

# POK NEWS DIGEST

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## Jammu & Kashmir

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

## About this Issue

*One of the reports in this issue indicates that the PPP-led government in Pakistan intends to withdraw the Legal Framework Order of 2004 from Gilgit Baltistan and replace it with a new constitutional package which embodies an “AJK” like political set up for the Northern Areas- a set up which comprises a president, a cabinet headed by a prime minister and a High Court. The local PPP leadership in consultation with the establishment in Pakistan is reportedly working on finalities of political transition in the Northern Areas. On a positive note, at least the government of Pakistan has finally admitted that people in this region were subjected to deprivation from basic political rights and economic gains.*

*The opening of Srinagar- Muzaffarabad trade route after almost six decades was greatly welcomed in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The matter was discussed at international forums like the European Union (EU) as one of the reports included in this issue affirms. Earlier in the month, an 18 member PoK delegation lead by chairman of “Azad Kashmir” Chamber of Commerce, Zulfikar Abbasi visited Kaman Post in Kashmir to explore the possibilities of cross-border trade.*

**Priyanka Singh**

# Political Developments

## **Shafqat Ali Inqalabi, “Why a soft heart for Pakistan?” Weekly Bange-e-Sahar, October 25-October 31, 2008**

The day of “self determination” was observed in the Pakistani occupied Kashmir on October 14 full with the ever repeated lengthy speeches and a cacophony of meaningless clichés in the newspapers that impress nobody. The evening, viewing the day’s broadcast on television channels was a mixture of anxiety and fun; the ‘senseless’ Kashmiri leaders and the top brass of Pakistani terrorist outfits were still pouring out words from the old rotten script handed to them by the Pakistani Intelligence agencies, which for the most part is their major hindrance on the road to independence. The so called leaders, acting in accordance with the script written by the Pakistani Intelligence agencies in 1988 have made no progress so far but fooling a whole nation since last sixty one years. These leaders on the directives of the Pakistani Intelligence agencies butchered thousands of Kashmiri youths. Through this article, I would like to bring to the attention of these so called leaders some questions. I doubt if they have got the answers. Will these hired political bigwigs like to please tell their people as who after penning the ‘standstill agreement’ with Maharaja of Kashmir Hari Singh sabotaged the agreement within few months when even the ink had not dried? Will they point out the people who under the supervision of army settled jihadis from the frontier in the valleys of Muzafarabad, Bagh, Rawlakot and other parts of Kashmir resulting in the butchery of hundreds of youth and non-Muslim females of the region besides putting on fire the houses and other belongings of the local non-Muslim community?

(<http://balawaristan.blogspot.com/2008/10/why-soft-heart-for-pakistan.html>)

## **“Resolution of Kashmir stand-off not far off: Zardari,” October 29, 2008.**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari reiterated that Pakistan will continue extending political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people, adding, all outstanding issues should be

resolved through dialogue. Talking to President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Raja Mohammad Zulqarnian Khan who called on him at Awan-e- Sadr, President Zardari said Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) firmly believes in democracy and hopes to resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir with India through dialogue. He further said that the new initiatives of starting trade activities between the two sides of Jammu and Kashmir would produce an atmosphere of confidence building between the two countries which would be helpful in resolving the issue of Kashmir.

(<http://urdunews.wordpress.com/2008/10/29/resolution-of-kashmir-stand-off-not-far-off-zardari/>)

## **“Conspiracy to divide Gilgit Baltistan people will fail, says GBUM,” October 29, 2008**

The conspiracies to divide Gilgit-Baltistan would be foiled and pressure would be mounted on both India and Pakistan to open the Kargil-Ladakh- Gilgit-Baltistan routes. This was stated by Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement chairman Manzoor Hussain Parwana, general secretary Ghulam Shehzad Agha and joint secretary Ismail Zia while addressing the party workers. They said efforts would also be made to compel India and Pakistan to withdraw their forces and other officials from Kargil-Ladakh and Gilgit Baltistan.

(<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/10/conspiracy-to-divide-gilgit-baltistan.html>)

## **“Kashmiri leadership sees light at end of tunnel”**

As Kashmiris observed complete strike on the occasion of Black Day on October 27 to draw attention of the international community towards their plight, Kashmiri leadership on this side of the Line of Control (LoC) as well as those at the helm of affairs in Pakistan appears to be optimistic about resolution of the issue. This is what one can deduce from the meeting of AJK President Raja Zulqarnain with President Asif Ali Zardari where the latter observed that solution of the problem was not far off. Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad

Khan also holds similar views. In a television interview, he lauded efforts of Mr Zardari for launching of cross LoC trade and expressed the hope that this would help resolve the Kashmir issue. Going by the statements of both past and present leadership of Pakistan and AJK, one can safely say that their thinking is not in tune with the mainstream views of people of Pakistan and Kashmiris. Our leaders have been expressing misplaced optimism about resolution of the conflict as the ground realities always never supported their contentions.

