

POK NEWS DIGEST

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Jammu & Kashmir

(Source: <http://maps-india.com/jammu-kashmir/jammu-kashmir-district-map.html>)

Political Developments

“AJK President welcomes Indo-Pak negotiations,” Associated Press of Pakistan

MUZAFFARABAD: The President of Azad Kashmir Raja Zulqarnain Khan has welcomed the Indo-Pak negotiations to ward off the reservations of Kashmiri people over the hydel power projects on rivers in Jammu and Kashmir. He said this while talking to delegations that came from different districts of the liberated territory at Kashmir House on June 1. The AJK President said that core issue of Kashmir must be addressed in its true perspective otherwise all efforts of confidence building measures (CBMs) would go in vain and permanent peace could not be established. Zulqarnain stressed upon India to move forward with positive thinking and give up the delaying tactics and stop human rights violation in occupied Kashmir. He further asked India to pull out its forces from Occupied Kashmir and pave the way for the durable solution of Kashmir dispute in accordance with the wishes of Kashmiri people.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=40041)

“AJK LA adopts three resolutions,” Associated Press of Pakistan, June 7, 2008

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly in its final session adopted three resolutions on June 6. Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Rashid Abbasi presented a resolution regarding the devastating earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar. The resolution expressed sympathies with the Chinese people on behalf of AJK government and the people of Azad Kashmir and appreciated the decision of the government for setting up a fund to provide assistance to quake survivors. The other condolence resolution regarding the death of Sardar Abdul Ghaffar Khan, younger brother of former President and PM of Azad Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan and uncle of AJK PM Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan paid glowing tributes to his struggle

for freedom movement against Dogra regime in 1947 at Neelabut. The other resolution was presented by Mehrun-Nisa MLA, which denounced the massacre of innocent Kashmiri people at the hands of Indian troops and called upon the international community to take notice of the grave human rights violations in Indian held Kashmir.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=40720&Itemid=2)

“Skardu declaration of GBUM,” June 15, 2008

A pronounced gathering of the significant alliance of nationalist parties of Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance was held on June 15, 2008, in Chowk Yaadgar-e-Shohda, Skardu – Baltistan. This public gathering was organized by the nationalist party Gilgit Baltistan United Movement. This public congregation unilaterally accepted and presented a combination of resolutions which has been named as “please pay attention – the World community”. The all public representative Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance has appealed to United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), the civilized countries of the world and the whole community in general to focus their attention towards Gilgit Baltistan so as to help them out in achieving their just and basic human rights and political demands. These are: - 1. An independent constitutional state assembly should be formed for the people of Gilgit Baltistan. 2. Gilgit Baltistan’s real political identity should be restored and the fraudulent Northern Areas terminology should be done away with.

(<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/06/skardu-declaration-of-gbum15-june-2008.html>)

Usman Manzoor, “AJK judiciary issue echoes in long march,” The News, June 15, 2008

The Parade Avenue, in the wee hours on June 14, echoed with the slogans of the independence of judiciary in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). While the mob of hundreds of thousands of people was demanding the restoration of the deposed

judges sacked by General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf, Muhammad Ibrahim Zia, the Vice-Chairman of the AJK Bar Council, on behalf of the legal fraternity of the AJK, addressed the charged mob and demanded of Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani to recheck the seniority of the judges of the superior court of the AJK, where the slot of the chief justice was allegedly hijacked by a junior judge on the orders of President Pervez Musharraf. The lawyers of the AJK not only demand the restoration of the deposed judges in Pakistan but also want an independent judiciary in the AJK," said the vice-chairman of the AJK Bar Council while addressing the participants of the long march.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=118517>)

“Azam new SC adhoc judge,” The Frontier Post, June 20, 2008

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Supreme Court Bar Association president Muhammad Azam Khan Advocate has been appointed as Adhoc judge of the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, it was officially announced. Muhammad Azam Khan Advocate has long carrier in legal field spreading over last three decades. Besides holding the incumbent office of the President of AJK Supreme Court Bar Association, he has also been Additional Advocate General of AJK, founder member of the AJK SC Bar Association.”

