

Weekly POK News Digest

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funding embargo
reforms power Plants POK
wheat prices
Gilgit-Baltistan



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Political Developments

G-20 leaders urged to address rights violations in 'IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 15 May 2023

Kashmir Freedom Movement (KFM) president Engineer Afzal Ziai has urged G-20 member nations to address the ongoing human rights violations in 'Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) and should take immediate steps to promote economic development and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir conflict. He claimed in his letter addressed to G20 member countries' Ambassadors in Islamabad that the Kashmir Freedom Movement is an 'indigenous political party' and civil resistance movement dedicated to advocating for the rights and aspirations of the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and works to promote the cause of Kashmiri self-determination and end the human rights abuses in the region. Ziai highlighted the continued 'human rights abuses and oppression' suffered by the people of Jammu and Kashmir under 'Indian Illegal occupation.' He called upon the international community, particularly the G-20 member countries, to take concrete measures to address the issue as the Kashmiri people have been subjected to inhuman treatment at the hands of the Indian security forces for decades.

The KFM appeals to the G20 leaders to reconsider the venue for the upcoming 3rd tourism working group meeting,

which is scheduled to be held in Srinagar. This decision has the potential to legitimize the 'illegal occupation' of Jammu and Kashmir and further marginalize the voices of the Kashmiri people, who have endured decades of human rights violations and political instability. The conflict is not just a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan but involves the aspirations and rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, it is important to include the people of Jammu and Kashmir in any future effort to resolve the conflict.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40242086/g20-leaders-urged-to-address-rights-violations-in-iiojk>

Pakistan to apprise international community about India's evil designs of G-20: Kaira

Daily Times, 17 May 2023

The advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira said that Pakistan was committed to apprising the international community about India's reprehensible and nefarious designs of holding G-20 conference scheduled to be held in 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). While addressing a press conference, he said Pakistan had always raised the voice for the 'oppressed Kashmiri' people by supporting them politically, morally, and diplomatically at all forums including their indigenous freedom movement. He said the United Nations

General Assembly (UNGA) had already promised to give the basic right to self-determination to Kashmiri people and India, despite 'malicious and vicious activities', could not muzzle their voice through power and force. He claimed that Modi-government has no stone unturned to oppress the fundamental rights of the Kashmir people, but the unwavering determination of the native Kashmiri people always slaps the vested interest of the BJP government.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1093965/pakistan-to-appraise-intl-community-about-indias-evil-designs-of-g-20-kairat/>

'IIOJK' wears a look of a living hell ahead of the G20 event

Pakistan Observer, 17 May 2023

The 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) is wearing the look of a territory, cut off from the world and a living hell boiling with anger and fear, as a result of intensified restrictions coupled with disgrace, humiliation and insult to its inhabitants at the hands Indian 'occupation forces' ahead of the proposed G-20 meeting in Srinagar. As the event date draws nearer, the Modi-led 'fascist Indian regime' has further increased restrictions in the name of security measures across the Kashmir Valley and in the Jammu region. India's spy agencies along with the Indian army and paramilitary forces have massively increased raids on the houses of

Hurriyat leaders and activists, social media users, and civil society members in the territory. Special police nakas have been set up in all major cities and towns, especially in Srinagar while Indian troops are seen checking and frisking vehicles randomly. Meanwhile, the life of civilians living along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Poonch districts has been particularly made a hell where multi-tier security by the army, border security force, police, Central Reserve Police Force, and Village Defence Committees along the areas on the LoC has been put in place. In Poonch and Rajouri, cordon and search operations (CASOs) have been going on for the past many days. The Youth Forum for Kashmir (YFK) has called upon the world to take notice of India's breach of commitment to peace, justice, and respect for human rights in 'India's illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK).

