

POK

News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Multiple reports in the current issue indicate that the United States has finally agreed to participate in funding the controversial Diamer Bhasha dam project. Statements given by the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard Olson, that the issue would be taken up during the US-Pakistan Economic Working Group meeting to be held in Washington in December 2012 hint at growing interest of US in such projects. Pakistan is keen to have US on board so as to induce other international agencies such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank to provide funds for raising this ambitious project. Besides, the US has already given \$ 150 million for the expansion of the Mangla Dam located in the so called AJK. Given that the Chinese presence in PoK is already entrenched, the emerging interest of US in the region is likely to unfold interesting geopolitical dynamics in the coming days.

A two-day conference comprising delegates from both J&K and PoK was held at Muzaffarabad on November 6-7, 2012. The symposium jointly organised by the AJK Women for Peace Organization and sponsored by a German organization, Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) caught media attention as it was first of its kind- a peace conference comprising only women delegates with a cross section representation from academia and civil society. The conference deliberated on important issues- the focus being on the humanitarian side where participants urged easing up cross LoC movement and setting up of a taskforce to address such problems.

The dilemma over levying taxes in Gilgit Baltistan continues. There is a raging debate on whether it is appropriate to impose taxes in the region keeping in view its ambiguous political and constitutional status.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Diamer-Bhasha dam still top priority, says Wapda chief

The Nation, November 28, 2012

LAHORE: Wapda chairman Raghid Shah reiterated that construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam is top priority of the government. In a media briefing at Wapda House on November 27, he stated that land acquisition and infrastructure development work in the project area was in progress. "Process to acquire land both in Gilgit Balitistan and KP was continuing. The work on 14 local contracts is in full swing for construction of model villages for affectees, Wapda offices and colonies, contractor's camps, road, etc. in the project area. Expression of Interest (EoI) had also been called for consultancy of the project," he noted. So far, no international lending agency has committed funding for \$13 billion Bhasha project owing to Indian propaganda that the dam is being constructed on disputed territory. There are reports the government is losing interest on the construction of the dam.

"World Bank has not directly refused funding for the Diamer-Bhasha," replied Raghid Shah on a question about the project but he refused to comment when asked why India was opposing the construction of the dam.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/28-Nov-2012/diamer-bhasha-dam-still-top-priority-says-wapda-chief>

Wapda welcomes investment in Diamer-Bhasha dam project

Pakistan Observer, November 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has welcomed investment in construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam by any local financial institution as the government attaches high priority to execution of the project. Central

Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) Director General Zafar Iqbal recently stated that CDNS was ready to invest in Diamer-Bhasha dam.

A Wapda spokesman has clarified that sometimes back the CDNS DG had expressed desire for investment of CDNS funds in Diamer-Bhasha dam project. However, during the course of meetings with Wapda officers, CDNS DG subsequently expressed his inability to make direct investment of funds in Diamer-Bhasha dam project.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=184065>

Pak-US strategic dialogue resumption with energy talks

November 27, 2012

ISLAMABAD: American diplomats hint at some big news on Diamer-Bhasha dam financing when Pak-US strategic dialogue resumes with joint working group on Energy meeting in Washington next month. A senior US diplomat on November 26 stated, "You should anticipate some big news," when asked what was extent of American interest in financing the mega hydropower project.

The meeting of the joint working group would take up all areas of energy sector cooperation between Pakistan and United States, stated Ambassador Richard Hoagland, Deputy Head of the US mission in Islamabad. He was chatting with journalists at the 'Independence of Lebanon' ceremony. Dr Asim Hussain, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Petroleum and Natural Resources was chief guest at the event. Hoagland asked to comment on US Ambassador Olson's meeting with Federal Minister for Water and Power Ahmad Mukhtar on very next day of Iranian President Mehמוד Ahmedinejad's presser in the capital, he stated it was mere coincidence.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=209001>

In Gilgit Sunnis hold Muharram procession in defiant of TTP

The Express Tribune, November 24, 2012

GILGIT: The religious harmony apparent at a Muharram procession in Gilgit on November 23 suggests the scars left by bloody sectarian strife do not have to haunt the region and its people forever. Dozens of Sunnis led a mourning procession in the heart of the city, where until recently Shias and Sunnis were victims of violent incidents stage-managed by extremist elements. The move is also a blow to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which had threatened to attack Muharram processions in Gilgit-Baltistan. G-B s administration was informed of these threats in a letter by the interior ministry last week. A Sunni delegation comprising elders and the youth from Kashrote and Yadgar areas convened at the Imambargah in Majini Muhalla, where they joined hundreds of mourners.

<http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=24007>

Shabbir Mir, IED explodes near Gilgit Police Lines

The Express Tribune, November 23, 2012

GILGIT: Panic swept through Gilgit town on November 23 evening after a homemade explosive device, exploded in a house situated close to the Police Lines. “There were no casualties whatsoever,” DIG Police Ali Sher noted soon after the blast. While there was no fresh congregation, morning processions were returning to their respective mosques when the blast occurred. “And let me tell you the blast had nothing to do with sectarianism,” the DIG clarified, saying that a property dispute had led to the blast as certain people from Gilgit Baltistan wanted possession of the house. The house bombed was located near the Police Lines at Konodas area.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/470196/huge-explosion-heard-in-gilgit/>

Human rights in Gilgit-Baltistan

ANI, November 19, 2012

GENEVA: As the general security situation

deteriorates in South Asia, and particularly in Pakistan, the world is becoming increasingly aware of the, as yet, relatively unknown area of Gilgit-Baltistan of Jammu and Kashmir a region which is administered from Islamabad despite the wishes of the region's peoples.

