

# POK NEWS DIGEST

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Volume 1

Number 2

July 2008

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Layout

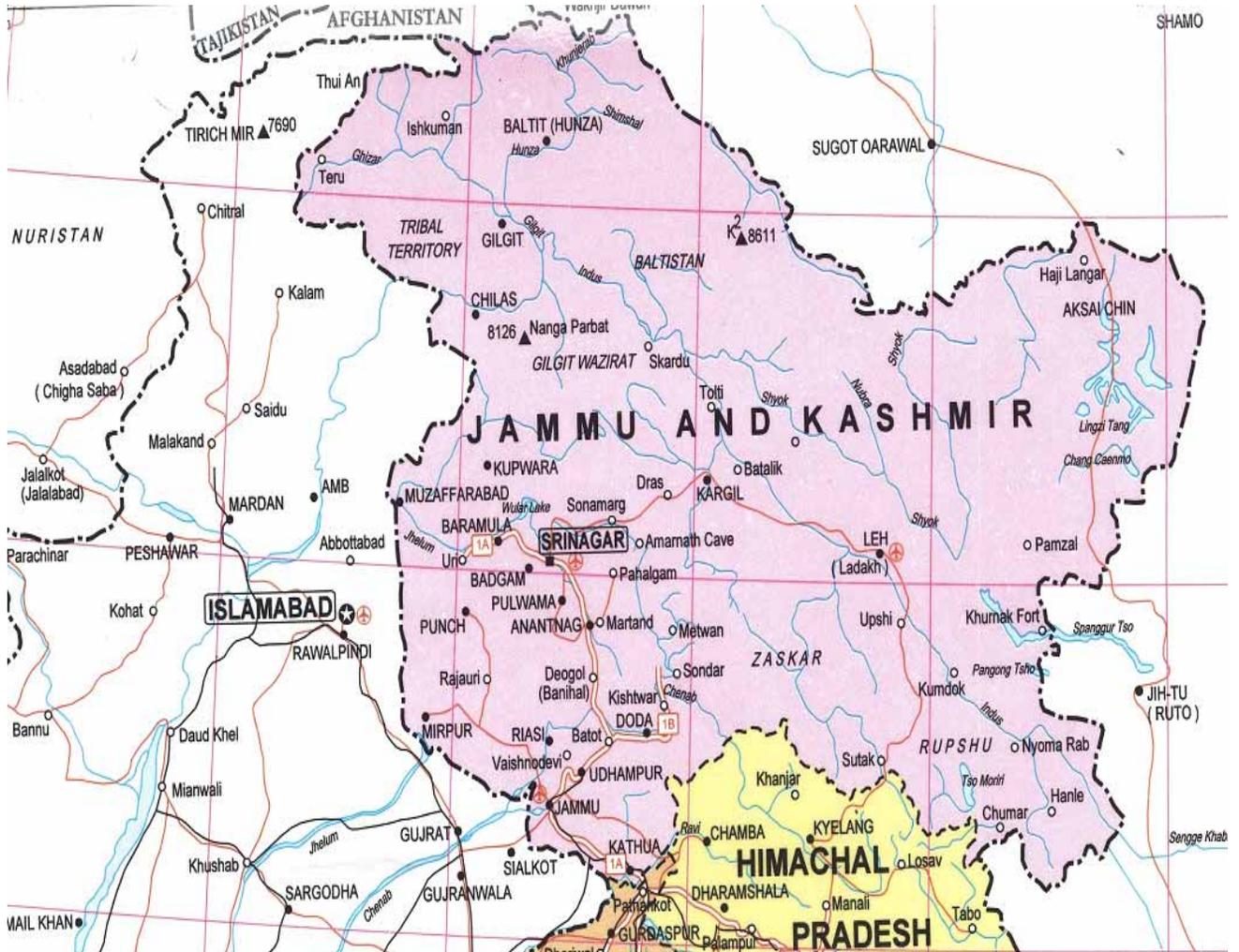
Sanjay Kumar

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## Jammu & Kashmir

(Source: Based on the Survey of India Map, Govt of India 2000 )

