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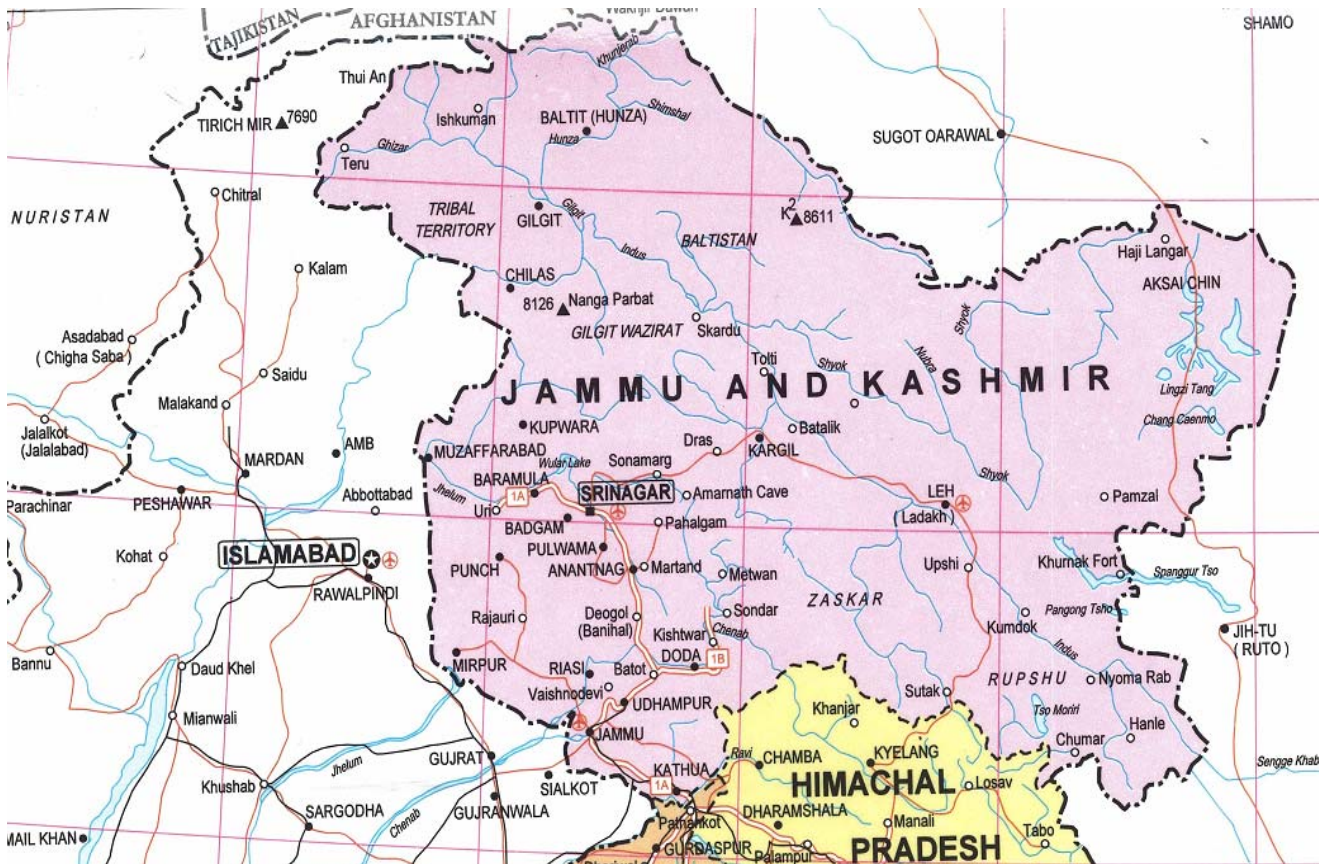
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

Wishing all our readers a very happy and prosperous New Year 2010!

The city of Muzaffarabad witnessed a suicide bomb attack on December 28- the day of Muharram. This attack raised major concerns among the authorities who felt PoK was secure from militancy even though it is playing havoc all across Pakistan. Those killed in the suicide attack were policemen as one of the reports indicates. This is the second instance where the state authorities have been targeted by militants in PoK, first being the June 2009 attack when an army post was ambushed by a suicide bomber.

Elections in Gilgit Baltistan are over and the process of government formation is underway. The federal government in consultation with the local leaders is contemplating on the formation and composition of the first ever cabinet in Gilgit Baltistan. Meanwhile, opposition to the Gilgit Baltistan self governance package is far from over. Prominent leader from the region made a comprehensive presentation before the House of Commons in Britain to let out the grievances of the nationalist leaders and their parties who were deprived from participating in the recently held elections.

The issue features reports on the dwindling state of cross LoC trade which has suffered immensely in the absence of proper facilities and lack of political support. Traders on both sides are disappointed and have threatened to call of trading activities completely.

Priyanka Singh

International Investment Conference for Gilgit-Baltistan

*Senge Hasnan Sering**

It was the Karakoram Highway (KKH) built with Chinese assistance which allowed Pakistan to establish its writ in the disputed region of Gilgit-Baltistan to a large extent.¹ In 1978, when KKH linked both countries, it enabled them to enhance their bilateral relations, guard their frontiers against their rivals, and enhance the economic and strategic depth in the neighboring countries.

In addition, the significance of the region increased manifolds after the discovery of vast resources of water reserves, minerals and metal base. Currently, more than US\$500 million worth of gemstones reach international markets from Gilgit-Baltistan. Surveys conducted by Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) reveal that valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan are rich with gold and base metals.² In some places, gold content goes up to 300 parts per million which is extremely high compared to gold quality found in Africa and Australia. Other precious stones found in Gilgit-Baltistan are Ruby, Emerald, Sapphire, Aquamarine, Tourmaline, Garnet, Fluorite, Pargasite, Spinal, Zircon, Topaz, Berylspars, Corundum, Margarite, Serpentine, Sulphur, Moonstone and Amethyst. As of now, several Pakistani and Chinese companies are already involved in extraction of the mineral wealth.

Encouraged by these activities and with an aim to further enhance resource exploitation, Pakistan organized an international investment conference on January 4, 2010 to open up Gilgit-Baltistan for the investors.³ The sectors prioritized included energy, tourism, communication, minerals & mines and food industry, particularly fruit storage, processing and packaging industry.⁴ An exhibition and cultural show was also arranged on the sidelines of the conference where various subject specialists and experts talked about available investment opportunities in Gilgit-Baltistan.⁵ The governors of all provinces, chief ministers, federal and provincial ministers, advisers, ambassadors, international companies, and presidents

of various chambers of commerce participated in this mega event.

