

POK

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

In July 2013, the PPP-led AJK government faced dissent from its own party members, who filed a no confidence motion against the chief minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed. The rebel group was led by Barrister Sultan Mehmood, a former prime minister of AJK and a leading contender for the post after the 2011 elections in AJK. He lost the opportunity to Abdul Majeed then. With PML-N taking over the government in Islamabad, the faction led by Sultan Mehmood saw it as an opportune moment to topple the AJK government and seize power with the help of the PML-N members in AJK assembly. Earlier, PML-N leaders had sent out feelers that in case a no confidence motion was tabled by the rebels in PPP, they would support it. Later however, prime minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif instructed the local PML-N leaders not to participate in any activity which would threaten the stability of the elected government in AJK. Eventually, the AJK government survived and the no confidence motion was withdrawn after the PML-N refused to support it.

Few reports included in the issue do indicate that the PML-N (especially the local chapter) did show interest in toppling the PPP government in AJK. The new Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir, also endorsed the idea. As a result, the PPP dissidents were completely banking on PML-N's support. With the intervention of the top leadership, PML-N's decision was changed last minute. The PPP-led AJK government got a new lease of life for at least the next six months as prime minister Abdul Majeed was able to secure a vote of confidence in the house.

In Gilgit Baltistan, the controversial timber movement policy started by Pakistan's former prime minister, Raja Pervez Ashraf (a day before he relinquished office) was finally withdrawn due to local resentment. The policy allowing movement of timber from Gilgit Baltistan to parts of Pakistan faced criticism from across sections in the region.

There are reports which suggest that tourism in Gilgit Baltistan would be affected as a result of the June 2013 terrorist attack on foreign mountaineers at the base camp near Nanga Parbat. Others indicate that the interest of foreigners in the region has not waned despite threat of terrorism.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Resolution withdrawn: AJK premier gets 'tainted' trust vote”

The Express Tribune, July 28, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: In a bid to stave off the possibility of a no-trust motion for the next six months, the Pakistan Peoples Party on July 27 gave a vote of confidence to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed. The PPP-forward bloc in the AJK Legislative Assembly had earlier tried to oust the prime minister by pressing for a parliamentary vote.

However, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on July 26 directed his party representatives in the legislature not to take part in any move to topple the AJK prime minister. The whole plot floundered after the PPP forward bloc withdrew the move before the Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court. The special session of the AJK Legislative Assembly, which was called by AJK President, Sardar Yaqoob Khan to take up the no-trust motion, was attended by only 17 ruling party members. Neither the movers of the no-trust move, nor members of opposition parties attended the session. The movers stated they had already withdrawn the resolution on July 26.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/582922/resolution-withdrawn-ajk-premier-gets-tainted-trust-vote/>

“Barrister Sultan Mahmood to join PTI”

July 29, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: A jilted former Prime Minister AJK, Barrister Sultan Mahmood has decided to join PTI, after his failure in no-trust motion against AJK PM, mainly over 'PML-N' s infidelity'. The promised support of 33 parliamentarians in his no-trust motion against AJK's PM never materialized for the unlucky Barrister , as only two of them turned up at no-trust motion , while only 10 turned up to accompany Barrister to High Court for filing writ petition' with

whereabouts of remaining 23, remained shrouded in mystery.

Hence after this failure, which also entailed loss of PPP membership, Barrister Sultan Mahmood is stated to have held a telephonic conversation with PTI's Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others; making his final decision to join PTI, along with his friends. He intends to travel to Europe after Eid to confer with his political associates, before meeting PTI chairman Imran Khan , followed by his (Sultan Mahmood's) “within 2-months” decision to join PTI.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=233943&catname=1>

“AJK Prime Minister survives no-trust motion”

Business Recorder, July 28, 2013

No-trust motion brought against Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majeed failed as not a member present in the Legislative Assembly voted in its favour during session on July 27. It should be mentioned that the motion had been submitted by two ruling People's Party (PPAJK) dissidents, Abdul Majid Khan and Muhammad Hussain Sargala on July 22.

However, the Assembly Secretariat sources claimed that they had also received, by fax, an application from the two MLAs for withdrawal of the no-confidence resolution. The resolution was tabled during the session of the Legislative Assembly which had been summoned by the president. Thirty MLAs were present during the session, none of whom voted in favour of the motion. The resolution stood rejected as a result.

Sources stated that the failure of no-trust motion was pre-planned as decided in back channel meetings and absence of MLAs supporting the resolution during the session confirms the secret talks of the political leadership. Chaudhry Abdul

Majeed of PPP's AJK chapter was sworn in as the 11th Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir in 2011.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-stories/0/1215566/>

Shabbir Mir, “Planning unrest: Second arrest made in foiled imambargah attack”

The Express Tribune, July 28, 2013

GILGIT: The accomplice of a suspected terrorist, who allegedly intended to attack a Shia mosque, has also been apprehended in Gilgit, shared the police on July 27. “We got to him (the accomplice) as a result of information revealed by Junaid Khan the suspect in custody during interrogations,” DIG Ali Sher noted. The unnamed co-conspirator is also a resident of Gilgit and had assisted Khan in the purchase of arms and explosives, added Sher.

On July 25, the police arrested Khan in Gilgit and seized explosives just before he was allegedly planning to attack an imambargah in Gilgit; later he confessed his intent was to spill blood and cause sectarian violence. Junaid Khan is noted to have links with the terrorist faction Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and had been trained at an LeJ camp in Miranshah.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/582751/planning-unrest-second-arrest-made-in-foiled-imambargah-attack/>

Asim Qadeer Rana, “No-confidence vote against AJK PM: PML-N won't be part of any narrow agenda”

The Nation, July 25, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The tussle over power in Azad Jammu and Kashmir seems to have reached the climax, as Barrister Sultan Mehmood-led camp has managed to get support of the required number of parliamentarians to topple the PPP-led government. Well placed sources stated that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had directed PML-N parliamentarians in the AJK assembly to remain impartial during the no-confidence vote against incumbent Prime Minister Abdul Majeed.

