

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

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## Political Developments

### **Kashmir's no to BJP**

*The Dawn, 14 October 2024*

The resounding message from 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir's' recent legislative elections is rejection of India's Aug 2019 action that robbed the state of even the nominal autonomy it previously had.

The verdict handed a decisive victory to the National Conference (NC) and was a setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aim of securing endorsement for his post-2019 policy.

On Aug 5, 2019, his government had abrogated Article 370 of the Indian constitution which gave the state special status. The state's bifurcation and absorption into the Indian union was in violation of UN Security Council resolutions and denounced across the 'occupied territory'. This opened another bleak chapter in the 'disputed state's' tortured history, which involved intensified repression, incarceration of Kashmiri leaders, grave violation of human rights and crackdown on the media.

Many in the Indian media read the outcome of the J&K election as a blow to the BJP and repudiation of its post-2019 actions. Harish Khare wrote in *The Wire*, "This is a strategic setback, whichever way the Modi apologists may want to slice it." Another writer called it "an electoral and moral defeat" for BJP. The *New York Times* acknowledged that "Modi's heavy manoeuvring to assert BJP ascendance was foiled".

NC leader Farooq Abdullah said, "The results were a 'verdict' against Modi's government ... [they] prove the steps taken on Aug 5 are not acceptable to the people." Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) declared: "By the vote people have rejected the unilateral changes imposed in August 2019, which led to their systematic disempowerment."

Before assessing the electoral outcome, it is important to consider the backdrop in which the elections took place — after a decade. They occurred in the coercive presence of half a million Indian troops deployed across J&K, with additional forces inducted for the election that patrolled the streets and set up new checkpoints. APHC leaders continued to languish in jail or house detention. Curbs remained on the media with foreign journalists prevented from travelling to the region.

The unmistakable message of the electoral verdict was rejection of Modi's post-2019 actions. A series of steps were taken by the BJP government after August 2019, including gerrymandering, aimed at manipulating and shaping the environment for the election. The electoral map was redrawn by carving out new constituencies to disempower the Muslim population. Jammu's representation was increased to 43 seats leaving Kashmir with 47, despite the fact that the Valley's population far exceeds Jammu's.

Demographic changes involved issuing domicile certificates to non-Kashmiri outsiders who became eligible to vote

after abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the constitution. Temporary residents were also given voting rights. These measures were roundly denounced in J&K including by pro-India Kashmiri politicians and only deepened the resentment and alienation of the Kashmiri people. Little surprise then that issues of statehood, abrogation of Article 370 and New Delhi's other measures that disenfranchised Kashmiris, dominated the election campaign.

The final blow came weeks before the election when the BJP government substantially increased the powers of the lieutenant-governor, nominated by New Delhi, to sharply limit the authority of the elected government. The LG, an instrument of direct rule by New Delhi since 2018, was given sweeping administrative and security powers and authority to nominate five members to the 90-member legislative assembly. This was condemned across Kashmir with political leaders describing it as an effort to reduce J&K to a municipality while NC leader Omar Abdullah said the chief minister's office had been downgraded to "a powerless rubber stamp". The Congress party called it the "murder of democracy".

The election result was a reaction to these moves and above all to the state's truncation and disempowerment. Significantly, there were no boycott calls. This reflected the public's eagerness to use the ballot box to vent their protest against New Delhi as an act of resistance, especially as the election was seen as a referendum on

the BJP government's policies. The National Conference that won 42 seats out of 90 secured an absolute majority with its ally Congress, which won six seats. The Congress party's ambiguous stance on Article 370 exacted a political price and eroded its support. All regional parties campaigned on promises to reverse the post-2019 changes.

The much speculated 'wave' in favour of independent candidates — a record number contested the election — failed to materialise with only two seats won by them in the Kashmir Valley. The People's Democratic Party was decimated, winning only three seats with voters punishing it for its opportunistic alliance with the BJP in the past. The BJP failed to win a single seat from the 19 it contested in the Valley but secured 29, all from Jammu's Hindu-majority districts. This underlined a more pronounced Hindu-Muslim divide in the region.

