

POK NEWS DIGEST

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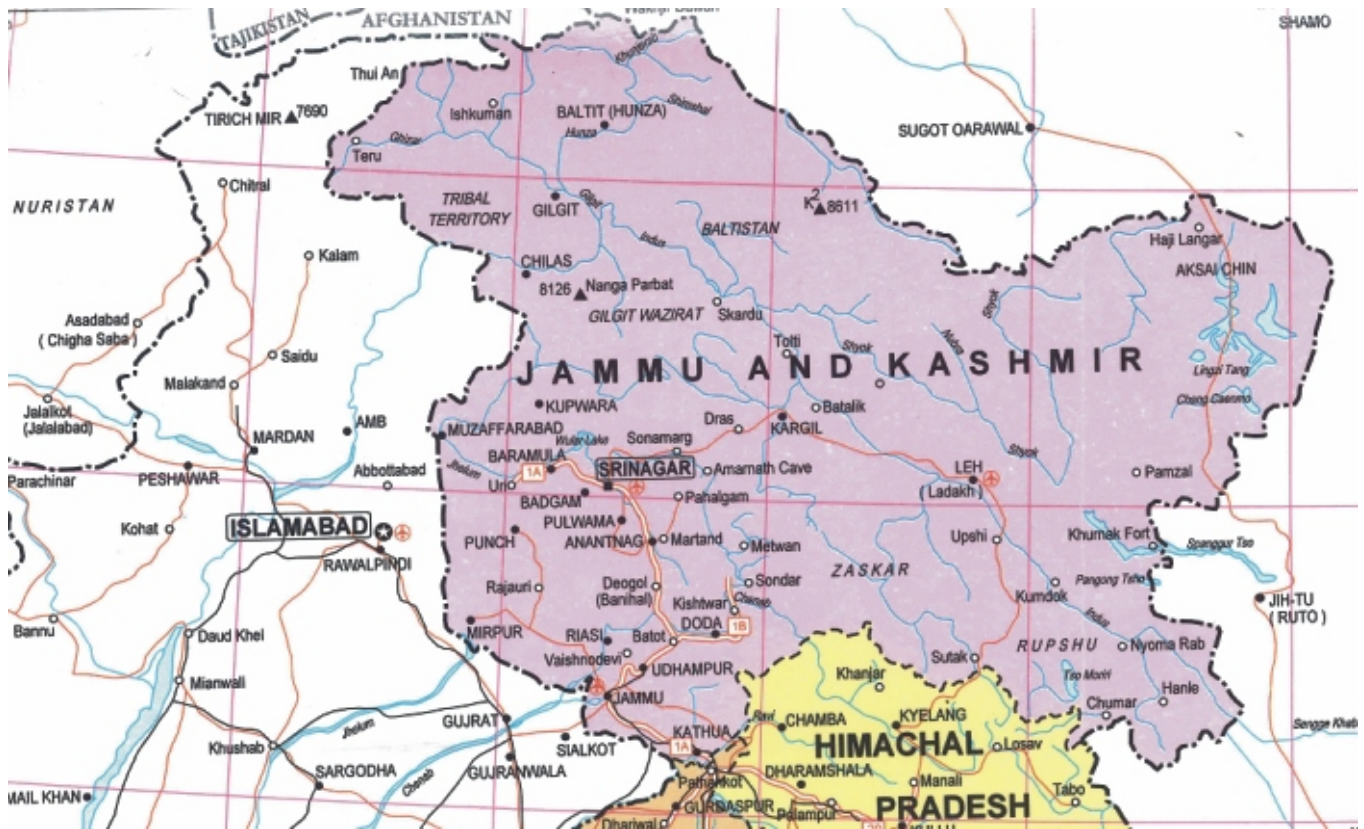
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

There are abundant reports in the current issue covering the controversial Diamer Bhasha Dam in PoK. The construction work on the dam project was reportedly started in October and Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani paid a visit to PoK for the ceremony. Going by the reports in Pakistan, there is mixed response to the Diamer Bhasha project. Some see it as a panacea to the severe energy crisis prevailing in Pakistan, as once completed this project is slated to produce 4500 MW of electricity. The failure of the Kalabagh Dam project to finally take off due to political tussle at the domestic level has left Pakistan with no option but to pin its hope on the Diamer Bhasha Project. As a result, Pakistan has completely overlooked the controversies surrounding this ambitious project. The Diamer Bhasha dam is located in a site which legally belongs to India. Not only this, there are ecological implications involving the project which threaten the region with a huge calamity in future owing to its location in an extremely sensitive seismic zone. Notably, a massive earthquake hit the so called AJK in PoK in October 2005 and the region is yet to recover from the colossal losses incurred therein.