Addressing the conference, acting governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, Mr. Kaira, announced to establish special economic and industrial zones over an area of 1,500 acres in Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that although billions of dollars can be earned by developing the tourism and mineral industry, however, Pakistan lacks adequate ground infrastructure and sufficient energy to harness these opportunities⁶ and current Chinese energy related projects will make power available to the growing industry.⁷ Further, a three-lane road from Gilgit to the Chinese border is being constructed to enhance mobility. In this regard, China has lent US\$125 million for up-gradation of KKH. Further, hydro-electric projects worth US\$19.6 billion and generating 11,500 megawatts of energy are under construction.⁸ Moreover, work on two air routes, one from Gilgit to Kashgar and the second from Skardo to Kashgar and Kathmandu is under way to facilitate tourists and investors.⁹ Few months ago, Pakistani prime minister also announced Rs. 15 billion worth of economic incentives for Gilgit-Baltistan to improve its infrastructure, energy base, tourism and social services.¹⁰ Further, Rs. 10 billion has also been allocated in the current PSDP for the above-mentioned projects.¹¹

In the post cold-war era, as the relationship between nation states has evolved opening up doors to multilateral trade and investments. Pakistan is allowing international companies to invest in natural resource exploitation to develop its economy.¹² Foreign investment in Pakistan has fallen sharply by more than 30% in the last two years.¹³ Many analysts think that Gilgit-Baltistan can provide the means to reverse economic downfall of Pakistan. Given future strategic links of consumer markets and energy producers, Gilgit-Baltistan can be a vital supply line of mineral and fossil wealth for countries of Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, India and China. One example is Italy's ENI, which is planning to build pipe gas from Central Asia to China, Pakistan and India. Given Afghanistan's security situation, the Karakoram corridor may help to fulfill this mega dream.¹⁴

Despite such a huge potential, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have largely failed to benefit from their own natural resources and communication networks, while revenue worth billions of dollars fill coffers in Islamabad. As of today, per capita income of the region is one-fourth of national average¹⁵ and literacy rate is less than 15%.¹⁶ Further, locals have no role in Pakistan's decision making process to build mega projects on their land. Instead, they face brutality and suppression when they demand their due share.¹⁷ In case of the current investment conference, the organizers, which are Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industries (LCCI), Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, regional minister for Investment and Gilgit-Baltistan governor are all imported from Pakistan.¹⁸ Recently proclaimed empowerment ordinance of Gilgit-Baltistan authorizes the governor and not the local legislature to deal with matters pertaining to water and mineral resources. It is feared that the investors will most likely come from Punjab too who may be biased towards government's political agenda in the region.¹⁹ Such policies do suggest Pakistan's intentions to exploit resources of Gilgit-Baltistan for the benefit of Punjab and continue the policy of encroachment on local services and assets. In the long term, many wealthy Pakistanis with political inclination will make Gilgit-Baltistan their home and establish control over its resources; it will lead to marginalization of the natives, demographic change, cultural degradation and competition over resources leading to ethnic and religious feuds. Pakistan sees resource exploitation and infrastructure development as a means to integrate the people of Gilgit-Baltistan which was reiterated by the acting governor on the first day of Investment Conference. He affirmed that "federal government was taking solid steps to strengthen the federation" and according to the chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, the establishment of Gilgit-Baltistan province is a step in that direction.²⁰

Before establishing itself in Gilgit-Baltistan,²¹ LCCI was instrumental along with the Punjab government, which allotted 500 acres of land free of cost²³ to incept the first-ever China specific economic and industrial zone at Faisalabad and Kalashah Kaku.²² More than 70 Chinese companies are presently providing financial solutions in specialized areas including power,

engineering, telecom, construction and infrastructure, mergers & acquisitions, debt syndications and private equity placements. Several of these projects are established in places very close to the Indian border, like Gilgit, Skardu, Muzaffarabad, Lahore and Kalashah Kaku. These developments have national security implications for India which regards the entire J&K as its integral part.

Opening up opportunities to international investors in a strategically located region, which is illegally occupied by Pakistan and claimed by India will increase geo-political sensitivities. As the international community increases its stakes in the region, it may lead to Lebanization of Gilgit-Baltistan.²⁴ Competition among the international players over resources may lead to interference in local politics and further socio-political fragmentation causing disharmony and a permanent weakening of the society.²⁵ Possible involvement of US companies in resource extraction will bring America and Pakistan closer. This may have some implications for India's strategic interests.²⁶ On the other hand, China may also react to American involvement given that in September 2009 it expressed unhappiness on Pakistan allowing US soldiers to visit Gilgit-Baltistan as tourists. Further, the arrival of west may sway the Taliban to increase their activities in Gilgit-Baltistan to counter such influences. This may in turn encourage Islamic extremist movements in the neighboring East-Turkestan and heighten China's concerns for its territorial security. China believes that many among the proponents of three-evils namely extremism, terrorism and separatism reside in Pakistan and support Uighur freedom fighters. It was on China's warning that Pakistan carried out a limited operation in Gilgit-Baltistan in May 2008 and expelled 300 suspected militants from Gilgit who could have threatened Chinese interests in the region. China is concerned for the safety of its 10,000 workforce involved in the completion of 125 projects in different parts of the country and many of these projects are located in Gilgit-Baltistan.²⁷

Gilgit-Baltistan is predominantly a Shia region. Iran has very close religious connections with the predominant Shias of the region and their involvement may cause apprehensions among the westerners as well the Sunnis of Pakistan. The very reason compelled

Pakistan to refuse permission to the Iranians to establish health related projects in Gilgit-Baltistan in 2001. Further, Iranian influence can enhance Islamic radicalism which will not go down well with Pakistan's neighbours like Tajikistan and India. In the end, involvement of international community to enhance economic growth may also become a tool to create political instability and strategic insecurities for neighboring countries.

The spinoff of such interventions may in the end prove costly to Pakistan's relations with China.²⁸ China has historically claimed Gilgit and Hunza. During 1949-1963, it made several attempts to occupy these districts, which was thwarted by Pakistani army with the help of the forces loyal to the Mir of Hunza. Further, despite acknowledging Pakistan as an indispensable strategic ally, it continues to occupy Raskam valley of Hunza and Shaksgam valley of Baltistan. In the wake of a possible diplomatic stand off, border disputes may once again resurface to hurt Pakistan's territorial interests.

Pakistan will have to strike a balance between its financial needs and the long term peace and social harmony in Gilgit-Baltistan. Further, it must ensure a genuine role for the locals in political and economic decision making. The long term impact of foreign intervention in a disputed region like Gilgit-Baltistan will be harmful for the natives²⁹ since Pakistani and international investors will tend to maximize revenues in shortest possible timeframe even if it comes at the cost of environmental, demographic and cultural degradation of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Endnotes

- 1 Isapahani, M. Z. (1989), 'Roads and Rivals: The Politics of Access in the Borderlands of Asia', London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd. Publishers p. 220
- 2 <http://www.hunzetimes.com/archives/3002>
- 3 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=215164> Friday, December 25, 2009
- 4 <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/18-investors-urged-to-tap-gilgit-baltistan-gems-am-02>
- 5 http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=216887
- 6 Terrorism and Talibanization has also damaged the industry which saw 12% decline in 2008-9.

- Government has announced new tourism policy to provide soft loans to tour companies; http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C05%5Cstory_5-1-2010_pg5_11
- 7 <http://www.hunzetimes.com/archives/2788?instance=tml-1&action=logIn>
- 8 Electricity generation capacity of local water resource range anywhere between 50,000 MW to 80,000 MW
- 9 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=215164> Friday, December 25, 2009
- 10 <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/11-rs12-billion-set-aside-for-uplift-of-gilgit-baltistan-il-10>
- 11 <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/18-investors-urged-to-tap-gilgit-baltistan-gems-am-02>
- 12 Pakistan has established tax-free economic zones in Punjab and Sindh province, which has attracted many international corporations like Procter & Gamble, Japan's Yamaha, and Italy's ENI, ENEL and Terna. ENI tends to double its investment in Pakistan to US\$3 billion by end of 2011; <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/business/09-pakistan-pins-hopes-on-tax-free-investment-zones-szh-05> <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/01-Oct-2009/Pak-Italy-sign-defence-accord>
- 13 <http://in.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idINSIN48201420090415>
- 14 ENI could use the current pipeline extending from Turkmenistan to Xinjiang (China) via Kazakhstan and bring gas to Pakistan and India through the Karakoram Corridor; http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C01%5Cstory_1-10-2009_pg7_1
- 15 Per capita per annum income of Gilgit-Baltistan, which is less than US\$ 268 is one fourth of Pakistan's average; AKRSP socio-economic survey SESNAC 2005
- 16 15% male; 3.5% female (World Bank estimates of 1997)
- 17 <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19800119&id=XUARAAAIBAJ&sjid=vuYDAAAIBAJ&pg=3412,4285194>
- 18 http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C12%5C25%5Cstory_25-12-2009_pg7_20

