

POK NEWS DIGEST

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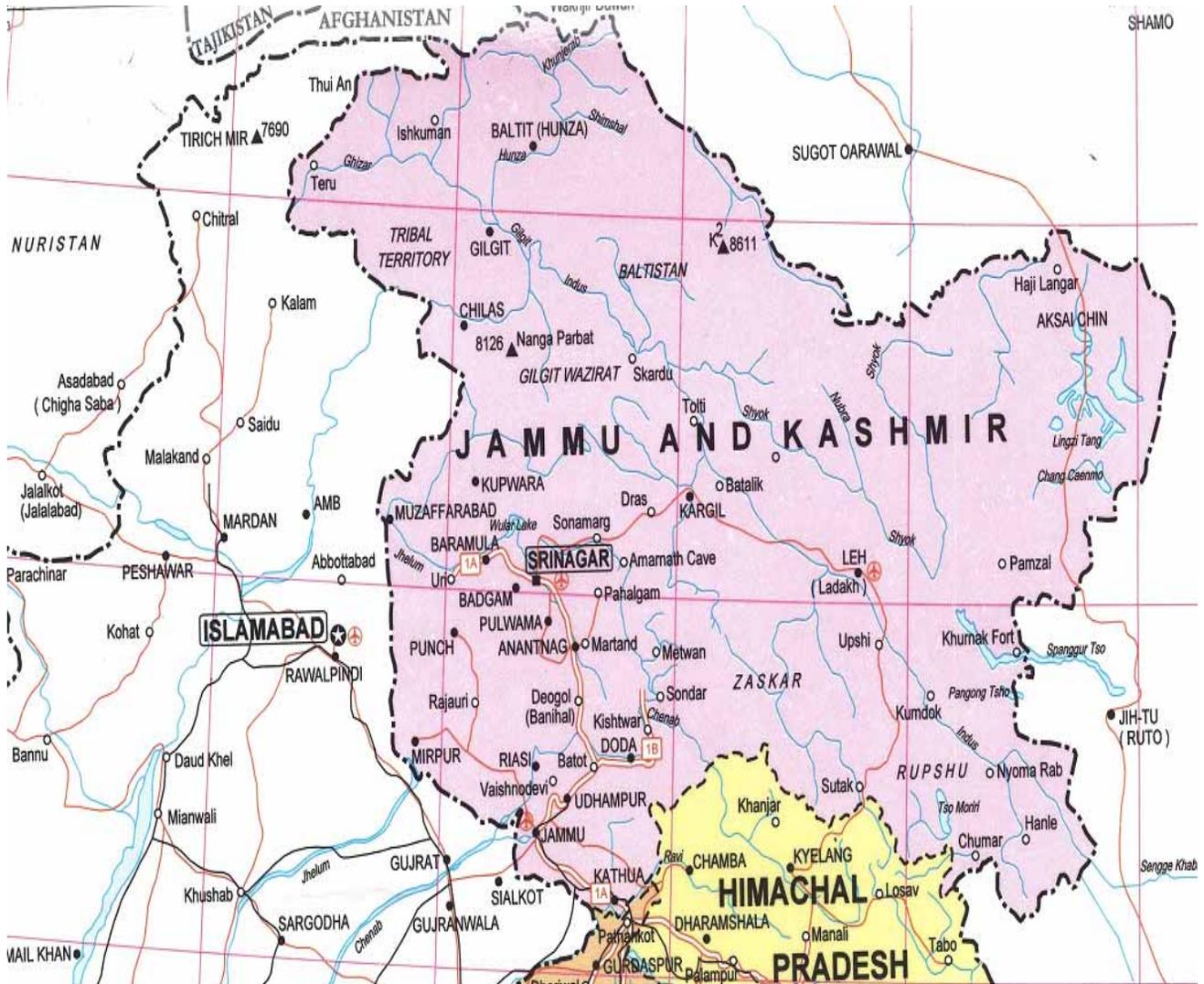
Layout

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

A number of reports included in this issue indicate that there seems virtually no end to the miseries prevailing in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The region survived an earthquake in October 2005 and since then has been getting large amount of aid from other countries. Instead of motivating the government of the so called 'Azad Kashmir,' the funds have failed to address the adjuring problems facing the affected people in POK. Corruption exists on a large scale in the state functionaries due to absence of a legitimate democratic structure. The electoral process is allegedly manipulated to suit the establishment in Pakistan. Major section of the population is deprived of basic necessities such as water and electricity.