(<http://pakobserver.net/200810/29/Editorial02.asp>)

### **“President to visit AJK,” The Daily Mail, October 27, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: Opposition leader in Azad Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly Sardar Qamar-uz-Zaman informed that President Asif Ali Zardari would visit Azad Kashmir soon. He expressed these views while addressing the inaugurating ceremony of ‘Bhutto Mela’ in Lahan Galli situated at the junction of Muzaffarabad and Bagh. He said that the Federal government was taking keen interest for the welfare of the people of AJK and stated with confidence that Kashmir issue would be solved in the tenure of PPP government. He said that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto had sacrificed their lives for the country and created awareness among people. He said that PPP has always raised Kashmir issue in front of international community and even now it was negotiating for right of self-determination of Kashmiri people.

(<http://dailymailnews.com/200810/27/news/dmbrn01.html>)

### **“Water row with India a threat to CBMs: Zardari,” Daily Times, October 28, 2008**

LAHORE: The blockade of Chenab River’s water by India could dent the ongoing confidence-building measures (CBMs), stated President Asif Ali Zardari on October 27 as reports noted. Zardari was talking to Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Satyabrata Pal who met him at the President’s House in Islamabad. Zardari urged India to abide by the terms of the Indus Water Treaty and stop blocking Pakistan’s water. Pal said the Indian government was

determined to advance the CBMs with Pakistan. President Zardari also met Azad Jammu and Kashmir Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President, Raja Zulqarnain on October 27 as reported by APP . Reaffirming his support for the people of Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC), President Zardari said the cross-LoC trade would further enhance the CBMs.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C28%5Cstory\\_28-10-2008\\_pg1\\_6](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C28%5Cstory_28-10-2008_pg1_6))

### **APHC-AJK observes Black Day in Islamabad and AJK, Kashmir Media Service, October 30, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: observing it as a Black Day, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter held a demonstration against India October 27. The demonstrators, led by the APHC-AJK Convener, Syed Yousaf Naseem staged a sit-in in front of the United Nations Observers’ Office. The protesters, holding banners and placards in their hands, raised high-pitched slogans against India.

(<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/aphc-ajk-observes-black-day-islamabad-and-ajk>)

### **“Kashmir dispute unresolved due to Musharraf: Nawaz,” Daily Times, October 27, 2008**

LAHORE: The Kashmir issue would have been resolved in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people if the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government had not been toppled by the then army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, on October 12, 1999, PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif said on October 26. The former premier said his government was dislodged under a planned conspiracy at a time when the resolution of the Kashmir dispute was near. Nawaz expressed these views while talking to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Zulqarnain at his residence in Raiwind. The PML-N chief assured Zulqarnain that his party would continue its political, diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri people, adding that relations between Pakistan and India could not improve without resolving the Kashmir dispute. The AJK president thanked Nawaz for his commitment to the Kashmir cause

and said the Kashmiri people loved Pakistan and its people.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C27%5Cstory\\_27-10-2008\\_pg7\\_23](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C27%5Cstory_27-10-2008_pg7_23))

### **Dweep Chanana, “Kashmiri Separatists Let Down Their People,” The Discomfort Zone, October 24, 2008**

India has just opened a border post for trade through Kashmir to Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Yet earlier this year, massive protests had broken out in Kashmir, over the transfer of a small piece of land to a Hindu trust. The transfer was meant to facilitate an annual hindu pilgrimage, by constructing temporary shelters. Yet, the Muslims in the Kashmir valley were furious, accusing the state government of planning to change the region’s demography. The resulting protests, which gathered hundreds of thousands, eventually turned into demonstrations by separatists against Indian presence. The sight of hundreds of thousands of muslim protesters saying prayers in public to protest against their government stands in stark contrast to what is happening to another set of Muslims not far from Kashmir. In Xinjiang to the North West the Chinese government severely restricts the practice of Islam.