- ¹⁹ http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=216390
- ²⁰ http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=93177&Itemid=2
- ²¹ Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan has signed 50 MoUs with different investors of Punjab in January 2010; http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C07%5Cstory_7-1-2010_pg1_5
- ²² http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C23%5Cstory_23-10-2009_pg5_12
- ²³ <http://pk2.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/chinanews/200607/20060702607265.html>
- ²⁴ Lebanization in the broad sense is used to describe a situation when the international community claims stakes in a particular country followed by establishing proxy political groups to back their interests and struggle to gain power and control over resources. Political situation pertaining to factionalization in countries like Afghanistan, Somalia and Lebanon may help understand the concept better. The term also relates to a situation in which non-state actors gain considerable influence and power to affect political process in a country.
- ²⁵ So far, only Indonesia has shown interest in investing in agriculture, coal and mining sector; <http://gecanews.wordpress.com/2010/01/06/indonesia-willing-to-invest-in-gilgit-baltistan-agriculture-sector/>
- ²⁶ India has strongly objected to presence of Chinese workers and investment in PoK. Similar reaction may come from India if investors from other countries arrive in Gilgit-Baltistan and help Pakistan gain economic and political leverage in the region.
- ²⁷ <http://alaiwah.wordpress.com/tag/gilgit/>
- ²⁸ <http://www.danielpipes.org/comments/105886>
- ²⁹ India has strongly objected to Chinese projects in PoK including Gilgit-Baltistan; http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/india-protests-pakistans-gilgit-order-china-aided-dam-lead_100246251.html

* *The Author is Visiting Fellow at IDSA. The views expressed are his personal and not that of IDSA.*

Political Developments

“10 killed, 81 hurt in Muzaffarabad blast, PM announces aid for Muzaffarabad blast victims,”

Pakistan Tribune, December 28, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: At least 10 people were killed and 81 injured on Sunday after a suicide bomber blew himself up at the gate of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Muzaffarabad. Meanwhile, Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir has announced financial support of Rs.200,000 for the victims. According to reports, a suicide bomber blew himself up near CMH in Muzaffarabad. Pakistani Army reached the scene after the incident and initiated rescue work. Injured were shifted to the CMH. Hospital sources confirmed that six dead bodies of policemen were brought in.

<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?222756>

“U.S. Embassy Condemns Terrorist Attacks in Muzaffarabad and Karachi,”

December 29, 2009

ISLAMABAD: “The U.S. Embassy in Pakistan condemns the terrorist attacks targeting innocent people during Muharram processions on December 27 & 28 in Muzaffarabad and Karachi. We extend our condolences to the victims’ families and friends, and to the Pakistani people.”

<http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-09122901.html>

Maqbool Malik, “Naheed may be offered Governor’s slot of G-B,”

December 31, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Naheed Khan, former MNA and political secretary to the assassinated PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto, is unlikely to accept party offer for the slot of the first governor of Gilgit-Baltistan. “We don’t need any office. What we expect from the party leadership is to consider our proposals seriously floated for the betterment of the party,” Senator Dr Safdar Abbasi, husband of Naheed Khan stated on December 30.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/31-Dec-2009/Naheed-may-be-offered-Governors-slot-of-GB>

“Decision to appoint woman as GB governor hailed,”

December 29, 2009

GILGIT: The Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) women wing Gilgit-Baltistan chapter welcomed the decision to appoint a lady governor in the region. “We should not forget the golden era of Malika Jawar Khatoon who ruled Gilgit-Baltistan with sagacity and dignity centuries ago. She proved the best reformer and worked for the betterment of the poor by developing agriculture, trade, unity and internal security,” said Sadia Danish, President, PPP women wing and member, Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly.

<http://skardu.wordpress.com/2009/12/31/decision-to-appoint-woman-as-gb-governor-hailed/>

Shabbir Ahmed Mir, “People of GB unlikely to accept woman as governor,”

The News, December 28, 2009

GILGIT: President Asif Ali Zardari’s announcement at Naudero on December 27 that a woman would be appointed as governor of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has shocked the people here as it is contrary to what the authorities in the Prime Minister office had been stating for the past couple of weeks. On December 24, the name of a prominent banker of Gilgit-Baltistan, Sher Jehan Mir, was repeatedly flashed on various TV channels as the likely first governor of GB. A number of newspapers also carried the report as their lead story the next day. Sources claim that Sher Jehan Mir had held a meeting with the high-ups in Islamabad. They also claim that he is likely to meet the prime minister in a day or two.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=215745

“NA committee voices concern over rigging in Gilgit, Baltistan assembly polls”

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly (NA) standing committee on Kashmir affairs and Gilgit and Baltistan voiced grave concern over rigging in Gilgit, Baltistan assembly polls and urged the government and election commission to evolve effective strategy to check rigging in future.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=156195>

“Hunger drove me to the gun: Pakistani militant,”

December 31, 2009

JAMMU: Pakistani national Tanveer Ahmad, 22, spoke of how in a bid to earn a living, he was lured into militancy, indoctrinated in camps, pushed into India - only to find himself in custody of Indian security forces. Tanveer is uneducated and belongs to a poor family in Manshera in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. He was caught by the Indian Army on November 15, 2009 while attempting to cross over into the Indian side from the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch sector.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/hunger-drove-me-to-the-gun-pakistani-militant_100296906.html

Usman Manzoor, “AJK CJ retires today, unheard, unsung,”

December 31, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Acting Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) High Court, Justice Sardar Muhammad Nawaz Khan retired on December 31, 2009, without being declared the permanent chief justice of the AJK HC by the Government of Pakistan for the last two-and-a-half years. Justice Muhammad Nawaz Khan had filed a petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, along with another judge of the superior court of the AJK, asking the apex court to direct the government to rectify the wrongs committed by the Musharraf regime in the past regarding the AJK judiciary.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=216047

“President Zardari to address solidarity rally in Mirpur,”

Pakistan Times

MIRPUR: President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated that President Asif Ali Zardari will address Pakistan Solidarity Rally in Mirpur on January 5, 2010. He further added more than 150,000 Kashmiris will participate in Pakistan Solidarity Rally.

<http://www.pakistantimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=7291>

“A leaderless nation in mourning,”

(Editorial), Pakistan Daily, December 31, 2009

The terrorist targeting of the 10th Muharram procession in Karachi somehow was not unexpected. A similar devastating act of terror had targeted a Muharram procession in Azad Jammu and Kashmir on the 9th of Muharram. The attack was first of its kind for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), which has not seen such violence before. In terms of suicide attacks, this was the second time it occurred in AJK, the first being the attack against a Pakistan army truck in which two soldiers were killed.

<http://www.daily.pk/a-leaderless-nation-in-mourning-13753/>

“AJK soil to become terrorists’ graveyard,”

December 29, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Zulfikar Khan stated that people of AJK live in religious harmony but terrorists wanted to create panic in the region through terrorism adding that Kashmir’s soil will be made a graveyard for terrorists. Speaking to media on December 29 noted said the involvement of foreign hand in suicide attack at Muzaffarabad could not be ruled out. Kashmiris will foil the nefarious designs of coward terrorists. AJK president said that terrorists have selected a wrong soil for their activities because Kashmiris are the victims of terrorism since centuries and they would face terrorists valiantly.

