

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 4 | Issue 45

04 November - 10 November 2024

POK
tourism
Chinese model
Market access tourism
economy
Gilgit-Baltistan
industrial digital ECONOMY
infrastructure



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Contents

Political Developments

- Revitalizing the Market Economy for Fruits and Crops in Gilgit-Baltistan
- COAS calls for urgent action on Kashmir, Palestine during peacekeeping forum
- 'AJK' president urges Scandinavians to advocate Kashmir peace
- PM 'AJK' along with ministers arrives on a day-long visit to Bhimber
- Preserving the Sounds of the North: The Damama and Its Cultural Legacy
- 'AJK' PM meets Barrister Sultan
- Nanga Pir Bagh a must-visit destination in 'Azad Kashmir'
- Jammu Muslims' 'Martyrdom Day' to be commemorated tomorrow – Nov. 06 with due solemnity, reverence
- Investing in GB

Economic Developments

- PCJCCI for transforming industrial economy to digital economy
- PM announces 100MW power supply, Rs1 billion endowment fund for GB

Vernacular Urdu Media

- From the stand point of tourism 'Azad Kashmir' is an industry and we must focus on this: Qamar Zaman Qaira
- For resolving people's demands related to Nadra, there is a need to establish zonal offices for Baltistan and Diamer Astore region: Haji Gulbar Khan
- Prime Minister 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' in a visit to Jhelum Valley faced PTI protestors, road blocked
- Article-370 restoration is not our issue but right to self-determination: Prime Minister 'AJK'

Political Developments

Revitalizing the Market Economy for Fruits and Crops in Gilgit-Baltistan

Pamir Times, 4 November 2024

In the 1980s and 90s, the Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) under the dynamic leadership of its founding General Manager, Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, successfully mobilized communities in Gilgit-Baltistan, leading to the establishment of Women and Village Organizations (WVOs). These organizations united villagers, promoted savings, and imparted skills in poultry, dairy farming, and Natural Resources Management (NRM), as well as orchard management and cash crops cultivation with improved seeds like potatoes, beans, and vegetables. Consequently, apricot, pear, and apple trees were widely cultivated, with French-origin apple trees and local varieties thriving. Cherry plantations were later introduced, and market demand for these fruits increased.

However, the growth in orchards and forestry tree plantations led to a dilemma – the lack of access to quality marketing and economic opportunities. Despite producing hundreds of thousands of kilograms of apples, apricots, other fruits, and cash crops like potatoes, beans, and vegetables, farmers faced significant challenges in selling their produce. The local market offered nominal prices, leading to frustration and stagnancy in the market economy.

To address this issue, relevant organizations and departments of the

Government of Gilgit-Baltistan must frame a comprehensive policy for plantation and marketing strategy to ensure equitable benefits for farmers. This policy should prioritize:

Market access and economic opportunities for farmers. Quality control and standardization of produce. Infrastructure development for storage, transportation, and packaging. Capacity building and training for farmers and WO/VOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Public-private partnerships for market promotion and development. Ensuring affordable power supply (hydroelectric power generation or solarization and wind energy). Prioritizing export to neighboring countries, particularly China, and other potential markets

Leveraging initiatives like the ETI project to focus on the potential of Gilgit-Baltistan's organic fruits and cash crops, with proper marketing. By implementing these measures, the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan can revitalize the market economy for fruits and crops, ensuring fair prices for farmers and contributing to the region's economic growth and development. This will also help reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, and promote sustainable agriculture practices in the region.

Additionally, the government should consider:

- Encouraging private sector investment in the agriculture sector

- Providing subsidies and incentives for farmers to adopt sustainable agriculture practices
- Establishing a robust extension services system to provide technical support to farmers
- Promoting organic farming practices to capitalize on the growing demand for organic produce
- Exploring new markets and trade opportunities with neighboring countries and beyond

By adopting a comprehensive approach, the relevant organizations and departments of the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan can unlock the full potential of the region's agriculture sector and improve the livelihoods of farmers and communities.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/11/04/revitalizing-the-market-economy-for-fruits-and-crops-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

COAS calls for urgent action on Kashmir, Palestine during peacekeeping forum

The Express Tribune, 5 November 2024

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir urged world powers to take immediate action regarding the humanitarian crises faced by Kashmiris and Palestinians.