# Political Developments

## **“CBMs can’t be meaningful without Kashmir resolution,” Kashmir Media Service, July 24, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Azad Kashmir Chapter said that Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between Pakistan and India cannot prove result oriented without the resolution of Kashmir issue. These views were expressed at a meeting of the Executive Council of APHC AJK Chapter under the chairmanship of the Convenor, Syed Yousuf Naseem. The meeting was also attended by the members, Mahmood Ahmad Saghar, Professor Mohammad Ashraf Saraf, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Sheikh Mohammad Yaqub, Dr Abdul Aala and Abdul Majeed Malik. The meeting urged that durable peace can only be established through peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue. It discussed the situation in Kashmir, successful diplomatic efforts, making Hurriyat more effective and unity among the ranks of the Hurriyat activists. The meeting thanked European Parliament for passing a resolution on Kashmir.

([http://www.kmsnews.org/news/cbms can% E2% 80% 99t- be-meaningful-without kashmir-resolution](http://www.kmsnews.org/news/cbms%20can%20be%20meaningful%20without%20kashmir%20resolution))

## **“Women protest ‘activities’ of militant groups,” Dawn, July 02, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: Around four dozen women staged a peaceful protest in Neelum valley on July 01 against the “growing activities of some militant groups” which they feared could harm the truce along the Line of Control, residents and official sources said.

The protesting women, led by Chand Bibi, Sarwar Jan and Afsar Jan, travelled from Athmuqam, some 80 kilometres to the northeast of Muzaffarabad, to a nearby army camp where they also staged a symbolic sit-in before being assured by the military officials in an hour-long talks that their concerns would be addressed. The protesters demanded of the military authorities to maintain peace and restrict the militants from operating in the border areas in general and Neelum Valley in particular.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/07/02/nat15.htm>)

## **“UJC flays Pak silence on recent Kashmir situation,” July 05, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: An alliance of militant groups on July 05 poured out anger at the governments, leaders, general public and media in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir for their “silence on recent happenings in Jammu and Kashmir” and gave an implied message that the struggling Kashmiris could rethink their ideology regarding Pakistan. “The Pakistani government and leaders are trying to compromise a short-cut with India on Kashmir... We condemn and reject their changed approach,” declared Syed Salahuddin, chairman of United Jihad Council (UJC), at a press conference.

Flanked by top office-bearers of over a dozen UJC constituents, he regretted that while the Kashmiris were hoisting Green flags in Srinagar amid shouts of ‘Pakistan zindabad’ during protest demonstrations against land transfer to Shrine Board, Pakistan and AJK governments behaved like silent spectators. “We condemn the criminal silence of conscienceless and ignominious Pakistani rulers... They could not speak two words of sympathy for the innocent Kashmiris,” a visibly angry UJC chief said.

([http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full\\_story.asp?Date=6\\_7\\_2008&ItemID=23&cat=1](http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=6_7_2008&ItemID=23&cat=1))

## **Usman Manzoor, “The warring My Lords of Azad Kashmir Supreme Court,” The News, July 06, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Two senior most ‘My Lords’ of the Azad Kashmir Supreme Court started a deplorable war of words, each trying to prove that the other is violating the code of conduct and was unworthy of the high post.

The Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Justice Riaz Akhtar Chaudhry, is being accused of starting a character-assassination campaign of the senior-most judge of the AJK Supreme Court, Justice, Manzoor Hussain Gilani. Justice Gilani, in a letter to the AJK chief justice dated July 1, 2008, reminded him that he was six-year junior to him and was made the chief justice within 20 days of his elevation to the Supreme Court. The letter of Justice Gilani stated that the incumbent chief justice was ridiculing, snubbing and pressurizing the

government officers, even the peons of the Supreme Court, not to obey the orders of Justice Gilani and to go on a pen-down strike against him.

([http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=122477](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=122477))

**Mumtaz Alvi, “Former AJK premier vows to send incumbent govt packing,” The News, July 12, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Billing July 11 as the blackest day in the history of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, former AJK premier, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry said on July 11 that two years back on this day, a rigged government was imposed on the Kashmiris. Speaking at a news conference at his residence, he said that human rights organisations, including the Amnesty International, had also termed the previous the AJK elections as rigged. “On July 11, people’s right of rule was bulldozed and democracy was uprooted, which also harmed the Kashmiris’ freedom movement,” he noted.