The increasing presence of Chinese personnel further complicates the situation, adding another dangerous component with the involvement of a third nuclear power in a volatile region. Jurgen Creutzmann, Member of European Parliament and Chairman of the Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan European Union, slammed Pakistan for numerous reports of Human Rights Violations in Gilgit-Baltistan area. He particularly showed concern over incidents of terrorism and sectarian violence perpetrated by armed groups. There has been a major escalation of sectarian violence because of Islamabad's encouragement to fundamentalist Sunni groups. There has been an increase in violence against women and political groups seeking self-rule.

He specifically asked Vice-President/High Representative of the Commission in European Parliament that “why can't International Media and Human Rights Organizations get easy access to Gilgit-Baltistan?” He slammed the Pakistan Government for not giving access to them. He further added, if this continues then Gilgit-Baltistan, heaven on earth, would turn into hell sooner or later.

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_eu-parliament-criticises-pakistan-on-security-human-rights-in-gilgit-baltistan_1766485

Governor GB meets Malik

The News, November 20, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit Baltistan Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah called on Minister for Interior Rehman Malik on November 19 and discussed the law and order situation in GB. During the meeting, Rehman Malik stated besides police, GB Scouts have been deployed in sensitive areas of GB to ensure peace during Muharram-ul-Haram. He stated police patrolling has also been increased during Muharram. The governor thanked and

appreciated role of the minister for taking appropriate security measures.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-144029-Governor-GB-meets-Malik>

PML-N challenges appointments in Shariat Court

Dawn, November 18, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The lawyers' wing of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) challenged the recent induction of two judges in the Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Shariat Court, alleging that the AJK president and the prime minister had doled out the two posts between themselves.

Speaking at a press conference on November 17, the central vice-president of PML-N lawyers' wing, senior advocate Sadaqat Hussain Raja, stated the president and prime minister had chosen one lawyer each from their respective constituencies for appointment against the two vacant posts. This move had dealt a blow to the prestige, integrity and status of the superior judiciary.

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/18/pml-n-challenges-appointments-in-shariat-court/>

AJK minister defends his actions

Dawn, November 19, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Minister for Health Sardar Qamaruz Zaman has offered to cooperate in a possible probe into allegations against him. He stated this with regard to some artefacts from Neelum valley. "I recommend a parliamentary committee be constituted to investigate this issue. The committee I propose should be headed by the Leader of the Opposition and should not include any legislator from my party (PPP)," he stated while talking to a group of reporters on November 18.

"If I am proven guilty, I will step down as minister and even quit politics," he added. Mr Zaman reiterated that the artefacts were gifted to him by a former AJK minister and a schoolteacher, belonging to the Neelum valley, and were

transported to Muzaffarabad by his staff in his absence.

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/19/ajk-minister-defends-his-actions/>

Press Release: ISF to hold elections in GB

Pakistan Today, November 17, 2012

KARACHI: Insaf Student Federation (ISF) will hold its internal elections in Gilgit-Baltistan on 18th November 2012. An independent election commission has been established to conduct free, fair and transparent election, upholding principles of democracy in its true letter and spirit. Central Vice President ISF Pakistan Ehsan Naveed will oversee the entire process and make sure strict implementation of all election rules, regulations and procedures during the elections.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/11/17/city/islamabad/isf-to-hold-elections-in-gb/>

G-B govt asked to lift ban on gemstones transport

The Express Tribune, November 18, 2012

GILGIT: The Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP) has asked the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government to lift its ban on transportation of gemstones. In a letter to the G-B chief secretary, TDAP maintained that the ban should be lifted as it is "illegal" and a violation of the trade policy, adding that transportation of precious stones is not banned anywhere else in the country.

TADP made the request after receiving a letter from the G-B Gemstones and Mineral Association, in which the association urged the authority to play its role in lifting the ban on the transportation of gemstones from G-B, if not on its mining. The association maintained that the ban has left hundreds of locals associated with the industry jobless. G-B hosts over 500 varieties of gemstones including amethyst, aquamarine, spinel, corundum, emerald, garnet, peridot, ruby, pyrite, moonstone, fluorite, pargasite, quartz and tourmalines.

Last year, the G-B Legislative Assembly (GBLA) imposed a ban on mining and transportation of

gemstones from G-B on grounds that the stones are being taken away at throwaway prices, causing great loss to the national exchequer and to the locals. In the ruling, the speaker also noted that a committee comprising members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council and GBLA will be set up to legislate on the issue.

When contacted, an official of the G-B government, requesting anonymity, noted that the ban on mining and transportation of gemstones will be discussed soon to formulate a policy.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/467338/g-b-govt-asked-to-lift-ban-on-gemstones-transport/>

Two AJK Shariat Court judges take oath

The News, November 18, 2012

MIRPUR: Justice Muhammad Mushtaq Chaudhry and Justice Shehzad Ahmad have been sworn in as judges of the Shariah Court, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan administered the oath to the newly-appointed judges at a special ceremony held at the Kashmir House late on November 16, stated an official handout issued on November 17.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-143576-Two-AJK-Shariat-Court-judges-take-oath>

Tariq Naqash, Former secretary appointed AJK premier's adviser

Dawn, November 18, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The cash starved Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government appointed a former federal secretary as adviser to the AJK prime minister on a one year contract against a hefty pay package. Mohammad Kashif Murtaza, a retired BPS-22 federal secretary who had served as AJK chief secretary from December 2004 to March 2007, will get “perks and privileges in accordance with Management Professional-1 package.” It includes Rs 350,000 monthly salary and other benefits, such as official transport and fuel. His job description, according to an S&GAD notification, is “management and development of property and real estate of the AJK government and the AJK Council situated in the jurisdiction of the government of

Pakistan; welfare, improvement of livelihood and settlement of Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan and AJK and any other tasks, the government may assign to him, from time to time.”

