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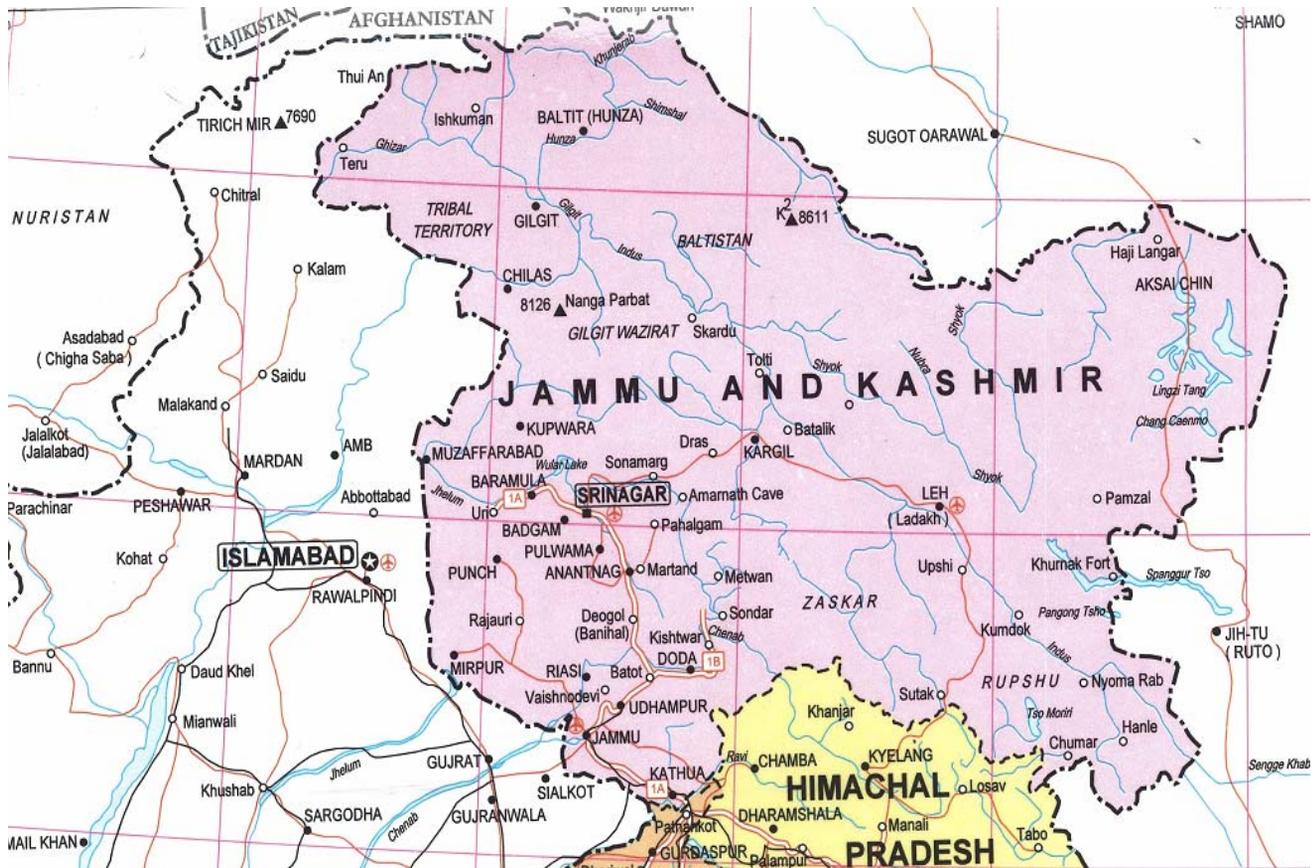
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

Yet another terror congregation was held in PoK during the past month where apart from other issues, slogans were raised against Scandinavian states like Norway and Denmark in context of the cartoon controversy- a controversy which refuses to die down. No prizes for guessing that the rally was organized by Jamat ud Dawa (JuD) which pronounced death sentence for those accused of blasphemy.

The case of PoK emerging as a hub for terror activities was taken up in a BBC report which is included in the current issue. The reports suggested that recruitment of militants is underway in Punjab province as more militant camps are being established in PoK.

Hunza was inflicted by a natural calamity as there was a massive landslide in Attabad threatening lives of thousands in the area. The landslide led to the formation of an artificial lake which is likely to immerse villages in the adjoining areas.

There are positive trends in the cross LoC trade as trading figures touched an all time high. Goods from both sides of the LoC were exchanged on a huge scale, the highest since its inception in October 2008, as is indicated in one of the reports.

Gilgit Baltistan got its first women Governor, Dr Shama Kahlid, amidst voices which clearly oppose the promulgation of the Gilgit Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Ordinance 2009. The opposing groups reject the ordinance calling it ultra vires and have filed a petition to this effect in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Priyanka Singh

Pakistan's Two-pronged 'Jihad-cum-Dialogue' Policy on Kashmir

*Senge Hasnan Sering**

Pakistan, a country heavily dependent on Chinese military and economic patronage, also borrows Chinese principles of diplomacy in dealing with her neighbours. One of the characteristics of Chinese diplomacy is to use military force and pursue dialogue simultaneously since both are deemed compatible and without any distinction.

Given the context, while Pakistan has recently held a foreign secretary-level dialogue with India on terrorism and Kashmir; it also continues to encourage and support militant and terrorist outfits like Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and United Jihad Council (UJC) in their armed conflict with India. As recently as on March 23, 2010, which is the commemoration day of Pakistan Resolution of 1940, these outfits held a rally in Kotli district of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). The leaders made speeches vowing to liberate Kashmir and its rivers by using force against India. Some also emphasized upon opening parallel diplomatic and military fronts against India including reviving the issue of accession of princely states of Hyderabad and Junagarh. The leader of UJC reiterated that diplomacy and talks have failed to achieve any results on Kashmir and Jihad against India is the only solution. The statements reinforce view expressed by Pakistani officials and the Foreign Minister himself who labeled the recent Indo-Pak meeting as meaningless.

Pakistan's willingness to allow banned terrorist outfits to operate from its land; provide sanctuary and training camps; and support their violence-based agenda is a concern for those who expect an honest and sincere support from Pakistan towards global initiatives on eliminating extremism and terrorism. Although primary target of these Pakistani outfits remain India; they are clearly becoming a threat for the west by networking and establishing long-termed relations with Taliban, Al-Qaida and Hamas. PoK becoming a refuge for such elements is a concern since Pakistan's decision

to use militancy as a diplomatic tool against its neighbors undermines the international initiatives and puts a question mark on Pakistan's commitment.