In a significant development, Indian Chief of the Army, General VK Singh referred to the presence of at least 3000-4000 Chinese troops in PoK. Reports about Chinese forays in PoK have been doing the rounds for a long time and its due accreditation by the Indian Army Chief has given credence to such reports. At the same time, it also emphasizes the need for India to strongly protest against the Chinese role in PoK.

There is unrest in PoK following arrests of certain leaders by the Pakistani authorities. Locals from PoK staged protests in Karachi demanding the release of a popular activist Baba Jan belonging to Gilgit Baltistan I.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Chinese Troops in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir: Gen VK Singh

The Economic Times, October 6, 2011

NEW DELHI: In what should send alarm bells ringing in the Indian security establishment, Army Chief Gen VK Singh on October 5 confirmed the presence of some 4,000 Chinese, including troops belonging to the People's Liberation Army of China in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK). The presence of the Chinese, including members of their defence forces, has been a matter of intense speculation here in India. But it's the first time an Army Chief has gone public with India's assessment about the kind of Chinese presence in PoK.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-10-06/news/30250574_1_chinese-presence-chinese-troops-pok

M.I. Mazhar, PPP cradles Yaqoob dynasty in Azad Kashmir

October 28, 2011

By officially supporting sitting president's daughter in AJK bye-election, Pakistan Peoples Party has cradled another political dynasty in Azad Kashmir. Farzana Yaqoob Khan, a candidate of ruling Peoples Party and daughter of President Sardar Yaqoob Khan, won bye-election of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly in Rawalakot. The seat of LA-19, Poonch-3 constituency was vacated by Sardar Yaqoob Khan after his election as President of the State. Earlier, Sardar Yaqoob had won the elections from this constituency by a massive margin. He had secured 27,655 votes in the general elections, defeating Sardar Khalid Ibrahim of JKPP who got 17,354. The total number of candidates in the constituency was seven.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/ppp-cradles-yaqoob-dynasty-in-azad-kashmir/>

Consensus reached on dam royalty

Dawn, October 30, 2011

MANSEHRA: The Water and Power Development

Authority and elders of Kohistan on October 29 reached an agreement on payment of the Diamer-Bhasha dam's five per cent royalty to the district and immediate release of money to the owners of the land acquired for the project.

The agreement was signed by Chairman Wapda Shakeel Ahmad Durrani and 13-member Harban Diamer committee of Kohistan in Abbottabad. On the call of Harban Diamer committee, locals blocked Karakoram Highway from October 15 to October 17 for payment of royalty and money of the land acquired for the dam. They cleared the road to the traffic only after the government agreed to accept their demands. Local MPA Abdul Sattar Khan told reporters on the occasion that it was a great achievement of the people of Kohistan that the government had accepted their right of dam royalty and agreed to pay them their land's cost.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/30/consensus-reached-on-dam-royalty.html>

Resettlement and royalties

Dawn, October 29, 2011

In Pakistan where water and other energy resources are becoming increasingly scarce, the creation of large-capacity dams appears a sensible idea. However, the creation of such reservoirs has been a contentious issue as in the case of the Kalabagh dam project which had to be shelved. The most recent project to be put on course after three decades was the Diamer-Bhasha dam. Meanwhile, the upgrading of Mangla Dam has failed to live up to expectations, even though the main project of raising the dam's height was completed in 2008. The sticking points tend to be squabbling among the provinces over projected revenues and the resettlement and compensation for those displaced. Both Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have laid territorial claims to the Diamer-Bhasha dam, for example, while raising the height of Mangla Dam has affected 50,000 people. The issue of

resettlement and compensation has not yet been addressed, leading to resistance by the affected communities against the filling of the reservoir.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/29/resettlement-and-royalties.html>

Alya Alvi, Bhasha dam and foreign powers

Dawn, October 28, 2011

The World Bank has come under severe criticism from international development lenders for not funding the \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam, the 'highest priority project'. According to reports, the forthcoming strategic dialogue between the US and Pakistan ahead of a fresh round of discussions by the Water Sector Task Force of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan would focus on Islamabad's precise plans for water sector reforms and the World Bank's lack of interest in the Diamer-Bhasha dam project. The two events are expected early next month. No mega development-related project has so far been funded by US, except for some conditional donations.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/28/bhasha-dam-and-foreign-powers.html/print/>

Tahir Niaz, Good on paper, poor on ground

Pakistan Today, October 27, 2011

ISLAMABAD: It goes without saying that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)-led government did wonders at the political front during its around four-year tenure when it comes to legal and constitutional achievements, but at the same time it is justifiable to say that it has miserably failed in providing relief to the masses. It would be dishonesty if the government is not credited for its policy of reconciliation which remained the epicentre of its politics since it took over and no doubt it paid back to the government.

