

# POK

## *News Digest*

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**A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR**

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

### • **Political Developments**

Healed Wounds: Sealed Mosques Reopen in G-B

Diamer-Bhasha Dam: G-B Lawmaker Demands Probe into 'Misplaced' Turbines'

Riots in Central Jail Gilgit: Denied Cell Phones, Inmates Set 15 Barracks on Fire

Gilgit-Baltistan Lawmakers for Review of Code of Conduct for Pak Clerics

Violation of Rules: G-B Govt Accused of Nepotism

### • **Economic Developments**

AJK to Produce 8,000MW of Electricity in Four Years

843 Projects Underway in Baltistan

### • **International Developments**

World Bank Agrees in Principle to Fund Diamer-Bhasha Dam

China Group Interested in AJK Power Projects

### • **Other Developments**

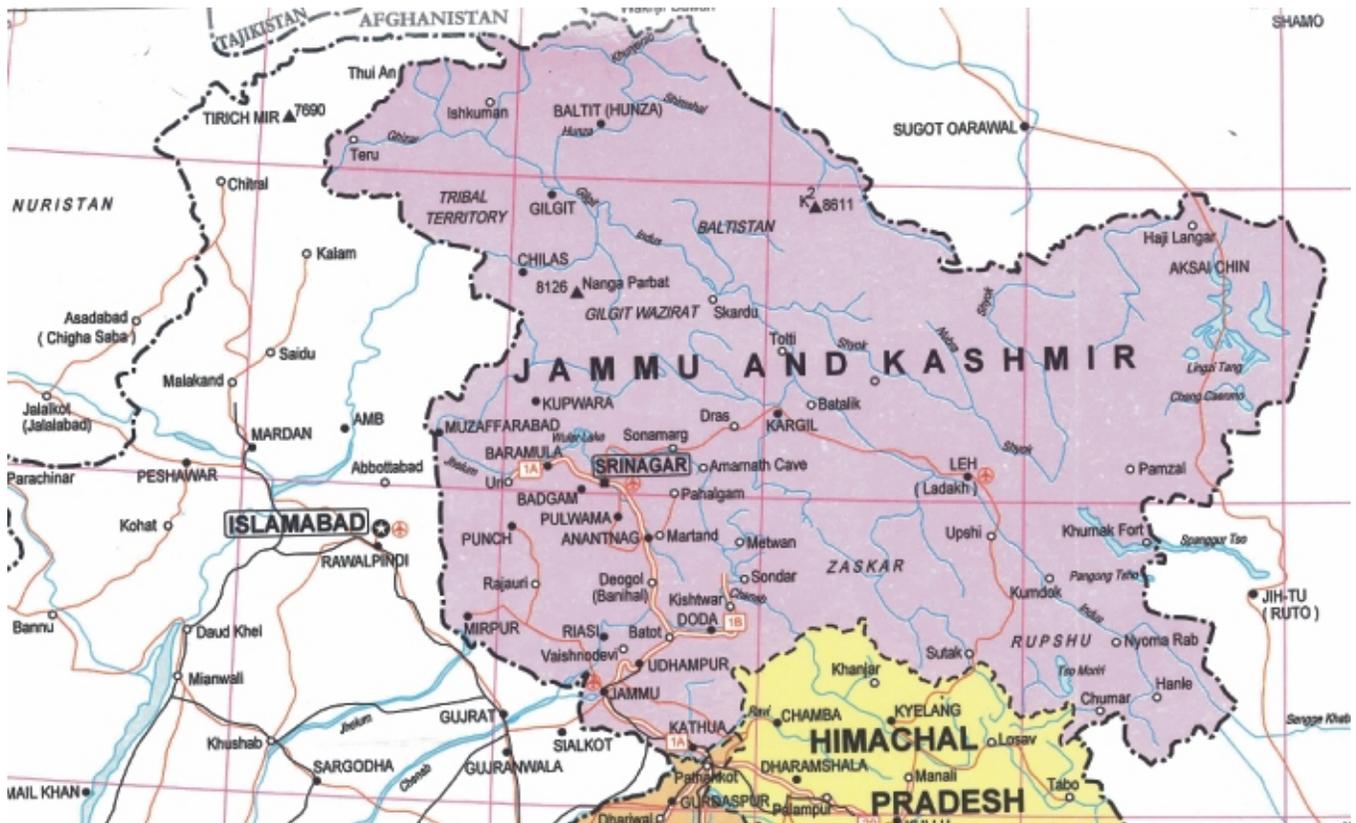
Environmental Protection: Report on AJK's Forest Management Completed

Museums to House Buddha Carvings Found from Bhasha Dam Site



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## Jammu & Kashmir

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

## **In this Edition**

*The situation in Gilgit Baltistan is relatively normal after a prolonged period of sectarian unrest and instability. Few mosques in the area which were closed in the aftermath of the sectarian violence have been re-opened and this came across as a welcome sign. The Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) passed a resolution to this effect after which these mosques were re-opened by representatives of the other sects as part of the goodwill gesture, to restore normalcy in the violence-struck region. A Judicial commission has been appointed after months on violence to probe into the outbreak of sectarian violence in the region.*

*Meanwhile, the controversial Diamer Bhasha dam in Gilgit Baltistan was recently embroiled in yet another controversy- it is alleged that some turbines of the dam were deliberately placed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which would entitle the latter to a large share in the royalty. As the report included in the current issue indicates, the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and the federal government of Pakistan were both urged to look into the matter and resolve it.*

