

POK

News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The festival of Eid in Gilgit Baltistan was marred by grief and shock over the killings of 19 innocent people in Mansehra on August 16. These people travelling in buses were on their way to Gilgit from Rawalpindi. According to reports, the victims were Shias and they were forced to disembark from the buses before being shot dead. They were identified as belonging to a particular sect from their identity cards before the assailants dressed in military fatigue killed them mercilessly. The attack appears pre planned as it occurred during the holy month of Ramzan when people travel back to their hometowns for celebrating the festival. The government of Pakistan ordered probe and few arrests had been made, as reports claim. However, the real culprits are far from being apprehended and the government has once again resorted to the Jirgas for helping maintain peace and order in the region. It raises serious questions on the administration's intention to secure the lives of the innocent people who have been targeted incessantly due to their religious affiliation.

The incident is a grim reminder of the attacks on Shias in February and April earlier this year. The modus operandi was similar to the previous attacks. The sequential unfolding of the events is absolutely similar to what is in the earlier incidents when the government and the administrative machinery was caught napping. The claims of certain arrests being made, involving Jirgas in help restoring order, statements regarding launching operations in the region to arrests trouble makers and ultimately making no headway: all this bears striking resemblance to the earlier incidents of target killings in Gilgit Baltistan.

The controversial Diamer Bhasha dam project is mired in huge financial difficulties due to unwillingness of the donor agencies to fund a project which is located in a disputed region. Pakistan is exploring other options to finance the ambitious project and it seems to have pinned its hope entirely on China. Notably, China is already funding a huge number of infrastructural and hydro power projects in the PoK region.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Nisar Ahmad Khan, 19 pulled out of buses, shot dead in sectarian attack

Dawn, August 17, 2012

MANSEHRA: Terrorists ambushed four buses, pulled out the passengers and shot at least 19 of them dead in the Babusar Top area of Mansehra district on August 16. Before killing the passengers, the assailants had checked their identity cards and shot them because they were Shia. "More than 50 terrorists wearing commando uniform intercepted a convoy going from Rawalpindi to Gilgit-Baltistan before 7am, hauled off passengers from four vans, identified them through their national identity cards and shot 19 of them dead," District Coordination Officer Dr Amber Ali Khan stated. He noted several CNICs had been found at the place in the mountain range where the attack had taken place.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/17/19-pulled-out-of-buses-shot-dead-in-sectarian-attack/>

2 killed in reaction to Shia killings in Gilgit: Sources

The Express Tribune, August 18, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Two truck drivers were killed in Nagar's Chalt valley of Gilgit-Baltistan in reaction to the massacre of 19 Shia passengers. One of the victims was identified as Muhammad Ishaque from Mohmand Agency. A sepoy of the Rangers was also shot and injured in Gilgit. In a related development, Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf called G-B Chief Minister Mehdi Shah and expressed grief over the incident in Naran.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/423795/2-killed-1-injured-in-gilgit/>

G-B massacre: When will Pakistan really win independence?

The Express Tribune, August 17, 2012

Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) is a natural splendour which

Pakistan boasts as a tourist attraction for foreigners and expats. This mountainous terrain is adorned with snow capped peaks, lush valleys and rivers that could revitalise your very soul. This place was heaven on earth; this place exists no more.

G-B, which once stood as the most appealing attraction for tourists now stands amongst one of the most neglected regions of the world. Eaten away by sectarianism, extremism and militancy, our lush valleys of the North are embedded with fear and vulnerability. The presence of militant factions and clashes between rival sects has become the causal route for disruption and disarray. Militant intrusion has led to civil war and carnage amongst the once peaceful people of G-B and continues to plague the people even today.

<http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/13490/g-b-massacre-when-will-pakistan-really-win-independence/>

Joint Investigation Team set up on Lalosar Carnage

Dardistan Times, August 17, 2012

GILGIT: A joint investigation team has been setup to probe into the heinous act of terrorism in Lalosar region of Mansehra District of Pakistan where 19 people were killed. SSP Investigations, Ilyas Khan will be leading the investigation team.

As per details, the team will dissect records of prisoners in jail who have been involved in sectarian killings. Reports claimed that 6 prisoners from Gilgit jail who were involved in attacks on Shia community have been shifted to unknown locations for extensive investigation. The Investigation Team will probe prisoners in the jails of Gilgit-Baltistan, Peshwar and Mansehra in order to detect any possible links with the attack.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/joint9-investigation-team-set234lalosar-carnage>

Civil society condemns target killing of 22 people

The News, August 18, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Civil society activists gathered in front of National Press Club to condemn the target killing of 22 innocent people because of their religious faith when they were on their way to Gilgit-Baltistan. The protestors chanted slogans against the target killing on the basis of religion and sect and demanded the government to provide protection to Shia community. They urged the government to immediately arrest the perpetrators or otherwise resign. They stated that hundreds of people belonging to Gilgit-Baltistan are forced to spend Eid in Islamabad as they do not feel secure to travel on the only road leading to their native areas.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-127079-Civil-society-condemns-target-killing-of-22-people>

Grief, Panic, Protests- Gilgit Baltistan begs for attention

Dardistan Times, August 17, 2012

Complete shutter down strike observed in parts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Protest rallies were held across Gilgit Baltistan against the heinous Loluser carnage. Ten people including two DSPs, Ghulam Nabi and Iftikhar, were injured when a group of unknown persons attacked the rally in Khaplu. The attackers threw stones on the participants and ran away. Eye witnesses stated that the rally was on its way peacefully when suddenly a group appeared and started pelting stones on the throng, causing panic among the protesters. Police immediately fired shells of tear gas to control the situation and as result of police action attackers ran away from the scene.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/grief-panic-protests%E2%80%94gilgit-baltistan-begs-attention>

Parts of Gilgit-Baltistan shut down to protest Shia killings

The Express Tribune, August 17, 2012

SKARDU: A second day of complete shutter-down was observed in certain areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, with demonstrations and rallies being held in different areas in protest of the killing of 25 people

by terrorists. Following protests and a call by Shia clerics of Anjuman-e-Imamia Baltistan against the delay in the arrest of the perpetrators, the local government also announced three days of mourning, with educational institutions and offices being closed for the period.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/423357/parts-of-gilgit-baltistan-shut-down-to-protest-shia-killings/>

