

POK NEWS DIGEST

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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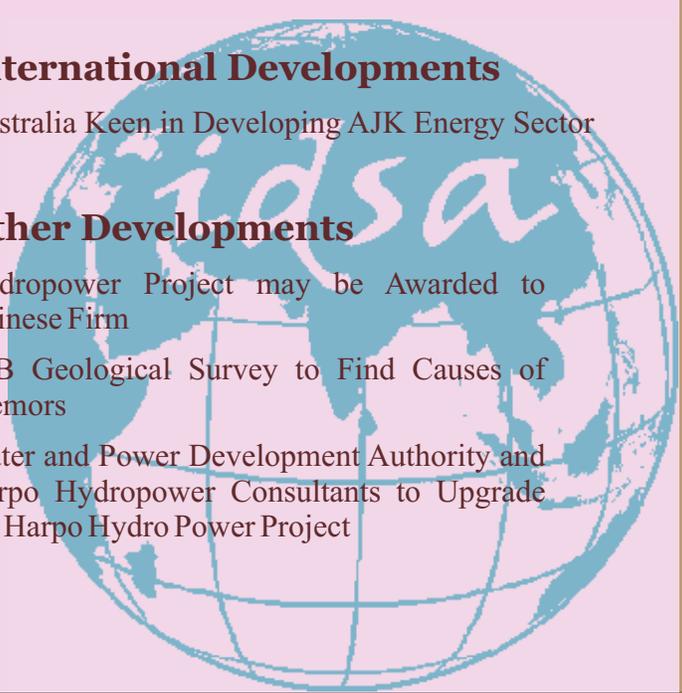
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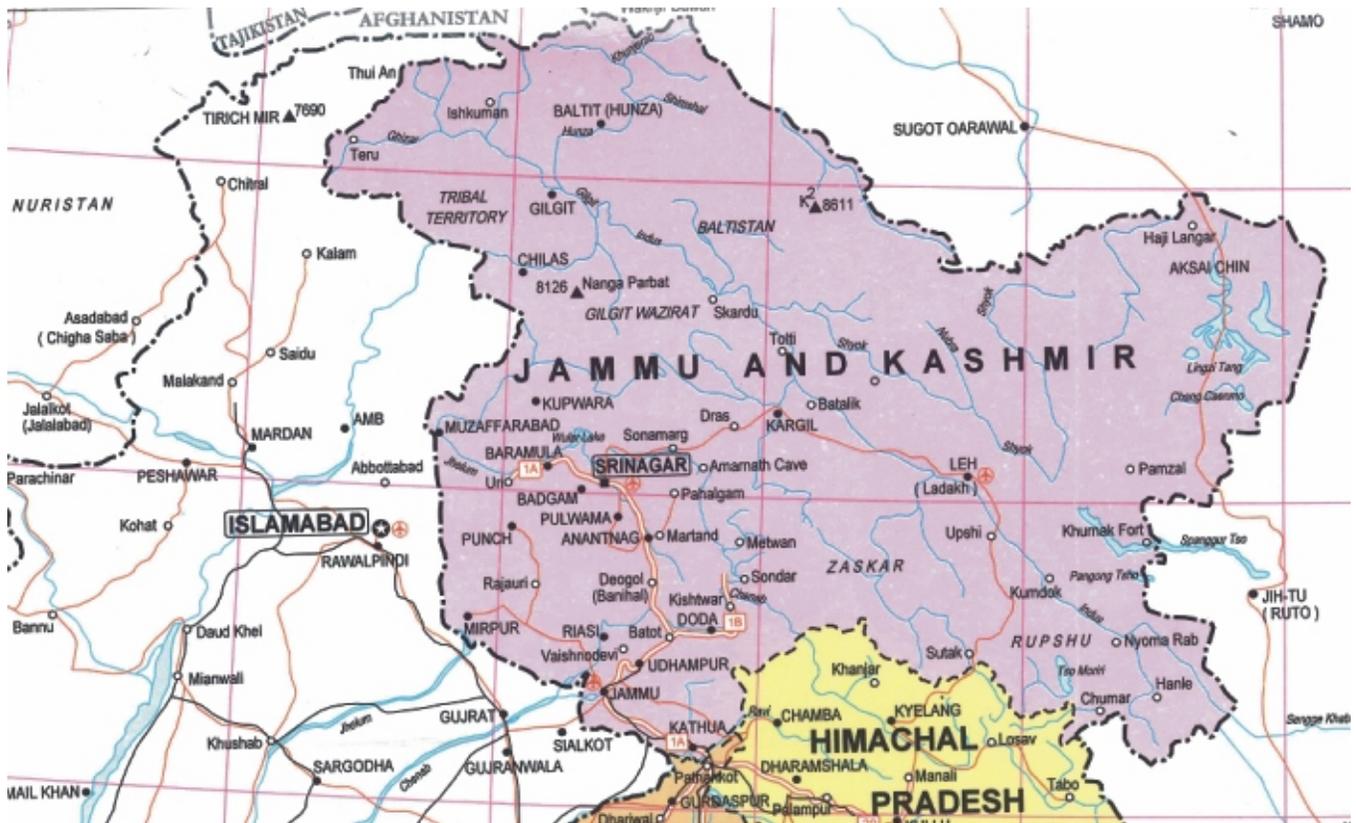
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Compiled & Edited
by
Dr Priyanka Singh

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010



Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Wishing all our readers a very Happy New Year 2011!

Thank you for your support and interest in the PoK News Digest and we look forward to your continued support!

The Chinese influence in PoK is known to be growing and this has also been acknowledged by the western media in the wake of Selig Harrison's article in the New York Times in August 2010. In this regard, the current issue contains reports which elaborate the extent of Chinese intervention in PoK. PoK is legally an integral part of India and China accedes it is a disputed territory. Hence, Chinese entrenched presence in PoK by way of building infrastructure and making huge investments is quite intriguing. Notwithstanding, Chinese designs on PoK could have multiple geo-strategic implications in the long term and India needs to keep a very close watch on the developments taking place inside its territory, which currently is under Pakistan's occupation.

The Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan reiterated that the region could not be made a province of Pakistan due to constitutional constraints. Notably, Gilgit Baltistan was bestowed with the Empowerment package last year to pacify political discontent amongst local people, whose fate has been hanging since more than six decades. The package however did very little to address the core concerns of the deprived people and therefore was subject of widespread opposition.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Gilani reiterates govt resolve for rehabilitation of AJK earthquake affectees

December 1, 2010

RAWLAKOT: Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani reiterated the government's resolve to stay on course for the complete rehabilitation of earthquake affected areas. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zaid Al Nahyan hospital in Rawalakot on December 1, he noted that the 2005 earthquake besides causing human loss, rendered millions of people homeless, adding that the Rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas in a short span of five years would not have been possible without the assistance of fraternal countries and international donors.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/11/30/gilani-reiterates-govt-resolve-for-rehabilitation-of-ajk-earthquake-affectees/>

Old ties: China to fund education of ex-nationals in G-B

The Express Tribune, December 5, 2010

GILGIT: The Chinese government has told the Uighur community that it will bear educational expenses of their children studying in educational institutions across Pakistan, a representative noted on December 4. "It is really good that the Chinese government is taking an interest in our affairs," said Abdur Rehman Bukhari, General Secretary of the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chinese Overseas Association (G-BCOA), a regional body of former Chinese nationals. Known as Uighurs, members of the Muslims community of China now settled in G-B and Rawalpindi had migrated from Xinjiang province before the partition of the subcontinent.

Currently numbering 5,000 households, these families still have ties with their relatives in Kashgar and other parts of Xinjiang, China. Bukhari said that the number of students being

financed by China could be around 5,000 and that the G-BCOA would verify the data of students enrolled in various schools in Pakistan for depositing their fee. Last month, the Chinese government through its embassy in Pakistan had arranged a post-Eid party for their ex-nationals in Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/86151/old-ties-china-to-fund-education-of-ex-nationals-in-g-b/>

Reconstruction begins in flood-hit Ghizer

Dawn, December 11, 2010

GILGIT: The government is initiating work on rebuilding and rehabilitating public and private infrastructure, destroyed in recent floods in Yasin valley of Ghizer district to ensure provision of civic amenities to the people. Member Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly, Mohammad Ayoub Shah noted the government had allocated Rs1.60 billion to rebuild the infrastructure in Ghizer district as public was greatly suffering.

He said the amount was approved by Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani during his visit to the area, meeting longstanding demand of the people. He added, the amount had been included in the Annual Development Plan as per the PM orders. Mr Shah said a protective bund would be built at a cost of Rs5 million and Rs10 million would be spent on construction of various link roads in Yasin subdivision. He said a main road from Thoi village to Mola Abad will cost Rs80 million.

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/12/reconstruction-begins-in-flood-hit-ghizer.html>

Gilani, Sultan mull strategy

The Nation, December 11, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, on December 11, discussed the overall political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir with the head of the People's Muslim League (AJK)

Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry in the backdrop of the imminent launching of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) AJK. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry called on the Prime Minister at the Prime Minister's House on December 11. Sources in the PML AJK noted that the meeting was held in cordial atmosphere and both leaders discussed the political scenario after the stepping in of PML-N in the AJK and its fallout on other political parties.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Islamabad/12-Dec-2010/Gilani-Sultan-mull-strategy>

Gilgit-Baltistan is not a province: Chief Secretary

December 12, 2010

The Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Balistan, Saifullah Chatha, has reaffirmed that the Gilgit-Balistan is not a province yet. But the region has been delegated some powers through a special package. There are constitutional intricacies in this regard which hinder giving the region a provincial status he stated before the media at Gahkuch. He said that the people here have their own government with powers to legislate local policies.

However, he interestingly, revealed that without the permission of the Secretary Treasure, a minister of the region cannot use any public finance. This is a universal system and the local leaders have to understand it. It, nonetheless, could not be ascertained whether he is talking about personal use or for developmental projects. "The bureaucratic official has no role in running the region and the elected people have the say in the affairs of the public policy in Gilgit-Balistan. We are working under constitutional auspices", Chatha noted.

The statement of Chief Secretary has exposed the claims of elected representatives of Gilgit-Balistan who have been sermonizing the public that they have attained a full status of province and are thus entitled to exercise the required powers of province. The leaders of Gilgit-Balistan never seemed clear about the status of the region. There has always been the ambiguity in what they say in this matter. Their

public statements contain wordings such as "like province" "near province", "towards province", "autonomous setup" etc.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/gilgit-baltistan-not-province-chief-secretary22>

Progress on Mangla Dam raising project reviewed

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 13, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo on December 13 chaired a meeting to review the progress of Mangla Dam raising project. The minister stated the Mangla Dam raising project was of national importance for which around Rs 62 billion was required, but due to former government's delay the cost has gone up to Rs 102 billion. Wattoo directed the Finance Division to inform Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in three days regarding the disbursement of Rs 4 billion funds. He said the progress of the project would be reviewed each month.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124494&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly: Govt sails through first year

The Express Tribune, December 13, 2010

GILGIT: Amid frequent crises, the nascent Mehdi Shah government sailed through its first legislative year in December, paying more attention to salaries, perks and privileges than legislation, sources stated. With its first session on December 10 last year, the 33-member Gilgit-Baltistan legislative assembly, elected under the self-governance order 2009, saw 12 bills being presented in the house, of which 10 were passed. Of these bills, only six could be made into laws. The fate of the pending bills before Gilgit-Baltistan governor is unknown. One of the bills approved was on lawmakers' salaries and other associated incentives, which sailed through the houses without any dissent and delay.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/89370/gilgit-baltistan-assembly-govt-sails-through-first-year/>

Mangla dam: 'affectees' rights to be safeguarded

Business Recorder, December 14, 2010

MIRPUR: Member AJK Legislative Assembly and President Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) AJK Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated on December 13, the due rights of Mangla dam affectees will be safeguarded in letter and spirit. Talking to a delegation of the Dam affectees, Majeed noted efforts to attain the due rights of the dam raising project affectees would continue till complete rehabilitation of the displaced families.

Chaudhry Majeed said that with liberal financial assistance of the federal government, the state government was fully committed to complete the process of resettlement and rehabilitation of the affectees before the completion of the project.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/general-news/pakistan/1134006:news.html>

KKH expansion project to further strengthen Pak-China ties

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 14, 2010

GILGIT: The Chinese Engineers engaged in widening of Karakoram Highway (KKH) are working round the clock to get the project completed within stipulated time so that people could have an easy access to both the countries. This was stated by General Manager (GM) National Highway Authority (NHA) Abdullah Jan on December 14. He said the Chinese Company CRBC was working on widening of KKH which was linking the country with China and was the main source of trade between both sides.

The General Manager said the highway was being widened in two parts. First one from Khunjarab to Raikote point, while other from Raikote to onward. The NHA official said this 335 Kms long part of KKH would cost \$500 million, adding, 85 per cent of the total cost had already been provided by the Chinese EXIM Bank while remaining was being provided by the federal government.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124579&Itemid=2

No differences between President & PM over ministers sacking; Kaira

December 14, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira stated that there are no differences between President and Prime Minister over removal of ministers, added the ambitions of the elements about differences between President and PM has failed and hoped that their desires would also not be fulfilled in the future.

