

POK

News Digest

Volume 5 | Number 7 | July 2012

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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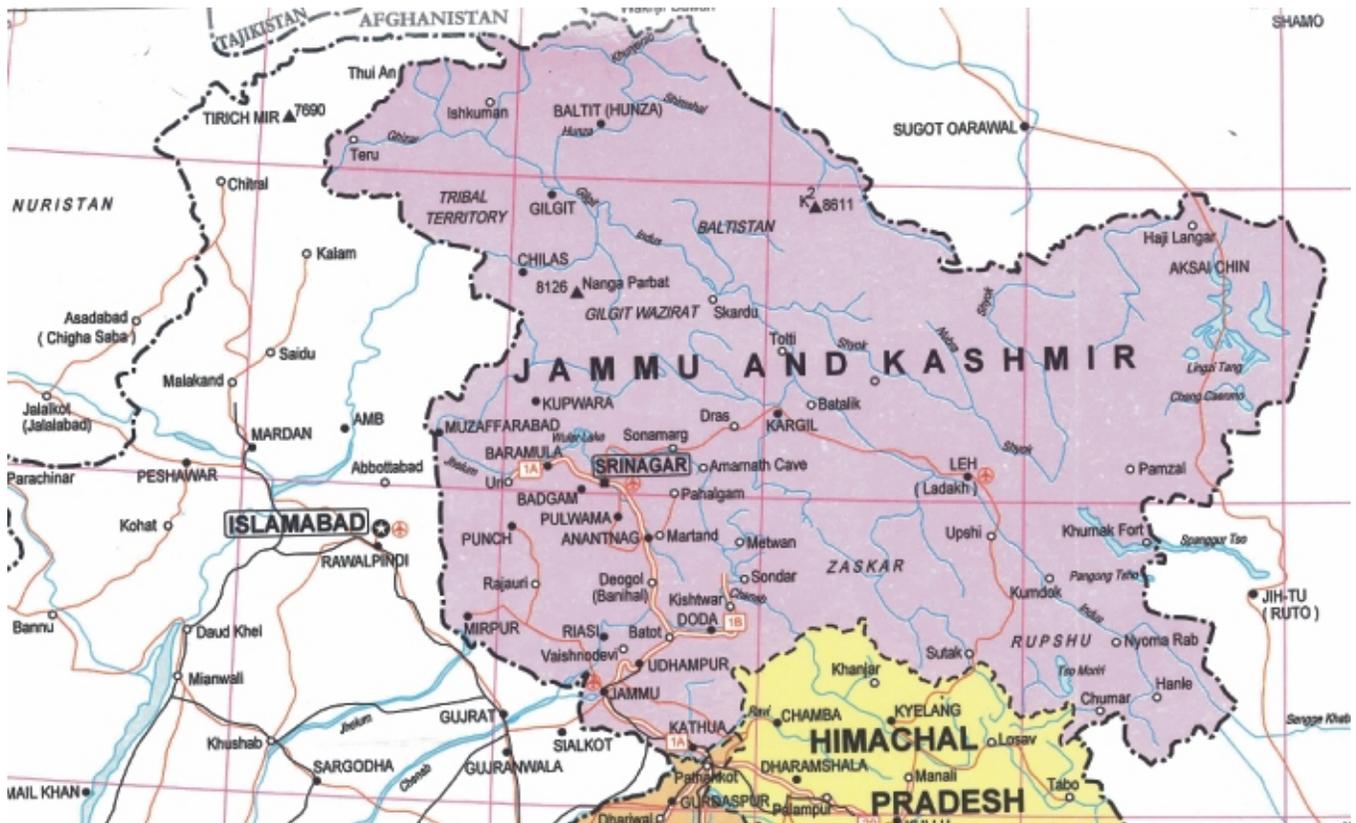
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

US Ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, paid a visit to the so called AJK on 13 June 2012. During his visit, Munter held meeting with Prime Minister AJK, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed and interacted with representative from NGOs. This was preceded by the visit of US embassy delegation to Gilgit Baltistan during May-June 2012. The high profile visit of US officials to the PoK signals a growing interest of the United States in this part of Kashmir. The US which in the past has funded the Satpara dam near Skardu is also likely the fund the controversial Diامر Bhasha Dam. Apart from the hydropower projects, the US Ambassador during his visit conveyed US willingness to support developing education sector and basic infrastructural facilities in the AJK.

Meanwhile, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has expressed certain reservations on the Diامر Bhasha dam project. A senior official from ADB (noted to lead the consortium) stated that Pakistan should approach other donor agencies such as the World Bank as it is huge project. The hesitance of the ADB has spiraled up the problems for Pakistan who earlier failed to get commitment from the World Bank to participate in the funding process. The World Bank is said to have linked its acceptance to India's concurrence, as the site of the dam is located in a region legally claimed by India.

Both Gilgit Baltistan and the so called AJK presented their budgets in the month of June, details being given in several reports included in this issue. In Gilgit Baltistan Assembly, a demand was raised that at least 50% of the funds should be allocated to new projects. The lawmakers complained that most of the funds were absorbed by the ongoing incomplete projects and this does not allow new projects to start.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Mushtaq Ghumman, Diamer-Bhasha dam: ADB expressing support insincerely?

Business Recorder, June 29, 2012

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is noted to be expressing support for Diamer-Bhasha dam project insincerely. A delegation of ADB, headed by Klaus Gerhaeusser, Director General, and Central West Asia Department called on the Federal minister for Water and Power, Ahmad Mukhtar on June 28. "ADB is no longer enthusiastic about the Diamer-Bhasha dam and the earlier schedule of an international road show and due diligence carried by their consultants has been postponed," stated an official on condition of anonymity.

On the Diamer-Bhasha dam, the Asian Development Bank has informed Wapda that other multilateral financial institutions, the World Bank and other potential donors needed to be approached, the sources added. On October 17, 2011, the then Prime Minister, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, laid the foundation stone of the \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam capable of generating 4,500 megawatts of electricity and a reservoir capacity to store over eight million acre-foot of water to meet the country's growing power and irrigation needs.