*The jail authorities in Gilgit jail were accused of torturing inmates. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) took serious note of the alleged atrocities committed by jail authorities. Some prominent activists have been imprisoned in Gilgit Baltistan including Baba Jan Hunzai and there is growing popular demand all across to secure his early release along with others.*

**Priyanka Singh**

# Political Developments

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## **GB Code of Conduct, Government in gridlock**

*Dardistan Times, May 27, 2012*

The government of Gilgit-Baltistan presented the Code of Conduct in the Legislative Assembly where the members raised a number of objections during a heated debate. Later, the speaker referred it to a select committee of the house for further deliberation and vetting. Whatever is its future, it has now become very clear that the government has put itself in a blind alley as far as the Code of Conduct and maintenance of peace and sectarian harmony in the region are concerned. The government's headache had almost come to an end after head of the Shia community Agha Rahat signed the code but as the chief of the rival community Qazi Nisar raised objections and demanded modifications in the documents.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/gb-code-conduct-government-gridlock>

## **Faisal Kamal Pasha, AJK Muslim Conference decides to join DPC**

*The News, May 28, 2012*

All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC) has strongly criticised Pakistan's efforts to normalise relationship with India neglecting the Kashmir cause. In its 79th convention at Kotli on May 26, the AJKMC decided to join Difa-e-Pakistan Council for extending moral, political and institutional support to the right of self determination for the people of Kashmir. Addressing the convention, AJK former prime minister and AJKMC Chairman Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan stated that none of the Pakistan's pact with India could ever be successful neglecting the people of Kashmir.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-110891-AJK-Muslim-Conference-decides-to-join-DPC>

## **Workshop: Focus on education to combat**

## **violence**

*The Express Tribune, May 28, 2012*

GILGIT: For the problems being faced by Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) and the country at large, education is the only way out. Speakers stated this at a workshop on “Role of media in spreading education in G-B” organised by Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ) at the Gilgit Press Club on May 27. The speakers zeroed in on the lack of opportunities for the people of G-B in education, especially resulting from sectarian strife in the recent past. They identified radio as the most effective tool of communication to spread education in the region, where people don't have easy access to newspapers.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/385133/workshop-focus-on-education-to-combat-violence/>

## **Healed wounds: Sealed mosques reopen in G-B**

*The Express Tribune, May 26, 2012*

GILGIT: The central Sunni and Shia mosques, which had been sealed in Gilgit after bitter sectarian clashes around two months back, were reopened before Friday prayers on May 25. The board members of the two mosques performed the reopening ceremony in public. As a goodwill gesture, the mosques of the two sects were opened by representatives of the other sect. The decision to reopen the places of worship had been passed in the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Assembly on the same day. After the session was over, lawmakers reached the area together.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/384419/healed-wounds-sealed-mosques-reopen-in-g-b/>

## **Attabad landslide: Govt releases 20m for supporting students**

*Pakistan Observer*

HUNZA: The Government released 20 million rupees more for supporting the students affected by

the Attabad Landslide and damming of the Hunza River. The cheques were distributed by Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) Speaker Wazir Baig, Education Minister Ali Madad Sher, MLA Mutabiat Shah and GB Secretary for Education, Syed Hadi. Cheques were distributed among principals and headmasters of different schools located in GB, for payment of the fees of affected students.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=157410>

### **GBLA approves Masajid Regulation Act 2012**

*Business Recorder, May 26, 2012*

The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) on May 25 approved unanimously Masajid Regulation Act 2012 on last day proceedings of the ongoing 21st session with its Speaker Wazir Baig in Chair. As the session began, Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed took the floor and requested the Speaker to resume debate on Masajid Regulation Act, 2012.

The Speaker allowed the house to debate on the act which was resubmitted by the Select Committee. The Deputy Speaker stated it was a difficult task to prepare such a law which was now awaiting the approval of the house. He declared the services of the Parliamentary committee in this regard exemplary and stated it was high time to work for further strengthening of the political forces so that the anti peace elements were weakened. Those who spoke on the floor include Rehmat Khaliq, Didar Ali, Amna Ansari and Janbaz Khan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1193480/>

### **Shabbir Mir, Diamer-Bhasha Dam: G-B lawmaker demands probe into 'misplaced' turbines**

*The Express Tribune, May 26, 2012*

GILGIT: A legislator of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) has asked the government to verify reports of a few turbines of Diamer-Bhasha Dam being purposefully fixed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) territory. "This is a cause of concern for Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B)," stated Didar Ali, an independent lawmaker, who alleged that it is an attempt by K-P government to get a share of the dam's royalty. He stated that if the reports are true,

the federal government and the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) should undo the act immediately. Ties between the K-P and G-B were strained after the former passed a resolution claiming rights of over 8km land near the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. According to experts, if the claim is accepted, K-P will be entitled to 50 per cent of the dam's royalty.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/384170/diamer-bhasha-dam-g-b-lawmaker-demands-probe-into-misplaced-turbines/>

