

POK NEWS DIGEST

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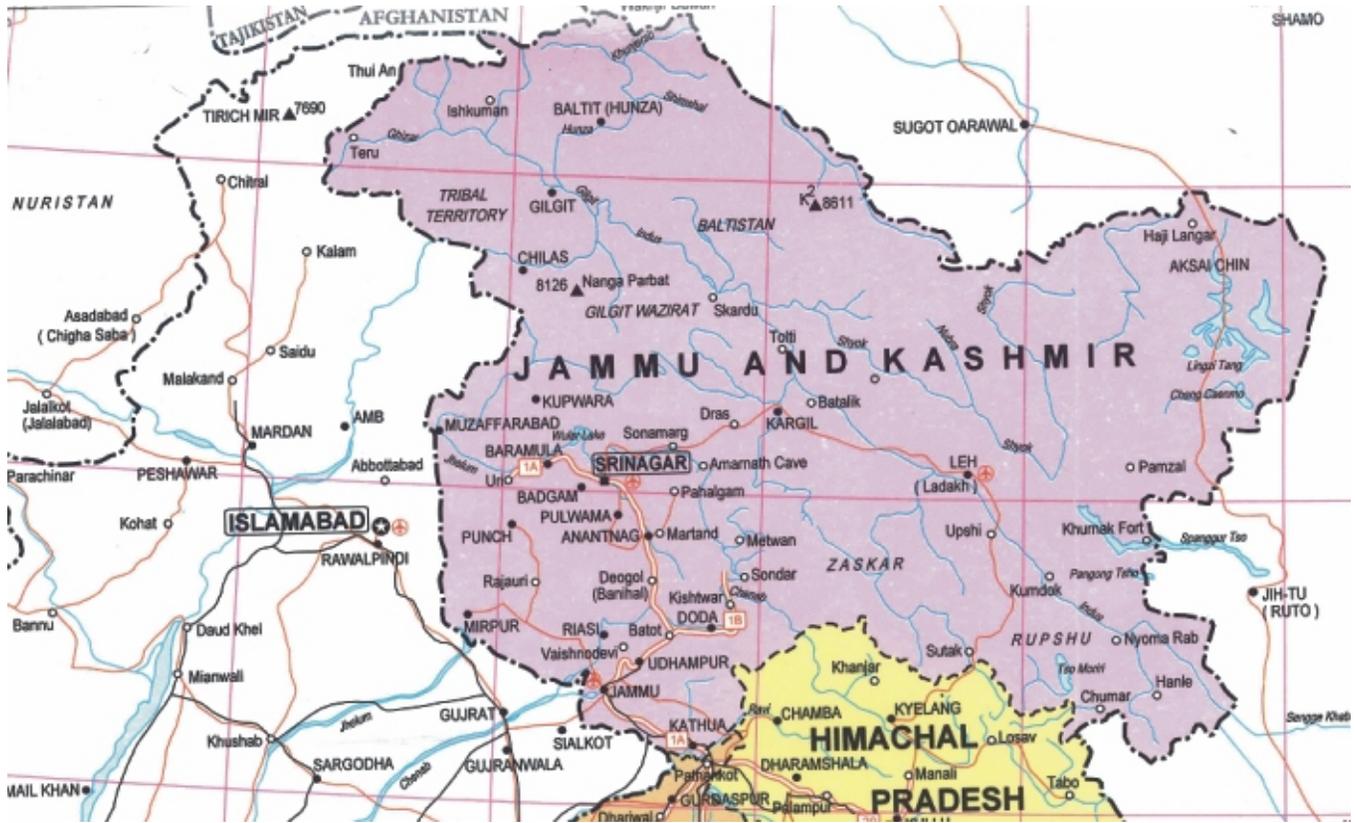
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The election euphoria in the so called AJK is far from over. Amidst allegations of wide spread rigging and foul play, the PPP emerged as the victorious side. This is in line with the past history where the party in power in the federal government of Pakistan manages to pull off a win in the AJK. It took some time for PPP leadership to take a decision on the new Prime Minister. Lobbying for the prime job was reported but finally Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari approved Chaudhry Abdul Majid's name in consultation with the top PPP leaders including Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani.

On the economic side, cross LoC trade resumed in the end of June after remaining suspended for months. However, there was some fall in the number of trucks passing through the LoC as compared to what it is in normal course. Problems facing cross LoC trade such as lack of banking channels and communication links between traders on both sides have disrupted trade on several occasions. It is often felt by traders on both sides that their interests are often undermined by political complexities existing between India and Pakistan. Traders have also expressed hope they can communicate directly with each other instead of dealing under prescribed channels of communication.

Some reports in this edition indicate Chinese plans to invest heavily in the PoK power projects. Serious differences have been reported between the government of PoK and Pakistan on the issue. In addition to this, Chinese companies are also taking keen interest in mineral resources of Gilgit Baltistan, as noted in a report.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Shabir Choudhry, Elections in Pakistani colony - Azad Kashmir

June 29, 2011

In a parliamentary form of government a party that gets majority forms the next government; and the party leader becomes a Prime Minister. This happens in every democratic and civilised country. However, rules in a Pakistani occupied territory known as Azad Kashmir are different. PPP emerged as the winner in the elections. It was expected, as always is the case, a ruling party in Islamabad gets the desired results in Azad Kashmir to suits its needs. Barrister Sultan Mehmood, former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and a leader of the PPP was interviewed by a Pakistani TV. He happily claimed to have got the majority to form the government. The TV journalist asked him who is going to be the Prime Minister. Barrister Sultan Mehmood with a fake smile on his face stated: Zardari Sahib will decide who is going to be the Prime Minister' (of Azad Kashmir).

http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1349:elections-in-pakistani-colony-azad-kashmir&catid=47:reporters&Itemid=76

PPP sweeps AJK polls amid rigging charges

The New, June 27, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) swept the election for the AJK Legislative Assembly amid allegations of rigging. According to unconfirmed results, the PPP won 21 seats, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) eight, Muslim Conference (MC) four and independent candidates have taken two seats in the 41-seat AJK Legislative Assembly.