(<http://www.planetd.org/2008/10/24/kashmiri-separatists-let-down-their-people/>)

### **“Kashmir is not a property of its Muslim inhabitants”**

Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM) Manzoor Hussain Parwana said on the occasion of the historic day of October 4, that on behalf of his party and the two million people of Gilgit-Baltistan he pays tributes to the people of Kashmir and their political leaders for once again drawing attention towards the moments in history during which we as a free nation had also carved out an independent state for ourselves. Every year by commemorating the day as the day of independent republic of Kashmir, the people of Kashmir draw the attention of the free and civilized world towards the people of a region who have been subjugated and kept deprived of all basic human rights for the last over half a century. The so-called political leadership of Kashmir has also taken

undue advantages of the situation at the cost of the people of Kashmir. The mujahidden, separatists and conferences who claim to get the region liberated by force from India and accede to Pakistan have further compounded the situation. I believe that the day when each Kashmiri realizes that Kashmir is not a property of its Muslim inhabitants alone but all who live here including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Pundits have the right to rule and neither they want to accede to Pakistan on the basis of religion nor they want freedom from India due to anti-Hindu sentiment. They want to make their region an independent state without consideration of caste, creed and religion, only then the day of independence will dawn in the region.

([http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/10/kashmir-is-not-property-of-its-muslim\\_20.html](http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/10/kashmir-is-not-property-of-its-muslim_20.html))

### **“We Want Free Balwaristan,” October 20, 2008**

The focus of debates on Kashmir at the annual meetings of United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva (UNCHR) has certainly changed over the past about 10 years. Ten years ago the Commission heard mainly what the Pakistan funded non-government organizations (NGOs) had to parrot about the right of self-determination of Kashmiris in the part of Kashmir that is on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LOC) and India’s alleged violations of human rights. One remembers the furore the Prime Minister of Pakistan kicked off in March 1994 when she moved a resolution on alleged violations of human rights in Kashmir. Ms. Bhutto had hoped that at least Muslim countries would support this resolution. Pakistan had to withdraw it because no support came from the Muslim countries. This was a serious setback to Pakistan’s diplomacy. But worse was the fact that since Pakistan was not willing to stop trans-LoC terrorism, it began to lose its credibility in the world community specially after the killing of some tourists in Kashmir in 1995 by Al Faran, which was actually Pak-based Harkatul Ansar. The report of these killings came when the Sub-Commission of the UNCHR was in session in Geneva. The delegates were shocked. Some of them very vehemently spoke against demand, such as the right of self- determination when national boundaries had already been settled.

(<http://kashmirihindu.wordpress.com/2008/10/20/we-want-free-balwaristan/>)

**“Afghans to be kicked out of Gilgit-Baltistan,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, October 18-October 24, 2008**

Considering the current scenario of law and order in the country, the local administration of Gilgit Baltistan has decided to remove Afghan nationals residing in the region without NOCs. “The administration has decided to keep a close eye on the activities of Afghan nationals residing in the region,” said a source in the local administration. He said a list of the Afghan nationals and their whereabouts in the region was also being started soon while those who are residing without NOCs will be deported from the region.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/10/afghans-to-be-kicked-out-of-gilgit.html>)

**“No more packages - we need freedom,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar , October 11-October 17, 2008**

According to reports, the Legal Framework Order of 2004 enforced in Gilgit-Baltistan is being replaced with a new constitutional package. The package envisaging a separate president, prime minister and cabinet, a high court and a public service commission for the region is in the final stages and the government has also finalized discussions with the local PPP leadership in this regard. Sources say under the new package, Gilgit-Baltistan will be given self-governance right. Besides giving financial and administrative powers to the legislative assembly, the number of its members will also be increased from the current 36 to 40. There will also be reduction in the 50 per cent reserved seats. The Northern Areas PPP president, Syed Jafar said that all issues regarding Gilgit-Baltistan have been finalized and soon over 60-years deprivation in the region will be removed. It is also reported that Prime Minister Gilani will visit the region to announce the package after taking the parliament into confidence on the issue. Whether military or civilian, successive governments in Pakistan have for the last over 60 years done the same trick in the names of so-called packages and hoodwinked the masses of Gilgit-Baltistan. This time too, it seems that the government in order to continue its rule over the area has tried to use the same trick in the names of so-

called packages and hoodwinked the masses of Gilgit-Baltistan. This time too, it seems that the government in order to continue its rule over the area has tried to use the same trick.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/10/no-more-packages-we-need-freedom.html>)

**“Terrorist activity ruled out,” The Frontier Post, October 13, 2008**

GILGIT: Police Chief of Gilgit-Baltistan region ruled out any possibility of terrorist hand in collapse of Gilgit Bridge over Karakoram Highway that linked Pakistan with China. “We have examined it from various angles and found no clue that the collapse was result of some terrorist activity” Inspector General Police, Khurshid Alam affirmed.