Pakistani regime has so far failed to persuade LeT to dissociate from those groups which regularly target western interests. This may suggest that either Pakistan is indirectly involved in jeopardizing western efforts against terrorism or that LeT is increasingly becoming independent of Pakistani control and spreading its operational scope and network with international militant outfits in order to receive their monetary and logistical support. While these groups desire to see India and USA disintegrated; they also have the dream of world dominance, and their efforts have become more synchronized since the disintegration of the USSR. They continue to increase their leverage in Pakistan and influence its foreign and defence policies. Such occurrences have forced many think tanks in the USA to believe that the goal of these outfits is far beyond acquiring control of Kashmir; and that solving the Kashmir issue will not help eliminate groups like LeT and JuD from the scene. Even though they claim to advocate justice and peace for the entire Muslim world, they prove to be the major perpetrators of violence in Kashmir. Because of influence of these outfits, Kashmir has become the epicenter of global Jihad and the terror conduits extending all the way to Afghanistan through Swat and Malakand districts, which are adjacent to PoK. It is in the interest of western countries especially USA to persuade Pakistan to dismantle terror outfits and their sanctuaries in PoK. Without a concrete step, Taliban and international Jihadis will find legitimacy, encouragement, as well as means to sustain their operation globally.

America's growing cooperation with Pakistan is a concern for the peace-loving communities around the world. Even though Pakistan pretends to cooperate with the USA against the terrorists; it will still not put all its eggs in one basket. It may dismantle some terror camps along the disputed Durand Line but the outfits currently active in destabilizing India along the Line of Control will not be touched. Pakistan finds it politically convenient to continue to support Kashmir's Jihad

chapter until it acquires complete control over the land and resources of Kashmir. Along with Kashmir, Pakistani regime is also accusing India on water issues. The Pakistani strategy to equate Kashmir's political issues with control over the rivers of Kashmir clearly demonstrates the underlying sinister motives of the Pakistani establishment which is keen to exploit the resources of the region rather than providing benefits to the people. In this context, Pakistan's dependence on the Jihadis to increase her 'negotiation-leverage' with India will also grow as the issue of water shortages for the farmers of Punjab will become acute.

Many analysts also believe that Kashmir is a stepping stone and people of Kashmir, the cannon fodder for Pakistan to avenge the liberation of Bangladesh. In the end, land of Kashmir is being used, and its society and economy destroyed by the Pakistani policymakers for their selfish and short-sighted goals. The Jihad policy of Pakistan has destroyed the peaceful atmosphere, rich civilization and economy of the Kashmir valley. The people of the Kashmir valley may eventually realize that in the last 63 years, they have been used as a low-cost tool of diplomacy by Pakistan to settle scores with India. One may deduce that the long term implications of creating instability in the region will greatly harm the interests of the common people while satisfying a handful among the Pakistani establishment.

On the other hand, there is a growing realization in PoK that the involvement of Pakistani Jihadi outfits in Kashmir only prolongs and complicates the issue and provides ample time and opportunity to Pakistan to sustain the illegal occupation of PoK and exploit resources at the cost of the wellbeing of the natives. The people of PoK including Gilgit-Baltistan believe that the land and resources of Kashmir, including the rivers, belong to the natives and not Pakistan, and that it is not acceptable to use PoK as a staging ground for Pakistani terrorism in India. Pakistan needs to stop interference in Kashmir and withdraw its troops and citizens from Muzaffarabad and Gilgit-Baltistan to ensure peace in the region.

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

Political Developments

“AJK remains a training ground for militants: BBC”,

Daily Times, March 4, 2010

LAHORE: Militant training camps for those fighting in Kashmir are once again being established in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and recruitment is also on the rise in Punjab, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported on March 4.

In its latest report, the BBC also mentioned that the United Jihad Council (UJC) meeting was held in Muzaffarabad in mid-January, chaired by former ISI chief Lieutenant General (r) Hameed Gul. The meeting decided that the freedom struggle or jihad should continue until the Indian control on Jammu and Kashmir comes to an end.

Pakistan has long been accused of supporting militant groups operating in Kashmir, which it denies. As a fledgling peace process between Pakistan and India developed in the years after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, it was widely believed that Islamabad’s support for the militancy had declined as it sought better relations with its nuclear-armed neighbour.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C03%5C04%5Cstory_4-3-2010_pg7_22

Tariq Naqash, “PaK rally calls Jihad against blasphemers”,

Rising Kashmir, March 25, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Hundreds of people held a rally on March 25 to express their love and admiration for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and called for war against the blasphemers. “The only punishment for Norway, al-Jihad; the only punishment for Denmark, al-Jihad,” shouted the participants at the rally as they paraded through busy thoroughfare of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The rally followed a seminar in the premises of press club which was organised by Jamaat ud Dawa (JuD) to defend the honour of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the wake of publication of blasphemous cartoons and ban on minarets in some European countries. “Death on those who insult our Prophet (PBUH)...

Death on those who insult our religion,” were some other slogans raised by participants at the rally who were also carrying black and white JuD flags, banners and placards inscribed with similar slogans.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=21924

“Shama Khalid takes oath as GB’s first governor”,

Dawn, March 23, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Dr Shama Khalid on March 23 took oath as Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, becoming the first woman assuming governorship in the country’s history. The chief judge Supreme Appellate Court of Gilgit-Baltistan administered the oath to Dr Shama Khalid at a special investiture ceremony at the Aiwan-i-Sadr, witnessed by President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah and federal ministers. President Zardari had appointed Dr Shama Khalid as the Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan on March 22. Dr Shama Khalid is a leading social worker who voluntarily worked in different parts of Gilgit-Baltistan by establishing free summer medical camps every year.

http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-shama-khalid-qs-07?pageDesign=mobile_detail

Aziz Ali Dad, “Discontents in Gilgit-Baltistan”,

Gilgit Baltistan Tribune, March 28, 2010

The absence of participation of Gilgit-Baltistan in decision-making bodies at the national level will make the whole exercise of administrative and political changes in the empowerment package meaningless. Real participation comes with a role in decision-making. The announcement of the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Ordinance in September 2009 gave some hope to the optimists that it would pave the way for democratic governance and political rejuvenation of the moribund governance structure and stagnant political culture of Gilgit-Baltistan. Sceptics, however, dubbed it as an eyewash

to hide the real mechanics of power, which are under the direct control of the federal government.

<http://gbtribune.blogspot.com/2010/03/discontents-in-gilgit-baltistan.html>

“People of Hunza are “na shukar” (thankless), says CM of Gilgit – Baltistan”,

Pamir Times, March 27, 2010

ISLAMABAD: We made a big mistake by giving cheques to families of the deceased people of Attabad on time. The people of Hunza are thankless (ungrateful) because they are not appreciating the role played by the government during Attabad disaster. We have done a lot for Hunza after the disaster. These views were expressed by chief minister of Gilgit – Baltistan while briefing the recently appointed governor of GB, Dr Shama Khalid, on Attabad landslide disaster. He also said that political elements are using the disaster for political purposes by arranging protests and sit – ins across the country.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/03/27/people-of-hunza-are-na-shukar-thankless-says-cm-of-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Mehdi Shah’s Derogatory Statement Hurt Affectees of Attabad Disaster”,

Editorial, Gilgit Baltistan Times, March 29, 2010

The statement by the Chief Minister for Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah, regarding the disaster affected people of Hunza is highly derogatory and a statement of an ill minded person. Briefing the newly selected Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, Dr. Shamshad, the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah stated that ‘People of Hunza are Thankless’ because they do not appreciate government for distributing checks to the families of deceased people of Attabad Disaster.