His comments came during the 28th annual conference of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centers at the Center for International Peace and Stability (CIPS) in Islamabad.

The conference, hosted for the first time in Pakistan from November 4 to 8, includes notable attendees such as UN Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Pakistan's Foreign Secretary.

During his address, General Munir highlighted that despite various efforts by the United Nations and other organisations to foster peace, the ongoing struggles of the people in Kashmir and Palestine underline the need for sustained efforts towards resolution.

Lacroix commended Pakistan for its contributions to UN peacekeeping missions and expressed appreciation for its role in hosting the conference.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2507431/coas-calls-for-urgent-action-on-kashmir-palestine-during-peacekeeping-forum>

PM 'AJK' along with ministers arrives on a day-long visit to Bhimber

Daily Parliament Times, 4 November 2024

Prime Minister 'Azad Kashmir' Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq along with ministers and former member of Kashmir Council Raja Babar Ali Zul-Qarnain arrived here on a day-long visit, today.

Welcome banners were installed on roadsides from Jatlan to Sahlar. The Prime Minister Chudhary Anwar ul Haq also inaugurated the Water Rescue Station and Food Department Dropping Center at Jabi.

He also inaugurated the RCC bridge and road at Salhar and addressed a

huge public reception on the occasion. Government Ministers including Col. Retired Waqar Ahmad Noor, Deputy Speaker Chaudhry Muhammad Riaz, Mian Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chaudhry Malik Zafar Iqbal, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Advisor to the Prime Minister Ahmed Sagheer, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Colonel Retired Muhammad Maruf, and a large number of local notables were present on the occasion.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/11/04/pm-ajk-along-with-ministers-arrives-on-a-day-long-visit-to-bhimber/>

‘AJK’ president urges Scandinavians to advocate Kashmir peace

The Nation, 8 November 2024

President ‘Azad Jammu Kashmir’, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has urged Sweden and Scandinavian nations to leverage their political and diplomatic influence to help resolve the long-standing Kashmir dispute, fostering lasting peace in South Asia.

He expressed these views while speaking to a delegation of Kashmir Council Sweden and Stability Pakistan Overseas Forum and Member of Parliament of Sweden Anders Tiger, which called on him at the Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Sunday.

The delegation was comprised of the Chairman of Kashmir Council Sweden and Stability Pakistan Overseas Forum Sheikh Saeed, President of Kashmir

Council Sweden Sardar Taimur Aziz Kashmiri, Sheikh Usman Tahir, Raja Bilal Mustafa, Ishtiaq Khan, Hafiz Sajjad Ahmed and others.

Speaking on the occasion, the ‘AJK’ President said that the key to peace in South Asia lies in the resolution of the Kashmir issue. “It is high time that the international community should play its effective role and pressurize India to stop the ongoing atrocities in disputed territory to pave the way for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute,” he said, adding that it was quite unfortunate that innocent civilians, particularly the youth, were being killed by the ‘Indian occupation forces’ day in and day out.

Terming the right of self-determination as an inalienable right of the people of Kashmir, he said, it was high time that the global community must shun its policy of indifference towards Kashmir and played its due role in granting Kashmiris their promised right.

On this occasion, Member of Swedish Parliament Anders Tiger assured the President that he would play his role in highlighting the Kashmir issue in his country and the rest of the Western world.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/08-Nov-2024/ajk-president-urges-scandinavians-to-advocate-kashmir-peace>

Preserving the Sounds of the North: The Damama and Its Cultural Legacy

Pamir Times, 4 November 2024

The northern areas of Pakistan are home to a rich cultural heritage, with

traditions that have been passed down through generations. Among these is the damama, an indigenous musical instrument known as daamal in the Shina language and damama in Chitrali. This unique instrument, which has its roots in the region of Kashmir, holds a significant place in the musical traditions of the area. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Ghizer, Pakistan, and speak with a local pioneer of the damama. This conversation shed light on the history, significance, and the pressing need to preserve this remarkable instrument.