### **Shabbir Mir, Riots in central jail Gilgit: Denied cell phones, inmates set 15 barracks on fire**

*The Express Tribune, May 24, 2012*

GILGIT: A prisoner of Central Jail Gilgit was injured and over 15 barracks were gutted in a fire set by rioting inmates on May 23, sources stated. Sources further noted that the fire broke out in an under-construction portion of the jail and spread quickly. It took fire-fighters more than two hours to bring the flames under control. "I first saw a huge cloud of smoke over the jail at about 2pm," stated an eyewitness. The smoke cloud could also be seen from Jutial, about 12km from the jail, where the inmates were previously kept in a makeshift arrangement when the central jail was short on space.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/383391/riots-in-central-jail-gilgit-denied-cell-phones-inmates-set-15-barracks-on-fire/>

### **Law on animal rights: Minister calls for more power to GBLA**

*The Express Tribune, May 24, 2012*

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) unanimously passed the "Prevention of Cruelty on Animals" act on May 23. Under the new law, the trade of wild animals' hides and activities like dog-fighting have been banned and violators are liable to punishment and even imprisonment. However, Regional Law Minister Wazir Shakeel, who earlier tabled the act, lambasted the federal government for restricting the assembly's role to lawmaking on subjects like animals' rights.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/383420/law-on-animal-rights-minister-calls-for-more-power-to-gbla/>

## **Zaffar appointed as new Press Secretary to AJK Prime Minister**

*Associated Press of Pakistan, May 25, 2012*

MIRPUR: Eminent Kashmiri journalist, columnist Zaffar Iqbal Mughal has been inducted as Press Secretary to AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, as stated in an official notification issued by the AJK government on May 24. The Prime Minister ordered for the induction of Mughal as his Press Secretary in BPS-18 by using his discretionary powers, according to the notification. Being a seasoned media man in AJK Zaffar Mughal has a respectable carrier in Urdu print and electronic journalism.

[http://app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=195839&Itemid=2](http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=195839&Itemid=2)

## **Gilgit-Baltistan lawmakers for review of code of conduct for Pak clerics**

*ANI, May 22, 2012*

GILGIT: Lawmakers in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have demanded a review of the new code of conduct for clerics by the Islamic Ideology Council (IIC). The suggestion was made during the G-B Legislative Assembly session after Law Minister Wazir Shakeel tabled the code in the house. The document binds prayer leaders of central mosques of different sects from using harsh language and maligning each other's beliefs.

"The matter is sensitive and it should be referred to the IIC before approval," stated Maulana Sarwar Shah of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F). His stance was supported by lawmakers Didar Ali, Rehmat Khaliq, Mirza Hussain and Sheikh Sirbaz, who opined that the code was prepared in haste and should be reviewed by IIC.

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/05/22/150-Gilgit-Baltistan-lawmakers-for-review-of-code-of-conduct-for-Pak-clerics-.html>

## **Efforts on to improve health sector**

*Pakistan Observer*

DIAMER: The government of Gilgit-Baltistan is giving much importance to the health sector and efforts were being made for its betterment, stated

Health Minister Haji Gulbar Khan. Addressing the media he stated the Secretary health and all the District Health Officers had been directed to leave no stone unturned in providing health facilities to the masses. He stated there was no deficiency of medicines in any hospital of the region.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=156759>

## **AJK PM assures timely completion of Mangla dam rehabilitation**

*Associated Press of Pakistan, May 21, 2012*

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on May 20 assured to Mangla dam affectees as well as the displaced families of Jammu & Kashmir refugees for timely completion of the rehabilitation of Mangla dam affectees. Talking to various delegations of Mangla dam affectees in Mirpur, Majeed stated that all the due rights of Mangla Dam raising project affectees would be fully provided. He stated that with the liberal financial assistance of the government of Pakistan, his government is fully committed to complete the process of resettlement and rehabilitation of the affectees of the Mangla dam raising project on time.

[http://app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=195101&Itemid=2](http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=195101&Itemid=2)

## **Violation of Rules: G-B govt accused of nepotism**

*The Express Tribune, May 20, 2012*

GILGIT: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) accused the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government of awarding a multi-million rupee tender on nepotism. Addressing reporters outside the Gilgit Press Club on May 19, PML-N Ghizer President Rana Nasir Hussain alleged that the government has awarded a tender for Rs700 million to blue-eyed officials. He claimed that the tender which includes construction of buildings, boundary walls and classrooms in different valleys of the region, including Ghizer, Diamer and Skardu was not advertised in any newspaper.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/381283/violation-of-rules-g-b-govt-accused-of-nepotism/>

## **Crackdown: Six revenue officials held over**

## **corruption charges**

*The Express Tribune, May 19, 2012*

MIRPUR: Six officers of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Revenue Department were arrested on charges of tampering the official land record by the AJK Accountability Bureau. The bureau spokesperson stated in a press statement issued on May 17 that four officials of the AJK Revenue Department Bhimber district were arrested over charges of depriving a private complainant, Muhammad Razzaq and making fake entries in the official land record.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/381007/crackdown-six-revenue-officials-held-over-corruption-charges/>

## **Shabbir Mir, Assembly session: G-B Development Authority Bill passed**

*The Express Tribune May 19, 2012*

GILGIT: Following a unanimous vote in its favour, the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) enacted the G-B Development Authority Bill on May 18. The bill, prepared by G-B Law Minister Wazir Baig and refined by a parliamentary committee, will serve as the watchdog for development in the mountain region. During the session, G-B Senior Minister Muhammad Jaffar stated the posts for three newly carved divisions would be created in the upcoming budget. The health minister, Haji Gulbar Khan, criticised the ban on recruitment in hospitals, saying that it has created staff shortage and the vacant posts should be filled on an immediate basis.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/381013/assembly-session-g-b-development-authority-bill-passed/>

## **Youth Wing of BNF (Hamid Group), abdicates Party affiliation**

*Dardistan Times, May 19, 2012*

LAHORE: Central and Zonal officials of Lahore based student wing of Balawaristan National Front (BNF) announced to abdicate party membership. Engineer Tehseen Ali an official of party's central executive council in a press release maintained that the party leadership entertains role and power at the cost of sufferings to people at the gross root level.

