it the minute they got power.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2390726/provinces-see-rightful-share-in-funds>

Tunnel collapse: NJHEP CEO alludes to 'lapses' in design

Business Recorder, 15 December 2022

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), of Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHEP), Muhammad Arfan Miana hinted at lapses in the design of the project as the experts have identified eleven different possibilities which may have led to blockage and subsequent partial collapse of the tunnel. While sharing the chronology of events with the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources, he said on July 4, 2022, excessive water leakage in the powerhouse was noticed which was managed by dewatering through pumping. On July 5, 2022, pressure in the tailrace tunnel increased to 616-m against the normal pressure of 600-m

due to which load decreased gradually from 696 to 200 MW. Later on, pressure in the tailrace tunnel was reduced to 601-m to avert damage to powerhouse installations. On July 6, 2022, the first load was further reduced to 125 MW but later on, the powerhouse was shut down completely. He said that under the 'emergency clause', of Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules, a contractor with all drawing, experience, and complete understanding of the project was approached to undertake remedial works and the company showed its willingness. The contract was signed on August 5, 2022, which was six months (original estimate) but the scope of the work has been increased during the inspection of the tunnel after complete dewatering.

Meanwhile, an independent Panel of Experts (IPoEs) has been hired with the following Terms of Reference (ToRs): (i) to ascertain the causes of excessive seepage/ leakage of water in the powerhouse and increase in water pressure in the tailrace tunnel of NJHEP); (ii) to evaluate the structural integrity of the underground works of the project, especially, the tailrace and others; (iii) to identify lapses in design or construction (if any) that caused such blockage and may potentially cause similar failures in future in it and/or another component; (iv) to suggest remedial measures to resolve the current problem in the tailrace tunnel, and reinforcements in another component of the project; and (v) to provide technical assistance to NJHEP in preparing and pursuing the insurance claim.

The IPoEs have opined that there could be eleven different possibilities causing the blockage and not a single postulated root cause would be sufficient to cause a tunnel collapse of the magnitude of the one observed in the tailrace tunnel. IPoEs' next visit is scheduled for January 2023. During the discussion, Ch Riazul Haq, MNA who visited river Kunhar as head of the Sub Committee, to prepare a report on pollution in the river, informed the committee that he found 189 hotels constructed illegally (without any NOC) on the banks of the river. He revealed that he saw an under-construction hotel on the banks of the river, which according to him, was owned by a recently retired judge of the Supreme Court, adding that all hotel waste is being dumped in the river.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40214628/tunnel-collapse-njhep-ceo-alludes-to-lapses-in-design>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The voice of Kashmiris will be brought to the attention of the Islamic world, including the international community: OIC Secretary

Daily Pakistan, 12 December 2022

Qamar Zaman Kaira, the advisor for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Kashmir affairs, and Hussain Ibrahim Taha, secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), visited the 'Azad Kashmir' Chakothi area close to the Line of Control. The delegation meets Kashmiri families who have been affected by cross-border firing and shelling. After the visit, Hussain Ibrahim Taha, Prime Minister Tanveer

Ilyas, and the president of 'Azad Kashmir,' Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry held a press conference at the president's house. According to Hussain Brahim Taha, his travel to 'Azad Kashmir' has two goals: first to assess the local situation and second to show support and sympathy to the people of 'occupied Kashmir', and added that we wish to establish a 'channel of conversation' with the concerned countries to diplomatically resolve this issue. Mr. Taha further told the media that he had undertaken the tour to implement a resolution adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) at a recent session, as he wanted to see for himself the situation on the ground. He said that the Islamic world will hear Kashmiris' voices, and the international community will also be considered in this regard. The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, spoke at the news conference and noted that OIC has supported the Kashmiri people at every forum and has reinforced their support for Kashmiris time and again and for that, we are very appreciative.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/11-Dec-2022/1519184>

The Muslim Ummah should stand together and speak out for Kashmiris: 'AJK' PM

Mahasib, 12 December 2022

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that the Muslim Ummah had to band together and speak out in support of Kashmiris. He said that the

Kashmiri people are appreciative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) assistance at every stage and support of their right to self-determination. He added that Hussain Ibrahim Taha, secretary general of the OIC, has reaffirmed his support for Kashmiris in crystal-clear terms, which has buoyed the spirits of Kashmiris engaged in the 'liberation movement.' He claimed that India has violated human rights in Kashmir by enforcing harsh laws, and the Indian Army has made life in Kashmir unbearable for Kashmiris. He urged Islamic countries to play an important role in stopping large-scale 'atrocities' in 'occupied Kashmir' and giving the Kashmiri people the right to self-determination. He expressed these views while talking to OIC Secretary General Hussain Taha Ibrahim, who met him along with Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Dr. Khalid Khurshid, Minister of Finance and Inland Revenue Abdul Majid Khan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Maldives Ambassadors among others. Ilyas further said that pressure should be increased on the United Nations from every platform of OIC to implement its resolutions to solve this long-standing problem. He stressed that Kashmir is like a body, if one part hurts, the whole body suffers, and so, Muslim countries should openly support Kashmiri. He said that Western countries have made laws for the protection of wildlife, but where are their think tanks for Kashmiris? He said that if a referendum can be held in Sudan, then there should be a referendum in Kashmir.

Hussain Ibrahim Taha said that a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue is the priority of the OIC and added that the OIC wants to reach a conclusion on the issue in cooperation with friendly countries. He further said that we want to open the channel of discussion between all stakeholders on the Kashmir issue so that this issue can be resolved through diplomacy, and added that we will convey the voice of Kashmiris to the Islamic world and the international community. He said that Kashmir is a part of the OIC and it is our responsibility and duty to resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully and according to the wishes of the Kashmiris. A documentary on Kashmir was also shown to the OIC Secretary General and his delegation in which the atrocities of the 'Indian army' were mentioned.

<http://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/news.php?id=1255>

Leaders of APHC-'AJK' briefed the OIC assistant Secretary-General on Indian plots in 'IIOJK'

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 14 December 2022

Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, the convener of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', (APHC-AJK) led a delegation to meet with Yousef Aldoubeay, the assistant secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in Islamabad to discuss India's 'anti-Kashmiri' policies in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). The delegation informed Yousef about 'land grabbing' demographic changes, and large-scale human rights violations in the

'occupied territory.' Gerrymandering was also mentioned as the delineation of assembly constituencies. The OIC secretary was further briefed about the closure of schools endangering the education of thousands of children as well as the outlawing of political and religious organizations. Yousef emphasized the need for Kashmir's settlement following UN resolutions while reiterating his support for the cause.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Resize-of-front-ready-14.jpg>

The Pakistan FO briefed foreign ambassadors on India's 'terrorist activities'

Daily Pakistan, 14 December 2022

The Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) has briefed around 30 foreign ambassadors in Islamabad, providing them with information on the specifics of 'Indian terrorism' in Pakistan as well as providing a dossier based on the proof of Indian 'state terrorism' in Pakistan. Foreign diplomats have also been provided with proof of financial assistance which India provided to terrorists in Pakistan. The diplomatic corps in Islamabad also includes representatives from the permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This dossier contains information and proof that India's 'state-sponsored terrorism' was wholly responsible for the Jauhar Town incident among others which resulted in the loss of lives. Pakistan also urged the international community to hold India accountable for its 'crimes.'

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/14-Dec-2022/1520455>

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Disclaimer

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