In aid of Gilgit-Baltistan Khurram Husain

The Express Tribune, July 30, 2012

The brutal sectarian murder that took place near Babuser Pass may not sound like much of an economic story to most people, but it is of such universal importance that it would be naïve to think that economic matters are divorced from the steady descent of our country into a boiling cauldron of primitive hatreds. However, the human tragedy that the killings represent is the first order of priority to highlight. There are only two overland linkages that the erstwhile Northern Areas have with the rest of Pakistan, and both of them have seen brutal sectarian murders.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/23/in-aid-of-gilgit-baltistan/>

COAS visits forward locations in Gilgit Baltistan to celebrate Eid with troops

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, visited forward locations in Gilgit-Baltistan on August 22 to celebrate Eid with troops. According to an ISPR press release, COAS visited Gayari to meet troops busy in the recovery operation. The operation started as a relief and rescue effort, immediately after the disastrous avalanche that caused Shahadat of 140 soldiers and civilians. It has continued without any let off for the last four and a half months despite severe terrain and climatic conditions. COAS lauded the perseverance and motivation of troops involved in the rescue effort which has resulted in the recovery of 79 bodies to date.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=205675&Itemid=1

Shabbir Mir, 'Undeclared curfew' imposed in Gilgit

The Express Tribune, August 22, 2012

GILGIT: All entry and exit routes were sealed and markets closed on August 22 after three people were killed and two others were injured a day earlier in a fresh wave of sectarian violence that erupted in reaction to the Naran bus attack. "The step has been taken to overcome target killings," Ali Sher, a senior police official noted. "This is understandably a reaction to the Naran bus killings," he stated of the violence that left three people dead and two others seriously wounded in different incidents of target killings in Gilgit on August 21. The recent incidents came four days after 19 passengers, mostly Shias, were shot dead by terrorists at point blank range in the Mansehra district.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/424734/undeclared-curfew-imposed-in-gilgit-town/>

Hussain Abbas, Emergency declared in Gilgit

Pakistan Today, August 22, 2012

LAHORE: Police and law enforcement agencies have blocked entry and exit routes to Gilgit amid tense law and order situation following Shiite killings in Babuser, a resident noted.

The local administration has declared emergency and gatherings of more than three people are banned in the area. Three people including Frontier Corps official were killed August 21 evening in an incident of firing near Sakwar area of Gilgit. Rangers, local police and army have been deployed and are continuously patrolling the city to deal with any unfortunate incident. It is pertinent to mention that the Shiite killings on Rawalpindi-Gilgit route has sparked clashes three times claiming hundreds of lives in Gilgit.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/08/22/news/national/emergency-declared-in-gilgit/>

Shabir Choudhry, Are Muslims safe in Pakistan and Gilgit Baltistan?

August 21, 2012

Despite what is happening to Muslims in Pakistan,

many people still regard Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a 'Fort of Islam'. When this 'Fort of Islam' was established in 1947 after division of the British India on religious lines, it resulted in death of around one million of innocent people and many millions were uprooted, as there was no planned transfer of people from one country to another. The 'fort of Islam' Pakistan was supposed to provide protection, self respect, economic prosperity and dignity to its citizens.

http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6739:are-muslims-safe-in-pakistan-and-gilgit-baltistan&catid=48:dr-shabir-choudhry&Itemid=79

Naran massacre: In Gilgit, fear mars Eid preparations

The Express Tribune, August 20, 2012

GILGIT: Residents of Gilgit are gripped in fear and forced to remain indoors following the carnage of 19 Shia passengers in Naran valley of Mansehra district. The ruthless killing overshadowed Eid preparation in the town that is still in a state of shock. Roads and markets in Gilgit were deserted in fear of violence since August 17, a day after the passengers were hauled off from four buses heading from Rawalpindi to Gilgit by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists and shot dead. The incident, which is the third in the last six months, is stated to have broken the fragile peace in the region.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/424343/naran-massacre-in-gilgit-fear-mars-eid-preparations/>

Jon Boone, Post-massacre, Pakistan army flights help Shia exodus

Hindustan Times, August 19, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A series of sectarian massacres on one of Pakistan's most important roads has forced the government to lay on military flights for Shias travelling to and from the country's capital. The decision to allocate C-130 Hercules transport planes for the use of civilians travelling between Islamabad and the north-eastern provincial capital of Gilgit follows the killing on August 16 of 20 Shias.

In the third such incident on the road in six months,

the victims were pulled off a bus some 100 miles north of Islamabad by armed men, lined up and shot.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Pakistan/Post-massacre-Pakistan-army-flights-help-Shia-exodus/Article1-916372.aspx>

'Govt committed to early completion of Bhasha dam'

Dawn, August 20, 2012

LAHORE: The PPP government is committed to early completion of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, which can generate 4,500MW of cheap hydel electricity and provide over six million acre feet of water for agriculture. In a statement issued here, central leader of the PPP Munir Ahmad Khan stated that dam would be completed with or without foreign funding. Precisely for this reason, the PPP had the project approved from the ECNEC in 2009.