They claimed that BNSO and its parent organization have more of a limelight hunger than a sincere will to serve the nation.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/youth-wing-bnf-hamid88-group-abdicates-party-affiliation23>

## **Cabinet meeting: Judicial commission formed to probe sectarian violence**

*The Express Tribune, May 15, 2012*

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government has decided to constitute a judicial commission to probe last month's sectarian bout which claimed over 20 lives in the mountain region. The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting chaired by G-B Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah on May 14. Government Spokesperson Ali Madad Sher apprised the participants that the government has arrested 21 outlaws wanted for bloodshed and has issued orders to arrest nine others. The security force formed in the wake of sectarian violence has also started operation on Karakoram Highway, he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/378778/cabinet-meeting-judicial-commission-formed-to-probe-sectarian-violence/>

## **Sectarian murders**

*The Express Tribune, May 14, 2012*

KARACHI: The crash of a passenger plane is a great human loss and we should all mourn this event. However, there is one thing that bothers me. The amount of media coverage that a plane crash gets is far greater than say incidents of sectarian violence. Take for instance, the shooting deaths of bus passengers all Shias in Mastung, Balochistan and on the Karakoram Highway in Gilgit-Baltistan. Would it be too much to ask the media, especially our television channels, to also give this issue the coverage that it deserves?

Sameen Hassan

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/378740/sectarian-murders/>

## **Illegal assets: Azad Jammu and Kashmir official arrested for graft**

*The Express Tribune, May 16, 2012*

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Accountability Bureau have arrested Raja Mushtaq Ahmed, the superintending engineer, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Public Works Department, Muzaffarabad, on the charges of making assets through unlawful means and corruption during his service tenure. An Azad Jammu and Kashmir Ehtesab Bureau spokesperson stated in a press release on May 15 that Mushtaq was arrested on May 14 after he was found guilty as a result of an inquiry conducted by the Ehtesab Bureau.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/379411/illegal-assets-azad-jammu-and-kashmir-official-arrested-for-graft/>

### **Cabinet approves mosque CoC**

*Pakistan Observer*

GILGIT: Gilgit Baltistan (GB) cabinet approved 'Code of Conduct' (CoC) for mosques and gave legal status to Masajid Boards, which were formed by the Parliamentary Committee. The cabinet discussed Law and Order situation and reviewed measures taken to maintain law and order in the region.

Meanwhile, talking to the media the spokesman of the government, Minister for Education Dr Ali Madad Sher stated the code of conduct has been approved and will be given a legal cover by presenting it in the assembly in the shape of a Masajid Boards Act and its implementation will ensure harmony, tranquility and tolerance. He stated the code was a need of hour which has been framed keeping in view the demand of society.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=155630>

### **Drug rackets in AJK: Court converts application into writ petition**

*Dawn, May 15, 2012*

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK High Court Chief Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal on May 14 converted an application seeking judicial probe into alleged presence of drug rackets in the AJK's capital into a writ petition.

Treating them as respondents, the court issued notices to AJK's chief secretary, IGP and vice chancellor AJK University to file their comments on the petition before or by May 20 whereas the petitioners Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

president Raja Farooq Haider, Central Press Club Muzaffarabad President Wahid Iqbal Butt and the club's human rights committee chief Syed Abrar Haider were asked to submit affidavit in support of their application within three days.

<http://dawn.com/2012/05/15/drug-rackets-in-ajk-court-converts-application-into-writ-petition-2/>

### **Azad Jammu Kashmir constitutes green benches**

*May 13, 2012*

Following the Supreme Court's initiative to hear environment related cases, all high courts and the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir have constituted 'green' benches. The move comes in light of recommendations of the Bhurban Declaration 2012 titled 'A Common Vision on Environment for the South Asian Judiciaries' during South Asian Conference on Environmental Justice held on March 24-25 under the aegis of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

<http://www.newspakistan.pk/2012/05/13/Azad-Jammu-Kashmir-constitutes-green-benches/>

### **Interior Ministry bans 2 group in GB**

*Pakistan Observer*

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry banned two organizations, Anjuman Imamia Gilgit-Baltistan and Muslim Students Organization GB. The Interior Ministry has sent a notification to all the security agencies of the four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Ministry explained that the organizations were allegedly involved in sectarian killings and riots over the past several months in Gilgit city. Both organizations have been banned under Anti-Terrorism Act-1997 and moreover, their accounts have also been frozen. After ban on two more organizations in GB the numbers of total banned organizations have reached to 29, earlier it was 27.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=154831>

### **Solidarity: Release of youth leaders sought**

*The Express Tribune, May 14, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: Youth and political activists

staged a protest demonstration in Islamabad on May 13 against the torture of Progressive Youth Front (PYF) activists, including its chairman Baba Jan, by police and intelligence officials in Gilgit Jail.