The voting for three seats of the legislative assembly was postponed due to the security situation. Fierce clashes between supporters of the

PPP and PML-N were reported from various constituencies in which two persons, including a PML-N supporter and several others, were injured. The AJK Chief Election Commissioner announced the first elections result of the Legislative Assembly, LA 39, Valley 4. According to the announcement, PPP candidate Syed Azhar Hussain Gilani obtained 1,397 votes, while PML-N candidate, Zafar Ali got 406 votes.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=7023&Cat=13&dt=6/27/2011>

JKCHR decides to move AJK High Court, SC

The News, June 30, 2011

LONDON: Jammu and Kashmir Council for Human Rights expressed its deep anguish on the failure of the AJK Election Commission to conduct free and fair elections in Azad Kashmir and enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections as provided in the UN General Assembly Resolution on the holding of elections. At a Council meeting held to discuss the electoral process and the emerging details of vote rigging in June 26 elections, Secretary General JKCHR, Dr Syed Nazir Gilani stated that these elections in addition to the general complaint of rigging are a violation of the free transfer of will embedded in the vote. AJK election laws are discriminatory and disenfranchise a large section of the electorate.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=55178&Cat=2&dt=6/30/2011>

AJK EC rejects foul play claims

The Nation, June 30, 2011

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Election Commission categorically refuted the allegations regarding rigging in June 26 AJK Legislative Assembly elections framed by certain losing

candidates and the political parties. A spokesman for the AJK Elections Commission stated in Muzaffarabad that the primary condition of producing the computerized national identity card by the voters for exercising their right to franchise was implemented strictly in all constituencies during the polling. "No incident of casting of fake vote or any unlawful use of influence upon the polling staff during polling was reported from any constituency," the spokesman noted.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/30-Jun-2011/AJK-EC-rejects-foul-play-claims>

Nawaz Sharif should not utilize Punjab govt resources during AJK election: Wattoo

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo stated PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif should not use the resources of Punjab government during AJK elections. He stated this while talking to media in Islamabad after high level meeting was held in interior ministry in connection with security matters of AJK elections. He held it was the decision of PPP and its coalition partners that elections in AJK will be held in fair and transparent manner and for this a good environment will be provided.

[Http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=180725](http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=180725)

Election victory shows trust of Kashmiris in PPP: Dr Firdous

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 28, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan stated on June 28 that election victory in Azad Jammu and Kashmir proves the confidence that the masses have in the leadership in Pakistan Peoples Party. Speaking to PTV she stated the hopes of those political actors dashed to the ground who was dreaming of mid-term elections. She further stated that media teams witnessed acts of violence at various polling stations and this shows that the Punjab Government was neither loyal to the country nor to the cause of Kashmir. She stated that Punjab government deployed more than 3000 police

personnel at different constituencies during state elections.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=143560&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, Opposition leader terms government, politicians 'inept'

The Express Tribune, June 29, 2011

GILGIT: The Leader of the Opposition in the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly, Bashir Ahmed on June 28 made a scathing criticism on the government and blamed the regional leadership for failing to exercise powers delegated to them in the G-B Empowerment Order. "Our regional leadership is inept and has been unable to utilise the powers delegated in the self governance order," stated Ahmed, a PML-Q member while talking to local reporters.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/198358/opposition-leader-terms-government-politicians-inept/>

Irfan Ghauri, Tales from the LoC: Divided at home

The Express Tribune, June 29, 2011

KAREN: There are some people in Karen village who can talk to their relatives only when the winter is at its harshest and the sound of the river is low. They shout messages across to their family members for this is the closest they can get to them. Divided by the Line of Control (LoC) that separates the two parts of Kashmir, people from this small village can never meet each other. Karen is about 80 kilometres north of Muzaffarabad, in the centre of the spectacular Neelum Valley. On the other side, Karen is linked with Kupwara town of Jammu & Kashmir.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/198517/tales-from-the-loc-divided-at-home/>

20 cops hurt in clashes with N activists in AJK

The Nation, June 29, 2011

MIRPUR: At least 20 policemen including a station house officer (SHO) and a returning officer (civil judge) were injured in a violent attack by an unruly

mob of the armed activists of PML-N AJK, protesting against rigging in polls in Nikayal town of Kotli District in Azad Jammu and Kashmir on June 28, police stated.

“The injured include Returning Officer LA-9 (Nikayal) Muhammad Shabir Chaudhry and SHO Nikaal Police Station Mirza Maqsood Ahmed,” Superintendent Police Kotli Irfan Masood Kashfi noted from the trouble-ridden Nikayal, the home town of PML-N AJK Supremo and former Prime Minister of AJK Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan on June 28.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/29-Jun-2011/20-cops-hurt-in-clashes-with-N-activists-in-AJK>

Maqbool Malik, PPP leaders lobby for AJK PM slot

The Nation, June 28, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Some of the PPP AJK stalwarts after winning election on their seats have arrived in the federal capital to secure choice slots in the next AJK government to be formed by the party next month, sources stated on June 27. Sources noted that a number of PPP leaders from AJK have started lobbying with the PPP central leadership to secure places in AJK government. Among those who are lobbying for the powerful slot of AJK Prime Minister are Chaudhary Majeed, former AJK PM Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary, Chaudhary Latif Akbar and Chaudhary Yasin.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/28-Jun-2011/PP-leaders-lobby-for-AJK-PM-slot>

AJK polls: Former premiers win their seats

The Nation, June 27, 2011

Four former Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime ministers have won the elections held on June 26. Former Prime ministers Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, Farooq Haider and Sardar Yaqoob won the elections in their respective constituencies during the AJK polls. PPP's Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry defeated PML-N's Arshad Ghazi in LA-3 Mirpur.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan of the Muslim Conference defeated the PPP and the PML-N's candidates in LA-13 constituency.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/27-Jun-2011/AJK-polls-Former-premiers-win-their-seats>

Trade attempt to weaken Kashmir movement: Salahuddin

The Nation, June 27, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Terming cross-LoC trade 'a deliberate attempt to weaken the freedom movement' in Kashmir, Chairman United Jihad Council, and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Syed Salah-ud-Din stated that lakhs of Kashmiris had not scarified their lives for trade, 'but for complete freedom from India.' The spokesperson of UJC Syed Sadakat Hussain in a statement quoting Salah-ud-Din stated, “Lakhs of Kashmiris have laid their lives in realising their aspirations and it is ironic that there has been no breakthrough on Kashmir issue.”

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/27-Jun-2011/Trade-attempt-to-weaken-Kashmir-movement-Salahuddin>

Masroor Afzal Pasha, MQM chief declares AJK polls null and void

Daily Times, June 27, 2011

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) chief Altaf Hussain declared the elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as null and void and demanded that fresh elections should be held as the present elections had become doubtful because of the autocratic steps of the government. He vehemently criticised the government's undemocratic, unconstitutional and unethical steps taken by those who claims themselves to be the champion of democracy and had even shamed the dictatorial steps of dictators in the past.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\06\27\story_27-6-2011_pg12_1

PML-N worker gunned down in Bhimber

MIRPUR: An activist of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), AJK chapter, was gunned down in a clash

between workers of PPP and PML-N during the polling for AJK Legislative Assembly elections in electoral constituency (LA-6) Samani valley of Bhimber district, police stated. Additional Superintendent of AJK Police Raja Irfan Salim stated that deceased was identified as Raja Muhammad Ifikhar son of Muhammad Younis, Resident of Bandli village.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=17640>

Vast power potential in GB

Pakistan Observer

CHIEF Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah rightly pointed out that the area with a potential to produce 50,000 MW of electricity can help overcome energy crisis in Pakistan, provided necessary investment is made in the sector. Talking to Chairman Board of Investment Saleem H Mandiviwalla in Islamabad, he also referred to the potential of the GB in tourism, mining, and food preservation.