<https://pakobserver.net/iiojk-wears-look-of-a-living-hell-ahead-of-g20-event/>

Mirpur bangs with 'Estekam-e-Pakistan Zindabad rally': Expresses Full Solidarity with valiant Armed Forces of Pakistan

Daily Parliament Times, 16 May 2023

Hundreds of members of civil society, political and social activists, and healthcare professionals held a rally called 'Estekam e Pakistan Zindabad' (Long live strong and determined

Pakistan) to renew their commitment to making sacrifices for the defense of the sovereignty and security of Pakistan inch-by-inch. The rally was held amid loud cheers for Pakistan and the brave armed forces of the country. Along with banners proclaiming their complete sympathy with Pakistan's brave armed forces and all other patriotic forces of the homeland, rally attendees carried the national flags of Pakistan and 'AJK.' Speakers at the event stressed that the entire country needed to unite behind the Pakistan flag to defeat threats coming from both inside and outside Pakistan that would compromise its ideological and territorial borders. They sharply denounced the damage that uncontrollable crowds that were purportedly supported by a political interest group had recently inflicted on national assets around the nation. The speakers reaffirmed 'AJK' people's complete solidarity with Pakistan's brave armed services, especially the Army, Air Force, and Navy. They added that the Kashmiris are fully prepared to defend Pakistan as needed by standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the gallant armed forces of the nation. They said that Pakistan was founded in the name of Islam and issued a warning against allowing any person or political group to spread misinformation about the Army and state institutions.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/05/16/mirpur-bangs-with-estekam-e-pakistan-zindabad-rally/>

JKLF writes to G-20 Member Countries

Daily Parliament Times, 17 May 2023

The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has urged Kashmiri people to stay away from the G-20 conference that India is hosting in Kashmir. Muhammad Rafiq Dar, the chief spokesman of the JKLF and the special representative of the party's imprisoned chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik, expressed concerns over India's covert anti-State agenda by hosting their officials' meeting on 22-23 May in the disputed State of Jammu Kashmir. The JKLF informed the G-20 leaders of India's covert plans to hold the gathering in a conflict zone in a lengthy letter that detailed the history of the Kashmir freedom movement and the current state of affairs in Kashmir. The G-20 is likewise requested to assist in resolving the Kashmir issue by applying pressure on both Pakistan and India to acknowledge the right to freedom of the people of the State.

India has begun a new wave of arrests and 'extrajudicial killings' of Kashmiri youth in addition to harassment of ordinary people in Kashmir, he continued, all under the guise of security preparations for the conference. He claimed that by organizing this conference in the disputed area, India is deceiving the international community to further its own hidden goals. The leaders of JKLF have called on residents of 'Indian

occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) to undertake a complete strike on 22-23 May 22 and the people of 'AJK'-GB to hold protests to voice their discontent with India for organizing this conference in the disputed State.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/05/17/jklf-writes-to-g-20-member-countries/>

The sense of security in any place does not come with conferences

Pakistan Observer, 18 May 2023

Al Jazeera has reported that India is holding an event in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir 'to claim that it's 2019 scrapping of partial autonomy brought peace and development.' The Al Jazeera report stated that in the years since New Delhi brought 'Indian-administered Kashmir [IIOJK] under its direct control, the Modi government has pushed a series of laws and policies that Kashmiris in the valley say are aimed at undermining their struggle for the right to self-determination of their future.' India claims the G-20 event will boost the region's tourism industry as it plans to take the delegates for a tour of the picturesque Himalayan valley. A political analyst based in Kashmir told Al Jazeera, on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals by the Indian government, that a 'sense of security in any place does not come with conferences.'

<https://pakobserver.net/sense-of-security-in-any-place-does-not-come-with-conferences/>

Saghar thanks UN Special Rapporteur for voicing concern over the situation in 'IIOJK'

Pakistan Observer, 18 May 2023

The Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter Mehmood Ahmed Saghar has expressed his gratitude to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Fernand de Varennes, for voicing his concern over India's decision to hold the G-20 meeting in Srinagar and its implications on the human rights situation in the region. He claimed that the statement should serve as an eye-opener for the world, particularly the G-20 nations who have been invited by New Delhi to attend the event in a territory, which it had 'occupied illegally' against the will of the Kashmiri people.