Talking to media after a ceremony which was held on the occasion of joining of people in PPP AJK, Kaira noted that why is there noise over the sacking of ministers as the media and all political parties were demanding to remove the ministers who were involved in Hajj corruption scandal.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=172379>

AJK govt decides to change mode of election on refugee seats: Riaz

December 14, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Dr. Mehmood Riaz stated that to make the upcoming AJK elections of 2011 peaceful, impartial and transparent the government has decided to change the election process on the 12 seats reserved for Kashmiri refugees settled in Pakistan.

In an interview, Dr. Mehmood Riaz noted that questions were raised on the 12 seats for the Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan, which showed that the election process on these seats was not transparent and impartial. He said that the representation of Kashmiri refugees settled in Pakistan is essential, adding that abolition of these seats would be the violation of United Nations resolutions. In these perspectives, it is under review to change the polling process on these 12 seats of Jammu and Kashmir refugees living in Pakistan, the minister added.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/12/15/ajk-govt-decides-to-change-mode-of-election-on-refugee-seats-riaz/>

Barrister Sultan merges PML with PPP

Business Recorder, December 15, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister of Azad Jammu, Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood has decided to merge Peoples Muslim League (PML) with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and vowed to work for strengthening of the party in the valley. Addressing a press conference on December 14 at Zardari House with Member National Assembly, Faryal Talpur, he noted, "I hereby announce to merge Peoples Muslim League with Pakistan People's Party unconditionally and will work for strengthening of the party in the valley."

Mehmood noted it is unfortunate that AJK PPP was divided into groups due to some misunderstanding, adding that now all these misconceptions have been removed. "Pakistan is facing a number of challenges and unity in the party will help steer the country out from these crisis," he further added. He stated PPP-led coalition government effectively highlighted the Kashmir issue at international fora, while the people of Kashmir kept the issue alive through their indigenous struggle.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/general-news/pakistan/1134359:news.html>

Design of KKH heralds

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 15, 2010

GILGIT: The Chinese engineers prepared the design of Karakoram Highway (KKH) to avert the land sliding. The General Manager (GM) of KKH Abdullah Jan noted that 18 open cut tunnel were being constructed at potentially identified sites where sliding is always hampering traffic due to blockade. He further stated 500 meter long mine tunnel has also been constructed near Khunjarab Pass where avalanches are used to block road. He further stated the tunnels would prevent blockades and ensure safety of passengers with minimum chances of human losses.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124714&Itemid=2

Mangla Dam upraising project to be

inaugurated soon

Pakistan Observer, December 16, 2010

MIRPUR: The construction work of raising of country's second largest reservoir - Mangla Dam located in Azad Jammu Kashmir would be completed soon, official sources noted. The Chinese engineers are doing the work and after completion, its inaugural ceremony would be held in Mirpur. Official sources noted that development projects of public welfare including new Mirpur city and four small towns, exclusively meant for rehabilitation and resettlement of the Mangla dam affectees are in progress.

Sources further stated that construction work of rehabilitation projects would be completed within the revised stipulated time frame. Elaborating benefits of the Mangla dam, the sources added that there will be an additional power generation which would help address the electricity problem in the country.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=66915>

China starts construction of 14 projects in AJK

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 17, 2010

ISLAMABAD: With the allocation of Rs. six billion, China has started construction of 14 projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. These projects are part of four and half year reconstruction project with the allocation of US \$ 300 in the shape of Preferential Buyers Credit Loan for reconstruction activities in Muzaffarabad, AJK. Brig Msuood Ahmed, Chief of Staff, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) stated that Chinese Preferential Buyers Credit Loan be used equitably for infrastructure development of three cities in AJK including Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot.

He informed that for the project EXIM Bank of China would provide US\$ 300 million (85%) whereas the Government of Pakistan has to provide counterpart funding of (15%) US \$ 53 million. Through this money, he noted, 43 roads and bridges

and 61 infrastructure development projects would be started in Muzaffarabad with the allocation of \$ 190 million whereas 30 roads and bridges and 36 infrastructure projects would be initiated in Bagh with the allocation of \$ 124 million. For the projects in Rawalakot an amount of \$ 39 million has been earmarked for constructing 15 roads and bridges and five infrastructure development projects.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124768&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, Reconstruction plan: Nawaz promises to build five villages in G-B

The Express Tribune, December 16, 2010

GILGIT: Former prime minister and chief of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Mian Nawaz Sharif on December 15 expressed concern over the delay in the reconstruction of the damaged part of the Karakoram Highway and asked the Gilgit-Baltistan chief secretary to expedite work on the restoration of the vital link between Pakistan with China. "It is really a matter of concern that the road has not yet been reconstructed to lessen woes of the stranded people of Gojal," he noted while addressing a gathering in Hunza. He also distributed cheques among the heirs of those who died in the January 4 landslide at Attabad.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/90751/reconstruction-plan-nawaz-promises-to-build-five-villages-in-g-b/>

JUI-F mulling departing Balochistan, GB governments

December 17, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam F (JUI-F) has started considering departing from Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan governments where as JUI-F leader Maulana Ghafoor Haidri reiterated that the decision of sitting on opposition benches is irrevocable. JUI-F is thinking about quitting from coalition governments in Balochistan, as well as Gilgit Baltistan, but ultimate decision will be made after important meetings of provincial parties. According to reports, Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman has already cautioned his provincial ministers to be

ready for resigning from their offices. On the other hand, while talking to media in Islamabad on December 16, Maulana Ghafoor Haidri stated that the decision of departing from Federal Government is final, no ambiguity lies in it and no question raises of comeback.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=172479>

Bad governance: PPP-led govt's performance assailed

The Express Tribune, December 17, 2010

GILGIT: Boloristan Labour Party expressed disappointment over the performance of the government saying that it has miserably failed to restore law and order in the region despite the fact that it spends millions of rupees on security agencies. "Rs300 million are being spent on law enforcement agencies annually but the law and order situation is deteriorating," noted a statement issued by the party on December 14. The labour party stated it will issue a white paper against what it called 'the government's one year performance.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/90647/bad-governance-ppp-led-govts-performance-assailed/>

Kohala hydro-power project likely to be awarded to a Chinese company

Business Recorder, December 17, 2010

MIRPUR: China is playing a pivotal role in speedy development of hydro-power sector in the country, besides sharing technical support and assistance for reconstruction of quake-hit areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The proposed Kohala hydro-power project in Muzaffarabad district, the largest private sector hydro-power project in Asia, was one of the mega projects next to the under-construction Mangla dam raising project and 969 Megawatt Neelum-Jhelum hydel-power project, and was likely to be handed over to a reputed Chinese construction company, official sources noted on December 16.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/fuel-and-energy/pakistan/1134990:news.html>

China to complete 190 projects in earthquake hit areas

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 17, 2010

ISLAMABAD: With allocation of \$353 million China will complete 190 projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). AJK was badly affected by the earthquake which struck northern areas of the country on October 8, 2005 with the intensity of 7.6 on international richer scale. These projects will be completed in four and half year and for the projects EXIM Bank of China will provide US\$ 300 million (85%) whereas the Government of Pakistan has to provide counterpart funding of (15%) US \$ 53 million.