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/18/former-secretary-appointed-ajk-premiers-adviser/>

Service regularization demanded

Pakistan Observer, November 16, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The teachers of Gilgit-Baltistan working under Social Action Programme (SAP) and National Education Foundation Programme (NEF) have demanded of the government to regularize their services and equalize salary structure with other regular government educators. The office bearers of SAP Teachers Association were of the view that currently there were 1456 teachers throughout Gilgit-Baltistan working on very nominal wages of Rs 3000 to Rs 4500 per month, and providing education to a large number of students, majority of whom belong to poor families.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=182526>

Zafar Bhutta, Neelum Jhelum project: Pakistan looks to new Chinese leadership for funds

The Express Tribune, November 17, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hopes that the new Chinese leadership will help clear a \$448 million loan pledged for the strategically important Neelum Jhelum Hydropower project located in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). A loan for the 969 megawatt (MW) project had previously been put on the backburner due to a controversy regarding the award of a multibillion rupee project to a Chinese firm. In August 2012, the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan had annulled the Rs14 billion 'Safe City Project' for Islamabad due to allegations of corruption. The former Chinese leadership had linked the disbursement of the loan with the award of the Islamabad Safe City project to a Chinese firm. The cancellation of the project meant the loan was withheld.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/466901/neelum-jhelum-project-pakistan-looks-to-new-chinese-leadership-for-funds/>

Kashmir dispute can't be resolved with force: Imran

The Nation, November 15, 2012

PTI head Imran Khan has stated that the Kashmir dispute can never be resolved with force, but rather with peaceful talks. Addressing a rally Mirpur in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) he declared that all decisions about the AJK should be made in Muzaffarabad. Lauding countless sacrifices made by Kashmiris, he urged on both Pakistan and India to spend their massive defense budgets on welfare of their respective masses while he also urged for a Kashmir solution based on will and desire of Kashmiris.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/15-Nov-2012/kashmir-dispute-can-t-be-resolved-with-force-imran>

Khalid Mustafa Bhasha Dam no longer top priority, says official

The Express Tribune, November 14, 2012

ISLAMABAD: While the cost of the Diamer-Bhasha dam project has risen from \$11.8 billion to \$13.6 billion because of the inordinate delay in securing funding, a senior official in the finance ministry says that the project is no longer the government's top priority. "The government was earlier pitching the Bhasha Dam as its top priority project before the IFIs, donor agencies and development partners and refusing credit lines being extended for other projects because of the dam's potential to produce cheaper hydel power and its huge capacity for water storage," stated the official.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-142769-Bhasha-Dam-no-longer-top-priority-says-official>

Parvez Jabri, Govt plans to facilitate the women of GB

Business Recorder, November 12, 2012

ASTORE: The government of Gilgit-Baltistan is taking all necessary steps to safeguard the basic rights of women. This was stated by president PPP women wing & advisor for tourism Sadia Danish on November 12. She stated women of the region are very talented and fully capable to compete in all

sectors of life. She stated all possible steps would be taken to provide opportunities to women in all walks of life especially in sports and games.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/90152.html>

Shadab Khan, Pak-India urged to benefit from Gilgit-Baltistan in connecting South and Central Asia

November 12, 2012

Pakistan and India urged to benefit from Gilgit-Baltistan in connecting South and Central Asia London (PR) The UK based think tank The Henry Jackson Society, in collaboration with the Washington based Institute for Gilgit Baltistan Studies, held an event titled "Gilgit-Baltistan: South-Central Asia's Socio-Economic Integration and Regional Politics" at the House of Lords which focused on reviving the infamous southern branch of the Silk Route to help transform the resource-rich region from being a battleground of three nuclear states into a hub of trade, tourism, economic integration and cultural exchange.

Lord Sir Clive Soley of Hammersmith facilitated the discussion and the panel consisted of Mumtaz Khan, Executive Director of International Center for Peace and Democracy, and Senge H. Sering, President of the Institute for Gilgit Baltistan Studies.

<http://www.newspakistan.pk/2012/11/12/pak-india-urged-benefit-gilgit-baltistan-connecting-south-central-asia/>

Hurriyat (M) delegation to meet AJK leaders first during visit to Pakistan

November 12, 2012

SRINAGAR: The Hurriyat Conference (M) delegation which would leave for Pakistan next month on its arrival in the country decided to meet the leaders from AJK. A Hurriyat leader, who was a part of the three hour meeting with Pakistan High Commissioner to India Salman Bashir, stated, "Hurriyat leadership conveyed to Bashir that they would first meet political leadership of Azad Kashmir which would be followed by meeting businessmen associated with cross LoC trade, members of the civil society and finally political

leadership of Pakistan, opposition party leaders and civil society from Pakistan.”

