

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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Gilgit-Baltistan river
generation diversion
energy Diabler-Basha POK
attack
agriculture technology



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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Political Developments

A grave injustice

Dawn, 12 December 2023

The Indian Supreme Court has validated the great injustice committed by New Delhi against the people of held Kashmir in August 2019. Hearing several petitions challenging the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution over four years ago, the court on Monday ruled that the said article 'was an interim arrangement', and that the BJP-led government's dubious decision to scrap the disputed territory's limited autonomy was the 'culmination of the process of integration.' Pouring salt on the Kashmiris' wounds, one of the justices observed that a 'truth and reconciliation commission' should be set up in the occupied region to probe rights violations. The learned judge should know that successive Indian governments have systematically denied the Kashmiri people their fundamental rights, and no one believes that an administration that treats Kashmir as conquered territory will seriously look into the abuses perpetrated by its troops.

Amongst the petitioners were parties that have always been loyal to New Delhi; the Indian state rewarded them for their 'loyalty' by reportedly putting Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah under house arrest before the verdict was announced. The decision is likely to give the BJP's Hindutva juggernaut a further boost in next year's elections, while it is also an attempt to rewrite

history. The world recognises Kashmir as a disputed territory, even though India is trying to create new facts on the ground. The abrogation of Article 370 has allowed India to change held Kashmir's demographics, and effectively turn Kashmiris into a minority in their ancestral land.

The court's decision may strengthen India's stranglehold over Kashmir, but it cannot extinguish the Kashmiris' strong desire for freedom and dignity. No amount of Indian legal subterfuge, or brute force, can stop the Kashmiris from demanding their legitimate rights. Though Pakistan has rejected the Indian court's decision, unfortunately, successive administrations here have failed to adequately highlight the Kashmir issue diplomatically on the global stage, which has added to India's brazenness. Sadly, not all occupations are deemed equal by the 'international community', as evident in the fact that the occupation of Kashmir and Palestine is conveniently brushed aside, whilst the occupation of Ukraine is cast as an existential battle between democracy and authoritarianism.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1797197>

Alvi slams Indian SC decision on Kashmir

The Express Tribune, 12 December 2023

Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora widely condemned the denial of rights to Kashmiris, with President Dr Arif Alvi rejecting the Indian Supreme Court's decision to uphold the revocation of the special status of the

'Indian Illegally-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). He expressed dismay over the decision, saying the Indian judiciary had succumbed to the 'fascist Hindutva ideology' giving decisions suited to the Indian government. He added that such decisions could not legitimise the 'occupation' of 'IIOJK' by India as the Jammu and Kashmir issue was an internationally recognized dispute that remained on the agenda of the UN Security Council for over seven decades. While condemning the decision, the president said that it was unfortunate that Indian courts had a history of making decisions against Muslims as in the cases of Babri Masjid, Samjhuta Express, Hyderabad Mecca Masjid blast, and Naroda Gam massacre during the 2002 Gujrat riots, etc. He added that the verdict of the SC could not change the status of the 'IIOJK.'

Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick strongly criticized the Indian Supreme Court for shamelessly behaving like a 'kangaroo court' and endorsing Modi's unlawful decision on 5 August 2019. India should avoid 'pushing peaceful Kashmiri youth to resort to alternative forms of resistance', she said while addressing an event commemorating International Human Rights Day organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani rejected the decision by the Indian Supreme Court upholding the

abrogation of Article 370, diminishing the autonomy of 'IIOJK' and voiced serious concerns, describing the Indian Supreme Court's ruling as a 'mockery of justice that runs contrary to established norms of morality and lacks historical evidence.' He raised questions about the impartiality of the court, suggesting it might have been compromised by Hindutva ideology. Former prime minister of 'AJK' and President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that the Indian Supreme Court's decision on the status of Jammu and Kashmir state injuriously prejudices the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) declared disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir state through its historic Resolutions accepted and signed in UN by government of India as a party to the dispute.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2449757/alvi-slams-indian-sc-decision-on-kashmir>

