

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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POK Karakoram
land **floods** Highway
reform Gilgit-Baltistan
Kashmir election **Tourism**
Summit



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

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Political Developments

Pakistani students asked to use social media for Kashmir freedom

Daily Times, 19 August 2024

The Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' chapter, Ghulam Muhammad Safi appealed to Pakistani students to play their role in the Kashmir freedom movement through digital media along with their education in this age of modern technology. Safi emphasized the significance of leveraging social media and online platforms to raise awareness about the Kashmir issue and mobilize support for the freedom movement, urging students to use their digital skills to make a meaningful impact. Safi said that the people of 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK) have a lot of expectations from the Pakistani youth and the Pakistani youth have to fulfill these expectations.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1218520/pakistani-students-asked-to-use-social-media-for-kashmir-freedom/>

'AJK' Mirpur journalists take to street protest against Indian state terrorism unleashed on Kashmiri journalists in 'IIOJK'

Daily parliament Times, 19 August 2024

Local journalists in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), staged mass street protest against Indian state violence unleashed against innocent Kashmiri journalists and civilians besides in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu

Kashmir' (IIOJK) state. The protest demonstration was managed by the newly unopposed elected office bearers of the Kashmir Press Club Mirpur under the leadership of its President Syed Abid Hussain Shah, Secretary General Raja Sohrab Ahmed Khan and other senior journalists. The members of the club expressed full solidarity with the journalists and Human rights and freedom defenders in 'IIOJK'. The protest rally was taken out from the Kashmir Press Club. The furious participant journalists chanted slogans against 'Indian fascist government' and its puppet administration and the occupying Indian military and para military forces for inflicting brutalities and sanctions to gag the Kashmiri conventional and social media in 'IIOJK.'

The protestors include those belonging to print and electronic media affiliated with international, national and the State regional press. Addressing the rally speakers including the press club President Syed Abid Hussain Shah and others expressed solidarity with Kashmiri journalists and the people of 'occupied Kashmir' struggling for the liberation of the motherland from Indian yoke. Speakers paid rich tributes to martyred Kashmiri journalists who laid down their lives during performance of their professional duties including those who were subjected to the state violence by the 'Indian occupying forces' in the internationally-recognised disputed Himalayan state.

Speakers called upon United Nations to take care of its due responsibilities ensuring early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue. They further urged the world body besides human rights organizations to take immediate notice of the Indian sanctions against media and freedom of expression and increased human rights abuses in the strife torn disputed Indian occupied state. The protestant Journalists carried placards and banners and chanted slogans against India and its 'occupying forces'.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/08/19/mirpur-ajk-journalists-take-to-street-protest-against-indian-state-terrorism-unleashed-on-kashmiri-journalists-in-iiojk/>

National Assembly special panel decides to highlight Indian atrocities in 'IIOJK' at global forums

Business Recorder, 20 August 2024

The Pakistan National Assembly's Special Committee on Kashmir Affairs unanimously decided to highlight the Kashmir issue at every regional and international forum while underlining the gross violation of human rights in the 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). An in-camera meeting of the special committee presided over by Rana Muhammad Qasim got briefing from Foreign Affairs and Kashmir Affairs. The representatives of Ministry of Defence, and other officers participated in the meeting. The meeting also decided to sensitise the world about the gross violation of human rights in 'IIOJK',

and inhuman treatment of Kashmiris, especially after annulment of Article 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution. The committee also noted that holding local government elections in 'IIOJK' would prove just a farce. Kashmir Committee members also recommended visiting border area of 'Azad Kashmir' Chakothi and other areas. The members of the Special Committee on Kashmir reiterated their commitment to utilise all resources in line with the chairman's vision to highlight the Kashmir issue worldwide.

The chairman of the committee said that Parliament of Pakistan would continue to highlight Indian atrocities on innocent Kashmiris in 'IIOJK.' He also said that hegemonic India has been denying the right of self-determination to Kashmiris, which is against all international norms. He added that Kashmir is an unfinished agenda of partition of Subcontinent, and Quaid's dream would be fulfilled after freedom of Kashmir. He said that more than one million personnel of India had been trying to suppress the innocent Kashmiris. He expressed these views while chairing the 1st meeting of the Special Committee of National Assembly on Kashmir in the Parliament House, Islamabad. The meeting was attended by various local and national leaders.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40318262/national-assembly-special-panel-decides-to-highlight-indian-atrocities-in-iiojk-at-global-forums>