Talking to APP Brig Msuood Ahmed, Chief of Staff, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) noted that China would provide the money under Preferential Buyers Credit Loan to be used equitably for infrastructure development of three cities in AJK including Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124820&Itemid=2

Pak-China sign \$ 275 million project for KKH repair

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 18, 2010

ISLAMABAD: National Highway Authority (NHA) and China Roads and Bridges Corporation on December 18 signed \$ 275 million agreement for repairing Karakorum Highway (KKH) damaged with Attabad accidental lake in Gilgit-Baltistan. Chairman NHA, Altaf Ahmad Chaudhry and Chairman Roads and Bridges Corporation of China, Wen Gong signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides. Briefing the media on the bilateral agreement, the chairman NHA said that the accidental lake of Hunza Attaabad has badly damaged several portions of KKH that need urgent repair. The Chinese engineers have advised to bring down the surface of the lake by at least 30 feet down to carry out repair work of the damaged portion.

He said that 15 km of the KKH will be recovered by bringing down the surface of the lake while the rest of the damaged portions will be reconstructed under an agreement between the two countries. The reconstruction including digging of six km tunnel, six high raise bridges and 70 small bridges will take six years under the project and will cost \$ 275 million, he added.

http://ftppapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=125075&Itemid=1

PML-N's launch jolts AJK political arena

The Nation, December 19, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Agreeing with the recommendations of the Organising Committee, PML-N chief Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif announced his party's formation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir in a crucial meeting with the top leadership of PML-NAJK chapter.

A delegation of PML-N AJK chapter led by Raja Farooq Haider, Sardar Sikandar Hayat and Shah Ghulam Qadir met the party's chief in Islamabad on December 18. The PML-N AJK chapter's delegation that called on Nawaz reportedly included ten incumbent members of AJK Legislative Assembly. In addition to Raja Farooq Haider and Shah Ghulam Qadir, other incumbent legislators including Raja Munsafdad, Raja Siddique, Raja Naseer, Raja Nisar, Shaukat Ali Shah, Sardar Naeem, Noreen Arif and Tariq Farooq attended the meeting.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/19-Dec-2010/PMLNs-launch-jolts-AJK-political-arena>

Former AJK PM Sardar Yaqoob joins PPP

December 19, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The former Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister, Sardar Yaqoob, announced to join Pakistan People's Party (PPP). While addressing a news conference in Islamabad, he stated that his decision to join PPP is the sincerity of the party towards Kashmir issue and he is proud to

be a part of the party. "I along with my fellows will work for the PPP honestly," he pledged. The PPP Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated the party would be organized after the inclusion of new members in it. Faryal Talpur said many people joined PPP and, she added, it shows that it is the biggest party of every class.

http://www.samaa.tv/News28989-Former_AJK_PM_Sardar_Yaqoob_joins_PPP.aspx

Peer Muhammad, Continued support: Chinese premier brings hope to Gojal's marooned

The Express Tribune, December 20, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The visit of the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has brought joyous tidings to the disaster-hit people of Gojal as he has promised continued support to the marooned people in upper Hunza, for their relief and rehabilitation. This was stated by Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) acting Governor Wazir Baig, who was given this assurance by the Chinese prime minister himself at the luncheon hosted by President Asif Zardari in Islamabad on December 18.

The acting governor stated that the Chinese Prime Minister assured him that his government would extend all out support to the affected people of the landlocked area. "All the ongoing mega development projects in G-B will be completed by the Chinese firms," Premier Wen further assured him.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/92117/continued-support-chinese-premier-brings-hope-to-gojals-marooned/>

Upcoming polls: Political temperature heating up in AJK

The Express Tribune, December 20, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: The political temperature in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is heating up as elections for the legislative assembly draw close. Two developments have set the stage for vibrant political activity in the valley ahead of the election season. Firstly, the announcement for the formal launch of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-

N) in AJK and, secondly, the merger of former prime minister Barrister Sultan Mehmood's People's Muslim League (PML) with Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir. Prospective candidates have already begun their spadework to pick and choose constituencies from where to contest for elections.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/92086/upcoming-polls-political-temperature-heating-up-in-ajk/>

PM summons AJK Council budget session

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 20, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in his capacity as Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council summoned the council's 45th session (budget session) on December 23 at Prime Minister House in Islamabad. The council will consider and pass the budget 2010-11 and will transact certain budget related fiscal legislative business, stated a press release by Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council Secretariat. The first sitting of the session of AJ&K Council was to be held on December 20 under the Chairmanship of the Vice Chairman, AJ&K Council and President of AJ&K Raja Zulqarnain Khan.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=125175&Itemid=2

Governor Gilgit-Baltistan calls on Interior Minister

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 21, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister A. Rehman Malik stated on December 21 that the government would take all necessary steps for the development of Gilgit-Baltistan and bring it at par with other parts of the country. He was talking to the Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan Wazir Baig, who called on him at the Interior Ministry. Rehman Malik said that the government would set up NADRA and Passport offices in Gilgit-Baltistan, while the appointment of Director FIA in the area would also be made soon. He also assured to cooperate for the expansion of Gilgit Airport, which would help promote tourism

in the area. During the meeting law and order in Gilgit-Baltistan was also discussed.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=125378&Itemid=1

Shabbir Mir, Plight of the poor: Govt schemes all words, no action?

The Express Tribune, December 22, 2010

GILGIT: The only system of support Maryam Bibi, a resident of a remote village in Ghizer valley, can rely on are her young children and a few day-jobs that barely help her get by. She single-handedly, and without the support of any government scheme, supports herself and her three children. Maryam, 36, is just one of example of how nepotism in the government's poverty alleviation programmes has left the most deserving people in our country standing alone.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/93047/plight-of-the-poor-govt-schemes--all-words-no-action/>

Wen Moves Pakistan Closer to China with US\$35 Billion Deal

December 22, 2010

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has signed US\$35 billion worth of deals with Pakistan, much of it in infrastructure deals designed to better connect the country with Xinjiang Province. China has a border with Northeast Pakistan at Taxkorgan, with trade crossing the Karokoram Highway from Kashgar to Gilgit and beyond. Roughly US\$20 billion was signed in government-to-government contracts and a further US\$15 billion in private sector deals. The amounts outstrip those signed a few days earlier with India by some US\$19 billion.