The meeting between Hurriyat leaders and Pakistan delegation comprising Pak High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, Military Attaché and Press Secretary was held at Salman Bashir's official residence at Tilak Nagar in New Delhi.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2012/11/12/hurriyat-m-delegation-to-meet-ajk-leaders-first-during-visit-to-pakistan.html>

GB Government to take on Social Media Users

Dardistan times, November 9, 2012

There is a mechanism' they say and the government believes religious hatred is being promoted on facebook and twitter by the people Gilgit Baltistan. Talking to journalists, Additional Chief Secretary, Faiz Ullah stated that strict action will be taken against all those who are indulged in spreading religious hatred on social media. “The enemies do not want peace and stability in Gilgit Baltistan. They are using facebook and twitter and other social media for their nefarious designs. They are fanning religious hatred.” Faiz Ullah stated.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/gb-government123take-social-media799users>

Tahir Khalil, Senate body now says Pakistan has six provinces

The News, November 7, 2012

ISLAMABAD: In another blatant blunder after the Interior Ministry declared Kashmir as part of India in its statement in the Supreme Court, a parliamentary body on November 6 declared the Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan as provinces of Pakistan.

The Senates Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination on November 6 issued the agenda for its meeting, in which AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan were declared provinces of Pakistan. Besides that, the official communiqué of the committee meeting also says that affairs of six provinces were discussed in the committee. It is interesting to note that the meeting chaired by Senator Farrukh Aqil was also attended by Minister

for Inter-Provincial Coordination Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, PPP Senator Mukhtiar Ahmed and JUI-F's Senator Ghulam Ali, but none of them objected as to when these six provinces were created. Pakistan has never declared AJK as its province nor Gilgit-Baltistan was declared as Pakistan's province.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-18664-Senate-body-now-says-Pakistan-has-six-provinces>

The GB people

The News, November 7, 2012

Interior Minister Rehman Malik has been accusing the people of Gilgit-Baltistan of being involved in the killings in Karachi and Balochistan. In fact, he never lets go of any opportunity to lay the blame for the killings in these places on the people of GB, most probably because he knows that the 2.5 million people, who are not even represented in the national parliament, will not be able to challenge him. The minister needs to substantiate his allegations with proof, if he has any. If he cannot prove the allegations, then he should keep silent.

A number of people from Gilgit-Baltistan have been killed in Karachi and other cities of the country, but so far none of the killers have been arrested or even identified. Will it be justifiable, in this situation, to say that the people of Pakistan are killing the people of GB? It will not, because, it is not the truth. Even if some people of GB are involved in terrorism or other crimes, the learned senator shall not mention the name of GB, because they are in no way representatives of the peaceful people who live in the highlands.

Noor Muhammad

Islamabad

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-11-141479-The-GB-people>

Nisar Ahmed Thokar, Voices for empowering PAK-Gilgit-Baltistan admn go shriller

November 5, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar stressed on the need for giving a true democratic system to the people of Northern Areas by providing all powers

to their elected representatives and officials, nominated or appointed by them including the Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) government. Speakers mostly the leadership of the Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) and Gilgit-Baltistan condemned the recent statement by the Federal Secretary Home in which he had admired “constitutional system in Indiancontrolled Kashmir” while criticizing such practices in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The speakers stated that region should be a given absolute constitutional power through a common President, Supreme Court and Kashmir Council. The seminar was organized by Jamaat-e-Islami. It was attended by Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Abdul Rashid Tarabi, former chairman of Gilgit-Baltistan National Alliance Innayatullah Shumali, Sardar Anwar Khan, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF's) Amanullah Khan, president Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League Abdul Majeed Malik besides others.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Nov/5/voices-for-empowering-pak-gilgit-baltistan-admn-go-shriller-49.asp>

KNP President arrested in Muzaffarabad London

ANI, November 5, 2012

LONDON: Ifzaal Suleria, Zonal President of Kashmir National Party was arrested today in Muzaffarabad by the local police. KNP President went to meet some friends in District Court area, known as Kacheri; where he was arrested on spot by local police who were looking for him. The police had arrest warrants for him in a very old case, which was related to Basha Dam demonstration. KNP Zonal President arranged a protest against Pakistani plans to build a dam in Gilgit to exploit local natural resources in 2005. Pakistani authorities get irritated when nationalist Kashmiris talk about situation in areas of Gilgit Baltistan, and how Islamabad rule this region of State of Jammu and Kashmir with an iron fist.

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/11/05/294-KNP-President-arrested-in-Muzaffarabad.html>

KP, GB reach agreement on demarcation of boundaries

Pakistan Today, November 1, 2012

PESHAWAR: The governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan have agreed for demarcation of boundaries between the adjunct areas of both the provinces. The KP government has requested GB government for segregation of the areas after some misunderstandings between two governments on the issue of geographical limits. KP government has established 9 checkposts to safeguards Kohistan district from the miscreants attacks which were objected by Gilgit Baltistan. Similarly KP government paid compensation to the persons, which were killed in the jurisdiction of Gilgit Baltistan.

The demarcation of boundaries would be carried out in the areas of Mansehra, Kohistan, Chitral and Baltistan, for which federal government has given approval. In this connection, the teams constituted for the purpose would present their report to both provincial governments within short span of time.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/11/01/news/national/kp-gb-reach-agreement-on-demarcation-of-boundaries/>

NH&MP to regulate flow of traffic on KKH

The News, November 1, 2012

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has entrusted the National Highway & Motorway Police (NH&MP) with regulating the flow of traffic on the Hassanabdal-Abbottabad-Mansehra section of National Highway (N-35).

A handout stated that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home and Tribal Affairs Department on the proposal of the National Highway Authority (NHA) handed over traffic management responsibility to the National Highway & Motorway Police for better management.