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=ts&nid=2550&ad=13-10-2008>)

**“Balawaristan: BNF Chief Abdul Hamid Speech to a Historic Gathering” October 10, 2008**

My dear brothers, sisters of Gilgit-Baltistan, Ladakh, Chitral and Kohistan; youth of BNSO, GBDA Leaders and distinguished guests, I want to let you know, I never keep my nation in dark by making cheap and emotional statements. I try to clear my stand according to the international laws and principles. Our stand does not only fulfil UNO but also matches with the legal stand of Pakistan. But this is ironic that Pakistan has always discouraged our peaceful and democratic struggle, whether it's so-called democratic government or Military dictatorship. This was not because our illegal stand, but because of the double standard of government of Pakistan itself. The stand of Pakistan to its public and national media was different than its international and legal stand.

Sometimes Pakistani regimes avoided giving our deserved rights on the pretext of sensitivity of our country (Balawaristan) and sometimes by the pretext of Kashmir dispute and its own constitution. In spite of all that if any one dares to raise any question or challenge their occupation, Pakistan has been trying to eliminate such people from its way. This was the reason; my life was under threat when I brought its inhuman treatment and illegal occupation to the UN's notice and other member countries of the democratic world.

(<http://kashmirihindu.wordpress.com/2008/10/10/balawaristan-bnf-chief-abdul-hamid-speech-to-a-historic-gathering/>)

### **Khalid Amin, "Kashmir issue to be finalized in Govt's tenure, says Kaira," The Daily Mail, October 09, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Qamar-uz-Zaman Kaira said that Kashmir issue would be finalized during the present government's tenure. He expressed these views while inaugurating Muzaffarabad City Development Project and Neelum Highway. He said that they paid gratitude to Kashmir's struggle for freedom and Pakistan would continue to support Kashmir cause morally, politically and diplomatically. He said that they would honor the dream of Quaid-e-Azam. Kaira further said that cross border trade between the two states starting from October 21 would help to solve the economic crisis of the Muslims of Kashmir and also that government has decided to start working on Muzaffarabad city development project, Bagh city development project and Rawalkot city development project at the same time. He noted that Rs 200 billions was estimated for the rehabilitation of Kashmir.

(<http://dailymailnews.com/200810/09/news/dmcitypage07.html>)

### **"MJC condemns Zardari's statement on Kashmir," October 06, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) on October 06 condemned President Zardari's statement regarding Kashmir freedom fighters in which he termed them as terrorist.

MJC spokesman Syed Sadaqat Hussian said that the President rubbed salt on the wounds of Kashmiris. He urged Pakistanis to take notice of the President's statement and play a role to correct his perception on Kashmir issue. "The president should study Kashmir history because Kashmiris have been fighting on democratic lines for right of self determination for last 40 years; however, it seems that he is unaware of the history", he added.

(<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2008/10/06/mjc-condemns-zardari%E2%80%99s-statement-on-kashmir/>)

### **"N. Areas identity crisis," October 02, 2008**

While addressing a joint parliamentary session on September 20, President Asif Ali Zardari said: "The people of Northern Areas must also get their basic rights, representative rule and an independent judiciary." People expected a lot more from the president. Just beating around the bush by saying that the people shall get their rights is not going to lessen the growing discord and sense of deprivation and alienation among the people.

(<http://www.paperarticles.com/2008/10/n-areas-identity-crisis.html>)

### **"Justice Saeed takes oath as AJK CEC," The Frontier Post, October 31, 2008**

MIRPUR: Justice (retd) Khawaja Muhammad Saeed took oath as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of Azad Jammu & Kashmir on October 30. The Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme Court, Justice Muhammad Riaz Akhtar Chaudhry administered oath to the new CEC at a simple ceremony held at the lawns of the AJK Supreme Court building. Earlier, the acting Secretary Law, of AJK Raja Muhammad Abbas read out the official notification for his appointment as the new AJK CEC.

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=hn&nid=2744&ad=31-10-2008>)

# Economic Developments

**Muzamil Jaleel, Mir Ehsan & Aditya V Singh, “Line of Control becomes Line of Commerce,” The Indian Express, October 22, 2008**

PEACE BRIDGE, CHAKAN-DA-BAGH : Barely weeks ago, a demand for opening the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad trade route and attempts to march to the Line of Control had led to violent clashes across the Valley. But it was very different at the Peace Bridge on this particular day. The moment the first truck carrying goods from Muzaffarabad rolled in, there was applause all around and slogans rent the air. Because this bridge on the Line of Control, which divides and connects the two parts of Kashmir, was now the Line of Commerce, kick starting trade on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road after a gap of six decades. Similar scenes were witnessed at Chakanda-Bagh crossing when three trucks from Poonch hit the road to Rawalakot, scripting a new chapter in Indo-Pak ties. Mubeen Shah, president of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) who led a delegation to the Peace Bridge, said: “Today, it is a symbolic beginning. But I am sure we will manage to break all impediments and make this trade a reality for future generations.”