They demanded their immediate release and access to medical treatment facilities. They condemned the local government for not taken any initiative to investigate the brutal torture of the prisoners. In prison, Jan and his comrades staged protests and planned a hunger strike against the inhuman conditions in jail. A large number of people, mostly from Gilgit-Baltistan, gathered outside the National Press Club (NPC) holding placards and banners. They were chanting slogans against the local police and security agencies for what they called their brutal act and demanded immediate release of the PYF activists.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/378389/solidarity-release-of-youth-leaders-sought/>

### **Farooq Tariq, More arrests in Gilgit Baltistan**

While protests in different cities of Pakistan are going on, we received a bad news from Hunza valley. Six activists of Labour Party led by comrade Nasir are arrested in Karim Abad, the main city of Hunza, while flyposting the posters for the release of Baba Jan. This is going too far, comrades are arrested even for this very normal political activity. Demonstrations for the release of Baba Jan and four other comrades and against the torture are held in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Multan, Hyderabad and other cities.

<http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2612>

### **Diamer Bhasha "life-line" of Pakistan**

*Business Recorder, May 12, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: Diamer-Bhasha Dam project, a life-line for the national economy, would help meet country future agricultural and power requirements. An official of Water and Power Ministry stated that the dam would generate 19 billion units of electricity annually.

He stated the mega project would store over 8 Million Acre Feet of water to meet country's growing power and irrigation needs. He stated the

Dam would enhance life of Tarbela Dam by over 35 years. To a question he stated, Diamir-Bhasha dam is the first major hydel power project after Mangla Dam built in 1967 and Tarbela Dam built in 1974. To another question, he stated Diamer Bhasha dam with a height of 272 meters, is being built on Indus river, about 300 kilometers upstream of Tarbela Dam, he added. He stated the Dam will be completed in seven to eight years.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-a-finance/industries-a-sectors/57226-diamir-bhasha-qlife-lineq-of-pakistan-.html>

### **PTI demands release of Baba Jan Hunzai**

*The News, May 10, 2012*

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General, Dr Arif Alvi has pledged support for the demand for the release of Baba Jan Hunzai and his fellow activists of the Labor Party Pakistan who had been languishing in jail for months. During a meeting with the Labour Party leader Farooq Tariq, Dr Alvi condemned the alleged torture of the arrested, saying that the treatment meted out to the political activists was a clear violation of fundamental human rights.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-107367-PTI-demands-release-of-Baba-Jan-Hunzai>

### **Pakistan: Human Rights Defenders Were Tortured During Jail Custody in Gilgit-Baltistan, Asian Human Rights Commission - Urgent Appeals Programme**

*May 10, 2012*

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has received information that the human rights defenders, Mr. Baba Jan Hunzai along with four companions were brutally tortured by the police and military intelligence, ISI, officials while in custody of the jail. The victims were not given access to any medical treatment facilities despite being severely tortured. The government has not taken any initiative to investigate the brutal torture of the prisoners detained in jail. It is alleged that a superintendent of police, a deputy superintendent of police, a station house officer (SHO) and the deputy superintendent of Gilgit district jail were directly helping and instigating the torture with the military

intelligence people. The torture victims are kept in a sub section of the jail which is at the top of a mountain where the temperature remains almost at freezing point.

<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAC-070-2012>

### **Syed Fazl-e-Haider, Sectarian strife in Pakistan hurts its ties with China**

*The National, May 11, 2012*

Last month, riots between Sunni and Shia groups in north-east Pakistan claimed at least 20 lives and left 50 others injured, prompting the government to deploy troops and to impose a curfew in the volatile areas. That curfew has since been lifted in the area, which borders western China. But growing sectarian discord in Gilgit-Baltistan and Skardu districts, where the riots occurred, is likely to turn the region into a sectarian flashpoint, frustrating Chinese plans for development of its western region.

The strategically located area of Gilgit-Baltistan - which connects Pakistan to China's western province of Xinjiang - borders Afghanistan, China, India and the strife-torn Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The region is seen by both India and Pakistan as part of the larger Jammu and Kashmir issue, which has been one of the most intractable points of contention between the two South Asian rivals since partition.

<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/sectarian-strife-in-pakistan-hurts-its-ties-with-china#>

### **Shabbir Mir, Paving way for harmony: In Gilgit, re-opening of mosques hinges on accepting new code**

*The Express Tribune, May 9, 2012*

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government has linked the opening of the mosques sealed in the aftermath of sectarian violence with the acceptance of the code of conduct that bars prayer leaders from making hate speeches. The code of conduct, prepared by a parliamentary peace committee, binds prayer leaders of both central mosques not to malign each other's beliefs or to use foul language against the rival sect's revered personalities. It states that prayer leaders and their deputies should not

issue inflammatory decrees, especially during Friday and Eid sermons.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/375923/paving-way-for-harmony-in-gilgit-re-opening-of-mosques-hinges-on-accepting-new-code/>

### **Masood Hussain, Oldest records on Buddhism need more attention**

*Economic Times, May 8, 2012*

Eight decades after cattle grazers discovered them in undivided India's Gilgit, the famous Buddhist manuscripts are still awaiting proper preservation in Srinagar's SPS Museum. Locked in a fireproof vault, mostly laminated, these scripts are neither displayed nor can they be photographed.

