

Weekly POK News Digest

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Karakoram Highway **POK Tehreek-e-Islaami** **Muslim Conference**
Gilgit-Baltistan CPEC
provisional provincial status
Abdul Qayyum Niazi
Kashmir Premier League



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

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Contents

Political Developments

- Changing GB's status
- PTI's Abdul Qayyum Niazi elected new prime minister of AJK
- Profile: Abdul Qayyum Niazi
- How diverse is the new assembly of Azad Kashmir?
- Tehreek-e-Islaami 'wins' GB by-polls

Economic Developments

- The Case for Realignment of KKH at Taata Pani
- Steps being taken to establish a PTV station in GB: Fawad Chaudhary

Vernacular Urdu Media

- 'Enemies may try to cause unrest during Muharram': IG Gilgit-Baltistan
- Gilgit-Baltistan will soon have representation in the National Assembly and Senate: Federal Minister for Law
- Azad Jammu Kashmir PM and Presidents' address against the August 5 move of the Indian government
- Nation observes Kashmir Exploitation Day; events arranged in major cities and AJK to express solidarity with Kashmiris
- Inaugural Kashmir Premier League starts in Muzaffarabad

Political Developments

Changing GB's status

Editorial, Dawn, 03 August 2021

The proposed legislation which proposes to accord a provisional provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan has already been submitted to Prime Minister Imran Khan. It will not affect Pakistan's position on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir as per the UN resolutions. The provisional status is meant to signify that the final status of GB will be determined according to the requirements of the UN resolutions.

The bill proposes the establishment of a provincial assembly in Gilgit-Baltistan and representation to GB in the Parliament in Islamabad. It also proposes replacement of the Chief GB court as a high court and the re-establishment of the Appellate Court along the same lines as in AJK. It will also bring GB within the jurisdiction of the Pakistan Supreme Court and merging of GB Election Commission into ECP.

The move is a step in the right direction as it respects the aspirations of the people of GB who expressed this demand through a unanimous resolution passed in the GB Assembly in March this year. The strategic area has also gained more importance with the establishing of CPEC and there is a greater need than ever to integrate it further into the mainstream.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1638509>

PTI's Abdul Qayyum Niazi elected new prime minister of AJK

Samaa News, 04 August 2021

PTI candidate Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi on Wednesday got elected as the new Prime Minister of Azad Jammu Kashmir on Wednesday by a comfortable margin. President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan administered the oath to him, after which he became the 13th prime minister of the region, taking over the reins from former premier Raja Farooq Haider.

Niazi secured the premiership by a comfortable margin, bagging 33 votes, while PPP and PML-N's joint candidate, Chaudhry Lateef Akbar, managed to win only 15 votes. Earlier today, Prime Minister Imran Khan had nominated Niazi as the PTI's candidate for the post. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry announced that Prime Minister Imran Khan had nominated Niazi as the ruling party's candidate for the position. In a tweet, the minister said that PM Imran had made the decision after extensive consultations and reviewing all the proposals. "He is a dynamic and genuine political activist and his heart beats for the people," he said.

Niazi won the AJK polls from the LA-18 constituency. He was not among the leading candidates for the prized post. Initially, Barristers Sultan Mahmood and Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan were being considered as the AJK PM.

<https://www.samaa.tv/news/2021/08/abdul-qayyum-niazi-is-the-new-pm-of-azad-kashmir/>

Profile: Abdul Qayyum Niazi*Daily Pakistan, 04 August 2021*

Prime Minister Imran Khan has pulled a surprise in AJK by appointing Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi as the Prime Minister. Needless to say that this move has left pundits, observers and even PTI insiders, who were expecting either Barrister Sultan Mahmood or Sardar Tanveer Ilyas to get the nod, scratching their heads.

Niazi, who joined PTI two years ago after parting ways with the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC), contested and won from the LA-18 Poonch-1 constituency. After Imran Khan's decision, Qayyum Niazi took oath as the 13th PM of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Niazi was born in a Darra Sher Khan town located on the Line of Control in tehsil Abbaspur of district Poonch. He got his graduation degree from the Azad Kashmir University. He became the district councilor of Poonch in 1982 when he stepped into politics. His family had a long-standing association with AJKMC party. He was first elected to the AJK assembly in 2006 on the ticket of AJKMC. He served as minister for finance, prisons, and some other portfolios during 2006 to 2011.