Insiders revealed Sharif's latest stance had been welcomed by AJK premier Majeed who was learnt to have thanked Sharif for discouraging his men from toppling his government. A no-confidence

motion was brought against the AJK premier on July 22 following which several ministers and advisers tendered their resignations. Voting on the motion will be held in July 26 session of the AJK assembly, for which the speaker summoned the session on July 24.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/25-Jul-2013/pml-n-won-t-be-part-of-any-narrow-agenda>

“PPP assures full backing to AJK's premier in light of no-trust motion”

Pakistan Today, July 25, 2013

The Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah met with Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on July 25 and assured the latter of his party's backing in face of the no-trust motion submitted against him in the AJK Legislative Assembly secretariat. The meeting took place in Islamabad and primarily discussed the no-confidence motion against Majeed by two ruling PPP-AJK dissidents.

The resolution was submitted on July 22 by the Minister for Rehabilitation Abdul Majid Khan and MLA Mohammad Hussain Sargala and enjoys the support of 17-18 members of the ruling coalition in addition to the entire opposition. Moreover, they have proposed the name of Barrister Sultan Mahmood as successor to the 'incumbent' Majeed. 10 cabinet members faxed their resignations to the AJK premier on July 22, the day the resolution was submitted in the assembly's secretariat.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/07/25/news/national/ppp-assures-full-backing-to-ajks-premier-in-light-of-no-trust-motion/>

“PML-N not to dislodge Kashmir govt: PM”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 25, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated on July 25 that keeping up with the best democratic traditions, the PML-N would neither make any effort to dislodge the sitting government in Azad Kashmir nor would take part in any move for no-confidence motion. The prime minister expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet in Islamabad. He asked Minister

for Kashmir Affairs, and Gilgit-Baltistan, Barjis Tahir to firmly convey the decision to the PML-N leadership in Azad Kashmir to abide by the party discipline and abstain from indulging in any activity that could create political turmoil in Azad Kashmir. The prime minister stated that the party had taken similar position during the formation of the governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan after the recent elections.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=244235&Itemid=2

“Govt not involved in AJK politics: Barjees”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 23, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Muhammad Barjees Tahir on July 22 stated that federal government is not involved in no-confidence motion moved against Prime Minister AJK. Talking to journalists, the minister stated that the present government of PML-N fully believes in true democracy and striving for strengthening it. Our leadership had shown a true spirit of democracy in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he added. Former Prime Minister (AJK) Raja Farooq Haider, Senior Minister (AJK) Chaudhry Yaseen, former federal minister Qamar Zaman Kaira were also there at the occasion.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=243884&Itemid=2

“Locals to be employed in Diamer-Bhasha Dam project”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 24, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Chaudhry Barjees Tahir on July 24 stated that maximum number of local people of Chilas would be employed in Diamer-Bhasha Dam project. During a meeting with two members of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, the minister stated that when the work on project would begin, local people would be given priority in recruitment. He stated that all the employees of class-IV and under would be from Chilas adding maximum eligible people in technical cadre would also be selected from the area. He stated that the

remaining seats of the project would be fulfilled from rest of the country on merit.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=244091&Itemid=1

Shabbir Mir, “German leads effort to rescue Iranians”

The Express Tribune, July 24, 2013

GILGIT: In a last ditch-effort, the government on July 23 joined rescuers in an attempt to locate three missing Iranian climbers. The rescue operations were resumed a day after being suspended. The latest effort is seen as the best attempt to save the climbers before inclement weather makes rescue efforts impossible. Aidin Bozorgi, Pouya Keivan and Mojtaba Jarah, all Iranians, were part of an 11-member mountaineering expedition that scaled the K3 or Broad Peak on July 16. While the remaining members of the expedition reached the base camp, the three Iranian climbers were stuck above 7,400 metres on the peak as their descent became complicated due to bad weather. According to tour operators, the three climbers were without food, water and shelter since July 18.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/581243/german-leads-effort-to-rescue-iranians/>

“PML-N to support Sultan for AJK PM: Barjees”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 24, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Chaudhry Barjees Tahir July 24 stated that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) would support Barrister Sultan Mahmood in the no-confidence motion against AJK Prime Minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed. Eleven members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly would vote for Barrister Sultan, he stated. Barjees Tahir made it clear that the federal government was not behind the no-trust move, which was initiated by the members of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Fourteen out of 30 PPP ministers had submitted the no-confidence motion after tendering resignation, he added. He stated he visited the AJK on the invitation of PM Chaudhry Abdul Majeed. He stated the PML-N

respected the mandate of all other parties and the party leadership had advised its members to wait for the elections.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=244055&Itemid=1

“Two held in Gilgit, explosives seized”

Dawn, July 26, 2013

GILGIT: Two suspects having link with a banned organisation were captured and explosives were seized with police claiming that an attempt to attack a mosque had been foiled. SP Gilgit Mohammad Ali Zia stated that upon secret information that terrorists were planning to attack a mosque at Al Sabah Chowk plainclothes personnel were deployed in the area. Two suspects roaming there were spotted and upon on a body search explosives and grenades were found in their possession.

The SP stated the suspects were aged around 17 and they belonged to the Asif Chhoto group of the banned Lashkar-i-Jhangvi group. He stated the youths were students of a madrassah in Islamabad and brought to the LJ fold by Salman, a resident of Peshawar. Salman took them to Miramshah for terrorist training.

<http://dawn.com/news/1032019/two-held-in-gilgit-explosives-seized>

Tariq Naqash, “No-trust resolution against AJK premier: PML-N to support PPP dissidents”

Dawn, July 24, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) chapter of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) on July 23 formally announced its support for the no-trust resolution, tabled against AJK premier Chaudhry Abdul Majeed by dissidents of the ruling Peoples Party (PPP-AJK). The PML-N announced its decision after a session on the issue on July 23 in Kashmir House, which was attended by 10 of its 11 Legislative Assembly members (MLAs).

The party's secretary general Shah Ghulam Qadir and three other senior office bearers were also present. However MLA Raja Naseer Ahmed could not show up as he was out of country. The party endorsed the allegations levelled in the no-trust

resolution and decided to support it 'unconditionally', stated the party's senior vice-chairman Chaudhry Tariq Farooq. “Since the move against Mr Majeed was initiated from within his party, we have decided to support it unconditionally,” he noted. He stated the Majeed administration had been the worst in AJK's history as it had politicised institutions, encouraged financial corruption and neglected the Kashmir freedom movement.