<https://pakobserver.net/saghar-thanks-un-special-rapporteur-for-voicing-concern-over-situation-in-iiojk/>

India and Kashmir: Two views

Dawn, 19 May 2023

Old 'principled' view: India is a priority for Pakistan's foreign policy. It is the principal adversary and the only country with which we have gone to war. It has brutally repressed the people of Kashmir and 'illegally annexed' the disputed territory of Kashmir, thereby terminating the comprehensive structured dialogue

with Pakistan. India calls the Kashmiri freedom struggle 'terrorism' although armed struggle is an inalienable right of people under 'forcible occupation.' Musharraf's four-point proposal had promised a principled compromise settlement. Pakistan's irresponsible and unforgivably corrupt governance and the opportunism of the international community allow India to escape censure. While the international human rights community condemns 'India's crimes' in Kashmir, the big powers prioritize state interests over law and morality. Pakistan's pathetic image, moreover, negates the cogency of its arguments.

Pakistan is a party to the Kashmir dispute. It regards the Kashmir Valley as its 'jugular vein' as its people would have opted to join Pakistan were they able to exercise their right to self-determination. Pakistan fought three wars with India over Kashmir, which failed to produce the desired results. Tashkent brought no relief and hastened the end of Ayub Khan. Shimla extricated Pakistani prisoners of war but at the cost of effectively 'bilateralising' the dispute. Subsequently, the Kargil conflict, instigated by the 'usual suspects' after Vajpayee's historic visit to Lahore, compelled a nonplussed Nawaz Sharif to rush to the US to beg for the safe withdrawal of Pakistan's forces from an impossible situation. This transformed the LoC into a de facto border. Pakistan paid a huge price in

blood, treasure, diplomatic isolation, and the perception of a failing state.

More recently, Pakistan downgraded relations with India after it annexed 'India Held Kashmir' (IHK) on 5 August 2019, unilaterally changing its status in violation of UNSC resolutions and the Shimla Agreement. This rendered the LoC moot as it issued from the agreement. By claiming to have resolved the Kashmir dispute forever, India destroyed the basis for dialogue with Pakistan. This was a demand for a Pakistan surrender even more ignominious than in Dhaka in 1971. India, moreover, arrested the entire Muslim leadership of the Valley and intensified its "repression" to the extent that Genocide Watch issued two 'genocide alerts'. While a misgoverned and isolated Pakistan was no longer able to counter India's unilateralism and 'repression' there was never any reason to meekly accept its fait accompli. The right to self-determination is not a gift from Pakistan to Kashmir. It is the inalienable right of the Kashmiri people. UN resolutions affirm the disputed status of Kashmir, and Pakistan as a party to the dispute. Accordingly, it has an absolute obligation to uphold and support the rights of the Kashmiri people in every legitimate way. Despite its rhetorical declarations of support, Pakistan has, in fact, de-prioritized support for the Kashmiri freedom struggle. As a result, the Kashmiri people on both sides of

the LoC today probably prefer independence to a failing Pakistan. Kashmiri independence, however, is opposed by both India and Pakistan.

It was, however, dangled before the Kashmiris by a former Pakistan prime minister. That risked complicating relations with China, which is Pakistan's most effective counter to India. Can forsaking principled positions stem the tide of failure engulfing Pakistan? Can acting as a defeated state stabilize Pakistan? Can such a Pakistan elicit or manage \$17 billion for a 'Living Indus Initiative'? Given that confrontation and conflict with India are no longer options, is unprincipled surrender the only alternative? Has Modi shown any inclination to consider resolving the respective 'core issues' of Kashmir and 'terrorism' through dialogue and compromise, which could usher in a mutually beneficial relationship?

Overcoming existential challenges that threaten Pakistan requires people's movements and nation-building, not the betrayal of principled commitments. Do Pakistan's ruling elites have the character, foresight, or common decency to provide minimally responsible leadership? Our present situation provides a very clear answer. India's contempt for Pakistan and its refusal to concede anything will not be mitigated by fawning submission. However, should we recover from our moribund condition and this will

require deliverance from the political and power elites, we may explore possibilities for improved relations with a currently pathologically anti-Pakistan India.