Let it be the 7th National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, 18th and 19th constitutional amendments, internal autonomy to Gilgit-Baltistan or the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan Package, the PPP-led government deserves credit at least for the initiatives it took, though support of the other

political parties was also vital in this regard.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/10/good-on-paper-poor-on-ground/>

Diamer-Bhasha dam: a perspective

Dawn, October 27, 2011

The project is being touted as a multi-faceted saviour for Pakistan's development, but in fact its construction will be one of the most disastrous investments for the entire nation with far-reaching impacts, especially in the scenario of climate change. The dam structure is not capable of controlling large floods, and it will be devastating also when an earthquake rocks it in this most risky zone, and might forever damage the Indus River bed at this precious location. When such an incident will occur, we will not be able to count in dollars the losses incurred by the devastation to this lifeline of the entire nation. In its regular operation, the overall volume of water in the Indus which will be able to reach downstream is one of the most important issues which is being disregarded, even though we have alarmingly witnessed the desertification of large tracts in Sindh.

Awareness about this issue needs to reach Pakistanis in other regions immediately. We should talk about the impacts on the soil, water, habitats and livelihoods of people in lower riverine areas if we are to speak of a mega project as beneficial. As climate change will now regularly rock us between droughts and flooding, we are talking about a life and death situation and millions of Pakistani citizens. Each of the benefits of a dam power-generation, water storage and irrigation can be achieved through many other means which we are already capable of practising. What solutions were good 60 years ago are no longer viable, and it is time not to forcefully dominate nature, but to work with it through smaller-scale interventions which are sustainable and which empower local communities. There is now only one way towards development let us religiously save our precious environmental resources, and fashion our projects accordingly. Save Pakistan now.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/27/diamer-bhasha-dam-a-perspective.html>

Diامر-Bhasha boundary dispute: Gilgit rejects K-P's claim to part of dam

The Express Tribune, October 26, 2011

GILGIT: Existing tensions between Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) have increased over the controversy of the Diامر-Bhasha dam, with both sides claiming rights to the dam. G-B legislative assembly members rejected K-P's claim over part of the structure on October 25 and decided to inform the federal government about "encroachment" through "proper channels". "K-P's claim over some eight kilometres of land in Diامر is baseless and so, is rejected," the lawmakers decided in an informal meeting chaired by the G-B legislative assembly speaker. Members of the G-B assembly stated that the K-P assembly had recently passed a resolution claiming land in Diامر. According to members, the K-P assembly also demanded equal compensation for the people of Kohistan likely to be affected by the construction of the proposed dam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/281890/diامر-bhasha-boundary-dispute-gilgit-rejects-k-ps-claim-to-part-of-dam/>

Kashmiri Women Yearn For Peace, Economic Stability

October 24, 2011

Women of Jammu and Kashmir from both the sides of the Line of Control (LoC) expressed their desire for peace, security and economic stability in the region and demanded an immediate end to the protracted conflict. The women during a two-day intra-Kashmir conference held at Gulmarg demanded their participation in all the peace-building initiatives and peace negotiations on Kashmir. They demanded of the governments of India and Pakistan to simplify the procedures of trade, communication and travel across the LoC by opening other trade and travel routes like Kargil-Skardu, Chamb-Bhimbar and Leh-Khaplu.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/24/we-want-peace-2.asp>

Shabbir Mir, Performance: GBLA passes 22 laws in two years

The Express Tribune October 25, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative

Assembly passed legislation on 22 subjects over two years and six bills are in the process of legislation, deputy speaker Jamil Ahmed G-B stated while briefing journalists on October 24. He added that the performance of this assembly is far better than the one which served under the General (retd) Pervez Musharraf government. "We have made marvellous legislative progress in a very brief period," he stated. Ahmed criticised previous G-B governments, saying that lawmakers spent money on irrational projects, resulting in the loss of resources and time.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/281125/performance-gbla-passes-22-laws-in-two-years/>

AJK to have over 1000-km highways network soon

The Frontier Post, October 23, 2011

MIRPUR: An extensive network of over 1000-kilometer long roads and highways is being laid in various parts of AJK including earthquake-stricken areas during the current fiscal year. The roads include over 470 km long road-network in earthquake hit zone and over 600 km long Kashmir Highway to be constructed from Mirpur to Neelam Valley district, official sources stated on October 22. Sources further stated that the AJK government has planned to gear up the construction work on additional 1000 km link roads besides the ongoing construction work on important bridges to ensure their completion within the stipulated time. They stated the government has also allocated colossal funds for local government and rural development sector.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=71141>

Moving in the right direction

Daily Times, October 21, 2011

The government has finally started building the \$ 12 billion Diامر-Bhasha Dam, 30 years after completion of its first feasibility report, a long time indeed. If the decision had been taken well in time, the country's state would have been far different from what it is now. The world's highest concrete dam with a height of 272 metres is being built on the Indus River about 300 kilometres upstream of

Tarbela Dam. It would generate 4,500 MW electricity and store 8.1 million acre feet of water. The dam will take over 12 years to complete and then start benefiting the energy-starved and water-short country.