Sultan Mehmood, who is also the president of the People’s Muslim League (PML), further alleged that a conspiracy was hatched in the AJK elections and the chief election commissioner was part of it, who was later made the chief justice of the Supreme Court. He said that all the AJK opposition parties, including the PPP, the JI, the Liberation Front and the Liberation League, had rejected the election results, adding that a white paper was also issued regarding the ‘massive corruption’ committed by the present AJK government but the government side had not responded to it. He claimed that 16 legislators, belonging to the Muslim Conference, were prepared to support the opposition’s bid for an in-house change.

([http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=123724](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=123724))

**“Resolution of Kashmir issue linked to regional peace,” Pakistan Daily, July 15, 2008**

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan, said that the resolution of Kashmir issue is imperative for establishment of peace in the South Asia region. He was addressing a seminar “Nazaria Ilhaaq-e-Pakistan Aur Hamari Zamadaryaan” (Concept of accession of Kashmir to Pakistan and our responsibilities) held at a local hotel. The event was hosted by the All

Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (Sindh). He said that the AJK government had, with a consensus, decided to mark the Shuhada-e-Kashmir week and Ilhaaq-e-Pakistan week. Various events were to be organised throughout Pakistan during the week which would continue till July 19, he informed. He recalled that when the earthquake hit AJK in October 2005, the world witnessed that the people in Pakistan from every part of the country extended help to the Kashmiris. The Prime Minister of AJK also said that an international donors’ conference will be organised in Muzaffarabad soon.

(<http://www.daily.pk/national/nationalnews/88-nationalnews/5656-resolution-of-kashmir-issue-linked-to-regional-peace.html>)

**“Minister seeks report on Sost dry port issue,” Dawn, July 20, 2008**

HUNZA: The Minister for Finance and Privatisation, Syed Naveed Qamar has assured that the real stakeholder of Sost Dry Port will be given their due rights. He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party, Hunza chapter, during his visit to the picturesque valley for the inauguration of the Ahmedabad Hydro Power Station. The delegation comprised Fida Karim, president Pakistan Peoples Party, Hunza, Karimullah Baig, president, Peoples Youth Organisation, Farmanullah Baig Razi, president PYO, Gojal, Aziz Jan, Chairman Union Council Gojal and Imam Yar Baig, party activist from Shinaki. The delegation informed the minister about the ‘large scale irregularities’ of Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Chief Executive Northern Areas and his family in the management of Sost Dry Port Trust. The minister was told that Mr Ghazanfar was hell bent upon to create misunderstanding between the newly-elected Board of Trustees of the port and the Chinese partners.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/07/20/nat12.htm>)

**“AJK Govt plans rapid implementation of Green and skilled Kashmir”, Associated Press of Pakistan, July 26, 2008**

MIRPUR: The AJK government’s vision of “Green and Skilled Kashmir”, primarily aimed at converting AJK into a model welfare state is being implemented under a broad-based phased development programme across Azad Jammu and Kashmir, official sources

said. The sources told APP on July 26 that the mass development programme will prove to be a milestone in redirecting the economy of the liberated territory with special focus to provide employment to the youth and to reform their economic future. "Provision of technical training at least to two persons in every home in Azad Jammu and Kashmir forms the central part of this programme", the sources said. They said that the programme will not only help in to emerge and strengthen better home economy but would also involve the implementation of various mega projects.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=46576&Itemid=2B](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46576&Itemid=2B))

### **Usman Manzoor, "Bars say legal correction should start from AJK," The News, July 17, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and the PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari have been given a suggestion by the office-bearers of the AJK Bar and the Supreme Court Bar Associations to start rectifying the judicial crisis engulfing the country from the AJK, where the violation was done first i.e. in October 2006. In different letters written by the AJK Bar Council and the Supreme Court Bar Association of the AJK, the legal fraternity has asked Prime Minister Gilani and Asif Zardari to proceed with the report that the prime minister had sought on the AJK judicial crisis. The letters also stated that the incumbent chief justice was six years junior to the senior-most judge of the AJK Supreme Court and the assault on the judiciary was done by former prime minister Shaukat Aziz in the capacity of the Chairman of the AJK Council, the Upper House of the AJK legislature.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=124685>)

### **"We want Kashmiris to live in peace: Taseer," Daily Times, July 18, 2008**

LAHORE: Pakistanis are waiting for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and want to see their Kashmiri brothers living in peace, Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer told Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan on July 17. The AJK prime minister called on the governor at Governor's House. The two leaders discussed matters of mutual interests in their half-an-hour meeting.