The National Conference was able to tap into popular anger with New Delhi by its unambiguous stand on statehood and autonomy. In its election manifesto the party pledged to fight for the restoration of Article 370, repeal all post-2019 laws that eroded Kashmir's autonomy and work for India-Pakistan dialogue. Omar Abdullah, who will be the next chief minister, said after the election that his first order of business would be for the cabinet to adopt a resolution calling for restoration of statehood. He promised to keep "the conversation about Article 370 alive" but acknowledged that its restoration would be

impossible under a BJP government. Nevertheless, his party's victory was clear indication of Kashmiri rejection of New Delhi's decisions as indeed the BJP's narrative of bringing 'development' to J&K.

Omar Abdullah will head a coalition government with Congress that will have very limited powers but face daunting challenges including a likely tussle with the LG. What is apparent is that BJP's hopes that the election would end the debate over J&K's status and enable Modi to 'legitimise' his 2019 action have been dashed.

In any case, an election under Indian occupation cannot serve as a substitute for a genuine exercise in self-determination by the Kashmiri people. Nor does the election alter in any way J&K's disputed nature, embodied in UNSC resolutions. What the election does show is that whenever given a chance to voice their opinion the people of Kashmir always say they want no truck with New Delhi.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1865066/kashmiris-no-to-bjp>

### **Kashmiri expatriates should stand up against Indian brutalities in 'Occupied Kashmir': President 'AJK'**

*Daily Parliament Times, 16 October 2024*

President 'Azad Kashmir' Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that overseas Kashmiri settled in the UK must play their much needed role to expose brutalities being inflicted on Kashmiri people by 'Indian occupation forces'.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Zahoor Ahmed, the councilor City Council. Speaking on the occasion, Barrister Chaudhry said that the political and human rights situation in the 'Indian held' territory had further deteriorated since the Indian government abrogated article 370 and 35A which granted special status to the held territory. Regarding the recently held elections in the 'disputed territory', the president said that the move was a ploy to keep the charade of the normalcy alive and give a notion that everything was hunky dory in Kashmir-the region marred by conflict and violence. Referring to the continued bloodshed in the region, the 'AJK' president said that Kashmiris were being ruthlessly martyred by the bloodthirsty Indian army day in and day out." Thousands of Kashmiri including the leaders of Hurriyat Conference have booked under sedition laws and left to rot in jails thousands of kilometres away from their homes", he said, adding that it was high time that the Kashmiris settled in the UK and other parts of the globe, should raise their voices in support of Kashmiris' right to self-determination at every forum besides exposing the nefarious designs of the Modi regime." Kashmiris settled in different parts of the globe should redouble their efforts to seek a just and peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute", he remarked. He said that improvement in the political and human rights situation in the region was inescapably linked to the settlement of the lingering dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions. The

president Chudhary, while expressing his concern over the persecution of religious minorities in India, said that the Modi government was not only targeting Muslims in 'Occupied Kashmir' but also in India. He said that the Indian government was involved in terrorist activities in many foreign countries including Canada and Pakistan. He said that it was high time that the Kashmiri expatriates should stand up against Indian brutalities in 'Occupied Kashmir'. On this occasion, the Luton City Councilor Zahoor Ahmed highlighted the Kashmiri diaspora community's role in projecting the Kashmiri cause at international level. He also invited the president Chaudhry to address the city council of Luton, which was accepted by the president.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/10/16/kashmiri-expatriates-should-stand-up-against-indian-brutalities-in-occupied-kashmir-president-ajk-2/>

### **Pakistan, China agree to further deepen strategic cooperation**

*The Nation, 16 October 2024*

Pakistan and China Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen strategic cooperation across key areas, including the economy, investment and regional connectivity. This was discussed during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and the visiting Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Islamabad today.

Both sides also emphasized the need to expedite the implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects.

Welcoming the delegation, the President emphasized that Pakistan's friendship with its all-weather partner remains a cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. He stressed the importance of exploring new avenues for cooperation as there is more space to expand bilateral relations. He also underscored the need to enhance connectivity through all-weather road networks to strengthen trade and people-to-people linkages. He said Chinese companies should benefit from the investment opportunities in Pakistan by investing in the Pakistan Stock Exchange. 'Pak-China joint statement'

Pakistan and China on Tuesday agreed to continue to deepen cooperation in various fields and accelerate efforts to build an even closer Pakistan-China community with a shared future in the new era. "The two sides noted that in a transforming and turbulent world where major changes are unfolding at a faster pace, the Pakistan-China relationship is of strategic significance, and any attempt to disrupt or undermine Pakistan-China cooperation is bound to fail. Pakistan and China enjoy an all-level, cross-board and high-quality relationship. The Chinese side reiterated that the China-Pakistan relationship is a priority in its foreign relations. The Pakistani side underscored that the Pakistan-China relationship is the cornerstone of its foreign policy while the Chinese side highlighted that the China-Pakistan relationship is of special significance in China's foreign policy," a joint statement between the



Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People's Republic of China, shared by Foreign Office Spokesperson, said.