The Unique Quartet

Damal (Damama), Soranayi (Shehnai) and Dadang (Dhol) are traditionally played by a group of four musicians. According to our interviewee, the group is only complete when all four are present, as each player has a distinct role that contributes to the overall performance. This collaborative nature of playing these instruments highlights the community spirit embedded in this musical tradition. The importance of each member underscores the intricate and harmonious relationships formed through music.

Learning the Craft

In the past, learning to play the damama was a natural part of life. Our interviewee's father, who did not attend school, spent his time mastering the instrument. However, the advent of formal education and changing societal priorities have made it difficult for the younger generation to devote time to learning this art. The shift towards

modern education has inadvertently sidelined traditional musical practices, leading to a decline in interest and skills among the youth.

The Craftsmanship and Sound

The damama is not just any instrument; it is crafted with a specific blend of materials that are essential to its authentic sound. The body of the instrument is made from iron mixed with gold. This combination is not merely aesthetic but serves a functional purpose. The gold-infused iron retains warmth longer than regular iron, allowing the instrument to produce a deep, resonant sound that is essential for its traditional use. Warming the instrument before playing ensures it maintains its tonal quality, which is distinct from other similar instruments like the tabla.

Historical Significance

The damama and other indigenous instruments like the dol and soranayi are deeply rooted in the history of the region. The damama, in particular, has a storied past. It was used during the era of Raja Mahboob Allah Khan, who brought it from Kashmir. The instrument played a pivotal role in various aspects of life, from warfare to weddings. For instance, during wars, a specific beat called the harip was played to boost the morale of soldiers and intimidate the enemy. This same beat, versatile in its use, was also played during weddings and significant departures, signifying its integral role in marking important life events.

Songs and Rituals

Various songs and beats are associated with the damama, each with its own cultural significance. The shushtuvar, for example, is played during weddings when the groom dances. Historically, this song was performed as a gesture of endearment from the king to the bride. Another song, mahjo, is played during the bride's departure from her home. These songs are more than just music; they are a vital part of the cultural and emotional fabric of the community, marking significant transitions and celebrations.

The Struggle for Preservation

Despite its rich history and cultural significance, the damama is at risk of fading into obscurity. Our interviewee lamented the lack of interest among the younger generation. The absence of passionate learners threatens the survival of this unique musical tradition. The challenge lies not just in teaching the technical skills but also in instilling a deep appreciation and love for the instrument.

Moving Forward

Preserving the damama and its music requires concerted efforts from the community, educators, and cultural institutions. There is a need to create awareness about the instrument's historical and cultural importance. Workshops and programs aimed at teaching the younger generation can help keep this tradition alive. Additionally, integrating the damama into contemporary music and cultural events can spark interest and passion

among the youth. In conclusion, the damama is more than just an instrument; it is a symbol of the rich cultural heritage of the northern areas of Pakistan. Preserving its legacy is crucial for maintaining the cultural diversity and history of the region. By fostering a renewed interest and appreciation for the damama, we can ensure that its distinctive sounds continue to resonate for generations to come.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/11/04/preserving-the-sounds-of-the-north-the-damama-and-its-cultural-legacy/>

'AJK' PM meets Barrister Sultan

Business Recorder, 4 November 2024

Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq called on the AJK State President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Sunday and discussed the matters of mutual interest and concern, including the need for an early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute, official sources said.

In a detailed one-on-one meeting, both the leaders discussed, in length, the issues of concern, with a special focus on the issue of Kashmir, 'AJK' President office sources later told APP.

While expressing their grave concern over the worsening political and human rights situation in the region, both leaders agreed to accelerate efforts at the international level to seek an early and amicable settlement of the lingering disputes.

During the meeting, the prevailing political situation in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' and the ongoing development projects in the region also came under discussion, the official sources added.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40330480/ajk-pm-meets-barrister-sultan>

Nanga Pir Bagh a must-visit destination in 'Azad Kashmir'

The Nation, 4 November 2024

Nanga Pir Bagh's breath-taking beauty, coupled with its tranquil atmosphere makes it an ideal destination for travellers seeking relaxation where its picturesque spot inviting visitors to unwind amidst nature's splendour, providing a refreshing escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. "Nestled in the heart of 'Azad Kashmir', Nanga Pir Bagh is rapidly gaining popularity among tourists seeking serenity," said a report aired by PTV news channel. Minister of Sports, Culture & Youth Affairs of 'Azad Government State of Jammu & Kashmir', Asim Shareef Butt, announced that the government was organizing cultural festivals, drawing large crowds and hosting district-level sports tournaments to promote community engagement and celebrate the region's rich heritage. Minister Asim Shareef Butt expressed his delight over Nanga Pir's increasing popularity and invited tourists to explore its breath-taking beauty.