Chaudhry Anwar calls India's Kashmir elections a sham, insists on UN plebiscite

Pakistan Today, 21 August 2024

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, has unequivocally rejected India's announcement to hold elections in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), describing it as a mere facade to mislead the international community. In a statement, he argued that such elections could not substitute the plebiscite promised by the United Nations, which he claimed is the only legitimate method to resolve the region's future. Following India's revocation of the region's special status and the issuance of what he termed 'fake domicile certificates' to millions of non-residents, Anwar accused India of attempting to obscure the truth by organizing these elections. He further declared that the tactics employed by India would not deter the Kashmiri people, who remain steadfast in their struggle for self-determination, a right upheld by United Nations Security Council resolutions.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/08/19/chaudhry-anwar-calls-indias-kashmir-elections-a-sham-insists-on-un-plebiscite/>

JKCHR urges Pakistan Government to respect 'sovereign status' of Pakistan-based Kashmir State Properties

Daily parliament Times, 22 August 2024

The United Kingdom (UK) based Jammu Kashmir Council for Human

Rights (JKCHR) has urged the Prime Minister of Pakistan to respect, what it call the 'sovereign status' of Kashmir Properties situated in all the four provinces of Pakistan and honour the obligations towards these 'trust properties.' There is a caution in United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSC) 91 in this regard. While referring to the reports that the present Government of Pakistan as a measure to overcome its financial crisis, is reportedly in the process of considering the sale of these properties, the communication noted that such a move would be unfair and unjust. The JKCHR communication has pointed out that 'the proposal to lift the ban on the sale of these properties should be immediately removed from the agenda. These properties are protected under Article 257 of the Constitution of Pakistan, and lifting the ban on their sale would harm the Kashmir cause and expose the Government of Pakistan to serious challenges from a broad constituency of aggrieved parties.

The communication has referred to a meeting held on 3 April 2017 at which JKCHR had expressed 'concerns regarding the management of proceeds from these properties, including sales, rentals, and other income, which are deposited in a special account called 'the Sale Proceeds Account of Immovable Property of Jammu and Kashmir State.' Unfortunately, the control and management of these properties have never been transparent, and concerns about

corruption, fraudulent sales, and misuse of proceeds persist. The JKCHR Communication has, 'reiterated that these properties have a sovereign character, and the proceeds from their sale, rent, and other income, deposited in the special Sale Proceeds Account of Immovable Property of Jammu and Kashmir State, are meant to serve the interests of the people of Kashmir. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been clearly defined in paragraph 60 of the report by the UN Representative for India and Pakistan.

It has been pointed out that on 12 November 1959 (Document S/4238), the Government of India raised objections to the 'Azad Kashmir' Government's decision to sell State Property in West Pakistan. This reference to the UNSC further insulates and protects these Kashmir properties, which are located in various parts of Pakistan and India. The JKCHR intervened in December 2019 and 'cautioned the Government of Pakistan against any such action, reminding that all Kashmir properties and assets situated in both India and Pakistan possess a sovereign character. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir in Srinagar has initiated legal proceedings in various courts to reclaim possession of these properties and has succeeded in many cases. This process is ongoing.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/08/22/jkchr-urges-pakistan-government-to-respect-sovereign-status-of-pakistan-based-kashmir-state-properties/>

[Economic Developments](#)

Karakoram Highway blocked as floods ravage GB

Dawn, 19 August 2024

As flash floods fueled by rapidly melting glaciers continued to wreak havoc in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), as the Karakoram Highway (KKH) was blocked at multiple points due to mudslides. The rapidly melting glaciers due to heatwaves have caused flooding in streams and rivers in various areas of GB. These floods have swept away crops and damaged dozens of houses in the region. In addition to the KKH, the Gilgit-Shandur road was also blocked due to flooding. According to authorities, the KKH has been blocked at multiple locations from Gilgit to Khunjerab. In Gilgit's Jaglot and Hunza's Shishkat village, the highway has been blocked due to mudflow. Subsequently, thousands of passengers, including foreign and local tourists, had been stranded due to the road closure.

The Gilgit-Ghizer road was also blocked at multiple locations after local nullahs overflowed in the Ghizer district. According to the police, the flooding occurred in various nullahs of Ghizer on Sunday, causing damages to public and private property. Due to the floods, over two dozen houses were damaged and three dozen houses were partially damaged. The bridges, roads, water supply channels, and electricity systems were also affected by the floods, which also disconnected the

link between several villages in Ghizer. Similarly, flash floods also occurred in Aliabad, Haiderabad, and other areas in Hunza as well as in Shigar and Nagar. There was no official statement from the government regarding the scale of devastation in multiple districts of the region. However, the director general of the GB disaster management remained unavailable for comments despite multiple attempts.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1853216/kkh-blocked-as-floods-ravage-gb>

Ambassador hints at initiating direct flights from Kazakhstan to Skardu

The Nation, 21 August 2024

Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin said that direct flight from Kazakhstan to Skardu, a beautiful region of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), could not be ruled out, which would enhance bilateral tourism. He said that International flights have started recently from Skardu International Airport, after which we have an opportunity to increase bilateral tourism by starting this one-hour duration direct flight from Kazakhstan to Skardu. He said that the International Tourism Summit would also be organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in Skardu. He said that people-to-people relations of two countries would increase with this air connectivity initiative, which was the backbone of all relations, in addition to enhancing bilateral relations.

