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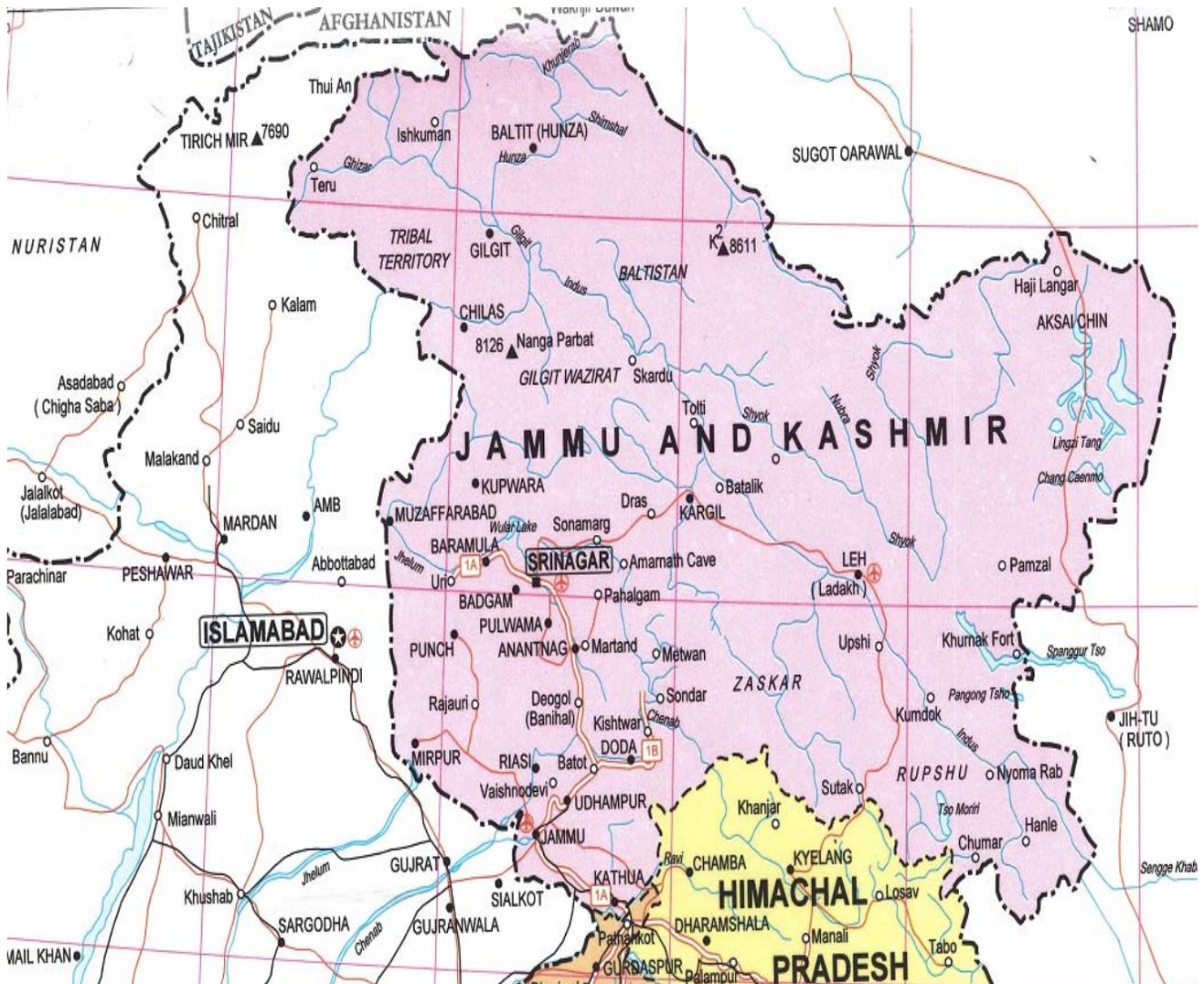
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

The issue is flooded with reports about the change in the 'AJK' government after a brief period of uncertainty. Sardar Mohammed Yaqoob Khan replaced Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan as the new prime minister of 'AJK.' Earlier, the incumbent government was toppled by a vote of no confidence on charges of irregularities. The new cabinet was sworn in and their portfolios were distributed.

