

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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POK Gilgit-Baltistan hydro Mangla projects Skardu wheat-shortage power shortage



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Political Developments

Chairman JKSM lauds Pakistan's new COAS Statement on Kashmir

Daily Parliament Times, 5 December 2022

Altaf Ahmed Bhat, the chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM), applauds Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir's remarks on Kashmir and calls them a beacon of hope for the 'besieged' and 'persecuted' Kashmiris. While praising Asim Munir's travel to the Line of Control and his position on the Kashmir issue, Bhat said that the new COAS of the Pakistani Army stated that the Pakistan Army has always supported the Kashmir issue. He claimed that India's 'evil and hegemonic plans' have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people while endangering the peace, security, and stability of the whole region. Bhat went on to say that throughout the previous seven decades, the 'Indian occupation' force has 'killed innocent Kashmiris', damaged property and businesses, stopped educational activities, and traumatized young people in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK).

However, he claimed that India has failed to quell Kashmiris' demands for self-determination and to stop them from adoring Pakistan and its Army. The Kashmiris who are struggling to find encouragement in Pakistan's support of the liberation movement added that the Pakistan army has often reaffirmed its commitment to

supporting Kashmiris. Bhat added that General Asim Munir's Kashmir remarks reflect Pakistan's principled stance on the Kashmir dispute, and its high time the UN, as a permanent member of the Security Council and developed Nations must intervene and force India to stop 'atrocities' in Kashmir, demilitarize 'IIOJK', and start the process of the plebiscite as per UN resolutions. As Quaid e Azam M Ali Jinnah rightly said 'Kashmir is the Jugular Vein' of Pakistan. Pakistanis have not left the struggling Kashmiris alone and will also not do it in the future at any cost.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2022/12/05/chairman-jksm-lauds-pakistans-new-army-chief-gen-asim-munirs-statement-regarding-kashmir/>

Tanveer Ilyas slighted by Shehbaz's 'omission' of Kashmiris

Dawn, 6 December 2022

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, the prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), rebuked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for failing to address the 'sacrifices of Kashmiri people' in a speech during the inauguration of Mangla Dam. Mr. Ilyas claimed during a press conference that the omission amounted to 'insulting' the Kashmiri people. The Mangla Dam Hydroelectric Power Plant, situated on the Jhelum river in the Mangla district of 'AJK', had its renovation project for units 5 and 6 inaugurated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. PM Shehbaz was interrupted by Mr. Ilyas while he was finishing off his speech. The 'AJK' premier was motioned to sit down and

voice his concerns later on. The incident took place when Mr. Ilyas stopped at Mr. Sharif's address to inquire about what he had accomplished for 'AJK.' But as soon as he finished speaking, PM Shehbaz hurriedly walked out, paying no notice to Mr. Ilyas, who had made numerous attempts to grab the premier's attention. Later, during a press conference, Mr. Ilyas claimed that PM Sharif's body language and gestures revealed his 'irascibility' and that Mr. Sharif had mocked the whole Kashmiri nation by failing to mention their sacrifices for the advancement and prosperity of Pakistan. He continued by saying that although the prime minister had thanked the whole world, he had left out the residents of Mirpur, whose graves and homes had been twice submerged during the construction and upgrading of the dam.

He said that the residents of 'AJK' believed that Pakistan was 'part of their faith' and that PM Shehbaz should have paid attention to their chosen representative. He asserted that the current government has halted the 500 billion in development money for 'AJK' announced by the former Prime Minister Imran Khan, and added that this government has been withholding our fair share from the beginning. Mr. Ilyas also lamented the federal government's failure to dispatch security personnel to the area to assist with the ongoing local government elections. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, a former leader of 'AJK' and head of the Muslim Conference, also criticized PM

Shehbaz's 'inappropriate behavior' and claimed that the PDM administration was 'willfully degrading' the dignity of 'AJK.'

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1724898/tanveer-ilyas-slighted-by-shehbazs-omission-of-kashmiris>

India's new media policy death knell for journalism in 'IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 7 December 2022

The PM Narendra Modi government along with the military establishment have now directed local Kashmiri newspapers in 'India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) not to publish news or statements from the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leadership, including information about the situation on the ground. The local Kashmiri newspapers were ordered not to publish statements from the APHC leadership in August 2019 when the Indian government broke international law and repealed Articles 370 and 35 A of the territory. The Modi regime, Indian army establishment, and RSS man Special DG CID R. R. Swain put these restrictions. Since the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35 A in the 'occupied Kashmir' region, the APHC, civil society, journalists, lawyers, human rights advocates, ordinary civilians, and other political leaders have been subjected to unrelenting detentions, interrogations, arbitrary travel bans, and repressive media policies while being denied access to appeals or ask for justice in courts and human rights bodies.