We indeed need private Sector investment for development of hydro electricity projects particularly small and medium sized to harness the energy potential of Gilgit-Baltistan as the Government alone is unable to allocate the required funds for the purpose because of resource constraints. The proposal to have an office of BOI in GB is quite relevant in this regard as Chinese investors were already working on various hydropower projects but there was a need to encourage local investors as well. Construction of roads and expediting the proposal for establishment of an industrial zone would help provide all industrial-related infrastructure and facilities to investors. But establishment of industries is hampered due to non-availability of reliable and continuous power supply and adequate availability of power will usher in industrial activity and the demand of energy and revenues both will then rise rapidly in near future.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=99619>

Shabbir Mir, Blocked court funds Gilgit-

Baltistan chief accountant in contempt case

The Express Tribune, June 26, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan's Supreme Appellate Court served a contempt of court notice to the region's head of the accountant-general of Pakistan for revenue (AGPR) office. Abdul Hameed Pasha had been summoned in person in a suo motu case but instead a representative appeared before the court. The court, headed by Justice Muhammad Nawaz Abbasi, had taken suo motu action against the AGPR a day earlier which was clubbed with a petition filed by a citizen Liaquat Alam pleading that Pasha had refused to approve his cheque worth Rs2.2 million, court officials stated. In response, the court had summoned Pasha to explain his reasons.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/196572/blocked-court-funds-gilgit-baltistan-chief-accountant-in-contempt-case/>

Minister sought changes in GB package

Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: Gilgit-Baltistan Minister for Law Wazir Shakeel stated some issues needed to be discussed in the package given to the region by the federal government. He stated that overall the package was satisfactory but some minor problems were required to be rectified. He further stated the main problem was that no authority was given to Gilgit-Baltistan for amending the package. "We need little amendments in the package and request has already been made before the federal government in this regard," he added. He stated a committee was working for improving the package and soon after the preparation of the final draft, negotiations would be held with the federal government. Earlier, federal government had allocated Rs7.689 billion for 14 ongoing development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) 2011-12, but it did not identify any new development projects. The G-B government sought over Rs8 billion for the development sector.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=99537>

Irfan Ghauri, AJK elections: Clan loyalty matters more than manifesto

The Express Tribune, June 25, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Despite having a higher literacy rate than most areas in Pakistan, voting patterns in Azad Jammu Kashmir depend largely on clan loyalty, with even the most educated of party workers having little clue as to what it is in their party manifesto. So critical is the clan loyalty factor in AJK elections that party leaders seek out candidates with the largest clans and the deepest roots inside their communities. Yet the campaign season itself has revealed several idiosyncrasies about Kashmiri society and politics. Manifestos, for instance, seem unimportant to nearly all of the political activists in the region. Most cannot identify what their own party stands for, let alone why they do not choose to vote for another party.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/195926/ajk-elections-clan-loyalty-matters-more-than-manifesto/>

Justice Azam sworn in as AJK CJ

The Nation, June 25, 2011

MIRPUR: Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, who was serving as acting Chief Justice of the AJK Supreme Court, has been appointed as permanent Chief Justice, stated an official notification. "In exercise of all power conferred by Section 42 (4) of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution (Act – 1974), the president, on the advice of the AJK Council, is pleased to appoint Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, Acting Chief Justice, as Chief Justice of AJK", the official notification issued by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department of AJK government in Muzaffarabad stated.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/25-Jun-2011/Justice-Azam-sworn-in-as--AJK--CJ>

Syed Danish Hussain, Marvi invited to join PTI

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 25, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has offered Marvi Memon, who has recently resigned

from her membership of PML-Q as well as the Parliament, to join PTI as head of Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK chapter affairs. A top-tier PTI leader confirmed the news expressing hope that Marvi would be in PTI within upcoming days for the aforementioned responsibility. However, Ms Marvi, stated that she had been invited by some political parties to join them but she had not taken any decision yet.

Giving brief details of her plans before joining any political party she stated, "I have to do some work of immediate importance in prevailing circumstances that includes conception of an alternate government model in the country with the help of loyal Pakistanis, and interaction with the people about their issues and their solutions."

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=143148&Itemid=38

Dr Firdous urges refugees to reject 'political jugglers' in AJK polls

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 23, 2011

SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan urged the refugees on June 23 to discriminate between friends and foes, and get rid of the leaders who had escaped from the country for their personal interests. She regretted that people's representatives in the past approached AJK assembly on the basis of Baradari but they did not honour mandate of voters and hoodwinked the people. As a result, the problems of refugees have increased manifold.

Addressing the public meetings at Pakpura and in adjoining village Talwara Mughlan, she stated that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was involved in politics of 'Thana and Kutchery' for attracting votes for their candidates contesting in AJK elections. She hoped that the people would use their discretion according to their conscience. She vowed to eliminate the politics of 'Thana and Kutchery' forever with the active support of the masses.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=143148&Itemid=38

Gibran Peshimam, Kashmir in focus – part 2: 'Azad Jammu Kashmir's laws contravene UN resolution'

The Express Tribune, June 23, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: A sweeping declaration, locally referred to simply as “The Shik” (The clause), must be signed by all electoral candidates in the AJK, which demands their allegiance to Islamabad. However, according to the region's best known and widely-respected jurist, Justice (retd) Manzoor Hussain Gillani, a former acting chief justice of AJK and its former chief election commissioner, 'the clause' is totally against the UN resolution. Even though the retired justice is in favour of the unification of Kashmir and merger with Pakistan, he, on his part, maintains that the spirit of choice is clearly undermined by 'the clause', even if the choice to be made would be in favour of Pakistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/194598/kashmir-in-focus--part-2-azad-jammu-kashmirs-laws-contravene-un-resolution/>

Gibran Peshimam, Kashmir in focus – part 1: Where's the 'Azad' in Azad Jammu and Kashmir?

The Express Tribune, June 22, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: They have Pakistani identity cards and passports – but are not quite Pakistani. Their homeland is autonomous, but not quite so. It has a Constitution – but one that is perpetually interim. They have a government and an assembly, but both of which are effectively powerless. It is a land and a people with a past, and perhaps a future – but with no present.

Welcome to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK): A virtual no-man's-land, which will go to the polls– but it is not quite clear what for. A majority of (Azad) Kashmiris see the current political and constitutional status of the area as a joke. Most prominent among such residents of this area is Justice (retd) Manzoor Hussain Gillani, a former acting chief justice of AJK and its former chief election commissioner, who calls the current situation a “paradox”. Identity(less) This “paradox”

has led to the systematic disenfranchisement of millions who live not only within its borders, on both sides of the LoC, but those who have migrated due to years and years of being in limbo.

