

POK

News Digest

Volume 5 | Number 10 | October 2012

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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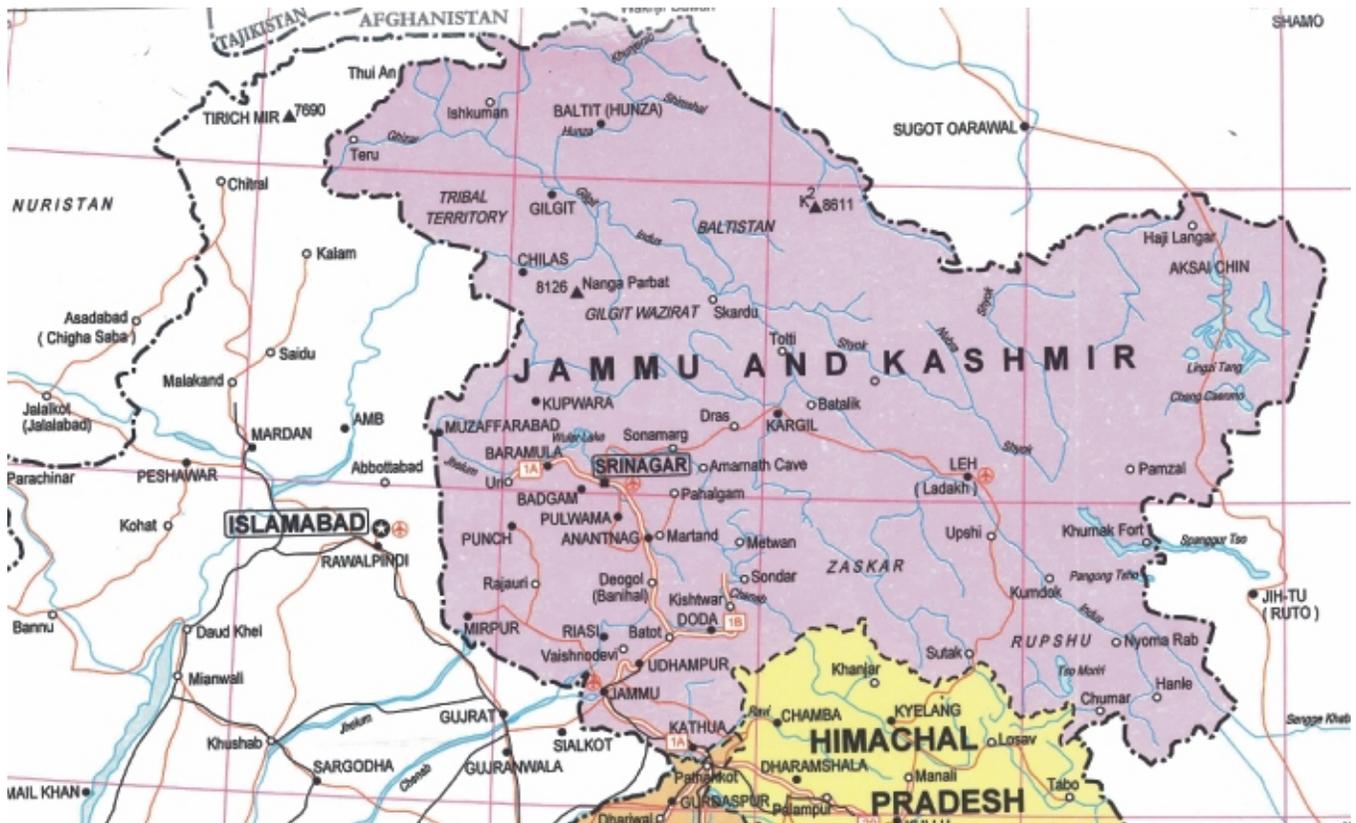
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The controversies revolving around the Diamer Bhasha Dam refuse to die down. In September 2012, reports surfaced suggesting that Japan and the United States are keen to invest in this mega project. According to initial reports, Japan had shown interest in providing machinery for the Diamer Bhasha dam worth \$ 4 billion and also assist in upgrading the capacity of the Mangla Dam in the so called 'AJK'. Later however, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) came out denying any such funding plan. The agency clearly stated that it has given no such promise to Pakistan on the dam project. On the other side, there were reports that Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised objections on Pakistan seeking funds from China for the Diamer Bhasha dam without competitive bidding. The bank made it clear that it would not be able to provide funds for the project if Pakistan does not exercise transparency in the funding procedures. There was a possibility that the bank could walk out of the project. However, subsequent reports suggested otherwise.

Meanwhile, the section of population affected due to the raising of the Mangla dam has demanded that a detailed schedule for the rehabilitation process must be outlined by the government of the so called AJK. There has been growing resentment over the inordinate delay in the rehabilitation process and people have threatened to launch protest movement against the state authorities in AJK.

Amidst growing concerns that Gilgit Baltistan might turn out to be another Balochistan, as indicated by reports included in the current issue, there are rising fears on the overall security situation in the PoK region. Transporters in the area have demanded that sensitive stretches leading towards Gilgit Baltistan be manned by security forces to ensure safe transit for the trucks.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Conspiracy to divide Kashmir bound to fail: Turrabi

September 17, 2012

BIRMINGHAM: Jamaat Islami Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chief, Abdur Rashid Turrabi stated that people of Jammu and Kashmir will not let the conspiracies to succeed for division of Kashmir and to make AJK and Gilgit Baltistan provinces of Pakistan. Addressing a reception hosted in his honour in Birmingham, he stated similar attempts were made in past to alter the status of AJK and northern areas of Kashmir under international conspiracy but rulers were forced to change their mind. Zulfikar Ali did try to implement his designs but he had to concede to the stiff resistance of Kashmiri people and similar formula of General Pervez Musharraf met its natural death.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2012/09/17/conspiracy-to-divide-kashmir-bound-to-fail-turrabi.html>

Pakistan army to launch operation in Gilgit-Baltistan

September 17, 2012

GILGIT: Pakistan has failed to root-out militants from its land. Over 40 militant training camps are still running in the country and in Azad Kashmir. Many of these camps are backed by the Pakistani army and spy agencies. The Pakistan government claims it has carried out army operations to curb militancy. And recently, during his visit to Skardu, Pakistan's interior minister Rehman Malik announced a military operation in Darel Valley in Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.mizonews.net/world/pakistan-army-to-military-operation-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Using youth to resolve conflict

Dawn, September 17, 2012

With the situation deteriorating day by day, the

peace process in Gilgit Baltistan is getting jeopardised. The government of Pakistan, specially the government of Gilgit Baltistan, has failed to prevent the terrorist attack on our sister community (Shias). The Chief Justice of Pakistan was supposed to take suo motu action against sectarian killings on Karakoram Highway but he has not done it so far. The chief justice seems to deem the case of disqualifying the PM of Pakistan as more appropriate. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan is still silent over sectarian killings in GB. Not a single voice has been raised by the media over this issue; the Human Rights Commissions all over the world have no single word over it. Although the UN Secretary-General took notice of this issue, it is left in the lurch. No one has sympathy for the people of Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/17/using-youth-to-resolve-conflict/>

Zaheer Abassi, Prime Minister seeks US help in building Bhasha dam

Business Recorder, September 16, 2012

Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf requested the United States to help Pakistan build multi-billion-dollar Diamer-Bhasha dam, helping it overcome the prevailing energy crisis. The Prime Minister raised the issue of energy crisis during a meeting with Marc Grossman.

