

POK NEWS DIGEST

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

Less than three months after the Mumbai Attack, Militant outfits regrouped in Muzaffarabad to make a brazen demand seeking the release of Zaki-ur-Lakhvi, the Lashker chief from the government of Pakistan.

China seems to be making most in the developmental projects across the earthquake affected areas of 'AJK.' It is Slated to render \$ 300 million for the purpose and a couple of Chinese firms would be involved the reconstruction process. An agreement to this effect was signed between the authorities concerned in Islamabad.

The cross LoC trade resumed after showing initial signs of downtrend due financial complexities involved. Trucks loaded with goods from 'AJK' reached Poonch in the latter half of the month.

The issue also includes a section on recent publication which features the book " Himalayan Frontiers of India" edited by Professor K.Warikoo.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Pak army arm linked to 26/11,” Times of India, February 26, 2009

MUMBAI: The Special Communications Organization, purportedly an innocuous cellphone service-provider in Rawalpindi, has emerged as a key player in the 26/11 probe. One of its top officials, Colonel R Saadat Ullah, has been named in the charge sheet presented in court on February 25. The SCO was established in July 1976 and entrusted with the responsibility of planning, developing and operating telecommunications in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the Northern Areas. An army organisation was considered more suitable to operate efficiently in the difficult terrain. That it is not just another mobile service-provider is clear from the fact that it has lost 76 of its men over the last three decades.

It's run by retired and serving officers from the Pakistani army's Signal Corps. Its regional headquarters are at Muzaffarabad in PoK and Gilgit in Northern Areas. The army men are telecommunication engineers who have been chosen for their ability to set up networks in hostile conditions.

(http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Mumbai/Pak_army_arm_linked_to_2611/articleshow/4192189.cms)

“Banned Pakistan militants gather,” British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Militant groups, some of them banned by Pakistan met publicly in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. An alliance of 12 groups attended the meeting in Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistani-administered Kashmir. They called on the Pakistani government to release imprisoned activists. India has accused the Lashkar-e-Taiba group of being behind the Mumbai attack and has demanded that some of its leaders be extradited to Delhi. More than 170 people died when 10 gunmen attacked India's financial capital in November. India has also accused some “state elements” in Pakistan of involvement. Islamabad and Lashkar-e-Taiba deny the allegations.

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7869697.stm)

“Pak guards terror conclave in PoK,” Economic Times, February 05, 2009

According to a BBC report, militant groups, including the banned Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Al-Badr, held a meeting in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir and called for intensifying the jihad in Kashmir. This flies in the face of assurances given by Pakistan about not allowing Pakistani soil to be used for carrying out attacks against India. At the end of the meeting, the militants agreed on a motion that said that armed struggle was the only way to bring about a successful conclusion to the Kashmir conflict. This is reportedly the first public meeting of such a scale since the Mumbai terror attacks took place. The Pakistani authorities, according to the BBC report, knew about the meeting but took no steps to stop it or arrest militants of the banned organisations. The meeting, the report said, was even given security with a line of policemen surrounding the venue.

(<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/4078240.cms?prtpage=1>)

“Gilgit Baltistan: Miserable Life Condition”

“The masses of Gilgit Baltistan are living a miserable life due to severe cold and record snowfall, but the government has done nothing to help them resolve their miseries.” These views were expressed by Manzoor Hussain Parwana, chairman of Gilgit Baltistan United Movement while talking to journalists at Skardu. He alleged that many people in the region were dying of severe cold as there was no fuel available in the region apart from timber which was not available in sufficient amount. Health units established in various rural areas of the region lacked basic medicine and other health care facilities. Heavy snowfall disrupted the transport system so people living in the far-flung rural areas had no chance of accessing secondary health care facilities in the

district headquarters. Furthermore, food and other basic utilities were running out. The chairman of Gilgit Baltistan United Movement demanded that the government create a relief package for the masses. "If Pakistan is not capable to running the affairs of the region, why it is clinging on to the region?," the chairman questioned. Parwana slammed the bureaucracy and said the non-local officers were the primary cause for the mass difficulties. He said that non-locals had been given the reins to a region they had never visited before and had no understanding of the problems faced by the masses.