Ahmad invited Taseer to visit the AJK. The governor accepted the invitation. The governor told the AJK

prime minister that Pakistan would continue supporting the Kashmiris' freedom struggle. He said peace in the region was not possible without the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The governor said hotel and tourism industry should be promoted in the AJK because it would boost the economy of the state. He said there were vast opportunities for investment in the AJK and that small powerhouses could be set up at natural waterfalls. He also said he would take along a delegation of investors to AJK on his visit.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C18%5Cstory\\_18-7-2008\\_pg7\\_41](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C18%5Cstory_18-7-2008_pg7_41))

### **"NAs Executive Development Committee to meet next month," Associated Press of Pakistan, July 27, 2008**

GILGIT: The Northern Area Executive Development Committee is expected to meet in the first week of August as arrangement were being finalized to hold meeting with Federal Minister For Kashmir Affairs and Northern Area in chair, official sources said. The meeting would finalize Annual Development Plan and Chairman Northern Area, Qamar Zaman Kaira would approve the ADP of the current year which would be conveyed to Finance Division to get uplift funds of first quarter of the financial year, added the sources. It is to be noted here that Federal Minister is expected to hold a number of official meetings.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=46672&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46672&Itemid=2))

### **"Indo-Pak officials discuss Kashmir-related CBMs," Press Trust of India, July 18, 2008**

Indian and Pakistani officials met on July 18 to discuss Kashmir-related confidence-building measures, including steps to facilitate travel and trade across the Line of Control (LoC). The meeting of the Working Group on cross-Line of Control CBMs, earlier scheduled to be held on July 10, was postponed as the official who was to lead the Indian side had gone to Afghanistan in wake of the suicide bombing at the Indian embassy in Kabul. Besides measures to facilitate travel and trade across the LoC, the two countries discussed new Kashmir-related CBMs and the launch of a truck service between Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, sources said. The Working Group

also reviewed the existing trans-LoC bus services, they said. The meeting came ahead of talks between the foreign secretaries of the two countries in New Delhi during July 21-22, to launch the fifth round of the composite dialogue.

([http://www.businessstandard.com/general/printpage\\_online.php?autono=42480](http://www.businessstandard.com/general/printpage_online.php?autono=42480))

**Tariq Naqash, “Srinagar-Muzaffarabad service to run weekly: Sardar Attique,” July 20, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan stated on July 19 that the bus service between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar will now run on weekly basis. Disclosing this at a public meeting to mark the end of weeklong programme on “accession of Kashmir to Pakistan day”, Attique said that the foreign ministries of Pakistan and India had taken the decision of running Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service on weekly instead of fortnightly basis on “our recommendation.”

([http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full\\_story.asp?Date=20\\_7\\_2008&ItemID=58&cat=1](http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=20_7_2008&ItemID=58&cat=1))

# Economic Developments

## **“Withdrawal of leases in Gilgit Baltistan demanded,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, July 26 - August 1, 2008**

GILGIT: “The federal government should withdraw all leases in Gilgit-Baltistan otherwise the matter would be taken to the International Court of Justice.” This was declared by Balawaristan National Front (BNF) spokesman Safdar Ali in a statement issued here. He said that the government had issued leases to hundreds of non-local people which were in violation of the State Subject Rule. He said that if the government did not change its policy about the issue, it would be raised in all forums and all options including moving to the courts would be utilised against the injustice. The BNF spokesman further said that while on the one hand the government and its agencies were trying to get the masses believe that the region lacked resources, on the other hand over two thousand and six hundreds leases had been issued to non-locals in the region. He said the beneficiaries of the leases were multi-national companies and non-local entrepreneurs. He said people of Gilgit-Baltistan opposed the matter and would not allow the state to rob them of their resources.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/07/withdrawal-of-leases-in-gilgit.html>)