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=ts&nid=1378&ad=20-06-2008>)

“Islamabad asked to stop its double standard on Gilgit Baltistan,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, June 14 -June 20, 2008

GAHKUCH: Chairman Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Abdul Hamid Khan has asked Pakistan to change its double standard on Gilgit-Baltistan, saying as a nation we are not against the integrity of Pakistan but oppose its occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan. In his telephonic address to a public gathering at Gahkuch on June 8, he said, “Pakistan’s stand on the issue has been different as far as its own public and national

media are concerned than the one it propagates to the international community. Sometimes Pakistani regimes denied us our due rights on the pretext of sensitivity of our country (Balawaristan) and sometimes on the pretext of Kashmir dispute and its own constitution. Despite this, if anyone dared to raise any question or challenge their occupation, Pakistan tried to eliminate such people from its way.” He further stated, “I want to let you know that I never keep my nation in dark by making cheap and emotional statements. I always try to clear my stand according to the international laws and principles.”

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/06/islamabad-asked-to-stop-its-double.html>)

“Call to include Gilgit and Baltistan in AJK,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, June 14 - June 20, 2008.

ISALAMABAD: Northern areas should be included in Azad Kashmir and given representation in the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly and Council. The peace agreement signed by two religious parties in 2005 should be implemented in letter and spirit in order to maintain peace in the region. This was stated by central mosque, Gilgit, Khateeb Maulana Qazi Nisar Ahmed, Amir Ittehad Ulema Council Northehrn Areas Maulana Sanullah, Qari Attaur Rehman, Mufti Riaz Mansoor and Maulana Ghulam Rasool Nasir while speaking at a newspaper forum here. They said Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir were a geographical unity and the government of Pakistan had also accepted the fact in various world forums saying that the Northern Areas is part of Kashmir.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/06/call-to-include-gilgit-and-baltistan-in.html>)

“A straw in the wind,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, June 14 - June 20, 2008

The people of Gilgit-Baltistan are still unable to understand why they have been given a powerless organization in the name of the legislative assembly. A majority of the public now very well understands that they are part of a slave nation. The rulers also want to deal with its subject through these local assembly members without directly coming into

contact with them. If you check the records of the so-called legislative assembly, you will never see any tangible work. Its meetings are filled with complaints and counter complaints about lack of powers besides criticizing each others. This further perplexes the educated people of the region. However, there is nothing to surprise. In the life of subjugated people such occurrences are a routine. The eagles of independence can only fly high in the sky as is done in Gilgit-Pakistan. It is certain that due to carelessness of Islamabad and the people of Pakistan, the day is not far away when the region would get what its people have been looking for. Public opinion in this regard is changing very fast. Whether the people of Gilgit-Baltistan want independence or not, circumstances are pushing them towards that direction. Expectations pinned in the new PPP-led governments have already gone up in smoke. The PPP Gilgit-Baltistan chapter's president Syed Jafar Shah himself has informed the top party leadership that if the new government failed to give the people their due rights, federalist forces would be weakened giving way to nationalist parties. However, irrespective of Mr Shah's warning, the PPP government has no time even to get its own house in order. Besides, past experience particularly that of the 70s' testifies that Islamabad is not concerned with anybody and remains complacent as ever before. It has even no idea that the situation is getting out of its control.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/06/straw-in-wind.html>)

“Abdur Rashid Turabi elected as Jamaat Islami AJK Amir”

MUZAFFARABAD: Abdur Rashid Turabi has been elected as Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu and Kashmir from 2008 till 2011. According to details, the JIAJK election process for the election of Amir was completed on June 25. The JI Central Executive Committee for the elections of the Amir nominated Muhammad Anwar Abbas as Nazim of election while set up Election Committee of Muhammad Saghir Qamar abd Fazil Tabsoom for his assistance. According to article 14-b of constitution of the JI AJK, the Central Executive Committee constituted

panel of Sardar Ejaz Afzal, Abdur Rashid Turabi and Dr. Khalid Mehmood.

(http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1214475117&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news)

“World help sought for ensuring rights,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar Saturday, June 21— June 27, 2008

SKARDU: Representatives of nationalist parties from Gilgit-Baltistan demanded restoration of the region's historical name, Gilgit-Baltistan, and said they reject the Pakistani government's adopted nomenclature 'Northern Areas' for their land. They said that Pakistan should stop denying basic rights to the two million people in the 21st century otherwise its consequences would be disastrous. The public meeting was organized by the Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement at Yadgar-Shuhada Chowk, Skardu. Speaking on the occasion, the leaders of the component parties of the Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA) sought formation of an Independent Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution for the region in accordance with the aspirations of the people. The speakers also asked the world community to take notice of rampant human rights violations in Gilgit-Baltistan. They appealed to the UN, EU as well as the world community to focus their attention on Gilgit-Baltistan to help the people in achieving their basic human rights. "The region's historical name, Gilgit Baltistan, should be restored and the so-called 'Northern Areas' should be done away with," the speakers demanded. They said all the routes especially the historical route between Kargil and Skardu should be opened so that the divided families can meet each other. All land given to non-local people in Gilgit-Baltistan in violation of the State Subject Rule (SSR) should be retrieved and the SSR should be enforced in the area, they added.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/06/world-help-sought-for-ensuring-rights.html>)