"This enchanting spot is known for its picturesque landscapes, magical

bushes, and scented breeze, making it an unforgettable experience for visitors," he added. Locals in 'Azad Kashmir' enthusiastically urged citizens and abroad tourists to discover the allure of Nanga Pir Bagh, the region's emerging destination. "Nanga Pir Bagh is a hidden gem waiting to be explored," said Muhammad Akram, a local resident. "Its breathtaking landscapes, serene atmosphere and warm hospitality make it an ideal getaway for nature lovers and adventure seekers," he added. Another local, Shamim Akhtar, said, "We are thrilled to see tourists taking interest in our beautiful valley." "We invite everyone to experience the magic of Nanga Pir Bagh and explore its uncharted trails, scenic vistas and cultural heritage," said an official of forest department. "We loved our visit to Nanga Pir Bagh, but faced difficulties due to poor road conditions. Hope to see improvements soon." a foreign tourist while enjoying 3rd Nanga Pir festival. To sustain tourism growth, the forest department should focus on reforestation and conservation efforts, an environmental expert Dr Hassan said. "Upgrading road infrastructure and developing eco-friendly facilities will further enhance Nanga Pir Bagh's tourist potential," a tourist guide Ahmed said. "Implementing sustainable tourism practices will ensure Nanga Pir Bagh's natural beauty is preserved for future generations" said Dr. Khan, Conservationist. "Vloggers are also being encouraged to visit Nanga Pir, a breath-taking destination in 'Azad

Kashmir', Pakistan. This enchanting spot is known for its picturesque landscapes, magical bushes, and scented breeze, making it an unforgettable experience for visitors," he added.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Nov-2024/nanga-pir-bagh-a-must-visit-destination-in-azad-kashmir>

Jammu Muslims' 'Martyrdom Day' to be commemorated tomorrow – Nov. 06 with due solemnity, reverence

Daily Parliament Times, 5 November 2024

Adequate arrangements have been made to commemorate Jammu Martyrs Day at both sides of the line of control in Jammu & Kashmir and rest of the rest of the world, where J&K people are living in, on 6th of November (Wednesday) with due solemnity and reverence to pay rich tributes to valiant Muslim inhabitants of Jammu city for giving the supreme sacrifices of their lives 77 years ago this day in 1947 while migrating to then newly-born Pakistan.

At least 0.7 million of Muslim residents of Jammu city and adjoining areas were mercilessly killed during a week-long ruthless genocide maneuvered and executed by the despotic Dogra ruler's force and gangsters besides the armed Hindu fanatics in the first and second week of November 1947.

These martyrs included 2.50 Muslim inmates of Jammu city and adjoining areas who were martyred by the Dogra forces and their armed paid bandits on 6th of November 1947 while they were moving for migrating to the adjoining Sialkot city of the newly-born separate

homeland of the Muslims of the subcontinent – Pakistan to get refuge in attempt to save their lives from the brutal attacks and the state-sponsored terrorism by the Dogra and 'Indian occupational armed forces'.

Our Special Jammu and Kashmir state Correspondent Altaf Hamid Rao reports from Mirpur 'AJK' that this year too, the Jammu Martyrs day is being observed at the time when the Kashmir freedom has reached at its climax following the continual anti-India protest by the people of bleeding 'Indian occupied' Jammu and Kashmir state for the last over five years complete information and communication blocked by the 'Indian occupational' forces – since furious Kashmiris have categorically rejected resisting against the forced August 5, 2019 Indian sinister action of scrapping special status of the disputed Jammu Kashmir State abrogating article 370 and 35-A of her constitution.

Preparations have been given final touches to commemorate the historic Jammu Martyrs day of global significance in the history of Jammu & Kashmir's freedom struggle at both sides of the LoC and rest of the world, organizers said.