## **Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “AJK electricity dept slams WAPDA for power cuts,” The News, July 05, 2008**

MIRPUR: The Electricity Department of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Southern region, asked WAPDA to put an end to the ongoing frequent and unscheduled loadshedding in various parts of AJK. Chief Engineer, AJK Electricity Department (South), Mirpur region, Tariq Mahmood Mallick stated on July 04 that by defying all moral and legal norms, WAPDA had been resorting to forced and unscheduled loadshedding for hours at the Chakswari/Kotli 132KV circuits for the last 48 hours.

The chief engineer electricity expressed the electricity minister’s displeasure at WAPDA’s power cuts, which were in excess of the daily seven-hour schedule of loadshedding.

The WAPDA official was also apprised of the minister’s feelings about the intolerable situation. Mallick said that such an attitude might cause great hatred and unrest among the masses, not only over the loadshedding and subsequent acute shortage of drinking water, but could also lead to a negative impact on the ongoing Mangla Dam raising project.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=122249>)

## **Zafar Bhutta, “37,000 families to be displaced by Bhasha Dam project,” Daily Times, July 06, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam will displace around 37,000 families, German Company Lehmar has informed in the final draft of detailed engineering design of the dam. Sources in Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) acknowledged that Lehmar has submitted the final detailed engineering design to the authority. The company has recommended setting up nine model villages near Gilgit to accommodate these affected families. The company has also recommended allotting five Marlas for residence per family and six canals to one family for agriculture purpose. The company has also informed that the dam power generation capacity would be 4,500 MW per day whereas its water storage capacity would stand at 7.5 million acre feet (MAF). Dam would have four turbines and two powerhouses.

Sources said the royalty would be distributed between main stakeholders, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Northern Areas. For the royalty, the power plants of 1,150 MW would be set up and income from these power plants would be aimed at royalty purposes.

The dam would be at 1,160 feet above the sea level and 360 feet from the river level. Ten feet storage capacity would be specified to handle the situation if the glacier splits. Lehmar in the detailed engineering design has indicated cost of \$ 8.505 billion at present against the earlier projected cost of \$ 6.5 billion in the year 2005.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C06%5Cstory\\_6-7-2008\\_pg5\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C06%5Cstory_6-7-2008_pg5_1))

**“Mangla Dam: Affected people assured of swift rehabilitation,” Daily Times, July 06, 2008**

MIRPUR: Resettlement and rehabilitation of people affected by Mangla Dam upraising is the responsibility of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir government and all efforts will be made to perform this task, said Mangla Dam Affairs (MDAs) Minister Chaudhry Muhammad Yousaf on July 05. Addressing a meeting at Mangla Dam Resettlement Organisation (MDRO) headquarters, he said the AJK government would take care of due rights of people displaced or affected by ongoing work on the dam’s upraising. He urged Water and Power Development Authority to accelerate development work immediately in the under-construction New Mirpur Garden City and four small model towns of the district to ensure the sufferers’ timely rehabilitation.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C06%5Cstory\\_6-7-2008\\_pg7\\_51](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C06%5Cstory_6-7-2008_pg7_51))

**Zafar Bhutta, “AJK Government Providing Power at Higher Rates,” Daily Times, July 15, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is making money from the consumers by providing electricity at higher rates, sources in Water and Power Ministry stated on July 14. Sources said that three power distribution companies- Islamabad Electric Power Supply Company (IESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) and Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) are supplying electricity to AJK government. They said that these companies are providing electricity at the rate of Rs. 3.59 per unit to the AJK government but it is supplying the electricity to the consumers at the rates prevailing in other parts of the country. At present, due to hike in oil prices in the international market, power purchase price of the distribution companies had spiked to over Rs. 5 per unit. IESCO is one of three major power distribution companies that approached National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) to make intervention regarding the tariff. This company stated that the AJK government is receiving the electricity at the lower rates but it is providing electricity to masses at the higher rates.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C15%5Cstory\\_15-7-2008\\_pg5\\_16](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C15%5Cstory_15-7-2008_pg5_16))