([http://www.indianexpress.com/story\\_print.php?storyid=376389](http://www.indianexpress.com/story_print.php?storyid=376389))

**Mir Ehsan, “PoK team crosses over, hopes to trade peace,” The Indian Express, October 10, 2008**

KAMAN POST (URI): Zulfikar Abbasi could not hide his emotions as he crossed the Kaman Post into India. “We are here to heal wounded hearts,” said the chairman of the “Azad Kashmir” Chamber of Commerce as he crossed the Aman Setu this afternoon along with his 18-member trade delegation from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) to be garlanded by traders and senior Indian officials.

Abbasi hoped the bottlenecks in trade modalities would be removed once trade starts. “We have been assured by both countries that the hurdles will be

be removed with the increase in frequency and volume of trade.” The PoK trade delegation was later accorded a warm reception at the Salamabad Tourist Reception Centre by the Kashmiri traders. “We have come here to start business relations that will lay the foundation for peaceful ties that last many generations,” said Muzaffarabad Traders’ Federation secretary Khawaja Farooq. Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) president Dr Mubeen Shah termed the move an important milestone in the history of Kashmir. “For Valley traders, the start of cross-border trade would mean an important alternative for trading their wares.”

([http://www.indianexpress.com/story\\_print.php?storyid=371462](http://www.indianexpress.com/story_print.php?storyid=371462))

**Sher Baz Khan, “Kohala power project attracts Chinese firm,” Dawn, October 10, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese Company has shown interest in investing in the \$2 billion Kohala hydro-electric power project in Azad Kashmir. A five-member delegation of the Sinohydro Corporation called on Minister for Water and Power, Raja Pervez Ashraf here on October 09 and said it was keen to invest in the 110 megawatts project. Mr Ashraf said his ministry would facilitate the company in joining open bidding.

The Chinese firm is involved in the Gomal Zam Dam and Khan Khawar and Dubair hydropower projects. The proposed plant in Azad Kashmir would be one of the largest hydro-electric power projects in the private sector in South Asia, an official said. It would require a 16kms tunnel, a diversion from Seran village and a powerhouse in Barasala. The project would be linked to the national grid at Rawat near Rawalpindi through a 115kms 500kV transmission line, he said. He further said it was a high risk project and any company venturing to invest there would demand open-minded discussion with the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Water and Power Development Authority on tariff and other issues.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/10/10/top17.htm>)

**“Trans-LoC trade — why not in Gilgit, Baltistan?” Weekly Bange-e-Sahar, October 25-October 31, 2008**

On October 21, the trans-LoC trade between the divided Kashmir went into effect and there was exchange of about 21 items. Due to the prevailing tensions between Pakistan and India over Kashmir since 1947, not only trade between the two countries remained suspended but also movement of people between the two parts of Kashmir as well as Pakistan and India had to suffer a lot. Had the two countries continued trade across the border and the LoC, people on either part of the divide would get daily-use items on much lower rates. But the war-like situation in the subcontinent has made it impossible for the two nations to continue bilateral trade. After 9/11, the world began to change and Pakistan and India also felt the pressure of the international community to resolve their issues through dialogues. Musharraf’s visit to India led to the composite dialogue process between the two archrivals and leading to a number of CBMs. Travel facilities at the Wagah border increased followed by exchange of political, cultural and trade delegations. Besides, the two countries also increased the number of visas to each other’s citizens. Pakistan started exporting more items like cement etc to India and received paper and sugar from India. The world has become a global village and the current century is also called the century of economy. The major countries of the world are seeking markets for their goods while the developing nations are in search of goods on cheap rates. In such an atmosphere, the launch of trade route between India and Pakistan becomes a need of the hour. After many hurdles, a bus route was opened between the two divided parts of Kashmir in 2005 and two border points were also opened to facilitate the people cross into each territory.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/10/trans-loc-trade-why-not-in-gilgit.html>)

**“AJK President seeks expatriates help to overcome financial crisis,” The Frontier Post, October 29, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Muhammad Zulqarnain Khan on

October 28 urged the overseas Kashmiris and Pakistanis to play their role for steering the country out of financial and economical crisis. Talking to a delegation of overseas Kashmiris led by Dr. Maroof, Raja Waheed Akbar, Dr. Abbasi, Raja Naveed Manga and Dr. Z. U Khan, he said Pakistan could be made a super power if huge investment is made and foreign exchange is enhanced. Highlighting the services of overseas Kashmiris, he said they rendered valuable services for Pakistan and Kashmir in the hour of need whether it was 1965 and 1971 wars, flood of 1992, earthquake, cancer hospital or Qarz Utaro Mulk Sanwaro scheme. The AJK President noted that Pakistan needed urgent financial support and asked the overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris to invest here.