China is looking to recalibrate its trade partnership with Pakistan currently much of it based on arms and weapons to infrastructure development. Pakistan has a southern coast line with the Arabian Sea, and China has already committed billions of dollars of investment at Gwadar Port, giving it access to sizable Middle Eastern markets. The Karokoram Highway will also be upgraded with an

ultimate aim being to provide road and rail links from Xinjiang all the way through to Gilgit, Islamabad and on to Gwadar.

<http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2010/12/21/wen-moves-pakistan-closer-to-china-with-us35-billion-deal.html>

Coalition falters: JUI-F struggles to preserve status quo in G-B

The Express Tribune, December 22, 2010

GILGIT: Following the withdrawal of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F) from the government in the centre, the situation in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) has become interesting. The JUI-F wishes to continue as a coalition partner in G-B, while the region's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) led government seems to have lost interest in the alliance.

Within the PPP, some members of the G-B government have been pressurising the chief minister Mehdi Shah to part ways with JUI-F. "We should take the initiative in Gilgit-Baltistan to end the alliance," a veteran PPP leader from Astore noted on December 21. The chief minister categorically stated more than twice this week that they would not ask the JUI-F to stay in the government if they do not wish to do so.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/93049/coalition-falters-jui-f-struggles-to-preserve-status-quo-in-g-b/>

Muhammad Saleem, PML-N to formally launch AJK chapter on December 26

Business Recorder, December 23, 2010

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is all set to formally launch the PML-N Azad Jammu & Kashmir Chapter on December 26. In this regard, PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif, will address the founding day convention of PML-N AJK on December 26.

PML-N AJK has chalked out programme to accord rousing reception to Nawaz Sharif on arrival in Muzaffarabad on December 26. PML-N activists from across the AJK would attend the founding day

function of PML-N AJK, sources stated

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/general-news/pakistan/1137380:news.html>

Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Calls on Babar Awan

December 24, 2010

The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan called on the law Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Babar Awan on December 23. He briefed the federal minister about the performance of his government, administrative activities and the working relations among different bodies in Gilgit-Baltistan. Mehdi Shah thanked Babar Awan for his efforts to provide the Gilgit-Baltistan Bar Council a 10 million grant.

He requested Babar Awan to devise a public friendly policy regarding Gilgit-Baltistan so as to tackle the problems of the region efficiently. The law Minister assured Mehdi Shah that he would take the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan to the presidency and make sure that the federal government will resolve the problems of the region on priority basis.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/chief-minister-gilgit-baltistan-c50alls-balbar-awan>

Court problems - In lieu of a loo: people deprived of facilities

The Express Tribune, December 24, 2010

GILGIT: Hundreds of lawyers and their clients have to face difficulties on court premises in Gilgit on a daily basis due to the absence of basic facilities. "There are no toilets or shelters for lawyers and their clients on court premises," Musrat Jamal, a lawyer of the lower courts noted. He added that people visiting courts did not even have access to clean drinking water. People are forced to drink tap water from nearby hotels, raising health hazards associated with contaminated water.

Save for the Supreme Appellate Court, the superior court of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Chief Court, Anti-Terrorism Court and other court buildings are located in Kondodas in Gilgit, but all are without

basic facilities. "More than 500-700 people are forced to drink this unclean water daily," Jamal said, adding that absence of public washrooms is yet another issue affecting them.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/93463/court-problems-in-lieu-of-a-loo-people-deprived-of-facilities/>

Shabbir Mir, G-B cash-starved but govt least bothered

The Express Tribune, December 27, 2010

GILGIT: Leader of the opposition in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, Bashir Ahmed noted that Chief Minister Mehdi Shah is least bothered about the region as a result of which it is "starved of cash". "They (members of the government) are not taking any interest in the economic affairs of Gilgit-Baltistan," Ahmed, who is a Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid legislator, noted. While talking to journalists on December 26 he stated that no funds are expected to be delivered by the federal government and several development projects have been suspended due to a lack of funds. He added that the government's performance in the first year was very poor. "There is nothing praiseworthy," he noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/95354/g-b-cash-starved-but-govt-least-bothered/>

Diamer-Bhasha Dam: Locals seek jobs in project

The Express Tribune, December 27, 2010

GILGIT: The Diamer-Bhasha Dam affected people demanded provision of jobs to the local people in the project saying that they will not tolerate employing people from other provinces. "It is we who are the sufferers but the jobs in our area are given to people from other provinces," said Haji Najeebullah, a representative of the Diamer-Bhasha Action Committee on December 25.

He asked the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) to implement the agreement signed between the people of Diamer and the government. The reservoir would inundate 23 villages of Diamer District and displace more than

40,000 people, 6,500 houses, 4,500 acres cultivable lands, 8,000 acres uncultivable land, 60,000 fruit trees, 33,700 other trees, besides commercial areas, hotels, shops, mosques, and graveyards.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/94994/diamer-bhasha-dam-locals-look-for-jobs-in-project/>

Altaf Hamid Rao, PML-N launched in AJK; Nawaz comes hard at supporters of dictators

Pakistan Times, December 27, 2010

MIRPUR: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) was formally launched in Azad Jammu & Kashmir on December 26. This adds a new party as an egalitarian bouquet of the political epoch of the AJK. Announcement about formation of PML (N) AJK Chapter was made by Quaid of the party, former Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif at a huge public meeting held in Muzaffarabad on December 26.

PML (N) AJK leaders including ex-Prime Minister of AJK Raja Farooq Haider Khan, ex-Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir, PML (N) top leader Raja Zaffar ul Haq and other senior leaders and activists of the PML (N) from across the AJK were present on this occasion.

<http://www.pakistantimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=17594>

Sikander Shaheen, PML-N AJK, JI alliance in the offing

The Nation, December 25, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Some major political developments are in the offing as PML-N chief Mian Nawaz Sharif left for Muzaffarabad to formally address PML-N's inaugural public procession in AJK on December 26. The party-based sources noted that the PML-N chief would hold important meetings with the leaders of AJK's mainstream political parties in Muzaffarabad to evaluate the possibility of forming political alliances for the upcoming general elections. Sources stated that deliberations in this regard between PML-N and Jama'at-e-Islami are already

underway and discussions to field joint candidates from certain electoral constituencies in the general elections that are scheduled in April 2011 are on the cards.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/25-Dec-2010/PMLN-AJK-JI-alliance-in-the-offing>

Building a bridge of peace and reconciliation

The Hindu, December 26, 2010

A civil society forum in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) has begun interacting with like-minded people in this part of the border to kick-start a process to understand “mutual issues” across the Line of Control. The Forum in Muzaffarabad completed its first year. Founded by Tanveer Ahmad, a journalist, writer and civil society member, the response to the initiative has been “very encouraging.”