<http://www.brecorder.com/market-data/stocks-a-bonds/0/1206819/>

AJK president, Hina Rabbani Khar call on PM Ashraf

The News, June 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) President, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan and Foreign Minister Ms Hina Rabbani Khar on June 27 called on Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf at the PM House and congratulated him on the assumption of the Office of the Prime Minister.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-117215-AJK->

[president-Hina-Rabbani-Khar-call-on-PM](#)

SC orders action against GB IGP in Hajj corruption case

Daily Times, June 28, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on June 27 ordered the federal government to suspend Gilgit-Baltistan Police Inspector General Hussain Asghar for not reporting back to the FIA Headquarters and submit a report on June 28. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and comprising Justice Jawwad S Khawaja and Justice Khilji Arif Hussain was hearing a suo motu case of corruption during Hajj in 2010.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C06%5C28%5Cstory_28-6-2012_pg7_5

Majeed announces regularization of contractual employees

The Frontier Post, June 30, 2012

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudry Abdul Majeed announced to regularize the services of all the contractual employees working in all the public-sector departments of AJK government. The AJK Prime Minister made these announcements while addressing the budget session 2012-13 in Legislative Assembly on June 28. PM Majeed also announced to establish another women university at Muzaffarabad next year, increase the members Legislative Assembly's fund from Rs. five million to 10 million.

He also announced to appoint two additional judges in AJK High Court, an additional civil judge in Patika, one civil judge in Mirpur, a circuit bench in Bagh and fund of Rs. five million for Chamber of Commerce. The prime minister stated that opposition and all members of the Legislative

Assembly would be taken on-board on Neelum Jehlum Hydel project before finalizing the agreement.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/169143/>

Majeed, Yaseen discuss telecom progress in AJK

Pakistan Observer, June 30, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Dr. Mohammed Yaseen called on Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhary Abdul Majeed to discuss the progress of telecommunication sector at AJK in general and Neelum Valley in particular. The Chairman informed that during the earthquake of 2005, the cellular companies of Pakistan were given special permission to provide telecommunication facilities at affected areas of AJK to facilitate search, rescue and relief operations. The efforts of the companies were appreciated at every level and it was decided by the AJK Council to regularize their presence by adopting PTA as the regulatory body.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=162517>

Police chief suspension orders not received: G-B

The Express Tribune, June 29, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government on June 28 stated it hadn't received any orders regarding G-B Inspector General (IG), Hussain Asghar, against whom the Supreme Court has directed the government issue suspension orders. "We haven't received any directives so far on IG Hussain Asghar," Sajjadul Haq, an official in the chief minister secretariat noted on June 28. Let the directives come first, he stated, adding that the G-B government will take a decision only after receiving concrete orders.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/400895/police-chief-suspension-orders-not-received-g-b/>

Shabbir Mir, Debate on budget allocations: G-B govt told to allocate at least 50% for new schemes

The Express Tribune, June 29, 2012

GILGIT: Legislators have urged the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government to refrain from

spending more than half of the new fiscal budget on schemes left incomplete from previous years. A majority of lawmakers stated this during a debate at the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) on the utilisation of Rs19.39 billion announced two days back for G-B for the fiscal year 2012-2013.

The lawmakers maintained that the G-B government often justifies non-initiation of new projects on the pretext that a significant portion of the budget is being spent on previously incomplete projects. They stated that the government should change its policy of spending over 80 per cent of the budget on previously incomplete development schemes and proposed that at least 50 per cent of the budget should be spent on new schemes to provide benefit to the people.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/400758/debate-on-budget-allocations-g-b-govt-told-to-allocate-at-least-50-for-new-schemes/>

Shabbir Mir, Shortage of judges: G-B's Supreme Court 'virtually dysfunctional'

The Express Tribune, June 29, 2012

GILGIT: Cases are piling up and litigants are suffering due to shortage of judges in the top court of Gilgit-Baltistan. With the expiration of contracts of two judges last month, only one judge is left in the three-member Supreme Appellate Court (SAC). The positions fell vacant on May 26 when the contracts of Justice Syed Jafer Shah and Justice Mohammad Yaqoob expired after they completed their three-year term. Dubbed as Gilgit-Baltistan's apex court, SAC is run by three judges including a chief judge, all of whom are hired on three-year contracts. Justice Rana Arshad, who replaced Justice Mohammad Nawaz Abbasi as chief judge after the latter's contract expired last year, is now looking after the SAC.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/400753/shortage-of-judges-g-bs-supreme-court-virtually-dysfunctional/>

Shabbir Mir, Bail plea accepted: Baba Jan likely to be released after 9 months

The Express Tribune, June 28, 2012

GILGIT: A court in Gilgit has accepted the bail plea

of a detained youth activist Baba Jan, who was imprisoned last year under the Anti-Terrorism Act for protesting over the killing of a man and son in Hunza. "He will be released from jail in about two days," Advocate Ehsan Ali, the counsel for Baba Jan, noted on June 27.

Jan, who is the chief organiser of Progressive Youth Movement, was among the nearly 100 people arrested for allegedly ransacking a police station and torching government offices after a clash, which claimed the lives of two internally displaced persons, Sher Afzal Baig and his son Sherullah Baig, in Hunza last year.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/400201/bail-plea-accepted-baba-jan-likely-to-be-released-after-9-months/>

Journalists arrested in Gilgit when a news story irked the Law Minister

Dardistan Times, June 27, 2012

GILGIT: Secretary Law of Gilgit-Baltistan has registered an FIR against two senior journalists of Gilgit-Baltistan for publishing a news item that made him uncomfortable. Abdul Rehman Bukhari, a prolific writer and Bureau Chief of Daily Baad-e-Shumaal and Nazir Naji, the Resident Editor of Daily Bang-e-Sahar were picked by Gilgit police on their way to work place. The Journalists were returning from the budget meeting when the Police hauled them off into vehicles and took them to the city police station.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/journalists44-arrested-gilgit454-when-news-story-irked-law-minister>

Pak fails to get World Bank commitment for dam project

PTI, June 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: In a setback to Pakistan, the World Bank has linked financing of its USD 11.7 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam project with Indian concurrence, a media report stated. Pakistan was unable to get a positive response from the Washington-based financial institution on the project amidst strained relations with the US, sources in the Finance Ministry noted. Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh was unable to get a

"firm commitment" from the World Bank's Vice President for South Asia, Isabel Guerrero, on co-financing the project when they met on June 25. Sources stated Shaikh raised the issue but could not get a "welcoming response".

<http://www.indiatvnews.com/news/world/pak-fails-to-get-world-bank-commitment-for-dam-project-8199.html>

Shabbir Mir, 2012-13 fiscal year: Gilgit-Baltistan unveils Rs19b budget

The Express Tribune, June 26, 2012

GILGIT: A total annual budget of Rs19.39 billion for the year 2012-13 was presented in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly on June 25. As Finance Minister Mohammad Ali Akhtar read out the budget speech, an opposition legislator Nawaz Khan Naji stormed out of the house, terming the proceedings an exercise in futility.