Indian SC verdict on Kashmir alters regional dynamics: experts

Dawn, 12 December 2023

The Indian Supreme Court's endorsement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to revoke the special status of the disputed Kashmir territory is seen as a significant boost for him and his party leading up to the upcoming elections, according to US experts. The decision followed growing calls from the Congress party for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, adding a layer of complexity to the already contentious issue. Michael Kugelman, a scholar of South Asian affairs at the Wilson Center in

Washington, told Dawn that the court's verdict was likely to strengthen Modi and the BJP's position, particularly in light of Congress's vocal stance on the matter. He argued that the repeal of Kashmir's status reiterated in the court's decision, seemed to have diminished the possibility of a resumption of formal dialogue. In that sense, the court verdict appears to rule out any possibility of Pakistan being willing to relaunch a formal dialogue with India though several top Pakistani leaders in recent years have indicated a desire to bury the hatchet with India, he said.

Shuja Nawaz, a Distinguished Fellow at the South Asia Center, Atlantic Council, outlined the challenges Pakistan would face in the aftermath of the court verdict. He suggested two potential choices for Pakistan: the conversion of 'Azad Kashmir' and GB into de jure provinces with democratic and economic development, or engaging in cross-border unrest with its associated costs and risks. Indo-Pak cooperation or regional trade may be a challenge in the face of the nationalistic fervour generated by the Modi's BJP, he told Dawn. As regional dynamics continued to evolve, the court's decision on the status of Kashmir was likely to have far-reaching consequences on political, diplomatic, and economic fronts, shaping the discourse between India and Pakistan in the foreseeable future, he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1797154/indian-sc-verdict-on-kashmir-alters-regional-dynamics-experts>

China calls for 'peaceful settlement' of IIOJK issue

The Express Tribune, 12 December 2023

China strongly reacted to the Indian top court's decision to revoke the special status of Kashmir and called for the settlement of the Kashmir issue in peaceful means according to the United Nations Charter, Security Council resolutions, and relevant bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan. 'On the Kashmir issue, China's position is consistent and clear. This is a dispute left from the past between India and Pakistan and it should be properly addressed in peaceful means according to UN charter, UNSC resolutions, and relevant bilateral agreements,' Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Mao Ning said during her regular briefing held at International Press Center (IPC).

The relevant parties need to settle this dispute through dialogue and consultations and safeguard peace and stability in the region, Mao said in response to a question asked by the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). Kashmiri leaders have already rejected the decision by the Indian Supreme Court and see the move as an attempt to dilute the demographics of the Muslim majority with Hindu settlers.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2449808/china-calls-for-peaceful-settlement-of-iiojk-issue>

Kashmir verdict 'sheer violation' of UNSC resolutions

Dawn, 13 December 2023

The 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) Legislative Assembly unanimously

condemned and dismissed the Indian Supreme Court's judgment on held Kashmir for being in sheer violation of the UN Security Council resolutions, commitments of the previous Indian governments, and sentiments of the majority population in the 'occupied territory.' At the outset of the proceedings, the house suspended its routine business and decided to hold a debate on the development in the wake of the Indian top court's verdict authored at the bidding of the 'Narendra Modi-led fascist government' of India. The endorsement of an action taken in contravention of the UN Security Council resolutions on 5 August 2019 is a mockery of justice and once again testifies that India's judicial system is biased and politicised to the core, which was the crux of the debate on six resolutions.

The house noted that the state of Jammu and Kashmir was an internationally acknowledged disputed territory whose ultimate status had to be and would be decided by its inhabitants through a free, fair, and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the UN. Until that happened, no government, no assembly or no court in India as well as in Pakistan could alter the existing position of the divided state, it added. The house also constituted a nine-member committee from both sides to formulate an action plan to highlight the Kashmir cause in the aftermath of the Indian court's objectionable judgment. Later, the lawmakers went to the office of the UN Military

Observers' Group for India and Pakistan, where they delivered a memorandum drafted in light of the resolutions earlier debated in the assembly. Separately, the general secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) also expressed concern over the Indian SC ruling, reiterating its call to reverse all illegal and unilateral measures taken since 5 August 2019 aimed at changing the internationally-recognized disputed status of the territory.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1797423/kashmir-verdict-sheer-violation-of-uns-c-resolutions>

Bilawal invites world attention to Kashmir

The Nation, 13 December 2023

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari invited world attention to the longstanding Kashmir issue. In a post on X, he said the recent judgment in India proved its ongoing contravention of international law. Such rulings lack credibility in the internationally recognized disputed territory of 'IIOJK.' Since 5 August 2019, India's actions have been in stark violation of UNSC Resolutions, ignoring the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, he said. The PPP chief added: Neither the Indian Parliament nor its Judiciary possesses the authority to amend UN Security Council resolutions or international agreements. In the eyes of the global community and the United Nations, 'IIOJK' remains a disputed territory, with its fate to be determined in line with international law. In an earlier

statement, Bilawal had also expressed his concern over India's dismissal of United Nations resolutions in its decision regarding the special status of 'Occupied Kashmir.'