It has already started earmarking money for it, and started acquiring land for the project. The PC-I for the by-pass road, which is prerequisite for the dam construction, has already been approved at a cost of Rs3.8 billion. On the recommendation of the lenders, the PPP government got the project approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI) and also from the Central Development Work party (CDWP). On top of it all, the prime minister performed ground breaking of the project on October 18, 2011, Khan stated.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/20/govt-committed-to-early-completion-of-bhasha-dam/>

Aziz Ali Dad, Death wish...Untimely meditations

The News, August 18, 2012

As I write this column it is being reported in the media that 25 passengers were hauled up from buses near the fringes of Babusar Pass and brutally murdered after their identification. From all the signs it appears to be killing on sectarian grounds. The scourge of sectarianism in the multi-religious society of Gilgit-Baltistan is eroding the social and moral fabric of society. Without the moral bedrock, society loses its sense of direction and plunges into abyss of nihilism. The yawning abyss between communities and the fire of sectarian violence is devouring all the communities in the area, but they

are under the illusion that the opponents are consumed by fire that is divinely lit.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-127156-Death-wishUntimely-meditations>

Pak alerts foreign diplomats on Eid violence

The Indian Express, August 19, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Fearing terror attacks, Pakistan imposed travel ban on foreign diplomats while Interior Minister Rehman Malik has called for strict vigil at diplomatic missions during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays to avert any possible incident of terrorism, including suicide attacks. The federal government imposed the ban on travel by foreign diplomats within the country without seeking prior permission. Diplomats will have to seek permission from the Foreign Ministry before any travel, sources in the Interior Ministry noted. Following advice from the Interior Ministry, diplomats in Islamabad were asked not to visit Quetta and Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/pak-alerts-foreign-diplomats-on-eid-violence/990376/>

Altaf demands end to killings over religious affiliations

The News, August 27, 2012

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) chief Altaf Hussain stated that it is his foremost effort to stop the killing of innocent people based on religious beliefs and persuasion. In a statement released on August 25, he stated that he was raising his voice for ending hatred and prejudices, and he would continue to do so without any fear of repercussions. Hussain stated that he was against the killing of innocent people due to any reason. "The blood of innocent people belonging to a particular community must not be spilled." The MQM founder told Agha Rahat that he shared the grief of the innocent people slaughtered in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-128391-Altaf-demands-end-to-killings-over-religious-affiliations>

Gilgit shootings: Four cops suspended, 12 suspects rounded up

The Express Tribune, August 27, 2012

GILGIT: Four policemen, in whose presence a cop

was killed and another was shot injured a day earlier, were suspended by the local government on August 26. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Ali Sher stated an inquiry has been initiated against the four policemen for negligence.

The incident occurred near Rax Chowk on August 25, when two motorcycle riders were stopped by the policemen for violating a recently imposed ban on travelling on motorbikes. The two men opened fire on the policemen, killing Constable Raja Shah Jamaluddin and injuring another, and managed to escape.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/426661/gilgit-shootings-four-cops-suspended-12-suspects-rounded-up/>

Hand grenade explosion in Gilgit

The News, August 27, 2012

GILGIT: Unidentified miscreants hurled a hand grenade at a house followed by aerial firing in Majhni area of Gilgit, causing no harm to anyone, police stated. According to the police, the incident took place on late August 26 when unidentified miscreants hurled a hand grenade, in Ratti Mohalla area of Majhni Mohalla and managed to escape. It may be recalled here that a hand grenade blast also took place in Hassan Jan area of Gilgit on August 25.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-64987-Hand-grenade-explosion-in-Gilgit>

Sectarian unrest: Kohistan jirga offers help to restore peace in Gilgit-Baltistan

The Express Tribune, August 25, 2012

ABBOTABAD: Tribal elders and clerics in Kohistan have offered mediation between rival sects in Gilgit-Baltistan to ease mounting tension and restore peace in the volatile region. The offer was made on August 24 during a meeting between a jirga and the district coordination officer (DCO), Aqil Badshah, in Kohistan. The jirga, comprising tribal elders and clerics, denounced the killing of 19 Shia passengers near Babusar Top in Kaghan valley earlier this month. The grisly massacre in Hazara division was aimed at maligning the local populace, they stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/425958/sectarian-unrest->

[kohistan-jirga-offers-help-to-restore-peace-in-gilgit-baltistan/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/425958/sectarian-unrest-kohistan-jirga-offers-help-to-restore-peace-in-gilgit-baltistan/)

Sectarian bloodletting

The Nation, August 26, 2012

Recent attack on the Kamra Airbase attack, and the brutal killing of 22 Shia passengers, who were on their way to Astore, Gilgit Baltistan, to celebrate Eid must be condemned strongly. Both these acts of terrorism aimed at destabilising Pakistan. Particularly, the genocide of Shia Muslims has been a norm in Pakistan, especially since the last few years. Besides, the state has failed to provide security to its people. Shia Muslims of Hazara community in Balochistan province and passengers of Gilgit Baltistan are being targeted after verifying their identities. Where are the security forces? The two main schools of thought, Shias and Sunnis, had been living peacefully in these regions since eons. However, the long-lasting peace was destroyed by the fundamentalist approach of military dictator Zia-ul-Haq. Prima facie, it appears that there is a non-ending clash between the two rival groups. But behind the scene, a big plan is being prepared by the masterminds of this game who have vested interests.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/letters/26-Aug-2012/sectarian-bloodletting>

Ulema's help sought to maintain peace in GB

Dawn, August 26, 2012

SKARDU: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah has stated that enduring peace is crucial for the development of the region. And to maintain peace and harmony among people belonging to various schools of thought in the region, ulema should play their role and cooperate with the government, he stressed.

He was addressing the 27th annual convention of Baltistan Students Federation (BSF). Mr Shah stated some elements didn't want better relations between Pakistan and its neighbouring countries like China and Iran. That is why these elements were encouraging terrorism, fundamentalism and sectarianism, endangering sovereignty and integrity of the country, he added. He called for

countering the conspiracies through wisdom instead of getting emotional.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/26/ulemas-help-sought-to-maintain-peace-in-gb-2/>

Life in Gilgit Cripples, Fear Grips the horizon

Dardistan Times, August 24, 2012

GILGIT: Life in Gilgit has crippled by fear as government has failed to develop a sense of security in the people. On August 24 offices reopened without any encouraging attendance. The workforce in the city preferred to stay home amid unpredictable law and order situation. The markets remained closed for 4 consecutive days. Streets appeared deserted with scarce vehicular traffic on the road. The city portrayed an image of curfew security personnel were seen everywhere on patrol.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/life-gilgit-cripples-fear-grips-horizon>