Similarly in the "Northern Areas" which is often referred as the Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan by a section of the local people, there is widespread political unrest in the absence of meaningful and effective democratic institutions. There is absolute lack of positivism in the policies of the government of Pakistan towards the region. Notably this area which is rich in resources has been subjected to an economic drain by Pakistan. The government's initiatives in building the regions infrastructure and overall development stand next to nil. This is evident from the appalling statistics of low levels of illiteracy, unemployment and the population below the poverty line. Sense of alienation has been prevalent since the last 60 years and is further accentuated due flawed policy of the Pakistan government. There is increasing demand for self rule and for restoring the original name of the region i.e. Gilgit Baltistan.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Look at PoK before asking for azadi: BJP to separatists,” The Economic Times, August 27, 2008

NEW DELHI: The BJP urged the separatists in the Kashmir Valley to consider the situation in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) and Gilgit-Baltistan while making demands for ‘azadi’ (freedom). Citing the report— Kashmir: Present situation and future prospects —by the Committee on Foreign Affairs by European Parliament, the BJP stressed on the ‘suffering’ and the ‘worst kind of human deprivation’ in both PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Party spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad stated, “This is not BJP’s own assessment. This is as per a report of European Parliament’. The report by the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament, which was submitted in April 2007, states that “there is considerable evidence that over many years, Pakistan has provided Kashmiri militants with training, weapons, funding and sanctuary and has failed to hold militants accountable for atrocities they have committed on the Indian-administered side.” In this context, Mr Prasad said that the people of the Valley should not heed to the call of the separatists and “they should understand the situation in PoK where the condition is pitiable with no respect for human life”.

(<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-3409563,prtpage-1.cms>)

Rajat Pandit, “40 Islamic terror camps operating across LoC: Army Chief,” The Times of India, August 23, 2008

NEW DELHI: Musharraf or no Musharraf, jihadi factories training terrorists to wage covert war against India continue to operate with full impunity in Pakistan, even as cross-border attempts are underway to exploit the resurgence of separatism in J&K. “The latest assessment pegs the number of terrorist-training camps still operating across the border at about 40,” said Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor.

While 20 of these camps are operational in Pakistan, 18 are in PoK and two in the Northern Areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. Many of the terrorists trained in these

camps are ready to sneak into India by infiltrating across the LoC or using other routes through Nepal and Bangladesh. Moreover, around 750 to 800 terrorists — 40% of them being of “foreign origin” — are already “present and active” in J&K, and there is apprehension that terror outfits will try to ramp up their activities in the run-up to the state assembly polls. As compared to last year, for instance, the level of “successful” infiltration till July this year has been brought down by as much as 65% due to a strong counter-infiltration grid. Violence levels, too, are down by 55% as compared to earlier years. “Despite continued infiltration attempts (almost 150 since January) by terrorist groups from across, we have been able to foil most of these bids this summer. This has caused a serious dent in the capability and motivation of terrorist outfits to initiate violence in J&K,” said Gen Kapoor.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-3394843,prtpage-1.cms>)

“Pakistan blamed for Gilgit Baltistan’s trouble,” August 28, 2008

The continuation of the exploitative and colonial policies in Gilgit-Baltistan has increased the sense of frustration and anger among the people of the region. The resolution of the NWFP assembly seeking renaming of Diامر-Basha dam as Basha; the Bhunji dam plan and unchecked looting and plundering of natural resources of the region have smashed the dream of accession of Gilgit-Baltistan with Pakistan. These views were expressed by Chairman of Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement Manzoor Husain Parwana.