<http://news.wateen.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=4259>

Imran Mukhtar, “Demos against Muzaffarabad, Karachi blasts,”

December 30, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Scores of activists of Shia organisations while condemning the Interior Minister’s statement to limit the mourning processions and raising anti-government, anti-Taliban as well as anti-US slogans held a protest demonstration against suicide blasts in Muzaffarabad and Karachi. The activists of Imamia Students Organisation (ISO), Imamia

Organisation, Majlis Wadhat-e-Muslameen and Anjuman Jansareen-e-Hussaini gathered in front of National Press Club to condemn the suicide attacks.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/30-Dec-2009/Demos-against-Muzaffarabad-Karachi-blasts>

“AJK PM terms blast as bid to promote sectarianism”

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider while condemning the suicide blast in Muzaffarabad and Karachi and expressing sympathy to the bereaved families stated that the blast was an attempt to promote sectarianism in AJK. Presiding over a high level meeting held to discuss the law and order situation in AJK, the AJK PM commended the way Ulema and civil society cooperated after the deadly attack. He directed the law enforcement agencies to take emergency steps to curb this menace. Negligence that risks the lives of people will not be tolerated, he warned.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/12/30/ajk-pm-terms-blast-as-bid-to-promote-sectarianism/>

“AJK President for better treatment of blast victims”

December 30, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Kashmir while visiting those who received injuries in the suicide attack assured that the injured would be provided with full medical treatment. CMH commanding officer briefed the president regarding the treatment of the injured including the children who also received multiple injuries in the blast. The president directed the Commanding Officer CMH to ensure better treatment of the injured either in Pakistan or to transfer them abroad. Education Minister Noreen Arif also accompanied the president.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/12/30/ajk-president-for-better-treatment-of-blast-victims/>

Tariq Naqash, “Demos held in PaK”

Rising Kashmir, December 26, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Asking the ruling Pakistan Peoples’ Party to desist from installing “puppet regime” in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), the activists of nationalist Kashmiri groups staged a demonstration on December 26 to protest the killing of a teenaged student and alleged rigging in the by-election. The activists of Kashmir National Party (KNP), National Lawyers Forum (NLF), National Students Federation (NSF) and Balawaristan National Front (BNF) took out the demonstration. The procession marched from Upper Adda and culminated outside the local press club. The banners read, “State terrorism by Pakistani forces in district Ghizer is unacceptable.”

http://www.risingkashmir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19441&Itemid=1

“Welcoming EU declaration on Gilgit Baltistan”

Mumtaz Khan executive Director of Center for Peace and democracy has called EU Declaration, a welcome initiative taken by EU MPs on Gilgit Baltistan. The declaration calls Pakistan to give full representative system in Gilgit Baltistan, and asking its President to minimize the aid to Pakistan unless it dismantles terrorist infrastructure. The EU declaration expressed dissatisfaction over the so-called Gilgit Baltistan self-governance package that Pakistan government has promulgated recently; and held sham elections to impose their nominees. Mr. Khan said that EU declaration endorsed widely held views of local population that rejected the package and called it conspiracy against the identity of Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://balawaristantimes.blogspot.com/2009/12/welcoming-eu-declaration-on-gilgit.html>

Tariq Naqash “Ganderbal woman is PoK Deputy Speaker”

Rising Kashmir, December 24, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Mehrun Nisa hailing from Ganderbal district of Kashmir became the first female deputy speaker of PoK Legislative Assembly on December 24. She was elected to the post of deputy speaker by a clear majority. Nisa of ruling Peoples

Conference bagged 28 votes in the currently 48-member house and defeated Mohammad Hanif Awan of Peoples Party (PPAJK) who was fielded as a joint candidate by the combined opposition.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19380&Itemid=1

“Gilani orders work on Diamer-Bhasha dam to be expedited,”

Daily Times, December 24, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on December 24 formed a committee to resolve all impediments delaying the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam. The committee – consisting of ministers for Water and Power, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, Information, Labour and Manpower and Inter-Provincial Coordination and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission – have been tasked with resolving all outstanding issues with stakeholders and develop a broader consensus on the project. The prime minister was informed that the dam would usher in a new era of socio-economic development for Gilgit-Baltistan and Kohistan areas through massive investment and would create thousands of employment opportunities for the local population.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C12%5C24%5Cstory_24-12-2009_pg7_14

“Government and opposition criticize rehabilitation process in AJK,”

Pakistan Christian Post, December 23, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: The government and major political parties in Azad Jammu and Kashmir unanimously asked government of Pakistan to redress the resentment of the people on the failures of rehabilitation process in earthquake hit areas. “Islamabad based and controlled Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has entirely failed to accomplish the task of rebuilding of the areas after wasting more than four years and huge funds on luxurious vehicles and lavish personal earnings by government officials”.

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenews.php?hnewsid=1603>

“AJK monitoring cell declared void,”

Pakistan Tribune, December 23, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The senior most judge of the Supreme Court of AJK in an unprecedented decision, declared the ‘monitoring cell’ created by the AJK chief justice as unconstitutional. He held this while passing an order after hearing a case of collecting examination and registration fee from the students of the quake-hit areas. Explaining the difference between the monitoring cell ordered by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in its NRO verdict and that in AJK, one of the senior constitutional office-holders of AJK noted that the monitoring cell proposed by the SC of Pakistan was a positive thing as it would monitor the functioning of the courts and not of the executive while the monitoring cell established in AJK was directly monitoring the executive, which by no means could be allowed.

<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?222652>

“PEMRA extends jurisdiction to AJK,”

Daily Mail, December 24, 2009

MIRPUR: Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory (PEMRA) on December 23 has extended its jurisdiction to Azad Jammu Kashmir in order to ensure the working of the local electronic media including FM radio and Satellite TV channels and the cable operators in line with the code of ethics set by the authority. The PEMRA has set up its office in Mirpur to operate in AJK, Regional General Manager, PEMRA AJK, Shamim Gul Durrani stated on December 23. He said that to ensure the extension and enforcement of PEMRA’s jurisdiction, the AJK Council has formally adapted the PEMRA ordinance. Dr. Abdul Jabbar, Executive Member, PEMRA formally inaugurated Regional Office.

<http://dailymailnews.com/1209/24/Brief/Brief3.php>

“Gilani and Fazl discuss GB cabinet formation,”

Daily Times, December 23, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl’s chief Fazlur Rehman called on Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani at the PM’s House on December 22 as part of

a consultation process for the formation of a cabinet in Gilgit-Baltistan. JUI-F spokesman Amjad Khan stated that the meeting was part of a consultation process between the two coalition partners for power-sharing in Gilgit-Baltistan. He said consultation is underway and if the government accepted the JUI-F's demands, it would definitely join the coalition government there.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C12%5C23%5Cstory_23-12-2009_pg7_37

Shabir Choudhry, “Another Kashmiri abducted by Pakistani secret agency,”

December 16, 2009

LONDON: It looks that Pakistani secret agencies have decided to crush activities of Kashmiri dissidents in Azad Kashmir or more appropriately Pakistani Occupied Kashmir, area under their control since 1947. Another young Kashmiri Kabeer Shah has been abducted from Athmaqaam three days ago, and no one knows his where about.

Four Kashmiri youths were abducted by ISI Lt Col Hamza from Muzaffarabad about four weeks ago and were only released after a massive campaign for their release in Muzaffarabad and close coordination and support of Asian Human Rights Commission and other human rights groups.

Pranab Dhal Samanta, “Pakistan’s role in missing PoK youths sparks protests,”

December 22, 2009

New Delhi India is watching with concern incidents of alleged abduction and people disappearing in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir over the past few weeks which point to the involvement of Pakistani military officials and the ISI even as local political parties have stepped up protests in the area. After Lt Col Hamza picked up four young men in the last week of November 2009, another youth went missing a few days ago. This has lead to unrest among locals. Following the first incident, locals rallied around human rights organizations and managed to secure the return

of the four young men who claimed to have been tortured in custody.