<http://gbtimes.wordpress.com/2010/03/29/editorialmehdi-shahs-derogatory-statement-hurt-affectees-of-attabad-disaster/>

“No backdoor diplomacy on Kashmir, says AJK PM”,

March 28, 2010

PESHAWAR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan on

March 27 ruled out any backdoor diplomacy to settle the core issue of Kashmir between India and Pakistan. “It’s not a corporate deal between two stakeholders. It is a question of the future of 150 million Kashmiris who must necessarily be made part of the negotiations,” he said at Meet-the-Press Programme at the Peshawar Press Club.

<http://kashmirglobal.com/content/no-backdoor-diplomacy-kashmir-says-ajk-pm>

“Joblessness drives Gilgit youths to suicide”,

Indian Express, March 16, 2010

The growing unemployment in Gilgit Baltistan has undermined the economic and social fabric of the Himalayan region. Lack of infrastructure here has prevented entrepreneurs from setting up industries that generate employment. This has forced many educated young men to leave behind their land and loved ones to migrate to Pakistan’s big cities. Most have ended up as unskilled laborers in the ghettos of Karachi and Rawalpindi. Increasing frustration has led many to commit suicide.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/videos/national/6/joblessness-drives-gilgit-youths-to-suicide/1518>

“Jamaat Islami AJK urges govt to present Kashmir effectively at OIC”,

March 15, 2010

RAWALPINDI: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Amir Abdul Rashid Turabi on March 14 urged the government to present the Kashmir issue in the proposed session of Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Qahira in an effective manner. He was expressing his views while addressing the gathering of central leaders.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/03/15/jamaat-islami-ajk-urges-govt-to-present-kashmir-effectively-at-oic/>

Usman Manzoor, “AJK SC challenges Pakistan SC in new row”,

The News, March 24, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has put constitutional experts in a state

of shock when it came at loggerheads with the Supreme Court of Pakistan over the unconstitutional appointment of the AJK chief justice.

The incumbent Chief Justice of AJK, Riaz Akhtar Chaudhry, while heading a three-member bench on March 15, 2010, passed an order barring Prime Minister of Pakistan to pass any notification regarding Chief Justice of AJK. He also restrained Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department from issuing any fresh notification and the President of the AJK from administering oath to any judge for the office of the AJK CJ.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=230620>

Tariq Naqash, “Children Forum seeks attention towards Kashmir’s sufferings”, *Rising Kashmir, March 21, 2010*

MUZAFFARABAD: An elected forum of Kashmiri children, affected in one or the other way by the ongoing conflict in their motherland, has called upon the Pakistani Parliamentarians and leading media persons to draw attention towards Kashmir problem and play their due role to bring an early end to their sufferings. The demand was made by the members of Sawera Children Assembly (SCA) through separate resolutions at a ceremony in the premises of a charity school here in the capital of Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=21805

“AJK SC puts its foot down Bars Pak PM from reviewing its CJ’s appointment”, *Pakistan Tribune, March 17, 2010*

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme Court, while admitting a writ petition for hearing, on March 16 issued a stay order, barring the AJK Council (Upper House of the AJK Parliament) and the AJK Council chairman (the Prime Minister of Pakistan) from reopening or reviewing the appointment of AJK Chief Justice Muhammad Riaz Akhter Chaudhry. The full bench of the apex court, comprising Chief Justice Muhammad Riaz, Justice Khwaja Shahid Ahmed and Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, on a writ petition filed through Advocate

Khwaja Muhammad Nasim, restraining the AJK Council and the AJK Council chairman/Prime Minister of Pakistan from issuing any further advice or reviewing or reopening the advice regarding the appointment of the AJK chief justice.

<http://paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?225612>

Vijay Kumar, “Pakistan wants to grab nearly 32,000 sq. miles of J&K territory: Bhim”,

March 16, 2010

POONCH: Jammu & Kashmir National Panther Party (JKNPP) Chairman, Prof. Bhim Singh said that Pakistan wants to grab nearly 32,000 sq. miles of our territory. He asked Pakistan to hold referendum in POK and Gilgit so that the people in suppression and oppression for the past 62 years under Pakistani dictatorship may decide their future whether they want to say with Pakistan at all.

http://www.groundreport.com/World/Pakistan-wants-to-grab-nearly-32-000-sq-miles-of-J_2/2919873

“Govt firm on bringing prosperity to Gilgit-Baltistan, says PM”,

Pakistan Times

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani said the development of Gilgit-Baltistan is one of the priority areas of the government and all possible assistance would be extended to the provincial government in this regard. The development of Gilgit-Baltistan would bring multiple prospects of tourism and ensure prosperity in the area, the Prime Minister said while talking to Dr. Shamma Khalid at the PM’s House in Islamabad.

<http://www.pakistantimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=9454>

“Hafiz Hussain accuses present rulers of conspiring to divide Kashmir”

BIRMINGHAM: Central leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI) and former member of National Assembly of Pakistan Hafiz Hussain Ahmed accused present rulers in Pakistan of conspiring to divide Kashmir permanently between India and Pakistan. According to handout issued, speaking at a reception hosted in his honour by Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK, he

said giving Gilgit-Baltistan a province like status by PPP government is part of conspiracy to make Line of Control a permanent border between India and Pakistan. Terming the Autonomy Package for Gilgit Baltistan as unconstitutional and illegitimate, Hussain Ahmed urged the Kashmiris from both sides of LoC to oppose the move with full force.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=160021>

“Gilgit Baltistan: Construction Plan of Diamer Dam Condemned”,

UNPO, March 15, 2010

The plan to build the Diamer Dam in Gilgit Baltistan is destroying land, resources and the identity of the region.

GBUM condemns state terrorism against the peaceful protestors of Chilas City, Diamer. GBUM called a public gathering in Skardu city to tribute the martyrs of Diamer Dam. On February 18, 2010, security forces shot at and killed three and injured seven innocent people of Gilgit-Baltistan who were demanding royalty and resource-loss compensation as a result of Pakistan’s decision to construct a dam in their district.