Amongst the economic developments, there is interesting news about how the small local traders are thriving with the inflow of Chinese goods in the Northern Areas via the Karakoram Highway. For obvious reasons the traders in the region have demanded the opening of ancient trade routes which could allow trade not only with China but with some Central Asian Republics also.

There is acute shortage of power in Gilgit- Baltistan as indicated in some reports under 'Other Developments.' The concerned authority, WAPDA plans to rid the area from power shortage in another three years time i.e. by 2011. Meanwhile, the industries are badly hit by load shedding for long hours.

The issue includes a commentary titled, "Pakistan's Water Wars With India" written by Professor P. Stobdan. The article talks about the persistent Indo-Pak water disputes in the light of President Zardari's article published in Washington Post on January 28, 2009.

Priyanka Singh

Commentary

Pakistan's Water Wars with India?

P. Stobdan

In a surprise move, Pakistan has once gain spawned the water issue on a political fast-track against India. On January 28, 2009, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in an article in *Washington Post* described water as a major issue between Pakistan and India. While congratulating the new US President Barack Obama, Zardari pleaded the US to re-hyphenate Pakistan with India on a number of accounts including the water crisis which he thought was fraught with serious consequences not only for environmental catastrophe, but also for fuelling extremism and terrorism in South Asia. He applauded Obama's desire to engage Pakistan and India to defuse the tensions in South Asia.

Why bring the water issue now? There could be two main reasons for it. Firstly, Pakistan is disturbed at being clubbed with Afghanistan as a troubled state, especially with Richard Holbrooke's appointment as a special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The direction by the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton emphasized on the importance of "an integrated strategy" that treats the problems of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single whole is a disturbing thing for Islamabad. Clinton intends to give a sharp focus on Pakistan and Afghanistan by mobilizing US allies and friends from around the world to stir up the faltering war on terror.

In the op-ed piece Asif Ali Zardari urged Obama to expand special emissary Richard Holbrooke's brief to include Kashmir and other disputes between India and Pakistan. He wrote "Much as the Palestinian issue remains the core obstacle to peace in the Middle East, the question of Kashmir must be addressed in some meaningful way to bring stability to this region."

He reminded the US that the situation in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India is indeed critical, but said that its severity actually presents an opportunity for aggressive and innovative action. He wrote that "the special envoy will work with India and Pakistan not only to bring a just and reasonable resolution to the

issues of Kashmir and Jammu but also to address critical economic and environmental concerns."

Secondly, Pakistan wants to divert the world's attention away from focus on terrorism in which Islamabad had landed itself up after 26/11 Mumbai attack. The world's pressure on Pakistan to own the 26/11 responsibility has tarnished Pakistan's international image as the real epicenter of terrorism. By raising the water issue, Pakistan wants to convey the point that it is not its professed ideology and fanaticism but water resources that fuel the fires of discontent among its people and in turn breeds extremism and terrorism. Pakistan's own media reports suggest that the water issue vis-à-vis India are being raised by the agencies other than the Pakistan Indus Waters Commission. Pakistan's position is that India is violating the Indus Waters Treaty's provisions by reducing the flow in the Chenab river at the Maralla headwork having adverse impact on the loss of cropped areas in Lahore, Kasur, Okara, Sialkot, Hafizabad, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad and Jhang districts. Besides, Pakistan claimed that the flow would cause early depletion of water reserves at Mangla dam. Pakistan threatens to write letters to Muslim countries, the members of the Friends of Pakistan forum and Britain to draw their attention to the issue.

It appears that Pakistan is keen to make water as the next catalyst for conflict with India. This is notwithstanding the fact that India and Pakistan signed the Indus Water Treaty way back in 1960s, which has been adhered to by India without tempering it despite several wars between India and Pakistan. The Treaty is being cited as a unique example of water-sharing mechanism in the world.