The day is observed every year by the Kashmiris to remember the great sacrifices of lives rendered by those over 2.50 lakh inmates of Jammu including men, women, children and elderly Muslims who were mercilessly slaughtered by the armed Hindu gangsters including the 'Indian occupying' and the Dogra military

troops near Jammu-Sialkot working boundary under a nefarious pre-planned conspiracy while they were proceeding for migrating to adjoining Sialkot city of Pakistan's Punjab province.

Like all previous years the martyrs day will be commemorated with the renewal of the pledge to continue mission of Kashmiri martyrs to bring the Kashmir freedom struggle to its logical end.

There would be gazetted holiday across the 'liberated territory' of 'AJK' to facilitate the people to attend the ceremonies including special prayers meetings to pay glorious tributes to the martyrs on this occasion

Special ceremonies including seminars, symposiums and prayer meetings will be held in all small and major towns of all ten districts of 'AJK' including the capital city of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimbher, Bagh, Rawalakot, Palandri, Havaili, Hattian and Neelam valley as well as in various parts of Pakistan – dwelled with Jammu Kashmir refugees, to pay glorious tributes to the Jammu martyrs, gunned down by the armed Hindu fanatics including 'Indian occupying' and Dogra military hooligans, this day (November 6) 77 years ago in 1947.

Participants will offer fateha for the upgradation of the departed souls of all the martyrs including the martyrs of Jammu & Kashmir who gave supreme sacrifices of their lives in the struggle for liberation of the motherland from the forced and unlawful 'Indian

occupation' of a bulk part of the Jammu and Kashmir state.

Similar special prayers meetings to mark the Jammu martyrs day, an icon of great significance in the history of struggle for freedom of Kashmir, will be held under the auspices of various social, political, religious and other public representative organizations to pay glorious tributes to the martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir.

The day will dawn with special prayers, at Fajr, in all the prominent mosques for the early liberation of occupied Jammu Kashmir from Indian yoke through the success of Kashmir freedom movement, progress, prosperity and stability of Pakistan and 'Azad Jammu & Kashmir'. Quran Khawani will be held at various places for Kashmiri martyrs under the auspices of various social, political and public representative organizations.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/11/05/jammu-muslims-martyrdom-day-to-be-commemorated-tomorrow-nov-06-with-due-solemnity-reverence-2/>

Investing in GB

The Nation, 7 November 2024

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's announcement to provide an immediate 100-megawatt power supply and a Rs. 100 million merit endowment for university students in Gilgit-Baltistan came at a crucial time. Gilgit-Baltistan, relies heavily on federal support for development projects and policy implementation.

As such, Prime Minister Sharif is directly responsible for the region's affairs. His focus on improving education and increasing the power supply, especially to the remote areas grappling with extreme temperature fluctuations, is a much-needed step forward. These initiatives will help address the pressing challenges faced by the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. However, beyond these measures, the Prime Minister must also dedicate efforts to promoting tourism.

While the idea of boosting tourism has been part of government agendas in the past, it has often been overshadowed by infrastructure projects aimed at improving access to Gilgit-Baltistan. Now that these access issues have been largely resolved, the time is ripe for a more thoughtful approach to tourism. The Prime Minister would do well to heed the views of the native people of Gilgit-Baltistan, who seek a more sustainable and nuanced approach than what is currently in place. Simply building infrastructure to accommodate an unlimited influx of tourists risks overwhelming the region and damaging the natural beauty that makes it so special. Investment in tourism must be accompanied by thoughtful and effective programs to ensure that the region's beauty is preserved. This includes initiatives like recycling, waste management, and the development of better facilities in carefully designed, centralised tourist hotspots. Our tourism policy must go beyond simply increasing access; it must also safeguard the environment.

The news that the Qatari government has shown interest in investing in tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan is a welcome development. With the right investment and a forward-thinking mindset, Gilgit-Baltistan could become one of the most visited regions in the country. As the region's patron, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif must ensure that this potential is realised as soon as possible.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2024/investing-in-gb>

Economic Developments

PCJCCI for transforming industrial economy to digital economy

Business Recorder, 5 November 2024

Nazir Hussain, President Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) have suggested transforming the industrial economy of Pakistan to the digital economy as per the Chinese model that has proved to be the best practice in this regard. During a discussion on digitalization of the national economy at PCJCCI think tank meeting on Monday, he said that we should set up integrated computing network hubs across the country to boost the digital economy and provide new impetus for the sector's development.