Manzoor Hussain Parwana paid tribute to the people of Diamer district and said that GBUM salutes those who received martyrdom while fighting for their just rights and guarantees that their sacrifices will not go waste. Pakistan cannot force the people of Gilgit-Baltistan to agree on the construction of the dam. Diamer dam is a disputed issue built on disputed land. Construction of the dam is a conspiracy and seen by locals as state-led ethnic extermination. In the guise of infrastructure development, Pakistan is destroying local cultural heritage, national identity, civilization, control over precious antiques, and elimination of local dwellings.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/10851/254/>

“UNPO Address Gilgit Baltistan Concerns at UN”,

UNPO, March 15, 2010

As a side event to the 13th session of the Human Rights Council, UNPO coordinated a conference

addressing the issues surrounding Gilgit Baltistan. UNPO in collaboration with Interfaith International organized an event on March 16 at the United Nations in Geneva. The conference entitled ‘Dialogue on the situation of Human Rights of Minorities in South Asia’ focussed on the thematic issues surrounding minorities in the Kashmir region of Pakistan and was likely to incorporate the ongoing unresolved problems plaguing UNPO member Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/10857/85/>

“Government to rehabilitate youth gone to PoK for terror training: Omar”,

PTI, March 15, 2010

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah March 15 said the government was resolved to rehabilitate those youths who have gone to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) for arms training and were living in miserable conditions there. “Government has taken firm stand on the rehabilitation of those youth who have crossed Line of Control and are living in a miserable condition in Muzaffarabad and Mirpur in PoK”, Omar said after inaugurating Rs31 crore Rangil Water Supply Scheme at Palpora in Srinagar. “Our government succeeded in convincing central government for their rehabilitation”, he further added.

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_government-to-rehabilitate-youth-gone-to-pok-for-terror-training-omar_1359436

“Gilgit Baltistan Uplift package”,

Hunza Times

SKARDU: A comprehensive economic package was being prepared for socio-economic uplift of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), as stated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Talking to the media, the sources said, the proposed package would prove helpful in accelerating development work in the region. A high level meeting of Asian Development Bank, World Bank (WB) and Gilgit-Baltistan administration was held in Islamabad to discuss the package, the sources noted. According to details, ADB and WB would invest jointly in mega projects of Health, Education, Agriculture, Power, Social uplift, Tourism, Mineral, and environment sectors in Gilgit Baltistan.

The sources said public representatives and political leaders would also be invited in near future to discuss the package further in detail to formulate a comprehensive package. —APP

<http://www.hunzetimes.com/archives/4718>

Aftab Chaudhry, “The history behind AJK CJ’s appointment”,

Kashmir Watch, March 14, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The hearing of the case regarding appointment of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Azad Kashmir will start in the Supreme Court of Pakistan on March 15. The case was submitted by Justice Manzoor Gilani in the Supreme Court against the appointment of Chief Justice of Azad Kashmir.

In this regard, it is decided to present old record of judges’ appointment in the Supreme Court in which the efforts of former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Atique Khan and Justice Riaz Akhtar Chaudhry were also mentioned who assured former President Musharraf for unconditional support and appointed a junior judge as Chief Justice.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1268585604&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news

“Book about Kashmiri refugees’ life in camps of AJK”,

Associated Press of Pakistan, March 13, 2010

ISLAMABAD: A recently-launched photo-book about Kashmiri refugees’ life in camps of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has been welcomed as an effort to make the people in the migrant camps be seen and be heard. The book is outcome of a joint effort of Mass Welfare Foundation (MWF) and IKV Pax Christi. Senior Program Officer (IPC) Marjan Lucas hoped the book would encourage others to follow suite. The book underlined the need to make serious efforts aiming at encouraging visibility, self-organisation, self-empowerment, intra-mobilisation of the migrant community. Marjan Lucas said “people do discuss Kashmir issue all over the world” with her native Netherlands no exception.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=98411&Itemid=2

Bringing The LoC Home

As a proposal to rehabilitate militants from PoK gathers steam, Parvaiz Bukhari tracks the experience of those who have already made the journey home without permission.

A Quiet Movement is underway in the Kashmir Valley — one that has no political father, although it is borne by a primal desire — that of a return to the homeland. Young Kashmiri men from Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK), in their ones and twos, have been returning home to the Indian side after spending the prime of their lives in “training camps” there. They catch flights from Pakistan to Nepal and enter India via the border town of Sonauli to reach the Kashmir Valley. Having given up militancy, most of these men turn themselves in at police stations, desirous of leading “normal” lives alongside their families. Some get arrested by the police before they can surrender.

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main44.asp?filename=Ne200310bringing_the.asp

“BNF chief hails Baloch nationalists’ struggle - Injustices brought us together”,

Weekly Baang Karachi, March 9-5, 2010

BANGKOK: Chairman Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Abdul Hamid Khan said though Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan do not share a common border and other interest, they were both victim of exploitation and time has come to get united to achieve the rights denied to their people for the last over six decades, as noted in a press release. Speaking at a conference on Balochistan at Bangkok, Mr Khan said Balochistan has become a burning issue in South Asia because of the heroic struggle of the nationalist parties and their youth who have been sacrificing their lives for their nation’s future.

<http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com/2010/03/bnf-chief-hails-baloch-nationalists.html>

“Pakistan should reframe Kashmir policy: AJK PM”,

Kashmir Watch

KARACHI: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Mohammed Farooq Hyder Khan stated that Kashmir cause was damaged during the reign of

former President Pervez Musharraf. Pakistan should reframe its national policy envisaging ideological and natural outlook about Kashmir, he noted while talking to journalists. PML-N leader Saleem Zia and leaders of Muslim Conference were also present on the occasion.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showajnk.php?subaction=showfull&id=1267998095&archive=&start_from=&ucat=18&var1news=value1news

“President seeks report of relief, rehabilitation measures for Attabad affectees”,

Associated Press of Pakistan, March 8, 2010

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on March 8 sought a report from Governor Gilgit Baltistan over the relief and rehabilitation measures undertaken for the landslide affectees of Atta Abad in the Hunza valley and steps for the draining of an artificial lake. The massive landslide had hit Hunza District on January 4, that led to the sliding of two villages including Attabad into the Hunza River. The landslide wiped-out everything in its path and the debris fell down into the Hunza River, blocking its water flow.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97963&Itemid=1

“Provincial status for G-B sought”,

March 9, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The people of Gilgit-Baltistan are true Pakistanis and they are in favour of getting the status of a province of Pakistan, stated the speaker of the area’s legislative assembly, Wazir Baig, in Islamabad on March 6. Addressing the media in the National Press Club along with Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed, Mr Baig said the residents of Gilgit-Baltistan had rendered sacrifices for more than six decades.

<http://skardu.wordpress.com/2010/03/09/provincial-status-for-g-b-sought/>

“Three AJK ministers bail in murder case approved”,

March 1, 2010

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District and Session judge, Mazhar Minhas endorsed the interim bail of

three Azad Kashmir ministers and assembly members for alleged involvement in murder of Captain (Rtd) Tariq. The court ordered the accused to submit Rs one Lac bail guarantees with the court. The court approved interim bail of Murtaza Gillani, Ahmad Raza Qadri, Raja Naseer, Sardar Ibrar and Raja Yaseen. Now they can’t be arrested until the challan of this case be presented in the court.