<http://dawn.com/news/1031508/no-trust-resolution-against-ajk-premier-pml-n-to-support-pp-dissidents>

“Pent-up resentment: AJK premier faces revolt in house”

The Express Tribune, July 23, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: For Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majid, it was like a bolt from the blue. It was virtually unthinkable that his own party colleagues would try to turn the tables on him. Two members of the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), submitted a no-trust motion against him in a surprise attempt to bring an in-house change in the assembly on July 22.

But from the charge sheet against the premier it appears that resentment had been building up for some time. “Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majid [has] failed to deliver [on his promise of] good governance, implement merit and root out corruption in government departments,” alleged the MLAs, Majid Khan and Muhammad Hussain Sargala, in the charge-sheet they submitted to the assembly's secretary, Chaudhry Basharat.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/580698/pent-up-resentment-ajk-premier-faces-revolt-in-house/>

“Six ministers resign from AJK cabinet”

Dawn, July 22, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Six ministers from the cabinet of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed resigned on July 22 following the submission of a no-confidence motion against the region's premier by two assembly members from the Pakistan Peoples Party

(PPP). The motion was moved by PPP's Mohammad Hussain and Majid Khan, following which three advisers also tendered their resignations.

According to sources, the six ministers who resigned Barqiyat Chaudhry, Majid Khan, Akbar Ibrahim, Hussain Sargala, Afsar Shahid, Akhtar Hussain Rabbani and Azhar Gilani and three advisers, will be voting in favour of the no-confidence motion against Majeed. Chaudhry Abdul Majeed of PPP's AJK chapter was sworn in as the 11th prime minister of Azad Kashmir in 2011. He was born in 1948 in the Tangdev village of AJK's Mirpur district and is a 1969 law graduate from Karachi's S. M. Law College.

<http://dawn.com/news/1031071/six-ministers-resign-from-ajk-cabinet>

“Diامر Bhasha Dam: WAPDA seeks proposals for consultancy services”

The Express Tribune, July 18, 2013

ISLAMABAD: As the \$14 billion strategically important Diامر Bhasha Dam remains stuck due to reluctance of international financiers, Pakistan has again requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to release funds for the much-delayed project. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar made the request in a meeting with ADB's Country Director, Werner Liepach.

Dar stated the new government was working on various initiatives to jump-start the economy and “looks forward to ADB's assistance for the construction of Diامر Bhasha Dam”, according to an official handout released by the Ministry of Finance. Liepach was noted to be supportive of the project and stated the ADB was willing to work with Pakistan in designing a “workable model for the implementation of the project”. An earlier move by the ADB to bring the World Bank on board for co-financing the project backfired when the WB insisted that the ADB first seek a no-objection certificate from India a condition that has delayed the project. Delhi believes that the project site is in a disputed territory.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/578344/diامر-bhasha-dam-wapda-seeks-proposals-for-consultancy-services/>

Ikram Junaidi, “GB police lack resources to secure foreign expeditions”

Dawn, July 16, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The former Inspector General of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Police, Capt (retired) Usman Zakaria, stated police did not have enough resources to accompany foreign expedition teams visiting the region. “Following the Nanga Parbat incident, we sent a police team but after traveling half the distance, the members informed that they could go no further because of the high altitude and lack of oxygen. So we called them back,” he stated. This was noted during a briefing given to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan regarding the killing of nine foreign tourists at Nanga Parbat base camp on June 22. The proscribed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) later claimed responsibility for the attack.

<http://dawn.com/news/1029256/gb-police-lack-resources-to-secure-foreign-expeditions>

“Ex-PaK premier proposes meet of JK, PaK, GB assemblies”

Rising Kashmir, July 16, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Demanding setting up of joint development fund by India, Pakistan and United Nations, ex-premier of Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) and president Muslim Conference (MC) Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan proposed that “the three assemblies of the State J&K, Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) must meet to share hearts and minds on the vexed Kashmir issue as ultimately the people of Kashmir would have to be associated with any solution of Kashmir. UN has already provided an implementable roadmap on Kashmir,” Sardar Attique stated in his address to the House of Common, United Kingdom at the invitation of All Parties House of Commons Kashmir Committee chairman Andrew Griffiths. He stated that Kashmiri viewpoint is that the issue needs to be settled through negotiations with the proper association of Kashmiris.

<http://www.risingkashmir.in/news/ex-pak-premier-proposes-meet-of-jk-pak-gb-assemblies-51384.aspx>

“Federal Minister assures full support to AJK Govt”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 18, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Chaudhry Birjis Tahir has assured full support of the Federal Government to Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government. Talking to journalists after a briefing on July 17, he stated that Federal Government would fully support the government in AJK for the development and prosperity of the area. He further noted that Kashmir is a strategic asset where 8 thousand megawatt hydro-power could be generated and no government could ignore this fact while taking decisions in this regard. Earlier, Birjis Tahir was accorded unprecedented welcome. Three AJK Ministers received him at Kohala Bridge, the entry point of AJK, while two Ministers and other leaders, received him at Ambore tunnel. Ch Birjis Tahir, on July 16 attended an Iftar-dinner, hosted by AJK Premier Chaudhry Abdul Majeed.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=243173&Itemid=2

“PM inaugurates 84 MW hydropower project on Jhelum”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 15, 2013

MANGLA: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on July 15 inaugurated the first private sector bonga escape 84 megawatts hydropower project built on the Jhelum River seven kilometers away from Mangla Dam in Azad Kashmir. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister stated the project was a milestone in the country's history and would pave way for construction of similar projects to cater to the power needs of various sectors of economy. The project will not only substantially improve power supply but also open new vistas of development, he added.