New 'pragmatic' view: UN resolutions on Kashmir are history. The world does not support Pakistan. Nor does it condemn India for these resolutions. The Kashmiris know Pakistan is helpless and cannot afford to conflict with India or alter the territorial status quo in Kashmir. The best they can hope for is a recovered and renewed Pakistan able and willing to resuscitate the dormant four-point proposal. This would require a fundamentally improved India-Pakistan relationship so that win-win approaches become feasible. The quicker Pakistan reconciles itself to prevailing realities, however unjust, the quicker the sufferings of the people of 'IHK' can be alleviated. Accordingly, Kashmiris want Pakistan to restore normal relations and fully engage with India so that it can bat on their behalf. Moreover, the potential benefits of bilateral trade, investment, tourism, cultural and media exchanges, etc, can help accelerate growth, and reduce inflation and poverty, mutual ignorance, mistrust, and hostile narratives.

Powerful quarters in both countries, however, have entrenched interests in mutual hostility. While India may lose valuable opportunities, Pakistan could

pay an existential price because of its parlous condition. We need not fear Chinese misgivings as they have no interest in India-Pakistan hostility. Is the 'old principled' or the 'new pragmatic' view more realistic? Are they mutually exclusive? Can a combination of them comprise a feasible longer-term strategy? Discussions should ensue on this and other national survival issues. Meanwhile, a government-led parliamentary assault on the judiciary! Rs300 going on to 500 to the dollar! Can't have an agreed census! Digital revolution and an on-off internet! 'Leaders' thousands of times richer than their vote banks sinking below the poverty line! Constitutionally superior bodies subordinate to a constitutionally subordinate body! The Army Act versus the Rule of Law! US 'non-interference' on daily display! We have become a global joke.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1754328>

India can't obfuscate 'IIOJK' ground realities through its propaganda machinery

Pakistan Observer, 19 May 2023

Narendra Modi-led 'Hindutva government' of India cannot hide the reality about the worsening situation in 'Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) by distorting the truth and twisting facts through its propaganda machinery based on lies and deceptions. Political analysts and those closely watching the situation in

'IIOJK' said said the Modi regime is holding the G20 event in Srinagar to try to show the world that a new era of the so-called peace and development has started in 'IIOJK', especially after the 2019 'illegal scrapping' of Article 370. By doing so, they said, New Delhi also aims to divert the attention of the international community from its atrocities and ulterior motives in 'IIOJK.'

They maintained that the unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 and other 'tyrannical measures' taken afterward by the Indian government have added to the miseries of the Kashmiri people and further aggravated the already volatile situation in the South Asian region. They added that no sane investor will even think of investing in 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir which is a nuclear flashpoint in the region.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-cant-obfuscate-iiojk-ground-realities-through-its-propaganda-machinery/>

China opposes disputed venue for G20 meeting

Dawn, 20 May 2023

India has tightened security for next week's meeting of G20 tourism in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region, which is expected to see China and Turkiye skipping the talks. Since India is steering the G-20 group in 2023 and analysts say it is using the G-20 meeting in an attempt to normalize what Pakistan describes as a 'military occupation' of the disputed territory

and to create an impression of international approval to its 5 August 2019 move that violates UNSC resolution on the disputed status of Kashmir. While Pakistan has already opposed the Srinagar meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin in its press briefing said, 'China is firmly opposed to holding any kind of G-20 meetings in disputed territory, and will not attend such meetings.' By holding a G-20 meeting of the working group on tourism on 22-24 May, Fernand de Varennes, the special rapporteur on minority issues, in a statement claimed that 'the government of India is seeking to normalize what some have described as a military occupation by instrumentalizing a G20 meeting and portray an international seal of approval.'