Mr. Ahmad roped in some acquaintances from Srinagar last week and discussed the “process of understanding” with “similar minded people” in Muzaffarabad, Gilgit, Mirpur and Hunza. This is the first such initiative since 1947 involving participants from all parts of Jammu and Kashmir, including Gilgit and Baltistan, annexed by Pakistan to its territory.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/other-states/article979295.ece>

Nawaz is protege of a dictator, says MQMAJK

The News, December 28, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement's parliamentary leader in the AJK Legislative Assembly Tahir Khokhar on December 27 slammed Mian Nawaz Sharif for heaping uncalled for criticism on his party during his Azad Kashmir visit.

Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad, he pointed out that instead of criticising the MQM for siding with ex-military ruler Pervez Musharraf, Nawaz should not forget the fact that he was groomed as a politician by a military dictator

General Ziaul Haq, who had also introduced him to the political arena.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=22620&Cat=2> 28/12/2010

Insult and Harassment in the name of Security in Gilgit: MQM

December 29, 2010

MQM has lamented the law enforcement agencies in Gilgit for insulting and harassing the public in the name of security checking. An adhoc meeting was

convened here in the central secretariat of MQM by the party workers of Gilgit Zone where they warned the authorities to stop the malpractices in the city in the name of securing public. Men are harassed and insulted, time and again, and even women are not spared. This practice has to be stopped otherwise the local administration should be responsible for dire consequences. Mir Sikandar and Hidayat ali noted in Gilgit

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/insult-and-harrassmen3t-na2m3e-7security-gilgit-mqm>

Economic Developments

Roshan Mughal, Intra-Kashmir trading resumes, dispute over levy lingers

The Express Tribune, December 15, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Traders marked the completion of two years of cross Kashmir trade service in a rare meeting on the heavily-militarised Line of Control (LoC). Traders from both Azad Kashmir and Indian Kashmir called upon their respective administrations to increase the trade volume and allow the traders of divided territory to meet every week at the LoC.

The one dozen traders, six from each side sat on the Peace Bridge at LoC in Chakothi under the watch of Indian and Pakistani civil and military officials and discussed the predicament they face in the weekly trading cross at the LoC and vowed to continue the trade despite challenges and obstacles. The meeting took place after both officials exchanged sweets and flowers to commemorate the second anniversary of cross LoC trade which started after India and Pakistan agreed under confidence building measures in 2009 to facilitate more interaction between the people of divided Kashmir.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/90218/intra-kashmir-trading-resumes-dispute-over-levy-lingers/>

Government plans strategy to counter tax evasion in cigarette industry

ISLAMABAD: Government is planning to chalk out a comprehensive strategy with cooperation of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government to stop tax evasion in cigarette industry which is causing a billion of rupees revenue loss to exchequer. Sources stated that federal government would provide technical assistance to AJK government to enhance its capability to crackdown again tax evaders in cigarette industry.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=171821>

16 projects initiated to promote tourism in AJK,

The Express Tribune, December 1, 2010

ISLAMABAD: In the hopes to revive the tourism

industry in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) the government is trying to attract tourists by providing them with more and up to date facilities in the region, Dr Shala Waqar, Secretary Tourism, noted while talking to the media. Dr Shala noted that the AJK Prime Minister was trying to initiate more projects in Muzaffarabad not only to attract domestic tourists but also international tourists. “We have initiated several projects in order to revive the tourism industry in AJ&K, this is a beautiful region and increased tourism is a method of generating more revenue to maintain the region,” Dr Shala added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/84240/16-projects-initiated-to-promote-tourism-in-ajk/>

Plan worked out to generate power through solar energy

Business Recorder, December 6, 2010

MIRPUR: In wake of the power crisis being faced by the country, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government would soon achieve a major breakthrough in solar energy sector, official sources stated. Sources further noted that the integrated solar energy utilisation plan has been inked by the government, in this regard, to provide electricity to masses on cheap rates.

Various projects, at district level, to utilise solar energy were being launched under the plan, sources added. Under the plan to be launched with the co-operation of the federal government, the people living at far flung areas, including top mountainous region, would be benefited.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/fuel-and-energy/world/1130983:news.html>

Muhammad Riaz, Absence of national grid station: private sector reluctant to invest in GB hydel power project

Business Recorder, December 9, 2010

LAHORE: Private sector is reluctant to invest in hydel power generation projects to tap the 50,000

MW electricity potential in Gilgit Baltistan mainly because of the absence of national grid station to transmit electricity to rest of the country.

Although, the federal government has relaxed its policies to induce private sector in hydel power generation, yet it did not provide any document containing solid and concrete framework to the government of Gilgit Baltistan, stated former president Mian Anjum Nisar of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry's.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/fuel-and-energy/pakistan/1132150:news.html>

Revisiting priorities: AJK council approves Rs9b budget for 2010-11

The Express Tribune, December 21, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) council has approved its budget for fiscal year 2010-2011, with a total outlay of Rs 9.007 billion. Of the total budget, the estimated development expenditure stands at Rs 2.2 billion while non-development expenditure is estimated to be Rs 870.53 million.

Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo presented the budget before the council. In his budget speech, he presented a comprehensive account of the previous year's fiscal performance, including budget estimates and achieved targets.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/92561/revisiting-priorities-ajk-council-approves-rs9b-budget-for-2010-11/>

AJK government evolves comprehensive industrial uplift plan

Business Recorder, December 21, 2010

MIRPUR: A comprehensive and broad-based plan has been evolved by the AJK government soon for the speedy industrial progress of AJK, official sources stated. At the first leg of the plan a high level committee, headed by the Chairman AJK Board of Investment, has already been formed for the revival of sick industrial units located in the industrial districts of Mirpur and Bhimbher. Sources added that state government has decided to emerge out of the plan after the business fraternity apprised the authorities of the growing problems faced by the

business fraternity in AJK. The local business community has recently highlighted the bottlenecks in the way of speedy industrial uplift in the area.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/business-and-economy/pakistan/1135986:news.html>

AJK business community hails Pak-China agreements, MoUs

Business Recorder, December 19, 2010

MIRPUR: Elite class representing various sections of life, including political and business communities on December 18 welcomed the signing of nine agreements and four Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between China and Pakistan during the ongoing visit of the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. These quarters have described Chinese Premier visit, a land mark in the history of the country to bring both Islamabad and Beijing more closer to each other, besides strengthening the already closed brotherly and friendly relations between the two countries.