"These are fragile assets and unless we have a proper preservation system, we do not permit people to touch them," museum curator Mushtaq Ahmad stated. "We will launch a formal programme in our own laboratory once we shift to the new museum building." A brand new museum, built for 30 crore, is ready for housewarming.

Gilgit manuscripts date back to the sixth century and are known to be one of the oldest records on Buddhism. These predate Rajtarangni, the oldest "history" that Kalhana wrote on Kashmir. Discovered by cattle grazers near an old stupa, these boxes were immediately transferred to Srinagar durbar.

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-08/news/31626509\\_1\\_manuscripts-sanskrit-national-archives](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-08/news/31626509_1_manuscripts-sanskrit-national-archives)

### **The Bitter Truth**

*Dardistan Times, May 6, 2012*

Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA), Wazir Baig, while speaking at a peace conference in the Gilgit city, acknowledged that during the recent sectarian killings and violence, five innocent people belonging to the Ismaili community lost their lives. The speaker warned that if the Ismailis could beat back the enemy at the border and get Nishan-i-Haider, surely they can repulse those who endanger their lives in the streets of Gilgit City. Mr Baig stated he respected religious leaders and Ulema but he had no room in his hearts

for those who propagate and promote hatred and sectarianism among the masses.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/90bitter-truth45>

### **Seminar: 'G-B should be made a secular state'**

*The Express Tribune, May 7, 2012*

A legislator and nationalist leader proposed that Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) should be made a secular and independent state. Chief of his own faction of Balawaristan National Front (BNF), Nawaz Khan Naji, stated this while addressing a gathering of young party members of BNF in Rawalpindi on May 7, stated a press release issued by the organisers. Naji stated that injustice, nepotism, corruption and interference of clerics in the administrative affairs of G-B are responsible for the sectarian unrest prevalent in the province. "Whether it is G-B's judiciary, bureaucracy, government or the civil society, they are all divided on a sectarian basis," stated Naji, who is also a member of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/375069/seminar-g-b-should-be-made-a-secular-state/>

### **Mehtab Haider, SC tribunal to resolve KPK-GB dispute on Bhasha Dam**

*The News, May 7, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: The government will constitute a high-powered tribunal led by chief justice of Pakistan to resolve the complicated issue of net hydel profit share between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) governments on account of construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam.

Chairman Wapda, Shakil Durrani confirmed on May 6 that a high-powered tribunal would be constituted to resolve the issue. Without putting in place required mechanism in shape of safety guard measures related to land compensation, environment and resolving net hydel profit share, the multilateral donors consortium led by Asian Development Bank (ADB) will find it difficult to

make Basha project as bankable for other donors to manage financing of \$12.7 billion for its construction.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-106994-SC-tribunal-to-resolve-KPK-GB-dispute-on-Bhasha-Dam>

### **Peer Muhammad, Police broke inmates' bones for complaining about food: HRCP**

*The Express Tribune, May 6, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has raised alarm over the torture of political workers by Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) police and security agencies for protesting against the quality of food in Gilgit Jail.

"Reports of alleged torture of at least five political activists in the Gilgit Jail are exceedingly worrying and hint at the authorities' stubborn refusal to learn from past mistakes," an HRCP statement stated on May 5. The five activists, who have been in prison for several months, continue to face harsh treatment for protesting against the poor quality of food and delay in hearing of cases of prisoners in the jail, it stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/374716/police-broke-inmates-bones-for-complaining-about-food-hrcp/>

### **Protest in Australia against Shia killings**

*Daily Times, May 4, 2012*

LAHORE: Hundreds of Pakistanis as well as civil society and human rights activists have been protesting outside the Pakistani Embassy in Australia since April 30 against "genocide" of Shias in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khairpur, Karachi, Parachinar and Quetta. The protesters wanted to present a charter of demands to the embassy, but the ambassador and embassy staff refused to accept the petition. This enraged the protesters who staged a sit-in. They have vowed to continue protesting until "solid measures" are taken to protect Shias in Pakistan.

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C05%5C04%5Cstory\\_4-5-2012\\_pg7\\_12](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C05%5C04%5Cstory_4-5-2012_pg7_12)

# Economic Developments

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## **A.G. Noorani, Revive LoC trade**

*Dawn, March 3, 2012*

It is a great pity that trade across the Line of Control (LoC) between the two parts of Kashmir, which started in October 2008, continues to suffer under crippling restrictions which could and should have been foreseen. Trade continues to be based on barter in a climate in which progress in trade and communication facilities is the order of the day. The ancient Silk route is being revived. All across Central Asia plans are being made to ensure seamless connectivity by road and the railways. This is apart from plans for oil and gas pipelines across national frontiers, of which there are more than one. In a context such as this, barter trade across the LoC stands out like a sore thumb.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/03/10/revive-loc-trade.html>

## **Seminar: 'AJK budget to be people-friendly'**

*The Express Tribune, May 31, 2012*

MIRPUR: Ministers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in a pre-budget seminar on May 30 vowed to make the budget for the year 2012-13 reflective of the aspirations of the people. The speakers stated that the emphasis will be on ensuring basic facilities such as water, power, health and education to the people, and efforts will be made to explore and enhance the resources of AJK to build a self-reliant economy. One of the major projects for the upcoming budget is on increasing the capacity of hydropower generation sector by up to 15,000 megawatts, they stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/386609/seminar-ajk-budget-to-be-people-friendly/>