Two things have emerged clearly from Pakistan's renewed attempt to raise the water issue. Firstly, it is clear that Pakistan is unlikely to come to terms with India even if the Kashmir issue is brought to any satisfactory solution. Those who believe that Kashmir is the only dispute between India and Pakistan are highly mistaken. Pakistan has been

propagating throughout that the question of Kashmir is the only key to India – Pakistan relations.

Secondly, it is also now clear that Pakistan has actually been eyeing for Kashmir's environmental resources rather than seriously thinking about the actual life and destiny of Kashmiri people. Islamabad's plea to Ambassador Holbrooke was to address critical economic and environmental concerns, but the failure to do so, according to Zardari could 'fuel the fires of discontent that lead to extremism and terrorism' comes as a stern warning.

Pakistan wants to change the rule of the game. Is India ready for it?

Political Developments

“Change of government in Azad Kashmir,” Editorial, Daily times, January 08, 2009

The ruling Muslim Conference in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) split in Muzaffarabad and replaced Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed with Sardar Muhammad Yaqub following a no-confidence vote based on allegations of “corruption and nepotism”. As expected, Sardar Attique left after accusing the federal government of interfering in the politics of Azad Kashmir, warning it of instability in the region. It is the Muslim Conference that has split, so it is difficult to see how the federal government could have engineered Sardar Sahib’s fall. Yet there could have been a tipping over the precipice when things were getting rough for him. It is true that all the opposition participated in the ouster vote, including 7 of AJKPP, 4 of Muslim League and 2 of MQM. The rest of the 32 out of a house 46 were his own men who are tired of his leadership for various reasons.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C08%5Cstory_8-1-2009_pg3_1)

Tariq Naqash, “No-trust vote topples AJK PM Attique,” Dawn, January 07, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly approved a vote of no-confidence against Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan on January 06 by a big majority. Following his defeat, Sardar Mohammad Yaqub Khan was sworn in as the eighth prime minister of the state. As the AJK Constitution makes it mandatory to name the successor of the incumbent, Yaqub Khan became the new Leader of the House after the motion was supported by 32 of the 46 members present in the assembly. Two members were absent.

Sardar Yaqub, 56, was administered oath by President Raja Zulqarnain Khan.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2009/01/07/top7.htm>)

“No mid term polls in AJK: Yaqoob”

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Yaqoob Khan ruled out any mid term elections in the state saying the legislative assembly will complete its constitutional term. The AJK premier also said that his government will toe the line of the Pakistani government vis-a-vis Kashmir issue and would not drain the exchequer on unnecessary foreign tours in the name of highlighting the Kashmir cause. He blamed former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed for the division of ruling Muslim conference. “Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan headed party and government dictatorially as he was the aide of former dictator General Pervez Musharraf and he himself was solely responsible for the removal of his regime” he observed.

(http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1232131229&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news)

“Deputy Speaker voted out of AJK assembly,” Daily Times, January 18, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Constituent Assembly on January 17 passed a no-confidence motion against Deputy Speaker Sardar Farooq Ahmed Tahir with 30 votes out of 47. The special session was chaired by AJK Assembly Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir. Member of the AJK assembly and minister in AJK coalition government, Muhammad Tahir Khokhar submitted a no-confidence resolution against the deputy speaker. All the members of the coalition government voted while the opposition abstained. The newly elected Prime Minister of AJK Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan said he would consult the coalition partners before taking important decisions and also take guidance from the opposition leader.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C18%5Cstory_18-1-2009_pg7_8)

