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## AJK marks 19th anniversary of Oct 8, 2005 killer earthquake with resolve to face any natural catastrophe with patience.



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MIRPUR (AJK): Oct. 8: The 19th anniversary of the devastating earthquake, this day of October 08, 19 years ago in 2005 was commemorated across Azad Jammu & Kashmir on Tuesday as 'Youm e Istiqamat' – the day of patience in all hours of trial for the live nations.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir flag remained at half-mast on all private and public buildings of the state to mark the anniversary to mark the anniversary with sorrow and grief in loss of massive men and material following the history's first-ever natural catastrophe that jolted bulk of AJK and adjoining KPK province turning the quake hit zone into rubble.

Since this year too the anniversary was observed as the 'Day Of Patience' besides as National Day for Raising Awareness about safety from natural calamities it was solemnised as 'day of firmness and determination for reconstruction in memory of earthquake martyrs' coupled with special prayers for the rest of the departed souls of the quake victims in eternal peace and to express complete solidarity and sympathies with the survivors of the history's most worst natural catastrophe.

The 7.6 magnitude earthquake jolted Azad Kashmir and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 8:52 am on the morning of October 8, 2005. Muzaffarabad, the AJK State's metropolis, was ground-zero in the catastrophic temblor. The city and the entire adjoining KPK's region to Balakot was left virtually unrecognizable when the earth stopped shaking leaving over 82,000 people dead and thousands injured.

The devastating earthquake of October 8, 2005, had shaken Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and adjoining areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province turning major part of the two adjoining

regions into rubble.

Lake~side Mirpur city of AJK observed the anniversary when it also met the identical fate in form of Sept. 24 devastating earthquake of moderate magnitude measuring 5.8 at Richter scale in year 2019 that had left at least 45 people dead and over 1000 injured besides huge damaging of the buildings across Mirpur city and adjoining areas of Jatlal leaving hundreds of thousands of the people shelterless badly affecting the daily life.

Our AJK Correspondent Altaf Hamid Rao reports from Mirpur on Tuesday that in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, the day dawned with special prayers for the martyrs of the earthquake. Prayers were also made for the liberation of the bleeding vale of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir from Indian forced and unlawful occupation.

Fateh Khawani and Quran Khawani were offered for thousands of victims of the calamity who lost their lives in the quake-hit Muzaffarabad and other parts of Azad Jammu Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In Mirpur division special functions were held to mark the day as the National Disaster Awareness Day at the Quaid e Azam International Cricket Stadium at the DHQ of Mirpur with new pledge.

A walk of the children living in Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust Rehabilitation and Educational Complex Mirpur was also taken out in Mirpur led by Founder Chairman of KORT Ch. Akhter Kashmiri Deputy Commissioner Ch. Yasir Riaz, SSP Khawar Ali Shoukat, Country Director KORT Sardar Sajid Dilawar, Divisional PID Chief and official Spokesperson Javed Malik and other city elite to mark the deadly earthquake of October 08, 2005. The walk started from Quaid e Azam International Mirpur Cricket stadium and ended at the same venue after passing through main Muhammad Road, Shaheed Chowk and quid-e-Azam Chowk.

Over 450 children dwelling South Asia's largest Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust (KORT) and Educational Complex Mirpur, who had fallen orphan and lost their parents in the devastating earthquake marched in the memory of their loved ones in Mirpur participated major congregations held in Mirpur and KPK's Swabi town to mark the anniversary with renewed pledge to face every natural disaster, Allah forbid, with patience.

Besides the dignitaries including the students of the KORT Educational Cimplex, sstudents of various other local schools and colleges also attended the ceremony besides large number of people belonging to all walks of life.

Special prayer was offered on this occasion for the martyrs of earthquake. Sirens were blown at 8.52 a.m and two minutes silence observed in the memory of the victims of the catastrophe.

Orphan children and students of different schools and colleges participated.

Central prayers ceremony was held at the State metropolis where participants including AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq and others laid floral wreath at the memorial of the martyrs in the capital town. A large number of local people attended the ceremony. One minute silence was observed at 08:52 Tuesday morning.

Speaking on this occasion, speakers including the AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, several of his cabinet colleagues, senior State Government officials related to the reconstruction and rehabilitation state functionaries paid rich tributes to the martyrs of the deadly catastrophe of October 08, 2005 earthquake and reiterated the resolve to complete the abandoned and incomplete public welfare projects in earthquake hit zone within the available financial resources.

It may be mentioned here that the AJK government had reportedly identified, last year, about 8 thousand projects for the reconstruction work in the earthquake-hit areas in AJK, with a total investment of Rs. 210 billion. Despite passage of 19 years down the line still a big portion of the projects in the earthquake hit zone was reportedly still lying incomplete, informed sources revealed.

The ceremony hosted in the State capital town to mark the anniversary was held in the capital city with the sign of deep rooted love and affection by the government and the people of Pakistan as well as the national and international NGO's and brotherly foreign countries who contributed their exceptional share for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of the quake hit zone of AJK.

The visitors belonging to all walks of life, laid the floral wreaths at the memorial monument of the martyrs of the deadly earthquake on this occasion paying rich tributes to the departed souls and other victims of the history's worst catastrophe.

The memorial ceremony, largely attended by the earthquake affectees (orphan and shelterless children) recalled the history's most tragic day of Oct 08, 2005 and prayed for the rest of the departed souls / the martyrs of the deadly earthquake.

It may be added that several of the mega Development Projects of public welfare have been completed in the AJK capital in the wake of the broad based phased plan to rehabilitate the AJK metropolis on latest grounds comprising modern civic and other infrastructural facilities.

Similar special ceremonies including walks for awareness, seminars and symposiums were also held in various parts of AJK including Rawalakot, Bagh, Palandri, Kotli and Bhimber districts in the memory of the martyrs of the devastating quake which left over 80 thousand people dead and

lakhs of others injured in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

The ceremonies were attended by the people representing all spheres of life including social and political workers, lawyers, journalists and members of the business fraternity to pay glorious tributes to the victims of history's worst catastrophe this ill-fated day 19 years ago.