He stated that US could help overcome Pakistan's energy problem by participating in Diamer-Bhasha dam, designed to generate 4,500-megawatt of electricity. The project is designed to store around 8.1 million acre-feet (MAF) of water. The prime minister argued that US participation in the project would send a good message to the people of Pakistan as the project would reduce miseries of the common man.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1237299/>

Pakistan has No Legal or Moral Justification to Annex Gilgit Baltistan

September 14, 2012

London branch of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has condemned the move by the Pakistani authorities to make Gilgit Baltistan a part of Pakistan constitutionally. In a statement issued after the meeting of JKLF London Branch, it stated that Gilgit Baltistan is part & parcel of Jammu Kashmir State and Pakistan has no legal or moral justification whatsoever to annex this part of Jammu Kashmir. The statement noted that Pakistan, the so-called big brother " of Kashmiris is back-stabbing the people of Jammu Kashmir and their sacred movement for national emancipation. If Pakistan really cares for Kashmiris and wants peace in the region, it must not betray Kashmiris.

<http://thesop.org/story/20120914/pakistan-has-no-legal-or-moral-justification-to-annex-gilgit-baltistan.html>

Sectarianism, extremism fragmenting country: Nilofar

Daily Times, September 15, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Nilofar Bakhtiar, chairperson of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Bardasht, has stated sectarianism and extremism were the gravest issues confronting Pakistan today and had led to the fragmentation in the northern areas as well as major urban centres like Quetta and Karachi. She was addressing a conference on 'Peace in Gilgit-Baltistan'.

The conference was the fifth civil society peace dialogue organised by Bardasht, which addressed major challenges that contributed to violence and intolerance in society. She stated that sharing the pain and anger of communities affected by sectarian and ethnic violence could forge a new beginning. The conference was attended by experts from Gilgit-Baltistan and discussed complex emergencies, disaster management and pro-women legislation.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C09%5C15%5Cstory_15-9-2012_pg7_28

Gilgit Baltistan Assembly has no right to decide

future of this region

September 13, 2012

GENEVA: Kashmir National Party leaders Abbas Butt, Zubair Ansari and Dr Shabir Choudhry in a joint statement reiterated KNP's stand that Gilgit Baltistan is legal and constitutional part of State of Jammu and Kashmir; and the entire state is disputed and forcibly divided and occupied.

The KNP leaders stated the state of Jammu and Kashmir is one political entity and must not be divided in any form or shape. Whatever the future status of the state it must remain united; and any attempts to divide it will be opposed as it will be disastrous for Jammu and Kashmir State and the entire region of South Asia.

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/09/13/76-Gilgit-Baltistan-Assembly-has-no-right-to-decided-future-of-this-region.html>

ECP urged to freeze BISP funds

Business Recorder, September 6, 2012

Pakistan Muslim League-N Azad Kashmir has demanded the blockage of Rs 150 billion of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and urged upon the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to freeze this huge amount for ensuring fair and impartial upcoming election in the country.

Addressing a news conference at Sialkot Press Club (SPC) on September 4, ex-speaker AJK Assembly and General Secretary PML-N, Shah Ghulam Qadir alleged that BISP was ruthlessly used in Azad Kashmir election by Pakistan Peoples Party and practice would be replicated in general elections of Pakistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1234419/>

Jalees Hazir, Saving Gilgit-Baltistan

The Nation, September 9, 2012

Speaking at a press conference in Skardu on September 9, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf Chairman, Imran Khan urged the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take suo moto notice of targeted killing of members of the Shia community in Gilgit-Baltistan. His party

had announced a day earlier that, if brought to power, it would give representation to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in the National Assembly and Senate. By addressing the two issues, the PTI has struck the right chord with the people of the region. The question is: why have the established political parties, including the ruling PPP that swept the last elections to the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, failed to articulate and address these popular concerns?

The monster of sectarian divisions is spilling over from a volatile Gilgit and getting bigger even in Skardu and other districts that have been known for tolerance and sectarian harmony. The composure of his historical analysis was replaced by intense emotions, as he asked me in a hurtful tone that shook my heart: “Why doesn't the Chief Justice take suo moto notice of these repeated killings when even minor incidents in the rest of the country catch his attention?”

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/columns/09-Sep-2012/saving-gilgit-baltistan>

Shabbir Mir, GBLA session: Lawmakers ask govt to declare G-B tax-free zone

The Express Tribune, September 7, 2012

GILGIT: An independent legislator has asked the federal government to declare Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) a tax-free zone and allow duty-free import of essential commodities from China. The proposal was floated by Syed Raziuddin in a resolution that he tabled during the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) session on September 6. Tax issues dominated the third-day of the 24th session of the house. “The region should be declared tax-free considering the level of poverty and backwardness of the region,” stated Raziuddin while speaking on his resolution.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/432650/gbla-session-lawmakers-ask-govt-to-declare-g-b-tax-free-zone/>

Map shows GB, AJK as parts of India

The News, September 5, 2012

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on September 4 directed the Punjab Chief Secretary to probe a map published in the Atlas book in which some territory

of Pakistan has been shown as a part of India. The Pakistan Social Justice Party had filed the petition and submitted that Atlas book published a map in which Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) were shown as parts of India by the publisher which was a conspiracy against Pakistan and a step toward changing the minds of new generations.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-130198-Map-shows-GB-AJK-as-parts-of-India>