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=hn&nid=2682&ad=29-10-2008>)

**Ikram Hoti, “Gangs smuggling Pakistani currency from China busted,” The News, October 29, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Customs have busted gangs involved in the smuggling of currencies, seizing a huge consignment of Pakistani rupee that was being transported from China. A high-level enquiry has been ordered into the illegal movement of currencies across the border with China. “The Customs made the seizure and it is conducting a high-level inquiry,” confirmed Mehmood Alam, the spokesman for the Federal Board of Revenue. Earlier, Customs sources admitted that the first consignment of Pakistani rupee, which was seized at the Sost Post at the Pak-China border in the Northern Areas, was of more than Rs 100 million. However, the FBR confirmed only Rs 10 million. The Customs authorities at Sost initially believed that fake Pakistani rupee, manufactured in China, was being transported into Pakistan. However, investigations revealed that the currency was not fake. Though, the FBR did not confirm more seizures of such consignments, Customs sources in Gilgit said the consignment intercepted on October 16 was neither the first nor the last. “The smuggling of foreign currencies from Pakistan is on to all the neighbouring countries. Perhaps China is more attractive for smugglers, as gangs in China pay more than those in other countries for buying these currencies,” stated a source.

([http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=143662](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=143662))

**“Fake Currency Creating Problems to Business sector of Northern Areas” Hunza Times, October 25, 2008**

GILGIT: Illegal currency is creating huge problem to the business sector in Northern Areas. These currencies are introduced by the fake currency traders from NWFP and from other Areas. People and businessmen are demanding the State Bank of Pakistan and to other law enforcing agencies to stop the network of illegal currency makers all over the country.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2008/10/25/fake-currency-creating-problems-to-business-sector-of-northern-areas/>)

**“PM to inaugurate Muzaffarabad City Development project on Wednesday,” Associated Press of Pakistan, October 07, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani would inaugurate the Muzaffarabad City Development Project in Azad Kashmir’s capital city on October 08. The new project is part of the government’s policy of reconstruction and rehabilitation after the massive earthquake of 2005. The Prime Minister during his day-long visit to Muzaffarabad on October 08 would meet AJK President Raja Zulqarnain and Prime Minister Sardar Attique Khan. Gilani would also perform the ground-breaking of Muzaffarabad-Athmuqam road during the visit.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=54855&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=54855&Itemid=2))

## **“EU welcomes reopening of Kashmir trade route” October 22, 2008**

BRUSSELS: EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner on October 22 welcomed the opening of the trade route across the Line of Control (LoC) that divides Jammu and Kashmir and said India and Pakistan can count on the support of the 27-member European bloc to resolve their differences, as reported by EuAsiaNews. This decision shows the vision of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari in bringing people together, Ferrero-Waldner, a former Austria foreign minister, said, adding: he very much hopes this momentum will continue.

(<http://www.indiblitiz.com/index.php/2008/10/22/eu-welcomes-reopening-of-kashmir-trade-route/>)

## **Khalid Hasan, “Kashmir Solidarity Day observed in Washington,” Daily Times, October 14, 2008**

WASHINGTON: The Kashmir Solidarity Day was celebrated here on October 12 by the Kashmiri-American Council (KAC) at a meeting attended by close to 200 local Kashmiris and Pakistanis. The Solidarity Day was called for by the heads of 16 political parties from Azad Kashmir. In an address to the meeting, KAC Executive Director Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai said self-determination is a basic principle of the United Nation Charter which has been re-affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and applied countless times to the settlement of international disputes. The concept played a significant part in post-World War I settlement, leading to plebiscites in a number of disputed border areas, even though no reference was made to self-determination in the League of Nations Covenant.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C14%5Cstory\\_14-10-2008\\_pg7\\_46](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C14%5Cstory_14-10-2008_pg7_46))

## **Khalid Hasan, “Kashmir settlement will rule out risk of nuclear war,” Daily Times, October 19, 2008**

WASHINGTON: The ultimate confidence-building and nuclear risk-reduction measure in South Asia would be a settlement of the Kashmir dispute, according to Michael Krepon, founding president of the Stimson Centre, a prominent think tank with an interest in South Asia.