Commenting on the recent killing of NLI (Northern Light Infantry) personnel in tribal areas, he asserted that in order to eliminate the impression that NLI was the local army of Northern Areas, people from Punjab and NWFP were being inducted in the unit and Balti and Gilgiti youth were dispersed to different units and local NLI personnel were sent to trouble-hit areas of NWFP and Balochistan. This, he added, was like rubbing salt into the Kargil injuries of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

(<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/08/pakistan-blamed-for-gilgit-baltistans.html>)

D J Mathal, “PML-N vows to ensure rights for Gilgit-Baltistan,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, August 16-August 22, 2008

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) announced that soon after the impeachment of President Pervez Musharraf, it will start implementing the Charter of Democracy along with its coalition partner, the PPP, and would ensure all constitutional rights for Gilgit-Baltistan.

(<http://www.axdo.info/pml-n-vows-to-ensure-rights-for-gilgit-baltistan/>)

“Azad Kashmir elections rigged: JI,” The News, August 02, 2008

Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Kashmir, Abdur Rashid Turabi, alleged that elections in Azad Kashmir (AJK) were rigged and the present government came into power with President Musharraf’s support. He said that rulers lent unconditional support to President Musharraf on his policy towards the Kashmir issue.

Asked how he saw the internal crisis in the NWFP/FATA and Balochistan, he said it was all linked with the Kashmir issue, adding that the Pakistan government had deviated from its stand. He added that the government has to change its Afghan and Kashmir policy and must recognise the rights of the locals. Turabi said that the independence movement of Kashmir lay in the stability and integrity of Pakistan but Musharraf’s policies had jeopardised the right of self-determination of Kashmiris.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=127695>)

Press release, August 06, 2008, Shafqat Inqalabi, Former spokesperson, Balwaristan National Front, Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan (POGB)

According to some reliable sources, ISI is starting to project the militants in PoK again. In first phase, ISI officials want to launch a campaign against the “qadeyani” (who are considered Muslim by world but in Pakistan they are not accepted as Muslims) citizens of district Kotle, PoK. ISI re started to operate some of the old militant camps which were closed from last many years under American pressure. For the last two months, ISI is much active in POGB, PoK as well as in the neighbouring countries especially in India and Afghanistan.

According to international reports, ISI was directly involved in Kabul blast where two diplomats of Indian embassy were killed. ISI was also directly involved in Ahmedabad bomb blasts in India.

“Government policies alienating youth of Gilgit Baltistan ,” August 02, 2008

Chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Manzoor Hussain Parwana stated that the arrest of Ghulam Shahzad Agha showed the frustration of the Skardu administration over the popular struggle of nationalist forces in the region. He further said that the double standard of the local administration was causing a wide gulf between the new generation of Gilgit-Baltistan and the rulers of Pakistan. In a press statement issued, Mr Parwana pointed out that Gilgit-Baltistan was not a part of Pakistan and the free movement and activities of workers and activists of Pakistani political parties in the region was illegal and unconstitutional.

(<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/08/government-policies-alienating-youth-of.html>)

“Govt faced problems that affected its performance: Kaira,” Associated Press of Pakistan, August 06, 2008

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Northern Areas and Kashmir Affairs, Amaruz Zaman Kaira said that the government had to face some unavoidable problems in its early days, which affected its performance. Talking to a private TV channel, he said that problems like soaring oil price at international market affected the performance of the government. “We had only few options to improve the things. We did not commit any mistakes in any sector”, he added.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=47554&Itemid=2)

“Hypocrisy of government functionaries in Azad Kashmir,” Kashmir Watch report, August 06, 2008

Corruption, nepotism, misuse of authority, victimization and discrimination plagues Azad (Free) Kashmir. The contemptuous manner in which some state functionaries continue to treat the law is leading to social anarchy and chaos in Azad Kashmir. Many believe the government of Prime Minister Sardar

Atique Ahmed Khan, which took power in July 2006, recognizes only one rule — might is right. The recent re-posting of Mushtaq Awan, Programme Director of AJK Community Development Program (CDP), is a case in point. He was posted out after remaining at the CDP for a mere four months. The CDP is funded to the extent of 50 percent by the International Funding for Agriculture Development (IFAD), and is tasked to help in the alleviation of poverty in rural areas through community participation. Awan's replacement is the fourth in CDP in less than a year, and has reportedly offended the international donors.