AJK has stood in virtual limbo – as far from 'Azad' as can be possible. It is a territory that has been forced into a comatose state of identity-lessness.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/193849/kashmir-in-focus--part-1-wheres-the-azad-in-azad-jammu-and-kashmir/>

Shahbbir Mir, Gilgit-Baltistan: Crackdown against radical elements

The Express Tribune, June 23, 2011

GILGIT: Security agencies finalised a strategy to launch a crackdown on religious radicals in Gilgit-Baltistan, sources noted on June 22. “The modalities have been finalised. It is only a matter of time before a crackdown is initiated against religious extremists,” an official noted. On June 21, witnesses claimed to observe unusual movement of security forces in districts where sectarian violence is endemic and various incidents occurred earlier this year. Following the worst sectarian crisis in 2005, the government jailed six clerics for inciting violence. However, they were released almost a year later in 2006.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/194582/gilgit-baltistan-crackdown-against-radical-elements/>

Kashmir refugees' problems to be resolved on priority: Firdous

Pakistan Observer

SIALKOT: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan on Monday stated PPP-led government was making sincere and consistent efforts to resolve problems faced by Jammu and Kashmir refugees who had settled in various parts of the country after the Partition. The Minister acknowledged that they had played a pivotal role in the Pakistan Movement and also paid heavy price for supporting creation of Pakistan.

The Information Minister was speaking at the residence of Ch. Sikandar Khan, a candidate from LA-32 Jammu-3, who announced his withdrawal

from the election of AJK Legislative Assembly unconditionally. Ch. Sikander assured full support to PPP candidate, contesting from the same constituency. Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan stated the unconditional withdrawal of Ch. Sikandar Khan would further strengthen PPP and the Party will win the election with thumping majority from the area.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=98797>

PML-N to rid AJK of 'military democracy'

The Nation, June 20, 2011

LAHORE/MUZAFFARABAD: The PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif pledged that his party would rid Azad Kashmir of military democracy and empower the people. The former prime minister, in an election campaign stated that PML-N would establish an exemplary democracy in the state by providing the people their due rights, justice, development and prosperity. The PML-N AJK would restore people's right to rule, end corruption and plundering and establish good governance, he stated. Nawaz noted attempt to rig the elections would be defeated with the might of the masses.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/20-Jun-2011/PMLN-to-rid-AJK-of-military-democracy>

Role of media in dev of GB

Pakistan Observer

DIAMER: Speakers at a seminar titled Role of Media in the Development of Gilgit-Baltistan, organized by the students of the Department of Media and Communication, Karakoram International University, highlighted the critical role of regional media in the development of the GB. The seminar, held at Musharf hall KIU, was participated by a large number of senior journalists from Gilgit-Baltistan, development professionals and students besides the Vice Chancellor and other faculty members of KIU.

In her keynote speech, Dr. Najma Najam, VC KIU stressed on the regional media practitioners to avoid sensationalism and practice objectivity in journalism. She stated media can play a key role in

educating the society on critical issues. Senior Journalist Saadat Ali Mujahid presented his paper on the evolution of print media in GB and its role in development. He highlighted the difficult situations during which the regional media has evolved. Mr. Aftab Mehmood, Station Director, Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Gilgit-Baltistan highlighted the role of Radio Pakistan in the evolution of media in GB and overall development of the region.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=98343>

Delegation of Gilgit-Baltistan Graduates Association meets the Chief Secretary

Dardistan Times, June 17, 2011

A delegation of Gilgit-Baltistan Graduates Association called on Saifullah Chatha, the Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan and demanded a probe into serious hiring irregularities in the Agriculture and Food Department. The delegation presented some actionable proof that the department was squarely indulged in corrupt practices while recruiting human resource. The chief secretary was convinced to summon the secretary of Food and Agriculture to present his version of the story. The secretary Food and Agriculture accepted that irregularities did happen and that he assumes responsibility for that.

The Chief Secretary, on the spot, declared more than 40 appointments in the stated department, null and void. He termed the hiring against due procedure and assured the delegation to initiate legal action against those involved.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/GBGA11-Gilgit-Baltistan09-Chief-Secretary>

Election monitoring: AJK-PPP invites international observers

The Express Tribune, June 17, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Former Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) PM Sultan Mahmood on June 15 asked the international community to send their observers and media representatives to monitor the upcoming elections on June 26. Talking to diplomats and

ambassadors at the party secretariat, he stated that no element would be allowed to intervene in the election process. He added reporters and international observers are welcome to monitor the elections to verify the democratic procedure. "We have an independent election commission so that nobody can raise questions concerning the transparency of the elections," he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/190391/election-monitoring-ajk-ppp-invites-international-observers/>

PPP, PML-Q decide to extend alliance to Azad Kashmir polls

Pakistan Tribune, June 16, 2011

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to bring a paradigm shift in the politics of the AJK region, particularly in the upcoming elections in Azad Kashmir, the PPP and PML-Q on June 15 decided to extend their coalition to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, agreeing to support each other's candidates in the elections.

The decision was taken during the meeting of senior leaders of the PPP and PML-Q chaired by Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. PML-Q's senior minister and Minister for Defense Production Chaudhry Parvaiz Elahi and Minister for Labour and Manpower Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain were also at the Prime Minister House.

<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?240447>

Shabbir Mir, G-B assembly passes Civil Servants Act

The Express Tribune, June 8, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on June 8 passed two bills on the second day of the house's proceedings. Law Minister Wazir Shakir tabled the Civil Servants Act 2011 bill in the house which was unanimously approved by the members. He also responded to questions on behalf of Chief Minister Mehdi Shah, who was not present in the House. PML-Q Member Amina Ansari criticised the government for not repairing Alam Bridge. She explained that business activity in Baltistan District has been severely affected due to

protests by locals against the chief minister's negligence.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/184394/g-b-assembly-passes-civil-servants-act/>

PM approves incentives package for non-GB domiciled officers in Gilgit-Baltistan

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on June 15 approved an Incentive Package for non-GB domiciled officers posted against All Pakistan Unified Grades (APUG) positions with the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan. Following is the detail of incentives package approved by the Prime Minister on the recommendations of the Establishment and Finance Divisions:-

i) Posting tenure in Gilgit-Baltistan will be two years from the date of joining and excluding EOL/Foreign Training/Deputation outside the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan.

ii) On transfer out from Government of Gilgit-Baltistan after completing two years tenure, the officer's choice for posting in any of the Provinces/Federal Government will be accorded preference.

iii) 100% increase in pay across the board for non-Gilgit-Baltistan domiciled officers during posting in Gilgit-Baltistan area.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=142336&Itemid=38

Zafar Bhutta, Diamer-Bhasha project: Boundary dispute threatens scheme

The Express Tribune, June 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The government secured the agreement of the cabinet, the provinces, the international lenders, and the more than 30,000 families who would be affected by its construction, but the Rs1 trillion Diamer-Bhasha dam project may yet be scuttled because of a boundary dispute between Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Sources in the Water and Power Development

Authority (Wapda) stated that Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani had directed them to start work on the Diamer Bhasha dam, even without the settlement of the boundary issue, which he stated could be resolved later. But the dispute refuses to die down, forcing Wapda to postpone its groundbreaking ceremony for the project twice in the last three weeks. Wapda officials are reluctant to move ahead with the project without resolving the issue first, fearing that the matter could become worse once construction starts with the boundary dispute unresolved.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/189012/diamer-bhasha-project-boundary-dispute-threatens-scheme/>