<http://www.brecorder.com/news/latest/16911:news.html>

Pasco to G-B govt: pay dues or face supply suspension

The Express Tribune, December 24, 2010

GILGIT: Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Supply Corporation (Pasco) warned Gilgit-Baltistan government to pay outstanding dues or be ready for another suspension of wheat supply to the region. Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government owes Rs10 billion to Pasco. "Pasco has asked the G-B government to pay its dues or face suspension of wheat supply to the region next year," sources in Civil Supply Department noted on December 23. They said that the issue of outstanding payments surfaced last year but it was temporarily resolved on the intervention of the political government. They said that the G-B government had sought time to clear the dues but failed to do so due to financial cuts in the annual budget.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/94035/wheat-quota-pasco-to-g-b-govt-pay-dues-or-face-supply-suspension-isb-city/>

International Developments

Australia keen in developing AJK energy sector

December 16, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The visiting parliamentary delegation headed by president of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Mrs Amanda Ruth Fazio called on the AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan in Kashmir House on December 15 and took keen interest in the Australian participation in energy and tourism sectors of AJK. “We are very much impressed by our ongoing visit and expect Pakistani/AJK business community to visit Australia and have interaction with socio-economic institutions there.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1292440206&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

Support needed: Investment in power, tourism sectors

The Express Tribune, December 4, 2010

GILGIT: A delegation of parliamentarians from Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) headed to Germany to seek

investment in the power and tourism sectors of the region, a provincial minister stated on December 3. “The delegation would try to expand on investment opportunities that German companies can undertake in the power and tourism sector in G-B, to help build the infrastructure of the region,” Wazir Shakil, the Provincial Minister for Law, Planning and Water and Power, stated. He said that the Chief Minister Mehdi Shah will be heading the delegation to Germany- a country that has contributed significantly in the past to Pakistan's rural development.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/85605/support-needed-investment-in-power-tourism-sectors/>

Other Developments

Tankers strike: Fuel crisis shuts Karakoram varsity

The Express Tribune, December 20, 2010

GILGIT: The ongoing fuel crisis forced the only higher learning institute of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) to shut its doors on students. Karakoram International University (KIU) was closed for an indefinitely period because of non-availability of fuel to run the bus service of the university, noted an official of the University on December 19.

The diesel crisis intensified in the hilly region bringing life to a standstill. "On the directives of the Vice-Chancellor, a committee reviewed the situation of shortage of fuel and decided to keep the university closed till fuel becomes available," a spokesperson for the university stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/92115/tankers-strike-fuel-crisis-shuts-karakoram-varsity/>

Cold snap disrupts life in Baltistan

Dawn, December 20, 2010

SKARDU: A severe cold wave gripped the Baltistan region adding to the problems of the people of the districts of Skardu and Ghanche. According to local met office the temperature was recorded minus 10 degree Celsius on December 19 in the city during day time. However, according to people the temperature fell to minus 22 degree centigrade during night time in the upper mountainous villages like Gultary, Saltoro, Kondos, Askoli, Hushe and Shila. Weather experts say the cold wave has developed because of the prolonged dry spell. Though weather remains normal during daytime but gets severe after sunset paralysing daily life. Water supply to most households has been disrupted as water pipes have burst due to freezing temperatures.

<http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/20/cold-snap-disrupts-life-in-baltistan.html>

Hydropower project may be awarded to Chinese firm

Right Vision News, December 19, 2010

MIRPUR: The proposed Kohala hydropower project in Muzaffarabad district is likely to be awarded to a reputed Chinese construction company, official sources stated on December 16. Kohala hydro-power project, the largest private sector hydro-power project in Asia, is one of the mega projects next to the under-construction Mangla dam raising project and 969 megawatt (MW) Neelam-Jhelum hydel-power project. "China is playing a pivotal role in the speedy development of hydro-power sector in the country, besides sharing technical support and assistance for re-construction of quake-hit areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Talks between top officials of the governments of both the countries are expected to include the multi-million dollar 1100 MW Kohala hydro-power project during the scheduled three-day visit of the Chinese prime minister to Pakistan commencing from Friday December 17," the sources revealed.

http://www.hydroworld.com/index/display/news_display.1325706916.html

Shabbir Mir, G-B geological survey to find causes of tremors

The Express Tribune, December 21, 2010

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government has finally decided to conduct a complete geological survey of all those areas facing underground tremors, officials stated on December 20. "A geological survey will be carried out soon in areas of Gilgit-Baltistan where underground tremors are taking place," stated an official in the district administration. "The real cause of the tremors will be known after the survey," noted the official, who chose to remain anonymous. People in Attabad in Hunza had time and again complained about

tremors and fissures on the ground, asking the government to take measures to resolve the problem, but the request fell on deaf ears every time.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/92560/g-b-geological-survey-to-find-causes-of-tremors/>

Water and Power Development Authority and Harpo Hydropower Consultants to upgrade the Harpo Hydro Power project

December 25, 2010

Water and Power Development Authority and Harpo Hydropower Consultants to upgrade the Harpo Hydro Power project Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and Harpo Hydropower Consultants have signed an agreement to upgrade the Harpo Hydro Power project in Rondu Valley of Baltistan. The Harpo Hydropower Consultants is a consortium of three Pakistani companies and foreign consultants. Around Rs70.43 million is needed for the feasibility study of the project. KfW banking group of Germany will provide grant for the upgradation of the feasibility study.

http://www.hydroworld.com/index/display/news_display.1329287608.html

Zayed Foundation opens three schools in Pakistan

December 26, 2010

MUZAFFARAD: UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Ali Saif Al Awani and Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan inaugurated three quake-proof schools financed by the Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation and executed by the UNESCO.