Babusar incident was terrorist attack: official

The News, August 25, 2012

MANSEHRA: The Babusar attack that left 19 people dead was aimed at creating law and order situation in Hazara Division and Gilgit-Baltistan, an official stated citing preliminary investigation on August 24. District Coordination Officer Mansehra Amber Ali Khan made the observation while speaking at a meeting attended by Ulema and scholars belonging to Sunni and Shia sects. He added that members of both sects were killed in the attack.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-128161-Babusar-incident-was-terrorist-attack-official>

Routes leading to Astore re-open, KKH still closed

Pakistan Observer, August 25, 2012

CHILAS: All the routes leading to and from Astore were opened on August 24, the eighth day of Babusar tragedy but Karakurram Highway remained closed for public transport creating difficulties for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and tourists stranded in the area. According to

details, people of various districts of Gilgit-Baltistan especially Astore had to face several hardships due to closure of KKH and other roads linking different areas of GB due to security concerns after armed men shot dead 22 people of Shite community in Lulusar area of Babusar.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=170814>

Pakistani Shi'as are 'victims of regional politics'

August 24, 2012

Pakistani development experts and activists say the massacre of Shia Muslims in Gilgit-Baltistan and other northern parts of Pakistan is linked to ongoing development programs in the area and regional politics. Last week, several gunmen, who were in the guise of Pakistani security officials, stopped a passenger bus travelling from Rawalpindi to the northwestern Gilgit region and dragged the travelers off the bus. The gunmen asked the passengers to show their identity cards, after which they brutally killed 22 of them at point blank range, making sure that they belonged to the minority Shia community. The Taliban, a Sunni-Wahabi militant organization, claimed responsibility of the attack.

<http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=23143>

Shabbir Mir, Sectarian violence: Transport ban creating food shortage in G-B

The Express Tribune, August 25, 2012

GILGIT: The ban on movement of public transport and trucks has created an acute shortage of food and other essential commodities in the capital city of Gilgit and adjacent valleys. The move to seal all entry and exit routes came after the killings of three persons in the troubled city, which comes on the heels of the massacre of 19 passengers mostly Shias in the Naran area of Mansehra District.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/425809/sectarian-violence-transport-ban-creating-food-shortage-in-g-b/>

FC man among two killed in Gilgit-Baltistan violence

Pakistan Observer, August 25, 2012

GILGIT: The serene Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) witnessed violence on second day of Eid on August

21 when two persons including a FC personnel were killed in different firing incidents. The GB region has been hit by a wave of violence, where security personnel have been deployed in sensitive areas. Despite heightened security, various firing incidents killed two persons including a FC man while another troop was injured.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=170376>

Iftikhar A. Khan, AJK political parties agree to amend 1974 constitution

Dawn, August 31, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Almost all the political parties of Azad Kashmir agreed on August 30 that the interim AJK constitution of 1974 should be suitably amended, and discussed various proposals regarding the move. While briefing reporters after chairing an all-party conference that brought together the top political leadership of Azad Kashmir, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo stated the AJK constitution could be amended with a simple majority in two houses including the AJK Legislative Assembly and AJK Council.

He stated the PPP, despite enjoying a simple majority in both the houses, has decided to bring amendments while taking all other political parties on board. He added that all decisions will be taken with a consensus so as to bring positive change to the lives of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and to give them more rights.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/31/ajk-political-parties-agree-to-amend-1974-constitution-2/>

Pakistani atlas shows PoK as Indian

Hindustan Times, August 30, 2012

A new school atlas published by the government of Pakistan's Punjab province has shown Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and the Gilgit-Baltistan region as Indian territories. The education authorities rushed to recall the atlas from all elementary and high school libraries of Punjab province, which has a population of 90 million.

The government of chief minister Shahbaz Sharif

has had to face criticism from academicians over the development. "It is a grave mistake that speaks of the inefficiency of our chief minister's team," publisher Khalid Pervez stated. Over 15,000 copies of the atlas had been delivered to school libraries so far. The education department stated it would take action against all those responsible for printing, approving and distributing the atlas. The publisher had been asked to reprint the atlas with correct maps, it stated.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Pakistan/Pak-s-Punjab-govt-shows-PoK-as-Indian-land-in-atlas/Article1-921660.aspx>

Zafar Iqbal, Youth Protest against Pakistan's Role in Gilgit Baltistan

August 30, 2012

In Pakistani Administrated Kashmir a pro independence student organisation marched on the roads against the sectarian killing of innocent people in Pakistan Controlled Gilgit-Baltistan. Activists of the hard-line National Students Federation (NSF) staged a rally and marched barefooted to registrar their protest over alleged occupation of Pakistan in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Agitators feared that the government of Pakistan is going to declare Gilgit-Baltistan region as its province.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/30082012-youth-protest-against-pakistans-role-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Kohistan, Kaghan incidents: Hazara police claim to have traced sectarian killers

The Express Tribune, August 29, 2012

MANSEHRA: The killers of Gilgit-bound Shia passengers have been traced, claimed chief investigator into the Babusar Top massacre on August 28. Muhammad Ilyas Khan, SSP Investigation Mansehra, who heads the police team investigating the gruesome incident, made the disclosure at a press conference.

Some 37 Shia passengers have been killed on the way to Gilgit in two separate incidents during the last six months in Hazara division of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. In both the incidents men in army

fatigues plucked passengers off buses and shot them dead. "Our team is in Chilas, waiting for a go-ahead by the Gilgit-Baltistan government, to enter the jurisdiction and arrest the suspects," SSP Ilyas Khan stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/427658/kohistan-kaghan-incidents-hazara-police-claim-to-have-traced-sectarian-killers/>

First year in business: AJK govt launches record projects PPI

The Express Tribune, August 27, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated that government has launched record number of mega development projects in its first year period after coming in power to bring about a real revolution in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He stated this while talking a delegation headed by Member National Assembly Zahid Tausif on August 26. The prime minister stated that to promote reconciliation policy, the state government is taking all political parties including opposition on board on all issues of vital importance.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/426760/first-year-in-business-ajk-govt-launches-record-projects/>

Operation against terrorists in GB soon: Malik

The News, August 29, 2012

SKARDU: Interior Minister Rehman Malik on August 28 again made it clear that criminals had been running towards Gilgit-Baltistan as they feared military operation in Waziristan. Talking to media men in Skardu, the interior minister stated that a targeted operation would soon be launched against terrorists in Darel area of Gilgit-Baltistan. Malik added that militants were being monitored via satellite in this area.