<http://www.kashmirlive.com/story/Pakistans-role-in-missing-PoK-youths-sparks-protests/557619.html>

“Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan administered Oath by Governor,”

Hunza Times, December 11, 2009

Governor Gilgit Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira administered oath to the first Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah in a ceremony held on December 11 in the Legislative Assembly. The ceremony was attended by leaders of Pakistan Peoples Party, members of Legislative Assembly, senior civil, military and judiciary officials.

<http://www.hunzetimes.com/archives/3903>

“Bureaucracy stalls \$800m hydel project,”

Pakistan Defence Forum

ISLAMABAD: Amid a controversy over expensive rental power projects, a \$800 million foreign investment for cheap hydroelectric power generation is unlikely to materialise mainly because of bureaucratic wrangling, despite full support extended by federal and Azad Kashmir governments. This comes at a time when the federal government is finding it difficult to lure foreign investment to meet growing energy shortfalls and is approaching world capitals to secure supplies of oil, natural gas and liquefied gas for power generation at much higher prices, involving massive outflow of foreign exchange. Background interviews and official documents suggest that after pursuing the 500-MW Mahl power project at home and abroad for almost four years now, the process ‘has been stopped altogether.’

<http://www.defence.pk/forums/economy-development/42101-bureaucracy-stalls-800m-hydel-project.html>

Khaleeq Kiani, “Ministries try to twist out of AJK dam row,”

Dawn, December 22, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The federal government was shocked on Monday over the unfolding of a diplomatic fiasco

arising out of a controversy between the Azad Kashmir government and state-owned companies of South Korea over the \$800 million hydropower project on River Jhelum. Two federal ministries got themselves absolved of the responsibility and passed the blame on to the bureaucracy in Azad Kashmir for stalling the 500-megawatt hydropower project. The action came in response to a story, 'Bureaucracy stalls \$800 million hydel project' published in Dawn on December 21, 2009.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/ministries-try-to-wriggle-out-of-ajk-dam-row-229>

“AJK Council’s budget presented,”

The Nation, December 16, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira on December 15 presented AJK Council’s balanced budget of Rs 6755.55 million for financial year 2009-10. He also presented revised estimates of Rs5000.127 million for the year 2008-09. Presenting current year’s budget, the minister proposed revenue receipts target of Rs6755.555 million for this financial year. This target includes Rs3850 million from Income Tax collection out of which 80% will be transferred to AJK government.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/16-Dec-2009/AJK-Councils-budget-presented>

“AJK PM urges parties to play role to end terror”

ISLAMABAD: AJK Prime Minister Farooq Haider urged the political and religious parties and the civil society to play their role to eradicate terrorism and politics of violence from the country. The terrorists have bathed the country with blood, children are being killed, mosque are being attacked, and uncertainty is prevailing therefore it is imperative for all parties to play their role to end terrorism from the country. He was addressing Academic Excellence Award Ceremony organized by the Read Foundation.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/12/08/ajk-pm-urges-parties-to-play-role-to-end-terror/>

“GB elections plagued with irregularities, says report,”

Weekly Baang Karachi, December 3, 2009

ISLAMABAD: A civil society organization in its report noted that government interference, weak administration, procedural irregularities and erroneous voter lists characterized the Gilgit-Baltistan polls. The report which is based on preliminary findings and pre-election analysis has been compiled by the Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen). It says significant changes will be necessary for future elections in Gilgit-Baltistan to meet national and international standards. The report said that despite legal restrictions on the use of state resources in favour of a party or a candidate in any election, functionaries of the federal government, including the prime minister and more than 10 ministers, not only campaigned for the People’s Party but also used state resources and authority to make policy decisions that had considerable implication. Promises of development funds and schemes, incentives to government employees, and announcement of administrative up-gradation of remote areas boosted the chances of candidates fielded by PPP.

http://weeklybaang.blogspot.com/2009/12/weekly-baang-karachi-volume-02-issue-38_03.html

Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “President to inaugurate Mangla Dam Raising Project,”

The News, December 2, 2009

MIRPUR: President Asif Ali Zardari would inaugurate Mangla Dam Raising Project. This was stated by President PPP Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on December 1. Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Human Rights Commission, Humayun Zaman Mirza and other leaders were also present on the occasion. Majeed said that the president will also announce some important projects in Mirpur like Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College, international airport, dry port, cadet college and heavy industrial complex to eliminate unemployment from Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=211177

“Ali Raza calls on AJK PM in Islamabad,”

Kashmir Watch, December 2, 2009

ISLAMABAD: EU based prominent Kashmiri leader and Chairman International Council for Human Development (ICHD), Ali Raza Syed briefed the Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider about the current developments on Kashmir issue in the European countries. Ali Raza is also President of Advisory Council is working in Belgium, the headquarter of European Union and EU parliament.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1259787973&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

“United Jihad Council rejects quiet dialogue on Kashmir,”

Sindh Today, December 1, 2009

SRINAGAR: The United Jihad Council (UJC), a conglomerate of guerrilla outfits based in Pakistani Kashmir, has rejected the proposed “quiet dialogue” between the Indian government and Kashmiri separatist leaders. In an interview, Syed Sallahuddin, the Muzaffarabad-based chief of Hizbul Mujahideen and the man who heads the UJC noted, “Dialogue at any level should include all the stakeholders in the Kashmir dispute.”

<http://www.sindhtoday.net/news/1/77168.htm>

“PML-N, PML-Q join hands in Gilgit,”

December 1, 2009

GILGIT-BALTISTAN: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) joined hands against potential government of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The decision was taken during a meeting of PML-Q leader Mirza Hussain and Bashir Ahmed and PML-N Gilgit President, Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman. The two parties also decided to bring joint candidates on 9 seats allocated for women and technocrats in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and to play role of a joint opposition.

http://www.samaa.tv/News15066-PMLN_PMLQ_join_hands_in_Gilgit.aspx

“PPP’s carrot & stick policy”,

(Editorial) Weekly Baang Karachi, December 1, 2009

Reports from various parts of Gilgit-Baltistan indicate that people in the region were made to understand two things before the elections to the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on November 12, 2009. first, if the people of the region did not vote for the candidates of the ruling Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), not only implementation of the Gilgit-Baltistan Self-Governance Order 2009 announced by Prime Minister Gilani on August 29, 2009 will be put on hold but also the burden of federal taxes would be put on the residents of the region. The ruling PPP had planned large-scale rigging before and during the elections to achieve its desired results.

<http://weeklybaang.blogspot.com/2009/12/weekly-baang-karachi-volume-02-issue-36.html>

“Public service policy to be pursued in Gilgit-Baltistan: PM,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 19, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on December 19 said Pakistan Peoples Party’s government has a history of carrying forward the agenda of people service, and hoped this could remain the cornerstone of the party’s future policies in Gilgit-Baltistan. Talking to Syed Mehdi Shah, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan at PM House, the Prime minister congratulated him on assuming the office and hoped that under his able leadership the people of Gilgit-Baltistan would witness a new era of development and prosperity. He said the unanimous election of PPP candidates in Gilgit- Baltistan is a reflection of the government’s firm commitment towards political reconciliation and politics of consensus.

http://ftp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=92218&Itemid=1

“AJK President, PM call on Wattoo,”

December 18, 2009

ISLAMABAD: President AJK Raja Zulfikar Khan along with Prime Minister AJK Raja Farooq Haider paid a courtesy call on Minister for Kashmir Affairs

and Northern Areas Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo here at Ministers Colony on Thursday. They remained with the minister for about one hour and discussed matters of mutual interest particularly the matters relating to budget of AJK Council. Chief Secretary AJK Khalid Sultan was also present on the occasion.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/12/18/ajk-president-pm-call-on-wattoo/>

“No trust motion against AJK assembly’s Deputy Speaker,”