(http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1217964803&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news)

“Gilgit-Baltistan first,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, August 09-August 15, 2008

The very ad hoc system that Pakistan has adopted for the last over six decades to control Gilgit-Baltistan testifies that the area is not part of any region but has its own identity and individuality. The modus operandi of Islamabad to control the region is now bringing the people of the area to a single platform calling for freedom. Despite accepting Gilgit-Baltistan as a party to the Kashmir issue, Pakistan has kept the region completely isolated from Kashmir. Nay the rulers have created such a psychological warfare that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan now even dissociate themselves from the issue of Kashmir. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan are now demanding self-governance which is only possible in a sovereign state. These federalist parties are pressing Islamabad to end decades-old deprivation of Gilgit-Baltistan otherwise they would also join nationalist forces waging struggle for an independent entity. This is far enough to vindicate the legality and objectivity of the demand which has been the cornerstone of the struggle of the nationalist parties of the region. The issue is people are not ready to further tolerate denial of their identity in which they have been kept for the last over 60 years. Packages and development schemes now cannot stop people from demanding their national identity. Gilgit-Baltistan is a disputed area and Pakistan has recognised its status as such in the United Nations. Therefore, the question arises that why people of a region whose status has yet to be determined should abandon their right of identity and culture.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/08/gilgit-baltistan-first.html>)

August 2008

“Muzaffarabad march punctured, cops deflate trucks”

Political analysts opine that the threat to march to Muzaffarabad is a ploy being used by politicians and separatists of Kashmir Valley to divert the attention from the main issue (Amarnath land controversy) that is confronting the state. Jammu and Kashmir authorities nipped the plans of Kashmir-based fruit-growers and their separatist supporters to march to Muzaffarabad. Police men deflated around two hundred trucks in Sopore and arrested more than 100 fruit-growers. The fruit-growers threatened to march to Muzaffarabad to protest against the blockade of Jammu-Srinagar National highway by Amarnath protester in Jammu. Hurriyat Conference, the Kashmir-based separatist conglomerate, also supported the proposed march to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Large numbers of troops had been deployed on the Jammu Srinagar National Highway to ensuring that there is no problem in transport of fruits as well supplies to and fro Kashmir Valley.

(<http://www.merineews.com/catFull.jsp?articleID=139260&catID=2&category=India>)

“14 August and occupied Balawaristan,” August 13, 2008

After two days Pakistani government is going to celebrate the independence day of Pakistan. In 1997, the nationalist parties of PGOB, Balawaristan National Front and Karakorum National Movement celebrated 14 August as the black day first time in the history of Gilgit Baltistan. Pakistani government sent hundreds of nationalist leaders and workers behind the bars of prison and apply the illegal ppc acts like 124-A, 124-B on them. The nationalist were not ready to surrender their movement and they resumed their activities after release from the prison.

(<http://balawaristan.blogspot.com/2008/08/14-august-and-occupied-balawaristan.html>)

Noor, “The Bill for Gilgit - Baltistan humiliated by the National Assembly,” August 15, 2008

PML (Q) legislator, Marvi Memon, presented a bill in the National Assembly on August 12, seeking provincial status for Gilgit - Baltistan. The bill was unanimously rejected by the house. The bill was

rejected because according to the KANA federal minister, Kaira, the issue is 'sensitive'. He said that the government has increased the budget of Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) and this, he said, would help bring the people at par with rest of the citizens of Pakistan. Presenting the bill, Marvi Memon said on floor of the house that people of Gilgit - Baltistan were being discriminated against by the governments of Pakistan. She accused the PM by stating that he wasn't interested in affairs of the region. While Marvi deserves appreciation for presenting the bill in the legislative assembly, one could not resist questioning her intentions in doing so.