Criminals of Waziristan had been running towards Gilgit-Baltistan, Malik stated and added that he had directed the IG of GB to enhance patrolling at the entry points. Meanwhile, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira stated that the anti-Pakistan elements wanted to shatter peace and harmony in Gilgit-Baltistan, but people would foil their malicious designs. He was speaking at the

inauguration ceremony of the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation's subsidiary FM-93 station. The new radio station would meet entertainment and information needs of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-17107-Operation-against-terrorists-in-GB-soon-Malik>

PML-N condemns sectarian killings

Daily Times, August 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Marvi Memon on August 27 condemned target and sectarian killings across the country, saying it was aimed at destabilising the country and crippling the national economy. Addressing a press conference, she stated the federal, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan governments were equally responsible for the failure of law and order. Accompanied by PML-N Gilgit-Baltistan Coordinator Siddiqui Farooq and Central Media Coordinator Asim Khan, she stated that the Punjab chief minister had announced an education package for the children of victim families.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C08%5C28%5Cstory_28-8-2012_pg7_29

Tense situation prevails in GB

Daily Times, August 28, 2012

GILGIT: Life on August 27 remained paralysed in the city as unidentified miscreants hurled a hand grenade at a house in Majini Mohallah. No casualties were reported. According to police, the incident took place on the night of August 26 when unidentified miscreants hurled the hand grenade and fled from the scene. In another incident in Amphari, some unidentified people opened fire on a man on August 27. Roads and streets in Gilgit were seen deserted after the violent incidents. Markets, business centres and shops are closed for the last nine days. The people are facing trouble in getting essentials. The Rangers, police and FC personnel are patrolling the city, but violent incidents are on the rise.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C08%5C28%5Cstory_28-8-2012_pg7_3

Zofeen Ebrahim, "If this isn't Shia genocide, what is?"

Dawn, August 27, 2012

"It must have been early morning when about two dozen masked men, in army uniforms, stopped their convoy of buses. All passengers were asked to get down. In an organised manner they separated the Shias from among the rest and having ascertained their identity (through their names and the area they belonged to), shot them dead," stated Hussain (real name withheld on request), who belongs to a village in the Astore district of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). Twenty-four people (21 Shias and three Sunnis) in aboard three buses, who had embarked on fateful that August 15 morning, from Rawalpindi, never reached their destination in G-B (a Shia-majority region), after their buses were intercepted near Lulusar area in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province on August 16, where they were mercilessly massacred.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/27/if-this-isnt-shia-genocide-what-is/>

Malik urges ulema's due role in sectarian harmony

August 28, 2012

SKARDU: Federal interior minister Rehman Malik has urged ulema to play their due role in maintaining religious and sectarian harmony and peace in the area. Talking to ulema of the area, he stated that some nefarious elements were trying to fan sectarianism in Gilgit-Baltistan against whom action was being taken. He assured of carrying out a targeted operation against those involved, while he also announced enhanced patrolling alongside Karakoram highway, which would also include air surveillance by helicopters.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=200855&catname=1>

Section 144 in Khaplu, Bridge Set on Fire

Dardistan Times, August 26, 2012

BALTISTAN: The section 144 of the law has been imposed in sub division Khaplu for the period of three months with immediate effect to maintain law

and order. According to a notification issued from the office of district Magistrate, provocative wall chalking, display of arms and holding rallies have been banned in the jurisdiction of sub division. "Strict action in accordance of law will be taken against the violators of this order" district administration warned.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/section-144-khaplu-bridge-00set-fire-chitral-baltistan-briefs>

Inqilabi expresses dismay over MC remarks for making AJK a province

August 26, 2012

SRINAGAR: Chief Patron Jammu Kashmir Mahaz-e-Azadi (MeA) Muhammad Azam Inqilabi expressed dismay over the reported statement in AJK Muslim conference rally at Neelabutt on 23 August that Pakistani government wants to make AJK as one of its provinces. In a statement issued here, Inqilabi stated, "If this news is true it shows that not only Pakistani government is non-serious about ideology of Pakistan but it will also deliver a big blow to Kashmir resistance movement." He stated resistance leaders and activists here have been "taken aback" by this news.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2012/08/26/inqilabi-expresses-dismay-over-mc-remarks-for-making-ajk-a-province.html>

Taliban Take Responsibility for the Attack. Protests, Emergency Meetings and 3-day Mourning in GB

Dardistan Times, August 16, 2012

GILGIT: Thousands of people took the streets in different cities of the region and staged sit in against the Lolusar tragedy. In Gilgit protesters got the markets closed and thousands of people took to streets to record their protest against the Lalosar carnage where 25 innocent passengers were gunned down. Youth burnt tyres on the roads to block traffic and chanted slogans against the government. The city was in the grip of terror and fear. Protests were on Ghizar road, Khomar, Umpheri, Majini Muhallah, Nagaral and other parts of Gilgit City.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/protests-emergency0099meetings-3-day-mourning-%E2%80%93-update-lalosar-carnage>

Altaf Hussain condemns killings of people at Babusar Top near Gilgit

Business Recorder, August 16, 2012

LONDON: Muttahida Quami Movement MQM leader Altaf Hussain strongly condemned killing of people at Babusar Top near Gilgit on August 16 after being pulled out from three passenger buses by armed terrorists. He stated gunning down of innocent people belonging to a particular segment of society in the country after ascertaining their identities was blatant terrorism. Elements involved in killing innocent people for their vicious designs were not worthy of being called humans let alone Muslims.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/74211-altaf-hussain-condemns-killings-of-people-at-babusar-top-near-gilgit-.html>