(<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/9192/254/>)

"Govt of Pakistan & AJK to make all out efforts to highlight Kashmir issue: AJK PM," February 06, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Prime Minister, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan assured on February 05 to Kashmiri people that all out efforts would be made to resolve the Kashmir issue as per wishes of Kashmiri people. He said this while addressing a special AJK Assembly session summoned on the occasion of Kashmir solidarity day here in the Assembly House when the whole Pakistani nation and Kashmiri people were observing Kashmir solidarity Day. He said that governments of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir would utilize their resources including diplomatic channels to highlight the Kashmir cause at international level in its true perspective. He also demanded of world powers to play their positive role for the resolution of Kashmir issue.

(<http://newspakistan.net/govt-of-pakistan-ajk-to-make-all-out-efforts-to-highlight-kashmir-issue-ajk-pm-2009-06-02.php>)

Shabbir Ahmed Mir, "New police force to safeguard highways in NAs," The News, February 08, 2009

GILGIT: Northern Areas Inspector General of Police Khurshid Alam hinted at raising a police force

that would ensure security on highways in the areas, an official stated on February 07. About 1,500 men will be recruited in the 'Karakoram Security Force' - a force similar to motorway or highway police - that will keep a constant supervision on the famous Karakoram Highway (KKH) and other highways in the region, said NAs IGP Khurshid Alam, while talking to a delegation belonging to Diamer district.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=161369>)

"Conditions for Diamer Dam by the People of Gilgit-Baltistan," Balawaristan Times

1. The will of the People of Diamer specially and the whole Gilgit Baltistan should be asked in referendum which should be held under an impartial body. If people vote for dam in referendum, then
2. Right of Ownership of Diamer over the whole area including the area of proposed Dam should be accepted in the presence of the international guarantors.
3. Boundary Demarcation of the whole Diamer including Babosar top, Jalkot and whole Shenaki Kohistan in the presence of impartial body and guarantor like UNO or World Bank etc
4. Guarantee of not raising the level of the dam in the future.
5. Guarantee of not deploying Pakistani forces for the protection and security of the dam. The security will be the responsibility of the local Gilgit Scouts, Northern Scouts and NLI (soldiers from Gilgit Baltistan only) and Police from Gilgit Baltistan.
6. The guarantee that Pakistan has no right over the Dam by all means and even if and when this area is separated from Pakistani occupation after the settlement of J&K issue.
7. All the employees (both technical and non-technical) will be appointed from Gilgit Baltistan.

8. Compensation should be given according to the rates of Islamabad at once and not in installment to the affected people.

9. Royalty of 10 Billion per annum should be given to Gilgit Baltistan and not to NWFP.

10. Sufficient power to meet all the requirements Gilgit Baltistan will be given free of cost.

(<http://balawaristantimes.blogspot.com/2009/02/conditions-for-diamer-dam-by-people-of.html>)

“English for official correspondence in AJK under consideration,” The Frontier Post, February 08, 2009

MIRPUR: AJK government is seriously contemplating to introduce English language for official correspondence in all the public-sector institutions in Azad Jammu & Kashmir under the phased program to meet the requirements of modern era, as stated by official sources. “At the first leg of the proposed plan, as suggested by the experts, the mutual official correspondence in English is proposed to be re-introduced in Services & General Administration, Police, development authorities, electricity, health, agriculture, forest departments as well as Accountant General office and their respective subordinate departments, official sources further stated on February 07. The English language would promote and strengthen the local knowledge and command in the studies of information technology.