Krepon recalled that the government of India has stated that maps cannot be redrawn. The government of Pakistan has stated that the status quo is unacceptable. One way to proceed towards a settlement would be to accept both positions and devise new regional structures that would overlay the current map of a divided Kashmir. These regional bodies could deal with trade, tourism, power generation, pilgrimages, and other matters. He found it encouraging that a delegation of business leaders from Muzaffarabad has crossed the Line of Control (LoC) dividing Kashmir to discuss the modalities of expanded trade.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C19%5Cstory\\_19-10-2008\\_pg7\\_27](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C19%5Cstory_19-10-2008_pg7_27))

# Other Developments

## “Kashmiris observe 61st Founding Day,” The Daily Mail, October 25, 2008

MUZAFFARABAD: The 61st Founding Day of Azad Jammu and Kashmir government was observed in a befitting manner while Jammu and Kashmir National Students Federation (JKNSF) observed it as a black day. Addressing the gathering, leaders of JKNSF including Kamran Baig, Talha Mehmood, Aamir Jameel said that AJK government pledged to provide free electricity to people but 10 to 12 hours load shedding made the life of people miserable. They appealed to the people not to pay bills if load shedding was continuing. Talking on Foundation Day, they said that a conspiracy was hatched on that day to make Kashmiri people as slave and the day has no role regarding the independence movement of Kashmir.

(<http://dailymailnews.com/200810/25/news/dmbrn02.html>)

## “Chinese protection: Police banish 300 suspects from Gilgit, NAs,” Daily Times, October 22, 2008

PESHAWAR: In a bid to provide security to Chinese workers at the Karakoram Highway, Northern Areas and Gilgit Police expelled 300 suspected people from the area and confiscated 450 non-custom paid vehicles, a police officer in Gilgit was quoted by a private TV channel as saying on October 21. The officer said the step had been taken to protect hundreds of Chinese workers and engineers undertaking development work at the highway from terrorism. Sources said that the action had been taken after two Chinese engineers were abducted from Swat valley.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C22%5Cstory\\_22-10-2008\\_pg1\\_6](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C10%5C22%5Cstory_22-10-2008_pg1_6))

## Taqi Akhunzada, “KIU’s regional campus in Baltistan demanded,” The News, October 19, 2008

SKARDU: Speakers of Baltistan National Movement and National Educational Conference have demanded that the government should set up Karakoram International University’s (KIU)

regional campus in Baltistan. Speaking on the occasion, KIU syndicate member Brigadier (R) Muhammad Zakir Shamim said that KIU charter clearly stated about the separate campus of the university in Baltistan but the government not yet established KIU’s separate campus in the region. (Contd after abbreviations)

### ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AJKHEB</b>	Azad Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Electric Board
<b>AJK</b>	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
<b>APHC</b>	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
<b>BNF</b>	Balawaristan National Front
<b>CBM</b>	Confidence Building Measures
<b>CDP</b>	Community Development Programme
<b>FATA</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
<b>FBR</b>	Federal Board of Revenue
<b>GBDA</b>	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
<b>GBUM</b>	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
<b>ISI</b>	Inter Services Intelligence
<b>JIAJK</b>	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
<b>KAC</b>	Kashmiri American Council
<b>KKH</b>	Karakoram Highway
<b>KNM</b>	Karakoram National Movement
<b>LoC</b>	Line of Control
<b>NLI</b>	Northern Light Infantry
<b>NALA</b>	Northern Areas Legislative Assembly
<b>NAEDC</b>	Northern Areas Executive Development Committee
<b>NWFP</b>	North West Frontier Province
<b>PoK</b>	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
<b>POGB</b>	Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan
<b>PPP</b>	Pakistan Peoples’ Party
<b>UJC</b>	United Jihad Council
<b>WAPDA</b>	Water and Power Development Authority

(Other developments contd....)

Former chief executive NAs, Haji Fida Muhammad Nashad while speaking on the occasion said that elected representatives of Baltistan were aware of this important issue and tried their level best but did not succeed to get KIU's regional campus for Baltistan".