Pakistan Shias killed in Gilgit sectarian attack

BBC, August 16, 2012

Pakistan's Shias have accused the government of doing too little to stop attacks against them. As many as 25 Shia Muslims have been forced out of a bus and killed in a sectarian attack in northern Pakistan, officials have told the BBC. The killings took place in a remote and mountainous area about 160km (100 miles) north of the capital Islamabad as the bus was travelling from the city of Rawalpindi to the city of Gilgit. Sectarian violence has killed hundreds of Pakistanis in recent years. Most attacks are in the Northern Areas and in Balochistan province. Police told the BBC that those killed in the latest attack were travelling on three buses for the forthcoming Muslim festival of Eid in the district of Mansehra. They were either shot or bludgeoned to death.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19280339>

GB Minerals Department Accused of Supporting Minerals Mafia

Dardistan Times, August 16, 2012

GILGIT: GB Metals, Minerals and Gems Association has slammed the GB government for patronizing and emboldening the mineral mafia in the region. The organization, through a press release,

claimed that the GB Mineral Department has once again cornered and ignored the local entrepreneurs and leaned towards foreign and non-local companies while issuing and renewing the licenses.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/gb-minerals-department455-a7ccused-supporting-minerals-mafia>

Mangla Dam raising project: PM Majeed orders to speed up rehabilitation process

The Express Tribune, August 12, 2012

MIRPUR: In response to protests by people displaced by the Mangla Dam Raising Project, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on August 10 directed the departments concerned to complete the rehabilitation process without further delay. In a meeting with representatives of various organisations fighting for the rights of the displaced people at the rest house of Public Works Department, Majeed directed the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and other related departments to complete construction of new homes for the displaced people in New Mirpur City and four small towns in Islamgarh, Siakh, Chakswari and Dadayal localities.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/420858/mangla-dam-raising-project-pm-majeed-orders-to-speed-up-rehabilitation-process/>

Mushtaq Ghumman, Diامر-Bhasha Dam: Pakistan likely to seek Chinese financing

Business Recorder, August 14, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is likely to seek Chinese financing for 4500 MW Diامر-Bhasha dam after the two key lenders i.e. World Bank and Asian Bank Development (ADB) sent unsupportive signals, sources stated. This was the crux of a meeting on \$ 12 billion multipurpose dam, presided over by the Minister for Water and Power, Ahmad Mukhtar on August 13. "We discussed the pros and cons of funding for the highly important project, especially in the context of ADB and World Bank role and future line of action," the sources added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/1-front-top-news/73653-diامر-bhasha-dam-pakistan-likely-to-seek-chinese-financing-.html>

Khaleeq Kiani, Call to seek Indian NoC for Bhasha dam rejected

Dawn, August 14, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The government is contemplating a plan-B to arrange funding for the \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam project through bilateral institutions after declining an Asian Development Bank suggestion that Pakistan should secure a no-objection certificate from India to seek multilateral funding for the project. The decision in principle was taken at a meeting presided over by Minister for Water and Power Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar on August 13 and attended by representatives of the ministries of finance, water and power, and economic affairs, Wapda and the Planning Commission, an official noted.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/14/call-to-seek-indian-noc-for-bhasha-dam-rejected/>

Risky development: Hydropower project leaves thousands in search of water

The Express Tribune, August 13, 2012

MIRPUR: Political leaders and environmentalists have expressed concern over the drying up of water springs as a result of boring of two tunnels for a power project in Neelum-Jhelum valley. "At least 600 water springs have vanished as a result of boring of the tunnels," stated Leader of the Opposition in Azad Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly, Farooq Haider Khan, while talking to media persons. The drying up of water springs has deprived several villages of natural drinking water, he stated, adding that the direction of underground water has also changed as a result. Khan was of the view that before initiating the project, it should have been debated in the assembly and its impact on the environment and people's lives assessed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/421201/risky-development-hydropower-project-leaves-thousands-in-search-of-water/>

Human Rights abuses continue unabated in Pak administered Kashmir

MUZFARRABAD: A human rights group in Pakistan administrated Kashmir (PAK) expressed concern over growing incidents of human rights

violations, mainly attacks on journalists. We are concerned over deteriorating situation of human rights and freedom of the press in AJK (PAK) as violence against women, monitories and press has increased since last few months, Press for Peace (PFP) stated in a statement. Yousaf Kashmiri an official of PFP that works for the promotion of human development and sustainable peace, gave details of some incidents in which local media persons were attacked by different groups or arrested and government authorities could not take action against the culprits.

<http://www.punjabnewslines.com/content/human-rights-abuses-continue-unabated-pak-administered-kashmir/55658>

Zafar Iqbal, Muzaffarabad Demands Empowerment from Islamabad

August 9, 2012

This week Pakistani Prime Minister received a startling welcome from people of Pakistan-Administrated Kashmir (PAK) with growing demand of transfer of more constitutional, executive and economic clout from Islamabad to Muzaffarabad. Pakistani premier Raja Pervez Ashraf visited Muzaffarabad to inaugurate two tunnel-boring machines in a controversial 969MW Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project (NJHP) being constructed by a Chinese firm. Pakistan and India are fighting a legal battle at the International Court of Arbitration (ICA) over the construction of the NJHP. The court will hold its final hearing next week at Hague and is expected to pronounce its verdict by the end of this year. This gives Pakistan an opportunity to accelerate its work on the NJHP.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/09082012-muzaffarabad-demands-empowerment-from-islamabad-oped/>

Shabbir Mir, Combating terrorism: G-B police chief stresses intelligence sharing

The Express Tribune, August 9, 2012

GILGIT: To counter the growing threats of terrorism in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), intelligence sharing will be increased in the region. This was stated by G-B's new police chief, Wazir Muhammad Ali Khan, during an interview on August 8. "The role of intelligence agencies is very important and

we are trying to expand it in order to become aware of threats beforehand,” stated Khan. “This has become all the more important following the recent bomb attack on a passenger van in Gilgit,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/419500/combating-terrorism-g-b-police-chief-stresses-intelligence-sharing/>

A H Nizami, AJK's interim constitution a 'symbol of slavery', says Raja Farooq

The Express Tribune, August 8, 2012

MIRPUR: The leader of the opposition in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly and former prime minister, Raja Farooq Haider, on August 7 declared the existing interim constitution of AJK, Act 1974, as an icon of slavery for the people of AJK, emphasising the need for introducing amendments immediately. Haider made the call “to ensure the emergence of a fully empowered government” in Azad Jammu Kashmir, which could run local administrative affairs without hindrance.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/418971/ajks-interim-constitution-a-symbol-of-slavery-says-raja-farooq/>