<http://www.fizanews.com/2010/03/01/three-ajk-ministers-bail-in-murder-case-approved/>

Aftab Chaudhry, “Watto submits recommendations to PM on CJAJK’s appointment”,

March 7, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Mian Mazoor Watto submitted his recommendations to Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani to resolve the issue regarding appointment of Chief Justice of Supreme Court Azad Kashmir (CJAJK). Justice Riaz Akhtar Chaudhry was appointed as Chief Justice Supreme Court Azad Kashmir (CJSCAJK) but Justice Manzoor Gilani had filed a petition in the Supreme Court Pakistan challenging the appointment of CJSCAJK. The hearing of the case is underway in Supreme Court of Pakistan.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1267997419&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news

“Promulgation of G-B order, a severe violation of UN resolutions: Shafqat”,

NNI, March 7, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Pronouncement of Gilgit-Baltistan as an autonomous Province of Pakistan is a violation of UN resolutions which is tantamount to usurping the rights of the people. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on March 6, Shafqat Ali Khan, a resident of Tehsil Panyal, District Ghizar, who is a petitioner challenging the empowerment and self-governance status of Gilgit-Baltistan in the Supreme Court, noted that declaration is also against the UNICP resolution which was passed in the United Nations. Challenging the order, Shafqat Ali Khan, who is also known as known as Shafqat Inquilabi, urged

the apex court to declare the promulgation ultra-vires of the Constitution.

<http://drshabirchoudhry.blogspot.com/2010/03/promulgation-of-g-b-order-severe.html>

“Bunji dam a bid to pit locals against each other”,

March 1, 2010

The bids to pit the people of Rondu, Bunji and Haramush against each other in the name of Bunji dam will be foiled. This was stated by chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement, Manzoor Hussain Parwana in a press statement issued here after meeting a delegation of the Bonju dam action committee. He asked Wapda to stop the policy of double standard and provide employment to the youth of the region keeping in view the boundary disputes and geographical facts in view. Otherwise, he warned, that the construction of the dam would be stopped by force. He said according to government documents, the area stretching to Brum stream belonged to Baltistan. The point where the Bonju dam was being constructed was located on the right side of the Indus River and belonged to Rondu while on the right side it was the property of Bunji. He said the Gilgit-Skardu road was located on the side of Rondu and the construction of the dam would badly affect the Rondu area.

<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2010/03/bunji-dam-bid-to-pit-locals-against.html>

“Kashmir Council has limited resources: Manzoor Wattoo”,

Asia Pulse Data Source via COMTEX, March 7, 2010

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo chaired a meeting of top officials of Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Council here on Thursday and examined the progress of development projects of AJK. According to a hand out issued, meeting was attended by Secretary KA&GB, M Ihtisham Khan, Joint Secretary Council, Qaiser Majeed Malik, Chief Planning Officer and other

officials of the Ministry. The officials briefed the Minister about various ADP (Annual Development Projects).

http://www.tradingmarkets.com/news/stock-alert/aepf_kashmir-council-has-limited-resources-manzoor-wattoo-828521.html

“Gilgit attack mastermind held from Abbottabad”,

March 3, 2010

ABBOTTABAD: The mastermind of hand grenade bomb attack in Gilgit has been arrested from Abbottabad, Gilgit police stated. The NWFP police have arrested a wanted criminal and mastermind of the attack on former deputy speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, Syed Asad Zaidi. The detained terrorist, Faizan, was sought in various murder and terrorism related cases.

http://www.samaa.tv/News17601-Gilgit_attack_mastermind_held_from_Abbottabad.aspx

“Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2009 challenged in Supreme Court”,

Daily Times, March 5, 2010

ISLAMABAD: A petition seeking the declaration of the Gilgit-Baltistan (empowerment and self-governance) Order 2009 as ‘ultra vires’ of the constitution was filed in the Supreme Court on Thursday. The petition was filed by Shafqat Ali Khan – resident of Panyal tehsil in Ghizar district – under Article 184(3) of the constitution through Muhammad Ikram Chaudhry advocate, making the federal government the respondent in the case.

The petition contended that the 2009 order was in total negation of the rights of citizens belonging to Gilgit and Baltistan and in disregard of the constitution. “The Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2009 gives a formula that is inconsistent with the constitution, thus it is liable to be cancelled and declared ultra-vires of the constitution”, the petition said.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C03%5C05%5Cstory_5-3-2010_pg7_7

“KNP welcome challenge to Gilgit Baltistan Ordinance 2009”,

March 4, 2010

LONDON: KNP leaders Abbas Butt and Dr Shabir Choudhry have welcomed the petition filed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan by Shafqat Ali Khan who is a resident of District Ghizar of Gilgit Baltistan. KNP leaders said Shafqat Ali Khan known as Shafqat Inquilabi has taken a daring step and made history by challenging this ordinance which aims to change the legal and constitutional position of the territory. KNP leaders said Gilgit Baltistan are part of former State of Jammu and Kashmir and are just as disputed as other parts of the State are; and no country has any right to unilaterally change legal status of any part of the State.

<http://drshabirchoudhry.blogspot.com/2010/03/knp-welcome-challenge-to-gilgit.html>

“AJK industrial uplift plan evolved”,

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: An integrated and broad-based plan had been evolved by the AJK government for uplifting the industries, official sources stated. In its first phase, a high level committee headed by the Chairman AJK Board of Investment has already been formulated for the revival of sick industrial units located in industrial areas of Mirpur and Bhimbher, the sources noted.

The state government had decided to chalk out the plan after the business fraternity apprised the authorities of growing problems faced by it. The local business community had already highlighted the bottlenecks in the way of the speedy industrial uplift of the area.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=18704>

Sayed Abid Hussain, “AJK govt says no to ownership rights for industrial plots”,

The News, March 5, 2010

MIRPUR: The government of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir has refused to grant proprietary rights of the industrial plots allotted on lease in the old and new industrial estates in Mirpur city, official sources said.

Years ago certain persons had acquired industrial plots in old and new industrial estates in Mirpur and Bhimbher in the name of various industrial concerns for a stipulated term on lease.

Even after passage of over a decade the said allottees of industrial plots have not set up any industry, instead they have been trying get the status of these plots converted to commercial so as to take advantage of escalating real estate prices.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=227269>

Sher Afzal Ehsam, “Representation of National Media in Gilgit Baltistan”,

Hunza Times

Several TV channels have submitted applications and other formalities to the government of Gilgit Baltistan for establishing live stream in major cities of Gilgit Baltistan. But the Government of Gilgit Baltistan kept it in pending list. Government is still saying that the “media of Pakistan is independent” while in this case, it seems that media is not yet independent. There are many reasons behind not giving the right to establish live stream in Gilgit Baltistan. The performance of the current government is known to all the people living in Gilgit Baltistan. It is PPP that claims that they are the masters of Democracy. But indeed the party is becoming weak day by day and it is quite clear to all the people living in different provinces of Pakistan.