The project, completed at a cost of \$ 215 million in 40 months, will produce 84 megawatts of electricity, which will be added to the national grid through a 132 kv transmission line. The project built with the assistance of Asian Development Bank and a number of other financial institutions, has been

completed by Laraib Energy Limited on built, operate and transfer (BOT) basis.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=242780&Itemid=2

Peer Muhammad, “Terror attack in G-B: Senate panel seeks update on Nanga Parbat progress”

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Relations has called a special meeting on July 15 to get an update from the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) authorities over the killing of 10 foreign tourists and their Pakistani cook on June 23 at the base camp of Nanga Parbat in G-B. Despite a lapse of over three weeks since the incident happened, there is limited success as far as the arrest of the culprits is concerned. As police had earlier identified 16 alleged suspects involved in the gruesome murder of foreign trekkers, only four have so far been nabbed and the rest still remain at large.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Haji Mohammad Adeel stated that he was concerned that there was no tangible progress in bringing the culprits to justice. He added “it seems that the authorities did not make any headway, as according to our information, two out of four arrested persons have handed themselves over to the police to prove their innocence.” He stated that the committee had now summoned the top administrative officers from G-B to get the latest update. “It is a matter between Pakistan and the countries from where the deceased belonged to and we want to exercise serious efforts to arrest them,” stated Adeel. He stated that as a parliamentary watchdog, “we will see the progress and pass recommendations accordingly.”

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/556769/ajk-cabinet-meeting-workers-wages-raised-to-rs9000/>

Ali Ahmad Jan / Jamal Khurshid / Waqas Naeem, “Timber movement: Illegal transportation from G-B continues unabated”

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The threat to forests in Gilgit-

Baltistan's (G-B) Diamer district may not have disappeared after all. Locals have alleged that the transportation of illegally-cut timber from Diamer to the rest of the country is still being carried out, in violation of a July 5 order by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to withdraw the Diamer timber movement policy.

The policy, which was notified by Sharif's predecessor, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf a day before he left office, had allowed four million cubic feet (cft) of legally and illegally cut timber, worth an estimated Rs8 billion, lying in Diamer's forests to be transported down country. But it just provided an excuse for the influential timber traders to chop more trees illegally and move them away from Diamer, according to environment activists.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/577016/timber-movement-illegal-transportation-from-g-b-continues-unabated/>

“Govt to ensure security for Sino-Pak projects, tourists: Barjees”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 15, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Barjees Tahir on July 15 stated the government would devise a strategic plan to ensure security for Sino-Pak developmental projects and foreign tourists in the country. The minister was briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan on the steps being taken by the government for the foreign tourists and the Chinese working on development projects in Pakistan. The Senate body met with Haji Adeel at the Parliament House. The minister cited his meeting with members of the Peace Committee GB and appreciated their efforts for sustainable peace. He stated the Gilgit Scouts would be equipped and trained to counter the new challenges.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=242771&Itemid=1

Tanveer Ahmed, “Foreign tourists killed in GB to avenge Waliur Rehman's killing”

Daily Times, July 16, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The foreign tourists at Nanga Parbat base camp in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) were

killed to avenge the killing of Waliur Rehman, the senior commander of Tehreek-e-Talban Pakistan (TTP), the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan was informed on July 15. The committee, which met under Senator Haji Adeel, was told that the four persons, nabbed by law enforcement agencies, have revealed that they had been directed to kill the foreign tourists to avenge Wali's killing in a US drone attack. GB Chief Secretary, Younas Dhaga told the committee that the porters who were taken hostage to guide the terrorists to the site also told the authorities during the investigation that the assailants raised the slogans that “we took revenge of Wali's killing in drone attacks after massacring the foreign tourists”.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\07\16\story_16-7-2013_pg7_3

Shabbir Mir, “Natural resources: Withdrawal of timber policy receives mixed reaction”

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2013

GILGIT: The withdrawal of the timber policy has received mixed reaction. While many welcomed the move, others have criticised Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for reversing his predecessor's decision. Elected representatives from Gilgit and Diamer valley are on the forefront opposing the withdrawal and blasted Sharif's government for 'depriving people of their rights.' The PM, who is also the chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) council, scrapped the timber policy on July 5.

The policy was initially put in place by former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in his final days of office. It allowed the transport and sale of four million cubic feet of legally and illegally chopped timber lying in Diamer valley. “This is nothing short of economic murder of the people of Diamer,” stated G-B Minister for Works Bashir Ahmad Khan, who is also a resident of the area. A senior member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), Bashir was one of the most proponent advocates of the policy, which was initially approved by the G-B Cabinet in 2011.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/577260/natural-resources-withdrawal-of-timber-policy-receives-mixed-reaction/>

“Plan to attract investment in AJK industrial sector”

The Nation, July 10, 2013

MIRPUR: An integrated phased plan is being inked by the AJK govt to encourage and promote foreign investment in the trade and industrial sector. AJK govt has also already chalked out a strategy for early revival of over 90 sick industrial units located in Mirpur and Bhimbher districts and to promote the industrialization process in both the districts as well as other parts of the area. The AJK government has decided to provide all possible required facilities and compensation to the intending foreign entrepreneurs. Sources pointed out that massive and bright potential was available for launching investments in hydropower generation, mineral and tourism sectors. Meanwhile, a high level meeting of the officials of the AJK government reviewed and discussed in length, with the owners of the Mirpur and Bhimber districts based sick industrial units, the ideas for quick revival of the units.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/10-Jul-2013/plan-to-attract-investment-in-ajk-industrial-sector>

“Rehabilitation: AJK PM addresses concerns of Mangla project affectees”

The Express Tribune, July 10, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on July 10 stated the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), as an important stakeholder, should ensure implementation of the Mangla Raising Project (MRP). While presiding at a meeting at Kashmir house, he called the MRP an important project for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. While addressing a protest held by the affectees, he directed the Wapda to fulfil its responsibilities and complete development work on the new city and towns meant for affectees as soon as possible. The meeting held for rehabilitation of affectees of MRP, Infrastructure and Impounding was also attended by Chairman Wapda, Syed Raghbir Abbas and various government officials.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/575139/rehabilitation-ajk-pm-addresses-concerns-of-mangla-project-affectees/>

“Minister urges release of funds for Mangla Dam”

Daily Times, July 13, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir underlined the need for taking solid measures for timely release of funds for Mangla Dam Expansion Project. Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on Mangla Dam Expansion Project informed him about hurdles and technical problems including release of funds in instalments. The minister was of the view the WAPDA should release the required funds for the project in one time instead of instalments in order to complete the project in time.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\07\13\story_13-7-2013_pg5_13

“Iqbal seeks US assistance in Bhasha dam project”

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 9, 2013

ISLAMABAD, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal on July 9 urged the United States government to support Bhasha Dam project for meeting Pakistan's future energy and water needs. The minister was talking to US Ambassador Richard Olson, who called on him at his office. Issues of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fields of development, education, and energy crisis, were discussed. Ahsan Iqbal told the Ambassador that it was due to lack of planning and mismanagement of past, that the country was facing acute energy crisis. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government has prepared a comprehensive plan for the future to solve the energy crisis on war footing, he added.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=242153&Itemid=2

Ali Hussain & Fazal Sher, “Foreigners' security beefed up”

Business Recorder, July 11, 2013

Following the recent tragic incident of the murder of 10 foreign mountaineers in Nanga Parbat, Gilgit-

Baltistan, the government has beefed up security of foreign tourists and those foreigners working on various projects in the country. Sources in the Foreign Office noted that the countries whose tourists were killed in the tragic incident at Nanga Parbat base-camp have conveyed their concerns and requested the government of Pakistan to ensure protection of their citizens.