On the other hand, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Janbaz Khan remained tight-lipped throughout the session. The 22nd session of the assembly was chaired by Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Speaker Wazir Baig and also attended by Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah. The total amount earmarked for the development sector was Rs8.39 billion, whereas the non-development budget amounted to Rs11 billion.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/399240/2012-13-fiscal-year-gilgit-baltistan-unveils-rs19b-budget/>

Shahbaz Rana, Diamer-Bhasha: WB links dam's funding to Indian agreement

The Express Tribune, June 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Amidst strained relations with the US, Pakistan was unable to obtain a positive response from Washington-based World Bank to help finance the \$11.7 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam project. Sources in the ministry of finance revealed that the World Bank has again linked the financing of the multi-billion dollar project with Indian concurrence.

Pakistan was unable to receive a firm commitment from World Bank's Vice President for South Asia Isabel Guerrero to co-finance the mega project

when Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh met with the former on June 25.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/399281/diameer-bhasha-wb-links-dams-funding-to-indian-agreement/>

Sacked: Three advisers to ex-PM sent packing

The Express Tribune, June 25, 2012

GILGIT: With the disqualification of Yousaf Raza Gilani from the office of Prime Minister (PM), the three advisers to PM appointed from Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have also been removed, stated officials. “The three are no more advisers to the new PM, it has officially been decided,” an official noted, adding that the news will be communicated to them shortly.

Two days back, a notification issued by the PM Secretariat did not contain names of the three advisers from G-B, suggesting they might be retained with the new PM. Earlier this year, Gilani appointed Attullah Shahab, Professor Muhammad Saleem, and Wazir Ibadat as advisers to the PM in G-B. The three were also the members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/398772/sacked-three-advisers-to-ex-pm-sent-packing/>

Government yet to drain Attabad Lake

Dawn, June 25, 2012

I am writing this letter to highlight a pivotal issue which the dwellers and local businessmen of Gilgit-Baltistan have been facing since January 2010 due to the forming of artificial Attabad Lake at Hunza Nagar.

The people living upstream remained cut off from the rest of the district for several months, but the local businessmen provided them relief by starting a ferry service. Patients, students and other affected people were transported free of cost. The 19-km-long Karakoram Highway, the sole overland connection between China and Pakistan, was submerged. Due to this catastrophe, the cross-border trade between the two countries has been badly affected. Local businesses have been ruined,

while the business community has become bankrupt and suppressed under huge loans.

<http://dawn.com/2012/06/25/government-yet-to-drain-attabad-lake/>

Shabbir Mir, For the release of 'innocents': Protesters block Karakoram Highway for six hours

The Express Tribune, June 24, 2012

GILGIT: Protesters blocked the Karakoram Highway (KKH) for six hours in Nagar valley to demand the release of individuals wrongly detained by the police. The six-hour blockade of the main highway on June 23 left scores of travellers, including local and foreign passengers, stranded at Rakaposhi Point, a tourists spot between Gilgit and Hunza.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/398249/for-the-release-of-innocents-protesters-block-karakoram-highway-for-six-hours/>

GB govt to promote media for development: Mehdi Shah

Business Recorder, June 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah has stated that his government was determined for promoting and strengthening media in the region for development. He stated this while talking to the office bearers of newly formed Gilgit Baltistan Journalists Association (GBJA) led by its Chairman renowned journalists Akbar Hussain which called on in Islamabad.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/63799.html>

AJK announces Rs 49.59 billion tax-free budget

Pakistan Tribune, June 21, 2012

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government on June 21 announced a total of Rs 49.59 billion revenue-oriented tax-free budget for the next fiscal year, with revenue expenditures estimated at Rs 40.05 billion and deficit of Rs 5.1 billion. The budget was announced by AJK Finance Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Ashraf in the AJK

Legislative Assembly, which met in Muzaffarabad. "An amount of Rs 9,547.036 million has been allocated for the development sector with Rs 40,050 million recurrent budget for the next fiscal year," he informed the House. The AJK assembly was told that the development budget was 15 percent more than that of the fiscal year 2011-12.

In his keynote address to lawmakers, the finance minister stated that the PPP government had presented a well-balanced and public-friendly budget for the first time in its five-year term, and almost all the sectors had been focused.

<http://paktribune.com/news/AJK-announces-Rs-4959-billion-tax-free-budget-250820.html>

Protest against detention of political activists

The Daily Times, June 17, 2012

KARACHI: A token hunger strike was initiated on June 16 at a camp outside the Karachi Press Club against detention of political activists from Gilgit-Baltistan for their alleged involvement in terrorism. The strike was observed for the release of Comrade Babajan, Amir Khan, Iftikhar Khan, Amir Hussain and Amir Ali.

The protesters claimed that the political activists were jailed in Gilgit for protesting against the killing of two Attaabad Lake affectees allegedly by Hunza Police on August 12, 2011.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C06%5C17%5Cstory_17-6-2012_pg12_6

Gilgit-Baltistan Journalists Association formed

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 12, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit-Baltistan Journalists Association (GBJA) has been formed to promote healthy journalism, protect rights of journalists of the region and its people and promote harmony among the communities. In this connection a meeting of the more than 110 media persons of Gilgit-baltistan working for various newspapers, news agencies, news channels was held at Gilgit Baltistan House in Islamabad on June 10, which unanimously elected Senior Journalist Akbar Hussain (PTV), as Chairman, Karim Madad (APP)

President and Rashid Arshad (Himalaya) as Vice Chairman.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=198261&Itemid=2

US envoy visits Muzaffarabad

The Express Tribune, June 14, 2012

MIRPUR: US Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter stated Washington takes keen interest in the development and prosperity of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Munter, who met with representatives of various NGOs and beneficiaries of US-sponsored projects during his visit to Muzaffarabad on June 13, added that Washington will continue supporting welfare projects in the state and help people and organisations interested in being a part of those. "USTATED will spend more than Rs450 million in AJK through these social welfare organisations," he observed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/393466/us-envoy-visits-muzaffarabad/>

Munter reaffirms US commitment to AJK

The Frontier Post, June 13, 2012

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador Cameron Munter and Dr. Marilyn Wyatt visited Muzaffarabad and Bagh today to highlight the United States' support for educational opportunities and local development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Ambassador Munter's visit, his first to the region, was an opportunity to renew ties with the government leadership of AJK and to meet with local residents who have benefited from US assistance.

"Today's visit is an important opportunity for me to renew the friendship of the people of the United States with the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir," Ambassador Munter stated. "As we demonstrated with our support to AJK following the devastating 2005 earthquake, and as we continue to show with our assistance today, the United States has an enduring partnership with this region."