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=hn&nid=3865&ad=08-02-2009>)

Hameed Shaheen, “Cracks develop in AJK cabinet,” Pakistan Observer, February 12, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Political watchers see serious “cracks” developing fast in the 4-party coalition cabinet in Azad Kashmir with Sardar Qamar Zaman Khan, Health Minister, likely to stage his “exit” from the cabinet. Reportedly a lot of at least ten more AJK ministers forms a group with him as his sympathizers. Sardar Qamar Zaman (PPP-AJK

Bagh), before joining the coalition government in AJK was Leader of Opposition in the Assembly. However, Sardar Qamar’s demand from day one of the 4-party coalition government in AJK since Jan 6, 2009, was to install him as Senior Minister in the cabinet, an obligatory office provided in the AJK Interim Constitution Act 1974. Senior Minister in AJK takes over the functions of the Prime Minister when the latter is out of the country under the Constitution.

(<http://pakobserver.net/200902/12/news/topstories12.asp>)

“UJC Flays Pak ‘Volte Face’ on Mumbai,” February 12, 2009

SRINAGAR: The United Jihad Council, or UJC, the Muzaffarabad-based alliance of militant groups active in Kashmir severely condemned registering cases against Zaki-ur-Rahman Lakhvi and others who had been picked up in Pakistan following Indian pressure on the Mumbai terrorist attacks. In a statement, the UJC spokesman, Syed Sadaqat Hussain, said that the Pakistan foreign office had been persistently maintaining till date that the material provided by India consisted of information and not evidence on which a case could be made out. “What proofs and evidences have suddenly come into existence after the visit of Richard Holbrooke from the US that Lakhvi has been declared the mastermind of the Mumbai attacks and several people are accused of being involved,” the spokesman said. According to him, Pakistani rulers had buckled under American pressure and bowed before an Indo-US conspiracy.

(http://www.kashmirobservers.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=785:ujc-flays-pak-volte-face-on-mumbai&catid=15:top-news&Itemid=2)

“Call to reinforce State Subject Rule in Gilgit Baltistan,” Balwaristan Times

People from various circles of society have demanded of the government to reinforce State Subject Rule (SSR) in Gilgit-Baltistan. In a survey report carried out in Gilgit city, people belonging

to various segments of the society expressed their concerns over the growing change in the demography of the region and considered it a threat to the identity of the local indigenous population. They fear that a day will come when the locals will have no say in the political process. People belonging to different provinces are appointed on key posts in different institutions in the region and after taking their positions they start purchasing land. The demography of the region was being changed from what it had been two or three decades back. Outsiders are occupying land and one day the locals will be forced to leave the region. An activist of a nationalist party slammed the government for abolishing the State Subject Rule in Gilgit-Baltistan and termed it a conspiracy to diminish the identity of the region.

(<http://balawaristantimes.blogspot.com/2009/02/call-to-reinforce-state-subject-rule-in.html>)

Fareed Farooqui, "AJK PM visits Nine-Zero," Daily Times, February 24, 2009

KARACHI: The Azad Kashmir delegation was accorded a warm welcome at the Muttahidda Qaumi Movement (MQM) Headquarter Nine Zero during its first visit to the MQM office. The prime minister held an hour-long meeting with the MQM Rabita Committee members, including Provincial Minister, Shoaib Ahmed Bukhari, Waseem Aftab, Anees Kaim Khani, Shakeel Umar and others. Yaqoob was accompanied by Azad Kashmir Minister, Dr Mehmood Riaz, Tahir Saleem Khokar, Azad Kashmir Assembly Deputy Speaker, Saleem Butt and others.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C02%5C24%5Cstory_24-2-2009_pg12_7)

"We are ready to cooperate with AJK in various sectors: Dr. Ebad," The News, February 23, 2009

KARACHI: The Governor of Sindh Dr Ishrat-ul-Ebad Khan said that all out cooperation will be extended for economic development, promotion of tourism and improvement in the education and other

other sectors in Azad Kashmir. He was talking to Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Mohammed Yakub Khan at Governor House on February 23.