Soon after the incident, in which two renowned mountaineers of China also lost their lives, the sources stated that the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded that the government of Pakistan take appropriate measures to guarantee the safety and legitimate rights of the Chinese citizens in Pakistan. This demand was mirrored by other governments whose nationals were killed in Nanga Parbat attack - Lithuania, Ukraine and Slovakia.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1209615/>

Shabbir Mir, “Combating militancy: G-B chief minister seeks additional resources from centre”

The Express Tribune, July 10, 2013

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister, Mehdi Shah asked the federal government to provide additional resources to help the region overcome terrorism. “We are doing our best despite our limited resources, but it is not enough. If the federal government is sincere, it should assist us in combating terrorism,” stated Shah on July 9 while referring to last month's brazen assault at a base camp of Nanga Parbat where militants in paramilitary uniform gunned down 10 foreign trekkers along with their Pakistani guide. “Geographically, G-B is the most sensitive region of the country and therefore merits more attention from the high-ups than the rest of the provinces,” he noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/574755/combating-militancy-g-b-chief-minister-seeks-additional-resources-from-centre/>

Waqas Naeem, “Timber movement from: G-B Federal govt withdraws controversial policy”

The Express Tribune, July 9, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has withdrawn a controversial timber policy for Gilgit-

Baltistan (G-B), which was approved by former Prime Minister Pervez Ashraf just a day before the end of his tenure, allowing transportation of timber worth billions of rupees from Diامر district to other parts of the country. Sources in the Climate Change Division confirmed on July 8 that they had received a notification from the PM office, dated July 5, withdrawing the timber movement policy and called for recommendations from the G-B Council as well as the division for further action. Environmentalists and local people have welcomed the move as a much-needed step.

The disastrous policy triggered a strong reaction from environmentalists and local people, who had protested against it ever since it was notified on March 15, 2013. The policy had allowed the transportation of around 4 million cubic feet (cft)-2.078mcf legally extracted and 1.936mcf illegally extracted -of timber worth Rs8 billion from Diامر to other parts of the country.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/574295/timber-movement-from-g-b-federal-govt-withdraws-controversial-policy/>

Shabbir Mir, “Call for reorganisation: PPP leader says party needs to revamp itself in G-B”

The Express Tribune, July 7, 2013

GILGIT: If the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is not reorganised in time, its fate in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) will not be any different from the rest of Pakistan after the May 11 general elections, stated senior leader Amjad Hussain. The general elections saw PPP shrinking from a national party to a regional party as it could only win from its stronghold, Sindh, that too not without being accused of rigging. Although the PPP blamed 'international players' for its defeat, independent observers stated it lost because of the poor performance and rampant corruption during its five-year term.

“The central leadership must take immediate measures before it is too late,” stated Hussain, adding the party revolves around Mehdi Shah (CM and PPP president in G-B) who makes decisions single-handedly. Hussain is also the chairman of the standing committee in G-B Council. In G-B's general elections held in 2009, PPP won by a two-thirds majority, leaving other parties far behind.

However, over the months, several PPP leaders shifted to the PML-N.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/573397/call-for-reorganisation-ppp-leader-says-party-needs-to-revamp-itself-in-g-b/>

“AJK unveils Rs30b healthcare projects”

The Nation, July 6, 2013

MIRPUR: AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed disclosed on July 5 that Rs30 billion development projects for dispensation of quality medical facilities to people were being launched across AJK in collaboration with the Global Care Foundation of Canada. The Prime Minister unveiled the mega healthcare plan after a meeting with a high-level delegation of the Global Care Foundation of Canada which called on him under the leadership of Dr Farah Deebe, Chairperson of the Foundation and Chairman Lt-Col (r) Sardar Abdul Rauf Magsi at the Prime Minister's House on July 5.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/06-Jul-2013/ajk-unveils-rs30b-healthcare-projects>

“Clarification: WAPDA says Diamer Bhasha Dam still top priority”

The Express Tribune, July 6, 2013

LAHORE: A spokesperson for the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has refuted a news report published on July 5, 2013, wherein it was stated that Wapda is paying more attention to the Dasu Hydropower Project, thereby putting the Diamer Bhasha Dam Project on the back burner.

The spokes person noted that Wapda is executing the Diamer Bhasha Dam as a priority project, and Dasu has never been preferred to it. “Diamer Bhasha Dam is of vital importance, being a water storage project, and need not to be compared to Dasu, which is only a run-of-the-river hydropower project,” as noted in an issued statement. The spokesperson also dismissed the claim that international donors had committed \$9 billion for the Diamer Basha Dam. He clarified that no such commitments were ever made.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/573041/clarification-wapda-says-diamer-bhasha-dam-still-top-priority/>

Zafar Bhutta, “Uncertainty prevails: Lenders seek guarantees before funding Bhasha Dam”

The Express Tribune, July 5, 2013

ISLAMABAD: As the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) pays more attention to the Dasu hydropower project, thereby putting the Diamer Bhasha Dam on the backburner, international loan commitments worth \$9 billion for the latter are in jeopardy. Multilateral and bilateral donors including the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had agreed to lend \$9 billion for the 4,500-megawatt Diamer Bhasha Dam. According to officials, Wapda's focus on the 4,300MW Dasu hydropower project caused problems in generating funds for Diamer Bhasha Dam. Now financiers are seeking a firm commitment from the government that it will accord top priority to Diamer Bhasha dam project.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/572609/uncertainty-prevails-lenders-look-guarantees-before-funding-bhasha-dam/>

“Press Release: Gilgit-Baltistan Issues: Nawaz Sharif's Immediate Attention”

Dardistan Times

Gilgit Baltistan is the only piece of region in this world, who's people are still deprived from their fundamental rights to govern themselves through their chosen representatives, backed by a parliament and to have access to an independent judiciary, Guaranteed under a Constitution, which in fact, is not only a violation of International Charter of Human Rights to which Pakistan is a signatory but also a disobedience of the orders/directives given on 28th May, 1999 by the Supreme Court of Pakistan (1999 SCMR 1379).