Due to lack of live stream and bureaus, media is unable to highlight Gilgit Baltistan. Attabad incident, the most disastrous and shocking incident in the history of Gilgit Baltistan was shown as a minor incident. National Media is playing role in highlighting Gilgit Baltistan but that is not enough. The Government must cooperate with National Media to give representation to Gilgit Baltistan so that media can play its vital role in the development of Gilgit Baltistan

<http://www.hunzatimes.com/archives/4695>

Economic Developments

“Cut in AJK budget unjust”,

The Nation, March 29, 2010

MUZAFRABAD: The federal government has imposed 40 percent cut on the development budget of Azad Kashmir. This indication was given by Sardar Farooq Tahir, Azad Kashmir Minister for Information and Hydel Board while talking to newsmen in Muzaffarabad.

The Minister reminded that President Asif Ali Zardari during his address to the joint session of Azad J&K Council and Assembly on January 5 this year had assured that Azad Kashmir development funds would be exempted from cut. He had also announced special funds of Rs one crore for each constituency of Azad Kashmir Legislative assembly. Similar generous announcement was also made by Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Prime Minister of Pakistan, while addressing the elite gathering in Muzaffarabad on the 4th anniversary of earthquake that Azad Kashmir would get its development funds.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-dailyenglish-online/Lahore/29-Mar-2010/Cut-in-AJK-budget-unjust>

Khaleeq Kiani, “Accord on compensation for dam project”,

Dawn, March 12, 2010

ISLAMABAD: With Pakistan reaching the threshold of water-scarce countries, the government has finalised Rs40 billion out-of-court agreement with 30,000 families to be affected by the proposed Bhasha-Diamer dam. “Pakistan’s per capita water availability, which was more than 5,000 cusecs in 1950, has come down to 1,000 cusecs per day because the nation has not been able to build a dam in almost four decades,” the Minister for Water and Power, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, stated at a joint news conference with Kashmir Affairs Minister Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo and Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah. He said 29,000 to 30,000 families would be affected by ‘Pakistan’s largest development project’ that would

have the capacity to store 6.4 million acre-feet (MAF) of water and produce 4,500 megawatts of electricity.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/13+accord-on-compensation-for-dam-project-230-za-08>

Tariq Naqash, “Body formed on financial issues in AJK department”,

Dawn, March 9, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider constituted a committee on March 9 to sort out the contentious issue of the mode of payments in the Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) department, within a month. The direction came in a meeting of Local Government Coordination Council, which was attended by LG&RD Minister Raja Naseer Ahmed Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Development) Tariq Mahmood, Secretary Finance Abid Hussain, LG&RD Secretary Iqbal Mohiyuddin and others.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/body-formed-on-financial-issues-in-ajk-department-930>

“Cross-LoC trade touches Rs100m”,

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: Cross Line of Control (LoC) trade on Poonch-Rawlakot route has touched the figure of Rs.100 million started from both the sides since October 2008, official sources stated. “This is the first time in the history of cross-LoC trade that figures have moved up and are touching the figure ten crore in an exchange of business,” the sources noted. The trade from Chakan-Da-Bagh cross-LoC point was registered at Rs 5.97 crore on a day, while on the next day business stood at Rs. 4.32 crore, moving the figure to Rs. 10.29 crore in total. Total trade registered stood at Rs. 4.32 crore. The highest trade on Poonch-Rawlakote route so far was recorded about Rs. 7 crore.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=19782>

Sayed Abid Hussain, “AJK govt says no to ownership rights for industrial plots”,

The News, March 5, 2010

MIRPUR: The government of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir refused to grant proprietary rights of the industrial plots allotted on lease in the old and new industrial estates in Mirpur city, official sources stated. Years ago certain persons acquired industrial plots in old and new industrial estates in Mirpur and Bhimbher in the name of various industrial concerns for a stipulated term on lease. Even after passage of over a decade the said allottees of industrial plots have not set up any industry, instead they have been trying to get the status of these plots converted to commercial so as to take advantage of escalating real estate prices.

<http://thenews.jang.com.pk/print1.asp?id=227269>

“Trans-LoC trade of Rs 47.4m conducted”,

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: Trade worth Rs 47.4 million was conducted on trans-LoC Rawalakot-Poonch route with pulses once again dominating the supply from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, official sources noted. Sources further noted 25 trucks carrying pulses in bulk besides almonds of worth Rs 34.9 million left for Poonch from Rawalakot. From Poonch, an equal number of 23 trucks reached Rawlakot and other parts of AJK carrying bananas, brown cardamom, red chilly, coconut, kernel, dry coriander and pineapple. The goods were worth Rs 12.5 million. The Trade Facilitation Officials (TFO) from Poonch and Hajeera, Rawlakot were present at Chakan-Da-Bagh-Tatrinote entry-point during cross-LoC movement of the trucks, the sources further added.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=19584>

“US refuses to fund Bhasha Dam project”, *Gilgit Baltistan Tribune, March 14, 2010*

ISLAMABAD: US will not provide funds for the construction of Bhasha Dam due to pertaining issues of environment and other complications, as noted by US Coordinator for Civilian Assistance Ambassador Robin Raphel on March 13.

In an interview with a private TV Channel, she said her country will extend assistance under Kerry-Lugar Bill in sectors including energy, water, education and health in collaboration with the government of Pakistan and the NGOs. She said the US is taking stock of 19 projects relating energy, which were solicited by the government of Pakistan. Robin said Bhasha Dam project is not part the aid money as it is a giant and complicated project. There are also serious environmental issues related to Bhasha Dam project, she further added.

<http://gbtribune.blogspot.com/2010/03/bhasha-dam-not-included-in-us-aid-bill.html>

“UNPO Address Human Rights in Pakistan at the UN”, *UNPO, March 12, 2010*

Coinciding with the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, UNPO has coordinated a series of events and a demonstration to highlight the issues and concerns of it Pakistani members. Coinciding with the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, which began this week; UNPO members from Balochistan, Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan have taken the opportunity to further promote their plight. In alliance with Interfaith International, UNPO has helped plan and co-ordinate two separate events focusing on the human rights issues in Pakistan, and the wider South Asian region.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/10850/89/>

“Kashmiri delegation meets HR bodies in Geneva”, *Kashmir News, March 10, 2010*

GENEVA: A Kashmiri delegation headed by Altaf Hussain Wani, leader of All Parties Hurriyat

Conference, Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter, met representatives of different human rights organisation, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, United Nations Watch and Special Assistant to Special Rapporteur on Torture, in Geneva on the side lines of 13th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/kashmiri-delegation-meets-hr-bodies-geneva>

Abdul Latif, “UK Charity launches Youth Centre in Azad Kashmir”, *Kashmir Watch, March 6, 2010*