The National Highway (N-35) known as Karakoram Highway (KKH) begins from Hassanabdal and ends at Khunjerab Top on Pak-China border traversing Abbottabad, Mansehra,

Gilgit and Hunza. It is the only shortest road trade route between Pakistan and China.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-140369-NH&MP-to-regulate-flow-of-traffic-on-KKH>

Govt uses all resources for masses

Pakistan Observer, November 3, 2012

HUNZA: The present government is utilizing all available resources for the welfare of the masses. This was stated by President Pakistan People's Party

Gilgit and Advisor to Chief Minister (CM) Gilgit-Baltistan Muhammad Mussa on November 2. Talking to media, he stated the affectees of Attaabad and other villages are being provided relief packages by government as well as by NGOs. He stated PPP government had initiated many projects to improve living standard of the people of far flung areas. “GB government is providing financial assistance for rehabilitation of flood victims.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=180686>

Economic Developments

AH Nizami, Azad Jammu and Kashmir to cancel industrial plot allotments

The Express Tribune, November 15, 2012

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government decided to cancel the allotment of industrial plots located in various industrial estates whose owners and/or allottees have violated prevalent rules and regulations by not setting up industrial units on allotted land within the stipulated time frame, official sources revealed. Sources noted on November 14 that a decision to this effect was taken in a recent high level meeting of the AJK Industries Department.

The department has so far cancelled the allotment of scores of industrial plots which were not used for their required purposes by allottees despite the expiry of the stipulated period. However, when contacted, sources at the department did not unveil the exact figure of the cancelled plots.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/465792/azad-jammu-and-kashmir-to-cancel-industrial-plot-allotments/>

Asma Razaq, 'CDNS can help build Diamer-Bhasha dam'

Business Recorder, November 16, 2012

The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has sufficient resources to fund the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam provided it is given the status of an autonomous body, the Director-General of CDNS Zafar M Sheikh stated on November 15. The Director General was addressing the launching ceremony of 'Students Welfare Prize Bond'.

He stated: "According to the Constitution, CDNS is working under the Ministry of Finance, but if the government grants it the status of an autonomous body, the Directorate will be in a

position to lessen the government's reliance on commercial banks for domestic borrowing and provide funds for the Bhasha dam within three years of the grant of status."

<http://www.brecorder.com/market-data/stocks-a-bonds/0/1258639/>

Government ready to implement all doable energy projects: Prime Minister

Business Recorder, November 14, 2012

Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf stated that the government has reset its priorities by laying greater focus on improving law and order situation, equitable electricity load-shedding and promotion of private sector. The Prime Minister was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on November 13. Federal Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo, Federal Secretary Commerce Munir Qureshi, Chairman FBR Ali Arshad Hakeem, Acting Governor Punjab Rana Mohammad Iqbal, were also present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister stated that the present government is ready to implement all doable energy projects without any delay and hindrance because it believes in private sector growth. The government and the private sector are on the same page to rid the country of economic ills being faced today.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193/1258055/>

Declaration: Easing cross-LoC interaction underscored

The Express Tribune, November 10, 2012

MIRPUR: There is need to ease traffic across the Line of Control (LoC) by simplifying clearance procedures and introducing scanners at various

points, stated a declaration issued on November 8. The declaration was issued by members of a dialogue on “Building bridges, bringing women voices into peace building in Kashmir” that concluded in Muzaffarabad a day before. The declaration also called for extending travel facility to refugees living in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) since 1990.

Additionally, it demanded more interaction between women entrepreneurs, educationists, lawyers, journalists, students and conflict resolution experts on both sides for setting up a task force with a mandate to address human rights and humanitarian issues.

Furthermore, it called for removing land mines that obstruct free movement of the people and are responsible for civilian casualties. It emphasised on gradual demilitarisation; including that of Siachen glacier and converting it into a peace park, providing justice to the victims of the conflict, especially widows, missing persons, displaced youth, end of abuse of human rights, scrapping of draconian laws and impunity.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/463462/declaration-easing-cross-loc-interaction-underscored/>

Usman Cheema, Delay increases Diemer Bhasha Dam cost by \$2b

The Nation, November 8, 2012

ISLAMABAD: No international donor ever committed to provide funding for the construction of Diemer Bhasha Dam project and the government has been unnecessarily delaying the project that increased its cost by \$2 billion. Sources stated that though the government held several meetings with the ADB but the bank never made commitment to provide funding for the project although it also never stated that it would not provide funding for the project.

Against that 'hope' given by ADB, the government also claims that it caused \$2 billion loss in terms of increasing the cost of project but in reality the government itself is more responsible for that loss.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper->

daily-english-online/business/08-Nov-2012/delay-increases-diemer-bhasha-dam-cost-by-2b

Khalid Mustafa Sethi steps up efforts to collect revenue

The News, November 6, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Nargis Sethi, who took charge as secretary of the ministry of water and power approximately 28 days ago, commented that the ministry had been extraordinarily slow in hydro generation development for the last 20 years. Resultantly, consumers pay large amounts of money for electricity due to the 70 percent share of thermal-based electricity in the whole power generation mixture.

Sethi stated that the ministry's capacity had eroded and so it was unable to respond effectively to all projects, particularly hydropower projects. She stated she has taken steps to restructure the ministry by inducting three more joint secretaries, three deputy secretaries and six section officers to effectively cope with the challenges that the ministry is faced with.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-141205-Sethi-steps-up-efforts-to-collect-revenue>

Shabbir Mir, Federal tax levy: Lawmakers from G-B vague over tax issue

The Express Tribune, November 5, 2012

GILGIT: The top brass of Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) government remains vague over whether the federal government's decision to impose an income tax has been fully endorsed in the region. “The decision to impose income tax in the region has not yet been taken,” Chief Minister Mehdi Shah noted on November 4 when asked if his government was endorsing the decision to impose income tax in G-B, a region whose constitutional status is still ambiguous.