Dawn, December 16, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: A ‘no confidence’ motion against Deputy Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly, Salim Butt was submitted in the Assembly Secretariat on December 16. According to official sources, the ‘no trust’ motion was submitted by the Muslim Conference’s legislator Shamim Ali Malik. Requisition for a session of the AJK Legislative Assembly was also submitted in the Assembly Secretariat with signatures of 19 assembly members.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-no-trust-motion-against-ajk-assembly-deputy-speaker-qs-05>

Irfan Ghauri, “Portfolios of 3 federal ministers changed,”

Daily Times, December 16, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani changed the portfolios of three federal ministers and took two ministries under his own control on December 15. According to a Cabinet Division notification, Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo was appointed Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C12%5C16%5Cstory_16-12-2009_pg1_2

“44th session of AJK Council summoned on Dec 19,”

The Nation, December 14, 2009

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in his capacity as the Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council summoned the 44th session (Budget session 2009-

10) on December 19. The first sitting of the session of AJK Council would be held on December 15 under the chairmanship of the Vice Chairman of Council, President of AJK Raja Zulqarnain Khan stated. The first sitting of the session will be adjourned after presentation of the budget by the Minister In charge, AJK Council Secretariat, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/14-Dec-2009/44th-session-of-AJK-Council-summoned-on-Dec-19>

Hameed Shaheen, “Zardari to announce mega projects in AJK,”

Pakistan Observer, December 13, 2009

ISLAMABAD: One of the three long outstanding demands of the wealthy Mirpuris to declare Mirpur as export-processing zone may soon materialize when President Asif Ali Zardari visits Mirpur on January 7, 2009. On party invitation the President is visiting Mirpur whose core working population resides in the United Kingdom since past five decades, earning valuable foreign exchange dumped unused in banks/financial institutions. Pakistan Peoples Party - AJK is bracing briskly to accord a warm welcome to their Co-chairperson on January 7, 2009 right from Mangla Bridge onward to the heart of Mirpur city, party sources noted. In AJK, Mirpur is the only city having all weather road networks with Punjab - a facility-cum-opportunity to attract overseas Mirpuris to invest back home in industry and commercial units.

<http://pakobserver.net/200912/13/news/topstories17.asp>

“Zardari to be given warm welcome on his AJK visit: Zulqarnain”

MUZAFFARABAD: President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Zulqarnain Khan while lauding President Asif Ali Zardari’s upcoming visit to AJK has said that rousing welcome would be given to Zardari on January 5. While speaking to delegates on Thursday he said Kashmiris are enthusiastic about the schedule visit of President of Pakistan and have pinned high expectations with the hope of revolutionary development package for Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/12/25/zardari-to-be-given-warm-welcome-on-his-ajk-visit-zulqarnain/>

Ijaz Kakakhel, “Govt plans establishment of ARI to enhance food security,”

Daily Times, December 13, 2009

ISLAMABAD: To improve farm income and enhance productivity and quality of main crops, fruits, vegetables, cereals, forages, herbs and pulses, the government has planned to establish “Agriculture Research Institute (ARI), Muzaffarabad, with cost of Rs 994.821 million as sources in the ministry of food and agriculture stated.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C12%5C13%5Cstory_13-12-2009_pg5_14

Economic Developments

Sayed Abid Hussain, “Expat Kashmiris urged to invest in AJK,”

The News, December 12, 2009

MIRPUR: The visiting Mayor of Halifax, UK Ch. Arshad Mahmood stated that despite the negative propaganda against Muslims by the anti-Islam forces, the British government was positively treating on equality basis its Muslim citizens including the UK-based Pakistani and Kashmiri expatriates. Former President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Ch. Muhammad Saeed, who also is the Honorary British Consul in AJK, invited the Pakistani and Kashmiri Diaspora in Britain to invest in the trade and industrial sector of AJK while addressing the ceremony.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=212887

Aditya V Singh, “J-K traders refuse PoK items, trade suspended,”

Indian Express, December 29, 2009

JAMMU: Traders in Jammu and Kashmir have refused to accept any trade item from the other side of the border, following a ban on export of moong dal from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). As a result, the cross LoC-trade on both the routes — Poonch-Rawalakote and Uri-Muzaffarabad — has been suspended for the week, official sources stated. Trade officials on both sides of Poonch-Rawalakote route held a meeting at the Zero Line on the crossing point at LoC in Chakan-da-Bagh in Poonch on December 28. The talks, however, remained inconclusive.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/jk-traders-refuse-pok-items-trade-suspended/560900/0>

Shujaat Bukhari, “No LoC trade from December 29, say frustrated businessmen,”

The Hindu, December 26, 2009

On the heels of a threat from traders in Rajouri-Poonch to suspend business across Line of Control (LoC), their counterparts from the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad sector have also said they will not join

the trade activity from December 29. Traders on both sides have accused India and Pakistan of not being serious in pushing the process ahead, saying restrictions defeat the basic idea of trading. The trade on the Poonch-Rawalakot side, which touched all-time high of Rs. 8 crore on a single day, has since gone down to Rs. 1.5 crore.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/states/other-states/article71035.ece>

“Trans-LoC trade crosses Rs70 million,”

The Nation, December 22, 2009

MIRPUR: For the second time, cross-LoC trade between Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir till stipulated time on the officially fixed days crossed the figure of Rs 70 million on Poonch-Rawalakot route through Chakan-da-Bagh- Taitrinote entry point according to official sources. The trade worth Rs 37.8 million (3.78 crore) was conducted through Chakan-Da-Bagh while on December 22, the exchange of trade was valued at Rs 33 million (3.30 crore).

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/22-Dec-2009/TransLoC-trade-crosses-Rs70-million>

Shujaat Bukhari, “Trade along LoC records a slump,”

The Hindu, December 19, 2009

Till recently the trade on this route was a big success story. But the past few weeks have seen a significant slump, as it went down to a little over Rs.1.5 crore from a whopping Rs. 8 crore at one point of time. The reason — Pakistan has banned export of moong dal (pulses) which proved to be a boon to trade. The merchants on this side have threatened to suspend the trade if moong dal and other items are not allowed.

Unlike the low trade on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route, the Chakan Da Bagh crossing point had witnessed brisk activity since the launch of the cross Line of Control trade on October 21, 2008. However, the main trade centre at Rangad is still without proper power supply, X-ray and weighing

facility. But the custom and immigration centre is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article67454.ece>

“Rs 8 bn being released for rehabilitation Package for Mangla Dam affectees,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 14, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Division would release Rs 8 billion for rehabilitation of those affected by the Mangla Dam expansion project. The decision was taken in a meeting among Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Minister for Water and Power Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin. The Ministers for Kashmir Affairs and Water and Power requested the Finance Minister for early release of Rs 8 billion so that rehabilitation process of the affected people can be expedited. Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin directed the high ups of his ministry for immediate release of the required amount.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=91881&Itemid=1

“BNF chief tells House of Commons Pakistan again cheated GB,”

Weekly Baang Karachi, December 22-28, 2009

LONDON: The drama of giving a package to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and the PPP government's holding of the recent elections in the region has exposed Pakistan's duplicity and cheat in the whole world. The Pakistani rulers prepared the so-called package under the supervision of a federal minister, Qamar Zaman Kaira, keeping all powers with themselves and then staged the drama of the elections for their own vested interest by violating the UNCIP resolutions. These views were expressed by Chairman Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Abdul Hamid Khan in his presentation to the House of Commons in London. He said the government of Pakistan had completely kept the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in the dark while preparing the package. It also kept them away from the election process. Parties from Karachi, Lahore, Larkana and Peshawar were brought in and provided with all sorts of facilities for interfering in the elections. Millions of rupees were also distributed among the voters to rig the elections. On the other hand, leaders and activists of the only nationalist parties, Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance consisting of Balawaristan National Front, Karakoram National Moment and Gilgit Baltistan United Moment were put behind bars or expelled from the region on October 30 and November 1 so that they could not take part in the polls on Nov 12. "Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and secret agencies used all types of strong-arm tactics including threats and state resources against the candidates of GBDA," he noted.