There have been false promises of normalcy and progress in Kashmir for more than three years since the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35 A of Kashmir, but the socioeconomic condition has worsened. While the BJP, RSS, Bajrang Dal, and other Sangh pariwars are entirely permitted in the Jammu region, political and other activities are completely outlawed and limited in the Kashmir Valley and sections of Jammu that are predominantly Muslim. Indian troops, paramilitary forces, and police officers used 'cruel and indiscriminate brutality' against Kashmiris to carry out their anti-Kashmir agendas under a military and police siege. The leadership in Kashmir has already been imprisoned or placed under house arrest as a result. Arbitrary detentions and harassment of journalists by Indian forces, extrajudicial executions, detentions, the sealing of buildings, institutions, schools, and other resources, as well as the termination of employees, are all frequent forms of what is referred to as collective punishments.

Several Kashmiri journalists including the owner of Kashmir Reader, Haji Hayat, journalists Gowhar Geelani, Asif Sultan, Manan Gulzar Dar, Fahad Shah, and Sajad Gul, and several other journalists are facing illegal detentions in different jails for the writing of ground situations and Hurriyat news statements. Kashmiri woman journalist Sanna Irshad Mattoo was not allowed to visit to receive her award- in New York recently during a Pulitzer Prize function. Even when Kashmir is

dumped from the news cycle, the conflict continues and this absence of the region from the news is seemingly referred to as normal by Indian media. The Media Policy 2020 of the Jammu and Kashmir administration aims to create a sustained narrative in the media about the functioning of the Indian government while issuing a warning to the independent news media that 'allegedly' peddles 'fake' news, or indulges in 'anti-national' activity to toe the official line. On the latest media policy, Kashmir Times editor Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal says it would serve as a death knell for journalism in the Valley. Local journalists remain one of the few reliable sources of information about the region, but sustained harassment and intimidation have normalized grave violations of media freedom. The number of foreign correspondents in Kashmir rapidly also decreased because of a media policy introduced in June 2020 and the Modi regime issued an order in September 2021 forcing 'unauthorized' journalists to obtain approval before they perform their jobs.

<https://pakobserver.net/indias-new-media-policy-death-knell-for-journalism-in-iiojk/>

Indian propaganda

The Nation, 8 December 2022

The cinema industry is a powerful tool to define and manipulate the collective conscience of a society. The movie industry as massive as Bollywood can have a lot of influence. The Indian film industry often stereotypes Muslims as extremists and terrorists reining the

underworld mafia. It has stooped to a new abyss of darkness with its recent release of a 'right-wing propaganda movie', *The Kashmir Files*. It was showcased at the International Film Festival held in Goa where an Israeli filmmaker and jury slammed the exhibit of the movie quoting that he knows how to recognize 'propaganda disguised as a movie,' asserted that the movie was pushed into the prestigious festival owing to 'political pressure', and criticized the movie as 'vulgar' and 'propaganda'. The Hindi-language film based on a fictional storyline narrating an exodus of Kashmiri pundits from 'IIOJK' has sparked the already existing religious polarization in Indian society.

The story of the 1990s exodus of pundits is only a 'distortion of historical facts.' A few minutes into the movie and we see Muslims lusting after Hindu women, Muslim kids flaunting Kalashnikovs, depicted as brutal and inhumane, and insulting Hindu deities. The movie is graphical in terms of violence with scenes of Muslims in skullcaps brutally murdering Hindus. Despite being fiction, the movie is being perceived and propagated as a factual historic account of the exodus; it incites violence against Muslims in general and Kashmiris in particular. The movie was banned in Singapore by their censor board citing that the film's provoking and one-sided portrayal of Muslims has the potential of disrupting social cohesion and religious harmony.