The AJK Minister for Tourism Tahir Khokhar and Deputy Speaker Mohammed Saleem were also present on the occasion. The Governor said that industrialists and business community will be pursued for playing an effective role in Azad Kashmir while private sector will also be approached for actively working for health facilities and for medical and engineering education in Azad Kashmir.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=69455>)

"BNSO Karachi extends activities to other cities," Weekly Baang-e- Sahar, February 24-March 2, 2009

KARACHI: The Balawaristan National Students Organization (BNSO) Karachi decided to extend its activities to educational institutions in other areas of Sindh. This was decided at a meeting of the BNSO presided over by Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Vice-President Syed Haider Shah Rizvi. The meeting also formed new cabinet of the BNSO Sindh zone besides discussing its performance and future line of action. The new cabinet included Faizullah Faraq, president BNSO Sindh zone; Mehboob Ali Shamoon, general secretary; King Nisar Hussain, vice-president; Naseeruddin, press secretary, and Mashkurul Haq, finance secretary. The meeting also approved BNSO Karachi University cabinet on the occasion. They are Mohammad Aslam Inqilabi, president, and Arif Hussain general secretary. Speaking on the occasion, Syed Haider Shah Rizvi paid tributes to the students of Gilgit-Baltistan for their efforts to create awareness among the deprived people of their region. He expressed the hope that the students would be working like a torch-bearers in the struggle for attainment of rights for Balawaristan.

(<http://weeklybaang.blogspot.com/2009/02/weekly-baang-issue-01-back-page.html>)

Tahir Hasan Khan, “AJK PM hints at holding dialogue with India,” The News, February 23, 2009

KARACHI: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister, Sardar Yaqoob hinted towards the possibility of holding dialogue with India. Addressing the Kashmiri people in Karachi and later talking to media on February 22, Yaqoob said that Kashmiris did not want war with India. Yaqoob also said that Pakistan President, Asif Ali Zardari, was very keen to resolve the Kashmir issue.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=164012>)

“Zaffar Akbar gets invite to attend Kashmir conference,” February 01, 2009

SRINAGAR: The Hurriyat Conference (M) senior leader and Jammu Kashmir Salvation Movement chairman Zaffar Akbar Bhat received an invite to attend National Kashmiri Conference being organized by the Jama'at-i-Islami, AJK, on February 3, at Muzaffarabad.

(http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=1_2_2009&ItemID=57&cat=21)

Economic Developments

“Trans-LoC chamber seeks multiple entry permits,” Kashmir Media Service, January 31, 2009

SRINAGAR: The Federation of Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FKKCCI), a trans-LoC chamber formed in October 2008 asked the governments of India and Pakistan to give two-year multiple entry permits to traders for facilitating trade across the Line of Control. The joint chamber is of the opinion that no trade can take place without facilitating and easing out the travel permit system for the traders on the both sides of the LoC, a senior office-bearer of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) stated.

(<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/trans-loc-chamber-seeks-multiple-entry-permits>)

Sayed Abid Hussain, “Kashmiris for meaningful trade on LoC,” The News, February 04, 2009

MIRPUR: AJK business community leader Khalid Sharif called for facilitating the trans-LoC trade to make it vibrant and long lasting. “The business community feels that this trade will bring people closer and reduce tension between Pakistan and India,” Khalid Sharif, Member Executive Committee of AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry stated. He recently visited Kashmir with an official trade delegation. “Trade between Kashmir and AJK would pave the way for resolution of Kashmir,” said Sharif, a front-line leader of the Federation of Jammu & Kashmir Chambers of Commerce & Industry, the sole forum of industrialists and traders of both sides of the LoC.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=160645>)

Sher Baz Khan, “National Bank closes Gilgit office after loan scam,” Dawn, February 11, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The management of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) decided to wind up its regional office in Gilgit after revelation of a fraudulent loan scam involving millions of rupees. An order

issued by the NBP stated that Gilgit has been reverted to the status of ‘sub-region’ under the bank’s federal capital region. The vice-president of regional office, Malik Mohammad Issa Khan, has been appointed recovery officer for the sub-region. The bank had launched an investigation into withdrawal of Rs50 million by a man using the name of the Pak-China Sost Port Company and forging signatures of four members of the company’s board of directors in loan documents. He also pledged collateral that did not exist.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2009/02/11/top11.htm>)

Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “Stay order against AJKCCI elections,” The News, February 12, 2009

MIRPUR: The District Judge of Mirpur on February 11 heard the case of stay order, served by the court against the annual elections 2009 of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and fixed the next date of hearing on February 14, 2009. The elections were scheduled to be held for all the three posts of president, senior vice president and vice president on February 10 for next one-year constitutional term. An application was filed by Raja Khalid Mahmood, Senior Vice President of the AJKCCI and Khalid Sharif, Member Executive Committee of the AJKCCI, who is also the candidate for the president-ship of the AJKCCI, challenging the validity of the membership of three of the executive committee members of the AJKCCI including Raja Muhammad Jamil, Zubair Abbasi and Chaudhry Javed Iqbal.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=162117>)

Iftikhar Gilani, “Trade across LoC reduced to trickle,” Daily Times, February 14, 2009

NEW DELHI: The cross-Line of Control (LoC) trade that resumed after six decades on October 21, 2008 has been reduced to a trickle. Traders in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) have stopped sending trucks across the LoC due to the uncertainty of

being paid. Traders said they had yet to settle accounts for items they had sold on the day the LoC was re-opened for trading. The situation has worsened because of the standoff between India and Pakistan since the Mumbai terror attacks. Trading facilities, like telephone communication and banks for transactions, were unavailable and would neither materialize in the near future in view of the deadlock situation in peace talks after the attacks.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C02%5C14%5Cstory_14-2-2009_pg7_5)

“Affected would be compensated, says AJK PM,” February 16, 2009

DHEER KOT: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob Khan said that the government was taking step to provide compensations to the quack victims. Talking to Tehreek Ray Haqooq earth quack affectees’ delegation led by Raja Mehtab, he assured that those affected people would receive compensation who gave application in this regard. He said that the talks with the relevant authorities were going on for compensating the affected people.

(<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/02/16/affectees-would-be-compensated-says-ajk-pm/>)

Noor Aftab, “Exemption of AJK from economic cut lauded,” The News, February 21, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) are highly indebted to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani for exempting AJK government from the economic cut imposed on the provincial governments due to tight financial situation, said AJK president Raja Zulqarnain Khan on February 20. He was addressing a ceremony organized by Kashmir Orphans Relief Trust (KORT). Referring to the efforts made by the army officials in the relief efforts after the earthquake, he said the army men participated in the relief work when their own family

members were killed in the earthquake. He also lauded the efforts of the Cuban doctors who set up various field hospitals badly affected by the earthquake.

(http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=163753)

“AJK to get royalty from Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project,” The News, February 25, 2009

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister, Sardar Yaqoob said that the Pakistan government would furnish a royalty to AJK in lieu of the Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project. Yaqoob was talking to the media after visiting the head office of the City District Government Karachi (CDGK) at Civic Centre on February 24. He said that the AJK government would be getting royalty as per the basis of the Mangla project, and this amount would be sufficient to meet the budget of the AJK. He said that the AJK government was currently getting Rs1.30 billion per annum as royalty from the Mangla hydropower project. Yaqoob said that the power project would produce 1,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity, although AJK has a potential to generate 8,000 to 12,000 MW through hydroelectric projects.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=164458>)

“AJK PM seeks investment in minerals,” The News, February 25, 2009

KARACHI: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan said that the minerals industry has tremendous investment potential in the region as it has confirmed reserves worth Rs40.16 billion in the districts of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Kotli. He said that the government had conducted a survey of these three regions recently following which they discovered that the region had 19 million tons of marble, 26 million tons of rubies and 70 million tons of limestone.

Khan was speaking at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).