http://weeklybaang.blogspot.com/2009/12/weekly-baang-karachi-volume-02-issue-43_20.html

“European Parliament raises serious concerns over Pak's proxy rule in Gilgit-Baltistan,”

Asian News International (ANI), December 18, 2009

BRUSSELS: The European Parliament, while raising serious concerns over the way in which Gilgit-Baltistan is being administered by Pakistan, has tabled a written

declaration on the threat facing the region from Islamabad. The draft, which has been counter signed by eight members of the European Parliament, stated that the European Union (EU) is concerned about the developments in South Asia, particularly Pakistan. "Whereas concerning Pakistan the EU is particularly worried about Gilgit Baltistan a part of the state of Jammu

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-214756999.html>

Hameed Shaheen, “European Parliament's ‘novel’ declaration on GB,”

Kashmir Watch, December 18, 2009

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented move in its Strasbourg meeting on December 16 the European parliament adopted a 'novel' declaration on Gilgit Baltistan (GB). The written declaration adopted by the parliament on the initiative of its eight members describes the recent administrative reforms as 'threat' to Gilgit Baltistan.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1261166494&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news

Murtaza Ali Shah, “UK refusing spouse visas from AJK,”

The News, December 25, 2009

LONDON: The British High Commission (BHC) in Islamabad has been accused of refusing hundreds of legitimate spouse visa applications from Azad Kashmir on the basis of confusion created by the recently-changed Nikah forms in Azad Kashmir. The BHC has recently started refusing applicants with marriage certificates issued in the AJK en bloc on the basis that those certificates do not prove that a valid marriage has been contracted.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=215292

Shabir Choudhry, “Protest against ISI in Muzaffarabad,”

December 7, 2009

LONDON: People of Muzaffarabad today once again protested against clandestine activities of

Pakistani secret agency ISI which kidnapped four Kashmiris from the city about two weeks ago. One of the four was released after many days of torture and inhuman treatment, but the remaining three are still kept in a secret location by the ISI. People of the city have been holding protest marches since the kidnapping of these people.

These people were taken by the ISI from a local police station where they were kept for some questioning. People of the area demand that the detainees should be released without any delay otherwise they will have no choice but to continue their protests and expose injustice of the Pakistani agencies.

“Link aid to Pak with effort in checking terror: European parliament,”

Indian Express, December 20, 2009

LONDON: The European Parliament has asked member nations to minimise financial aid to Pakistan until it successfully eradicates terrorist groups functioning from its soil. The parliament also expressed concern over the situation in Gilgit Baltistan and asked Pakistan to “give full representative democracy and freedom to the people of Gilgit Baltistan and hold in abeyance the Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009.” A written declaration on the ‘Threat to Gilgit Baltistan from Pakistan’, signed by eight members and supported by the Parliament, asks the Pakistan government to allow international media and rights groups free access to the region.

<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Link-aid-to-Pak-with-effort-in-checking-terror—Europe-parliament/556767/>

Other Developments

“AJK President, PM to attend education moot on Jan 6”

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir President Raja Zulqarnain and Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan would attend the scheduled conference aimed at bolster the education in the area. The conference “Kashmir Information and Research Center” will be organized by an NGO and scheduled to be held on January 6, 2010.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/12/25/ajk-president-pm-to-attend-education-moot-on-jan-6/>

“Erra deputy chairman visits SPAPEV office,”

The News, December 24, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) Deputy Chairman Lieutenant General Sajjad Akram on December 23 visited the Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV) offices and appreciated the role of the organisation’s relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects being carried out in the October 8, 2005 earthquake-hit areas in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the NWFP. The Erra Deputy Chairman said Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Saudi Arabia, as it had always helped in hour of trial. He commended the role of Saudi Arabia, its people and the SPAPEV in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the earthquake-hit areas.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=215033>

“Erra okays reconstruction of 20-km road in Battagram,”

The News, December 23, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) board approved the reconstruction of 20-kilometre Kund-Banna Road in Battagram. The meeting was held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of Altaf Muhammad Saleem with the board members and representatives of governments of Azad Kashmir and NWFP. The Erra board also approved PC-I for restoration of Pesco services damaged during 2005 earthquake.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=214895

(Other Developments continued after Abbreviations)

ABBREVIATIONS

AJKHEB	Azad Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Electric Board
AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
BNF	Balawaristan National Front
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CDP	Community Development Programme
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBR	Federal Board of Revenue
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
JIAJK	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
KAC	Kashmiri American Council
KKH	Karakoram Highway
KNM	Karakoram National Movement
LoC	Line of Control
NLI	Northern Light Infantry
NALA	Northern Areas Legislative Assembly
NAEDC	Northern Areas Executive Development Committee
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PoK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POGB	Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan
PPP	Pakistan Peoples’ Party
UJC	United Jihad Council
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK): An Overview

Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) is constitutionally an integral part of the Indian Union and remains under Pakistani occupation since 1947¹, when Pakistan's Army engineered a tribal invasion and took control of more than 114,500 square kilometers of J&K. Pakistan declared its occupied part as 'Azad' or free and conferred to J&K Muslim Conference, a pro-Pakistani local political party, to constitute its first titular government.

Subsequent to occupation, Pakistan embarked on the agenda of usurping J&K. First to be annexed was Gilgit-Baltistan, which went under the direct control of Pakistan in 1949, as the leaders of AJK Muslim Conference were forced to hand over these regions of J&K through the 'Karachi Agreement'. Likewise, Shinaki Kohistan and Chitral, which constituted parts of Jammu & Kashmir before its partition in 1947, were also annexed and merged into the NWFP of Pakistan in 1955 and 1970 respectively. Later, when Pakistan and China agreed to demarcate 'international border' in 1963, Pakistan provisionally ceded 19,313 sq. kilometers of trans-Karakoram track of J&K including the segment of Baltistan known as 'Shaksgam' and part of Gilgit called 'Raskam' to China.²

Salient features of PoK are as under:

Total Area of PoK (under the current form): 85,793 sq. kilometer

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: 19,313 sq. kilometer

Area of Chitral: 14,850 sq. kilometer

Area of Shinaki-Kohistan: 5,398 sq. kilometer

AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR (AJK)

The Muzaffarabad district of Kashmir province, Mirpur and parts of Poonch districts of Jammu

province have been under Pakistan's control since the tribal invasion of 1947. Pakistan amalgamated these districts together and created the so-called AJK. AJK is the south-western political entity of the former princely state of Jammu & Kashmir. It borders the present-day Kashmir province to the east, Jammu province to south-east (both separated from it by the Line of Control), the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan (NWFP) to the west, the Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan Region (FAGB) of J&K to the north, and the Punjab Province of Pakistan to the south. AJK is envisaged as an autonomous region by Pakistan. The government of AJK is considered as a parallel government, which was established to challenge the legitimacy of the J&K government in Srinagar. Despite the fact that AJK is neither a country nor a province of Pakistan, it has its own President, Prime Minister, High and Supreme Courts, Penal Code, national anthem and a flag. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature and real authority lies with the federal government of Pakistan. Significant matters such as defence, tax revenues, supposed 'foreign policy', rehabilitation of refugees and the financial control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan.

Currently, the parts of Kashmir province under PoK is divided into three districts of Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Neelum, while the parts of Jammu province under PoK is divided into five districts namely Poonch/Rawalakot, Sudhnati/Pallandari, Bhimber, Kotli and Mirpur.