Tourism promotion

Pakistan Observer, September 4, 2012

ASTORE: Advisor to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan (GB) for Tourism, Sadia Danish stated on September 3 that the government of GB was utilizing all available resources for the promotion of tourism department in the region. Speaking to media, she stated the government has allocated Rs 11, 32,0000 grant for the uplift and development of tourism in the region. She stated that massive tourists from country and foreign were visiting GB. “We have talked with several companies for the promotion of tourism,” Sadia added. To a question, she stated the success of RAMA Festival was a big achievement of tourism department, adding the department would organize these types of events in future also.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=172399>

Shabbir Mir, Sectarian violence: PML-N chief flays govt for inaction in G-B

The Express Tribune, September 5, 2012

GILGIT: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief, Nawaz Sharif, who visited Gilgit on September 4, voiced concern over growing incidents of sectarian killings in the region and criticised the government for failing to take any effective action to ensure peace. “Unfortunately, incidents of terrorism are on the rise while the government is doing nothing to stop them,” he noted in a ceremony in Gilgit. He lashed out at Gilgit-Baltistan's governor and chief minister for not paying due attention to regional issues, saying that instead of spending time in the region to settle

the crises, the top officials prefer to stay in Islamabad. “Under these circumstances it is illogical to expect them to maintain peace,” he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/431569/sectarian-violence-pml-n-chief-flays-govt-for-inaction-in-g-b/>

Imran Khan for suo motu action over sectarian killings

Dawn, September 3, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Requesting the chief justice to take suo motu action over the recent incidents of sectarian violence, chairman Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan stated the government's silence on the incidents in Gilgit-Baltistan and Quetta was unfortunate, as reported. During a visit to Skardu, he stated that the country's “incompetent and weak leadership” had been unsuccessful in providing protection to the people.

He also stated that the entire nation was saddened by the targeted killings of Shias in Quetta and Gilgit-Baltistan. The PTI chief stated the government should resign if it could not protect the citizens. Khan also visited mosques of different schools of thought and met a number of religious scholars in Skardu. He emphasised the need to promote tolerance in order to keep the Muslims united.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/03/imran-khan-for-suo-motu-action-over-sectarian-killings/>

AJK PM calls for support to overseas Pakistanis

The News, September 4, 2012

BIRMINGHAM: Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated that PPP stands shoulder to shoulder with overseas Pakistanis on the issue of dual nationality and appealed to PML-N to stop playing politics on this issue and support the right of millions of overseas Pakistan to take part in Pakistan's politics and social life. In an interview, Majeed stated overseas Pakistan had representation in the legislative assembly and no law will be made to disfranchise overseas Pakistanis who are playing a great role in the development of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. He called on PML-N and other parties to “keep in mind

the larger national interest in the long run” and not play politics with the future of Pakistan by stripping off millions of overseas Pakistanis from their right to stand in election and vote in Pakistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-129988-AJK-PM-calls-for-support-to-overseas-Pakistanis>

Appointment of DG LG&RD: AJK Service Tribunal suspends notification

Dawn, September 4, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK Service Tribunal on September 3 suspended an allegedly controversial official notification whereby the charge of the post of Director General (DG) Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) department was given to an officer from the engineering unit, triggering a strike by administration unit officials. On August 10, the government transferred LG&RD department's in-charge DG Ghulam Murtaza as an officer on special duty (OSD) and assigned the additional charge of the post to Kamran Hafeez, a superintending engineer (SE) of the department. The order, which was stated to be in violation of an earlier judgment of the Service Tribunal and the Supreme Court, created a state of chaos in the LG&RD department as officers of administration unit not only went on strike but also formed an 'action committee' to fight it tooth and nail.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/04/appointment-of-dg-lgrd-ajk-service-tribunal-suspends-notification/>

Amendments in AJK interim constitution after consensus: Wattoo

Pakistan Tribune, August 31, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Minister Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo stated that the amendments in Interim 1974 Constitutional Act of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) will be made after taking all political parties on board. He was addressing a press conference after chairing a meeting of AJK All Parties Conference (APC) held on August 30. The conference was attended by heads of all parties of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to discuss the matter of amendments. Wattoo noted before the media that the meeting decided to gather all recommendations

and dispatched them to already formed parliamentary committee having representation of all parties. He stated the committee would submit its report within two months to leadership in Pakistan, which would take the final decision on amendments.

AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob, Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, former presidents Sardar Muhammad Anwar Khan and Raja Zulqarnain, former prime ministers Sardar Attique Ahmad, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary and Raja Farooq Haider, senior minister Yaseen, AJK JI chief Abdul Rasheed Turabi, former AJK Assembly Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir and leaders of different parties attended the meeting.

<http://paktribune.com/news/Amendments-in-AJK-interim-constitution-after-consensus-Wattoo-252888.html>

GB Govt blamed for giving free hand to murderers

Pakistan Observer, September 1, 2012

GILGIT: Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamat Amir and Khateeb Markazi Jamia Masjid Gilgit Qazi Nisar Ahmad criticized the Gilgit-Baltistan government for being least concerned over the killing of innocent people in the area. Addressing a big Friday gathering in Gilgit he stated the provincial government was misguiding the Federal government and planning a major operation in Diamer. He such an operation would not be in the interest of the country and people of the area. He stated the people and Ulema of Diamer have collaborated with the administration to the maximum to help restore peace and order.

Qazi Nisar Ahmad stated that the government has given free hand to a group and its terrorists in Gilgit while police has failed to arrest the murderers. He warned that if the government did not stop its unjust policies and continued supporting a particular group, the situation would deteriorate further. He also alleged that that the GB government was favouring students of a particular sect for airlifting them through the C-140 aircraft provided by the federal government. He demanded an end to Self Governance Order 2009 and giving a new system where rights of every one are protected.

<http://pakobserver.net/201209/01/detailnews.asp?id=171870>

'Locals should be appointed as judges in G-B's apex court'

The Express Tribune, September 19, 2012

GILGIT: Lawyers in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have demanded that judges be appointed at the Supreme Appellate Court (SAC) from amongst senior lawyers instead of reappointing retired judges at the court. Supreme Appellate Court Bar Association (SACBA) Representative Advocate, Shehbaz Ali stated the apex court has been dysfunctional for the last four months after the post of two of its judges were left vacant. Justice Mohammad Yaqub and Justice Jafar Shah of the SAC retired in June earlier this year after their three-year contracts expired.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/438788/locals-should-be-appointed-as-judges-in-g-bs-apex-court/>

Violent protest: One killed, another injured as police open fire on mob

The Express Tribune, September 19, 2012

MIRPUR: A man died and another sustained bullet wounds when police opened fire at an unruly mob protesting registration of a case against an activist of an opposition party in Bhimber district of Azad Kashmir on September 18.