“AJK cabinet gets 12 new ministers,” Daily Times, January 25, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Twelve more ministers of Azad Kashmir cabinet took oath on January 24, raising the number of the cabinet members to 23. Azad Kashmir President Raja Zulqarnain Khan administered the oath in a ceremony held at Kashmir House, which was attended by AJK Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob Khan, AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir and parliamentary leaders of coalition parties, members of the AJK Legislative Assembly and bureaucrats. The newly-inducted ministers are Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz, Muhammad Aziz Hanif Awan, Sardar Muhammad Naeem Khan, Major (r) Yousuf Dad Khan, Ali Shan Soni, Chaudhry Rukhsar Ahmad, Raja Muhammad Siddique, Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique Batli, Akbar Ibrahim, Dewan Mohiuddin, Shaukat Ali Shah and Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C25%5Cstory_25-1-2009_pg7_2)

“Portfolios of 23 member AJK cabinet announced”

MUZAFFARABAD: The portfolios of 23-member cabinet of Azad Kashmir Government were announced and department of Services and General Administration issued the notification in this regard. According to the notification, Mian Abdul Waheed has been given the charge of Forest Department, Begum Noreen Arif (Social Welfare and Women Development), Tahir Khokhar (Tourism, Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs), Dr. Mehmood Riaz (Electricity), Muhammad Hanif Awan (Zakat, Ushr and City Development), Chaudhary Muhammad Rashid (Hydro Electric Board and Religious Affairs), Chaudhary Latif Akbar (Revenue, Planning and Development), Col (retd) Naseem Khan (Construction and Highways), Sardar Qamar-uz-Zaman Khan (Health), Chaudhary Muhammad Aziz (Education, School and IT Board), Sardar Naeem Khan (Education, Colleges and Small Industries), Raja Nisar Ahmed Khan (Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs), Major (retd) Munsaf Dad

Khan (Agriculture and Irrigation), Chaudhary Muhammad Yousuf (Mangla Dam Affairs and Cooperative Fisheries), Chaudhary Rukhsar Ahmed (Revenue Department), Chaudhary Anwar-ul-Haq (Physical Planning, Housing and Public Health), Chaudhary Ali Shan (Jails), Abdul Majid Khan (Information), Raja Muhammad Siddique (Civil Defence and Transport), Syed Shaukat Shah (Food), Chaudhary Akbar Ibrahim (Rehabilitation), Ghulam Deewan Moinuddin (Industries and Trade) and Muhammad Sadique Batli (Auqaf and Council of Islamic Ideology).

(<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=139817>)

“Plight of the People of Balawaristan,” Balawaristantimes, January 26, 2009

Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Chairman, Abdul Hamid Khan stated that Balawaristan (Pakistan Occupied Gilgit Baltistan) is a disputed part of Jammu & Kashmir, which is also the most deprived and neglected part of the world. Speaking at the Brussels conference, he said, “I am taking this opportunity to introduce my country Balawaristan and enlighten you that geographically the region occupies strategic significance in the periphery of Pakistan under its control known as Northern Areas, but historically known as Brooshaal/Bloristan, Dardistan or Gilgit Baltistan, we call it Balawaristan. We also reserve our right over Pakistan occupied Chitral and Shenaki Kohistan, China occupied Shimashaal and Ladakh (including Aksai-Chin), which are part of Balawaristan.”

(<http://balawaristantimes.blogspot.com/2009/01/plight-of-people-of-balawaristan.html>)

“Rooting out the JuD,” The News, January 27, 2009

Weeks after it began a crackdown on the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jamaat-ud-Daawa which is affiliated with it, the Punjab government seems to have moved in for what seems like the kill. An administrator has been appointed to oversee all the institutions run by the now-banned including the hospitals, schools and

other welfare bodies it operated. Crucially, the JuD's sprawling headquarters at Muridke have finally been taken over. This complex included the organization's main offices. In the past, organized training had also been imparted here, but these activities were moved to Azad Kashmir after a 2002 ban on the LeT. A police post has been set up outside the JuD headquarters. The Punjab administration has said the move was delayed because of the 'complexities' involved. Insiders say this is a reference to clearance from senior figures in various positions of power. The decisive action would seem to imply that the Pakistani government does indeed have some evidence of the LeT's involvement in the Mumbai attacks. The moves against it, in December last year, began after angry Indian finger-pointing towards the organization as the group behind the Mumbai attacks. It is assumed there must be at least some proof of this in the files handed over to Islamabad by New Delhi. Going by logic, we must reason the authorities acted on the basis of solid information.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=159205>)

Hameed Shaheen, "15 Kashmiri political parties meet tomorrow; Kashmir Declaration to be issued," Pakistan Observer, January 22, 2009

ISLAMABAD: An All Parties Ad hoc Committee on Kashmiri Peoples' Right to Self-determination was set to meet on January 23 to deliberate and issue a joint Kashmir Declaration containing the combined resolve of Kashmiris to re-activate their political role at the national and international levels for the implementation of right to self-determination by the global community.