“Sost situation worries PPP”, Dawn, June 29, 2008

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) has expressed concern over ‘deliberate attempts’ being made to create law and order problem in upper Hunza by remnants of the past regime and called for an immediate halt to such activities. PPP spokesman and former senator Farhatullah Babar in a statement here on June 28 said that peace, development and empowerment of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan was a top priority of the government and any attempt to subvert that would not be allowed. The plan to disrupt peace in the region came to light when several hundred people, including women and children, were forced to stage a protest demonstration leading to the blockade of Karakoram Highway (KKH) at the Sost border town against harassment and intimidation of people by the Chief Executive and local administration. The demonstrators blocked the highway and chanted slogans against the Chief Executive of Northern Areas Ghazanfar Ali Khan for creating unrest in the peaceful area by bringing his henchmen to intimidate the people and take forcible possession of the Sost Dry Port following a local court decision setting aside a stay order of a lower court against the former management of the Silk Route Dry Port Trust.

(<http://dawn.com/2008/06/29/top16.htm>)

Economic Developments

Tariq Naqash, “AJK presents Rs 29.97bn deficit budget,” Dawn, June 19, 2008

MUZAFFARABAD: Finance Minister Raja Nisar Ahmed Khan presented the Azad Jammu and Kashmir’s Rs 29.97 billion tax-free but deficit budget for 2008-09 in the Legislative Assembly here on June 18. The budget proposes Rs 20.417 billion for non-developmental expenditures and Rs 9.555 billion, including a foreign component of Rs 800 million, for development activities. The finance minister claimed that the volume of development budget was 20 per cent more than the current year.

According to the minister, the income during the next year was estimated at Rs 15.817 billion, including Rs 7.5 billion from local resources such as provincial excise, stamps, forests and electricity charges, Rs 779 million water use charges of Mangla Dam, Rs 2.438 billion from the AJK Council as its share of taxes collected from the AJK territory and Rs 5.1 billion from the federal government as AJK’s share in federal taxes. The deficit amounted to Rs 4.6 billion and would be met by funds to be provided by the federal government, the minister said.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/06/19/nat5.htm>)

Tariq Naqash “4 hydel projects coming up in AJK,” June 15, 2008

MUZAFFARABAD: The federal government of Pakistan has earmarked Rs 697.254 million in its public sector development programme for next financial year for initiation of four hydropower generation projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir with total generation capacity estimated at 64.4 megawatts. Briefing newsmen, AJK prime minister’s adviser on planning and development, Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, said these projects included Bitar (4.8MW), Dhanna (17.5MW), Jagran II (43.5MW) and Jheeng (14.4MW) and their estimated cost was Rs 8165 million. Highlighting the current status of some ongoing federal funded projects, the adviser said that Rs 700 million had been sanctioned in

2007-08 for the Rs 3083.961 million water supply scheme for New Mirpur City and Hamlets under the Mangla dam package but of that allocation hardly Rs 175 million had been spent in the ongoing year.

(http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=15_6_2008&ItemID=27&cat=1)

Masood Hussain, “Trans-LoC trade likely by August,” Economic Times, June 18, 2008

SRINAGAR: India and Pakistan are likely to announce a slew of CBMs, specific to J&K, later this month when Islamabad’s foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi flies in with a high-level delegation. The CBMs include making the trans-LoC fortnightly bus service into a weekly service, introducing a triple-entry permit system and exploring possibilities for starting a Kargil-Skardu bus service, an issue Pakistan has opposed throughout. Sources said a delegation comprising top officials is currently visiting J&K and holding parleys with top officials and the political executive over the viability of some new CBMs.

(http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/PoliticsNation/Trans_LoC_trade_likely_by_August/articleshow/3139427.cms)

“From LOC to LOC,” Asian News International (ANI), June 28, 2008

LONDON: In presence of visiting APHC leaders, Sardar Atiq, Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said he would like to convert Line of Control to Line of Commerce. In other words change LOC with another LOC. Is that what is their agenda? Are they here to sell division of Kashmir? Have people of Jammu and Kashmir sacrificed so much to get Line of Commerce in place of Line of Control? It was CFL (Cease Fire Line) until it was replaced with LOC - Line of Control in 1972. Cease Fire Line implies that fighting has stopped but the dispute over which the fighting began has not been resolved yet, hence a temporary pause in the war. Pakistan agreed to replace CFL with Line of Control after defeat of

1971, and now people only talk of LOC. Both lines were imposed on the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and some might argue there is no difference between the two. This is not true. When dealing with borders and geography of countries one finds international boundary or Cease Fire Line in vocabulary. International boundary separates one country from the others, and cease fire as noted above indicates continuation of war or struggle which has been stopped.