The two sides expressed grave concern over the protracted conflict in Gaza and the dire and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, and urged for an immediate and permanent ceasefire as well as efforts to ensure unimpeded humanitarian assistance. The two sides reaffirmed their support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to establish an independent State of Palestine.

Both sides expressed support for resuming the process of political settlement and their readiness to work with the rest of the international community to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question. "The two sides expressed grave concern over recent Israeli aggression on Lebanon, which further escalated the tension in the region. We oppose practices that violate the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and oppose moves that fuel antagonism and escalate tensions. Pakistan and China call on the international community, especially major countries with influence, to play a constructive role and avoid further turmoil," it was added. Pakistan and China reaffirmed their commitment to an upgraded version of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by jointly building a growth corridor, a livelihood-enhancing corridor, an

innovation corridor, a green corridor and an open corridor, and develop CPEC into a demonstration project of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

"The two sides agreed to further synergize China's eight major steps for supporting Belt and Road cooperation with Pakistan's 5Es framework based on Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy, and Equity & Empowerment." The Pakistani side positively assessed the visit by the Chinese working team on economic cooperation, and expressed its willingness to continue experience-sharing on development in various areas with the Chinese side.

At the invitation of Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chinese Premier Li Qiang paid an official visit to Pakistan from October 14 to 17. The two sides underscored that since the establishment of diplomatic ties, Pakistan-China relations have withstood the test of times and have remained rock-solid. Since President Xi Jinping's historic state visit to Pakistan in 2015, the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between the two countries has made significant progress.

After Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's successful official visit to China in June 2024, the two countries have enjoyed even stronger political mutual trust, more vibrant cooperation, and closer strategic coordination. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the momentum of Pakistan-China relations and agreed to further strengthen the ironclad friendship and cooperation

between the two countries. The Pakistani side highly commends and firmly supports major visions and propositions put forth by President Xi Jinping, such as fostering a community with a shared future for mankind, the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative.

Both sides advocate for an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and are committed to working together with all countries around the world for a bright future of peace, security, prosperity and progress.

The two sides agreed to maintain the momentum of exchanges under the strategic guidance of the top leaders for the development of bi-lateral relations. They agreed to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation at all levels and across various fields between governments, legislative bodies and political parties.

The Pakistani side expressed warm congratulations on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the successful conclusion of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and highlighted that China's endeavour to further deepen reform comprehensively and advance high-standard opening up will bring new development opportunities for Pakistan and all other countries around the world.

The Chinese side commends the new achievements attained by Pakistan in economic reform and development under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The two sides reaffirmed their firm support to each other in independently choosing a development path that suits their respective national realities, and agreed to strengthen exchanges of governance experience and foster greater synergy between their development strategies. The two sides reaffirmed their unyielding support for each other on the issues concerning their respective core interests and major concerns.

Both sides stressed that the authority of the U.N. General Assembly Resolution 2758 brooks no question or challenge.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Oct-2024/pakistan-china-agree-to-further-deepen-strategic-cooperation>

### **Elections in 'IIOJK': what next?**

*The Express Tribune, 14 October 2024*

Results of the three-phase elections held in the 'Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) were announced last week. It was the first vote since 2014 and after the abrogation of special status of the disputed territory. The state assembly elections, called a sham by Pakistan, were held on the direction of the Indian Supreme Court. Being the first state assembly elections after the repeal of Kashmir's special status, it was seen as a referendum on the Modi government's policies. The BJP government had claimed that the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution brought normalcy, investment and prosperity



in the 'occupied territory'. Elections were the first test case of those claims and how the people in the region viewed Modi's policies. Also, the BJP wanted to see a first Hindu Chief Minister of the only Muslim-majority state under New Delhi's control.