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/166440/>

Protest demos: Power dept's staff seek raise in salaries

The Express Tribune, June 14, 2012

MIRPUR: The technical staff of the Mirpur Electricity Department staged a number of protest demonstrations on June 13 to press the government to increase their salaries. The employees boycotted their duties by locking their office rooms and took out processions from outside the electricity department's office complex. They marched on various avenues across the city, raising slogans against the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government and demanding that their service structure be upgraded. They also demanded that they be paid the same amount of salaries given to the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) technical staff.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/393242/protest-demos-power-depts-staff-seek-raise-in-salaries/>

More development

Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: Deputy Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Jameel Ahmed stated that up-coming budget of fiscal year 2012-13 would bring more development and prosperity in the region as many more projects would be started. He stated that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government was taking steps on priority basis to provide employment to people of GB and to raise their living standard. "Generous funds would be allocated for the development projects in up-coming GB budget 2012-13 which ultimately would bring advancement in the region", he further stated. He noted that jobs in various government sectors would also be created in order to meet unemployment in the region.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=160475>

Karakoram security force: Regularisation of services demanded

The Express Tribune, June 14, 2012

GILGIT: The employees of Karakoram Security Force (KSF), an organisation guarding the

Chinese engineers along the Karakoram Highway (KKH), have demanded regularisation of their services as per policy rules.

"We have been performing our duties for the last four years. The government should also listen to our demands," an employee of the KSF told media in Gilgit on June 13. He added that the job insecurity had discouraged more than 400 competent employees. Established in 2008, the KSF provides security to the Chinese engineers working on KKH in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B).

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/393217/karakoram-security-force-regularisation-of-services-demanded/>

Problems caused by Attabad Lake By Letter

The Express Tribune, June 13, 2012

ISLAMABAD: This refers to the letter titled "Problems caused by Attabad Lake" (June 11) by Muhammad Ali. As someone whose family has been affected by the Attabad landslide disaster, I was shocked to read about the claim made by the president of the Importers and Exporters Association of Gilgit-Baltistan-that the local businessmen have been providing a free ferry service for the area's residents.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/393121/problems-caused-by-attabad-lake-2/>

Shabbir Mir, Diamer-Bhasha Dam compensation: Affected people threaten to bulldoze dam's structures

The Express Tribune, June 14, 2012

GILGIT: Disgruntled by the non-payment of compensation, over a hundred villagers of Thore valley on June 13 threatened to bulldoze all structures of Diamer-Bhasha Dam.

Talking to the media at the Gilgit Press Club on June 13, Mohammad Bakhtiar, a local resident of Thore valley accused the administration of "cheating and depriving the villagers of their legitimate compensation". Bakhtiar, who led the villagers on a 150 kilometre trip to Gilgit to apprise media of their woes, warned that if complete compensation amount was not paid to

them, they will dismantle all structures of Diamer-Bhasha Dam built so far and will expel the labourers from the site.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/393243/diamer-bhasha-dam-compensation-affected-people-threaten-to-bulldoze-dams-structures/>

Petitioners' perdition: Cases pile up due to shortage of judges in AJK courts

The Express Tribune, June 13, 2012

MIRPUR: Litigants in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) are suffering due to the shortage of judges in the High Court and Shariat Court. In a letter to the President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, the AJK High Court Chief Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal has underscored the need to increase the number of judges in the High Court and Shariat Court. He reasoned that under section 43 of the AJK Interim Constitution 1974, the High Court should comprise a chief justice and four judges, while additional judges may be appointed depending upon the workload.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/392710/petitioners-perdition-cases-pile-up-due-to-shortage-of-judges-in-ajk-courts/>

AJK government to continue reconciliation policy: Prime Minister

Business Recorder, June 13, 2012

The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will continue its policy of reconciliation as it is in the best interest of the masses of the state. This was stated by the AJK Prime Minister Chaudary Abdul Majeed on the occasion of his meeting with the former President and Prime Minister of AJK Sardar Sikandar Hayyat Khan who called on him in Prime Minister House on June 11.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1199868/>

Shabbir Mir, Demanding rights: Visually-impaired garner support of G-B's top clerics

The Express Tribune, June 13, 2012

GILGIT: Disappointed over the indifferent attitude of the government towards their demands, a group of visually-impaired persons have garnered support

of top clerics of Gilgit-Batistan (G-B). "Since the political government has let us down, we have asked the clerics to press the government to meet our long-standing demands," stated Visually Impaired Persons Rehabilitation Association (VIPRA) President Irshad Kazmi, who led the delegation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/392707/demanding-rights-visually-impaired-garner-support-of-g-bs-top-clerics/>

Zafar Bhutta, State-sponsored: Indian team tour of dam sites proposed

The Express Tribune, June 12, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A top official of the Pakistan Commission for Indus Water has sought a state-sponsored visit of Indian officials to the Mangla and Tarbela dams. In a proposal sent to the Ministry of Water and Power, Deputy Indus Water Commissioner Shiraz Jamil Memon asked the government to pledge funds for arranging a visit by Indian officials to the two dams, of which one lies in the disputed area of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/392333/state-sponsored-indian-team-tour-of-dam-sites-proposed/>

Assumes office

The News, June 11, 2012

LAHORE: Sajjad Saleem Hotiana assumed the charge of Gilgit-Baltistan chief secretary on June 10. Soon after assuming the charge, he visited the site at Chilas where 10 passengers were gunned down on April 3, and was briefed on the progress of investigations by the officials concerned. Sajjad Saleem directed them to finalise the challan against those responsible for the deaths of 10 innocent passengers.

The chief secretary also visited the sites of Diamer and Basha dams and listened to the grievances of the effectees belonging to Thor Das Valley and directed the revenue administration to address all the grievances in accordance with the law within next 30 days.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-5-113671-Assumes-office>

Mangla Dam raising project: Warrant issued for arrest of WAPDA official

The Express Tribune, June 12, 2012

MIRPUR: A judge on June 11 issued arrest warrant for a Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) official for contempt of court. The judge directed Mirpur Police Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Tahir Mehmood Qureshi to produce Wapda chief engineer Mangla Dam in court before June 18. He was responding to petitions filed by locals of Kalayal Shehroo, Mirpur tehsil, demanding payment of compensation money for their land acquired under the Mangla Dam Raising Project (MDRP). The judge also issued notice to Collector Land Acquisition Mangla Dam Affairs for non-compliance of the apex court's orders to pay compensation to the land owners on time.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/392246/mangla-dam-raising-project-warrant-issued-for-arrest-of-wapda-official/>

More empowerment: Call for making G-B a province

The Express Tribune, June 12, 2012

GILGIT: Because of the Kashmir issue, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have suffered for over six decades. It is time that the issue be resolved and G-B be declared a constitutional part of Pakistan.