(<http://pamirtimes.wordpress.com/2008/08/15/op-ed-the-bill-for-gilgit-baltistan-humiliated-by-the-national-assembly/>)

“Speakers call for withdrawal of forces from disputed areas,” Dawn, August 16, 2008

GILGIT: Leaders of nationalist and left wing parties demanded immediate dissolution of the Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) and holding of fresh elections for a constituent assembly that could frame a constitution for Gilgit-Baltistan on the pattern of Azad Kashmir. They also demanded an end to identity crisis of the region by restoring its historical name – Gilgit-Baltistan.

Through a resolution, the speakers asserted that after withdrawal of forces from the region, elections for an independent legislative assembly should be held under a non-partisan international authority, so that the elected representatives of the people could decide about the future of the region. They demanded that all old and historic roads including the Ghizer-Hunza-Tajikistan, Skardu-Kargil and Astore-Srinagar routes should be opened, so that the divided families could meet each other and tourism and local economy could be promoted through cross-border trade.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/08/16/top13.htm>)

Tariq Naqash, “Centre ignoring AJK govt’s corruption: Sultan,” Dawn, August 31, 2008

MUZAFFARABAD: A former prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on August 30 accused some unnamed federal government functionaries of

taking share from the incumbent AJK government in return for their silence towards “unchecked corruption” in the territory.

Barrister Sultan Mahmood recalled that when he was the prime minister (1996-2001), the federal authorities had imposed a “monitoring” system in the AJK on the grounds that those who provided the funds were empowered to question their utilisation. “Those who pay, they have a say” was what they would tell me but now all are silent because they get their share in the money generated by the present rulers through corruption,” he alleged at a news conference.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/08/31/top15.htm>)

Economic Developments

“Food crisis looms large on Gilgit-Baltistan,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, August 16-August 22, 2008

GILGIT: There has been persistent decrease in the production of wheat and maize in Gilgit-Baltistan for the last about 15 years. Due to increasing demand in the national and international markets, farmers of Gilgit-Baltistan have switched over to the cultivation of potato instead of wheat and maize. The current food crisis in the world has put its negative effects on Gilgit-Baltistan. For the last many years, Gilgit-Baltistan has not been able to keep pace between the growth of its population and production of food items.

(<http://bangsahar.wordpress.com/2008/08/30/food-crisis-looms-large-on-gilgit-baltistan/>)

Dilshad Azeem “World Bank refuses to fund Diamer-Bhasha dam,” Pakistan Defence, July 31, 2008

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank categorically refused to fund water and power projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and the Northern Areas (NAs), including the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. “The bank’s refusal to provide funds has virtually endangered the practicability of the Bhasha Dam on whose feasibility and technical reports huge amounts have already been spent since 2006,” sources privy to a high-level meeting said. The meeting was told that the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) required \$30-40 billion for the projects, including the Bhasha Dam and others in the next 15 years to meet the growing electricity requirements through cheap power.

(<http://www.defence.pk/forums/economy-development/13122-world-bank-refuses-fund-diamer-bhasha-dam.html>)

“World donors meet begins in AJK today,” Daily Times, August 25, 2008

MUZAFFARABAD: A three-day international donors conference was held on August 25 to enhance the human and institutional capacity building with a view to further accelerating the pace of development in quake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir. The conference was organised by the AJK

government in collaboration with international financial institutions and multinational companies engaged in development activities for the socio-economic upliftment of the masses. Over 90 experts from the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and international companies agreed to attend the conference.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C08%5C25%5Cstory_25-8-2008_pg7_47)

“Pak-China trade activities set to resume as Olympics nearing end,” Associated Press of Pakistan, August 25, 2008

ISLAMABAD: As a security measure, the Chinese government was issuing only limited’ visas to the traders during the Olympics. The situation was likely to normalise from August 25 as olympics concluded on August 24. Pak-China Sost Port Company Private Limited is a joint venture company between Sinotrans and Silk Route Dry Port Trust. The port is constructed at a height of 9300 feet above sea level and is at the distance of approximately 850 km from the federal capital, Islamabad, and at the brink of Karakorum Highway (KKH).