<https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Dec-2023/bilawal-invites-world-attention-towards-kashmir>

PBC, SCBA reject Indian SC verdict on 'IIOJK' status

The Nation, 13 December 2023

The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) and the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) have strongly condemned the Indian Supreme Court ruling to uphold the 2019 revocation of 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir's special status and expressed that it holds no legal significance. PBC Vice-Chairman Haroon-ur-Rashid and Chairman of Executive Committee, Hassan Pasha, and members of the Council accused India of using the pretext of domestic legislation and judicial verdicts to abdicate its international obligations and expressed that to uphold the shameful act of the Indian government of 5 August 2019 to abrogate Article 370 of the Indian Constitution in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, which has had far-reaching implications, not only for the people of the region but also for the broader principles of democracy, self-determination, and international law.

They expressed that Pakistan does not acknowledge the supremacy of the Indian constitution over Jammu and Kashmir considering it an internationally recognized disputed territory and said that any process

subservient to the Indian constitution carries no legal significance. They reiterated the legal fraternity of Pakistan's unwavering support and stand in solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiri people and announced a complete strike from all the courts throughout the country tomorrow as a mark of protest against the decision of the Indian Supreme Court. ****

<https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Dec-2023/pbc-scba-reject-indian-sc-verdict-on-iiojk-status>

Two more deaths take Diامر attack toll to 11: GB CM

Dawn, 13 December 2023

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan said two more people who were injured in an attack targeting a passenger bus in Diامر have lost their lives, taking the total death toll to 11. Earlier, it was reported that nine people, including two soldiers, lost their lives when unknown attackers opened fire at the Rawalpindi-bound bus from nearby hills. Addressing a session of the GB assembly on Tuesday, the chief minister called the attack 'a conspiracy to create unrest in the region.' He said it was his government's responsibility to bring the accused to justice. A meeting of local elders and religious leaders in Diامر was called after the attack in which GB cabinet members and other top officials also participated, he said, adding that they were requested to help the government in arresting the culprits.

Mr. Khan said terrorist attacks which occurred in Diامر were termed 'sectarian', which benefited the

terrorists. Today, we call them [attackers] mujahideen or commanders. These names were not given to them by the government, he added. Whatever they call themselves, I assure you we will arrest them. He urged opposition members to refrain from labeling terrorist attacks as a sectarian matter. GB Home Minister Shams Lone told the house that a search operation was underway to arrest the culprits.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/print/1797421>

China doubles down on its claim over parts of Ladakh in 'IIOJK'

The Express Tribune, 13 December 2023

China doubled down on its claim over parts of Ladakh in the 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK) region. Mao Ning, the spokeswoman of China's Foreign Ministry, said in a news briefing that, 'China has never recognized the so-called union territory of Ladakh set up unilaterally and illegally by India.' On 5 August 2019, New Delhi revoked the special status granted to the region under Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution and downgraded the erstwhile state into two federally-administered Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh.

India's Supreme Court on Monday upheld these decisions taken by New Delhi and asked the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold elections in Kashmir by September next year. Responding to the verdict, Mao said: 'India's domestic judicial verdict

does not change the fact that the western section of the China-India border has always belonged to China,' according to a transcript of the news briefing held in Beijing. Beijing had objected to the changes to 'IIOJK' as China has claims in Ladakh along the border of what is called as Line of Actual Control.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2449922/china-doubles-down-on-its-claim-over-parts-of-ladakh-in-iiojk>