This was stated by the G-B Qaumi Movement President Abdul Waheed during a press conference at the Gilgit Press Club on June 11. Waheed argued that the international powers wanted to carve a new region comprising G-B, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and part of China to protect their economic interests.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/392267/more-empowerment-call-for-making-g-b-a-province/>

Govt working for up-lift of GB

Business Recorder, June 11 2012

HUNZA: Advisor to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Muhammad Mussa on June 11 stated that the government was working for the up-lift of the region and betterment of the masses. He stated that affected people of Atta Abad lake had been provided

compensation from GB government while some Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) were also providing assistance to affectees in this regard.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/politics-a-policy/61589-govt-working-for-up-lift-of-gb.html>

G-B for regularisation of supreme appellate court judges

The Express Tribune, June 11, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) law department is seeking to regularise the services of the Supreme Appellate Court judges. According to sources, the G-B chief secretary has prepared a summary in this regard, which he will share with the chief minister and the governor of G-B before submitting it to the Prime Minister Secretariat for approval by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/391708/g-b-for-regularisation-of-supreme-appellate-court-judges/>

Another British journalist deported from AJK for lack of valid travel documents

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 8, 2012

MIRPUR: Another British journalist Parry Cimon, who claimed himself to be the correspondent of a UK-based newspaper, "Evening Special," was deported from the territorial jurisdiction of Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir by the local law-enforcement agencies on June 7 for lack of holding valid travel documents, official sources stated.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=197945&Itemid=2

Government chalks out plan to promote trade, tourism in AJK

Business Recorder, June 9, 2012

The government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) on June 8 chalked out an integrated plan for promoting trade and tourism sectors in AJK. Sources noted that the plan has been started on the special directives of AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed.

In order to materialise the idea of making AJK a most attractive hub of prospective tourism activities

an international tourism conference is proposed to be organised in near future.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-a-economy/189/1198394/>

Aftab Maken, AJK govt asked to seek centre's help for damage control

The News, June 6, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A prominent Kashmiri civil society activist, privy to the developments regarding rehabilitation and reconstruction in the earthquake-affected areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has asked the AJK government not to hide facts regarding the shifting of funds meant for reconstruction and instead courageously press the Centre to make immediate efforts for damage control.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-112658-AJK-govt-asked-to-seek-centres-help-for-damage-control>

Uplift needed: Mirpuris demand basic facilities

The Express Tribune, June 6, 2012

MIRPUR: Visiting expatriates and local residents of Mirpur have demanded the government to provide them basic civic amenities. The locals have expressed concern over the lack of streetlights and hygienic drinking water facility in the city, which is arguably the most developed city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and have demanded that the government improve the dilapidated sewerage system.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/389260/uplift-needed-mirpuris-demand-basic-facilities/>

SC again orders to recall Asghar for probe of Hajj scam

June 5, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court, during the hearing of the Hajj corruption case on June 5 has ordered the investigating officer (IO) Hussain Asghar to rejoin the FIA before June 8, otherwise court would suspend the notification of his appointment.

The court further stated that the officers deployed in

the provinces were obliged to accept orders given by federal government officers.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/sc-again-orders-to-recall-asghar-for-probe-of-hajj-scam/>

View Point on US Embassy Delegation to Gilgit-Baltistan

Dardistan Times, June 4, 2012

The recent visit of American diplomats to Gilgit-Baltistan has raised eyebrows in the region. People from cross sections of society saw the mysterious visit of the diplomats, who arrived in the region without any official permission. Soon after reaching the city of Gilgit, the delegation met the finance minister of the region and inquired him about the economic position of the region. They also discussed women's participation in governance and public and private sector organizations during a meeting with a female member of the legislative assembly.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/view-point-us98-embassy-delegation-gilgit34-baltistan>

'Balanced footing': Opposition seeks more powers to run AJK affairs

The Express Tribune, June 4, 2012

MIRPUR: The people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) should be granted the same basic human rights enjoyed by the people of Pakistan. AJK Legislative Assembly Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Chaudry Tariq Farooq gave the proposal during a press conference at the Kashmir Press Club on June 1.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/388159/balanced-footing-opposition-seeks-more-powers-to-run-ajk-affairs/>

Victory of govt

Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: It was the biggest victory of the democratic government of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to present the fifth budget of its tenure, stated Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Pir Karam Ali Shah. He stated the government had tried to give maximum relief to the masses in the budget. He stated 20 per cent increase in salaries and pensions

of government employees and reduction in tax on daily-use items would help decreasing inflation. Shah further stated the increase in budget for Education and Health sectors would facilitate masses in these sectors. Allocation of Rs. 8 billion development budget for Gilgit- Baltistan would bring revolution in each and every sector of the region, the governor added. Meanwhile, it is reported from Multan that industrialists from south Punjab termed the national budget 2012-13 a realistic attempt to provide relief to people.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=158642>

Govt committed to uplift of GB residents: Rehman Malik

The News, June 4, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik on June 3 stated that the government was committed to the uplift of people of Gilgit-Baltistan by focusing tourism and socio economic development. He was talking to Senior Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Muhammad Jaffar, who called on him along with Minister for Local Government and Rural Development GB Engineer Ismail, Parliamentary Secretary Wazir Hasan and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Gilgit-Baltistan Provincial General Secretary Ghulam Muhammad.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-15094-Govt-committed-to-uplift-of-GB-residents-Rehman-Malik>

Huma Yusuf, Need for local responses

Dawn, June 4, 2012

Last week, the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly issued a 'Code of Conduct' aimed at stemming sectarian violence in the region. The first of its kind, the law is a good example of what the state response to soaring sectarian violence should have been all along. There are indeed considerable difficulties in enforcing such a code and ensuring that violators are prosecuted. But the symbolic weight of the legislation is significant in a country where militants belonging to sectarian outfits roam free, convene rallies and prop up politicians of mainstream political parties.

Moreover, the fact that the code was enacted at a

regional level is important given the various incarnations of sectarian tensions across Pakistan, it is essential that the issue be addressed at a local level.

<http://dawn.com/2012/06/04/need-for-local-responses/>

Fearing sectarian violence: Decapitated body found in Sharote

The Express Tribune, June 4, 2012

GILGIT: Recovery of a man's decapitated body near Gilgit on June 3 remounting tensions of sectarian violence in the region. Shops remained closed in Gilgit fearing sectarian bouts similar to those in April when over two dozen people were killed.