Sultan invites international observers to monitor AJK polls

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Former AJK Prime Minister and Chairman Election Campaign Committee of Peoples Party Azad Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mehmood on June 15 asked the international community to send their observers and media representatives to monitor general elections in Azad Kashmir scheduled to be held on June 26. Addressing ambassadors and diplomats of more than 35 countries here at the Party Secretariat, he stated that the reports of the international observers and media coverage would prove that there was complete democracy in Azad Kashmir adding, no element would be allowed to intervene for ensuring free and fair election. He also appealed the Ministries of Kashmir and Foreign Affairs to facilitate the international observers during the elections in AJK.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=142285&Itemid=2

'N' candidate vows to revolutionise AJK economy

The Nation, June 4, 2011

MIRPUR: PML-N candidate from Mirpur for June 26 elections Muhammad Saeed on June 2 declared that after being elected, his party would initiate revolutionary reforms to strengthen economy,

which as he observed has shattered because of flawed policies of the incumbent government. Mr Saeed, who is also former president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, stated that because of the poor policies of the incumbent rulers, AJK's economy had yet crumbled after the state's industrial estates started giving a look of graveyards due to lack of facilities by the government despite the hue and cry of investors. He pointed out that five to six mega industrial units in the only major industrial district of Mirpur could not run because of the lack of availability of gas.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/04-Jun-2011/N-candidate-vows-to-revolutionise-AJK-economy>

Roshan Mughal, Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections: ML, JI enter into electoral alliance

The Express Tribune, June 3, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The Muslim League and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) have entered into an electoral alliance for the June 26 elections for Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly. "The alliance with JI is on common agenda including stepping up of Kashmir liberation movement, exposing Indian repression and provision of good governance in AJK," Muslim League AJK chief and former Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan announced at a news conference held at the Jamaat-i-Islami office on June 2. He stated that an Islamic welfare society will be set up in AJK to provide even development and justice opportunities to the people of state, while resources will be developed to allow the region to be economically self-reliant.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/181382/azad-jammu-and-kashmir-elections-ml-ji-enter-into-electoral-alliance/>

Nawaz to evolve AJK poll strategy

The Nation, June 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif met various groups from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in Islamabad on June 14 to evolve election strategy for party candidates taking part in the AJK Legislative Assembly elections to be held on June

26. Sources stated Nawaz, who would travel from Lahore to Islamabad, would meet various delegations from AJK to constitute coordination committees to expedite election campaigns of the party candidates.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/13-Jun-2011/Nawaz-to-evolve-AJK-poll-strategy>

Bill to give expats representation in assemblies soon

The Nation, June 13, 2011

MIRPUR: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) is contemplating bring a Bill in the Parliament to get ensured the due representation of Overseas Pakistanis in the National as well as all the four Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan, stated Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Dr Nadeem Ehsan. He was talking to reporters at PWD Rest House Mirpur on June 12. Parliamentary Secretary on Overseas Pakistanis Farhat Muhammad Khan, OPF Managing Director Ehsan Jamali, Director Mirpur Zahoor Ahmed Solangi, Assistant Director Zaheer Ahmed Warriach and Welfare Officer Masood Akhter Raja and other officials of OPF were also present on the occasion.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/13-Jun-2011/Bill-to-give-expats-representation-in-assemblies-soon>

Pro-freedom Kashmiri leaders under IT scanner

Pakistan Observer

MUZAFFARABAD: The Income Tax Department filed fresh tax evasion cases against top pro-freedom Kashmiri leaders including JKLF chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik, Democratic Freedom Party chairman Shabir Shah and JKLF leader Showkat Ahmad before a Srinagar Court for allegedly failing to furnish income tax returns for 2009-10.

The Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar issued summons to the pro-freedom leaders and ordered them to be present in the court on June 27 to face the trial. The court also issued fresh summons

to Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman Syed Ali Geelani and his son-in-law in a separate Income Tax complaint for allegedly concealing particulars of their income and evading tax payment.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=97402>

GB decides to end boycott of Shandur Polo Festival

Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: Gilgit-Baltistan decided to end its boycott of Shandur Polo Festival, the three-day sporting event held every year at the world highest polo ground located in Chitral, a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is to be mentioned here that last year Gilgit-Baltistan stayed away from the internationally acclaimed Shandur Polo Festival, due to the lingering row over the ownership of the ground and meadows of Shandur. Gilgit-Baltistan claims ownership of the ground and pastures, saying that these had been integral part of Gilgit-Baltistan since British era.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=97200>

Dr. Javid Iqbal, Balwaristan - Fourth party of Kashmir dispute! ...an addition to J&K State's political nomenclature

June 12, 2011

Balwaristan! Ever heard of it before? While Baltistan is a known geographical identity, Balwaristan is hardly heard of-an addition to erstwhile J&K state's political nomenclature. That such an entity is talked of has a news source-Tanveer Ahmad-a well known broadcaster, columnist and a social activist from 'Pakistan Administered Kashmir' [PaK]. Tanveer's story makes out that a person named Nawaz Khan Naji, the founder and supreme head of his faction of the Balwaristan National Front, won a by-election in his home constituency of Ghizer (L-A 19) and thereby became a member of the Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly. As Tanveer notes in one of his columns, Naji won, despite a political agenda that directly questions Pakistan's occupation of the territory, and being head of a party that espouses the

total independence of Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh. He aspires for their re-emergence into a re-union of "Highland People" named Balwaristan.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jun/12/balwaristan-fourth-party-of-kashmir-dispute--5.asp>

Gilgit Baltistan: Report Sees Continued Threat of Chinese Penetration

UNPO, June 10, 2011

India's leading strategic affairs think tank has recommended a change of 'discourse' on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and suggests a multi-pronged approach to counter Pakistan. The Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in a study "PoK: Changing the discourse" released last week warns against China's growing designs in the vital Gilgit-Baltistan area that borders the Kargil-Drass region of India. "If the current pace of Chinese penetration is sustained then China may completely take over Gilgit-Baltistan by the year 2020", says the study.

Explaining the Chinese interest, it says the Gilgit-Baltistan region is contiguous to China's Xinjiang province where Muslim separatist feelings are strong. Therefore, China seems to be preparing to take over control over Gilgit-Baltistan, should the central authority in Pakistan become ineffective. "China has a strategic intent to dominate PoK in general and Gilgit-Baltistan in particular", the 54-page study report says, while adding that Pakistan has ignored the resentment of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan against the increasing Chinese penetration into their area.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/12753>

Shabbir Mir, GBLA session: Gemstone mining banned

The Express Tribune, June 9, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly on June 8 imposed an immediate ban on

gemstone mining and export of precious stones from the mineral resource-rich mountain region. The decision was taken following a heated debate in the G-B Legislative Assembly earlier in the day on issuance of licence for mining and export of gemstones from the region to other parts of the country.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/185002/gbla-session-gemstone-mining-banned/>

Shujaat Bukhari, China in the forefront in building power projects in PoK

The Hindu, June 6, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Amid a cold war between the federal government of Pakistan (GOP) and the government of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) over the issue of building hydel power projects, China is taking a lead role in their construction in the region. This increasing presence of Chinese companies in PoK comes amid the protest lodged by New Delhi against the "direct involvement" of China in rebuilding the Karakoram highway in Gilgit-Baltistan, the part of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State and annexed by Pakistan. The highway was severely damaged in the floods last year and the work to rebuild it is going on at fast pace. There has been stiff resistance from PoK government to GOP's "unilateral" decision. Locals, who feel projects will ease power crisis, have no serious objection to Chinese presence.