A large gathering for the independence movement was called in Srinagar by the Hurriyat leadership in 1990. To crush the movement for independence,

Governor Jagmohan Malhotra was sent with full authority. Within two months of his appointment, he was removed due to atrocities he unleashed against Kashmiri Muslims which was covered by international media. During this period several Hindu minority people living in the valley fled away. So the *Kashmir Files* movie depicts historically inaccurate facts. The movie presents only a one-sided story with the evil motive of sabotaging the freedom movement. The government gave tax relief to the movie and is being aggressively advertised on social media. The movie incited rage across India. Only recently in Ahmedabad, Gujarat a fanatic group of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) stopped a mere passer-by Muslim Muhammad Adnan and forcibly showed him the movie on their mobile while beating him and torturing him. The Muslims are pestered and victimized all over India for being responsible for the massacre that 'never happened.' Playing by the hybrid warfare the objective of the movie is to sabotage the freedom movement for the right of self-determination in 'IIOJK' screening them as bloodthirsty fanatics and propagating the Hindutva agenda across India.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/08-Dec-2022/indian-propaganda>

OIC SG to visit Pakistan, 'AJK' on 10th

Business Recorder, 9 December 2022

A five-person delegation from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), led by Hissein Brahim Taha, will

visit Pakistan and 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) from December 10 to 12, 2022. The OIC Secretary General will be in Pakistan at the invitation of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, according to a statement from the Foreign Office. He will be traveling to Pakistan for the first time since taking office in November 2021. The Secretary-General will meet with the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the delegation level during his visit. According to the release, he would also visit 'AJK' and have meetings with the ministers of commerce, information technology, and the minister of GB and 'AJK' affairs. The OIC Secretary General and the Foreign Minister will also talk about other topics on the OIC agenda, including the Jammu and Kashmir conflict, Islamophobia, and the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40213457/oic-sg-to-visit-pakistan-ajk-on-10th>

Confiscating Kashmiris' properties by the Modi regime has become the new normal in 'IOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 9 December 2022

The Modi government's practice of seizing or attaching Kashmiris' property under various pretexts has established itself as the new standard in 'Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK). A report from Kashmir Media Service claims that the 'fascist' Indian government led by Modi is taking away Kashmiris' possessions to persuade them to stop supporting the liberation movement. It deplored that the IOJK authorities attached another

house of an innocent Kashmiri man, Ghulam Ahmad Najar, son of Ghulam Mohammad Najar, under the draconian law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in the Khrew area of Pulwama district. The report said recently, the authorities seized 11 properties worth 90 crores of Indian rupees belonging to Jamaat-e-Islami of the occupied territory. It said attaching properties of the Kashmiris is a sheer political vendetta on part of the Modi's Hindutva regime, adding that Indian troops are regularly destroying the Kashmiris' houses during violent military operations. It claimed that the RSS-backed Modi regime is hell-bent on depriving the Kashmiris of their lands, properties, and jobs, and demolishing their houses or attaching their properties is aimed at breaking their freedom sentiment but it would never succeed in its nefarious designs. The report maintained that demolition of properties, illegal confiscations, and forced evictions are part of India's systematic 'settler colonialism' campaign in 'IOJK.'

<https://pakobserver.net/confiscating-kashmiris-properties-by-modi-regime-has-become-new-normal-in-iojk/>

Economic Developments

PM inaugurates refurbishment project of Units 5 and 6 of Mangla Dam

The Nation, 5 December 2022

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated the refurbishment project of Units 5 and 6 of Mangla Dam aimed at enhancing its electricity generation

capacity. While speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister termed the project a wonderful example of cooperation between Pakistan and the United States (US). He said the total cost of this up-gradation project is 483 million dollars, of which 150 million dollars were provided by the US as a grant. He emphasized the need for further enhancing bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and the US in the field of trade and investment. While alluding to the contributions made by Mangla Dam to the country's economy, the Prime Minister said Pakistan cannot afford expensive energy on which annually twenty-seven billion rupees are currently being spent. He underlined the need for exploiting indigenous resources including hydel, solar, air and coal to produce cheap electricity. He said the present government has prepared a project to generate ten thousand megawatts of electricity through solar energy. He regretted that the country could not fully exploit the hydel power potential of sixty thousand megawatts and added that apart from the extension of Mangla and Tarbela Dams, Diamer Basha, Dasu and some other projects have been launched. He said that had these hydel projects been earlier completed, the country would not have faced much destruction due to recent floods as well as its reliance on imported fuel would have been negligible. In his remarks on the occasion, the US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome said Mangla Dam is a great symbol of Pakistan-US cooperation. He said amongst other

hydropower projects, his country is also assisting Pakistan to rehabilitate Tarbela power stations.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/05-Dec-2022/pm-inaugurates-refurbishment-project-of-units-5-and-6-of-mangla-dam>