Mehbooba Mufti, the region's former top elected official, said police had detained hundreds of Kashmiris ahead of the meeting. In a party newsletter, she alleged there has been an 'unprecedented surge in arrests, raids, surveillance and persecution of our people' ahead of the event. However, police claimed there was a need to enhance the security measures at vulnerable locations to 'avoid any chance of terrorist attack' during the G20 meeting. In New Delhi's effort to shape what it calls 'Naya Kashmir,' or a 'new Kashmir,' the territory's people and its press have been largely silenced. This is despite what Volker Türk, the UN high commissioner for

human rights, told the UN Human Rights Council a few weeks ago was a 'worrying human rights situation in the Kashmir region.' India, however, slammed the expert's statement terming them as 'baseless' and 'unwarranted' in its response shared by India's mission at the UN on Twitter.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1754510/china-opposes-disputed-venue-for-g20-meet>

India cannot silence the voice of Kashmiris, says FM Bilawal

The Nation, 21 May 2023

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that India will not be able to suppress the voice of the people of 'occupied Kashmir' by holding the G-20 summit in the disputed region. While speaking to the media after arriving in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) on a three-day visit, Bilawal said, 'India can't play an important role in the world by violating UN resolutions.' He asserted that at a time when India is holding a conference in 'occupied Kashmir', I have been invited to address the Assembly of 'AJK.' He added I believe that when a country takes such a step as India has taken, its true face comes before the world. In connection with showing solidarity with the 'oppressed Kashmiri people', Mr. Bhutto went on to say that he will also participate in a protest rally in the Bagh district to express solidarity with Kashmiris. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Advisor on Kashmir affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Qamar Zaman Kaira

said that India wanted to hold the G20 session to hide its cruelties in the ‘occupied Kashmir.’ He claimed that the ‘oppression’ of India on Kashmiris was increasing with every passing day while adding Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Mr. Bhutto-Zardari raised the issue of Kashmir at every forum. Mr. Kaira stressed that the incumbent government would not shy away from raising the Kashmir issue at all forums mentioning Imran Khan did not raise the desired voice for the oppressed people of the ‘Indian occupied valley.’ He claimed that due to the effective foreign policy, G20 members were voicing concerns over the session’s location highlighting China and Turkey would not participate in the session.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/21-May-2023/india-cannot-silence-voice-of-kashmiris-says-fm-bilawal>

Economic Developments

Gilgit-Baltistan’s Power Crisis Worsens

Pamir Times, 15 May 2023

People across Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), except for a few small pockets, are hit hard by the crippling power crisis that refused to dwindle despite the arrival of late spring. Major cities, like Skardu and Gilgit, on average, receive up to 20 hours of load shedding every day. Remote valleys and far-flung areas are also either engulfed in darkness or rely on diesel generators, lantern-burning

Kerosene oil or natural gas, and candles. During a recent poll conducted by Pamir Times, over 80 percent of the around 500 respondents said that their regions were suffering from up to, or over, 20 hours of load-shedding. The situation is ‘so bad that we cannot iron the clothes of our children and they have to wear crumpled uniforms to school’, added a resident of Gilgit city. Throughout the autumn, winter, and now, spring, locals have protested the shortage of electricity in the region.

The situation is usually grim during winters for the last many decades because the hydro-power plants cannot operate at full capacity due to extreme cold conditions. In the past, however, the situation used to get better with the arrival of spring, as melting snow and ice provided water to run power plants. This year, the region is already in late spring and early summer, depending on the elevation of localities, but the power crisis has worsened. Successive governments in the region have failed to develop a sustainable mechanism for power generation and distribution in the region. Hundreds of small and large hotels and commercial markets have been developed in the region by the locals and outsiders to cater to the tourism industry. However, this unplanned growth has strained local resources, leading from one crisis to the other.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2023/05/15/gilgit-baltistans-power-crisis-worsens/>

Any increase in wheat prices is unacceptable: JI GB

Dailyk2, 15 May 2023

Maulana Abdul Sami, the head of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), said that the nation is currently at a turning point because of the politics of retaliation pursued under the name of accountability. He said that everyone can see the ongoing conflict between the ruling class, the establishment, and other political parties and that no one is concerned about the welfare of the common populace. The government and bureaucracy are burdening the people rather than taking away their benefits by increasing the cost of subsidized wheat, the price of petroleum products, and other consumer goods all across Pakistan, particularly in GB. He proclaimed that an increase in wheat prices is unacceptable to the people of GB.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/14160>