According to Gilgit Assistant Commissioner Usman Ahmed and the police, the body was found in Sharote and the victim is believed to be a local of Goharabad, a small town of Chilas where a charged mob killed 10 commuters in response to a hand grenade attack on a rally in Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/388161/fearing-sectarian-violence-decapitated-body-found-in-sharote/>

Shabbir Mir, Peace through education: 'Three Cups of Tea' author on G-B swing

The Express Tribune, June 4, 2012

GILGIT: Embattled author and co-founder of the nonprofit Central Asian Institute (CAI) Greg Mortenson visited Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan on June 3 his first trip since a controversy surrounding his book, 'Three Cups of Tea', broke last year. The best-selling memoir recounted how Mortenson was inspired by a group of local children to build a chain of schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Back home, a lawsuit was filed against Mortenson last year after a US TV show '60 Minutes' and investigative reporter Jon Krakauer challenged his work, saying he had fabricated and exaggerated parts of his books to boost sales. The lawsuit was, however, dismissed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/388421/peace-through-education-three-cups-of-tea-author-on-g-b-swing/>

Budget: People-friendly for some, redundant for others

The Express Tribune, June 3, 2012

MIRPUR: Senior civil servants of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) gave mixed reactions over the national budget announced on June 1. Where some describe it as people-friendly, others stated it is redundant for the poor who are “suffering because of the poor policies of their rulers”. Talking to media at the Kashmir Press Club, AJK Legislative Assembly Deputy Leader of Opposition Chaudhry Tariq Farooq expressed concern over the new budget and alleged that it is politically-motivated. “Half of the budget is deficit,” he lamented. He warned that as the government is focused on printing currency notes amounting to billions instead of giving due attention to the problems at hand, the country will suffer higher inflation in the coming days.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/387956/budget-people-friendly-for-some-redundant-for-others/>

Gilgit-Baltistan representatives seek US support

Pakistan Today, June 2, 2012

After Balochistan, resentment is brewing up in Gilgit-Baltistan with the local representatives there calling on the US to support the right of self-determination of the people of the disputed region, saying that they are being oppressed by the Pakistan government. A three-member delegation of US embassy in Islamabad, including Lisa Buzenos, Political/Economic Officer and Kimberly Phelan, Political Officer, met chairperson of Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Manzoor Hussain Parwana in Gilgit on May 31, reports stated.

Parwana called denial of the right of self-determination and degradation of local national and cultural identity as two main issues for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, saying that with abundance of natural resources and enviable geo-strategic location the region fulfils the criteria to sustain as an independent country.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/06/02/news/national/gilgit-baltistan-representatives-seek-us-support/>

Shabbir Mir, Reaction: Despite uplift projects, G-B locals perturbed over budget

The Express Tribune, June 3, 2012

GILGIT: Despite many uplift projects earmarked for Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) in the new budget, senior officials of the G-B government, as well as politicians, traders and even students, have expressed displeasure of what it entails, and what it does not. “We were expecting drastic cuts in prices of gas, petrol, diesel and basic food commodities but what turned up is disappointing,” stated G-B Chamber of Commerce President Javed Hussain. “The government had promised a people-friendly budget, but it is anything but,” stated Hussain, adding that the prices of basic food items and fuel continue to be out of reach of the poor.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/387957/reaction-despite-uplift-projects-g-b-locals-perturbed-over-budget/>

Asad Kharal, Agencies concerned over trips by diplomats

The Express Tribune, June 3, 2012

LAHORE: Following reports of an unauthorised trip by US embassy officials to Gilgit-Baltistan, an intelligence agency's report has expressed serious concern regarding the “secret movement” of foreign missions/diplomats in the country, including covert meetings with officials and private persons without informing either the foreign office or the interior ministry. The report, cited in an interior ministry circular has advised foreign missions to avoid this practice to prevent any “untoward incident.”

The report states that a number of foreigners have been found visiting prohibited areas without obtaining a No-Objection Certificate (NOC). It also directs law enforcement agencies to not provide direct security to any foreign missions/diplomats until the foreign office formally gives them details of their presence and programme schedule.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/388040/agencies-concerned-over-trips-by-diplomats/>

Strategy evolved for solving problems of refugees: AJK Prime Minister

Business Recorder, June 2, 2012

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudry Abdul Majid has stated that a strategy has been evolved to resolve the problems confronted the refugees settled in various parts of Pakistan. Under the plan a shelter will be provided to every refugee settled across Pakistan and sufficient budget had been allocated for the purpose he revealed. Addressing a news conference at Sialkot Press Club (SPC) on June 1, the AJK Prime Minister strongly refuted that Pakistan was showing flexibility on Kashmir issue adding that Kashmir issue is integral part of foreign policy of Pakistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1195972/>

Pakistan's stability vital for Kashmir cause: AJK PM

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 1, 2012

SIALKOT, Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chaudry Abdul Majeed urged all political parties in Pakistan to unite and shun differences for political and economical stability of Pakistan which was vital for strengthening the Kashmir cause globally. Addressing a crowded press conference at the Sialkot Press Club on June 1, he stated Pakistan's political and economical stability could boost the Kashmir cause in the international community, adding that the PPP had advocated the Kashmir cause effectively in the world.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=196765&Itemid=2

Ansar Abbasi, Gilgit-Baltistan, the next slaughter house for merit

The News, June 1, 2012

ISLAMABAD: In a unique case of murder of merit, government non-papers, which are never made

part of the official record, show why the most eligible candidates are deprived of their right to get official jobs in the federal government under Gilani's misrule. Official documents and some of these government non-papers available show how callously the federal government had annulled the process of appointments in an official department merely because those who had passed the written test and got the top positions were not the blue-eyed boys of political masters.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-15033-Gilgit-Baltistan-the-next-slaughter-house-for-merit>

Governor GB appreciates BISP role

Pakistan Observer

ISAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has given special compensation in its poverty score benchmark for the families with one or more disabled persons so that they could be supported through the programme throughout the country including Gilgit Baltistan. Also, more deserving families who fall just above the criteria have been given the right to appeal through BISP's Grievance Redressal System so that more and more deserving families could be included in the programme. This was stated by Farzana Raja, Federal Minister and Chairperson BISP while talking to Governor Gilgit Baltistan Pir Syed Karam Ali Shah who visited BISP Secretariat.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=158187>

Economic Developments

Shahbaz Rana, Resource crunch may stall dam progress:ADB

The Express Tribune, June 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) stated that Pakistan's limited financial resources may affect progress on Diamer-Bhasha Dam even if the international lending agencies extend the assistance for completion of the multi-billion-dollar project. The issue of counterpart rupee funding against the external loans was raised by Klaus Gerhaeuser, the director general for Central and West Asia department of the ADB during a meeting with finance minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh on June 28, stated the sources.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/400885/resource-crunch-may-stall-dam-progress-adb/>

Rs 62bn compensation paid to Mangla Dam affectees

Business Recorder, June 24, 2012

MIRPUR: An amount of Rs62 billion has been distributed among almost all the Mangla Dam affectees as compensation, official sources stated. "The affected families are given the compensation amount in accordance with the market rates," the sources stated. They stated the process was completed according to the agreement reached between the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and the Azad and Jammu Kashmir (AJK) government.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/industries-a-sectors/63941-rs62bn-compensation-paid-to-mangla-dam-affectees-.html>

Tahir Hasan Khan, Azad Kashmir economy needs more attention

The News, June 22, 2012

KARACHI: The Azad Kashmir agricultural

sector has the potential to produce tea of global quality if the government initiated an investment-friendly policy to attract foreign businessmen into farming. Former President FPCCI, Chaudhry Saeed, also a politician of Azad Kashmir, revealed on June 21 at the Karachi Press Club.