Election results, however, showed that the BJP's dream remained unfulfilled as it could only win 29 seats, far short of the simple majority needed to form the government. The party got 4 more seats than in 2014 elections but that was not the result the BJP wanted. The latest polls, meanwhile, saw the revival of the Jammu Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), the oldest party in the disputed region. It won 42 seats while Indian National Congress (INC) bagged 6. The JKNC and INC had already announced their alliance, meaning they will have a simple majority to form the government. There were 90 seats up for grab while 5 members would be nominated by Lieutenant Governor. Since the governor was a handpicked man of the Modi government, he would pick pro-BJP members. But even that would not change the equation as JKNC still has the majority.

It is important to note that the elections were not fought on the issues such as jobs, poverty and health and education facilities. In fact, people voted for JKNC because it promised to restore the special status of the disputed territory and favoured dialogue between India and Pakistan. This means it was a clear defeat of the Modi government's narrative that the Kashmir dispute is settled after the abrogation of Article 370. That both JKNC and INC spoke of

India-Pakistan dialogue suggests that both these parties are aware of the sentiments in the valley. However, the election results also indicate that people of Kashmir probably are not happy with Pakistan's current policy. Unlike in the past, the groups and parties that have been seeking right to self-determination in Kashmir did not call for a boycott of the elections. Kashmiris, meanwhile, voted for a party which has been advancing the Indian policy in the region for decades. The crux is that the people of Kashmir rejected the BJP's Kashmir policy but at the same time they participated in the hope that a change could only come through political effort, in the absence of a clear policy from Pakistan.

Meanwhile, New Delhi promised restoration of statehood of Kashmir after the elections. Currently, Kashmir is a union territory, meaning it is being directly controlled by the Centre. But the restoration of statehood does not mean going back to the pre-August 2019 situation. Umar Abdullah, the JKNC leader and the likely Chief Minister, concedes that restoration of Article 370 is impossible as long as BJP is in the government. However, he insists that Modi will not remain in the government forever. So, he thinks that once the BJP is out of power, there may be a chance to reverse all those changes. On India-Pakistan talks, Umar Abdullah says that Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is to visit Islamabad for the SCO meeting, may have said he will not indulge in bilateral talks, but this does reflect a change. He thinks even if there is no

bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan during the SCO meeting, Jaishankar's visit is a step in the right direction.

To conclude, what do the election results in Kashmir mean for Pakistan? For example if the Modi government restores the statehood of Kashmir, would it fulfil the precondition Pakistan has set for resumption of talks?

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2502578/elections-in-iiojk-what-next>

### **Reassessing October 27th: A Call for Justice on Kashmir's Black Day**

*Daily Parliament Times, 15 October 2024*

October 27 is marked as "Black Day" by the people of Kashmir, a day that signifies the beginning of a long and painful chapter in their history. In 1947, Indian 'occupation forces' landed in Srinagar, claiming to secure the territory after the signing of the controversial Instrument of Accession by Maharaja Hari Singh. This event has since been a focal point of conflict and debate, as it marked not just a military invasion, but a profound infringement on the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. The term "Black Day" encapsulates the deep sense of loss and betrayal felt by Kashmiris. It symbolizes the day their voices were silenced and their aspirations for autonomy dismissed. The promise made by Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, to hold a plebiscite allowing the Kashmiri people to choose their future has remained unfulfilled. Instead, the

region has experienced decades of military presence, restrictions on freedoms, and human rights violations. In rethinking October 27, it's crucial to shift the narrative from a mere historical account to an understanding of the ongoing struggle for justice and self-determination. The geopolitical discourse often frames the Kashmir issue as a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, overshadowing the vital perspective of the Kashmiri people themselves. Their plight should not be seen solely through the lens of international politics but as a profound humanitarian concern. Kashmiris have endured continuous repression and marginalization, yet their resilience remains unbroken. As we acknowledge Black Day, it is essential to recognize the ongoing movement for self-determination, which transcends the historical grievances of 1947. The desire for autonomy is rooted in the Kashmiri people's identity, culture, and aspiration for a peaceful existence free from external imposition. "Black Day" reminds us of how the Kashmiris' right to choose their own future was taken away. But it also reminds us that the future of Kashmir must include the people of Kashmir in the process. The world has a responsibility to ensure that Kashmiris, who have faced years of human rights violations and military control are heard and respected. The impact on the people of Kashmir has been tragic. From the violence after October 27, 1947 to the many forced migrations, the people of Kashmir have suffered greatly. They have experienced deaths, displacement and growing up in a place filled with fear