Mr Amanullah Khan, Convener of the Committee, has invited 15 Kashmiri political and religious parties to discuss intensively all aspects of the Kashmir dispute in the light of the evolving international and regional scenarios. The Ad hoc Committee is the common platform of the Kashmiri political and religious parties to move forward in unison for energizing the global community for Kashmiris right to self-determination.

The Convener Mr Amanullah Khan also stated that "a new awareness" on the international level is emerging regarding Kashmir solution. "It is proper time for the Kashmiri political parties representing all shades of Kashmiri opinion to sit together and discuss about ways to draw world attention towards the right to self-determination aspect of the Kashmir dispute."

(<http://pakobserver.net/200901/22/news/topstories16.asp>)

"Zardari, AJK Prime Minister discuss political situation"

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan on Saturday called on President Asif Ali Zardari and exchanged views on the political situation in AJK. Appreciating the Kashmir policy of Pakistan, the AJK Prime Minister said it would help move forward the process of Kashmir-related dialogue between India and Pakistan. President Zardari said Pakistan had always been committed to extend political, moral and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir in their struggle for their right to self-determination. Qamar Zaman Kaira, Federal Minister for KANA was also present during the meeting.

(<http://newspakistan.net/zardari-ajk-prime-minister-discuss-political-situation-2009-25-01.php>)

"President PPP AJK vows to recover looted money from Sardar Attique," Regional Times, January 19, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: President Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has said that the demand to hold new elections has been cancelled keeping in view the current circumstances, adding that, money looted by former Prime Minister AJK, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan would be recovered. While addressing the Press in Central Press Club on January 18, he said, "We have joined coalition Government in AJK by removing Musharraf's remnants." The government, he said, would complete its tenure. "We have toppled the Government of former Prime

Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan through democratic ways while Federal Government had no role in no-trust move against him, he further added.

(<http://regionaltimes.com/19jan2009/backpagenews/presdieln.htm>)

“NALA passes three resolutions,” Hunza Times, January 20, 2009

The Northern Areas Legislative Assembly approved three resolutions on the fourth day of its proceedings here on January 19. The session was later adjourned. The first resolution moved by Fida Mohammad Nashad urged the government to follow its methodology as practiced in rest of the country in Gilgit-Baltistan too. Speaker Malik Mohammad Miskeen referred the resolution to the house for debate and PPP’s Fidaullah Advocate and Aftab Ahmed recommended some changes after which it was passed unanimously. Hafizur Rehman presented a resolution criticizing the suspension of senior forest officials and termed it a sheer violation of law. He said people in Islamabad should respect public sentiments before taking such decisions. In another resolution, Mr Rehman condemned the Mumbai incident.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2009/01/20/nala-passes-three-resolutions/>)

“Gilgit Baltistan: War is Forbidden Along Borders,” January 12, 2009

Below is a statement made by Manzoor Hussain Parwana, Chairman of the Gilgit Baltistan United Movement which is part of the Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance, and a UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization) member as of September 2008

“War is not the solution of the problem so Pakistan and India should stop thinking of defeating each other in the war field. We won’t allow any body to make Gilgit Baltistan a war field. If Pakistan and India try to make our region as battled field then we will compel to invite international community to intervene in the matter”. This was stated by Manzoor Hussain

Parwana, Chairman Gilgit Baltistan United Movement while addressing a press conference at Skardu. Parwana was concerned that some peoples have been issuing statements to the local press that they will fight along with the armed forces. They do not know the distraction of the war. He demanded the government to stop emotional blackmailing of the astute mass of the region in the name of religion. “We are neither part of India nor Pakistan so why should we give our lives for the mere fulfillment of the ill will agendas of either of the both,” he added. He said the region can be brought in parallel with the developed nations of the world if the minerals and natural resources of the region are fully utilized.