Protest in Skardu over power cuts, wheat shortage

Dawn, 6 December 2022

People took to the streets in Skardu to vent their rage over long power cuts and wheat shortages in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region. The protesters, holding lanterns, staged a sit-in at the town's Hussaini Chowk, chanting slogans against the government. A large number of political and social activists took part in the sit-in, responding to a call by the Baltistan Awami Action Committee. A spokesman for the committee said Skardu was facing power outages lasting as long as 22 hours, amid freezing temperatures. The protesters also highlight another problem confronting the populace and that is a wheat shortage. According to Najaf Ali, who heads the Awami Action Committee, and Ghulam Hussain Athar, president of the Anjuman Tajran-i-Skardu, subsidized flour had almost vanished from the market as the federal government had curtailed supply to the region. The Awami Action Committee intends to call a conference of major parties in GB to thrash out a plan to mitigate the people's misery.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1724951/protest-in-skardu-over-power-cuts-wheat-shortage>

Development package for 'AJK:' Senate body discusses progress made

Business Recorder, 7 December 2022

The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) affairs discussed progress on the special development package for Neelum Valley and the ongoing work on Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) projects in 'Azad Kashmir.' The committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Senator Sajid Mir. The additional chief secretary planning and development 'Azad Kashmir' gave a detailed briefing to the committee regarding the progress on the special development package for Neelum Valley and the ongoing work on PSDP projects. While giving a briefing, he said that 76 percent of the 48-megawatt Jagran-2 project in Neelum Valley with the support of the French Development Agency has been completed. France has to give 85 percent of the loan for this project while the remaining 15 percent will be paid by the government of Pakistan. He said that a total of 100 megawatts of electricity will be generated from Jagran, which will be added to the national grid. He further said that the project of 40 megawatts in the Neelum Valley is under process and added that there is an agreement with Kuwait for which the process of obtaining NOC is in progress.

While giving a briefing regarding the ongoing project in Neelum Valley, he said that the practical work on the 50.352 km Shahrada-Nuritop-Jhalkhand road is expected to start next

year. He said that approximately 57-77 percent of the work on Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College Mirpur and Mirwaiz Muhammad Farooq Shaheed Medical College have been completed, now more funds are required. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College Mirpur is to be completed in 2023, but due to a lack of funds, it is difficult to complete this project in 2023. The chairman committee expressed his displeasure over the non-provision of funds for various types of projects on time. He also ensured payment of salaries to the employees who have not received their salaries. The secretary of Kashmir and GB affairs said that due to the non-appointment of the principal Accounting Officer, there was difficulty in the issuance of funds which would be resolved once the appointment is made. Member Committee Senator Shahadat Awan informed said that Kashmiris have made a lot of sacrifices for their rights, and they should raise their voice in every forum in an effective manner. The committee also provided the details of the plots allotted to non-Kashmiris.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40212995/development-package-for-ajk-senate-body-discusses-progress-made>

Kashmir, water issues need to be resolved: Minister

The Nation, 9 December 2022

Kashmir is the 'jugular vein' of Pakistan as most of the water reserves in Pakistan depend on the rivers coming out of Indian 'occupied Kashmir' which flow into Punjab.

Water is a common problem for both countries because of their dependence on agriculture. For this, we must come back to negotiations like in 1960 but today's conditions have changed a lot and the 1960s formula cannot be sufficient to meet today's needs. These views were expressed by Punjab Finance Minister Sardar Mohsin Khan Leghari while addressing the summit titled 'Kashmir issue and future water disputes' held in connection with the second all-Pakistan summit by the student society at the Government College University of Lahore. While addressing the gathering, the minister said that the Kashmir issue has many aspects, one of which is the water dispute, and added that the water crisis is a global problem. He said that the students can play an important role in highlighting the importance of the Kashmir issue and the need for its solution, including the careful use of water among the people.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/09-Dec-2022/kashmir-water-issues-need-to-be-resolved-minister>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The Kashmiri people's morale was raised by the Army Chief's visit to the LoC: Former 'AJK' PM