The GB government's decision to appeal the funding embargo in the Supreme Court

Dailyk2, 15 May 2023

Due to the 'injustices and excesses of the federation' with Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), the GB government will appeal to the SC, arguing that no federal government, regardless of which one is in power, has the authority to halt GB's financial flow. Chief Minister Khalid

Khurshid stated during his remarks at the press conference that there has always been an issue between the federal government and GB since the federal government has been arbitrarily cutting into our budget. He said that the present federal government has terminated the Annual Development Program (ADP) and Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) initiatives, and it does not provide wheat with subsidies. While we were daydreaming about the Shoontar Pass, Shagharthing Road, Hattang Nala, and other large projects, the federal government was not even providing funding to the contractors.

He said that we are going to court so that we can finally settle this problem for once and all in the best interests of the local population, added that we will have issues in the future if we do not speak up now. Regardless of which party governs the federation, GB will continue to receive its budget after the court renders a verdict as it will be illegal to slash the budget. Khurshid said that while a bag of wheat costs 18000 rupees in other regions of the nation, we were only providing a subsidy of 16200 rupees. As a result, the price of wheat has been slightly raised in response to the federal government's request that unless the price of wheat is raised, the release of funds in May and June won't be available.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/14161>

The former president of the Gilgit Chamber led Chinese exporters to GB

Urdupoint, 16 May 2023

With the help of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA), headed by Mushtaq Hussain, the former president of the Gilgit Chamber, Chinese traders traveled to Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Meetings were held between members of the delegations and officials from the GB administration, customs, and other divisions, as well as from the chambers of trade and local entrepreneurs. Mushtaq Hussain was the head of the visiting delegation, which also included Wu Zhaoping, Chen Xiong, Li Weiyan, Kan Jibo, Yan Ping, Ojia Long, Holly Juan, Zhang Zibin, Lin Yufu, Lin Jianwei, Huang, and Liang Kai among others. The delegation held discussions with cherry exporters, growers, and other relevant authorities regarding the export process, and agreements were also signed in this regard.

According to Aminullah Baig, vice president of the FPCCI, the presence of a delegation of Chinese exporters and the participation of local traders in the dialogue process will be a significant step towards boosting commerce in underdeveloped regions like GB. China is significantly contributing to Pakistan's economic progress, according to Baig. Businessmen in

Pakistan, particularly in GB, will have a significant opportunity to access the larger Chinese market thanks to the visit of Chinese exporters. He stated that FPCCI welcomes Chinese businessmen to Pakistan and offers them all the necessary support. The members of the Chinese delegation praised the FPCCI, the TDA, and the officials and traders of GB and declared that Pakistan is their second home. The business community in Pakistan should work to forge close links with its counterparts in China so that their companies can grow more successfully in Pakistan. The delegation's members also indicated an interest in collaborative ventures and investments in Pakistan.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/commerce/live-news-3583909.html>

IRSA releases 149,700 cusecs water

Business Recorder, 18 May 2023

The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) released 149,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 128,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1428.20 feet and 30.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 35,500 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.80 feet, 66.80 feet higher than its

dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 41,200 cusecs and 48,000 cusecs respectively.

<https://pakobserver.net/irsa-releases-149700-cusecs-water/>

Speakers underscore the need for implementing economic, development reforms in GB

Business Recorder, 18 May 2023

Speakers at a conference, while stressing the need for implementing strategic economic and development reforms in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region, have said that small landholders are playing a critical role in the regional economy; therefore, land reforms must be focused on smallholders to get the maximum benefit from resources. While addressing a two-day conference jointly organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) and Karakoram International University (KIU), they said that vision for GB should be to save the entire region's ecosystem. Lack of access to essential services such as education and healthcare has resulted in reducing economic opportunities, speakers added. Abdul Khalid Khurshid, Chief Minister G-B, while emphasizing the importance of the rule of law for any societal development, said that smallholder

farmers in GB played a vital role in the region's economy. However, to help them unlock their true potential, the region's government needs to introduce targeted measures to increase their productivity in terms of agriculture and livestock. He said that land reforms must be implemented strategically to allow for efficient use of resources such as water, fertilizer, and soil conservation methods so that small farmers can make the most out of their land. The panelists further stated that 'we donors have constitutional rights and that GB is the only region with no separation movements because it loves Pakistan.' The people of GB have always been sandwiched in political wars, and its economy is zero. They emphasized that until GB gets representation in the federal government, it will not pay taxes, and if it does not pay taxes its economy will never grow.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40242725/speakers-underscore-need-for-implementing-economic-development-reforms-in-g-b>