APHC-'AJK' draws UN attention toward India's onslaught on Kashmiris' identity

The Nation, 14 December 2023

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter has drawn the attention of the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, and permanent member states towards the Indian Supreme Court's verdict that validated the Indian government's 5th August 2019 move to repeal the special status of 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). The APHC-'AJK' Convener, Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, in a letter addressed to the UN chief and permanent members, wrote that the court ruling is just another attempt to undermine the Kashmiris' legitimate political aspirations and provide a legal cover for the Modi government's move to change the status of the UN recognised disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The letter says the court ruling violates the sanctity of the UN Security Council resolutions, which not only call for holding a plebiscite in the

region but also recognize the Kashmiris' inalienable right to self-determination.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Dec-2023/aphc-ajk-draws-un-attention-towards-india-s-onslaught-on-kashmiris-identity>

People ready for 300 Kashmir battles: PM

The Express Tribune, 14 December 2023

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar declared that the people of Pakistan are prepared to engage in 300 battles for Kashmir if war is imposed upon them. He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering moral, political, and diplomatic support for the people of 'India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). While addressing the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) legislative assembly, PM Kakar criticized the recent verdict of the Indian Supreme Court, denouncing it as politically motivated and a tool to consolidate India's 'illegal occupation.' He called for India to desist from consolidating its 'occupation', revoke the illegal, unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, and not change the demography of the disputed territory.

Chaired by 'AJK' legislative assembly speaker, Chaudhry Latif Akbar, the session was attended by 'AJK' Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq and assembly members. PM Kakar also stressed upon India to halt the human rights abuses in 'IIOJK', repeal emergency laws, withdraw heavy military presence, and provide unhindered access to the UN bodies

and the international media. During his visit, the PM also paid tribute to the martyrs of the Kashmir movement and those living along the Line of Control who suffered losses due to the Indian ceasefire violations. He said Pakistan would continue to stand alongside the people of Kashmir in their struggle and wished them to enjoy their due rights.

He also said that Kashmir is 'Pakistan's jugular vein.' The word 'Pakistan' is incomplete without Kashmir. The people of Pakistan and Kashmir are bound by unique affinity. We share joys and sorrow. Pakistan cannot remain indifferent to the situation in Kashmir. Kashmir runs in our blood. Jammu and Kashmir remains an important facet of Pakistan's foreign policy, he remarked. He said across the political divide, the entire Pakistani leadership stood united to support the Kashmiris for their right to self-determination. Giving a historical account, the prime minister said that Kashmir was the oldest unsettled agenda of the United Nations as the UN Security Council resolutions remained unimplemented and the Indian government was bent upon consolidating its occupation of disputed territory through a series of legislative and administrative measures.

Referring to the Indian decision to take the Kashmir issue to the UN and repeated Indian leaders recognizing it as a dispute, he said the current Indian government must honour its long-standing commitment to the UN resolutions. He said the Indian SC

verdict was politically motivated instead of grounded in law to validate the illegal unilateral measures of 5 August 2019. The prime minister said considering its massive human rights abuses, the title of 'world's largest democracy' for India should be changed to the 'world's largest hypocrisy' where hollow slogans of democracy and diversity were raised to cover up the marginalization of minorities, state-sponsored terrorism, and illegal occupation.

However, he said, the domestic legislation and judicial verdicts could not absolve India of its obligations. He said, on the one hand, India wished to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while on the other its leadership took pride in trampling upon international laws. Such contradictions reinforced by the Hindutva ideology should be an eye-opener for the international community, he added.

He said thousands of Kashmiris had been killed, thousands faced forced disappearances and pellet gun injuries, and thousands of the women suffered molestation, while the human rights abuses were also documented in two of the UN reports. Questioning the conscience of the international community, he said despite killings, illegal detention of Kashmiri leaders, and destruction of structures, India could not undermine their resolve for freedom. He said Pakistan and the Kashmiris rejected the Indian measures of gerrymandering of constituencies and measures to change the

demography. He said Pakistan wanted good neighbourly ties with India but its unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 had vitiated the environment leaving the onus on it to undo the situation. Pakistan wanted peace with justice, not peace with injustice, he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2450028/people-ready-for-300-kashmir-battles-pm>

Indian SC verdict upholding abrogation of Article 370 denying special status of Kashmir stands no legal validity: JKLF