## **BISP distribute cheques**

*Pakistan Observer*

ASTORE: Benazir Income Support Program

(BISP) has started the process of cheque distribution among deserving people through post offices in all the districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. This was stated by Regional Director BISP Muhammad Hasan. He stated that poor and needy people of the region will be provided all possible financial assistance through this program. "Watan cards have also been provided to flood effectees in all the districts of GB", he further stated.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=155431>

## **AJK to produce 8,000MW of electricity in four years**

*Pakistan Observer*

LAHORE: Acting Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chaudhry Yasin has stated that 8,000 megawatt electricity will be produced in Azad Kashmir in four years and provide to Pakistan. He stated that not a single megawatt electricity was produced in the Musharraf regime or in Nawaz Sharif's tenure adding that it was the reason that people were facing load shedding crisis today.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=155097>

## **LoC trade: Pakistani traders return consignments to India**

*The Express Tribune, May 9, 2012*

MIRPUR: Azad-Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) traders returned 21 trucks of chilli and pomegranate seeds to their counterparts in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) saying these items were of substandard quality, noted a report from across the Line of Control (LoC).

Goods worth over Rs10 million were traded through the Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point in Rawalakot between AJK and J&K along the LoC. On May 8, as many as 23 trucks rolled out from Trade Facilitation Centre

(TFC) at Ranger in Poonch city of J&K to Rawalakot AJK, of these only two trucks carrying items worth Rs 600,000 were allowed into Pakistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/376035/loc-trade-pakistani-traders-return-consignments-to-india/>

### **843 projects underway in Baltistan**

*Associated Press of Pakistan, May 10, 2012*

SKARDU: As many as 843 Rural development schemes are in progress in the division with a cost of Rs. 65 million. Three out of the total are targeted to be completed by the end of June 2012. This was disclosed by Director Local Government and Rural Development of the division Muhammad Naeem on May 9. He stated all the development schemes were being completed through the Project Committees at District Council, Municipal Committees and Union Council levels. These projects were being supervised so that the quality of work could be

ensured, he added. He stated, out of the total 843 projects, 559 were being accomplished in Skardu with a cost of Rs. 27.5 million.

[http://app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=193765&Itemid=2](http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=193765&Itemid=2)

### **Plan inked to raise fish production in Mangla Dam**

*Business Recorder, May 11, 2012*

The AJK authorities have inked a plan to increase fish production in the mega reservoir of Mangla Dam up to 2000 metric ton annually. The plan includes the phased launching of the fish breed of superior races in the dam this year. Official sources noted on May 10 that enhanced fish production, pollution-free environment, revival of parks and supply of hygienic water were the foremost priorities of the government.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-allied/183/1187812/>

# International Developments

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## **Shabbir Mir, US team approaches G-B police chief for security cover**

*The Express Tribune, May 29, 2012*

GILGIT: The United States embassy in Islamabad directly approached Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) Inspector General Police Hussain Akhtar to provide security for an official US delegation visiting the region on May 30, official sources confirmed to The Express Tribune on May 27. Surprisingly, the schedule of the three-member delegation including Second Secretary Lisa Arunee Buzenas, Second Secretary Kimberly Gayle Phelan and security assistant Javed Khalid was not communicated to the home department which is responsible for all the security arrangements in case of any visits by foreign delegates. "We are not aware of a visit planned by any foreign delegation to G-B," stated senior district administration official Usman Ahmed, while talking to The Express Tribune.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/385482/us-team-approaches-g-b-police-chief-for-security-cover/>

## **US Deputy Ambassador calls on former AJK Prime Minister**

*Associated Press of Pakistan, May 25, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: The US Deputy Ambassador, Richard Hoagland on May 24 held a detailed meeting with former AJK Prime Minister and Central Leader of PPP (Azad Kashmir), Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry at his residence in Islamabad. During the meeting, continued for one and half an hour, the resolution of Kashmir issue was discussed in the backdrop of current security situation in South Asia. They also discussed matters pertaining to mutual interest along with the important events occurring in this region.

[http://app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=195627&Itemid=2](http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=195627&Itemid=2)

## **Khalid Mustafa, World Bank agrees in principle**

## **to fund Diamer-Bhasha Dam**

*The News, May 2, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has agreed in principle to fund the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, a senior official at the Ministry of Finance noted. "The Finance Minister had written a letter to the president of the World Bank seeking funding for the project," he stated. "The Asian Development Bank (ADB) - the lead financial institution in providing funds for Diamer-Bhasha dam - had asked the government of Pakistan to arrange more funds from big donors such as World Bank, as it cannot arrange the required funding alone," the official elaborated.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-106011-World-Bank-agrees-in-principle-to-fund-Diamer-Bhasha-Dam>

## **Khaleeq Kiani, China group interested in AJK power projects**

*Dawn, May 7, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is seeking a push for early mobilisation of Chinese contractors to start construction of 1,100MW Kohala Hydropower Project (KHP) and increased financial support for under-construction 969MW Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP). Sources stated the Chinese contractors CWE a subsidiary of Three Gorges Dam had been showing less interest in going ahead with the \$2.2 billion Kohala project and dilly-dallying on mobilising its machinery and workforce to start it even though the project had been negotiated through official channels of the two governments bypassing public procurement rules. An official stated the crucial two-day session of the Pak-China Joint Energy Working Group (PCJEWG) opening in Islamabad on May 6 would revolve around the \$3.6 billion NJHP and \$2.2 billion KHP even though it would take up 19 projects involving a total cost of over \$12 billion.