He stated that tax would not be levied without first signing a written agreement between the regional government and the federal government over certain points. Shah's remarks stood in clear contradiction with officials who

had confirmed the decision to impose an income tax.

A member of the G-B Council, Amjad Hussain recently confirmed that the decision to impose income tax has been taken and a notification was also issued to this effect. He, however, stated the decision should have been preceded by a written agreement to avoid legal complications that might surface due to G-B's constitutionally disputed status. When the same question was posed before Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah, he neither denied nor accepted that a decision to this effect had been taken.

He, however, noted that “every respectable nation pays taxes to live with honour and dignity so it shouldn't be an issue if we have to pay taxes.” The governor further stated that if an income tax was imposed, then the regional government would have sufficient money at its disposal to invest in development projects.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/460903/federal-tax-levy-lawmakers-from-g-b-vague-over-tax-issue/>

Group insurance for GB officials: Mehdi

The News, November 4, 2012

LAHORE: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister, Syed Mehdi Shah has stated that like the other four provinces, group insurance for the public servants will be provided in Gilgit-Baltistan. Syed Mehdi Shah stated this while presiding over a meeting with senior officials of Punjab

government and State Life Insurance on November 3. GB Chief Secretary Sajjad Saleem Hotiana and Rescue 1122 DG Dr Rizwan Naseer were also present.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-5-140899-Group-insurance-for-GB-officials-Mehdi>

Gilgit-Baltistan: 2010 Flood Victims Are Due To Receive Compensation

November 2, 2012

Victims of the 2010 floods in Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan and Sindh are among those to receive compensation for their losses. The programme awarding the compensations is part of collaboration between the government of Pakistan and international donor agencies. The National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) has resolved around 377,526 appeals through 'Grievance Redressal System' under the Citizen Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP) Phase-II, a Nadra official stated on November 1.

The CDCP Phase-II of Nadra is designed to give Rs40, 000 in two tranches to the people whose houses were damaged by the floods 2010, the spokesperson stated. Nadra has so far processed a total of 950,523 Watan Cards in the second phase of CDCP, including 9,403 for Azad Kashmir, 4,039 for Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/15076>

International Developments

US announces \$150 million for Mangla dam expansion

Pakistan Today, November 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The United States on November 28 announced a grant of 150 million dollars for the expansion of the Mangla Dam power plant. The project is expected to generate 310 megawatts of electricity. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the project at Mangla Power House, US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson stated the US would provide 150 million dollars for the expansion of the Mangla power station. Olson stated a meeting of the Energy Working Group would be held in Islamabad in December 2012, adding that, the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam was a priority for the US.

Addressing the ceremony, Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Syed Raghیب Abbas Shah stated 400 million dollars would be spent on the expansion of the Mangla power house which would be able to provide additional production for the next 40 years.

“The fourth phase expansion work will begin in March 2012,” Shah noted.

Moreover, he stated that the feasibility report of five mega projects was in the process of completion. He also noted that in the next five years, 5,000 megawatts electricity would be added to the national grid which would benefit 1 million consumers. While talking to newsmen after inaugurating Mangla powerhouse expansion project, the US Ambassador Richard Olson stated that joint cooperation between Pakistan and the United States is needed to defeat the common danger of terrorism. He further stated his country acknowledged the sacrifices of Pakistan in the war on terrorism. The ambassador noted the United States is ready to help Pakistan overcome energy

crisis and will provide 150 million dollars assistance for up-gradation of Mangla powerhouse.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/11/28/news/national/us-announces-150-million-for-mangla-dam-expansion/>

US reaffirms assistance for Diamer Bhasha Dam

The Express Tribune, November 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The United States stated the financing issue of the multi-billion dollar Diamer Bhasha Dam project will be taken up in the upcoming meeting of the US-Pakistan Economic Working Group next month in Washington. US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson reaffirmed support to the project during a meeting with Minister for Water and Power Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar on November 23 and discussed various matters of mutual interest and to enhance bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

Olson stated US will continue to support the people of Pakistan and help improve the local power sector. He stated Diamer Bhasha Dam was an important project for future water requirements and to generate cheaper power, adding that US was interested in hydropower projects in Pakistan. He stated that Diamer Bhasha project will be discussed during the US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue to be held next month in Washington.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/470301/us-reaffirms-assistance-for-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

Pakistan to seek US support for multilateral loans

The News, November 21, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad will seek the backing of US for convincing multilateral creditors to extend financial assistance to Pakistan's struggling economy during an upcoming high-level meeting of Pak-US Strategic Dialogue Economic and Finance Working Group scheduled to be held in Washington

DC by next week. “The meeting will be held on November 29 and 30 in Washington DC in order to bring the issues confronting both sides on table and resolve them before the key changes in the US administration in the aftermath of US presidential elections,” a top official noted on November 20.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-144168-Pakistan-to-see-US-support-for-multilateral-loans>

US diplomat, Wattoo discuss political situation in country

Business Recorder, November 21, 2012

US Deputy Political Counsellor Rick Waters on November 20 called on Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and President PPP Punjab Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo on November 20 and discussed political situation of the country in detail. Wattoo stated that the future of Pakistan lies only in the continuity of democratic process and sustainable development is possible only if political stability in the country. He stated that democracy under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari has flourished.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1260259/>

'US keen to conclude bilateral investment treaty with Pakistan'

Pakistan Observer, November 16, 2012

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson has stated his country is prepared to make its contribution for construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam, which is a high priority with Pakistan. In an interview with Radio Pakistan conducted by Director General Murtaza Solangi, Richard Olson pointed out that this is a costly project for which a consortium of countries and multilateral institutions will have to be formed to arrange its funding.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=182522>

Gilgit-Baltistan: EU Speaks Up Against Human Rights Violations

November 20, 2012

In a recent press release the European Parliament

criticizes Pakistan for severe Human Rights violations in Gilgit-Baltistan. As the general security situation deteriorates in South Asia, and particularly in Pakistan, the world is becoming increasingly aware of the, as yet, relatively unknown area of Gilgit-Baltistan of Jammu and Kashmir a region which is administered from Islamabad despite the wishes of the region's peoples. The increasing presence of Chinese personnel further complicates the situation, adding another dangerous component with the involvement of a third nuclear power in a volatile region.