(<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/9080/254/>)

“Gilgit-Baltistan to have representation in Kashmir Committee,” January 10, 2009

GILGIT: Gilgit Baltistan would have representation in Kashmir Committee and in this regard, names of two members would be notified shortly. According to official sources, Northern Areas administration has received two names from the federal government and the members are likely to be included in the committee.

(http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1231698797&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news)

“Political heads of development authorities & civic institutions across AJK removed,” Associated Press of Pakistan, January 07, 2009

MIRPUR: Newly elected Prime Minister of AJK, Sardar Yaqoob Khan led government removed all the political heads including chairmen of the development authorities and administrators of the civic institutions across Azad Jammu & Kashmir on January 06.

A senior AJK government official stated that Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissions of the concerned divisions, districts and the sub divisions have been

assigned additional charges as heads of the development authorities, Municipal Corporations and Municipal Committees of their concerned areas.

Following the orders of the new AJK government, the Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and ACs have taken over the additional charge as heads of the development authorities and civic institutions of their concerned districts.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=64247&Itemid=2)

“APHC-AJK hold demonstration in front of UN observers office,” January 05, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chapter, held a protest demonstration and sit-in at the office of the United Nations Observers Office on January 05, on the occasion of “Self-Determination Day.” Members of APHC-AJK chapter and leaders of political parties were present on the occasion.

(<http://kmsnews.org/news/aphc-ajk-hold-demo-front-un-observers-office>)

“Pakistani investigators find Mumbai link: WSJ,” Daily Times, January 01, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani investigators have unearthed substantive links between the gunmen who attacked Mumbai in November and the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) group, as reported by the Wall Street Journal. The newspaper said in an online report on December 31, 2008 that at least one top LeT leader, Zarar Shah, captured in a raid early this month in Azad Kashmir, had confessed to the group’s involvement in the attack. Shah’s admission was backed up by US intercepts of a telephone call between Shah and one of the attackers during the assault, the Pakistani security official stated.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C01%5Cstory_1-1-2009_pg1_6)

“Appointment of SAC chief aimed to suppress people’s voice: GBUM,” January 27, 2009

“The rulers of Pakistan are hell-bent on strengthening the roots of colonial system of governance in Gilgit Baltistan but the voice for self-rule rising against the unjust and cruel means of the rulers is indicative of a big nationalist revolution in the region.”

These views were expressed by Chairman Gilgit Baltistan United Movement while reacting to the appointment of an ex-Supreme Court of Pakistan judge as the chief of the Supreme Appellate Court (SAC) of Gilgit Baltistan. Manzoor Hussain Parwana said the appointment of a non-local, retired and above all a PCO judge as chief of the SAC was a joke with the people of Gilgit Baltistan.

Such step illustrates the intention of colonial masters to safeguard the imposing system in the region and suppress the rising voice of the masses for their basic legitimate rights and prolong the de-facto control. The appointment of the outsider and a retired judge on the post ignoring the adequate and indigenous judge had also exposed the hollow claims of government to give the local people a democratic setup, he added He announced to launch a movement for attaining the basic rights of the local people and call the masses to join hand with nationalist movement to resist against the illegal appointment of the non-local judge in the region.