The Parliament Times, 14 December 2023

Raja Muzaffar Khan, the acting Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF Yaseen Malik group) based in the United States (US), has stated that the Indian Supreme Court's prejudicial and dictated verdict upholding the abrogation of Article 370 denying special status to Kashmir is deeply disappointing for the people of the internationally-acknowledged status of Jammu and Kashmir. In a statement published in the media, he voiced grave concern, adding that the judgment jeopardizes the constitutional rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Muzaffar emphasized that the abrogation of Article 370 was done without the consent or consultation of the Kashmiri people, further alienating them from the Indian government. He called for a peaceful and inclusive resolution to the Kashmir conflict, based on the principles of justice and self-determination. Muzaffar also urged the international community to

intervene and facilitate dialogue between India and Pakistan to address the longstanding issue of Kashmir.

As the acting chairman of JKLF, he reiterated the organization's commitment to advocating for the rights of the Kashmiri people. He said that several pro-Indian and pro-Pakistani politicians in Jammu Kashmir have expressed their support for the ideology of an independent Kashmir. This unexpected shift in their stance reflects a growing sentiment among the people of Kashmir for complete independence. The JKLF, which has long advocated for the reunification of Jammu and Kashmir and complete independence from both India and Pakistan, sees this as a victory for their cause. The fact that politicians from both sides of the Kashmir conflict are now openly expressing their support for an independent Kashmir is seen as a blow to the opposing agendas of India and Pakistan, he added. Muzaffar said that this new development highlights the changing dynamics in the region and the increasing desire of the Kashmiri people for a future that is not bound by the interests of either India or Pakistan. It also demonstrates the failure of the two countries to address the aspirations and grievances of the Kashmiri people, leading them to seek an alternative path towards independence.

While the Indian and Pakistani governments have historically opposed the idea of an independent Kashmir, this recent shift in the political landscape of Kashmir presents a new

challenge for them. It challenges the narrative of the Kashmir conflict being a binary issue between India and Pakistan and instead recognizes the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmiri people for Azadi. Muzaffar further said that the international community is urged to take note of this development and support the Kashmiri people in their pursuit of independence. The voices and aspirations of the Kashmiri people must be heard and respected in any future resolution of the Kashmir conflict. He called for unity among all stakeholders to support the cause of an independent Kashmir, where the people can live in freedom and determine their own destiny.

[https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/12/14/indian-sc-verdict-upholding-abrogation-of-article-370-denying-special-status-of-kashmir-stands-no-legal-validity-jklf/#:~:text=MIRPUR%20\(%20AJK\)\(Parliament%20Times,of%20Kashmir%20\(IIOJK\)%20state%20deeply](https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2023/12/14/indian-sc-verdict-upholding-abrogation-of-article-370-denying-special-status-of-kashmir-stands-no-legal-validity-jklf/#:~:text=MIRPUR%20(%20AJK)(Parliament%20Times,of%20Kashmir%20(IIOJK)%20state%20deeply)

GB Assembly seeks honour for heroic Roshan Bibi

Dawn, 15 December 2023

The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GB-LA) unanimously passed a resolution, urging the government to bestow a civil award to the 28-year-old woman who took six bullets as she protected her two children and husband during a recent terrorist attack on a passenger bus in Chilas. The resolution, jointly moved by six women assembly members, pays tribute to Roshan Bibi for facing six bullets to save her family. It calls upon

the government to nominate her for a civil award. In the assembly session chaired by Speaker Nazir Ahmed Advocate, members Surraiya Zaman and Kulsoom Farman tabled the resolution, commending Roshan Bibi's bravery and compassion. Mr. Hussain emphasised the need to eliminate terrorism, attributing the recent security issues and clashes among communities in GB to potential foreign involvement due to the region's geographical importance.