(http://www.app.com.pk/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50070&Itemid=2)

“Why resource rich Northern Areas still face poverty?” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, August 16-August 22, 2008

GILGIT: Gifted with abundant natural resources, Gilgit-Baltistan still remains one of the backward areas of the world. For the last over 60 years, the region has been under the direct rule of Pakistan. There are unlimited avenues and resources for development but so far the government has failed to utilize them for the welfare of the local people. Every year, the government of Pakistan earns between Rs. 30 billion to Rs. 40 billion from the Sost Dry Port, Karakoram Highway, tourism and mineral resources of the region. But the way the government has been treating the area in terms of development priorities shows that it is not sincere to change the socio-economic condition of the region. According to the government statistics, the population of the area is 500,000 but independent

estimates put the figure well over 1.5 million and the number of unemployed youth at over 30,000. Since 1947, no government has seriously tried to end unemployment and poverty in the region due to which the people are living below poverty line even in the 21st century.

(<http://bangsahar.wordpress.com/2008/08/30/why-resource-rich-northern-areas-still-faces-poverty/>)

“Pakistan can use third option to resolve issue of Kishanganga hydro-electric project,” Associated Press of Pakistan, August 02, 2008

NEW DELHI: Expressing satisfaction over the modifications made by India in Baglihar hydro-electric project as recommended by international neutral expert, Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, Pakistan Indus water Commissioner stated that Pakistan can use third option if the issue of Kishanganga project is not resolved bilaterally. If Kishanganga project is constructed under the design as proposed by India, twenty seven percent less water will flow in Neelum River which will affect the Neelum-Jhelum project downstream. Pakistan raised serious objections over Kishanganga project during the 3-day talks and termed it as violation of Indus Basin Treaty. He also said Pakistan had invited Indian team to visit Neelum-Jhelum project from August 18 to 23.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=47265&Itemid=1)

“AJK lock horns with Islamabad over new power rates,” August 02, 2008

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir locked horns with the federal government over new power rates reportedly being applied in the territory in violation of any existing agreement, sources stated on August 02. Electricity Secretariat intimated to the Finance Ministry that the net arrears payable by the AJK to WAPDA at Rs 48.712 million by the end of April instead of Rs 1.14 billion as shown by Iesco. AJK Finance Ministry, the sources said, termed the Iesco demand as ‘inaccurate’ because the dispute regarding increase in tariff exists between WAPDA and Nepra. WAPDA is charging electricity dues on AJK in accordance with the new tariff whereas as per clause 5.2(b) of agreement between

WAPDA and AJK government ‘future power tariff (beyond September 2003) for Azad Kashmir shall be fixed by the federal government on the recommendations of standing sub-committee.

(http://www.pakwatan.com/latest_news1.php?id=8043)

“Annul all illegal mining leases issued in disputed Gilgit - Baltistan”, Nationalists demand in Hunza Valley,” August 21, 2008

HUNZA: The people of Gilgit-Baltistan need to be united in order to fight for the basic human and constitutional rights of the depressed and marginalised communities of the region. This was said by the leaders of nationalist parties and civil society organisation during a public consultation gathering in Aliabad, Hunza. The gathering was organised by Karakoram National Movement (KNM), Progressive Youth Front (PYF) and Balor Forum with the support of Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA). Hundreds of people from Hunza and Nagar participated in the gathering. The speakers demanded that the Government of Pakistan shall immediately define the constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan and the region should be given self-rule. They also demanded to declare Gilgit-Baltistan as least-developed region and therefore funds should be provided on preferential basis.