He said that for the promotion Pakistan Kazakhstan and Central Asia relations, there was a need to increase economic integration and enhance land and air links. The envoy said that mutual diplomatic, economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan were being strengthened with time. He said that a bilateral agreement has been reached for the promotion of transit trade and a lot of progress has been made on this, which would strengthen the economic ties and trade between the two countries. Yerzhan Kistafin said that there was a need to exchange business delegations in order to enhance bilateral relations.

The ambassador said that there was a need to work on the potential in GB including conventional tourism, medical and cultural adventure tourism, mining and precious stones, minerals and natural resources, hydro-power, agriculture including fruits and food and water resources and other sectors. Yerzhan Kistafin said that the northern region of Pakistan was rich in natural beauty in which 6 major mountain peaks of the world were located. To a question, he said that bilateral trade was far below its potential and more work was required in this regard. The ambassador said that the role of the private sector was imperative to increase cooperation in the field of tourism for which the business community of both countries must play their due role in this regard. He said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan were bound in historical, religious and

cultural relations that covered many dimensions.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/21-Aug-2024/ambassador-hints-at-initiating-direct-flights-from-kazakhstan-to-skardu>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The people of Kashmir would continue to light the flame of freedom ignited by Shaheed Ali Shah Geelani in any circumstances: Uzair Ahmed Ghazali

Urdupoint, 20 August 2024

The Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmed Ghazali said that Baba Hurriyat Shaheed Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the esteemed leader of Tehreek-e-'Azad Kashmir', is being honoured throughout the state on his fourth martyrdom day for his unwavering and unceasing fight for Islam, freedom, and the rights of the people in the 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK). Ghazali declared that the Kashmiri people would carry on the revolutionary leader's flame of independence in every manner. He said that the great leaders of Kashmir who refused to bow before Indian oppression and stood steady like a rock did so at the cost of their lives.

While declaring dates for protest march to honour the martyrdom of Geelani, he urged people to join the rally in large numbers. He said that a special invitation to the 'Azad Kashmir' administration, legislative parties, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Kashmir United Movement, commercial organizations, civic society,

and students, including refugees will be made. He declared that 'we are the martyrs of Muhammad Maqbool Butt, and Syed Ali Shah Geelani.' He said that we also honour the other martyrs including Maulvi Muhammad Farooq, Abdul Ghani Lone, Muhammad Afzal Guru, Muhammad Ashraf Khan Sehrai, among others. He said that the missions of the thousands of martyrs who fought against Indian imperialism have been safeguarded and carried out by the likes of Burhan Wani, Shaheed Zia Mustafa among thousands of others. He stated that following eleven years of nonstop imprisonment, Babai Hurriyat Shaheed Syed Ali Shah Geelani was martyred on 1 September 2021 in Hyderpora, Srinagar. He was born on 29 September 1929 in Baramulla.

He said that Geelani was not only a significant figure in Jammu and Kashmir politics, but he was also an outspoken and passionate advocate for Kashmir's inclusion into Pakistan. In addition, to his affiliation with Jamaat-e-Islami, he also founded the All Party Hurriyat Conference's (Tehreek Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir) as a distinct political organization dedicated to the liberation movement. Moreover, he said that Geelani in addition to a freedom mujahedeen has also possessed a passion for knowledge and literature as he was a great admirer of Shaheed Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Geelani also wrote numerous books including a memoir about his captivity, Uzair added.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4125682.html>

Elections cannot be held at military gunpoint in 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir:' Ch. Latif Akbar

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 21 August 2024

The interim president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Ch. Latif Akbar rejected 'fake elections' that were announced under duress in 'Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK), and asserted that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions stipulated that the fate of Jammu and Kashmir could only be ensured by a referendum, allowing Kashmiris to make their own decisions about their future. He claimed that a fair plebiscite cannot take the place of a sham election that is being overseen by Indian soldiers. The three-phase election's goal as announced by 'occupied India' is to force the decision upon the Kashmiris at the point of gunfire.