The meeting was also attended by Brig Mansoor Saeed Sheikh (Retd), Senior Vice President PCJCCI, Zafar Iqbal, Vice President, Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General and the executive committee members of PCJCCI. President PCJCCI said that data centre

computing equipment will be key accelerators for the development of new technologies and industries such as Artificial Intelligence, big data and block chain, and help fuel digital transformation and high-quality development. He also shared that under the plan, China's national hubs are being set up in key areas including Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta region, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Chengdu-Chongqing city cluster, Guizhou province and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, he said and suggested to replicate this model in major business cities of Pakistan including Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Hyderabad and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Brig Mansoor Saeed Sheikh (Retd), Senior Vice President PCJCCI said that the national computing network will boost the free flow of data and for smooth economic circulation, with the hubs also playing a key role as the new drivers of economic growth and supporting the national big data strategy. He further added that China has planned to build national integrated computing network hubs as part of the government's ongoing efforts to accelerate the "new infrastructure" construction and promote green, high-quality development of the digital economy. We can also adopt this technique to boost the development of super-large and large-scale data centres and build data centre clusters in key regions,

supporting businesses such as industrial internet, financial securities, disaster warning, telemedicine and video calls, he said.

Zafar Iqbal, Vice President PCJCCI said that the new move will help to achieve a structural balance between data centres in eastern and western regions, boost innovation in big data applications, improve efficiency in the use of computing resources and promote green, high-quality development.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI said that the big data industry will be a key driving force in the transition from an industrial economy to a digital economy. It would make a big push to continuously accelerate the development of 5G networks and 1,000M fibre optic networks to create a new intelligent ecosystem, he added.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/amp/40330678>

PM announces 100MW power supply, Rs1 billion endowment fund for GB

The Nation, 7 November 2024

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday announced the immediate power supply of 100 megawatts for Gilgit Baltistan and Rs1 billion endowment fund for the universities students.

The prime minister, who chaired the special meeting of the GB cabinet during his daylong visit, expressed satisfaction and pleasure over the timely completion of Bubar Model Village, which he earlier inaugurated,

to provide housing facility to the people affected by flood in 2022.

He instructed the GB administration to establish educational institutions, playgrounds, power transmission and other facilities in Ghizer district. Besides announcing an immediate power supply of 100 megawatts to GB, the prime minister announced Rs 1 billion merit-based endowment fund for the students of Baltistan University and Karakorum University.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the GB cabinet members that the federal government would establish Daanish Schools in GB, on the pattern of Punjab province.

He said that his government was actively working for the uplift and welfare of the GB people.

He recalled that while being Punjab chief minister, his government had given a Rs1 billion gift to uplift GB's education sector. He said that the provincial governments' cooperation with the federal government for the economic stability was significant.

The prime minister told the participants that stock exchange has crossed the 92,000 mark and the increase in remittances, tax return filers and reduction in inflation were pleasant developments for national economy.

He lauded the role of all provinces, 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' and GB in the national development and highlighted his government's special focus on the uplift of GB, merged

districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

The prime minister said that the federal government was taking measures to promote tourism in GB as Qatari government had also expressed interest to invest in tourism there.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Attaullah Tarar, Amir Muqam and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, members of the GB cabinet and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

The prime minister, who earlier distributed allotment certificates among a few of the entitled people, asked the authorities concerned to immediately build a school, dispensary and playground for the village. The dispensary should be equipped with first aid, ultrasound, X-ray and maternity care facilities, he added.

He also called for the third-party validation of the project to address the shortcomings and asked to add chimneys in all the newly constructed houses to avert any untoward incident, particularly during the winter.

Wearing a traditional Gilgit cap Pakul and robe, he instructed Federal Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui to supervise the construction of the school at the village.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, who had also visited the flood-hit village in 2022 after it was completely destroyed, recalled teenage girl Qandeel and her father were among the only survivors of their family.

In his address, GB Chief Minister Gulbar Khan thanked the prime minister for supporting the GB people in distress. He said the 2022 floods killed several residents in the Bubar village and the newly built model village was equipped with all basic amenities including connectivity.

Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz Sharif says security of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan is the topmost priority of the government.

He was talking to Ambassador of China to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, during his visit to the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad on Wednesday. The Prime Minister strongly condemned the incident of firing on Chinese nationals in Karachi.

He told the ambassador that he has come to express his indignation at the incident and enquire after the health of Chinese nationals, who were injured in the incident. He said it is a matter of satisfaction that the injured Chinese nationals are recuperating.

The Prime Minister assured the Chinese ambassador that those responsible for the attack will be brought to justice, and he is personally monitoring the investigation process.

Shehbaz Sharif said instructions have already been issued to provide the best medical facilities to the injured Chinese nationals.

He said China is a time-tested friend of Pakistan and such cowardly attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan are a deliberate attempt to damage the

fraternal ties between the two countries.

The Chinese ambassador thanked the Prime Minister for his visit and expressed hope that he will play his role in bringing the culprits to justice.

On the occasion, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi were accompanying the Prime Minister.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2024/pm-announces-100mw-power-supply-rs1-billion-endowment-fund-for-gb>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

From the stand point of tourism ‘Azad Kashmir’ is an industry and we must focus on this: Qamar Zaman Qaira

Urdu Point, 5 November 2024

Former minister for Kashmir Affairs, Qamar Zaman Qaira said that it is a moment of joy that our youth go to foreign countries but spend their hard-earned money here only. He further added that ‘Azad Kashmir’ from the standpoint of tourism is an industry and we must focus over it. There are several tourist spots in this region which haven’t been opened so far and there is need to work on them too. Our brothers from ‘Azad Kashmir’ should invest in tourism sector and doing so will give employment to the people of the region. Such expression of thoughts were shared during inauguration of a leading continental hotel in Muzaffarabad. Other personalities who were present during this inauguration

ceremony included former prime minister Raja Mohammad Farooq Haider Khan. Qamar Zaman stressed that from both the government and private basis, there is a need to give attention to this unexplored arena. Doing so will leave no person unemployed in the region here. 'Azad Kashmir' is a beautiful region. If facilities are available here, every resident will earn money and people will quit government jobs and rather will run toward business sector. The youth of 'Azad Kashmir' are brave people and in their prime youth instead of choosing luxuries they prefer earning through different varieties of jobs. If youth of 'Azad Kashmir' give more attention to this sector, they will attain glory. The government of 'Azad Kashmir' should also give due attention to this sector so that the locals of the region get benefitted from this.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4217130.html>

For resolving people's demands related to Nadra, there is a need to establish zonal offices for Baltistan and Diamer Astore region: Haji Gulbar Khan

Urdu Point, 5 November 2024

Chief minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan said that Baltistan and Diamer Astore region have an urgent need to establish zonal offices so that people belonging to the far-flung areas of this region get to resolve their issues pertaining to Nadra. While conversing with the senior board members of the Nadra, he said that there should be a

separate office for females where female staff will help women to get their identification cards and them no longer face challenges in other related details to the Nadra.

In these Nadra offices, for fulfilling appointments of small scale, it has to be ensured that people from the local region are recruited. The chief minister further said that Gilgit, Diamer, Baltistan, orders will be given to the SMB to follow similar practices for the establishment of Nadra offices on tehsil levels as well.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-4217356.html>

Prime Minister 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' in a visit to Jhelum Valley faced PTI protestors, city road blocked

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 7 November 2024

On the arrival of the Prime Minister 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', PTI protestors blocked the city road. Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq, accompanied by other members and ministers in a visit to Jhelum valley faced strong protests from the PTI. The protestors blocked the city road and gave slogans in favour of inmate bearing number 804. The protestors were carrying black flags, photos and thus were clearly signifying the intensity in their protest. On this occasion, PTI 'Azad Kashmir's' Deputy President Zeeshan Haider, was present. The Assemblers said that the Prime Minister's visit to the Jhelum Valley was unsuccessful because people were not in favour of it. Apart

from few government officers, most of the common people here rejected Anwar ul Haq's visit. The protestors said that in his visit the Prime Minister made fake promises to the public and didn't announce any big package for the district headquarter. The protestors said that similar to the 'occupied Kashmir', orders are being issued here banning people's human rights, their right to protest and their right to assemble. Such orders were today through the people's strength trampled under their feet; protestors underscored. The protestors further said that the conscious and politically aware people of the Jhelum valley have clearly rejected the unlawful and incompetent government and have openly announced its failure. They further raised that the corruption is at its peak, and principle of merit is more often bypassed. They vowed to continue to fight against this government and will continue to protect and seek people's rights and their freedom.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Resize-of-PAGE-03-1-5.jpg>