and violence. Reports of killings, disappearances and abuse continue to show the suffering of the people in the region. Efforts by the international community to bring peace have often failed because bigger countries are more focused on their own interests. Meanwhile, the region has become one of the most militarized areas in the world. The new path forward must be one of reconciliation and respect for human rights. The international community must reconsider its role in the Kashmir conflict. The United Nations resolutions affirming the right to self-determination have been largely ignored. Global actors should advocate for a renewed commitment to facilitating dialogue that includes the voices of Kashmiris, ensuring that their rights and aspirations are central to any resolution. For peace in South Asia, it is crucial that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is resolved according to UN Security Council Resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people. For over seven decades, successive generations of Kashmiris have waited for the UN to fulfil its promises. The international community must pressure India to stop human rights violations, reverse its illegal actions of August 5, 2019 and implement the Security Council Resolutions. Pakistan remains fully committed to supporting the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination and will continue to provide political, moral, and diplomatic backing for their just struggle. Efforts to improve the economy, build trust, and respect human rights are important. A peaceful solution would not only help Kashmir

but also improve relations in South Asia and create more opportunities for cooperation. Ultimately, October 27 serves as a reminder not just of past injustices but of the urgent need for a future where the Kashmiri people can freely decide their destiny. By rethinking this day, we honor the struggle of those who have fought for their rights and affirm the importance of listening to the voices that have long been marginalized. The path forward must prioritize peace, justice, and the fundamental right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir. It is time to focus on peace, justice, and the right of the Kashmiri people to shape their own future. Only through a new approach, based on dialogue and respect, can we hope to resolve this long-standing conflict. This October 27, we need to realize that the Kashmir conflict is not just about borders. It is about giving people the right to decide their own future.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/10/15/reassessing-october-27th-a-call-for-justice-on-kashmirs-black-day/>

### **JKLF (Yasin Malik) calls for SCO Intervention to help Resolve Kashmir Issue for ever-lasting Peace in South Asia**

*Daily Parliament Times, 16 October 2024*

Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front – JKLF (Yasin Malik) in an appeal on Tuesday to the ongoing SCO summit, urged upon the head of the Organization to facilitate a resolution to the longstanding Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan.

The request emphasized that addressing the Kashmir issue is crucial not only for honoring the aspirations of the Kashmiri people but also for ending decades of enmity and curbing proxy wars and terrorism in the region.

In a statement reaching to the desk of our Special Jammu and Kashmir state Correspondent Altaf Hamid Rao here, US-based acting Chairman of the JKLF (Y) Raja Muzaffar highlighted in the appeal the pressing need to lift all restrictions that impede unity and peace in Kashmir. The unresolved status of the region has significantly contributed to the dysfunction of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), adversely affecting vital regional connectivity and infrastructure development projects. Concerns were raised that if the Kashmir issue remains unaddressed, the SCO may encounter similar challenges.

The statement further asserted that Kashmir possesses the potential to transform from a conflict zone into a bridge of peace and tranquility, advocating for its development as an economic zone. The SCO was urged to leverage its resources to facilitate this transition, thereby promoting prosperity and cooperation across South Asia.

In a collaborative effort, the neighboring countries -China, India, and Pakistan—were called upon to join hands in this initiative. The JKLF (Y) Acting Chairman underscored in the appeal the importance of seizing this historic opportunity to resolve the

Kashmir issue, paving the way for a better and safer future for all in the region.

Muzaffar called for action resonates with the hope that with effective leadership and cooperation, lasting peace and development can be achieved in South Asia, he concluded in the statement.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/10/16/jklf-yasin-malik-calls-for-sco-intervention-to-help-resolve-kashmir-issue-for-ever-lasting-peace-in-south-asia/>

### **Lord Nazir calls for early grant of right of self-determination to Kashmiris without further delay**

The Kashmir-origin Ex Lord of the British House of Lords, Lord Nazir Ahmed said here on Wednesday that Jammu Kashmir people will not accept any option less than the basic right to self-determination – since the much delayed unresolved Kashmir issue involves the fate of over 1.60 crore people of the internationally-acknowledged disputed Jammu Kashmir state.