He called for action against terrorists and the enforcement of government authority. He called for exemplary punishment for those involved in the heinous incident, stating that failure to bring such individuals to justice would undermine efforts to control such incidents. Roshan Bibi, originally from Ishkoman, sustained six bullet wounds during the 2 December terrorist attack on a passenger bus in Chilas. Transported to Karachi's Aga Khan Hospital for urgent medical treatment, she miraculously survived. In an interview, Roshan Bibi recounted the attack, describing how she shielded her children and husband during the gunfire.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1797967/gb-assembly-seeks-honour-for-heroic-roshan-bibi>

Economic Developments

WAPDA chairman reviews Diamer-Basha Dam Project diversion system

The Express Tribune, 11 December 2023

Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt Gen

(R) Engr Sajjad Ghani visited the Diamer-Basha Dam Project (DBDP) to review the river diversion system, which has been operational for a week after partial diversion of the River Indus at the DBDP site. According to the WAPDA spokesman, the diversion system consists of about one Kilometer (Km) long diversion tunnel, a 0.857 km long diversion canal, and two coffer (starter) dams - one upstream and the other downstream of the main dam site. WAPDA succeeded in diverting the River Indus partially last week through the diversion system constructed for the purpose. Currently, the mighty River Indus is flowing mainly through a diversion tunnel and diversion canal, while partly through its natural course. The WAPDA chairman also reviewed construction progress on different sites of the project.

At present, construction work is continuing smoothly on 13 sites simultaneously. It is pertinent to mention that WAPDA is all set to achieve the landmark of the Indus River diversion at the DBDP next week by plugging the upstream coffer dam. The River Indus will, then, be flowing completely through the diversion system, bypassing the main dam site and rejoining its natural course after about a distance of 800 metres. The DBD project is being constructed on the River Indus, 40-Km downstream of Chilas town. This mega multipurpose project is scheduled for completion in 2028. It has a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 Million acre-feet (MAF) to irrigate 1.23 million acres of land.

The power generation capacity of the project stands at 4,500 MW, with annual energy generation of 18 billion units. The DBD is amongst 8 under-construction WAPDA projects, which are scheduled for completion from 2024 to 2028-29. These projects will add about 10,000 MW of low-cost and environment-friendly electricity and store 9.7 million acre-feet of water.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2449619/wapda-chairman-reviews-diamer-basha-dam-project-diversion-system>

The GB Assembly's approved Board of Investment and Trade Amendment Bill

Dailyk2, 12 December 2023

The Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly (GB-A) approved the Board of Investment and Trade Amendment Bill by a majority vote. The amending bill was introduced in the Assembly by Syed Sohail Abbas, the provincial Law Minister of GB. According to Abbas, the Chairman of the GB Board of Investment and Trade is the Chief Minister under existing law, and the Chief Minister is unable to focus on this crucial sector owing to his full schedule. As a result, the provincial government should appoint a chairman by amending Section 5 of the law. The Finance Minister requested that the Speaker waive the regulation requiring the Bill to be forwarded to the Committee and instead enable the Bill to be brought to the House (Assembly). The Speaker directed that the Bill be presented to the Assembly while the Rules were suspended. Consequently,

the amendment bill was debated in the House and passed with a majority vote.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/18938>

Progress on dam projects reviewed

The Express Tribune, 13 December 2023

The Implementation Committee on Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dams (IC-DBMD), constituted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, convened to review the ongoing progress of both projects at its meeting in the IC-DBMD Secretariat, Islamabad. Chaired by Chairman of Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and IC-DBMD, Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), the meeting brought together key stakeholders including the Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan (GB), Additional Secretary (Budget) from the Finance Division, and the Secretary/Senior Member Board of Revenue from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), along with other officials via Zoom. Ghani expressed satisfaction with the strides made by IC-DBMD and its Sub Committees toward the expeditious execution of the DB and MD Projects. Acknowledging the committee's significant contribution, he emphasised its pivotal role in addressing challenges encountered during project implementation.

In the meeting, Member (Finance) WAPDA presented an overview of the financial aspects of both projects. Detailed progress reports were also provided by the General Manager of Land Acquisition and Resettlement, the Chief Executive Officer of DB Dam

Company, and the General Manager of MD, outlining achievements and challenges encountered in the project development. Updates highlighted substantial advancement in construction work for both projects. Last week, WAPDA accomplished a partial diversion of the River Indus at the Diamer Basha Dam Project, with plans to reach a crucial milestone in the coming days. Similarly, concerted efforts are underway to complete the diversion of River Swat for the Mohmand Dam during the current low-flow season. The Committee commended the progress made in land acquisition for both DB and MD, lauding the collaborative efforts of WAPDA and district administrations.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2449866/progress-on-dam-projects-reviewed>