Article-370 restoration is not our issue but right to self-determination: Prime Minister 'AJK'

Urdu Point, 7 November 2024

Prime Minister 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir', Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq met a delegation of Kashmir committee under the leadership of Rana Qasim Noon. The members of the Kashmir committee who were part of the visiting delegation included Doctor Tariq Fazal

Chaudhary, Fatehullah Khan, Wajeeha Qamar, Syed Javed Ali Shah Jeelani. On this occasion, the most senior minister retired Colonel Waqar Ahmad Noor, Abdul Majid Khan, Mian Abdul Waheed, Sardar Javeed Ayub, Deewan Ali Khan and other members were present.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq said that on 6 November 1947, the most barbaric killing of Muslims took place in Jammu, forcing scores of Muslims to migrate to Pakistan. From 1947, efforts are underway to change the Muslim majoritarian aspect of the 'Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir'. He further added that in the past, the Kashmir Committee has played a wonderful role and equally some important politicians had essential role in that.

Kashmir's attachment with Pakistan is on the basis of religion. All routes of Kashmir and even the direction of the waters is toward Pakistan. After August 5 2019 decision, the youth of Kashmir are in deep anxieties. The way the current chief addressed Kashmiris in his speech must have given strength to Kashmiris. Pakistan is a jugular vein for Kashmiris. He said that the 'Azad Kashmir' has a potential of 10, 000 megawatt of electricity. He said that restoration of Article-370 is not our concern but the right to self-determination.

On this occasion, Haq welcomed the members of the Kashmir Committee and thanked them for paying the visit.

On this occasion, Rana Qasim Noon said that without Kashmir Pakistan is incomplete. Resolving Kashmir is our national cause. No matter what, Kashmir issue cannot be ignored or sidelined. Post 5-August 2019, Pakistan suspended its ties with India.

We have fought wars over Kashmir. In every aspect, Kashmir is essential for Pakistan. After August 5, 2019, the kind of response we expected didn't come and this affected the Kashmir issue on the international level. Noon said that through the efforts of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Army Chief, the Kashmir issue received attention. He further said that today is the martyrs' day of the Jammu Muslims when half- a lakh Muslims were martyred in Jammu in 1947.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-4219724.html>

From Social Media

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

7 November 2024

SSP Sher Khan recovered the stolen goods and cattle from Diamer and handed them over to Ghazor police.

#Diamer #Ghizer #crime news #police

Link to the video:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1854538400143200273>

Roshan Din Diameri @Roshan_Din

8 November 2024

New research funded by the Italian government reveals Pakistan's glaciers

are more numerous than the previous estimates of 5,500. Collaborative work by the Italian scientists and Gilgit-Baltistan universities highlights a major discovery for the region's glaciers. #Climateresearch #Glaciers

@UNFCCC @ClimateChangePK
@RominaKAlam @UNDP_Pakistan
@evk2cnr

Link to the tweet:

https://x.com/Rohshan_Din/status/1854620460551410172

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

7 November 2024

Who will be responsible if the dogs bite someone in PHQ Hospital female wing?

#Dog #bite #incident #Gilgit

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1854281694817456409>

PAMIR Times @pamirtimes

6 November 2024

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has approved a construction of a 100 Megawatt solar power plant in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Project will be completed in one year. #gilgitbaltistan #gilgit #solarEnergy

Link to the tweet:

<https://x.com/pamirtimes/status/1854154975598813344>

Weekly POK News Digest

Volume 4 | Issue 45

04 November - 10 November 2024

Compiled by

Mohd. Usman Bhatti and Muneeb Yousuf

Edited By

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

Disclaimer

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



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: www.idsa.in; Email: pokdigest@gmail.com