Urdu point, 5 December 2022

The All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC) leader and former prime minister, Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan, claimed that the newly appointed Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir's visit to the Line of Control (LoC) had not only

boosted the morale of Kashmiris but it was also an admirable act. He claimed that the entire Kashmiri population pays respect to the COAS during his first visit to 'Azad Kashmir' and praised Kashmiris' 'freedom movement' and stated that the people of 'occupied Kashmir' are fighting for Pakistan's completion. International human rights organizations, he claimed, are aware of the 'constant killing in occupied Kashmir,' and he added that 'occupied Kashmir' was showing disturbing signs of deterioration in human rights. He further claimed that Kashmiris will never forget the heroic sacrifices of the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and he added that the Kashmiri populace is supporting the Pakistan Army and are prepared to respond to any Indian aggression at any time.

He claimed that India is attempting to quell Kashmiris' righteous struggle for freedom and that Modi has allowed the military free reign to 'murder Kashmiris' in 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir.' He said that South Asia cannot experience permanent peace if the Kashmir issue is not settled following UN resolutions. He said that though the Modi administration's 'atrocities' in 'occupied Kashmir' are increasing, however, he claimed that the independence movement led by Kashmiris cannot be halted by the 'occupiers' by using harsh measures. He claims that despite PM Modi sending his army to carry out 'genocide' against the indigenous

population, Kashmiris made sacrifices that history will never forget and that they have continued to struggle for their independence based on their constitutional rights.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3380343.html>

The Army general's remarks on Kashmir have lifted Kashmiris' spirits: APHC

Nawaiwaqt, 6 December 2022

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference-Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-JK) in 'illegally occupied' Kashmir claims that Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir's remarks on Kashmir are a soother for the wounds Kashmiris have sustained as a result of the over a million Indian troops who are actively involved in the 'murder of innocent Kashmiris.' According to Kashmir Media Service, in a statement released in Srinagar, the APHC spokesman complimented the Army Chief for valiantly bringing the demand before the international community to ensure justice and fulfill what is promised to the Kashmiris under the UN resolutions.

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/AJK/2022-12-06/page-1>

Politics on Kashmir is being played by a Tosha Khana looter and a watch seller: Pakistan Information Minister

Jasarat, 8 December 2022

The Information Minister of Pakistan, Maryam Aurangzeb said that the person who robbed the Tosha Khana and sold watches is engaging in

political activity under the guise of supporting the Kashmir cause. She remarked that PM Shehbaz Sharif should not take instructions from the 'seller' of Kashmir about the Kashmir issue. She claimed that during the ceremony for the Mangla Dam renovation project, the prime minister of 'Azad Kashmir' engaged in a regrettable act at Imran Khan's behest. She said that PM Shehbaz Sharif urged the prime minister of 'Azad Kashmir' to first have a seat and have a conversation. She regretted that Imran Khan had used a vile strategy to undermine the nation's progress at an event in 'Azad Kashmir' to advance his waning political career. A one-hour protest in Kashmir and renaming roads and chowks while in power, according to the minister, were Mr. Khan's antics while in office, and now he was playing an unholy game with national interests. She asserted that Prime Minister Shehbaz had vociferously championed and highlighted the cause of Kashmir and the interests of Kashmiris at every international meeting, including the UN General Assembly and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

<https://www.jasarat.com/2022/12/07/tosha-khana-loot-watch-cellar-is-dong-politics-kashmir-maryam-aurangzeb/>

COAS's comments on 'occupied Kashmir' reflected the aspirations of people from both sides of the LoC: Pasban-e-Hurriyat

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 8 December 2022

The statement made by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim

Munir, according to Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, represented the hopes and aspirations of people who reside on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC). The Kashmiri people, he claimed, had been battling for their legitimate right to self-determination following UN resolutions, and General Asim Munir had emphasized the same choice. While referring to statements made by the Indian Defense Minister and army general about attacking 'Azad Kashmir', Ghazali claimed that India wanted to create a warlike climate in the area, and the COAS's appropriate response raised the morale of the Kashmiri people. He emphasized that India must realize that the Kashmir issue must be resolved following the UN Security Council. He further claimed that Pakistan is the third most significant party in the Kashmir dispute, and added that PM Narendra Modi and the Indian military should keep in mind that the Pakistani army is indisputably involved in the 'illegally occupied' portions of Jammu and Kashmir by India and that Pakistani military forces are supporting Kashmiris in their fight to be free from Indian 'occupation.'

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

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Disclaimer

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