Akbar claimed that India is not only altering the population ratio in 'Occupied Kashmir', but it has also increased unfair regional representation in the Assembly to maintain its occupation. India is making vain attempts to become important in the eyes of the world. The government of Pakistan ought to draw attention to India's travesties and the sham elections and that Pakistan will persuade the world about India's crimes. He claimed that India have consistently violated the UN resolutions and that the people of 'OJK'

have traditionally opposed Indian control.

According to him, the BJP has lost the previous elections despite its forceful presence and that the people of Kashmir are voting against India and it is a testament that they want a referendum. The oppressed Kashmiris of 'Occupied Kashmir', in particular, he claimed, reject these fraudulent elections, as do all Kashmiris worldwide. He said that the government of Pakistan ought to press the international community to hold an impartial election in 'OJK' in compliance with UN resolutions.

He further claimed that human rights are continuously being violated in Kashmir and the youths, journalists and Hurriyat leaders were jailed and killed. He said that international community needs to be involved to free the innocents Kashmiris including Hurriyat leaders from Indian prisons. Minister of Wildlife and Fisheries Sardar Javed Ayub, Mayor of Muzaffarabad Sikandar Geelani, Vice Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Mushtaqul Islam, and former member of the Kashmir Council Parvez Akhtar were also present on this occasion. In addition, Pakistan Peoples Party deputy secretary Shaukat Javed Mir, Director of Information Muhammad Bashir Mirza, among others also attended the conference.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-21.jpg>

The Land Reforms Bill has been sent to the Provincial Cabinet

Dailyk2, 22 August 2024

A summary of Land Reforms Bill has been sent to the provincial cabinet for discussion. After the approval of the cabinet, the bill will be presented in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly (GBA). If the bill is passed by the GBA, the bill will be sent to the approval of the GB Governor, after his approval, the Bill will be published in the Gazette of Pakistan. After its publication in the Gazette of Pakistan, all the Khalsa Sarkar lands of GB will be declared the property of the people and all previous laws related to the ownership of Khalsa Sarkar will be abolished in GB. It should be noted that earlier, the Chief Minister of GB Haji Gulbar Khan had formed a committee to finalize the Land Reforms Bill, which subsequently approved the Land Reforms Bill in its first meeting.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/24569>

From Social Media

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

24 August 2024

In Chilas, the people have announced to launch a protest movement, shouting slogans against the government. #chilas #diamer #protest #movement.

Video link:

<https://twitter.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1827362196663214200>

Gilgit Baltistan Tourism.
@GBTourism_

24 August 2024

Skardu International Airport: Skardu International Airport is taking steps for Night Landing for the first time in history. This is a great news for the residents and tourists of Gilgit-Baltistan.

https://twitter.com/GBTourism_/status/1827261791745044959

Hamid Hussain @H2_GBian

24 August 2024

Gilgit-Baltistan has attracted significant interest from adventure tourists, with over 1,700 foreigners applying to experience its unique landscapes and outdoor activities. This surge in applications highlights the region's growing popularity as a premier adventure tourism destination, offering opportunities for trekking, mountaineering, and exploration of its stunning natural beauty.

https://twitter.com/H2_GBian/status/1827338305744044429

Sher Nadir Shahi @GilgitiGadero

26 August 2024

I strongly condemn the the issue of illegal notice from Cyber Crime Gilgit Branch against peaceful activist # Javid Numberdar and several others from Gilgit Baltistan.

State wants to stop peaceful voices forcefully in Gilgit Baltistan.

@a_siab @Justice_Upheld
@UNHumanRights.

Images link:

<https://twitter.com/GilgitiGadero/status/1828125118201283035>

Mahmud Saad@MahmudSaad75232

27 August 2024

Gilgit-Baltistan continues to suffer under relentless #loadshedding, while Pakistan turns a blind eye. The power crisis is just another example of how the region is neglected and exploited. Shameful!

#GilgitBaltistanDeservesBetter
#PakistanFailure @imransiddique89

Video link:

<https://twitter.com/MahmudSaad75232/status/1828313033703366801>

Awais @retrophile38

27 August 2024

In Balochistan, innocent and poor people from Punjab have been killed after being identified through their ID cards. Similarly, in Gilgit Baltistan, people were killed based on sectarian verification. It is now evident that there is no genuine sectarian issue; rather, the forces behind these actions are linked to the army. A similar situation is unfolding in Balochistan, where they are planning Operation Azam Ishakam to profit in dollars.

<https://twitter.com/retrophile38/status/1828200213976125939>

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Disclaimer

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