The present administrative, judicial and legislative system prevailing in Gilgit Baltistan is based on Gilgit Baltistan (Empowerment & Self Governance) Order 2009, which is, no doubt, just an Executive Order issued by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Northern Areas on September 9, 2009 wherein the fundamental power to amend the same has remained with the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Northern Areas (Government of Pakistan) and other meaningful powers have been entrusted to

Gilgit Baltistan Council which in fact, is not fully represented by the people of Gilgit Baltistan thus leaving behind very limited powers of municipal legislation to the directly elected Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly. The continuation of such kinds of ad hoc and cosmetic arrangements to give the people of Gilgit Baltistan false hopes of giving them real constitutional rights shall have disastrous outcomes for the region.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/News/327746983/gilgit-baltistan-issues-nawaz-sharifs-immediate-attention>

“Upcoming LBs' elections: CEC GB, NADRA sign contract for preparation of electoral rolls”

Business Recorder, July 3, 2013

Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) on July 2 signed a contract for preparation of computerised electoral rolls to be used in upcoming local bodies' elections as well as general elections for Legislative Assembly. "Error-free computerized electoral rolls for GB with a vision of 'one CNIC, one vote' will strengthen democracy in region", stated Tariq Malik, Chairman NADRA.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1206694/>

Mushtaq Ghuman, “Economic agenda held hostage to terrorism: minister”

Business Recorder, July 3, 2013

The government fears that its economic agenda is being held hostage by terrorists and is working on measures to deal with this situation effectively, well-informed sources noted. Remarks to this effect came in the second federal cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on June 26, 2013. Privatisation Minister, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan who was initially tipped as Commerce Minister, sources stated, like other cabinet colleagues was disturbed over the incident at Nanga Parbat which claimed lives of a dozen foreigners. "The economic agenda of PML (N) government is being held hostage to terrorism. It is imperative to formulate a national security policy at the earliest to combat the menace of terrorism,"

sources quoted Khurram Dastgir as saying in the meeting.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-a-economy/189/1206564/>

“What financial crunch?: AJK legislators' team to visit US, Canada”

The Express Tribune, July 2, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: While the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government finds itself in financial woes to meet its day-to-day expenditures, a six-member delegation of AJK Legislative Assembly is planning a week-long visit to USA and Canada. It has been learnt that the visit will cost Rs10 million to the exchequer. A daily allowance of 15 to 20 per cent will also be given to each visiting member from taxpayers' money.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/571064/what-financial-crunch-ajk-legislators-team-to-visit-us-canada/>

“Tourism declines in northern areas”

Pakistan Today, July 21, 2013

The investigation report compiled by the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) claimed that terrorists' attack on the foreign tourists in Nanga Parbat was aimed at abolishing tourism from Pakistan. As per the report, the GB government stated that the reason behind the attack was to divert foreign tourists towards neighboring countries including India, Nepal and China instead of Pakistan. According to investigations carried out by the GB government, after the 9/11 incident a few number of foreign tourists visited Pakistan and after this incident all tourists have been automatically diverted to the neighboring countries. Investigation report stated that GB wild life department was generating Rs 209 million per year from tourism in regards to hunting only. After the incident the tourism industry, especially the national route and Central Asia route has been severely affected.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/07/21/city/islamabad/tourism-declines-in-northern-areas/>

Economic Developments

“LoC traders to pitch for transit trade during historic AJK trip”

Pakistan Today, July 19, 2013

The first-ever traders delegation from Jammu and Kashmir would go to Azad Kashmir in August 2013 which would help promote transit trade on the LoC on the pattern of the Wagah border. Traders stated that the LoC trade between Uri and Muzaffarabad possessed huge potential for transit trade. A 45-member delegation of traders would visit Azad Kashmir on August 26 to explore possibilities of strengthening trade-ties between the two parts of Kashmir. “We will stress on increasing the number of tradable items as the governments of Indo- Pak had limited these to 21 items. We will try to ask for imported cement from Azad Kashmir,” stated Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) President, Abdul Hamid Punjabi.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/07/19/news/profit/loc-traders-to-pitch-for-transit-trade-during-historic-ajk-trip/>

“Commodity price hike: AJK traders experience mixed fortunes”

The Express Tribune, July 17, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: While some traders in Azad Jammu and Kashmir are benefiting from the rising demand for essential commodities during the month of Ramzan, others complained that the unfairly high rates set by pricing control committees have forced them to stop selling. “From the first day of Ramadan, meat, fruits and vegetables sales have increased. There is also a healthy demand for Fast Moving Consumer Goods,” local trader Shaukat Nawaz stated. Sales in general have increased by 30 to 40 per cent but traders who offer special discounts have witnessed a 50 to 60 per cent daily rise.

Butchers in mutton market stated that mutton consumption has also increased as most residents preferred to increase their protein intake during Sehri and Iftar times. The demand for mutton is reported to be worth around Rs5 to 10 lakh a day. Other traders, who have not been so lucky, claimed that price control committees had failed to address their complaints regarding price hikes. The committees have not been able to control the prices of essential goods in Muzaffarabad Kotli, Mirpur and Rawalkot, they stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/577916/commodity-price-hike-ajk-traders-experience-mixed-fortunes/>

“Construction of 147MW Patrind Hydro project begins in AJK”

The Nation, July 22, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Second hydro IPP of 147 MW in the private sector, processed by Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) has started construction and its ground breaking is likely to take place in the next month. The estimated investment on the project namely Patrind Hydro power is 362 million US dollars and it is located in the AJK. The project would start its commercial operation in 2017. First hydro has already started its operation and contributing 84 MW and last week Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated it.