Speakers urge govt to resolve energy crisis in G-B

Business Recorder, 19 May 2023

Speakers at a conference while urging the government's immediate attention to resolve the energy crisis in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) region have said that the perpetual energy crisis in the region is a serious issue. While speaking on the

final day of the conference hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with the Karakoram International University (KIU), they underscored that several legal framework issues are contributing to the problem. One of the main issues is the delay in government approvals, which is generating further issues, they said. This delay is causing a lack of new investors due to government regulations, which is hindering progress in the region. Additionally, Gilgit is facing multiple crises, including infrastructure issues, political issues, and demand-side issues. Speaking on the occasion, Lire Ersado, a representative of the World Bank, while presenting the 'World Bank: State of Human Capital in Pakistan,' said that Pakistan needs to create safe and supportive schools. It can reap dividends from two phases of the demographic transition.

As Pakistan's working-age population is about 60 percent time to reap demographic transition. Pakistan can reverse 40 years of lagging growth and become a growth leader by investing in human capital, he said. He further said that Pakistan's human capital complex is much lower than expected, given the level of economic development, it can increase GDP growth up to 144 percent by slowing population growth, making sure child is in school, and ensuring basic nutrition. The Panel discussion on

'Markets, Regulations and Border Trade' was moderated by Dr Ahmed Waqas where speakers from GB shed light on how markets, regulations, and border trade can contribute to the economy. There are restrictions on visiting the border in GB, making it challenging to explore its potential resources and do border trade with other countries. Dr Ahmed Waqas stressed the need for paying special attention to the main markets, tourism, construction, and education in the region.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40242931/speakers-urge-govt-to-resolve-energy-crisis-in-g-b>

PIA announces to restore Lahore-Skardu flights

The Nation, 21 May 2023

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to restore flight operations between Lahore and Skardu starting from 03 June. This move comes as part of the airline's initiative to promote tourism in Pakistan, aligning with the vision of the Federal Civil Aviation Minister, Khawaja Saad Rafique. Accordingly, PIA aims to enhance travel facilities for tourists by increasing domestic flight services on various routes. Initially, the Pakistan International Airline (PIA) will operate two weekly flights, scheduled every Wednesday and Saturday, between Lahore and Skardu. PIA's decision to increase domestic flight services

underscores its commitment to supporting tourism in Pakistan. By offering enhanced travel options, the national carrier aims to facilitate tourists in exploring the diverse landscapes and cultural heritage of the country.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/21-May-2023/pia-announces-to-restore-lahore-skardu-flights>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Pakistan should launch a vigorous diplomatic offensive to address the Kashmir issue

Jasarat, 15 May 2023

The leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', Dr. Khalid Mehmood Khan claimed that Pakistan's government should launch an aggressive diplomatic offensive and uphold its moral and political duty to stop G-20 nations from visiting the 'occupied' territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Mehmood claimed that India is repressing people, including leaders of the JI and the Hurriyat to justify the proposed G-20 summit in the region that is currently under 'military occupation.' While speaking to the media, Mehmood claimed that India is conducting 'genocide' against Kashmiris in flagrant defiance of the UN Charter, UNSC resolutions, and fundamental human rights of the 'occupied people.' He claimed that though there are restrictions on aid organizations entering the region, even

the journalists are barred from working there, and internet access has been shut down frequently and that the international community should be aware of these issues and take action to ensure that Kashmiris have the right to self-determination by their aspirations.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2023/05/15/dr-khalid-mehmood-5/>