Jurgen Creutzmann, Member of European Parliament and Chairman of the Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan European Union, slammed Pakistan for numerous reports of Human Rights Violations in Gilgit-Baltistan area. He particularly showed concern over incidents of terrorism and sectarian violence perpetrated by armed groups. There has been a major escalation of sectarian violence because of Islamabad's encouragement to fundamentalist Sunni groups. There has been an increase in violence against women and political groups seeking self-rule.

He specifically asked Vice-President/High Representative of the Commission in European Parliament that “why can't International Media and Human Rights Organizations get easy access to Gilgit-Baltistan?” He slammed the Pakistan Government for not giving access to them. He added, if this continues then Gilgit-Baltistan, heaven on earth, would turn into hell sooner or later.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/15155>

People of Gilgit Baltistan highlight gross human rights violation committed by Pakistan

ANI, November 9, 2012

LONDON: People of Gilgit Baltistan highlight state sponsored atrocities and demand intervention by the United Nations. President of the Institute for Gilgit Baltistan Studies, Senge Hasnan Sering, stated on November 8 stated that Pakistan is heavily dependent on China as they are losing its friends around the world, including the United States, which have been the biggest patron of Pakistan for

such a long time. So, now they are heavily dependent on China and need Gilgit-Baltistan to have a border link with China, so Pakistan is desperate to continue the illegal presence in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/11/09/166-People-of-Gilgit-Baltistan-highlight-gross-human-rights-violation-committed-by-Pakistan-Update-Gilgit-Baltistan-.html>

Parvez Jabri, USTATED committed to reconstruction programme in earthquake hit areas of AJK, KPK: Mission Director

Business Recorder, November 8, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The US Agency for International Development (USTATED) Mission to Pakistan is committed to develop a reconstruction programme in collaboration with Pakistan's Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) in earthquake hit areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtoonkhawa. USTATED has already 51 out of a total 77 buildings in various parts of AJK and KPK especially in districts Bagh and Mansehra according to USTATED office Islamabad.

This Programme will "build back better" by using international standards for seismic design and construction, engaging local communities and developing the capacity of Pakistani workers.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/89605-ustated-committed-to-reconstruction-programme-in-earthquake-hit-areas-of-ajk-kpk-mission-director-.html>

Japanese envoy, Wattoo discuss cooperation for AJK, GB development

Associated Press of Pakistan, November 1, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Japanese Ambassador, Hiroshi Oe on October 31 called on Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo and discussed with him the matters of mutual interest. They also discussed mutual cooperation, especially relating to Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, stated a press release issued here.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=213239&Itemid=2

China's expanding footprint in Gilgit-Baltistan November 5, 2012

Pakistan has not only leased out Gilgit-Baltistan to its neighbor and close ally, China, but has put at risk the region's culture, language and natural wealth. Ruled like a colony from Islamabad since 1948, Gilgit-Baltistan is today being exploited by China for its strategic and economic interest. Known for its scenic beauty, Gilgit-Baltistan is now facing another severe challenge of an ecological imbalance in nature due to the massive use of toxic chemicals while mining by the Chinese. China has built the 528 mile-long Karakorum highway without paying a single penny to the local people. In return, Pakistan gifted 2,500 sq mile area of Shamshaal in Hunza to China.

<http://www.niticentral.com/2012/11/chinas-expanding-footprint-in-gilgit-baltistan.html>

Other Developments

Ban imposed on motorbike riding in Gilgit

The Nation, November 21, 2012

GILGIT: The government has banned motorcycle riding in Gilgit on November 20. Interior Secretary stated that a ban had been imposed on the motorcycle riding that would be applicable till Ashura. Gilgit and adjacent areas are the worst hit parts of Northern Pakistan affected by sectarian violence over the last few months. Authorities in Karachi have also come up with a ban on riding of the two-wheeler on 9th and 10th Muharram, citing potential terrorist activities in the metropolis.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/21-Nov-2012/ban-imposed-on-motorbike-riding-in-gilgit>

Discourse: Bringing Shina culture, language to the fore

The Express Tribune, November 17, 2012

Zeal and zest in literature of Gilgians is comparably generative than the rest of the country, according to Professor Dr Syed Sohail Iman, the dean of faculty of social sciences at the Karakoram International University (KIU), Gilgit. He stated this while addressing a discourse on “Malangay Samutari: The collection of Malang Poetry”, a book compiled by Israrud Din Israr and published by Shina Language and Culture Promotion Society (SLCPS), at KIU Gilgit. During the ceremony, three research papers on the book were presented by local scholars and later Malang's ghazals were sung.

The first paper, written by KIU Gilgit Lecturer Fouzia Mansoor, stated that while earlier Shina poetry is characterized by exaggeration, mockery and illogical ideas, the author has tried his best to keep Shina poetry from low and vulgar ideas by introducing new concepts.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/466986/discourse-bringing-shina-culture-language-to-the-fore/>

Women delegation from J&K terms AJK visit historic

November 14, 2012

SRINAGAR: Terming their visit to Azad Kashmir a historic and emotional moment, the 10-member delegation of women activists from Jammu & Kashmir returned from Muzaffarabad after attending a 3-day cross-LoC conference from November 5 to 7, 2012. The delegation members on arriving in Srinagar told media that the visit would serve as a roadmap for future dialogues.