Issued By, Gilgit Baltistan United Movement, Skardu Baltistan

(<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2009/01/appointment-of-sac-chief-aimed-to.html>)

Economic Developments

Ershad Mahmud, “Across the Line,” Hunza Times, January 18, 2009

Not with standing the constitutional and political wrangling, many socio-economic developments are taking place in Gilgit. Gilgit city is getting more modernized and developed with new roads, buildings, mobile phone companies, etc. The Karakorum Highway has truly transformed the lives of the people living in these areas. Sharing his personal experience, the President of the Northern Areas Chamber of Commerce and a prominent trader, Haji Mohammad Hussain stated, “Until 1984, I myself used to wear plastic-made shoes and spend the whole day standing in queue to obtain rationed sugar and a canister of ghee. I started a business on small scale when trade was opened with China through the Karakorum Highway. Today, I run a big business and each year do business worth millions of rupees.” One can single out several persons who have become millionaires in recent times, mainly because of trade with China. Wood selling to the urban areas of the country is also one of the major income generation sources. The credit for this economic turn-around also goes to the Aga Khan Foundation and many other non-governmental organizations that have launched several income generation projects for the local people. A great number of lucrative jobs have been created for the local educated people.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2009/01/18/across-the-line-by-ershad-mahmud/>)

“Northern Areas traders want ancient trade routes reopened,” Hunza Times, January 29, 2009

The Northern Areas traders have asked the government to reopen the Skardu-Kargil and Astor-Srinagar roads and wind up operations of the Customs Department in the region. They also called for allowing access of the Northern Areas to Tajikistan via Wakhan Corridor to harness the trade potential of the area to the full. These demands were submitted by a delegation of the Northern Areas Chamber of Commerce and Industry to the federal government.

A delegation of the chamber, headed by its president, Javed Hussain, called on Minister for Kashmir and Northern Areas Affairs (KANA), Qamar Zaman Kaira and presented before him a list of demands that includes keeping the KKH open round the year and calling back the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) staff from Northern Areas.

Javed Hussain further stated that in principle Pakistan government could not impose any tax without giving representation to the people of Northern Areas in the Parliament. He cited the Supreme Court of Pakistan verdict of 1998, according to which the government could not levy tax on the people of the region without giving them basic democratic and other rights as enjoyed by other citizens of Pakistan.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2009/01/29/northern-areas-traders-want-ancient-trade-routes-reopened/>)

“Fruit Traders Meeting CM Today,” January 14, 2009

SRINAGAR: A delegation of fruit growers association met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on January 14 to seek an end to problems facing them and get their visit of Pakistan occupied Kashmir through. The delegation of fruit growers association met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in protest of the Governor’s administrations failure to address problems facing them, after snapping trade ties with their counter parts in Pakistan

“We are meeting Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for allowing us to pay a visit to Pakistan occupied Kashmir and also ease the other hurdles in the trade ties between two parts of Kashmir,” Farooq Ahmad Malik, President of the Sopore fruit buyers’ association stated. The fruit traders recently decided not to send their consignments across the Line of Control (LoC) citing lack of communication, banking arrangements and difficulty in establishing contact with traders across the border as the reasons.

(http://www.kashmirobservers.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=467:fruit-traders-meeting-cm-today&catid=5:business&Itemid=6)

Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “Trans LoC trade rising despite Pak-India tensions,” The News, January 30, 2009

MIRPUR: Trans-LoC trade between Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Jammu & Kashmir has increased despite tensions between Pakistan and India in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Mumbai. AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry Executive Committee Member, Khalid Sharif observed this while addressing a meeting of businessmen on January 29. The leader from the business community emphatically said that negative impact of the Indo-Pak tension on cross-LoC trade should be avoided and discouraged by both countries in all circumstances.

(http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=159843)

“Cross-LoC trade gains momentum, goods reach Poonch from AJK,” Kashmir Media Service, January 28, 2009

JAMMU: In Kashmir, after the export of 310 quintals of potatoes, tomatoes and rajmash from Poonch, the traders in Poonch imported a large quantity of fresh fruits, Peshawari sandals, rice, garlic and dry fruits from Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The trade between Poonch and Rawlakot suddenly gained momentum and large quantity of export and import of items was quite significant. Large scale cross-LoC trade on Poonch-Rawlakot route assumed more importance especially when trade on Uri-Muzaffarabad route in two parts of Kashmir had been suspended for more than past two months.