Accompanied by his cabinet, he highlighted the investment opportunities in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and believed that the relationship between the business community of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir is important and needs to blossom. Khan urged investors and businessmen to concentrate on the minerals sector. He said that Muzaffarabad had a Reconstruction Opportunity Zone whereas Mirpur had established an export processing zone other than eight industrial estates in various other areas of AJK.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=164374>)

“Trucks loaded with goods reach Srinagar from AJK,” February 26, 2009

SRINAGAR: A day after Poonch traders dispatched goods to Azad Kashmir, the traders from other side of the Line of Control (LoC) sent two trucks loaded with goods worth at least 5 lakhs rupees. Two trucks loaded with goods were sent by Azad Kashmir traders through Datta Agencies Hazira to the traders in Poonch. The goods including 140 bags potato worth Rs 73,600 (Pak currency), 358 boxes of orange worth Rs 126,780 were imported by Bansi Lal & sons Poonch, 35 bags of Mungi (W) pulses worth Rs 1,42,920 were imported by trader Rajiv Tandon of Poonch and 102 pairs of Peshawari chappals (ladies) worth Rs 55,580 were imported by Amrit Lal & Sons of Poonch.

(<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/trucks-loaded-with-goods-reach-srinagar-ajk>)

International Developments

“China to provide \$ 300 million to AJK quake affected,” February 15, 2009

ISLAMABAD: China pledged an amount of three hundred million dollars for the reconstruction of earthquake affected areas in Azad Kashmir. An agreement to this effect was signed in Islamabad on February 15. The pledged amount will be used for the development of Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot cities under the Urban Development programme. Pakistan will also contribute fifty three million dollars in the programme. Out of the total pledged amount, over 190 million dollars will be spent on ninety projects in Muzaffarabad city, 123.55 million dollars on fifty projects in Bagh and over thirty eight million dollars will be spent for the execution of thirty projects in Rawalkot.

(<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/02/15/china-to-provide-300-millions-to-ajk-quake-affectees/>)

Khalid Amin, “Chinese firms to undertake urban development project,” Daily Mail, February 15, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Two leading Chinese firms would undertake the urban development projects in three quake affected cities Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot. An umbrella contract for the AJK urban development project was signed here at Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) in presence of the President AJK, Raja Zulfikar Ali Khan, PM AJK, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob, Federal Minister for Kashmir and Northern Affairs (KANA), Qamar-uz-Zaman Kaira and Chinese ambassador H.E. Luo Zhaohui. The Contract was signed by representatives of two Chinese construction companies and ERRA deputy chairman Lt Gen Sajjad Akram. Meanwhile, for smooth and effective implementation of Muzaffarabad city development project, a steering committee has been constituted under deputy chairman of ERRA Lt Gen Sajjad Akram which has the mandate to give policy direction to project implementation.

(<http://dailymailnews.com/200902/15/news/dmcitypage01.html>)

Other Developments

“IPCC undecided about water allocation to twin cities, AJK,” Daily Times, February 03, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Inter-Provincial Coordination Committee (IPCC) on February 02 failed to reach a consensus decision on allocation of water to the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) for drinking and irrigation purposes from provincial shares respectively. The 5th meeting of the IPCC was held at Parliament House with Inter-Provincial Coordination Committee and Minister Mian Raza Rabbani in the chair. Sources stated that both the proposals for allocation of drinking water to Islamabad and Rawalpindi from Ghazi Brotha and AJK for irrigation purposes from Indus basin were opposed, as the smaller provinces held the view that they were already facing 42 percent water shortage during the current Rabbi season.

(http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C02%5C03%5Cstory_3-2-2009_pg11_4)

“PMAJK Sardar Yaqoob lauds ERRAs reconstruction process,” Associated Press of Pakistan, February 02, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The massive reconstruction process carried out by ERRAs and speedy progress made in last three years is even more than the development made in AJK in last 50 years, said Prime Minister AJK Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan while inaugurating Basic Health Unit in Chatter Kalas, Muzaffarabad. He said AJK government will keep on supporting ERRAs for completion of all the projects well in time.