Niazi's elder brother, Sardar Ghulam Mustafa, was also elected to the legislative assembly twice and served as a minister both times. A younger brother, Sardar Habib Zia, is a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court of AJK. Niazi also has a third brother settled in

the US, and a son, who is a Labour Party's councilor for London in the UK.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/04-Aug-2021/abdul-qayyum-niazi-who-is-the-new-pm-of-azad-jammu-kashmir>

How diverse is the new assembly of Azad Kashmir?*Geo News, 04 August 2021*

Looking at the age, gender, profession and educational qualifications of the newly elected members of the AJK assembly brings out some interesting facts.

There are no young politicians in the 25-30 years age group. In the last general election, 5% of the elected assembly members were from this age group. An overwhelming majority of more than 60 percent of the elected members are over 50.

82 percent of the new lawmakers are college graduates. This category has shown a huge improvement from 58% graduate lawmakers who had entered the assembly in the last election. There are zero PhD or MPhil holders.

A majority of new lawmakers are business owners (58%) with a significant minority of lawyers (18%) followed by landlords or agriculturists. Six women have made it to the 53-member assembly, of which one was elected on a general seat. The other five have been nominated on reserved seats.

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/363484-age-gender-profession-how-diverse-is-the-new-assembly-of-azad-kashmir>

Tehreek-e-Islaami 'wins' GB by-polls

24 News, 08 August 2021

After a close contest, Tehreek-e-Islaami Pakistan (TIP) won the Gilgit-Baltistan by-election in the Nagar valley with a narrow margin of 278 votes from its nearest rival, the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI).

As per news reports, the by-polls in constituency GB-4 Nagar-I were held peacefully and a large number of male and female voters cast their votes. As per official results, TIP candidate Ayyub Waziri received 5341 votes and won the seat against the PTI candidate Agha Beheshti, who managed only 5063 votes. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) candidate Javed Hussain obtained 4194 votes for the third position.

On the day of counting, the Tehreek supporters said that the returning officer was delaying the announcement of results purposefully and accused him of having corrupt intentions. These supporters then besieged his office forcing the returning officer to call in the police. The Police then sprang into action and dispersed the protestors.

<https://www.24newshd.tv/08-Aug-2021/tehreek-e-islami-wins-gb-by-polls>

Economic Developments

The Case for Realignment of KKH at Taata Pani

Pamir Times, 03 August 2021

One of the most vulnerable spots of Karakoram Highway in the Gilgit-

Baltistan region, without a doubt, is the "Taata Pani" area, named so due to the presence of hot springs in the area. This area can arguably be called as one of the bottlenecks of the Karakoram Highway because it is highly prone to natural hazards. Even during a light shower, landslides, mudslides and floods are common in this area hindering traffic every now and then. In the past, during major landslides or floods, the area has remained blocked for days disconnecting GB from the rest of Pakistan. During prolonged blockades, edibles and petroleum products almost always become short in supplies in the region's markets, as was the case recently.

To find a lasting solution to this problem, it is suggested that the KKH may be realigned at least 5 kilometers downstream and shifted to the right bank of the river Indus so as to bypass the blockage prone left bank. The terrain on the right bank is stable and the mountains are rocky. This will not only reduce the financial burden on the government but will also be instrumental in ensuring the flow of tourists and goods along the CPEC route.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2021/08/03/the-case-for-realignment-of-kkh-at-taata-pani/>

Steps being taken to establish a PTV station in GB: Fawad Chaudhary

Radio Pakistan, 04 August 2021

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain says steps are being taken to establish a PTV station in Gilgit Baltistan.

Talking to Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan Raja Jalal Hussain in Islamabad, he said government is fully focusing to make Gilgit Baltistan attractive for foreign investors to invest in developmental projects. He said services of mobile network and digital cable companies will be improved in the area. He emphasized on augmenting interest of the youth in digital media as it contains ample opportunities for them. They also discussed issues of mutual interest including development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Governor Gilgit-Baltistan was in complete agreement with the Federal Minister of Information's proposal and said that it will help in capturing the imagination of the young people of GB.

<https://radio.gov.pk/04-08-2021/steps-being-taken-to-establish-a-ptv-station-in-gb-fawad>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

'Enemies may try to cause unrest during Moharram': IG Gilgit-Baltistan

Daily K2, 04 August 2021

Addressing a function in honor of the families of martyrs' on the occasion of Police Martyrs' Day at PTC, Inspector General of Police Gilgit-Baltistan, Muhammad Saeed Wazir called Gilgit-Baltistan as the land of martyrs and conquerors.

He also thanked the provincial government, especially Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid, for making the martyrs' package equal to other provinces. Earlier, families of martyred

soldiers used to get 3 million rupees but now they will get 10 million.