Our Special Jammu and Kashmir state Correspondent Altaf Hamid Rao reports from Mirpur that while talking to journalists at the Kashmir Press Club in Mirpur-‘AJK’ he urged upon to the government of Pakistan to formulate a lively policy on the issue of Kashmir keeping Kashmiris atop the board being the major stakeholders.

He said that Kashmiris firm, just and principled stand on the Kashmir issue stood intact for the last 77 years so far. Lord Nazir Ahmed continued that

since Jammu Kashmir stand as main party to the issue, their involvement in the efforts to ensure early peaceful settlement of the issue was inevitable. While referring to the much delayed Kashmir conflict, Lord Nazir said “it could not immediately be commented that there was no benefit to the Kashmiris of the elections in ‘Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir’”.

Lord Ahmed confirmed that the BJP will lose to India in the next elections. “Whatever puppet government is installed in ‘Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir state’, it is considered to be pro-India”, he added.

He said that the voice of Kashmiris could not be raised because if they do so, then Governor is the only option. Lord Ahmed said that those who spread chaos in the country could never be well-wishers of the nation. He said that the elements involved in terrorism have no religion. They undermined the foundations of the country become the stooges of the enemies, he added.

Strongly condemning the Indian brutalities in ‘IIOJK’, Lord Nazir Ahmed said Kashmiris have been targeted by the Indian army and will continue to be so in the future.

The international powers, he observed, have given free rein to those who stained the hands with bloodshed of innocent Palestinian Muslims, children, women, young and elderly people. “We, at this horrifying situation in Palestine and Lebanon, are left as spectators, which is regrettable.” He urged that Pakistan should launch an

international move emphasizing that the issues of Kashmir, Palestine and Lebanon should be resolved to ensure delivery of due rights to the populations of these turbulent ridden lands.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/10/16/lord-nazir-calls-for-early-grant-of-right-of-self-determination-to-kashmiris-without-further-delay/>

## **Economic Developments**

### **Automation of development processes: Gilgit-Baltistan govt ink agreement with KIU**

*Business Recorder, 18 October 2024*

The Government of Gilgit-Baltistan has made significant advancements by inking an agreement between P&D Department and Karakoram International University (KIU) for automation of its development processes. This pivotal shift will enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability within the governance structure.

By integrating e-governance, which leverages digital technologies and automation, the development processes will be streamlined to optimize the use of limited development resources, improve service delivery, and support more effective decision-making.

Additionally, this initiative will refine governance across line departments, improving their operational efficiency. Karakoram International University (KIU), as the region’s hub of higher education, has taken on this crucial responsibility. This assignment will



also enhance the professional and technical capacities of the IT team and providing opportunities for its IT graduates to contribute to this landmark project, which is foundational for the region's development.

This event was attended by key stakeholders, including the Chief Secretary, Vice Chancellor of KIU, Additional Chief Secretary (Development), Registrar and Treasurer of KIU, Chief Economist of the Planning and Development (P&D) department, Chief of the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) P&D and its team, government secretaries, heads of KIU departments, technical experts from the KIU IT department, heads of various government line departments and P&D Department.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40327717/automation-of-development-processes-gilgit-baltistan-govt-ink-agreement-with-kiu>

### **Next phase of CPEC, SCO can be real game-changers: FPCCI**

*Business Recorder, 15 October 2024*

Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has explained that next phase of China – Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can be the real game-changers for the national economy – as we have geographical contiguities; economic complementarities; regional trade advantages and ability to look East & diversify our economic partners

Apprising that a high-profile delegation of The China Asia Economic

Development Association (CAEDA) has visited FPCCI to explore investment, joint ventures and trade opportunities in mines & mineral; information technology and IT-enabled services (ITeS); agriculture & livestock; food processing & storage; infrastructure development and renewable & alternative energy sources, he informed that CAEDA is an organization focused on promoting economic cooperation and development between China and countries in Asia; as well as other global partners. CAEDA often works with governments, businesses and international organizations to encourage economic integration and partnerships in sectors like finance, technology, energy, and infrastructure.

Abdul Mohamin Khan, VP FPCCI & Reginal Chairman, said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and China is showing increasing trend since the implementation of the China – Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA). Bilateral trade volume between the two countries has surpassed \$20 billion, he added.