<http://dawn.com/2012/05/07/china-group-interested-in-ajk-power-projects/>

# Other Developments

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## **Unregistered: Over 6,000 women in G-B without CNIC: survey**

*The Express Tribune, May 30, 2012*

GILGIT: Over 6,000 women are deprived of Computerised National Identity Cards (CNIC) in remote areas of Gilgit, a recent survey by a non-profit organisation has revealed. Without an identity card, the women are unable to become beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme, or receive the rights they are entitled to, such as the right to vote, health insurance and Watan cards, stated Ejaz Khan, an official of Publishing Extension Network that conducted the survey.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/385836/unregistered-over-6000-women-in-g-b-without-cnlic-survey/>

## **Shabbir Mir, Adding insult to injury: G-B school teachers demand rights**

*The Express Tribune, May 15, 2012*

GILGIT: Sher Khan has been working as a schoolteacher in Diamer valley for more than 15 years. Yet all makes is Rs 3,000 a month, which is less than half of the minimum wage for workers. To add insult to injury, he has not been paid for the past six months. "Hundreds of teachers have been performing their duties for more than a decade now, hoping to be rewarded one day, but that day never comes and we can't wait anymore," stated Khan outside the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) on May 14.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/378796/adding-insult-to-injury-g-b-schoolteachers-demand-rights/>

## **Environmental protection: Report on AJK's forest management completed**

*The Express Tribune, May 3, 2012*

PESHAWAR: To find out workable solutions to the effect of climate change on the forests of Azad

Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a comprehensive third-party evaluation of AJK's forest management interventions has been completed. The study, completed by Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) Peshawar, will help to effectively plan and formulate strategies for sustainable conservation, protection and development of forests in the region.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/373112/environmental-protection-report-on-ajks-forest-management-completed/>

## **Shabbir Mir, The ground reality: In Gilgit, workers' exploitation continues at every level**

*The Express Tribune, May 1, 2012*

GILGIT: Saad Khan, a scrap collector, does not know if his rights as a labourer are protected under the law, nor was he ever told about it. He continues to be exploited at the hands of his employer. On the contrary, Hafizur Rehman, a grade-1 employee in a government-funded project, knows that the fixed minimum wage in the preceding years is around Rs7,500 per month, yet he is not paid that amount on one pretext or the other. Exploitation continues to haunt employees at every level.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/372262/the-ground-reality-in-gilgit-workers-exploitation-continues-at-every-level/>

## **Mehtab Haider, Museums to house Buddha carvings found from Bhasha Dam site**

*The News, May 2, 2012*

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to construct two museums to preserve 33,000 rock carvings, sculptures and statures of Buddha discovered from the site of construction of Bhasha Dam. These discovered rock carvings will probably be preserved in fiber glass material same on the lines of Aswan Dam in Egypt. In order to accomplish this task in more professional way, Wapda has hired services of an international consultant Dr Herald Hauptmann who belonged to

Germany and working on preserving heritage in the area from last two decades.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-106126-Museums-to-house-Buddha-carvings--found-from-Bhasha-Dam-site>

### **Uniform Distribution Ceremony in Gilgit under WWF-Pakistan**

*Dardistan Times, May 21, 2012*

GILGIT: WWF-Pakistan under its Pakistan wetlands programme-Northern Alpine Wetlands Complex delivered 22 sets of uniform to the field staff of Gilgit-Baltistan Wildlife Department in a ceremony held in Gilgit Conservation Information Centre on May 10, 2012. The purpose of providing uniform to the field staff was to encourage dedicated personnel of the department who render their services to protect wildlife resources in their respective regions.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/uniform-distribution99-ceremony-gilgit-under-wwf-pakistan23>

### **AH Nizami, Unearthed: The shrine where a thousand poppies bloom**

*The Express Tribune, May 6, 2012*

MIRPUR: One visits the shrines of holy men where internal seeds are planted and blossom into intoxicating spiritual nourishment. At the mausoleum of Tahli Waali Sarkaar in Mirpur district, poppies are growing in the lawn. Locals

have accused Taj Jalib, contracted to maintain the shrine and provide food and facilities to visitors, of using the fertile grounds for a spot of illicit horticulture. Jalib apparently refutes the allegations, though the facts on the ground seem to contradict this version of events.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/374714/unearthed-the-shrine-where-a-thousand-poppies-bloom/>

### **Shabbir Mir, Peace initiative: Riders gallop horses around Gilgit to promote harmony**

*The Express Tribune, May 6, 2012*

GILGIT: As many as 50 polo players galloped horses around the city on May 5, appealing to the masses to play their part in restoring peace in the mountainous region. The riders, led by a police escort and an ambulance, set out from Shahi Polo Ground and rallied through various routes waving at children, who had gathered alongside the roads to see them. Decked in colourful dresses, the riders represented various polo teams of Gilgit-Baltistan, including the Gilgit polo, police and scouts teams. As they passed through the major avenues, several vehicles could be seen joining the rally to show solidarity.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/374617/peace-initiative-riders-gallop-horses-around-gilgit-to-promote-harmony/>

# 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.*

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