He added that Kashmir could also grow flowers of an international standard, but regretted that Pakistan had no significant share in the global trade of flowers, which stood at \$1.5 billion.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-115857-Azad-Kashmir-economy-needs-more-attention>

Chinese investors: AJK premier vows to create conducive environment

The Express Tribune, June 21, 2012

MIRPUR: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on June 20 called on all Chinese builders to invest in the state and assured that they will be facilitated in every way possible. AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated this during a meeting with a Chinese delegation he had called on at the Kashmir House. The delegation included a renowned Chinese company's vice president, Gond Yan Ki, and chief representative Wang Hong.

"We want to make the state self-dependant and also be in a position to contribute in the development and progress of Pakistan," stated Majeed. He stated that AJK offers vast opportunities for investors, especially in hydro-power and tourism sectors. He invited Chinese firms to harness the 300 megawatts of electricity generation potential in Mirpur division alone.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/396856/chinese-investors-ajk-premier-vows-to-create-conducive-environment/>

Sumit Bhargav, Skirmishes halt cross-LoC trade, travel

June 20, 2012

RAJOURI: Continuing Indo-Pak skirmishes along the Line of Control have led to the suspension of travel and trade taking place between the divided Jammu and Kashmir across the border. While the operation of the bus service from Chakan-da-Bagh was stopped on June 19, the cross-LoC trade remained suspended for the second consecutive week with fresh incidents of border firing reported on June 19. Official sources stated that nearly 24 trucks were stationed at the Trade Facilitation Center at Chakan-da-Bagh but the border gates remained closed. Sharing the concern of the traders, an official at the center stated that there was no immediate peace in sight and it will surely lead to loss to the traders.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/20/skirmishes-halt-cross-loc-trade-travel-62.asp>

Trader's murder: Gilgit grinds to a halt as traders protest killing

The Express Tribune, June 15, 2012

GILGIT: Infuriated over the killing of a vegetable supplier, the traders' union observed a shutter-down strike here on June 14. They demanded that the business community be provided protection and the killers be arrested. Most of the city presented a deserted look, while police increased the number of patrols on the roads leading in and out of the city.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/393926/traders-murder-gilgit-grinds-to-a-halt-as-traders-protest-killing/>

Hunza lake blocking Pak-China trade

Dawn, June 11, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (GBCCI) criticised the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) for not being able to release water from the spillway of the artificially formed Hunza lake. They threatened to block the Karakoram Highway and close down government offices in the Sust town if the government didn't ensure early release of

water. President of the GBCCI Javed Hussain, while addressing a press conference in Gilgit on June 10, stated the FWO had badly failed to do its job. He claimed that the GBCCI was capable of clearing the spillway if it was asked for the job.

<http://dawn.com/2012/06/11/hunza-lake-blocking-pak-china-trade/hunzalake2-670/>

Line of control: Goods worth Rs13.9m traded

The Express Tribune, June 9, 2012

MIRPUR: Trade between Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Jammu & Kashmir is rising gradually as on June 8 goods worth over Rs13.9 million were traded at the Line of Control (LOC), officials state. As many as 16 trucks came from the trade facilitation centre of Poonch to Rawalakot in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, bringing bananas, cumin, herbs and red chilli worth Rs5.14 million. From AJK, six trucks carrying potatoes, onions, dry dates and almonds worth Rs8.80 million went to the other side of LOC. Officials from both sides monitor transportation of goods every day.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/390805/line-of-control-goods-worth-rs13-9m-traded/>

Saadia Qamar, Gemstone business: Shades of grey

The Express Tribune, June 9, 2012

KARACHI: Raja Riaz Ahmed has been a part of the once lucrative gems business for the past six years. Having taken extensive courses in cutting and polishing precious and semi-precious stones from Gilgit-Baltistan, Ahmed now owns his own kiosk of valuable jewels in G-B. He employs 20 people and has taught the art of cutting and polishing gems to about 200 students. Ahmed is literally sitting on a gem mine but his life is devoid of sparkle. The businessman, who is currently displaying precious and semi-precious stones at the first Pakistan International Gems and Jewellery Exhibition at the Pearl Continental, Karachi, says his business never got the support it deserves.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/391256/gemstone-business-shades-of-grey/>

International Developments

Protest in London against AJK power cut

The News, June 30, 2012

LONDON: About 150 activists from the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP) gathered outside the Pakistan High Commission to protest against the long hours of loadshedding in Azad Kashmir and the crackdown by the AJK government on the protesters.

Organised by the UKPNP, the protesters alleged that in some parts of Azad Kashmir there was no electricity for more than 24 hours and the local administration had failed to do anything about this situation. They alleged that hundreds of traders and ordinary citizens have been put behind the bar across Azad Kashmir for raising their voice against the power shortage.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-117638-Protest-in-London-against-AJK-power-cut>

World Bank agrees to provide funds for 4,320MW Dasu project

The News, June 22, 2012

LAHORE: The World Bank has agreed to provide financial assistance for 4,320MW Dasu hydropower project, following the signing of an agreement with the government of Pakistan to provide \$840 million for 1,410MW Tarbela 4th extension project, a statement noted on June 21. It has also been agreed that the project will be constructed in phases after the initiation and finalisation plan of the 4,500MW Diamer-Bhasha dam project, it stated.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-115841-World-Bank-agrees-to-provide-funds-for-4320MW-Dasu-project>

China to finance 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum project

Pakistan Today, June 20, 2012

LAHORE: CDWP approves revised PC-I of Rs

274.88 billion for the project Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Shakil Durrani on June 19 stated that the China EXIM Bank would provide US \$448 million to help complete the strategically important 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP).