(<http://mykarakorum.blogspot.com/2008/08/annul-all-illegal-mining-leases-issued.html>)

Syed Abid Hussain Shah, “AJK minister asks WAPDA to end excessive load-shedding,” The News, August 31, 2008

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Electricity, Malik Muhammad Nawaz Khan asked WAPDA to immediately end the excessive and forced load shedding in busiest urban area. In a letter addressed to Chairman WAPDA Shakeel Durrani, the minister said: “since we are aware of the national energy crises, we are strictly observing load shedding in line with the schedule provided by WAPDA.” Yet it was observed during last two weeks that the duration of load shedding on Mangla-Mirpur, Kotli, Rawalakot, Bagh Circuit escalated.

(http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=132892)

**“Kaira for completion of projects in time,”
Pakistan Times, August 08, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira, Chairman Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, presided over the meeting of the Northern Areas Executive Development Committee (NAEDC) on August 02. During the meeting, approval to the Northern Areas Annual Development Plan was accorded. It was agreed that throw forward of development schemes should be gradually reduced as a move toward good governance. Keeping in view this principle, throw forward has been planned to be reduced by Rs. 2 Billion in FY08-09. The main areas of focus in the A.D.P. were energy, communications, transport, education and health with adequate allocation for other sectors as well.

(<http://www.pak-times.com/2008/08/08/kaira-for-completion-of-projects-in-time-3018/>)

**Tariq Naqash, “Foreign firm wants MoU Implemented in totality: Power project in AJK,”
Dawn, August 21, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: A foreign firm expressed concern over a recent advertisement by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Electric Board (AJKHEB) about a power project and asked the AJK government to ensure that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in this regard is honoured in totality.

As per the MoU signed by the AJK government with Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) in May last year, the CCC was to assist in the development and implementation of hydropower projects on an engineering, procurement and construction managements (EPCM) basis. Specific project identified in the MoU was 43.5 megawatt Jagran-II, located in Neelum valley to the northeast of Muzaffarabad. CCC was also to assist in identifying possible sources for financing.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/08/21/nat3.htm>)

International Developments

“9th International Kashmir meet in US today,” August 01, 2008

WASHINGTON: The 9th International Peace Conference on Kashmir organized by Kashmiri American Council, Kashmir Centre and Association of Humanitarian Lawyers attracted added importance because of the SAARC conference being held in Sri Lanka where India and Pakistan’s Prime Ministers met on sidelines. The conference was to be attended by some prominent opinion makers from India and Pakistan, Kashmir leaders and intellectuals from both the sides of LoC. Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Attique Khan and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Chief Muhammad Yasin Malik did not attend the conference.

(http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=1_8_2008&ItemID=28&cat=21)

Other Developments

Zulfiqar Ali Khan, “Bridge collapse threatens local economy,” August 28, 2008

HUNZA: The collapse of the main bridge on KKH, connecting Hunza, Nagar and other areas with Gilgit town, resulted in sharp decrease in potato price and increase in the “side-income” of local police. The potato contractors, political activists and representatives of farmers of Hunza and Nagar valley held an urgent meeting in Aliabad, Hunza and condemned the harsh behaviour of the police with the truck drivers and labours at Konadas and Nomal bridges. They blamed police for allowing heavy trucks carrying Chinese exports goods while illegally charging huge money.

(<http://pamirtimes.wordpress.com/2008/08/28/bridge-collapse-threats-local-economy/>)

“Government officials and stakeholders policy underway,” The Frontier Post, August 06, 2008

MANSEHRA: The second phase of the ERRA rural landless project was launched on August 01 and August 02 in Muzaffarabad and Mansehra. The aim of the second phase is to provide earthquake affectees living on highly hazardous land as declared by the Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP), a grant of Rs. 75,000 to purchase 5 Marlas of safe land for themselves and their families. The end goal of the policy is to rehabilitate 8,000 families living on highly hazardous land by providing them with financial assistance to purchase safe land to rebuild their once lost homes.