The items imported from AJK to Poonch via Chakan-Da-Bagh include 400 boxes of oranges, 50 boxes onion, one large bag garlic, one bag berry, 142 Peshawari sandals, 10 bags rice (each weighing 50 kg), 10 bags Moong Dal (each weighing 50 kg), 10 bags Afghani ‘Khudmani’ and 20 kg groundnut.

International Developments(<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/cross-loc-trade-gains-momentum-goods-reach-poonch-ajk>)

International Developments

“MQM’s ideology accepted in Pakistan, AJK: Overseas Pakistani,” January 28, 2009

KARACHI: Members Ad-hoc Committee and Organizer of Muhibban-e-Pakistan, an organization of Pakistani people living in Gulf countries have said that the philosophy and ideology of Muttahida Qaumi Movement, (MQM), which is about “Haq Parasti” have spread all over Pakistan including Azad Kashmir. In a joint statement issued by MQM here on January 27, they also congratulated Saleem Butt on his election as Deputy Speaker in the Legislative Assembly of Azad Kashmir and election of Tahir Khokar as Minister in AJK. They said that the Haq Parast group-backed representatives will play their full and active role in resolving the problems of the people of Azad Kashmir. MQM is the only party in Pakistan which has not only raised the slogans to give leadership to the lower-middle class people but it has also sent the people from this class to the assemblies and Senate, they asserted.

(<http://newspakistan.net/mqms-ideology-accepted-in-pakistan-ajk-overseas-pakistani-2009-28-01.php>)

Other Developments

“Efforts being made to restore electricity in Gilgit: WAPDA,” Associated Press of Pakistan, January 17, 2009

GILGIT: people were facing hardships due to longest load shedding being observed in this far flung part of the region. Also, people working in small industrial units including timber factories were almost paralyzed due to power failure.

Meanwhile, Water and Power department of NAs, stated on January 17 that water channel of Naltar power station was damaged by boulders that fell from the mountains after heavy rains and snowfall. The sources said that all out efforts were being made to repair the channel. Sources further added that water supply to machines would be made possible shortly.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=65248&Itemid=2)

“Gilgit-Baltistan to get rid of load shedding by 2011,” Hunza Times, January 02, 2009

The Northern Areas’ water and power department has claimed that it will overcome power shortage in the region within the next three years, and building on the success, it will be in a position to sell out electricity by 2015. The department’s executive engineer, Naz Akbar, said that at present 93 power stations were functioning in the region. Mr Akbar further said the water and power department was currently incapable of generating electricity vis-à-vis demand, as the generation capacity was 77.7 megawatt against the local demand of 148 megawatt. According to him, 14 power projects were completed last year, while 27 projects are under construction and would be commissioned within stipulated period.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2009/01/02/gilgit-baltistan-to-get-rid-of-loadshedding-by-2011/>)

(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

“Lord Nazir Ahmed meets President Asif Ali Zardari to shift MSBMC”

ISLAMABAD: British Member Parliament Lord Nazir Ahmed held a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari in Aiwan-e-Sadr and asked the President to shift the Mohtarma Shaheed Benazir Medical College (MSBMC) from Kotli to Mirpur in Azad Kashmir as demanded by the concerned masses. Later, President Asif Ali Zardari approved the proposal and directed to shift the MSBMC from Kotli to Mirpur in Azad Kashmir. In this regard, a high level meeting was held in the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, which was presided over by the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, Qamar-uz-Zaman Kaira.

(<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=138455>)

**“New AJK government for early revival of sick industrial units in liberated territory,”
January 11, 2009**

MIRPUR: Under the spirit to encourage and give impetus to the process for industrial development in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, the newly-elected Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan led AJK government is taking necessary steps for the revival of sick industrial units to make them, the production-earning factories, as stated by official sources.

(<http://newspakistan.net/new-ajk-government-for-early-revival-of-sick-industrial-units-in-liberated-territory-2009-11-01.php>)

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 Zulqarnain 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, Abbassi, 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.

POK NEWS DIGEST

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