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/06/01/stories/2011060163461100.htm>

Economic Developments

Cross-LoC trade resumes on Poonch, Uri routes

Kashmir News, June 29, 2011

SRINAGAR: The cross-LoC trade resumed from both routes of Poonch-Rawlakote and Uri-Muzaffarabad. Only 19 trucks exchanged sides against usual number of 60 on Poonch route, 39 vehicles crossed sides in Kashmir. Official sources stated the cross-LoC trade resumed on Poonch-Rawlakote route after about three and a half months. Trade between the Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the J & K was suspended on March 13 after the businessmen dealing with cross-LoC trade protested imposition of Value Added Tax (VAT) on the items exported from Jammu & Kashmir. However, the traders of both routes decided to resume the trade after the J & K authorities assured to concede their demand for lifting VAT on the exports.

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/cross-loc-trade-resumes-poonch-uri-routes>

Shabbir Mir, Diamer-Bhasha Dam: Increased compensation demanded

The Express Tribune, June 22, 2011

GILGIT: Villagers in Goharabad and the adjacent valleys likely to be affected by the Diamer-Bhasha Dam have rejected compensation rates for their lands. They say that they will not allow work on the site unless the government revises the rates. "There is sheer discrimination against us in the compensation rates offered by the government. We are not going to accept that," stated Noshad Alam, a representative of Goharabad, a village in Diamer valley, about 85km from Gilgit. He was flanked by dozens of other people. This week, enraged protestors pelted the assistance commissioner's office in Chilas with stones and blocked the highway in protest. They stated that more than

35,000 people will be dislocated and forced to leave behind their ancestral lands. But the government is not even offering them fair compensation rates, they added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/193755/diamer-bhasha-dam-increased-compensation-demanded/>

Wapda chief vows to meet energy crisis

The Nation, June 25, 2011

MIRPUR: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Shakil Durrani on June 23 visited Mangla Power House to witness the rehabilitation works at Unit No 5, official sources stated. He was accompanied by Mangla Dam Raising Project General Manager Chief Engineer Mangla Dam Organisation, Resident Engineer and other officers, stated the sources. Speaking on the occasion, the chairman stated that the Wapda is implementing a two-pronged strategy for optimum utilisation of the indigenous hydropower resources to cope with growing demand of electricity in the country.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/25-Jun-2011/Wapda-chief-vows-to-meet-energy-crisis>

Shabbir Mir, Mining matters: 'Giving permits to foreigners is like letting them rob G-B'

The Express Tribune, June 23, 2011

GILGIT: The issuance of permits to foreigners for mining precious stones has triggered unrest in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), as people consider the move an attempt to rob them of their rights and property. "We warn the government of dire consequences if it allows mining rights to people other than those from G-B," Raja Azam, an MQM member in the G-B Legislative Assembly (GBLA), told reporters on June 22. He stated that he had raised the issue in the assembly too, but the government took it lightly.

Following speculation in the local media this week that a foreign interest had been issued a mining license, politicians from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in Skardu warned their own government that issuing permits to foreigners will lead to people standing up against them.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/194529/mining-matters-giving-permits-to-foreigners-is-like-letting-them-rob-g-b/>

Shabbir Hussain / Shabbir Mir, Budget 2012: Gilgit-Baltistan presents Rs15.4 billion budget

The Express Tribune, June 21, 2011

ISLAMABAD/GILGIT: The government of Gilgit-Baltistan presented a Rs15.4 billion budget for fiscal year 2012, even as journalists in the region boycotted the election proceedings for what they felt were promises broken by Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and Chief Minister Mehdi Shah. The budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 is approximately 40.4% higher than the actual spending for the outgoing year of about Rs11 billion. However, it is only 18% higher than the announced Gilgit-Baltistan budget of Rs13 billion for fiscal year 2011. Like the four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan's government lacks the capacity to spend all of the money that is allocated to it by the federal government.

Gilgit-Baltistan Finance Minister Muhammad Ali Akhtar presented the budget to the region's Legislative Assembly. About 47% of the budget, or Rs7.3 billion, has been allocated for development spending, a substantial increase over the Rs3.34 billion spent on development last year. However, last year, the regional government was only able to spend about 60% of the total budget allocated for development, which accounted for most of the unspent money in 2011's budget.

Taking its cue from the federal government, Gilgit-Baltistan will be raising salaries for its employees by 15% and pensions by 20%. Total spending on Legislative Assembly, the cabinet, the chief minister and the governor's offices is expected to come to Rs200 million.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/193191/budget-2012-gilgit-baltistan-presents-rs15-4-billion-budget/>

Peer Muhammad, G-B development: Govt allocates Rs19.2 billion for 15 projects,

The Express Tribune, June 8, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has earmarked over Rs19.214 billion for various development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2011-12. These projects are in addition to the funds allocated through the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and G-B.

The funds will be spent on five projects in the water and power sector, seven projects of the information ministry and eight of the interior ministry. The major chunk of the fund, Rs18 billion, has been allocated for the construction of Diamer-Basha dam. Besides that, Rs650.956 million have been set aside for Bunji hydro-power project, Rs50 million for Phander hydro-power project, Rs50 million for Basha hydro-power project and Rs20 million for the Harpo hydro-power project in Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/184390/g-b-development-govt-allocates-rs19-2-billion-for-15-projects/>

Peer Muhammad, Draining water: Decision on Attabad Lake tender soon

The Express Tribune, June 20, 2011

ISLAMABAD: A high level committee will visit Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) to assess the situation at Attabad Lake and decide whether it contracts for draining out the accumulate water and rebuilding the damaged road would go to local or foreign firms. This was decided during a meeting between President Asif Zardari and army chief General Ashfaq Pervaz Kayani last week at the President House. The two discussed the 24km of Karakoram Highway which was submerged in the Attabad disaster. The blockade has not only caused serious problems for locals, but also had badly disturbed trade between Pakistan and China for the last one and a half years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/192352/draining-water-decision-on-attabad-lake-tender-soon/>