Students protested against the 'controversial G-20' meetings and the atrocities committed by the Indian troops in 'occupied Kashmir'

UrduPoint, 15 May 2023

The Hurriyat Conference of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) organized students protest and marches against Indian 'military atrocities' in 'occupied Kashmir' and India's contentious plan to host the G-20 meetings in the disputed region. During the protest march, obnoxious slogans were chanted against the Indian 'military occupation', as the protesters claimed that in addition to engaging in 'acts of terrorism', the 'Indian military also violates basic human rights, detains innocent people, and lays sieges in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK). The protestors chant 'Bhartiya tyrants, leave Jammu and Kashmir,;' 'we will take away our freedom right'; and 'Boycott-Boycott G-20 Boycott' were raised enthusiastically by Kashmiri students and children in support of freedom and the martyrs of

Kashmir. Usman Ali Hashim, the Pasban-e-Hurriyat's leader, the organization's chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, and others informed the students taking part in the anti-India demonstrations that India has been 'occupying Kashmir' for the past 74 years. It is a place where people's civil, political, social, and religious rights are gravely abused. They claimed that the Kashmiri people are still fighting to liberate their region from Indian rule. The G-20 summit, according to speakers, is an attempt by India to modify the contentious status of the Kashmir conflict to cover up its "brutality and terrorism." In light of the feelings of the Kashmiri people, they urged the G-20 participants to abstain from the upcoming meetings being hosted by India.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3582116.html>

Rallies in GB to show support for the Pakistan Army

Dailyk2, 16 May 2023

To express support for the army, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) conducted protests throughout Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). People carrying placards and banners with pro-Pakistan Army chants participated in the protest demonstrations. During the gatherings, speakers said that Pakistan had been assaulted on 9 May by an extremist

group and that we are standing with General Asim Munir today. Muslim League (N) is Pakistan's largest political party, according to the leaders of the rally, who stated this in their address. The leaders of PML-N said that their party always followed democratic principles and that the legal and constitutional framework was used to combat every plot. The leaders, therefore, urged the federal government that the terrorists who have adopted a political persona and initiated attacks on 9 May be dealt with harshly.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/14182>

Siraj ul Haq urged President, and PM to speak with Muslim and other friendly nations to prevent the G-20 summit

Jasarat, 17 May 2023

Sirajul Haque, the leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan, has asked President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief General Hafiz Asim Munir, and Foreign Minister Bilawal to get in touch with the leaders of China and Islamic nations to stop the G-20 meeting from taking place on 22 May in Srinagar, the capital of 'occupied Kashmir.' During a press conference with Hurriyat leaders, Sirajul Haq stated that JI has also begun contact with the ambassadors of the relevant countries in Islamabad over the conduct of the G-20 meeting and

that these efforts will continue. A memorandum will be delivered to the UN Observer Mission, and there will be a significant protest all over Pakistan on the eve.

According to Sirajul Haq, the announcement of the G-20 conference taking place in Srinagar on 22 May has caused dread and anxiety among Kashmiris living all over the world as a result of the unrest in Kashmir, which is jeopardizing regional peace. He claimed that the world already condemned India's unilateral move on 5 August along with Pakistan, Kashmir, and other nations. Due to Srinagar's location in a disputed area, any foreign gathering there is prohibited by law, he added.

The fact that India is hosting a G-20 summit in Srinagar is a failure of Pakistan's foreign policy as India's obstinacy has not been sufficiently emphasized by the government. In his opinion, Pakistan should have contacted China and other friendly nations, particularly Islamic nations, and should have requested a boycott of the G-20 summit. He claimed that during his visit to India, the foreign minister Bilawal took our suggestion under consideration and emphasized the significance of the situation and issue surrounding 'occupied Kashmir.' He expressed alarm over the targeted killing of Hurriyat leaders in Kashmir who were living in Pakistan and noted

that Hurriyat leaders are not targeted in Britain, the United States, or other European nations, but rather in India and Pakistan.

<https://www.jasarat.com/2023/05/17/siraj-ul-haq-426/>

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Disclaimer

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