He presided over a meeting to review progress on the project being constructed on Neelum river in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), where he also informed that the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) had also approved revised PC-I of the project amounting to Rs 274.882 billion. The meeting was attended by members of the Authority, NJHP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other officials concerned.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/06/20/city/lahore/china-to-finance-969-mw-neelum-jhelum-project/>

Japan lauds PAF for airlifting Japanese tourists from Gilgit

The News, June 6, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Hiroshi Oe June 5 presented an 'Award of Excellence' to the 17-member Pakistan Air Force (PAF) that successfully airlifted 77 Japanese tourists from Gilgit to Chaklala Air Base on April 8, 2012. Responding to a request from the Japanese Embassy, the PAF within no time dispatched a military aircraft to airlift 77 Japanese tourists including some other foreigners from a northern region where sectarian violence had left them stranded in April this year.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-112797-Japan-lauds-PAF-for-airlifting-Japanese-tourists-from-Gilgit>

Other Developments

Shabbir Mir, Endangered habitats: Biodiversity of Karakoram National Park in peril,

The Express Tribune, June 27, 2012

GILGIT: Unchecked deforestation and hunting at the Central Karakoram National Park has threatened the biodiversity of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), experts stated on June 26. The park which is spread over 10,000 square kilometres in five districts of G-B is a natural habitat for over 10 species of wild animals and 12 rare species of birds. Some of the endangered species include marmot, snow leopard, markhor, ibex, blue sheep, brown bear, musk deer, Tibetan wild ass, and wolf. However, due to the absence of official records, the status of these species is not known.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/399588/endangered-habitats-biodiversity-of-karakoram-national-park-in-peril/>

Fish farming: Over 2.6m fry released in Mangla reservoir

The Express Tribune, June 26, 2012

MIRPUR: To raise fish production of Mangla Dam reservoir, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Anglers Association on June 25 released over 2.6 million fry into all its major pockets. AJK Anglers Association President Ramzan Dutt, stated the initiative will raise the annual fish production of the reservoir to a maximum of 5,000 metric tons and help boost the local economy.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/399130/fish-farming-over-2-6m-fry-released-in-mangla-reservoir/>

Safer communication: Building the capacities of AJK journalists

The Express Tribune, June 24, 2012

MIRPUR: To raise awareness among journalists about safety of their computerized data, a training workshop was held at a local hotel in Mirpur on June 24. The two-day workshop, titled “Safety

Clinic for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Journalists”, was aimed at raising awareness among both the freelance and working journalists about ways to protect their data, especially when being communicated over the internet. At least 28 journalists affiliated with the national print and electronic media including the AJK State Press participated in the workshop, which was organised by Intermedia, a non-governmental organisation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/398251/safer-communication-building-the-capacities-of-ajk-journalists/>

Seminar: In rural areas, women themselves responsible for their exploitation

The Express Tribune, June 25, 2012

GILGIT: Women themselves are responsible for their suppression in the rural society of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). This was discussed at a seminar titled “Promoting tolerance and respect for women in society” held in Gilgit on June 24. The participants discussed the issues being faced by women in far-flung areas and shared their experiences. They also enacted skits to represent how women often deprive other women by giving preference to men in the society.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/398770/seminar-in-rural-areas-women-themselves-responsible-for-their-exploitation/>

Strike: In AJK, power cuts and water shortage brings life to standstill

The Express Tribune, June 23, 2012

MIRPUR: The unscheduled power of over 18 hours has brought residents to wits' end in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Agitated over the situation, a mob set ablaze the electricity department office in Barnala, a town of Bhimber district. Also, a shutter-down strike was observed in different parts of Rawalakot over the prolonged power outages.

People from diverse segments of the society took

part in the protest, including businessmen and lawyers.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/397804/strike-in-ajk-power-cuts-and-water-shortage-brings-life-to-standstill/>

Facsimile edition of Gilgit manuscripts

June 20, 2012

SRINAGAR: The National Archives of India on the request of Minister for Tourism and Culture, Nawang Rigzin Jora has forwarded facsimile version of manuscripts of Gilgit to the State Government for its preservation besides to showcase the rich cultural heritage of Gilgit from pre-historic to modern times under one roof. Facsimile version of these Gilgit manuscripts entitled "Lotus Sutra manuscript series 12: Gilgit Lotus Sutra manuscripts from the National Archives of India, facsimile edition has been printed recently in collaboration with the Institute of Oriental Philosophy and Soka Gakkai, Japan.

<http://www.groundreport.com/Business/Facsimile-edition-of-Gilgit-manuscripts/2946787>

Shabbir Mir, Risky consumption: With contaminated water in Gilgit, disease can't be far behind

The Express Tribune, June 20, 2012

GILGIT: Though abundant in water resources, the melting snow peaks may signal alarm for residents of Gilgit city. Locals have to make do with water that has alarmingly high levels of turbidity in the absence of a filtration system. Approximately 70,000 people are forced to use the contaminated water in the region. "I just don't have words to describe the muddy and stinky water we are getting," stated Hammad Wali, a resident of Kashort area. He added that the water was unusable for both drinking and washing.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/396245/risky-consumption-with-contaminated-water-in-gilgit-disease-cant-be-far-behind/>

USTATED rebuilds quake-hit schools Obaid Abbasi

The Express Tribune, June 18, 2012

BAGH: Days of gloom are over for Muhammad Adnan as he can finally go back to his school that was destroyed in the high-intensity 2005

earthquake. "This is the happiest day of my life," stated the ninth grader. He was going to attend the Government Boys High School Arja in Bagh district, which was recently reconstructed by the USTATED. "I faced many problems because I could not continue my studies. However, a few months later USTATED established a makeshift school where I was able to continue my education" he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/395144/ustated-rebuilds-quake-hit-schools/>

Restricted development: In Mirpur village, schoolgirls without teachers

The Express Tribune, June 10, 2012

MIRPUR: Over the past few years, none of the students of a government girls' high school in Palahel Rajgan village, Kotli District, have been able to pass their matric exams. Are the girls not studying hard enough or is there a problem with the schooling? Human rights activist Rashed Akram blames the latter. "Since its 30 years of existence, the school has lacked teaching staff and basic facilities," stated Akram. He stated that for the past few years the school has had no teachers for biology and mathematics, which is why the girls have been repeatedly failing their exams.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/391437/restricted-development-in-mirpur-village-schoolgirls-without-teachers/>

World Environment Day: Making eco-friendly choices to ensure a better tomorrow

The Express Tribune, June 6, 2012

ATTOCK / MIRPUR / GILGIT: Environmentalists on June 25 called for collective efforts to protect the fragile ecosystem of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) and stressed to create awareness among communities for better handling of its resources. Environment experts stated this during seminars organised in G-B to observe World Environment Day on June 5. Lectures, speeches, drawing competitions and walks were also held in schools to observe the day, raising awareness about the ecosystem of the mountainous region, and ways to conserve energy and to protect the environment.

<http://tribune.com.pk/author/2713/our-correspondents/>

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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