Zafar Bhutta, Raising Mangla Dam: 1960s error to cost govt Rs39b in 2012

The Express Tribune, June 20, 2011

ISLAMABAD: A strategic mistake in the original 1960s engineering design of Mangla Dam is expected to cost the government Rs38.8 billion in fiscal year 2012, as the government will be forced to evacuate thousands of people and compensate them in order to complete a project to expand the dam's diminishing storage capacity. Documents submitted on May 26 to the executive committee of the National Economic Council – the nation's highest economic decision-making body – reveal that while the dam's original design incorporated the possibility of raising its current levels, it did not factor in the need for an extended lake area.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/192509/raising-mangla-dam-1960s-error-to-cost-govt-rs39b-in-2012/>

ERRA Board approves projects for next year

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 3, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has approved number of projects and budget for the year 2011-2012 in 17th Board meeting of ERRA in Islamabad on June 2. The Board approved Ring Road project being built from Chinese loan linking Muzaffarabad and Kahota, Project for distribution and building ground storing tanks for water supply in Bagh and laying of water distribution network in Rawalakot. The Board also approved improvement and Black Topping of Amnai to Puran Road district Shangla, for which the loan has been provided by the Islamic Development Bank.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=141033&Itemid=2

Roshan Mughal, Financial plan: AJK budget 'increases' negatively

The Express Tribune, June 15, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) finance minister's claim that the state's budget has been increased by 34 per cent is proven incorrect the moment one looks at last year's

figures. The AJK budget for 2010-11 was Rs47.3 billion. In contrast, the budget for 2011-12 is Rs44.55 billion, which is around 6 per cent less. Moreover, the legislators, who are busy running a heated campaign for the upcoming elections, walked out of the assembly without debating on the budget.

According to the budget, government employees have been given a 34 per cent increase in their salaries and the net deficit has been decreased to Rs5 billion from Rs12.5 billion last year. However, the development sector's share has also been reduced from Rs11.1 billion last year to Rs8.2 billion. No new taxes have been introduced in the new budget, even though there is a strong need to increase state revenues. According to the proposed budget, all the income will be generated through state resources (Rs13.64 billion), federal taxes (Rs9 billion), taxes collected by Kashmir Council of AJK (Rs6.9 billion), water usage charges from Mangla (0.72 billion) and annual development program fund (8.284 billion).

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/189081/financial-plan-ajk-budget-increases-negatively/>

Rs 50b disbursed among affectees

The Nation, June 5, 2011

MIRPUR: The compensatory amount of over Rs50 billion out of over Rs54 billion has so far been distributed among the affectees of the just-completed Mangla dam raising project against their properties to be affected due to the gigantic project, official sources stated. At the same time, construction work in new Mirpur garden city (and four new towns, exclusively meant for the fresh Mangla dam affectees), carved at different locations on the periphery of Mangla lake in the district has been accelerated, sources noted on June 4.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/05-Jun-2011/Rs50b-disbursed-among--affectees>

Gilgit-Baltistan Investment Week to be held

Dardistan Times, June 2, 2011

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(LCCI) will be holding an Investment Week for Gilgit-Baltistan in September. The report noted that LCCI will arrange a weeklong exhibition and industry-specific awareness sessions and discussions to attract flow of investment into the region. The report further quoted the LCCI president Shahzad Ali Malik's optimistic remarks about Gilgit-Baltistan that the region has a great potential to leverage the economic activities, not only, in the region but in the whole country provided the potential and talent is harnessed.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/gilgit-4baltistan-investment-week-be-held2>

Attabad tragedy: Audit report of relief aid to be made public

The Express Tribune, June 1, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly

Speaker Wazir Baig stated that an audit report will be carried out into the money received by the Gilgit Baltistan administration in the wake of the Attabad tragedy. "The audit report will be then presented in the legislative assembly," Baig noted. Although he didn't explain the reason behind his decision, it is believed that the complaints raised by the people of Gojal forced him to take action. In January 2010, a massive landslide blocked Hunza River at Attabad, creating a lake that not only submerged a large stretch of the Karakoram Highway, but also five villages upstream.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/179906/attabad-tragedy-audit-report-of-relief-aid-to-be-made-public/>

International Developments

Dutch Ambassador inaugurates schools in Muzaffarabad, Bagh

Pakistan Observer

MUZAFFARABAD: Ambassador of Netherlands Joost Reintjes inaugurated 21 new schools constructed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the earthquake-affected districts of Muzaffarabad and Bagh. The inauguration ceremony was held at Government Boys Primary School Mera Paprosha the other day. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has contributed US\$32 million, making it the largest donor for the earthquake education programme.

This funding is part of a broader package of support to UNICEF for school reconstruction in the earthquake affected region from a group of donors. With these funds, UNICEF is expected to complete the planned 691 schools (410 permanent and 281 pre-fabricated) in AJK and KPK provinces by the end of the current year. The total number of beneficiary students of the programme would be 65,000.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=100055>

Senge Hasnan Sering, Chinese mining companies make inroads into Gilgit's mineral-rich region

The Economic Times, June 29, 2011

At a time when the distance between American and Pakistani priorities in the post-Osama period continues to grow, China is passionately vouching for Pakistan's entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is seen as the upcoming Asian NATO. For some time now, China and Pakistan have aspired to create a regional alliance comprising the Arab countries, Central Asian Republics, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey, and SCO could most likely help that dream come true. But

there is more to it than meets the eye. The lynchpin connecting these countries will be Gilgit Baltistan, a disputed region rivaling Serbia in area. Although constitutionally a part of India and bordering China's Xinjiang province, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Gilgit Baltistan remains in Pakistani control since 1947.

The political uncertainty owing to India's claim to the region is especially worrisome for China, which currently depends on her southern neighbour for two reasons. Firstly, China uses transit routes of Gilgit Baltistan to reach Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and the ports along the coastline of Arabian Sea; and secondly, Chinese mining companies control the region's much valued mineral deposits of uranium, gold, copper, marble and precious stones.

http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2011-06-29/news/29717321_1_uranium-exploration-korean-miners-mineral-deposits

Protest against AJK polls in London Murtuza Shah

The News, June 25, 2011

LONDON: The United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP) staged a demonstration outside the High Commission of Pakistan here against the exclusion of some nationalists from standing as candidates for the 26th June legislative assembly elections. Shaukat Ali Kashmiri, the UKPNP leader and founder, has started a campaign against the legislation clauses, which bar those who hold nationalistic views from fighting for the elected office. The demonstration attended by a large number of Kashmiri activists, was led by Usman Kayani, the UK President of the party and addressed on telephone by Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri from UKPNP's Europe headquarters in Switzerland.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=54438&Cat=2&dt=6/25/2011>

Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry seeks UK investment in AJK power sector

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 3, 2011

LONDON: Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has urged the UK business community to invest in the hydel power and tourism sectors in the AJK as a way towards alleviating the unemployment problem and contributing as well to the progress and development of the region. Speaking at a dinner hosted in his honour by the UK-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UKPCCI) at a Central London hotel on June 2, he stated hydel power sector in AJK has not been exploited to the hilt and this remains a promising venture for the UK-based Pakistani and Kashmiri business community.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=141026&Itemid=39