The police used baton, fired teargas shells and gunshots in the air to disperse the protesters, mostly workers of the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), who stormed the district courts complex. The PML-N worker was booked allegedly by ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) activist Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, police and witnesses stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/438765/violent-protest-one-killed-another-injured-as-police-open-fire-on-mob/>

Imran Khan meets Sunni, Shia and Noor Bakhshi Leaders in Baltistan

Dardistan Times, September 2, 2012

SKARDU: Chairman Pakistan Tehreek Insaf on September 2 met with religious leaders of different sects in Skardu and discussed issues related to law and order. According to details, Imran Khan called on renowned Shia scholar Sheikh Hassan Jafri and

assured him that his party would play its due role for restoration of religious harmony. Lauding the efforts of Sheikh Hassan Jafri for peace in the region, Imran stated that Sheikh Jafri played important role in maintaining law and order in the region after Kohistan, Chilas and Loluser tragedies. "People could become aggressive on the killings of innocent passengers but Sheikh Jafri controlled the sentiments of public.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/imran-khan-meets-sunni34shia66and-noor-bakhshi-leaders-baltistan>

Mushtaq Ghumman, Construction at Diamer-Bhasha dam site: Ecneec hands over bypass project to Wapda

Business Recorder, September 3, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) reportedly handed over the construction of bypass at the site of Diamer-Bhasha dam project to Wapda, presently with National Highways Authority (NHA), to secure \$70 million grant from USTATED, sources noted. The project envisages construction of (7.3-metre-wide) 34.83-kilometre-long bypass along Shatial-Thor Nullah on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) along with widening and up gradation of the existing 2.94-km-long link road from Thor Nullah to the KKH.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/1-front-top-news/76738-construction-at-diamer-bhasha-dam-site-ecneec-hands-over-bypass-project-to-wapda-.html>

TeK for stronger AJK govt role in Kashmir

Daily Times, September 2, 2012

LONDON: The UK Tehreek-e-Kashmir (TeK) Secretary General Abdul Majeed Nadeem on September 1 demanded that the Azad Kashmir's Interim Constitution Act 1974 be amended for a strong role of the AJK government in Kashmir. While addressing the Tehreek-e-Kashmir general meeting on the recently held AJK All-Parties Conference to evolve consensus on constitutional reforms, Nadeem stated now was the right time to establish a responsible government with constitutional powers to restore the original role of government in the base camp of Kashmir's freedom

movement and remove all impediments in its way to perform its basic role.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C09%5C02%5Cstory_2-9-2012_pg7_19

Zafar Bhutta, Diamer Bhasha Dam: Govt to approach China, local banks for financing

The Express Tribune, September 2, 2012

ISLAMABAD: With power shortage increasing continuously in the face of rising consumer demand, the government has decided to seek financing from China for the mega \$13 billion Diamer Bhasha Dam with power production capacity of 4,500 megawatts and also take loans from domestic commercial banks by offering guarantees.

According to sources, Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf would place a request before his Chinese counterpart during the visit on September 10 for financing the Diamer Bhasha Dam, for which multilateral donors including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) had sought no-objection certificate (NOC) from India due to the dam "being situated in a disputed territory".

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/429899/diamer-bhasha-dam-govt-to-approach-china-local-banks-for-financing/>

Ahmed Ali-Aafani, Sectarian imbroglio

Dawn, September 24, 2012

Nestled in the northern Karakoram-Himalayan region of the subcontinent, Gilgit and Baltistan remained a strategic part of Dogra-ruled Jammu and Kashmir prior to the territory's self-generated independence in 1947-48. When a local group led by Col Hassan Khan of Kashmir's Fourth Regiment in Gilgit revolted against Maharaja Hari Singh, the then ruler of Kashmir, they initially desired to set up Gilgit and Baltistan as an independent state. Impressed by the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and because of religious affiliations, the region opted to accede to Pakistan hoping to achieve greater spiritual and religious freedom. In terms of commerce, the markets of Srinagar and Leh in Jammu & Kashmir were geographically closer and more accessible to the

area than Abbottabad and Rawalpindi. Yet ever since the 1988 massacre of Shia Muslims in Gilgit and Jalalabad during the military regime of Gen Zia ul Haq, journeying on the Karakoram Highway (passing through Kohistan and now Naran) has over time become a perilous exercise.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/24/sectarian-imbroglio/>

Non-duty paid vehicles: FBR launches recovery drive for generating Rs 50 billion

Business Recorder, September 25, 2012

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has launched country-wide recovery drive against non-duty paid smuggled vehicles for generating additional revenue of around Rs 50 billion during 2012-2013. Sources noted that the FBR has started cross matching of data with the provincial excise and taxation departments.

The FBR will be able to trace the owners of such vehicles with the help of provincial database. In this regard, the FBR has also approached the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Out of every 500 imported vehicles, duties and taxes have been paid on 200 vehicles and remaining 300 are mostly non-duty paid smuggled cars. This is not any kind of amnesty scheme as the duties and taxes alongwith redemption fine would be recovered from the date of registration or import of the non-duty paid vehicle. The FBR has not offered any special concessions in taxes to the owners of the non-duty paid smuggled cars, sources stated.

<http://www.brecorder.com/taxation/181/1241733/>

Sanskriti Sinha, 6,500km Bus Route from Kashmir to UK for Expats in Birmingham

September 24, 2012

An ambitious project to start a bus service, travelling nearly 6,500km from Mirpur, the largest city in Azad Kashmir - a self-governing territory under the control of Pakistan and part of the larger state of Kashmir administered by Pakistan - to Birmingham has been announced.

Mirpur, located in the north-east of Pakistan, at the

foothills of the Himalayas, has a large expatriate community in Birmingham and the city is therefore often referred to as Little England or Little Birmingham. The bus service, if established and when it is started, will easily be Britain's longest bus route, taking 12 days to cross five countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Serbia and Belgium). Passengers will be charged £130 for a ticket, as reported. Mirpur's transport minister, Tahir Khokherc, added that arrangements for sightseeing could also be made and he called the journey a "thrilling" ride.