He also announced that the son or daughter of a martyr will be recruited in the ASI rank. The department will also pay for their children's education. Commenting on the possibility of a Shia-Sunni flare up during Moharram, the IGP said that Muharram is about to start and anti-national elements and enemies of the region will try to sabotage the atmosphere of peace and brotherhood. He praised the people of GB for not giving in to the divisive forces and maintaining an atmosphere of peace.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/2976>

Gilgit-Baltistan will soon have representation in the National Assembly and Senate: Federal Minister for Law

Daily K2, 04 August 2021

Federal Law Minister Farogh Naseem has said that steps that are being taken to make Gilgit-Baltistan a province will soon yield tangible results. Gilgit-Baltistan will be represented in the Senate in the National Assembly. The law Minister said that the Kashmir cause needs to be seriously considered while formulating the legislation that makes GB a provisional province. However, the opposition must refrain from playing politics over such a delicate issue. The provisional provincial status will provide GB with representation in the National assembly and the Senate.

Talking about the 18th amendment, he said that the 18th amendment was

passed jointly by PML-N and PPP and further improvement was needed in the 18th amendment. He also targeted the PPP government in Sindh and blamed its corrupt practices for causing a lot of damage and bringing disrepute to the province. Farogh Naseem also made the demand of bringing local governments in the whole of Sindh. He, however denied any discussion on creation of new provinces and said that MQM and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf are performing very well in Sindh and will change the balance of power in the future.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/2973>

Azad Jammu Kashmir PM and Presidents' address against the August 5 move of the Indian government

Daily Jang, 05 August 2021

On the second anniversary of the unfortunate event caused by India's revocation of the autonomous special status of Indian Occupied Kashmir, Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan and newly elected Prime Minister, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi issued messages to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and the whole world.

Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said that India has laid siege on Kashmiris with more than 900,000 troops. However, he said that with Imran Khan at the helm of affairs, the matter would be taken up at the highest International fora. He called Imran Khan a brave and courageous leader who was the ambassador of the Kashmiri people.

Speaking about the plight of Kashmiri people after the revocation of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's special status, Azad Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan said that India is attempting a change in the demographic makeup of the occupied territory. He said that India is deliberately settling non-resident Hindus in Kashmir causing a dispossession of the local Muslim population.

<https://jang.com.pk/news/966465>

Nation observes Kashmir Exploitation Day; events arranged in major cities and AJK to express solidarity with Kashmiris

Daily Muhaasib, 06 August 2021

Reaffirming Pakistan's abiding commitment to the Kashmir cause, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday again urged the international community, including the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), human rights organizations and the global media, to hold India accountable for killing innocent Kashmiris and denying their right to self-determination.

A number of events were arranged in all major cities, including the federal capital, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in the wake of atrocities being committed by the occupation forces, especially after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A. In AJK, multiple gatherings and rallies marked by people demanding the right to self-determination for the people of

Jammu and Kashmir were held across all districts to mark 'Youm-i-Istehsaal' or Kashmir exploitation day

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Gen Qamar Bajwa, in a statement released by the ISPR, said that crises in occupied Kashmir resulting from India's highhanded and unlawful tactics were threatening regional peace. When Pakistan has been warning that the extremely volatile situation in occupied Kashmir can blow up anytime with serious consequences for the entire region, India is claiming normalcy in held Kashmir while flaunting its controversial move as a success.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=1&edit ion=muzaffarabad&dt=06-08-2021>

Inaugural Kashmir Premier League starts in Muzaffarabad

Jasaarat, 07 August 2021

The inaugural Kashmir Premier League (KPL) Twenty20 tournament started amid fanfare at the picturesque Muzaffarabad Cricket Stadium on Friday night.

The six-team event, which will continue till Aug 17, features Muzaffarabad Tigers, Rawalakot Hawks, Bagh Stallions, Mirpur Royals, Kotli Lions and Overseas Warriors. Overseas Warriors team will comprise Kashmiri players from overseas while the rest of the outfits will be representing different cities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Shahid Afridi's Mirpur Royals played Shoaib Malik-led Rawalakot Hawks under lights in the event's opening match at the Muzaffarabad Cricket

Stadium, which will host all the games, at the time of preparing this report.

The tournament will see a number of current and former Pakistan and foreign cricketers, including ex-South African batsman Herschelle Gibbs, former England wicket-keeper Matt Prior, Afridi, Malik, Mohammad Hafeez, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Irfan, Sharjeel Khan, Shan Masood, Sohaib Maqsood, Ahmed Shehzad, Haider Ali, Kamran Akmal, Sohail Tanvir, Anwar Ali and Imad Wasim in action.

<https://epaper.jasaarat.com/2021/08/07/karachi/1>

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Disclaimer

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