Shabbir Mansha, Chairman of FPCCI's Pakistan – China Business Council, stated that currently Pakistan exports cotton yarn, rice, refined copper, fish, chromium ores & concentrates, aluminium, unwrought, dry fruit and ethyl alcohol to China. Whereas, China is the largest source of imports for Pakistan as it imports semiconductor devices; mechanical appliances; synthetic filament; electric apparatus for line telephony; flat-roll products iron; nitrogen fertilizers; engineering



goods and hi-tech component for various industrial sectors.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/amp/40327145>

### **Adaptation Fund Board approves \$10m worth project for Indus-SAFER**

*Business Recorder, 16 October 2024*

Adaptation Fund Board Monday approved a landmark \$10 million worth project for the Indus-Sustainable Actions for Ecosystems Restoration in Pakistan (SAFER) to reduce Pakistan's vulnerability to climate-driven impacts.

Adaptation Fund is an organization established in 2001 under UN Convention on Climate change to provide funding to countries for climate change programmes.

SAFER, led by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MOCCEC), with International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) serving as regional implementing entity, will see the roll-out of key, inclusive approaches to increase integrated and adaptive water resource management in the Indus River, with a particular focus on nature-based solutions (NbS) and interventions that benefit and/or are designed to increase the participation of women, youth, and children.

With 90 percent of Pakistan's people and more than three-quarters of its economy sited in the Indus Basin, climate-driven alterations to the river's flow are set to seriously impact Pakistan's economy and ecology,

threatening hard-won gains in poverty reduction and inclusive development.

SAFER aims to mitigate the risk of such climate shocks, leveraging the expertise of executing partners children's humanitarian and developmental aid organization United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and gender equality body UN Women.

The project particularly focuses on interventions around water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector, and targets women, children, and youth, in order to build the resilience of those communities disproportionately hit by climate-induced crises.

The project is designed to align with national plans and strategies, including Pakistan's National Adaptation Plan and the country's flagship Living Indus Initiative, which deploys nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches to protect, conserve, and restore natural, terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems in the Basin.

SAFER, which will roll out in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh over the next three-and-a-half years will set up community-based early warning systems in hazard-risk zones, nature-based spring-water recharge systems in water-stressed communities, nature-based ground-water recharge facilities and climate-resilient water infrastructure, ecosystem-based wetlands and wastewater treatment facilities, rehabilitated water ponds to reduce surface waste-water, capacity-building programmes to support women and

youth to participate in climate adaptation and disaster management and resilience policy development

“We’re delighted to see this project get the go ahead which aligns perfectly with the Pakistan government’s priority to address climate challenges and strengthen resilience in the face of increasing climate-related disasters,” said Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40327310/adaptation-fund-board-approves-10m-worth-project-for-indus-safer>

## **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

**In ‘Indian occupied Kashmir’, women have kept freedom movement alive: Sardar Usman Ali**

*Urdu Point, 15 October 2024*

The chairman of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference youth wing, Sardar Usman Ali Khan spent busy days, as people from different walks of life came to meet him. The chairperson of female wing of Muslim Conference, Samia Sajed Raja also met Khan. Besides her, Raja Ahsan, Advocate Haider and other prominent people met him and discussed the political situation of ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) and also talked about the latest situation of Kashmir.

Sardar Usman Ali Khan said that women have played a foremost role in the Muslim Conference. Women in Kashmir have kept the hopes of freedom alive. Khan further added that Pakistan stands in the way of India’s

desires of Kashmir. The women’s wing of the Muslim Conference is playing its role in the strengthening of the Muslim Conference. The way, Samia Sajed Raja has played her role in managing the women’s wing, all across the ‘AJK’ deserves huge congratulations, said Sardar Usman.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4191908.html>

**‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ government has continuously failed to play its role in resolving the Kashmir conflict: Aziz Ahmad Gazali**

*Urdu Point, 15 October 2024*

The Chairman of Pasban Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, Aziz Ahmad Gazali said that the ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ (AJK) government and political leadership is continuously failing to come up with any tangible solution in resolving the Kashmir issue. In ‘Indian occupied Kashmir’, Hurriyat’s leadership for its demands of state’s independence and justice has been facing jails for decades.