Seminar: Call for constitutional reforms in AJK

The Express Tribune, August 4, 2012

MIRPUR: Since the status of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Council in the light of UN resolutions is questionable, there is need to introduce reforms in AJK. For this reason, necessary amendments should be introduced in the interim constitution of AJK, keeping in view the demands of civil society, politicians and members of the AJK Legislative Assembly. This was

discussed at a seminar with Justice (retd) Abdul Majeed Malik in chair on August 2. Malik observed that Pakistan has maintained its stance under the constitutions of 1956, 1962 and 1973 that the Jammu and Kashmir state is not part of Pakistan. Thus its future status is yet to be determined by the people of the state.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/417185/seminar-call-for-constitutional-reforms-in-ajk/>

Javid Hayat, Shadow governance: right to vote and rule in AJK

Daily Times, August 2, 2012

The history of the AJK indicates that the right to vote and the existing basic governance structure was a result of political parties putting up an incredibly hard-fought struggle. Politics and power distribution in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is conditioned by three main factors. Firstly, it is driven by the Kashmir conflict at large, which resulted in the AJK acquiring a disputed status that further led to interim arrangements and uncertainty. Secondly, becoming a de facto federal unit of the state of Pakistan has sidelined it from the mainstream, which, in turn, created 'systematic' dependency in almost all spheres of political, economic and societal life. Thirdly, at the internal level, ethnicity or cross-cutting cleavages based on tribes (biradri) and regional divisions play a significant part in the political shaping and reshaping.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C08%5C02%5Cstory_2-8-2012_pg3_4

Economic Developments

Mushtaq Ghumman, Financial constraints: Govt likely to shelve Diamer-Bhasha dam

Business Recorder, August 18, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The government is likely to shelve high priority Diamer-Bhasha dam at least for the time being due to uncertain financial assistance from international financial institutions and Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) including Japan and will commence civil work on the project by utilising its own resources as well as establish power house as Independent Power Producer (IPP), sources noted.

World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have already conveyed diplomatically 'no financing' to the multi-purpose dollars 12 billion project, which will also generate 4500MW electricity at very cheap rates.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/1-front-top-news/74415-financial-constraints-govt-likely-to-shelve-diamer-bhasha-dam-.html>

Khaleeq Kiani, WB wants Bhasha dam delayed

Dawn, August 11, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has reportedly offered funding to induce Pakistan to take up the Dasu power project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and delay for 10 years the strategically more important Diamer-Bhasha dam in Gilgit-Baltistan. That appeared to be the crux of the proceedings of Senate Standing Committee on Water and Power on August 10, even though top bureaucrats tried to satisfy the committee that Pakistan's sovereign decision on the matter maintained focus on the multipurpose Diamer-Bhasha project.

<http://dawn.com/2012/08/11/wb-wants-bhasha-dam-delayed/>

Khalid Mustafa, Pakistan left with no option but to pledge Wapda assets

The News, August 11, 2012

ISLAMABAD: In a massive blow, the leading donor for the Bhasha Dam, the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) has informally reversed its commitment to finance the project, top officials in EAD, Wapda, finance and water and power ministries noted. This has left Pakistan in the lurch and now the authorities concerned are going to put their heads together to find out alternatives to raise funds for the most important water and power project of Pakistan. A Wapda spokesman confirmed that the critical funding issue had emerged as a stumbling block in the project and alternative options would soon be considered to raise a massive \$12 billion for the dam.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-16705-Pakistan-left-with-no-option-but-to-pledge-Wapda-assets>

Donors to set aside Indian pressure over Diamer Bhasha dam: PEW

August 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) has urged multilateral donors to set aside the pressure of India and extend financing for the Diamer Bhasha dam that could prove a source of overcoming energy crisis in Pakistan. In a statement issued on August 28, President Pakistan Economy Watch Dr. Murtaza Mughal stated multilateral donors including World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have refused to extend financing for the Diamer Bhasha dam under influence of India but donors must set aside the pressure of India and extend financing for the dam. "The donors should not become part of controversy between two

countries over water rights and should extend financing for the strategically important water and power project that would become a backbone of Pakistan's economy," he added.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=200869&catname=Business>

Uplift needed: Call for impetus to AJK's ailing industrial sector

The Express Tribune, August 26, 2012

MIRPUR: The business fraternity of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has demanded the government to take measures to give an impetus to the state's ailing industrial sector. The local business community, through their main representative forum, the AJK Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AJKCCI), urged the government on August 25 to grant incentives to help revive 90 non-operational industrial units in industrial zones in Mirpur and Bhimbher districts.

Khawaja Zafar Iqbal, the chairman of AJKCCI Committee for Revival of Sick Industries, stated that out of a total of 200 industrial units in AJK, mostly established in Mirpur and Bhimbher districts, 90 are "lying sick" due to the lack of required infrastructure and operational facilities.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/426269/uplift-needed-call-for-impetus-to-ajks-ailing-industrial-sector/>

Mangla Dam Raising Project: Funds released for rehabilitation of affected

The Express Tribune, August 19, 2012

MIRPUR: The government of Pakistan has released funds required for the rehabilitation of people affected by the Mangla Dam Raising Project. This was stated by Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated during this day-long visit to Mirpur on August 18. He reiterated that timely rehabilitation and resettlement of the people affected by the project are the government's priority. "Every line of the written agreement in connection with rehabilitation of the people

affected by the Mangla Dam Raising Project will be implemented in letter and spirit," Majeed added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/423901/mangla-dam-raising-project-funds-released-for-rehabilitation-of-affected/>

Zafar Bhutta, Diamer-Bhasha project: Pakistan considers slapping surcharge to finance dam

The Express Tribune, August 20, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Rejecting the stipulation set by the World Bank and other multilateral donors to obtain a no-objection certificate from India for the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam, Pakistan is considering other proposals including placing a surcharge on power consumers to generate the funds.