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=141921>)

**“Various projects launched in AJK on earthquake’s 3rd anniversary,” Associated Press of Pakistan, October 15, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Government of Pakistan launched a number of new projects for reconstruction and rehabilitation of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the third anniversary of October 8, 2005 tragic earthquake that shook the region and unleashed unprecedented havoc to both human lives and infrastructure. The occasion was marked by the unveiling of much criticized Muzaffarabad Master Plan, which is now likely to be a reality in coming days. The ground breaking of 76 Km-long Neelum Valley Road was performed, which is envisaged to be completed by June 2010. A massive urban development programme was also launched for three major cities of AJK namely, Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalkot. This includes the reconstruction of roads, bridges housing recreational facilities, commercial set ups, transport & communication Virtually Landless affectees who are living on highly hazardous sites for the purchase of land and Rs. 174,000 for construction of houses on newly purchased land.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=55785&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=55785&Itemid=2))

**“CM pledges resources for AJK quake victims,” The News, October 13, 2008**

Punjab Chief Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif stated that the Punjab government will provide all possible resources for the rehabilitation of their earthquake victims in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The CM was talking to President Azad Kashmir, Raja Zulqurnain who called on him on October 12. They discussed various matters of mutual interest. President Azad Kashmir, apprising the Chief Minister about steps

taken for the rehabilitation of earthquake victims, stated that work for their rehabilitation was going on speedily and priority was being given to the construction of schools and hospitals.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=140758>)

**“Gilani for assessing effects of disasters,” Dawn, October 09, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has stressed the need for addressing risks posed by natural and human induced disasters, including terrorism, to ensure continuity of economic growth in the country. The conference was organised by the National Disaster Management Authority to commemorate the catastrophe caused by October 08, 2005, earthquake which had killed 73,000 people and rendered 3.5 million homeless in parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and northern districts of the NWFP. It caused a loss of over \$5.2 billion.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/10/09/top9.htm>)

# Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), legitimately an integral part of the Indian Union is presently under Pakistan's control. Pakistan occupied the territory as a result of tribal invasion in 1947 engineered by the Pakistani army. It covers one-third of the total area of 86,023 square miles/ 222,236 square kilometers of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The area under occupation comprises two administrative units: Mirpur- Muzaffarabad and Gilgit Baltistan referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and the 'Northern Areas' respectively by the government of Pakistan. Pakistan ceded a segment (2,700 sq miles) of this occupied territory lying to the north-east border of the Northern Areas known as the Trans Karakoram Tract to China in 1963.

## “AZAD KASHMIR”

Pakistan envisaged the Azad Kashmir as a country with a President, a Prime Minister and a Legislature of its own according to the Karachi Agreement of April 28, 1949. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature as this invaded territory is neither a country nor even a province. Significant subjects such as defence, supposed 'foreign policy' of POK, rehabilitation of refugees and the overall control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan.

**Area:** 13,297 square km

**Mirpur** comprises 3 districts: *Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur*

**Muzaffarabad** is divided into five districts: *Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Poonch, Sudhnati*

**Population:** 3,271,000 (1.685 million Male, 1.665 million Female)

**Capital:** Muzaffarabad

**“President”:** Raja Zulfikar Khan

**“Prime Minister”:** Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

**“Azad Jammu and Kashmir” Council:** Total 11 members- 6 from the government of AJK and 5 from the government of Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the President AJK.

**Legislative Assembly:** 49 seats

**Tribal population:** Awan, Abbasi, Ansari, Gilani, Gujar, Jarral, Jat, Qureshi, Malik, Mughal, Pashtuns, Rajput, Rachyals, Sudhan, Tarkhan

## NORTHERN AREAS

The **Northern Areas** officially referred to by the government of Pakistan as the **Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA)**, is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied part of Kashmir and is a self governing unit under Pakistani control. The area is five times bigger to that of Azad Kashmir. The status of this region being unstated in the successive constitutions of Pakistan over the years, the people are denied basic socio-political and legal rights. The Northern Areas have no representation in the National Assembly and are governed by the Northern Areas Council headed by Minister of Kashmir and Northern Areas. A Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in the absence of a High Court. The population mainly comprises Shia, Sunni and Ismaili Muslims. Ethnic groups include Baltees, Shinas, Vashkuns, Mughals, Kashmiris, Pathans, Ladhakhis and Turks.

**Governor/ Commissioner:** Imran Ali

**“Chief Minister”:** Irfan Ali and Shahid Hussain

**Legislature:** Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (29 seats)

**Languages:** Balti, Shina, Brushaski, Khawer, Wakhi, Turki, Tibeti, Pushto and Urdu

**Area:** 72,496 km

**Capital:** Gilgit

**Districts:** seven

**Baltistan** is divided into *Ghanche and Skardu*

**Gilgit** divided into *Astore, Diamer, Ghizar, Gilgit and Hunza Nagar*

**Population:** 1.5 million

**Political groups:** United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, Balwaristan National Front (BNF) and Gilgit Baltistan United Action Forum for Self Rule, Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM).

**Literacy rate:** 14% male- 3.5% female

**State of Infrastructure:** No pipelines for water supply and no electricity supply for at least two thirds of the population in Northern Areas.

**Disclaimer**

PoK 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 as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Northern Areas' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

# POK NEWS DIGEST

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