He also stated there would be two stopovers - one at Quetta, near the Afghan border and in the Iranian capital of Tehran.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/387422/20120924/mirpur-pakistan-kashmir-little-birmingham-bus-service.htm>

Inauguration: NATCO makes its first transit in Azad Kashmir

The Express Tribune, September 25, 2012

MIRPUR: Delayed thrice, the much-anticipated bus service by the Northern Areas Transport Corporation (Natco) was finally launched on September 24. To put a cherry on top, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Transport Authority Chairman Adil Mahmood Khan announced that commuters will not be charged for the inaugural transit, between Mirpur and Muzaffarabad.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/441934/inauguration-natco-makes-its-first-transit-in-azad-kashmir/>

Nadra suggests framework for GB electoral rolls

The News, September 25, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) has suggested a collaborated framework to the government of Gilgit-Baltistan to prepare computerized electoral rolls of the province. The suggestion was made to the delegation led by Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah who visited the National Database and Registration Authority on September 24. Nadra's Chairman, Tariq Malik also presented a draft of the contract about preparation of electoral

rolls of GB to the chief minister, the chief election commissioner and other delegates for review.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-133796-Nadra-suggests-framework-for-GB-electoral-rolls>

Ghizar Chitral road sealed. Back to colonial age!

Dardistan Times

GHIZAR: In the wake of Rehman Malik's announcement about potential target killing along the Ghizar Chitral road, the Gilgit Baltistan government has sealed the road completely for passenger buses including the government owned NATCO bus service. That suspension would remain so for an indefinite time, sources stated. Few days ago GB government had stopped private companies to run their bus service along the route. The NATCO, under strict security, was running its buses but not anymore. The suspension of transportation on this route altogether has put travellers in great hardship. This route is considered one of the safest routes due to the cultural and ethnic linkages between the Ghizar and Chitral Districts. The region has gone back to the colonial age when people used to walk in Marches in order to get to the nearby valleys.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/ghizar-chitral-road234-sealed-ghizar6back-colonial-age>

Pakistan asks India to stop opposing Diamer dam

Pakistan Today, September 24, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has asked India to stop opposing the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam at various international financial institutions (IFIs), as New Delhi's opposition to the vital dam was casting a negative impact on the ongoing Indo-Pak peace process, besides causing huge loss to the country's exchequer. India is against the construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam on grounds that it is located in the 'disputed territory' of Gilgit-Baltistan and hence it has been opposing Islamabad's endeavors to seek the required financial assistance for the important project from multilateral creditors.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/09/24/news/national/pakistan-asks-india-to-stop-opposing-diamer-dam/>

Shabbir Mir, Depleting funds: Gilgit-Baltistan govt advised to cut PWD workforce by half

The Express Tribune, September 24, 2012

GILGIT: The finance ministry of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) has asked the G-B government to cut the workforce of the Public Works Department (PWD) by half in order to raise funds for development projects. The suggestion has been made in view of shrinking development funds with the G-B government, officials of the finance ministry noted on September 23. PWD currently has over 4,000 employees on its pay roll, of whom a majority have been hired by successive government on contracts. A finance ministry official privy to the affairs of PWD claimed that a large number of these appointments have been made by politicians to appease their voters.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/441355/depleting-funds-gilgit-baltistan-govt-advised-to-cut-pwd-workforce-by-half/>

Shabbir Mir, Security threat: Traffic between Ghizer, Chitral via Shandur Pass suspended

The Express Tribune, September 23, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government barred traffic on the road linking Ghizer to Chitral via the Shandur Pass on September 22 after the ministry of interior warned of a possible attack similar to the Babusar massacre on the route. "We cannot afford to allow traffic on the road due to security threats to passengers," Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) G-B headquarters Ali Sher noted.

Officials of the G-B government informed that the ministry of interior recently wrote them a letter in which it warned about a possible terrorist attack on the Ghizer Chitral road. The ministry stated that the attack could be similar to the ones that occurred in Babusar and Kohistan, in which passengers, mostly Shias, were hauled off of busses and shot dead, officials stated. Shiite attacks are on the rise in several areas of Gilgit Baltistan under supervision from the Qazi Nisar group. The government is silent.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/440994/security-threat-traffic-between-ghizer-chitral-via-shandur-pass-suspended/>

Sectarian violence

The Nation, September 21, 2012

A surge in sectarian killings in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is seriously denting the atmosphere of sectarian harmony that traditionally prevailed in the country. Tension in Balochistan and GB is persisting and isolated incidents of violence by members of both Sunni and Shia sects are continuing unabated. It appears that governmental institutions are numb and incapable of addressing the situation. If this indifferent attitude continues on the part of the government, sectarian strife will reach even the big cities of the country. The month of Moharram is about two months away and can provide an opportunity to those who want to aggravate the law and order situation further in the country through sectarian violence. At this critical juncture of history, Pakistan is confronted with a number of internal and external threats. Sectarian crises will further complicate the situation.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/letters/21-Sep-2012/sectarian-violence>

Natural resources of GB can be exploited: PM

Daily Times, September 21, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf has stated that Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is gifted with many natural resources, which can be exploited by attracting foreign investment to bring prosperity for its people. The prime minister expressed these views while chairing the second meeting of GB Council in his capacity as chairman at Prime Minister House on September 20. The prime minister stated that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has always kept the need of people of GB and their betterment in mind while taking decisions. It was Shaheed ZulfiKar Ali Bhutto, who abolished FCR in GB and introduced substantial administrative, judicial and political reforms, he added.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012\09\21\story_21-9-2012_pg5_7

PM urges people of GB to stand united, make region a citadel of peace

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 28, 2012

GILGIT: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf on

September 28 urged the people of Gilgit Baltistan to stand united and rise above their petty differences to make the region a citadel of peace and love so that it may witness progress and rapid development. He was addressing a gathering in Gilgit at a dinner hosted in his honour by Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah and attended by a large number of people and leaders belonging to different political parties, notables, senior officials and elite of the city. Prime Minister Ashraf, who was on his maiden two-day visit to the region had a spate of meetings aimed at understanding the problems of the people and ways to find a solution, stated progress and development was only possible when there was peace.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=209925&Itemid=1

For peace in Gilgit-Baltistan

The Express Tribune, September 29, 2012

Addressing the first joint session of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council and Legislative Assembly on September 28, Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf announced Rs 2 billion in socio-economic development funds “to grapple with the wave of deadly sectarian violence that has gripped the restive tourism haven”. He was clearly shaken by the recent massacre of Shia passengers travelling in a bus on the Karakoram Highway (KKH). He stated that the FC, Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts and police units had been deployed on the KKH for the protection of passengers and the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government had been asked “to ensure secure journey of passengers”.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/444392/for-peace-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

NATCO bus continues operating in AJK: Tahir

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 27, 2012

MIRPUR: The government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) September 26 declared that the recently-launched Northern Areas Transport Corporation (NATCO) bus service would continue operating on the stipulated permitted routes in AJK. AJK Transport Minister, Tahir Khokher described the transporters protest against launching of