(http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=66905&Itemid=2)

“Skardu facing power crisis,” Hunza Times, February 04, 2009

The residents of Skardu town have been facing severe power crisis for the last several years. The problem increases in winter due to less water in the channels.

(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

In most villages and towns, there is 18 hours' loadshedding and the practice has been continuing for the last three months. The Power and Works Department, which is responsible for providing electricity to the town, blames WAPDA for the crisis. The PWD authorities say the crisis began after WAPDA destroyed the water channel of an old power house for building the phase 1 of a new power house as part of Sadpara dam.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2009/02/04/skardu-facing-power-crisis/>)

“Excavation work for hydropower project starts,” The News, February 21, 2009

LAHORE: Excavation of a 47km-long network of tunnels, one of the main works for the 969-megawatt Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project (NJHEP), has started at the project site near Muzaffarabad in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The tunnel network is meant for diversion of Neelum river water to outfall into the Jhelum river near Chattar Kalas. A statement issued stated that NJHEP General Manager, Hasnain Afzal and a representative of Islamic Development Bank witnessed the blasting of rocks for excavation. The Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project is of immense importance as it would inject low-cost hydel electricity into the national grid. The IDB and other Middle Eastern donors have already agreed to finance the project.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=163663>)

“Govt. to arrange alternative energy resources for NAs: Qamar Zaman,” February 24, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, Qamar Zaman Kaira on February 23 said the government will provide alternative resources of energy to people living in far-flung areas to prevent deforestation in the country. Addressing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between the Ministry of KANA and Carbon Planet Ltd Australia, the minister said that the agreement was the beginning of an innovative

approach towards poverty reduction in the Northern Areas. “We have made a humble beginning towards introducing Carbon Commerce in the Northern Areas to preserve our national heritage and to fight environmental population which was the big challenge faced by the world”, he added. “The carbon credit business worldwide is in the vicinity of over US\$100 billion. Through the conservation of trees, forests in the Northern Areas we hope to access initially around US\$ 20 million,” the Minister further informed.

(<http://newspakistan.net/govt-to-arrange-alternative-energy-resources-for-nas-qamar-zaman-2009-24-02.php>)

“Traffic across LoC again picks up,” Kashmir Media Service, February 20, 2009

SRINAGAR: After the Mumbai terror attacks, the traffic on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service across the Line of Control is showing signs of picking up again, indicating that the level of confidence among the people to travel across the LoC is being restored. In the aftermath of Mumbai terror attacks, there was a sharp dip in the number of passengers travelling on the cross-LoC buses from Srinagar and Poonch. The number of arrivals from across the LoC had also dropped sharply. However, slowly but steadily the traffic on these bus services is picking up, as stated by an official.

(<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/traffic-across-loc-again-picks>)

Recent Publication



K Warikoo is Director of the Central Asian Studies Programme at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has authored several books on Kashmir, Central Asia and Afghanistan, and is the founding editor of Himalayan and Central Asian Studies.

(<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Himalayan-Frontiers-India-Routledge-Contemporary/dp/0415468396>)

Himalayan Frontiers of India

Historical, Geo political and strategic perspectives

K. Warikoo (Editor)

Routledge Contemporary South Asia, London, 2009

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of historical, geo-political and strategic perspectives on the Himalayan Frontiers of India. It explains the developments in and across the Himalayas and their implications for India. Topics such as religious extremism, international and cross border terrorism, insurgency, drugs and arms trafficking are discussed by experts in their respective field. Himalayan Frontiers of India will be of interest to scholars in South and Central Asian studies, International Relations and Security Studies.

The Himalaya, which is a great natural frontier for India, symbolises India's spiritual and national consciousness. The Himalayan region displays wide diversity of cultural patterns, languages, ethnic identities and religious practices. Along the Himalayas converge the boundaries of South and Central Asian countries, which lend a unique geopolitical and geo-strategic importance to this region.

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.

POK NEWS DIGEST

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