The UAE envoy delivered two preparatory schools for girls and boys and secondary school for girls to the educational authorities in the presence of Raja Zulqarnain Khan, President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Syed Ghulam Murtaza Gillani, Minister for Physical Planning, Housing, Public Health, senior officials amongst others.

http://www.wam.ae/servlet/Satellite?c=WamLocEnews&cid=1292138129441&pagename=WAM/WAM_E_Layout&parent=Query&parentid=1135099399852

Fish farming: Plan to increase Mangla fish output underway

The Express Tribune, December 27, 2010

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir government plans to breed fish in the huge reservoir of Mangla Dam. Ramzan Advocate, Honorary Game Warden of Fisheries and Wildlife Department has already chalked out an integrated plan to meet the increased local demand for fish in Mirpur and other parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) under the private-public partnership joint ventures. He said that since the output of fish from Mangla Dam could be raised from 1,800 to 2,000 metric ton per annum, the government was seriously contemplating implementing the plan. The annual target of launching at least 500,000 fish of the highly expensive Mohri and Rahoo breed in Jarri Kass, Mangla, Khud, Poonch and Kansi pockets of Mangla Dam's reservoir was being achieved.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/95353/fish-farming-plan-to-increase-mangla-fish-output-underway/>

Shabbir Mir, Perpetual crisis: Fuel shortage hits Gilgit hard

The Express Tribune, December 28, 2010

GILGIT: A shortage of diesel in Gilgit is compounding people's misery, who are already faced with persistent power outages and freezing cold. Criticising the government for inaction, people agreed that owners of petrol pumps and oil tankers are colluding to earn extraordinary profits. The supply of fossil fuels has never been smooth even adulterated petrol and diesel are sold at 30-40 per cent extra price on the black market. According to some, pump owners earn millions by selling their fuel quota to entrepreneurs in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and save nearly Rs60,000 a truckload in freight charges.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/95671/perpetual-crisis-fuel-shortage-hits-gilgit-hard/>

Sabotage attempt: Building housing important documents burnt down in Gilgit

The Express Tribune, December 29, 2010

GILGIT: Important documentary evidence and inquiry reports regarding several corruption cases were lost after unidentified persons burned down three offices of the government's Buildings and Roads (B&R) department in Gilgit, police and other sources stated. The incident occurred sometime after midnight on Monday as unidentified men torched the building and fled in the dark, police noted. They added that a case has been registered and investigations launched. At least three offices were burnt in the course of the events. According to other sources, a number of documents and inquiry reports compiled by authorities against some influential officials of the Public Works Department (PWD) were stored in the offices of the building.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/96252/sabotage-attempt-building-housing-important-documents-burnt-down-in-gilgit/>

Testing winters: Risky boat rides over frozen Attabad Lake

The Express Tribune, December 29, 2010

GILGIT: Boat service is the only means of transportation for over 25,000 people of Gojal this winter after a 25-kilometer patch of Karakoram Highway (KKH) was submerged underoverflowing water of Attabad Lake. The situation has worsened since the temperature in Gojal valley dropped and the surface of the overflowing water turned into ice, making the voyage difficult and at times impossible, locals noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/95728/testing-winters-risky-boat-rides-over-frozen-attabad-lake/>

UN-HABITAT implements sanitation projects in 6 cities

The News, December 30, 2010

UN-HABITAT Pakistan is implementing the 'Water and Sanitation Improvement in Urban Informal Settlements through Gender Mainstreaming project in 21 informal settlements of six selected cities of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. In Muzaffarabad, the project (women led total sanitation) has been implemented with poor communities in 3 urban slums of Kashmiri refugees in municipality area through a consortium of local partners namely; Sungi Development Foundation, Children First and Saibaan Development Organisation. In Islamabad, the project has been implemented in the urban slums of Faisal Colony in 66 Quarter by Plan Pakistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=22912&Cat=6&dt=12/30/2010>

Legalising illegal vehicles in G-B

The Express Tribune, December 22, 2010

GILGIT: The Federal Customs Department has sought details of non-customs paid (NCP) vehicles from Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) administration, sources in the provincial government stated. The move aims at regularising non-customs paid vehicles brought in the area, noted an official of the provincial government. He said that many NCP vehicles are registered with the G-B Police's Registration Department, but they do not have the data of new vehicles brought in illegally.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/92439/legalising-illegal-vehicles-in-g-b/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Total area of Jammu and Kashmir	222,236 sq kms
Area of under illegal Pakistani occupation (PoK = AJK + Gilgit Baltistan)	78114 sq kilometres
Area of J&K under Chinese occupation <i>Area ceded to China by Pakistan</i>	42,685 sq kms 5,130 sq kms
Together Pak-China	120,799 sq kms
Area with India	101437 sq kms

Administrative Divisions: Two, namely Mirpur-Muzaffarabad (referred to as Azad Jammu & Kashmir or AJK by Pakistan) and Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan (FAGB).

Area ceded to China by Pakistan: 5180 sq. kilometres (Area of Shaksgam Valley)

(Source: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.jammukashmir.nic.in/>, accessed on November 14,, 010)

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

Population: 2.973 million (1998 population census), Male, 1.850 million; Female, 1.832 million

Capital: Muzaffarabad

Kashmir (Muzaffarabad Division) comprises of 3 districts: Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Neelum, Hattian

Jammu (Mirpur Division) comprising of 5 districts: Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur, Sudhnati/Pallandari and Rawalakot/Poonch, Haveli

President: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

Ethnic Groups: Gujjars, Jats, Mughal, Rajputs, Sudhan, Awan, Qureshi, Pashtuns, Shins, Ladakhi, Baltis etc.

Religious Groups: Sunni, Ahlehadith, Shia, Nurbakhshi, Christians, Qadianis, Hindus

Languages: Punjabi, Hindko, Pahari, Kashmiri, Balti, Puriki, Shina

Political Parties and Groups: United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, AJK Muslim Conference, International Kashmir Alliance, JK National Party, Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (Amanullah), Peoples United Action Committee, All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

(Source: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www. www.ajk.gov.pk/>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Seven

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche and Skardu districts

Gilgit Region is divided into Astore, Diamer, Ghizer, Hunza-Nagar and Gilgit districts

Ethnic Groups: Shin, Balti, Puriki, Ladakhi, Wakhi, Yashkun, Tibetan, Mongol, Tatar, Mon, Pashtun, Khowar, Dom, Gujjar, Rajput and Kashmiri

Religious Groups: Shia (Twelvers), Nurbakhshi (Twelvers), Ismaili, Sunni, and Ahlehadith

Languages: Shina, Balti, Wakhi, Khowar, Gujjari, Burushaski, Puriki, Kashmiri, Pashto

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: 24 members directly elected

Governor of G-B: Wazir Baig (officiating)

Chief Minister G-B: Syed Mehdi Shah of Skardu district.

Political Parties and Groups: Balwaristan National Front (BNF), Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum, Gilgit-Baltistan, United Movement (GBUM), Baltistan National Movement, Karakoram National Movement, Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA), Gilgit Baltistan National Alliance (GBNA), All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

(Sources: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk>, & website of the Balwaristan National Front, <http://www.balawaristan.net>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

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 'Gilgit Baltistan' 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



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: lbscidsa@gmail.com