In line with the policy of the federal government, PPIB is working on various projects of about 1100 MW to be completed during next five years. Sources noted that the PPIB is expediting the Gulpur hydro project of 100 mw, the third hydro IPP in the private sector to be completed by December 2017. All the major formalities are being finalized and the project is in the financial close phase. PPIB has already successfully managed to induct 29 independent private

projects under 1994, 1995 and 2002 policies, totalling about 8657 MW in the national grid which is more than 50% of the total generation of the country. Due to these projects the country received a foreign direct investment of \$ 9.4 billion and attracted leading international and local investors to Pakistan's power sector.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/22-Jul-2013/construction-of-147mw-patrind-hydro-project-begins-in-ajk>

International Developments

Shahbaz Rana / Samra Aamir, “Diamer Bhasha Dam: US approves grant for due diligence, feasibility study”

The Express Tribune, July 25, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The United States has approved a grant for verifying feasibility and geological studies of \$14-billion Diamer Bhasha Dam, marking the first concrete support from Washington for the much-delayed project. The funds will be provided through the United States Agency for International Development (USTATED) and will be used to finance the due diligence of feasibility studies. The US will support construction of the project so that donors and international financial institutions can gain confidence. The US will provide \$20 million for due diligence, which will be done by international consultants, stated Shakil Durrani, the government's adviser on Diamer Bhasha Dam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/581470/diamer-bhasha-dam-us-approves-grant-for-due-diligence-feasibility-study/>

Senge Sering, “China's Growing Interest in Gilgit-Baltistan”

July 16, 2013

Recent agreements between China and Pakistan during the visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Beijing on July 4 reflect China's growing interest in Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan. One must greatly admire China for making optimal use of geography to promote economic and strategic interests. Instead of conquering lands, China decided to befriend her South Asian neighbors and this interdependence resulting from economic and security partnerships, is often claimed as a diplomatic victory.

<http://www.sharnoffsglobalviews.com/baltistan-china-143/>

“Chinese firms evince interest to take up more ventures in Pakistan”

The Economic Times, July 7, 2013

BEIJING: Chinese firms engaged in big infrastructure projects in Pakistan expressed their willingness to take up more ventures in the country, including PoK. State-owned Gezhouba company, which is constructing Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), told Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that it would like to take part in the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, designed to generate 4,500 MW of power in Gilgit-Baltistan in PoK.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-07-07/news/40421471_1_two-all-weather-allies-sharif-gilgit-baltistan

“Chinese company Three Gorges has offered assistance for Diamer Bhasha Dam”

July 7, 2013

BEIJING: A Chinese company, Three Gorges has offered assistance for Diamer Bhasha Dam. Chairman of the Three Gorges Corporation of China, Cao Guang Jing, who called on the Prime Minister told that his company was executing nine power projects in Pakistan. The Prime Minister assured the company's head to address any problem confronting the company in execution of projects. Cao GuangJing offered company's technical assistance to Pakistan for Diamer Bhasha Dam project besides expressing willingness to carry out more hydel power projects in the country.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=231755&catname=Business>

Other Developments

“Capacity-building: Gilgit to come at par with latest data collection methods”

The Express Tribune, July 28, 2013

GILGIT: The 'Teacher Mapping and Projection Model' (TMPM) project was launched in Gilgit on July 27. The project hopes to improve data collection methods in the region. “The initiative aims to bring in modern data collection software tools to generate better and reliable information for institutions,” stated USTATED Teacher Education Project's Provincial Director, Jawad Ali at the inauguration. The project has been sponsored by USTATED. G-B's Education Planning Director, Muhammad Abideen remarked with the increasing number of schools, enrolment and teachers, old techniques can no longer be relied upon to maintain and update information.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/583183/capacity-building-gilgit-to-come-at-par-with-latest-data-collection-methods/>

Shabbir Mir, “Undeterred and determined: Climbers upstage terrorists”

The Express Tribune, July 21, 2013

GILGIT: A group of Romanian mountaineers scaled Nanga Parbat on July 19, becoming the first expedition to achieve the feat after last month's massacre at the foot of Pakistan's second tallest peak. Ten foreign trekkers and their Pakistani guide were mowed to death by gunmen in paramilitary fatigue at a base camp of Nanga Parbat, in Gilgit-Baltistan on June 23 in an attack claimed by both the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Jundullah sectarian extremist group.

“We learnt around that three of them [mountaineers] had reached the summit while another two were about to scale it,” stated Muhammad Ali, the expedition organiser. The ascent of the 8,126-metre-high Nanga Parbat known as the 'Killer Mountain' came nearly a month after the June 23

massacre which has already resulted in the cancellation of nearly 30 foreign expeditions.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/579816/undeterred-and-determined-climbers-upstage-terrorists>

“Landslide: Chinese engineer, local worker killed near Attabad Lake”

The Express Tribune, July 16, 2013

GILGIT: A Chinese engineer and a local worker were killed as a result of a landslide near the Attabad Lake on July 16. Both the labourers were working at a construction site. The local worker was identified as Zohaib Nazeer. Earlier on May 2, at least one labourer was killed and three others, including two Chinese engineers, were injured in a landslide while working in the same area.

CRBC, a Chinese road construction company, is working on constructing a tunnel from Attabad to Gojal as an alternative to the Karakoram Highway, part of which has submerged after a landslide formed a lake on the Hunza River. In a similar incident in January 2010, at least 19 people were killed in a landslide near Attabad village adjacent to Hunza, which is about 120 kilometers from Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/577610/landslide-chinese-engineer-local-worker-killed-near-attabad-lake/>

“Mitigating Measures: ERRA chief calls for implementing of building codes”

The Express Tribune, July 3, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Almost eight years have passed since the devastating October 8, 2005 earthquake, however, Azad Jammu and Kashmir is yet to be fully redeveloped. The reason for this is 'slow release of funds', according to the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) chief. Of the 14,000 projects approved, 9,500 different structures such as buildings, schools, hospitals have reached completion whereas 2,500

are still in the pipeline, stated Erra Deputy Chairman Major-General Azeem Asif on July 2. He further informed that Erra has reconstructed 600,000 shock-proof houses in disaster-prone areas across Pakistan.