GB delegation explores agri-tech cooperation in Gansu province

The Nation, 13 December 2023

A delegation of government officials and agricultural experts from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) province visited Lanzhou, China. They conducted visits to local enterprises and held exchange meetings to explore cooperation potentials. During their visit to Jinkefeng Company, a subsidiary of the Gansu Academy of Mechanical Science, the Pakistani delegation toured the production base and gained comprehensive knowledge about the company's flagship products and their wide applications in agricultural production. The company also demonstrated the complete operational

model of silage harvesting equipment that they plan to showcase and promote in Pakistan, which sparked great interest among the delegation members. Subsequently, detailed discussions were held on future cooperation models and specific plans, resulting in a series of agreements.

According to Gwadar Pro, the delegation expressed their anticipation for substantial cooperation with Jinkefeng Company in agricultural equipment, aiming to drive the modernization of agriculture in Pakistan. The similarities in geography and weather between Gansu and GB will make the cooperation particularly potential. The adoption of modern farming practices can effectively improve agricultural production, said a delegate member of the GB agriculture department. In the future, we will continue to increase our investment in cooperation with Pakistan, enhancing product quality and technological capabilities. Additionally, we will strive to promote the widespread adoption and implementation of silage equipment in Pakistan, said the head of Jinkefeng Company. After the exchange, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed to transfer agriculture technology and machinery to GB. The collaboration seeks to jointly explore new opportunities for the development of silage processing and the livestock industry.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Dec-2023/gb-delegation-explores-agri-tech-cooperation-in-gansu-province>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

The Indian SC ruling is a continuation of the August 5, 2019 decision: PM of 'AJK'

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 13 December 2023

The latest ruling of the Indian Supreme Court (SC), according to Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, is a continuation of the decision of 5 August 2019, which Kashmiris have already rejected. He said that if India attempts to create a Gaza-like situation in 'occupied Kashmir', the Line of Control (LoC) will cease to exist and that the Kashmiris' tolerance has now run out. He shared these views in a press conference at Jammu Kashmir House Islamabad with Hurriyat leaders led by All-Party Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Kashmir', chapter Convenor Mahmood Ahmed Sagar and Secretary General Sheikh Mateen. Colonel (R) Waqar Ahmed Noor, senior ministers among others were also present at the conference. He said that it appears that India intended to detach parts of Kashmir and divide it into divisions, then stage a sham election there. According to him, a clear plan of action will be devised in response to the Indian government's decision.

In response to a question, the Prime Minister stated that we should not be disappointed by what has transpired in the past. The government of Pakistan and all the political leadership of 'Azad Kashmir' will be brought together; in

the next forty-eight hours, all Kashmiri political and Hurriyat leadership will meet the Prime Minister of Pakistan in Muzaffarabad; this time, steps will be taken with complete preparation. In answer to another query, the Prime Minister stated that Kashmiris should trust their leadership as long as the Hurriyat leadership is present and added 'I will also associate myself with this movement.'

The Prime Minister said that the ideological training of the new generation will be done, and a large-scale campaign will be started in 'Azad Kashmir' in connection with the freedom movement in Kashmir. said that the Hurriyat leadership is steadfastly sticking to their position and that the 'AJK' government will achieve its goal under the guidance of Hurriyat leaders, he said. He stated that there were ups and downs in the Kashmir liberation movements, but Kashmiris have never surrendered to India. We shall all work together to strengthen the liberation struggle.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-1.jpg>

We demand our rights, not charity: Sikandar Ali

Dailyk2, 12 December 2023

The former member of the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) assembly and head of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Captain (Retd.) Sikandar Ali has stated that GB's problems would not be solved until the constitutional status of the region is

determined. While addressing the All Party Conference (APC), he stated that we desire constitutional rights and that we should be given a full constitutional province. He stressed that if full constitutional status is not possible, give us at least an 'Azad Kashmir' like political setup. He said that until the Kashmir issue is resolved and the referendum is held, our territory should be transformed into an 'Azad Kashmir' - style structure or a transitional province. He further said that what sin has been committed that we have been denied our constitutional rights despite the passage of seventy-six years? He said that constitutional rights should be granted to GB and that we are seeking our rights, not charity from anyone.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/18920>