Area of AJK: 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

Jammu (Mirpur Division) comprising of 5 districts: Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur, Sudhnati/Pallandari and Rawalakot/Poonch

President: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Farooq Haider Khan

Political Structure

AJK Council: Total 12 members, selected by Prime Minister of Pakistan, six each representing governments of AJK and Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49, of which 29 are directly elected from the AJK, 11 are elected from various districts of Pakistan under the provision for the 'Kashmiri refugees', whereas 8 seats are reserved for females, overseas Kashmiris and the technocrats.

Judicial System: AJK has its own High and Supreme Courts, which are assisted by district session and magistrate courts. Further, AJK has its own Bar Council and Penal Code. However, approval of chief justices for High and Supreme Courts comes from Pakistani-dominated AJK Council. In addition, Pakistan's military tribunals also function in AJK. The Chief Secretary, regional commissioners, and Inspector General of Police are also appointed by Pakistani minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan (KAGB), previously known as Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (KANA).

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 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)

Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan (FAGB)

Gilgit-Baltistan was previously referred to by Pakistan as the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA). It is the northernmost political entity within

the Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) and is under direct control of the Islamabad government. The area, after separation of Chitral and Shinaki Kohistan, is still five and half times bigger than AJK. It borders Ladakh and Tibet to its east; East-Turkestan to its north; Afghanistan and Tajikistan to its north-west; Chitral to its west; Dir, Swat, Kohistan and Kaghan districts of NWFP to its south while AJK and the Kashmir Valley lie to its south-east. Before 1947, Baltistan was part of Ladakh region and ruled through the Jammu provincial government, while Gilgit was ruled under the authority of Kashmir province. When Pakistan occupied these regions, they were amalgamated under the garb of so-called 'Northern Areas' and thereby received the status of federally controlled region in 1974. However, the status of Gilgit-Baltistan is left undefined in the successive constitutions of Pakistan. Pakistan accepts Gilgit-Baltistan as part of the Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir, however, does not consider it as part of AJK. Due to a direct control imposed from Islamabad, the locals still await constitutional and judicial rights. For instance, they lack representation in the Pakistani Parliament, Council of Common Interests (CCI), Hydro-electric Board and National Finance Commission (NFC). Further, they cannot access the provincial high courts and the Supreme Court of Pakistan for justice. The Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in Gilgit-Baltistan who is a political figure nominated by the Minister for KAGB.

After occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan in 1949, Pakistan administered the region under the draconian and inhumane Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) for around 20 years.³ PM Z.A. Bhutto of Pakistan abolished FCR in 1974 and introduced an ad-hoc presidential ordinance to govern the region. Since then, Gilgit-Baltistan has been ruled by presidential ordinances, which have come under repeated amendments. In 1994, PM Benazir Bhutto promulgated Northern Areas Governance Order which was later renamed as Legal Framework Order (LFO) by President Musharraf in 2007.⁴ In essence, they all remained as ad-hoc ordinances without any constitutional cover.⁵ As pressure from both local and international political and human rights organizations increased with demands of genuine political and

judicial rights for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan announced the so-called 'Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order' on October 26, 2009.⁶ Unfortunately, this order is yet another presidential ordinance with no parliamentary backing, and replaces the current LFO with some amendments.⁷ The term 'self governance' is coined as a strategic move to defuse pressure of the international organizations, which promises to introduce administrative, political, economic and judicial reforms in Gilgit-Baltistan. Although the ordinance is claimed as a replica of the AJK political and judicial system; it refuses the post of president, prime minister to the locals and establishment of penal code, and High and Supreme Courts.

According to the order, Northern Areas will be called Gilgit-Baltistan and the current Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) will be replaced by Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA), which will have the right to legislate and choose a chief minister. Further, Pakistan will replace the existing Chairman of NALA with a governor to ensure federal government's control over the region. Gilgit-Baltistan would also have its own public service commission, a chief election commissioner, an auditor general, and a boundary commission to settle boundary dispute between Pakistan and J&K. The legislative assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan would have a total of 33 members, including six reserved seats for women and three for technocrats. Further, similar to AJK Council, Gilgit-Baltistan Council will be constituted to ensure representation of federal government in the region. The council will enjoy legislative powers over 60 odd subjects. It will have 15 members which shall be presided over by the prime minister of Pakistan. While the Assembly is given the powers to propose the budget, approving authority will be ministry of KAGB in Islamabad. Compared to the provinces of Pakistan, where the chief minister is the supreme authority, the newly proclaimed order rests all administrative, political and judicial authority with the Pakistani governor which will eventually make the assembly a toothless tiger. Governor will be the executive authority and custodian of tax and revenues. He will administer Gilgit-Baltistan council on behalf of the prime minister of Pakistan, and oversee public service

commission, election commission, boundary commission, judiciary, and auditor general's office. He will be the authority to appoint heads of public service commission, election commission, boundary commission, commissioner of excise and taxation, chief judge of appellate court, auditor general, regional cabinet members and advisors. He will have the right to approve the budget, and dissolve the assembly and impose emergency under prescribed conditions. Further, the Inspector General of Police, Chief Secretary and all departmental secretaries, directors of departments, and commissioner and deputy commissioners of districts will be appointed by the governor. Likewise, it will not be the Assembly but the Council under the governor, which will legislate on natural resources of Gilgit-Baltistan, including minerals, forests, electricity and water storage, industries, school curricula, tourism, cinematography etc.

Salient Features of FAGB are as under:

Area of FAGB: 72,496 sq. kilometer

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: seven

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ganche 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

Political Structure: In July 2009, NALA was dissolved before it could complete its 5-years term, and along with that, advisors to the Chairman including the Chief Executive were also sacked. Subsequently, election for GBLA was held on November 12, 2009 under the newly proclaimed self-governance and empowerment order. Pakistan People's Party (PPP),

the ruling party of Pakistan, won two-third majority in GBLA and formed government.

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members, selected by Prime Minister of Pakistan; 7 representing government of Gilgit-Baltistan and 8 representing government of Pakistan. The Gilgit-Baltistan Council is headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Further, Chief Minister, Governor, Minister for KAGB and Prime Minister of Pakistan are voting members of GBC.

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: GBLA has 24 directly elected members while 6 female and 3 technocrats come through selection.

Acting-Governor of G-B: Mian Manzoor A. Wattoo, who is also minister for KAGB. He is currently a Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan elected from Okara district of Punjab province.

Chief Minister G-B: Syed Mehdi Shah of Skardu district.

Political 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)

Judicial Structure: Instead of High and Supreme Courts, Gilgit-Baltistan will have an appellate court which will be headed by the chief judge. The chief judge, as well the session and district judges will be appointed by the Pakistani prime minister. In addition to the appellate court, there will be a chief court in Gilgit. The number of judges has been increased from three to five. In addition, Pakistan's military tribunals will continue to function in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Literacy rate: 15% male; 3.5% female (World Bank estimates of 1997)

Per Capita Income: PCI of Gilgit-Baltistan is around one-fourth of Pakistan's average (US\$264 compared to Pakistan's US\$ 1,071).⁸

State of Infrastructure: More than two-thirds of the villages lack potable water, electricity, telephone,

health units, girls' schools, paved roads, ration depot, and pony tracks.

Endnotes

- ¹ Baltistan was occupied by Pakistan a year later in 1948
- ² <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2754976?seq=7>
- ³ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/pakistan/law.htm>
- ⁴ <http://ips-pk.org/content/view/234/259/>
- ⁵ <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>
- ⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/gilgitbaltistan-package-termed-an-eyewash-089>
- ⁷ <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>
- ⁸ AKRSP Socio-economic Survey of Northern Areas and Chitral (SESNAC) 2005; http://www.finance.gov.pk/finance_blog/?p=238; <http://finance.kalpoint.com/pdf/highlights/todays-pick/per-capita-income-falls-to-1071.pdf>

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 'Northern Areas' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

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