NATCO bus service in various inter-district AJK routes unjustified. He pointed out that PPP-led AJK government had already accepted most of the demands of the transporters including raise in fares in view of the recent increase in prices of the petroleum.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=209623&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, Repair and maintenance: Gilgit gets a facelift before PM's maiden visit

The Express Tribune, September 28, 2012

GILGIT: Otherwise left untended for months and at times for years, roads in Gilgit got a rare repair job on September 27, a day after Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf's maiden visit to Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) was confirmed. In trucks and tractors laden with construction material and equipment, workers of the district administration started roving the city streets, identifying damaged portions and making repairs as they traversed. Labourers of the municipal committee worked overtime and reached out to almost every damaged road in the town, including localities of Jutial, Khomer and Kashrote. Speed bumps were repainted and garbage in markets and along roads disposed off, providing much-needed relief to the resident.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/443578/repair-and-maintenance-gilgit-gets-a-facelift-before-pms-maiden-visit/>

Zafar Bhutta, Seeking brownie points: Govt seeks to earn carbon credits on Kohala project

The Express Tribune, September 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to earn carbon credits under the United Nations-sponsored clean development mechanism on the 1,100-megawatt Kohala hydropower project located in Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir.

In a report submitted to the Ministry of Water and Power, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) stated it had hired consultants to register the Kohala project with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in an attempt to claim carbon credits as provided under the clean development mechanism (CDM) of Kyoto Protocol.

The CDM allows rich countries to offset some of their carbon emissions by investing in climate-friendly projects, such as hydroelectric power and wind farms, in developing countries. This has resulted in collective investments of \$215 billion in about 4,500 projects in 75 developing countries. According to reports, these projects have reduced carbon dioxide emissions by one billion tons, which would otherwise have gone into the atmosphere.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/443542/seeking-brownie-points-govt-seeks-to-earn-carbon-credits-on-kohala-project/>

Pak launches multi-million dollar projects in Gilgit-Baltistan, China to chip in with \$100 million

India Today, September 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf launched two multi-million dollar strategic projects in the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region aimed at restoring the Karakorum Highway that links Pakistan with China. Ashraf performed the groundbreaking for a new 17-km section of the Karakoram Highway that will replace a 25-km section that was submerged by the Attabad Lake, which was formed as a result of landslides. The new section will be completed in a year at a cost of USD 282 million, officials stated. He also inaugurated a 335-km section of the road from Raikot to Khunjerab that was upgraded at a cost of USD 510.42 million.

This section of the highway has been widened and meets international standards of construction, officials stated. The Karakorum Highway was severed by the artificial Attabad Lake following landslides.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pak-launches-multi-million-dollar-projects-in-gilgit-baltistan/1/222729.html>

GB likely to be another Balochistan: Kashmala

September 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Information, Pakistan Muslim League and member of National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights, Kashmala Tariq stated that target killing in Gilgit Baltistan is still continued, some elements are destroying peace of this region and fear has prevailed in the whole

region. She emphasized that the people are scared while coming out from their homes after 7:00pm as they fear target killings. She also highlighted that in greater game of China and America, this region is strategically very important as its borders are touched with China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/gb-likely-to-be-another-balochistan-kashmala/>

Peer Muhammad, 'Fresh threats': Lawmaker demands deployment of army on two border areas

The Express Tribune, September 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A lawmaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly demanded on September 28 that army be deployed at two important border areas of Ghizer district. The demand came after intelligence reports that militants from neighbouring Afghanistan could attack passengers on Shandur Road, which connects Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) with Chitral. Muhammad Ayub Shah, who was elected from Ghizer, stated, "We demand that the federal government deploy army at Darkut Pass and Korumbar Pass as there is possibility of infiltration of militants from some provinces of Afghanistan." He stated that people had only recently started using the road to travel again. An attack on Shia passengers by militants in August had sent fear waves across the region, with people opting not to travel by roads unless absolutely necessary.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/444095/fresh-threats-lawmaker-demands-deployment-of-army-on-two-border-areas/>

PM directs indiscriminate strict action against outlaws in G-B

Associate Press of Pakistan, September 28, 2012

GILGIT: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf on September 28 vowed to fully restore peace and tranquillity in the scenic Gilgit-Baltistan and directed administration to take strict action without any discrimination against anyone who breaks the law. He was chairing a high level meeting attended by Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Pir Karam Ali Shah, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira, Minister for Communication Arbab

Alamgir, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah, Usman Khan Tarakai member G-B Council.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=209929&Itemid=1

Bhimber police-mob clash: Inquiry report holds district administration responsible

The Express Tribune, September 29, 2012

MIRPUR: An inquiry report into a recent clash between police and a mob in Bhimber District held the district administration responsible for the incident, which claimed a life and injured a person. Those accused of perpetuating the unrest include former Deputy Commissioner Khawaja Muhammad Naeem and former Superintendent Police Muhammad Jamil, official sources stated on September 28.

"The inquiry report submitted to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has held Bhimber District administration responsible for the unrest that led to the clash between the mob and the members of the law-enforcing agencies," a source close to the inquiry commission noted. The unfortunate event took place in the district court areas right under the noses of the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police, he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/444099/bhimber-police-mob-clash-inquiry-report-holds-district-administration-responsible/>

Zafar Bhutta, wooing investors: Govt may act as guarantor for AJK power projects

The Express Tribune, September 30, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) is likely to approve government guarantees for building hydropower projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), meeting a key demand of foreign investors who are keen to invest in the state. According to sources, the ECC will take up the issue in its meeting on October 2 after foreign firms stated the Ministry of Water and Power that international lenders were not willing to provide

loans for hydropower projects in AJK because of the state's legal status. They sought government guarantees to win loans and undertake the projects.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/444529/wooing-investors-govt-may-act-as-guarantor-for-ajk-power-projects/>

Tariq Naqash, Package for Azad Kashmir's health sector announced

Dawn, September 29, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Kashmir (AJK) government on September 28 presented a 'grand package' in the health sector, under which 2,270 new posts would be created in three phases. This was revealed during AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed's press conference on September 28. Speaking on the occasion, AJK Health Minister, Sardar Qamaruz Zaman stated the notification of 1,082 posts in the first phase had been issued, while 727 and 500 posts would be created in the second and third phase, respectively. The press conference was attended by several other ministers. The health minister stated ever since its inception, the People's Party government in AJK had upgraded a number of health facilities and had successfully mitigated the shortage of staff in administration and clinics.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/29/package-for-azad-kashmirs-health-sector-announced/>

Tariq Naqash , Controversial appointments in AJK

Dawn, September 28, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council (AJKC) secretariat has made two appointments in blatant disregard to the recommendations of the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC). FPSC nominees have finally made a presentation to Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf for justice, it has been learnt.