MIRPUR: The President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Raja Zulqarnain Khan, on March 6 launched the Sport for Life! Pakistan Centre at Mirpur International Cricket Stadium sponsored by UK based charity Sport for Life! Inc. Located in Mirpur Cricket Stadium’s media conference centre, the Sport for Life! Pakistan Learning Centre will provide sport, education and healthy lifestyle training to disadvantaged children aged 10-16 who are failing to reach their potential at school and in society. The project is supported by a group of senior sporting Ambassadors, including some of Pakistan’s greatest cricketing role models, Wasim Akram and Imran Khan.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1267907815&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news

Hameed Shaheen, “Saudi Relief completes 7300 more houses in AJK, NWFP”, *Pakistan Observer*

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV) has completed 7300 more pre-fabricated houses to provide residential facilities to the quake affectees in AJK/NWFP. The housing units were constructed in Balakot and Muzaffarabad. Dr.Khalid M. Al-Othmani, the Regional Director of Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims, (SPAPEV) unfolded the details during his interaction with the newspersons. He said the task to construct 4000 houses in Red

Zone area of Balakot was successfully accomplished and the displaced families have been accommodated in these pre-fabricated units. Over 3000 units have also been handed over to deserving families in Muzaffarabad. About 1000 units at Bagh are under construction. The total cost of 8000 housing unit is \$ 40 million, he added.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=16662>

Other Developments

“Bhasha Dam may drown rock drawings on KKH”,

Pakistan Travel & Culture, March 28, 2010

The Diamer–Bhasha dam will submerge more than half of the prolific rock art that abounds in Gilgit-Baltistan. According to Harald Hauptmann, a renowned German archaeologist, who has been working on the petroglyphs in Gilgit-Baltistan since 1989, there are more than 50,000 rock engravings and 6,000 inscriptions in ancient languages like Kharosthi, Brahmi, Sogdian, Chinese, and Proto-Sharada etc., 30,000 of which will submerge in the dam when it is constructed.

<http://blog.travel-culture.com/2010/03/28/bhasha-dam-may-drown-rock-drawings-on-kkh/>

“Hydel power generation projects to be launched”,

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government had kicked off an integrated plan to utilize huge available Hydel power resources in various parts of the State with the financial support of the government of Pakistan, official sources stated. It was noted that since only 400 Mega Watt (MW) of electricity was the need of entire State, the government had decided to start work on different Hydel Power generation projects using the available resources with immediate effect.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=22884>

“Water level rises at Mangla; Tarbela at dead level”,

The News, March 28, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Water level rose 19.25 above the dead level at Mangla Dam; however, Tarbela is still running at dead level, according to a report published on March 28. According to Met Department, the usable water reserves at Mangla soared to 110,000 acre feet with inflow at 35,455 cusecs and outflow at 28,000 cusecs. Tarbela is receiving 31,000 cusecs with the same amount of outflow. According to Met Department, most areas of the country are expected to be dry; while, hot weather is likely in the central

(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

and southern areas. The spell of rains is expected to begin again in the next 24 hours in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=101673>

“School dropout rate alarming in GB”

GILGIT: The rate of dropouts in government-run schools is alarming in Gilgit-Baltistan. Recent statistics released by the Education Management Information Centre claimed that the dropout rate at primary level among boys was 11 per cent and girls 8 per cent which was further increasing. The dropout was mainly due to poverty, migration of families and mismanagement of schools. The statistics said that there were 1,688 functional academic institutions including the National Education Programme and community-based schools.

<http://www.interface.edu.pk/students/March-10/Khyber-Medical-University-students-strike.asp>

“AJK plan for promotion of fisheries launched”

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: An integrated plan has been launched for the promotion of fish breeding and angling with the coordination and participation of the private sector under the spirit of the recently-launched tourism uplift program in Azad Jammu Kashmir, official sources noted. It was further stated that under a recent agreement signed between the private sector fishing concern and the government, the company/contractor will launch at least 20 lakh fish breed in the Mangla Lake under a phased program during the next three year stipulated period.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=22490>

“WAPDA exempts Mirpur from load shedding”

Daily Times, March 25, 2010

LAHORE: Following negotiations between top officials of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Electricity Department and WAPDA, Mirpur district has been exempted from load shedding. The chief engineer of the AJK Electricity Department and senior WAPDA officials held the talks in Mirpur after hundreds of Kashmiris took to the streets protesting

the unannounced load shedding. At least 40 people, including three journalists, were injured when police tried to stop demonstrators from marching towards Mangla Dam.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C03%5C25%5Cstory_25-3-2010_pg1_4

Shamsuddin Muhammad, “Novroz is being celebrated in Gilgit-Baltistan”

March 21, 2010

HUNZA: Novroz Festival was being celebrated with simplicity this year in most of the valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan. In Hunza-Nagar, the festival is observed with great zeal. Nevertheless, the natural disaster of land sliding and its negative implications faced by Upper Hunza overshadowed the celebration. The day started with special prayers in mosques, Jamat Khanas for world peace, prosperity and good time in future; and marked the very first day of the natural calendar of year that lasts as a legacy of ancient Persian and central Asian tradition.

<http://alshams.wordpress.com/2010/03/21/novroz-is-being-celebrated-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Hunza Landslide Threatens Pakistan”

March 18, 2010

The people of Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan have had many, indeed too many a sleepless night since January after suffering a massive landslide in Attabad. The impact of the landslide has been considerable and has led to the forming of a natural dam in the Hunza River forming a lake that is consuming villages as it moves upstream.

Catastrophic effects are feared if the dam breaks with a tsunami-like flash flood of up to 20 metres high being feared which will have the potential to devastate not just the heaven that is Hunza, but Pakistan more widely as far and wide as the Tarbela Dam. In such a calamity, experts on the issue opine that the water would sweep down from an altitude of nearly 2,500 metres, being replenished by first the Gilgit River and then the Indus, before hurtling down the narrow northern stretches of the Indus Valley towards the Tarbela Dam, 40km north-west of Islamabad.