In a statement released to media in Muzaffarabad, Gazali said that in these difficult times, when India is not only forcefully controlling Kashmir but is also trying to take away the Islamic identity of the Kashmiri people and also their lands. He said that the leaders of the ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’, other than giving press conferences, statements, and sending prayers haven’t given anything to the freedom movement. He further added that despite Indian government passing stringent laws in Kashmir after 5 August 2019, the leadership has failed to

come up with any durable response. He demanded the 'Azad government' to come up with its working plan and share it with the public.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4191869.html>

### **JKLC organizes special programs to observe Oct 27 as Black Day**

*Daily Parliament Times, 18 October 2024*

On the special instructions of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell has organized special programs to observe October 27 as Black Day and expose Indian atrocities to the public and show the true face of India to the international community.

Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Mirza Wajahat Rashid Baig addressing a meeting in Kashmir Centre, Rawalpindi, regarding the preparations for observing Black Day on October 27, said that a large protest rally and public meeting will be held in Muzaffarabad on that day.

Leaders of all political parties of 'Azad Kashmir', leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, including ministers, students, women, journalists, lawyers, representatives of political, social, religious and commercial organizations and civil society members will participate in the rally. On this occasion, special documentaries will also be shown about the human rights violations in 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir'.

He said a roundtable conference will be organized on October 26 with the

support of National Press Club, Islamabad, in which federal ministers, Hurriyat leaders, senior media persons and university students will participate.

A signature campaign will also be organized on the occasion of October 27 Black Day. Apart from this, protests and rallies would be held in Rawalakot, Lahore, Karachi, Mirpur and other cities of 'Azad Kashmir'.

Wajahat Rashid Baig said 'Azad Kashmir' and the people of Pakistan are with the people of 'occupied Kashmir' and the time is not far when the Kashmiri people will get freedom from Indian rule.

He said the Kashmiri people do not recognize the sham elections in the 'occupied territory' and would continue to struggle for their right to self-determination. Despite the resolutions, the Indian government has created an atmosphere of fear and terror in 'occupied Kashmir', he added.

Wajahat Rashid Baig said every year the Kashmiri people observe Black Day on 27th October and record their protest that on this day the Indian Army entered the Jammu and Kashmir and 'illegally occupied' it in violation of the aspirations of the Kashmiris.

Director Raja Khan Afsar Khan, Sardar Sajid Mehmood, Sardar Najibul Ghafoor Khan, Raja Rashid Raza and Farhan Qayyum Abbasi and others participated in the meeting.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/10/18/jklc-organizes-special-programs-to-observe-oct-27-as-black-day/>

## For their better future, the youth of Rawalkot have to adopt smart thinking: Chaudhary Anwar-ul-Haq

Urdu Point, 15 October 2024

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Chaudhary Anwarul Haq met people and also met former information minister, Sardar Aabid Hussain Aabid. Saradar Aabid put forward various demands related to Singwala Girls Inter College, bad state of roads, and especially to that of Damini road.

Prime Minister 'AJK', Anwarul Haq said that people from Rawalkot should play their role in attracting more tourists to this region. The youth of Rawalkot should specifically adopt smart thinking for their better future. The government is trying to call tourist operators from all across Pakistan for festival and cultural shows and efforts are being made to resolve all issues. He further said that all demands related to Singwala Girls College and roads will be prioritised and resolved at the earliest. The most senior minister, Kernel (retired) Waqar Ahmad Noor, Sardar Aamir Altaf, and Depuy Commissioner Poonch, Mumtaz Qazmi among others were present.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/rawalkot/national-news/live-news-4191827.html>

## From Social Media

**WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti**

18 October 2024

After dogs in Gilgit, cats also started biting. Today three people including a doctor were bitten by cats.

#cate #bite

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1846998827716497644>

**WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti**

16 October 2024

The doctors announced that they will resort to protest if their issues are not resolved.

#PMA #YDA #doctor #protest

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1846501563520651760>

**Roshan Din Diameri @Rohshan\_Din**

17 October 2024

IMF urges Pakistan to invest Rs 1.2 trillion a year for climate resilience

#IMF #Pakistan #Climate Action  
#climatecrisis @ClimateChangePK  
@RominaKAlam @sherryrehman

Link to the tweet:

[https://x.com/Rohshan\\_Din/status/1846886590250983861](https://x.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1846886590250983861)

# Weekly POK News Digest

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**Disclaimer**

*PoK weekly News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. MP-IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.*



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