Interestingly, the controversial notification was issued by the AJKC on September 13, in spite of a resolution passed by four out of six elected AJKC members in favour of the FPSC nominees. Copies of the resolution were sent to Prime Minister Ashraf, who happens to be the chairman AJKC, AJK President Sardar Yaqoob Khan, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo and AJKC's secretary and joint secretary. Documentary evidence available revealed that in February 2011, FPSC issued a public notice, in accordance with the AJKC's requisition of October 2010, seeking applications for three posts of section officers in the AJKC secretariat.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/28/controversial-appointments-in-ajk/>

Economic Developments

Bhasha, Dasu dams fate in doldrums as IFIs denying funds

The Nation, September 13, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Playing with the future of motherland vis-à-vis its pursuits of accomplishing energy needs and goal-oriented food security plans, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are out to throw Pakistan into the rock-bottom depths of darkness through their sick-minded and ill-conceived conspiratorial policies and devilish demeanours to jeopardise the energy scenario in the country. Sources in Water and Power Ministry informed that fate of two strategically important hydel power projects of Diamer Bhasha Dam and Dasu Dam of the country are still in doldrums due to unavailability of needed funds coupled with ostensible unwillingness by the IFIs to invest on them. Similarly, delay in the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam has caused increase worth of \$2.5b in the cost of the construction of the dam now, adding, that this hydel project is faced with five years delay which was initially planned to meet the future water needs of country particularly the dream of food security (agriculture) and cheap hydel power in the country. Available documents further confirmed that in accordance with Project Component-1 (PC-1) designed for the construction of the Diamer Bhasha Dam a cost worth of \$11,17 billion was estimated in 2009, which however, has now reached at \$13,68 billion with an increase of \$2.5billion due to delay.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/13-Sep-2012/bhasha-dasu-dams-fate-in-doldrums-as-ifis-denying-funds>

AH Nizami, Traders exchange Rs5.7m worth of goods across LoC

The Express Tribune, September 8, 2012

MIRPUR: Cross-Line of Control (LoC) traders

carried out trade worth Rs5.7 million through Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point on the historic Rawlakot-Poonch route, official sources stated. Sources noted on September 7 that goods worth Rs5,749,156 were traded in 10 trucks between Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), along the LoC, till the stipulated time late September 6. Three trucks carrying onions and bananas worth nearly Rs549,600 each rolled out to AJK. From the AJK side, seven trucks carrying herbs and dry dates worth nearly Rs519,556 each were sent to the other side of the LoC.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/433210/traders-exchange-rs5-7m-worth-of-goods-across-loc/>

Shahbaz Rana, Diamer Bhasha project: Do not compromise on transparency, ADB warns

The Express Tribune, September 4, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has conveyed to Pakistan that it will not finance Diamer Bhasha Dam if Islamabad compromises on safeguard measures and competitive bidding process while seeking financing from China for the \$11.2 billion project.

The message was delivered by the ADB's country office to Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Shakil Durrani, according to officials. The news comes just before Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf's scheduled visit to Beijing next week where he is expected to place a request for financing the dam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/430686/diamer-bhasha-project-do-not-compromise-on-transparency-adb-warns/>

Khaleeq Kiani, ADB denies abandoning dam project

Dawn, September 4, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank

has clarified that it has not walked away from the \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha Dam, but warned Pakistan against awarding the contract to China without international competitive bidding. "We have not changed our position. We have not walked away from the project," an irritated country director of the bank in Islamabad, Dr Werner E. Liepach, noted before journalists. He stated the bank remained committed to the project and continued to have dialogue with stakeholders in a positive professional manner.

<http://dawn.com/2012/09/04/adb-denies-abandoning-dam-project/>

AJK Council okays Rs 9.594bn budget for FY2012-13

Daily Times, September 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Council meeting presided over by Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf in Islamabad September 25 unanimously approved the budget for fiscal year 2012-2013 of total outlay of Rs 9.594 billion, which is 130 percent of the revised budget of FY2011-12.

The AJK Council also requested Pakistan's government to sanction grant-in-aid, amounting to Rs 1.3 billion to meet its budgetary deficit for FY 2012-13. The meeting was informed that the council had allocated Rs 1.915 billion for Annual Development Programme that also includes Rs 1.120 billion for ongoing schemes. These schemes are people focused, emphasising upon paradigm shift from area development to human development.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C09%5C26%5Cstory_26-9-2012_pg5_2

GilgitBaltistan jurisdiction: FBR suggests amnesty scheme for legalisation of 800 vehicles

Business Recorder, September 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue has proposed to the Ministry of Finance an amnesty scheme for legalization of around 800 non-duty paid smuggled vehicles in Gilgit-Baltistan. Sources noted on September 25 that

the FBR's proposed amnesty scheme would be area specific applicable on vehicles used within the territorial jurisdiction of GilgitBaltistan and not in the rest of the country.

The local excise and taxation department of Gilgit-Baltistan has allocated local numbers to these 800 smuggled vehicles. No duties and taxes have been paid on these vehicles and therefore they would be immediately confiscated in case they entered into tariff areas of Pakistan. The local authorities of Gilgit-Baltistan have requested FBR to allow legalization of non-duty paid vehicles through an amnesty scheme.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/business-a-economy/81788-gilgitbaltistan-jurisdiction-fbr-suggests-amnesty-scheme-for-legalisation-of-800-vehicles-.html>

AH Nizami, LoC trade: Traders to settle accounts through authorities

The Express Tribune, September 21, 2012

MIRPUR: After recent meetings between the foreign ministers and foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan, and ahead of commerce secretary-level talks between the two countries which began on September 20, cross-border traders on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) met for more than three hours at the Zero Line at Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh in the Rawalakot-Poonch district on September 19 to discuss wide-ranging issues. Civil and police administration officials from Rawalakot and Poonch also attended the meeting. The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Trade and Travel Authority director general also joined the meeting for the first time, official sources noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/440054/loc-trade-traders-to-settle-accounts-through-authorities/>

International Developments

New financiers: US, Japan pledge assistance for Diamer Bhasha Dam

The Express Tribune, September 13, 2012

ISLAMABAD: In related developments, an official of the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) told a parliamentary pane on September 12 that Japan has agreed to provide machinery and equipment worth \$4 billion for the Diamer Bhasha Dam. While addressing the panel, he also stated that Japan had agreed to cooperate in extending the power generation capacity of the Mangla dam. While briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Water and Power, the EAD official added that the US Agency for International Development had committed \$200 million, and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) had committed \$100 million for the Diamer Bhasha project.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/435652/new-financiers-us-japan-pledge-assistance-for-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