(<http://www.dailyindia.com/show/254047.php/From-LOC-to-LOC>)

International Developments

**“Osama in K2 report dismissed as lie,” Dawn,
June 09, 2008**

SKARDU: Various political and religious figures here have emphatically dismissed an Arab TV report a few days back claiming the presence of Osama bin Laden in the mountainous belt of K2. Rejecting the news, Allama Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Jaffery said that the rumour about the presence of Osama in this region was a conspiracy to damage the peaceful image of this region and destroy its tourism. Dismissing this claim as absurd, Shaikh Jaffery said, “Gilgit- Baltistan was a peaceful region and the people living there were a peace loving moderate lot who had nothing to do with characters like Osama. After this news, not only the traditional peace of this region would be affected but also tourism which is the source of income of this area, would be destroyed,” he maintained. Northern Areas information adviser Sikandar Ali said that, “the presence of Osama in K2 was baseless as survival of human life in the harsh weather conditions on the heights was impossible. Secondly, police and paramilitary forces were deployed on the check posts at all entrances of the Northern Areas. It was not possible for Osama to enter the region crossing all those check posts. The report of Arab TV is irresponsible,” he remarked.

(<http://dawn.com/2008/06/09/nat5.htm>)

Other Developments

“Panic looms over Gojal area after glacier burst,” Dawn, June 16, 2008

GILGIT: The third outburst of a glacier within two months in Gulkin valley of Gojal, upper Hunza, has caused widespread panic among the inhabitants. Huge boulders that blocked Karokoram Highway were cleared to restore traffic but the mudflow from the lake disrupted telecommunication besides damaging water channels of the village, a spokesman for Northern Areas administration said.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/06/16/nat8.htm>)

“Affectees of GLOF to be compensated, Chief Executive NALA”

Ghazanfar Ali Khan, chief executive of the Northern Areas Legislative Assembly expressed sympathy with the farmers who were affected by the recent Glacial Lake Outburst Floods, at Chatghust, Ghulkin. According to a local weekly newspaper (*Badd-e-Shimal*) the chief executive has said that the damage to property and crops will be compensated by the government.

While this came as welcome news, it is also important to consider the point raised by the deputy commissioner of Gilgit district during his visit to Ghulkin regarding the absence of funds related to emergency and disaster. The chief executive, if he compensates the damage, will have to take funds out from the already scarce development budget to make such compensations.

(<http://pamirtimes.wordpress.com/2008/06/17/affectees-of-glof-to-be-compensated-chief-executive-nala>)

“India may block Pak radio signals in IHK,” Kashmir Media Service, June 21, 2008

SRINAGAR: After imposing ban on airing of Pakistani television channels in occupied Kashmir, Government of India is contemplating to block the signals of all Pakistan and Muzaffarabad based radio stations in Poonch and Rajouri districts of occupied territory. Puppets authoritative told media men that the

Indian Defence Ministry has directed All India Radio (AIR) to block all Pakistan and Muzaffarabad based radio signals in Poonch and Rajouri. “Defence Ministry has passed on strict directions to AIR and intelligence agencies to make sure that the radio signals along the Line of Control (LoC) are blocked. Orders in this regard have been issued with the instructions that immediate steps should be taken to implement these orders,” the sources added.

(<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/india-may-block-pak-radio-signals-ihk>)

Mumtaz Alvi, “AJK demands 626 cusecs water from Mangla,” The News, June 29, 2008

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has demanded daily supply of 626 cusecs of water from the Mangla Dam for drinking and irrigation purposes. Sources in the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) said that a demand in writing by the AJK government had been forwarded to the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC). They pointed out that the IPC had already sought comments of the four provinces, and had also written to the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) in this connection. It is likely that the item would be included in the agenda of the next Inter-Provincial Coordination Committee meeting, if and when held.

(http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=121129)

ACRONYMS

AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
BNF	Balawaristan National Front
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
JIAJK	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
KKH	Karakoram Highway
LoC	Line of Control
PoK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
PPP	Pakistan Peoples' Party

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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