At a workshop titled, "Implementation of Building Code for Disaster Risk Reduction", Asif stated the pace of redevelopment is dependent on funding as well as the nature of the project. "After any mega disaster in the world, it takes up to 10-15 years to reconstruct and rehabilitate the region" stated Asif.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/571534/mitigating-measures-erra-chief-calls-for-implementing-of-building-codes/>

"Disasters management"

The News, July 15, 2013

Gilgit-Baltistan, a region surrounded by gigantic mountains, is prone to natural disasters like landslides, earthquakes, avalanches and floods. It has also been experiencing glacier outburst and torrential monsoon rains for the last many years that add to the miseries and suffering of the dwellers. To respond to such disasters, a Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority has been established to rescue and rehabilitate disaster-affected people.

But this organisation lacks skilled workers and machinery such as excavator machines and bulldozers. It has to be equipped with human and material resources. The rehabilitation process must be fair, transparent and quick. An effective mechanism of monitoring needs to be developed to ensure transparency in the processes and make sure that assistance is provided to the deserving people.

Karim Mohammad Khan

Ghizar

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrint.aspx>

"Rail, fibre optic links along KKH planned"

The Express Tribune, May 3, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will soon be embarking on an ambitious plan to expand its strategic road and rail networks to ease travel and facilitate trade with the Central Asian Republics, China and other

regional countries. Among the eight agreements inked during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's recent visit to China, one is for an \$18 billion project to build a road and rail track, including a string of tunnels in the mountainous track passing over a height of 4,693 metres to be used as part of the Pakistan-China 'economic corridor'.

The corridor, planned to boost trade between the two countries, will use the existing 1,300km Karakoram Highway (KKH), including a new section currently being realigned due to construction of the Diamer Bhasha Dam, and a 700km extension further south up to the Gwadar Port, for fast transportation of goods.

<http://dawn.com/news/1029045/rail-fibre-optic-links-along-kkh-planned>

"Gems manufacturing centre established"

The News, July 14, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company (PGJDC) has established Gems and Jewellery Training and Manufacturing Centre (GJTMC) in Gilgit. It is estimated that almost 95 percent of precious and semi-precious stones are found in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). GJTMC Gilgit, under the supervision of PJGDC, aims to achieve excellence through improvement of human resource skills as well as extending its production in Pakistan. "Gilgit-Baltistan is blessed with unlimited precious and semi-precious stones," an official stated. "Despite the mineral wealth, there has been no coordinated effort to reap the benefits through promotion of awareness about gems, skill development and market information and facilitation to miners." He added that the PGJDC has imparted gemstone faceting carving, gemmology and manual jewellery designing training to many students and the number is increasing".

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-189740-Gems-manufacturing-centre-established>

Shabbir Mir, "Chilas town: Saving 'honour' or family riches"

The Express Tribune, July 14, 2013

CHILAS: The highlands, as beautiful and idyllic as they may be, are also very troubled. Chilas town, in

particular, the headquarters for Gilgit-Baltistan's Diamer Valley, an area rich in natural resources but one that hardly has a 10% literacy rate has also seen a staggering 12 cases of honour killings this year alone. One such incident is the killing of a mother and her two daughters last month, allegedly over a simple audio clip recording. And yet, as a follow-up reveals, the case may be more complicated.

Shrouded in mystery- The triple murders occurred on June 24, a day after armed men stormed a Nanga Parbat base camp, fatally shooting 10 foreign mountaineers and their Pakistani guide. According to the police, 65-year-old Iqbal, nicknamed Kutooro, shot his step-mother, 45, and his two sisters, aged 16 and 18, after hearing a 'objectionable' recorded conversation in which the mother was allegedly talking to a man identified as Sartaj. When the audio clip made rounds, and residents heard about the area, Iqbal carried out the attack to 'restore' the family's honour.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/576737/chilas-town-saving-honour-or-family-riches/>

“Checking pollution: Ban on dumping waste in rivers”

The Express Tribune, July 11, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The district administration on July 10 imposed a ban on dumping solid waste and rubble in rivers Neelum and Jhelum. Construction companies working on projects in the capital city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) will not be allowed to toss rubble in the rivers because it pollutes the waters of River Neelum and River Jhelum, according to a notification issued by the Muzaffarabad deputy commissioner.

Initially, the AJK Environmental Protection Agency raised the issue with construction companies working in earthquake-hit parts of Muzaffarabad. They were asked to stop dumping rubble in the rivers to prolong the life of the recently raised Mangla Dam and save the fish. “Strict action would be taken if the construction companies are found guilty,” the notification stated. Members of civil society and non-governmental organisations working on environment-related issues hailed the

decision of the district administration to impose the ban and assured their support.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/575333/checking-pollution-ban-on-dumping-waste-in-rivers/>

“Infrastructure overhaul: Workshop held on master plans for Gilgit city”

The Express Tribune, July 10, 2013

GILGIT: Work on the preparation of master plans for Gilgit and Skardu towns of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) got underway on July 9, with environment experts reviewing possible ecological implications. During a one-day workshop, a senior official of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Islamabad office, Saeed Ahmad, along with Dr David, an international consultant, assisted local officials on how to make the master plans eco-friendly. “The objective of inviting a consultant and an IUCN official was to train local officials working on the plans about the various environmental concerns they should keep in mind,” stated Haider Raza, an IUCN representative in Gilgit who organised the workshop.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/574769/infrastructure-overhaul-workshop-held-on-master-plans-for-gilgit-city/>

Tara Brady, “Smiling sisters shot dead for dancing in the rain: Pakistani girls, 15 and 16, killed along with their mother for making video which 'stained the family honour'”

Daily Mail, June 30, 2013

Two teenage sisters have been murdered in Pakistan after they were accused of tarnishing their family's name by making a video of themselves dancing in the rain. The girls, aged 15 and 16, are seen running around in traditional dress with two other younger children outside their bungalow in the town of Chilas, in the northern region of Gilgit. The sisters, named as Noor Basra and Noor Sheza, appear to break into dance and one even flashes a smile at the camera.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2351836/Smiling-sisters-shot-dead-dancing-rain-Pakistani-girls-15-16-killed-mother-making-video-stained-family-honour.html>

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 5,180 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: Nine

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche, Skardu, Kharmang and Shigar 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

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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