July 2008

**“\$40 billion investment in energy sector: AJK plans to meet power needs of Pakistan,” July 16, 2008**

KARACHI: Azad Jammu & Kashmir which has invited \$40 billion of foreign investment in hydel energy sector as a part of its energy and investment-focused strategy during FY2008-09, has a plan to provide electricity to the power-hungry Pakistan which is facing 4,000MW shortage. “Pakistan has a shortage of 4,000MW while Azad Kashmir has the potential to generate 17,000MW of electricity, for which we have invited \$40 billion foreign investment in the energy sector,” Prime Minister of AJK Sardar Attique Ahmed noted in an interview. The AJK premier further stated that his government had formulated a policy based on energy and investment for fiscal year 2008-09 under which no sales tax would be collected for 10 years on foreign investment in different energy sectors like hydel, solar, wind mill, bio diesel, fuel cell etc.

(<http://www.defence.pk/forums/economy-development/12757-40-billion-investment-energy-sector-ajk-plans-meet-power.html>)

**Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “AJK makes record tax collection,” The News, July 20, 2008**

MIRPUR: The Income Tax, Excise and Sales Tax Department of Azad Jammu & Kashmir made a historic achievement in the last fiscal year (2007-08) as it collected Rs. 3, 588 million under the head of income tax against the target of Rs. 3,200 million. The high revenue collection came in the wake of an extensive recovery drive. Disclosing this, Commissioner Income Tax and Collector Excise and Sales Tax of AJK Council, Muhammad Asif Abbasi stated on July 19 that the income tax collection included extra revenue of Rs. 388.8 million following strict adoption of a policy of merit by the tax department despite adverse effects of history’s worst earthquake on the economy.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=125106>)

**“Plan to modernise communication sector in AJK,” Associated Press of Pakistan, July 21, 2008**

MIRPUR: Under the spirit of the annual (2008-09) public service development programme, the AJK

government inked a broad-based integrated plan for the upliftment of communication sector to put this region on the path of speedy progress and prosperity, official sources affirmed. The sources stated on July 21 that in order to materialise the plan, the state government has allocated over Rs. 2 billion in the current financial year under the development programme to achieve the target. The funds would be spent on the ongoing schemes and new projects, the sources added. It is 31.07 percent of the overall Annual Development Programme chalked out for the current financial year for the AJK.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=45962&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=45962&Itemid=2))

### **Tariq Naqash, “Held up reconstruction process mounts frustration in Muzaffarabad,” July 24, 2008**

Anger is piling up in the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir due to the unwarranted delay in the initiation of much-hyped Muzaffarabad City Development Project (MCDP) and from political leaders to ordinary citizens, all and sundry put its blame on Pakistan’s Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA). Though Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan’s government in AJK is yet to make any public statement on the burning issue, Zahid Amin, chairman of Development Authority Muzaffarabad (DAM) lately disclosed without mincing words that “vested interests” in Erra are bent upon scrapping the role of Chinese companies in reconstruction of Muzaffarabad after slashing the size of the mega project.

It was at the international donors’ conference in Islamabad in November 2005, the Chinese government had pledged a Preferential Buyers’ Credit through its EXIM-Bank (soft loan with 1.5 percent interest rate) for reconstruction of Muzaffarabad. A loan agreement was signed between Islamabad and Beijing in the follow up of that commitment. In September 2007, Erra and two Chinese companies, chosen by Beijing, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and though it was announced on the occasion that the groundbreaking of some of the packages under the Rs. 21.356 billion MCDP would be performed preferably on October 8, 2007, nothing could be

initiated due to a disagreement with the Chinese companies about the ratio of overhead charges.