Khalid Mustafa Japan denies it made \$4 bn offer for Bhasha dam

The News, September 16, 2012

ISLAMABAD: It has now been confirmed that the Senate Committee on Water and Power was misinformed by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) when it was told that Japan had agreed to provide \$4 billion for the Bhasha dam as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has denied it officially. The impression that Japan has taken the lead by agreeing to provide funds of \$4 billion for machinery and equipments including turbines for the much touted Diamer-Bhasha dam was given by EAD officials but a JICA spokesman noted that Tokyo had not given such a nod to Pakistan. The controversy over Japan funding the Bhasha dam emerged when a senior EAD official informed the Senate Committee meeting that Japan had come forward and agreed to help install the

electro-mechanical system of the dam which includes the 12 power turbines, each with a capacity of 375MW and to this effect it would provide \$4 billion credit line.

[http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-132228-Japan-denies-it-made-\\$4-bn-offer-for-Bhasha-dam](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-132228-Japan-denies-it-made-$4-bn-offer-for-Bhasha-dam)

Zafar Bhutta, Neelum-Jhelum: Abu Dhabi Fund withholds \$100 million loan for power project

The Express Tribune, September 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Abu Dhabi Fund (ADF) has withheld a \$100 million loan it had pledged for the construction of the 969 megawatt Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, a parliamentary panel was informed on September 28. The ADF provides development aid to developing countries in the form of concessionary loans and grants on behalf of the Abu Dhabi government.

“The loan agreement of \$100 million is pending with the ADF because it has linked it to the resolution of payment issue with Etisalat in the PTCL privatisation process,” Lt Gen (R) Muhammad Zubair, the managing director of Neelum-Jhelum hydropower company, noted before the National Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Division. Zubair informed the committee, which met under the chairmanship of Pirzada Imran Ahmed Shah, that the loan agreement of \$448 million with Exim Bank China was also pending as China State Council was yet to give the go-ahead.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/444209/neelum-jhelum-abu-dhabi-fund-withholds-100-million-loan-for-power-project/>

India's remarks on AJK groundless, says China

The Nation, September 21, 2012

BEIJING: China on September 20 dismissed as 'entirely groundless' Indian Army Chief Gen Bikram Singh's assertion that PLA soldiers were

present in Azad Kashmir. “The allegation that Chinese soldiers are present in the Azad Kashmir is entirely groundless,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei stated. Hong first skipped answering a question on Gen Singh's charge at a media briefing in Beijing, but later sent an e-mail to a news agency denying the allegation. While denying the Chinese troops' presence, Hong stated that China's stand on Kashmir remained clear and consistent that it was an issue to be resolved by India and Pakistan through negotiations. “Kashmir is left over (by history) between India and Pakistan. As a neighbour of India and Pakistan, China maintains that the relevant issue be resolved through dialogue and negotiations between India and Pakistan.”

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/21-Sep-2012/india-s-remarks-on-ajk-groundless-says-china>

Report about detention of AJK president at New York airport denied

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 25, 2012

NEW YORK: A spokesman for Azad Jammu and Kashmir President, Sardar Yaqoob Khan September 25 rejected as “baseless” a press report that the president was detained at New York's JFK airport on his arrival here. The spokesman called the report, which was published in a section of the press, “baseless and concocted”, stating there was no truth to it. President Yaqoob Khan was in New York to attend the 67th session of the UN General Assembly. He was received at the airport by members of the Pakistani and Kashmir community.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=209449&Itemid=2

Other Developments

Mangla Dam Raising Project: Affected families to launch protests from September 21

The Express Tribune, September 16, 2012

MIRPUR: People affected by the Mangla Dam Raising Project (MDRP) have threatened to launch a protest movement against the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government from September 21 if it fails to give them a schedule for the completion of their rehabilitation. Addressing a news conference at the Mirpur Press Club on September 14, representatives of over 100 affected families and heads of various action committees fighting for their rights announced that they would hold anti-government rallies across the district and hold a sit-in outside the Prime Minister House if development work at New Mirpur City is not resumed and if they are not given a schedule for the completion of their rehabilitation. They also stated they would resist filling of the dam to its maximum level (1,242 feet) if their demands were not met.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/437375/mangla-dam-raising-project-affected-families-to-launch-protests-from-sep-21/>

Shabbir Mir, New forest policy: In Diamer, fear of deforestation

The Express Tribune, September 17, 2012

GILGIT: People in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have voiced concern over “unbridled chopping” of forests in parts of Diamer District. They claim that tree smugglers are using the recently-announced forest policy, which lifted a decade-old ban on transportation of four million cubic feet of timber rotting in Diamer district, as a guise to smuggle freshly-cut timber. “I have seen dozens of freshly-chopped trees in Diamer's Thor valley and it is highly likely that these will be transported out along with the old stock,” a resident of Chilas noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/437715/new-forest-policy-in-diamer-fear-of-deforestation/>

Fazal Khaliq, Continued violence: Transporters demand security on all routes leading to Gilgit-Baltistan

The Express Tribune, September 13, 2012

SHANGLA: Transporters are wary of going to Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) due to the ongoing violence and have demanded the government to provide them foolproof security on all routes leading to the area. The decision was taken on September 12 in an emergency meeting of truck owners associations of Bisham, Shangla, Hazara and G-B in view of the killings of more than 10 truck drivers in G-B during the last three weeks. “The government has failed to provide security to our drivers and conductors in G-B,” stated Shangla Transporters' Association President Gul Muhammad. “We have staged a large number of wheel-jam strikes to sensitise the government towards our losses, but now we have set an ultimatum of 24 hours for getting security for transporters.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/435748/continued-violence-transporters-demand-security-on-all-routes-leading-to-gilgit-baltistan/>

Precious stones reserves present in GB: Aftab

The Nation, September 24, 2012

HUNZA: Immense deposits of precious stones were present in Gilgit Baltistan, stated advisor to Forest & Minerals GB Aftab Haider on September 23. He noted that the GB government would take right steps to generate revenue through these deposits. He stated that many departments of gems & minerals sector are conducting different cutting & polishing courses of precious and semi precious stones. Some private NGO's were also working for the development of gems sector in the region, he added.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/24-Sep-2012/precious-stones-reserves-present-in-gb-aftab>

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: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

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 Assembly: Total 33 members (24 members directly elected)

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

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



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