Malaysian firm wins \$14m deal

Daily Times, June 16, 2011

A press release issued on June 15 revealed that under the agreement, TNB Remaco will provide services worth \$14.1 million for the operation and maintenance of 84 MW New Bong Escape Hydroelectric Power Complex being built at a cost of \$235 million on the Jhelum River in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The services would be provided for an initial period of five years with an option of extending it for another seven years. The 15-month mobilisation period for the project is likely to commence in August this year.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\06\16\story_16-6-2011_pg5_9

Other Developments

Six OMCs barred in AJK, Northern Areas: OGRA

Business Recorder, June 29, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has suspended licenses of Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) only for certain parts in the country, an official stated. The authority on June 28 suspended licenses of six oil marketing companies for not retaining required stocks at their oil depots in various parts of the country. "As a result these companies will not be operating in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas while at other places they would operate", OGRA official sources stated. The official noted these companies will not supply stocks to the petrol pumps in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas of the country while petrol pumps in those areas are allowed to sell petroleum products.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/industries-a-sectors/18575-six-omcs-barred-in-ajk-northern-areas-ogra.html>

Hybrid Solar Water Heating System in Gilgit-Baltistan

Dardistan Times

Pakistan-US Science & Technology Cooperation Programme (USTATED) and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan have funded \$164,115 and \$76,566 respectively on a project to provide alternate energy system in Gilgit-Baltistan, using CO2 as working fluid. The project is technically collaborated by the University of North Dakota and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (Pakistan). The purpose of this research project is to show how solar energy can be used as a safe and ecologically friendly hybrid system for heating and space applications. Heating and hot water in Gilgit-Baltistan is a daily need, mostly met with either

using firewood or electricity-- rapidly depleting energy sources.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/category/news/gilgit-baltistan>

60 AJK citizens crosses Line of Control through trans-LoC bus

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 18, 2011

MIRPUR: Highest number of 60 citizens of Azad Jammu Kashmir reached Srinagar on June 16 after they crossed over to other side of the Line of Control (LoC) for the second consecutive week through the weekly trans-LoC bus from Muzaffarabad to Srinagar, official sources stated. Sources noted on June 17 that 60 Kashmiris belonging to divided families, highest in 2011, hailing from various parts of AJK, including 24 women and 20 children, crossed the peace bridge on foot at Chakothi-Uri sector at the LoC, linking AJK and Jammu & Kashmir.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=142589&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, Gilgit residents brace themselves as diesel crisis looms large

The Express Tribune, June 17, 2011

GILGIT: As diesel crisis continues in the country, the spill-over effects have started reaching Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), where hoarders are attempting to benefit from the situation by creating an artificial crisis. "There are indications that people in the oil industry are trying to create a fake crisis in the region to fill their own pockets," stated Zahid Ali, a transporter in Gilgit. "The situation might spread to other parts of G-B if the government does not do something about it soon," he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/190397/gilgit-residents-brace-themselves-as-diesel-crisis-looms-large/>

Ruinous shutter down strike impairs life in Baltistan

Dardistan Times, June 7, 2011

A complete wheel-jam and shutter down strike was observed in Baltistan that almost impaired public functioning in the region. From the street hawkers to oil tankers associations and petrol pump owners got united against the government and Frontier Works Organization (FWO), engineering and construction wing of Pakistan Army. Shops, Markets, and business centres were completely shut down. There was hardly any vehicle on the roads and people were desperately helpless to get to their destinations such as schools, hospitals and work places. Attendance in schools and offices remained ridiculously low.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/ruinous-shutter-down3-strike1-impairs-life-baltistan48>

11745 Kashmiris swap sides on LoC in 4-years

June 10, 2011

As many as 11745 members of the divided families swapped sides in last four years through Uri-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakote opening points between this part and Pakistan administered Kashmir. The Regional Passport Officer, G. A. Dar stated that while 4828 persons from this part of the divide travelled to Pak, 6917 Muzaffarabad residents met their families here. He stated since 2007, 6268 Kashmiris were issued permits and 4828 of them traveled across, whereas 10883 PaK residents got cleared and 6917 of them traveled across to this part of the divide.

<http://www.kashmirdispatch.com/more-news/10063848-11745-kashmiris-swap-sides-on-loc-in-4-years.htm>

Tourism can enhance GB's economy

Pakistan Observer

HUNZA: There is a huge scope of tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, and if given proper attention, can contribute a great deal in strengthening the economy of the region. This was stated by the Advisor to Chief Minister for Tourism Sadia Danish.

She noted steps were needed to boost tourism sector in Gilgit- Baltistan as a lot of employment opportunities could also be created through proper utilization of resources. She stated there were many areas in the region which were worthy seeing and there was a need to popularize these areas in order to promote tourism.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=96641>

Shabbir Mir, World Environment Day: Call to protect fragile mountain ecosystem

The Express Tribune, June 7, 2011

GILGIT: World Environment Day (WED) was marked in Gilgit on June 6 with different stakeholders pledging to conserve the rare wildlife and diminishing forests to keep the environment safe. Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) Environment Protection Agency (EPA), in collaboration with Mass Awareness for Water Conservation and Development (MAWCD-UNDP), Serena Hotel and District NGOs Network organised an environmental walk in the morning as participants held banners inscribed with slogans encouraging people to adopt pro-conservation practices in their lives.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/183759/world-environment-day-call-to-protect-fragile-mountain-ecosystem/>

Shabbir Mir, KKH remains blocked, hundreds stranded

The Express Tribune, June 4, 2011

GILGIT: The Karakoram Highway (KKH) remained blocked for the fifth consecutive day on June 3, after a massive landslide obstructed part of the KKH near Pari on May 30, hugely disrupting traffic. Rubble piled up on the highway when Chinese engineers tried to widen the KKH from Raykot to Khunjerab. The pile-up forced hundreds of trucks to wait on both sides. "We reached Gilgit via Chamogarh road as there was a large convoy of trucks," stated a passenger from Rawalpindi.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/182040/kkh-remains-blocked-hundreds-stranded/>

Roshan Mughal, Pollution: Are your civic agencies polluting your water?

The Express Tribune, June 4, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The Municipal Corporation seemingly feels that the banks of Neelum River are a safe place to dispose of rubble. Huge amounts of debris of earthquake-damaged buildings are being dumped into the river which is flowing in the middle of Muzaffarabad. To make things worse, the city's sewage lines have also been opened to river. Neelum River, which is also known as Kishanganga, originates from Jammu & Kashmir and enters

Muzaffarabad from Chella Bandi, from where it runs towards the west and joins Jhelum River in Domel. A large quantity of rubble is also being disposed off in lower Neelum valley, where a road, funded by the Asian Development Bank under the Earthquake Emergency Assistance Program, is being built by a Chinese company. Apart from that, Jhelum River, which flows from Srinagar, is also being used for dumping rubble and sewage disposal.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/182041/pollution-are-your-civic-agencies-polluting-your-water/>

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, 2010)

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.

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