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## AJK Observes International Women's Day, Reaffirms Equal Rights and Empowerment for Women



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Altaf Hamid Rao.

MIRPUR (AJK), March 8 – Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) observed International Women’s Day on Sunday with renewed pledges to uphold the dignity, rights, and empowerment of women across all sectors of society. The day marked a reaffirmation of the commitment to maintain women’s respected status in line with Islamic teachings that discourage gender discrimination.

Altaf Hamid Rao, reporting from Mirpur, stated that ceremonies across AJK emphasized ensuring equal opportunities, safeguarding rights, and promoting the full participation of women alongside men. Special events, including walks, seminars, and symposiums, were held in all ten districts, highlighting the critical role of women in society and their contribution to national development.

International Women’s Day, observed annually on March 8 since 1900 under the United Nations charter, seeks to recognize women’s achievements and raise awareness about gender equality. In AJK, the day was celebrated under the auspices of local NGOs, social welfare organizations, and state-run women development institutions, with participation from women representing social,

professional, and working-class communities.

Seminar speakers highlighted exemplary women engaged in diverse fields, including humanitarian work and initiatives for women's self-help and empowerment. They stressed that no society can flourish without recognizing women as responsible mothers, sisters, daughters, and professionals contributing their skills and intellect.

The speakers also strongly condemned ongoing violations against women in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, including incidents of harassment, rape, and killings. They urged the United Nations and international human rights organizations to intervene and stop these atrocities, emphasizing the importance of protecting the fundamental rights of Kashmiri women.

Celebrations across AJK underscored that women, who make up over 51 percent of the population, are essential to the nation's progress, prosperity, and social harmony. Participants reiterated that equal rights, respect, and dignity of women must be maintained at all times, and their talents fully utilized for societal development.

The observances concluded with a call to continue collective efforts to empower women, promote gender equality, and ensure their rightful place in every sphere of life, reinforcing that a healthy and thriving society is impossible without the active role of women.