([http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full\\_story.asp?Date=24\\_7\\_2008&ItemID=1&cat=12](http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=24_7_2008&ItemID=1&cat=12))

# International Developments

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## **“UK to continue reconstruction efforts in quake-hit areas,” Daily Times, July 03, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Reconstruction work by the British government in areas affected by the October 2005 earthquake would continue, United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development, Douglas Alexander said on July 02. A statement by the British High Commission said that accompanied by senior officials from the Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority (ERRA), Alexander visited the affected areas in Azad Kashmir. “He saw first hand rebuilding around Balakot and Mansehra, two of the villages worst hit by the earthquake,” it said. He later visited a new bridge at Kahouri, one of 50 funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and saw medical facilities and quake-proof housing provided by the international community.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C03%5Cstory\\_3-7-2008\\_pg7\\_25](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C03%5Cstory_3-7-2008_pg7_25))

## **“London conference supports Kashmiris’ right to self-determination,” July 03, 2008**

LONDON: The fourth international peace conference on Kashmir resolved that right of self-determination was an inalienable and non-negotiable right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Terming right to self-determination as an undeniable right of people of Jammu and Kashmir, the participants in the conference ‘Visions of Peace’ held in the House of Commons, Palace of Westminster maintained that Kashmiris should be granted this right to ensure peace in the region in particular and world in general. Held under the aegis of Kashmir Centre, the conference called for demilitarization from both the sides of the ceasefire line, declaring Jammu and Kashmir as a non-nuclear zone. The conference further called for a concerted dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir to be speeded up and the dialogue should be all-inclusive by providing due space to the people of Jammu and Kashmir at the dialogue table.

([http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full\\_story.asp?Date=4\\_7\\_2008&ItemID=37&cat=21](http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=4_7_2008&ItemID=37&cat=21))

## **“Worrisome al-Qaeda build-up: expert,” July 23, 2008**

Al-Qaeda’s revival on Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan will have negative ramifications for counter-terrorism operations across South-East Asia, a leading terrorism expert says. Northern areas of Pakistan have fallen to the Taliban and the three-month-old government in Islamabad has so far refused to allow US forces to pursue the militants inside the country. The International Crisis Group’s senior Asian adviser, Sidney Jones, warned that Islamist militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan were likely to still have connections with fighters in South-East Asia.

“The other thing that’s not good news is the rejuvenation of al-Qaeda and the Taliban on the Pakistan-Afghan border because that’s the one region where South-East Asians have long-term experience and probably ongoing contacts,” Ms Jones told a conference.

US intelligence firm Stratford last week reported increasing military action on the border.

(<http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/536641/1935264>)

# Other Developments

## **“World urged to help save Gilgit Baltistan environment,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, July 5- July 11, 2008**

MUMBAI: Gilgit Baltistan United Movement Chairman, Engineer Manzoor Hussain Parwana urged the environmentalists across the world to write letters to their parliamentarians informing them about the real situation in Gilgit Baltistan, expressing concern over the region’s environment under Pakistan’s colonial rule and its detrimental effects on the situation of their respective countries. In his paper presented at the international conference on ‘Responsibility to the Future: Business, Peace and Sustainability’ organised by the Strategic Foresight Group and co-hosted by the United National Global Compact from June 26-28, Parwana urged the participants to establish Gilgit Baltistan Supports Group in their communities to work for avoiding the game to hunt endangered species in Gilgit Baltistan. He asked them to organize workshops, conferences, video and slideshows and seminars on environment of Gilgit Baltistan, and impress upon their governments to provide scholarships for environmental research on Gilgit Baltistan and other environmental projects. He asked them to tell their friends about the situation in Gilgit Baltistan.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/07/world-urged-to-help-save-gilgit.html>)

## **“Heavy floods hit Gilgit- Baltistan area,” Daily Times, July 07, 2008**

GILGIT: Heavy floods triggered by lightning inundated many villages at various points of Gilgit-Baltistan as Karakoram Highway got blocked in Jutal and Thalichi area, police officials said. Many reports disclosed that floods washed away a large area in Sher Qila village of Ghizer district as people ran out of homes to save their lives. In Jutal and Thalichi points, huge boulders erected blockade which stopped all traffic. Police reports added that the floods affected crops, orchards, irrigation channels and many houses. The water flow in rivers and streams was high and electricity was suspended for some time in the region.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C07%5Cstory\\_7-7-2008\\_pg7\\_4](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C07%5Cstory_7-7-2008_pg7_4))

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## **ACRONYMS**

AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
BNF	Balawaristan National Front
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
JIAJK	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
KKH	Karakoram Highway
LoC	Line of Control
PoK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
PPP	Pakistan Peoples’ Party
UJC	United Jihad Council
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority

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