<http://blog.otherpakistan.org/2010/03/18/hunza-landslide-threatens-pakistan/>

“Conference in Gilgit demands calamity hit status for disaster affected areas of Hunza”,

Pamir Times, March 10, 2010

GILGIT: Speakers at a conference held in Gilgit on March 10 said that if the government did not increase pace of the debris removal work at barrier of the lake formed on Hunza River the ensuing threat posed by the lake would inflict heavy losses to life and property from Hunza to Tarbela. The political leaders also threatened to launch a movement across GB if pace of the debris removal work was not enhanced and if the government did not take concrete steps to safeguard life and property of people upstream and downstream of the lake. The speakers included leaders of various political parties and religious groups. The speakers unanimously termed the lake hazard to be of great risk for the entire region and not only Gojal valley.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/03/10/conference-in-gilgit-demands-calamity-hit-status-for-disaster-hit-areas-of-hunza/>

Fazal Amin Baig, “Save Pakistan from the catastrophe”,

Dawn, March 11, 2010

The year 2010 witnessed a natural disaster, which did not indicate a good omen to the people of Pakistan, particularly to the dwellers of the Indus River and Gilgit-Baltistan, resulting in result of a dangerous battle between the nature and the humans. January 4, 2010 caused disaster at considerable scale when a heavy landslide in Central Hunza ruined the Ghareyat village (these days called as Attabad), blocked the Hunza River and cut off the Karakoram Highway for more than 1½ km. This catastrophe of the first phase took the lives of 19 people of Ghareyat, damaged 43 houses completely and displaced more than 1,500 people who now stay in the camps in Karimabad in Central Hunza.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/sci-tech/03-save-pakistan-from-the-upcoming-doomsday-ss-05>

Khalid Amin, “Steps afoot to control landslide in GB: Afridi”,

Daily Mail, March 10, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Environment Mr. Hameed Ullah Jan Afridi said that government is committed to make all possible arrangements to control the landslide situation in Attabad, Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that necessary and rapid measures should be taken in this regard. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting to review the landslide situation at Attabad, Gilgit-Baltistan in Islamabad on March 10. The meeting was attended by stakeholders including Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan, Home Secretary Gilgit Baltistan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Additional Secretary Interior, Joint Secretary KA&GB, representatives of Wapda, ERRA and Agha Khan Development Network.

<http://dailymailnews.com/0310/10/CityPage/CityPages3.php>

Aftab Noor, “Photo book on AJK refugee camps launched”,

The News, March 10, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been continuously making valuable efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue for sustained peace in the region, AJK President Raja Zulfikar Khan stated on March 10 in Islamabad. He was addressing the launching ceremony of a photo book titled, ‘Life of Migrants in Refugee Camps in AJK’ composed by Ms. Marjan Lucas from the Netherlands.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=228220>

“Another disaster threatens Hunza inhabitants”,

Daily Times, March 3, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Experts fear that the landslide-affected people of Attabad, Hunza may suffer losses due to a potential outburst of an artificial lake formed as a result of a massive landslide in Hunza River. These concerns were brought forward during a conference

organised by Sungi Development Foundation and Gilgit-Baltistan Human Rights Advocacy Network (HRAN) at the National Press Club to understand and disseminate the correct picture of the natural disaster that hit and killed at least 13 persons in Atta Abad.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C03%5C03%5Cstory_3-3-2010_pg7_23

“Floods pose threat to road link with China”,

Gulf Times

Parts of a major bridge on the Hunza river on the Karakoram Highway in Pakistan’s mountainous north in Gilgit-Baltistan have been submerged by an overflowing lake formed by a landslide on January 4. Sources stated that the bridge, said to be the largest on the highway, had developed cracks and was closed, cutting off Gojal valley from the rest of the country. Experts fear that in the event of the bridge collapsing the land link between Pakistan and China would be snapped because an under-construction alternative bridge would take two years to complete. The closure of the bridge left about 3,000 people stranded in Shishkat village.

http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=346031&version=1&template_id=41&parent_id=23

“Save Gojal, Save Gilgit-Baltistan, Save Pakistan... Protest in Lahore”,

March 1, 2010

The civil society of Gilgit Baltistan, based in Lahore, on 28th February 2010 registered a protest in front of Lahore press club. The motive behind the protest was to get the attention of the Federal government, in particular, and the Punjab provisional government, in general, towards the snail speed rescue work in Gojal Hunza regarding the January 4th 2010 disaster. Participants held various banners and chanted slogans against the poor effort of the federal and local government of GB for the rescue operation.

<http://sadoy-e-zoyir.blogspot.com/2010/03/save-gojal-save-gilgit-baltistan-save.html>

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK): An Overview

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

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

Salient features of PoK are as under:

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

Administrative Divisions: Two, namely Mirpur-Muzaffarabad (referred to as Azad Jammu & Kashmir or AJK by Pakistan) and Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan (FAGB).

Area ceded to China by Pakistan: 19,313 sq. kilometer

Area of Chitral: 14,850 sq. kilometer

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

AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR (AJK)

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

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

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

Area of AJK: 13,297 square km

Population: 2.973 million (1998 population census), Male, 1.850 million; Female, 1.832 million

Capital: Muzaffarabad

Kashmir (Muzaffarabad Division) comprises of 3 districts: Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Neelum

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

President: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Farooq Haider Khan

Political Structure

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

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

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

Ethnic Groups: Gujjars, Jats, Mughal, Rajputs, Sudhan, Awan, Qureshi, Pashtuns, Shins, Ladakhi, Baltis etc.

Religious Groups: Sunni, Ahlehadith, Shia, Nurbakhshi, Christians, Qadianis, Hindus

Languages: Punjabi, Hindko, Pahari, Kashmiri, Balti, Puriki, Shina

Political Groups: United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, AJK Muslim Conference, International Kashmir Alliance, JK National Party, Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (Amanullah), Peoples United Action Committee, All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan (FAGB)

Gilgit-Baltistan was previously referred to by Pakistan as the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA). It is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) and is under direct control of the Islamabad government.

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

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

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

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

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

Salient Features of FAGB are as under:

Area of FAGB: 72,496 sq. kilometer

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: seven

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ganche and Skardu districts

Gilgit Region is divided into Astore, Diamer, Ghizer, Hunza-Nagar and Gilgit districts

Ethnic Groups: Shin, Balti, Puriki, Ladakhi, Wakhi, Yashkun, Tibetan, Mongol, Tatar, Mon, Pashtun, Khowar, Dom, Gujjar, Rajput and Kashmiri

Religious Groups: Shia (Twelvers), Nurbakhshi (Twelvers), Ismaili, Sunni, and Ahlehadith

Languages: Shina, Balti, Wakhi, Khowar, Gujjari, Burushaski, Puriki, Kashmiri, Pashto

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

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

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

Governor of G-B: Dr Shama Khalid

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

Political Groups: Balwaristan National Front (BNF), Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum, Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Baltistan National Movement, Karakoram National Movement, Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA), Gilgit Baltistan National Alliance (GBNA), All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

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

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

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

State of Infrastructure: More than two-thirds of the villages lack potable water, electricity, telephone, health units, girls' schools, paved roads, ration depot, and pony tracks.

Endnotes

¹ Baltistan was occupied by Pakistan a year later in 1948

² <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2754976?seq=7>

³ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/pakistan/law.htm>

⁴ <http://ips-pk.org/content/view/234/259/>

⁵ <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>

⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/gilgitbaltistan-package-termed-an-eyewash-089>

⁷ <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>

⁸ AKRSP Socio-economic Survey of Northern Areas and Chitral (SESNAC) 2005; http://www.finance.gov.pk/finance_blog/?p=238; <http://finance.kalpoint.com/pdf/highlights/todays-pick/per-capita-income-falls-to-1071.pdf>

Disclaimer

PoK News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Northern Areas' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

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