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=hn&nid=1585&ad=06-08-2008>).

“NRSP to start work in Diamer,” Dawn, August 10, 2008

GILGIT: Northern Areas Chief Secretary, Babar Yaqoob Fateh Mohammad assured the people of Diamer that the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) would launch work for socio-economic development in the area. Speaking at the concluding ceremony of the three-day Babusar Polo Festival, he said the government was fully aware of the problems of the masses and would take all measures

to resolve them. He made special mention of Diamer-Bhasha Dam and said all-out efforts were being made to resolve the grievances of the affected people.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/08/10/top18.htm>)

ACRONYMS

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
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
JIAJK	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
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 Kashmir (PoK), legitimately an integral part of the Indian Union is presently under Pakistan's control. Pakistan occupied the territory as a result of tribal invasion in 1947 engineered by the Pakistani army. It covers one-third of the total area of 86,023 square miles/ 222,236 square kilometers of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The area under occupation comprises two administrative units: Mirpur- Muzaffarabad and Gilgit Baltistan referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and the 'Northern Areas' respectively by the government of Pakistan. Pakistan ceded a segment (2,700 sq miles) of this occupied territory lying to the north-east border of the Northern Areas known as the Trans Karakoram Tract to China in 1963.

“AZAD KASHMIR”

Pakistan envisaged the Azad Kashmir as a country with a President, a Prime Minister and a Legislature of its own according to the Karachi Agreement of April 28, 1949. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature as this invaded territory is neither a country nor even a province. Significant subjects such as defence, supposed 'foreign policy' of POK, rehabilitation of refugees and the overall control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan.

Area: 13,297 square km

Mirpur comprises 3 districts: *Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur*

Muzaffarabad is divided into five districts: *Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Poonch, Sudhnati*

Population: 3,271,000 (1.685 million Male, 1.665 million Female)

Capital: Muzaffarabad

“President”: Raja Zulfikar Khan

“Prime Minister”: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

“Azad Jammu and Kashmir” Council: Total 11 members- 6 from the government of AJK and 5 from the government of Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the President AJK.

Legislative Assembly: 49 seats

Tribal population: Awan, Abbasi, Ansari, Gilani, Gujar, Jarral, Jat, Qureshi, Malik, Mughal, Pashtuns, Rajput, Rachyals, Sudhan, Tarkhan

NORTHERN AREAS

The **Northern Areas** officially referred to by the government of Pakistan as the **Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA)**, is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied part of Kashmir and is a self governing unit under Pakistani control. The area is five times bigger to that of Azad Kashmir. The status of this region being unstated in the successive constitutions of Pakistan over the years, the people are denied basic socio-political and legal rights. The Northern Areas have no representation in the National Assembly and are governed by the Northern Areas Council headed by Minister of Kashmir and Northern Areas. A Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in the absence of a High Court. The population mainly comprises Shia, Sunni and Ismaili Muslims. Ethnic groups include Baltees, Shinas, Vashkuns, Mughals, Kashmiris, Pathans, Ladhakhis and Turks.

Governor/ Commissioner: Imran Ali

“Chief Minister”: Irfan Ali and Shahid Hussain

Legislature: Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (29 seats)

Languages: Balti, Shina, Brushaski, Khawer, Wakhi, Turki, Tibeti, Pushto and Urdu

Area: 72,496 km

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: seven

Baltistan is divided into *Ghanche and Skardu*

Gilgit divided into *Astore, Diamer, Ghizar, Gilgit and Hunza Nagar*

Population: 1.5 million

Political groups: United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, Balwaristan National Front (BNF) and Gilgit Baltistan United Action Forum for Self Rule, Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM).

Literacy rate: 14% male- 3.5% female

State of Infrastructure: No pipelines for water supply and no electricity supply for at least two thirds of the population in Northern Areas.

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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