Returning home with a bagful of memories, the activists stated they are proud of being the first batch of women delegates to cross LoC and hold discussions with women activists and civil society members of Muzaffarabad. The 10-member delegation comprised Prof Nusrat Andrabi, Nighat Shafi Pandit, Prof T Joldan, Prof Qurat-ul-Ain, Prof Effat Yasmeen, Prof Ravinderjit Kour, Prof Rekha Chowdary, Prof Yasmin Ashai, Ellora Puri and Ayesha Saleem. This was the first visit of women activists from Kashmir to Muzaffarabad since 1947. First such conference was organized in Srinagar in November 2007 and the last was held in Gulmarg in September 2011. The main motive of the visit was to include women in the peace-building process.

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/2012/11/14/women-delegation-from-ihk-terms-ajk-visit-historic.html>

Youth Exchange Programme: Girl from G-B to represent Pakistan

The Express Tribune, November 9, 2012

GILGIT: A youth volunteer of Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRSC) in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) will represent the country in the International Youth Exchange Programme to be held in Japan this month. Shahida Gul, a ninth grader at Sir Syed Public School Gilgit, belongs to Yasin Hundur valley of Ghizer District. The PRCS management gave her a farewell at the Gilgit office on November

8. Organised by Japan Red Cross Society in collaboration with Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science and Technology, the exchange programme will be held from November 14 to November 28, 2012 in Tokyo.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/462904/youth-exchange-programme-girl-from-g-b-to-represent-pakistan/>

Rescuing heritage: NGO gets tourism award for restoring 19th century palace in Baltistan

The Express Tribune, November 16, 2012

GILGIT: The restoration of a 19th century palace in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B)'s Khaplu valley has won a non-governmental organisation (NGO) an international tourism award. Renovation of the Khaplu Palace and Residence was "highly commended" under the "best in poverty reduction" category of The Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards 2012 announced recently at this year's World Travel Market. "This was the only project from Pakistan that won an award and this is certainly good news for us," stated Col (Retd) Salman Beg, the chief executive officer of Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP) the NGO that restored the historic building. "The awards rested on a simple principle: that all types of tourism, from niche to mainstream, can and should be organised in a way that preserves, respects and benefits the local people," he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/466510/rescuing-heritage-ngo-gets-tourism-award-for-restoring-19th-century-palace-in-baltistan/>

Pakistani schools win 'Education Buildings Honour' award

Pakistan Today, November 9, 2012

ISLAMABAD: International Design-Build Institute of America awarded this year's Education Buildings Honour Award to the United States Agency for International Development (USTATED) funded earthquake reconstruction project in Pakistan undertaken by CDM Smith Incorporation.

The Design-Build Award was conferred on November 8, in the United States of America, on CDM Smith Inc. which is a US-based engineering

and construction firm implementing the USTATED funded Pakistan earthquake reconstruction and recovery program for designing and constructing earthquake-resistant schools, basic health units and a hospital in the Bagh and Mansehra districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/11/09/city/islamabad/pakistani-schools-win-education-buildings-honour-award/>

106 illegal Pak immigrants reach home

Pakistan Observer, November 11, 2012

ISLAMABAD: At least 106 Pakistani nationals deported from Greece arrived home on November 10. Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials took into custody the deported persons. According to details, 106 illegal Pakistani immigrants who were deported by Greece landed at Benazir Bhutto International Airport Islamabad. The FIA officials took all the deported persons into custody for interrogation.

Officials stated that majority of the deported persons belonged to Punjab while others belonged to three provinces and also Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). It should be mentioned that hundreds of illegal Pakistani immigrants reach Greece and other countries through various routes every month using illegitimate means for their entry into Europe to seek jobs and held in Greece for illegal entry.

<http://pakobserver.net/201211/11/detailnews.asp?id=181772>

4.3 magnitude earthquake hits Chitral, surrounding areas

The Express Tribune, November 8, 2012

An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.3 hit Chitral and its surrounding areas on November 8. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. Pakistan saw its worst earthquake in October 2005 which levelled entire villages and cities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and nearby areas in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The 7.6-magnitude earthquake had killed 74,000 people and displaced 3.5 million.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/462666/4-3-magnitude-earthquake-hits-chitral-surrounding-areas-express-news/>

Asad Naeem, AJK to celebrate Iqbal's day in befitting manner

Business Recorder, November 8, 2012

MIRPUR: Jammu Kashmir people living at either side of the line of control (LoC) including AJK, will celebrate 135th birth anniversary of Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal on November 9 in a befitting manner. It will be a public holiday in AJK on this occasion.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/283-allama-iqbal/89667-ajk-to-celebrate-iqbals-day-in-befitting-manner-.html>

Shelter for homeless without discrimination

The Nation, November 6, 2012

MIRPUR: AJK Prime Minister Ch Abdul Majeed categorically declared on November 5 that all sorts

of allotments made by the Mirpur Development Authority so far stood intact and non of the allotments was ordered to be cancelled by his government. The AJK Premier was talking a delegation of the members of Kashmir Press Club Mirpur who called on him at the Prime Minister House in Muzaffarabad under the leadership of Press Club President Syed Abid Hussain Shah and former Vice President Sardar Abid Hussain.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/lahore/06-Nov-2012/shelter-for-homeless-without-discrimination>

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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