Pakistan was earlier asked to obtain an NOC from India to build the 4,500 megawatt hydropower plant, which the donors were offering to finance along with the Dasu hydropower project. However, authorities rejected the idea and are now considering other ways to generate money for the construction of the stated dam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/424454/diamer-bhasha-project-pakistan-considers-slapping-surcharge-to-finance-dam/>

Pakistan, India urged to modernise LoC trade

The Nation, August 13, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: Traders of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) on August 13 called upon India and Pakistan to chalk out a comprehensive roadmap to improve Trans- Line of Control (LoC) trade to redress current flaws and restrictions which are damaging the spirit of the peace trade. Intra Kashmir Trade Co-ordinator Mubarak Awan, who has been a participant of recent Srinagar Conference about Intra-Kashmir trade, stated that one of the major obstacles for Muzaffarabad -based traders community is that there is no well-established market structure in Pakistan administrated

Kashmir to accommodate growing needs of trade done between both parts of Kashmir.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/13-Aug-2012/pakistan-india-urged-to-modernise-loc-trade>

Comprehensive plan to promote tax culture in AJK

Business Recorder, August 9, 2012

A comprehensive plan has been inked to promote tax culture to improve and streamline the existing system for realisation of taxes during just-started fiscal year of 2012-13 in Azad Jammu Kashmir. Official sources noted on August 8 that the authorities have invited proposals from experts including the business community stalwarts and for improvement of the existing tax realization system would be welcomed.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1225473/>

Zafar Bhutta, Cold feet: Setbacks in Diemer-Bhasha funding

The Express Tribune, August 3, 2012

ISLAMABAD: In a major setback for the \$11.5 billion Diemer-Bhasha Dam project, all foreign

lenders have expressed reluctance to provide finances and have, instead, offered to fund the 4,320-megawatt Dasu hydropower project. According to reports, the Indian lobby in Washington is vigorously working against the funding of the Diemer-Bhasha Dam, forcing the US and other donors to link its assistance for the Pakistani project with a No Objection Certificate (NoC) from New Delhi given India's claims that the Dam is located in the disputed territory of Gilgit-Baltistan. Washington had earlier agreed to fund the project on the condition of approval from the US Congress. The World Bank, on the other hand, already refused to extend finances for the Diemer-Bhasha Dam, linking the financing of the multi-billion dollar project with Indian concurrence.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/416860/cold-feet-setbacks-in-diemer-bhasha-funding/>

International Developments

UN, US to pressurize Pakistan to open Gilgit-Ladakh trade route

A day after the killing of 21 Shias by militants, the third such sectarian attack in the restive region in six months, an organization representing the people of Gilgit Baltistan has asked the United States and the United Nations to put pressure on Pakistan to open the trade routes with Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Laddakh. "United Nations and USA are requested to pressure Pakistan to open travel and trade routes towards Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Indian Ladakh so that Shias are not forced to travel on the roads that have become killing fields and virtually controlled by ISI-led militants like Lashkar Toiba, Lashkar Jhangvi and Sipah Sihaba," Washington based Gilgit Baltistan National Congress (GBNC) noted in a statement today.

<http://english.samaylive.com/world-news/676511464/un-us-to-pressurize-pakistan-to-open-gilgit-ladakh-trade-route.html>

Shahbaz Rana, Diamer Bhasha dam: Japanese aid keeps plans afloat

The Express Tribune, August 31, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Japan has agreed in principle to finance the power houses of the Diamer Bhasha dam, renewing hopes that the project will not be suspended. The dam has been designed to generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity, which Pakistan direly needs, besides storing water for agriculture purposes.

According to a senior government official, Japan has agreed to finance the construction of the power houses of the dam through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He stated the move, if it materialises, will create a win-win situation for both parties: it will provide much-needed funding for the project and an opportunity to JICA to sell its equipment. However, the exact amount of the funding has not yet been worked out as modalities will be finalised later on, the official added. Meanwhile, the authorities have informed the premier about this development.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/428687/diamer-bhasha-dam-japanese-aid-keeps-plans-afloat/>

Korea keen to invest in 2 hydropower projects

Pakistan Tribune, August 28, 2012

The Korean authority expressed its interest in investing in the construction of two mega billion-dollar hydropower projects including Diamer Bhasha Dam with power generation capacity of 4,500 megawatts (MW) and Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project with 969 MW capacity. The high-level Korean delegation led by Minister for National Restoration, Republic of South Korea Myung-Pil Shim called on Federal Minister for Water and Power Ch Ahmed Mukhtar on August 27.

<http://www.eco-business.com/news/korea-keen-to-invest-in-2-hydropower-projects/>

Other Developments

Mangla Dam raising project: Affected families take to the streets, stage sit-in

The Express Tribune, August 10, 2012

MIRPUR: Hundreds of people affected by the raising of Mangla Dam Project staged protests on August 9 after the government failed to give a schedule for completion of their rehabilitation. They staged a sit-in outside the office of Mangla Dam Resettlement Organisation (MDRO) and stated they will not let the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) fill the dam to its highest level of 1,242 feet unless the 100,000 affected people are shifted to alternative residential sites. They gave the government time till Eidul Fitr to complete the rehabilitation process.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/419879/mangla-dam-raising-project-affected-families-take-to-the-streets-stage-sit-in/>

Gilgit schools, colleges closed

Dawn, August 24, 2012

GILGIT: The administration August 23 ordered a shutdown of government and private educational

institutions in Gilgit city indefinitely because of the law-and-order situation, media reported. The government will review the situation after three or four days. The August 16 slaying of 20 Shia bus passengers prompted the decision. Police have since been monitoring public transportation on various routes and have been escorting buses going through Bisham.

http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/newsbriefs/2012/08/24/newsbrief-02

Growing green: Plantation drive kicks off in AJK

The Express Tribune, August 23, 2012

MIRPUR: A week-long tree plantation drive has been started in different parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), in which over a million saplings will be planted throughout the state, official sources stated on August 22.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/424856/growing-green-plantation-drive-kicks-off-in-ajk/>

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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