The biased ruling of India's SC on Kashmir can never be accepted: 'AJK' Minister of Forests

Urdupoint, 12 December 2023

The forest minister of 'Azad Kashmir', Chaudhry Muhammad Akmal Sargala stated that the Indian Supreme Court's (SC) judgment is a continuation of the 5 August 2019 ruling, and that Kashmiris once again rejected the Indian SC decision. He claimed that the oppressed Kashmiris of 'Occupied Kashmir's morale will rise against this injustice. He stated that a clear action plan will be developed in response to the Indian SC judgment in consultation with the government of Pakistan, Hurriyat leaders, diaspora, and 'AJK' political leaders. The Prime Minister will launch a large-scale campaign for the liberation

movement throughout the state. He claimed that Hindutva's objective has been advanced by the Indian SC and that Kashmiris will fail Indian plans.

He claimed that we have not bowed our heads to India and that we will not recognise India's SC judgment. With this verdict, India's claim to be the world's largest democracy and the so-called secular state has been exposed, he claimed. This decision by the Indian SC contradicts not only Indian laws but also UN resolutions, because 'occupied Kashmir' is an internationally recognised disputed region and Kashmiris are not bound by any such decision.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3841905.html>

Protests in 'AJK' against an Indian Supreme Court judgment

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 14 December 2023

Protests are taking place across 'Azad Kashmir' in response to India's Supreme Court (SC) judgment on article 370, including a large demonstration organised by the Pasban-e Hurriyat (PH) in Muzaffarabad, Jammu, and Kashmir. Thousands of people took part in demonstrations, waving black flags and carrying placards and banners with anti-India and anti-Supreme Court of India sentiments printed on them. The protesters also tore up and burned copies of the Indian Supreme Court judgment. The speakers at the protest rally stated that the 'Azad

Jammu and Kashmir' Legislative Assembly (AJK-LA) adopted a comprehensive resolution rejecting all of the Indian government's inhumane acts. They declared that the people of Jammu and Kashmir rejected all illegal activities done in the Indian Lok Sabha on 5 August 2019, including the biased verdict by the Supreme Court verdicts on 11 December 2023.

According to speakers, the Indian Supreme Court's judgment is the vilest decision in which the internationally recognised disputed state has been deemed a constitutional component of India. The SC of India has also backed the Modi government's plan to declare Ladakh as a Union Territory (UT), separating it from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. They further stated that the people of Kashmir will not allow 'Indian terrorism in Occupied Kashmir', and that they will join the resistance alongside their Kashmiri brothers in 'IIOJK.' Speakers warned that a biased verdict by the Indian SC will exacerbate conflict in South Asia. They urged the UN Security Council to fulfil its obligations and commitments to Kashmiri's right to self-determination. They stated that the government of 'AJK' will leave no stone unturned for the Kashmir freedom movement. Speaker of the 'AJK' Assembly Ch. Latif Akbar, former Prime Minister of 'AJK' Abdul Qayum Niazi, Chairman of the PH, Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, and MLA Sardar Hassan Ibrahim among others were also present.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Resize-of-front.jpg>

From Social Media

PAMIR TIMES ® @pamirtimes

14 December 2023

Another passenger injured during the terrorist attacker on a bus last week lost his life today, succumbing to his injuries. Rehmat Hasan, a resident of Gahkuch (Ghizer) is the 12th victim of the massacre. His teenage son, Asif, was also killed in the attack. #Chilas #Hudur #KKH.

<https://twitter.com/pamirtimes/status/1735268406008373671>

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15 December 2023

Awami action committee Puniial District Ghizer GB staged a protest against the increase in wheat prices by the Govt. and a terrorist attack on a passenger bus two weeks ago in Hudoor Diامر GB. #Geotv.

Images link:



<https://twitter.com/israruddinisrar/status/1735631743649304661>

Basharat Issa @BasharatIssa

16 December 2023

Please watch this video and educate yourself on the status of Gilgit-Baltistan. Thank you @anayatba
Debunked: PM Pakistan's 5 Lies in 5 Minutes | AB Unfiltered
<https://youtu.be/88LVWb50Qsc?si=526luVBTbovV4oN9> via @YouTube.

Video link:

<https://twitter.com/BasharatIssa/status/1735929013787582807>

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Disclaimer

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