Some would say that there are other projects, even faster ones, which would compensate for the water and electricity shortfall quicker than the Diamer-Bhasha dam, such as the Kalabagh Dam (KBD). The KBD if begun in the middle of Musharraf's tenure would have partially bridged our current shortfall of five to six thousand megawatts of electricity by adding 3,600 MW to the system. But even that would have been a high price for less load shedding given that Sindh would arguably have been lost to the country as the province, being the lower riparian, has been the strongest opponent of KBD on a number of accounts. Rejected by the assemblies of three smaller provinces, this proposed dam has become too politicised over the decades. Stress on building this dam, a hotbed of conflicts, can easily cause fissures harming the unity of the country. The issue of water distribution among the provinces already keeps them at loggerheads even in the presence of the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), set up in 1992 to ensure equitable distribution of water among the provinces.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C10%5C21%5Cstory_21-10-2011_pg3_1

PM visit proves fruitful for region: Wazir

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 21, 2011

ASTORE: Vice President Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Youth Organisation Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Wazir Kamran stated on October 20 that the recent visit of Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani had been proved fruitful for the region. He stated the project of Diamer Basha Dam is beneficial for the country and it would help to meet the energy crisis. He stated the government of PPP was utilizing all available resources for the development and prosperity of the country. He further noted the government had initiated various relief programmes for the people including Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Watan card etc.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=160503&Itemid=2

Panthers Party demands referendum on Gilgit and Baltistan

October 20, 2011

JAMMU: Accusing Pakistan of forcibly occupying Gilgit and Baltistan, Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) demanded a referendum to ascertain the will of the people there. "We demand a referendum on Gilgit and Baltistan which has been illegally and forcibly occupied by Pakistan," JKNPP chairman Bhim Singh stated. Singh was on a visit to forward areas of Suchetgarh, Akhnoor, Suchetgarh, Dabler and Arnia areas along the Indo-Pak border in Jammu district. The JKNPP chief also accused Pakistani leaders for trying to exploit the local people in the name of religion. Singh praised the locals of border areas for upholding old traditions of composite culture and unity of the people.

http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/wire-news/panthers-party-demands-referendumgilgitbaltistan_602334.html

Mehdi assures academic funds

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: The Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Mehdi Shah stated that the government would make all out efforts for the provision of civic amenities particularly the educational facilities to masses. A statement revealed that the Chief Minister Mehdi Shah noted this in a meeting with Vice Chancellor Karakoram International University, Dr. Najma Aziz. The statement further noted that the CM was informed by the university management regarding establishment of a campus in the Skardu region.

The CM announced an amount of Rs 110 million to establish campus in Skardu and stressed the need for its early completion. He also instructed to set up a campus of the university in Diamer district as well. The management assured him that work for campus in Diamer district will begin soon. The mechanism of work in all police stations of Gilgit-Baltistan is being computerized so as to further link them with the main database at federal ministry of interior to keep record of the crimes as well as to monitor performance of the police.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=121203>

Shabbir Mir, Ostentatious display: Gilgit-Baltistan spent Rs20m on PM's visit

The Express Tribune, October 20, 2011

GILGIT: The cash-strapped Gilgit-Baltistan government spent approximately Rs20 million on arrangements for the prime minister's visit to the region. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani, who laid the foundation stone for the country's third-largest reservoir the Diamer-Bhasha Dam in Chilas on Tuesday, stayed in the area for an hour or two where he was accompanied by the Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister, governor and Pakistan Peoples Party workers and leaders from the region. According to sources, before Gilani's arrival in Chilas, two bullet-proof cars were flown to Gilgit via a C-130 aircraft and then transported to Chilas, about 124 kilometres from Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/278005/ostentatious-display-gilgit-baltistan-spent-rs20m-on-pms-visit/>

Diamer-Bhasha dam to resolve energy crisis

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 22, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Former Minister Water and Power, Raja Pervez Ashraf stated that construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam, the third largest water reservoir in the country, would help resolve energy crisis. He stated that agriculture sector would get benefit from this big water reservoir project while a sufficient quantity of water could also be stored through the construction of this dam in the country.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=160629&Itemid=2

Diamer-Bhasha Dam to bring big prosperity

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: The political leadership of Gilgit-Baltistan on Wednesday called Diamer-Bhasha Dam project a milestone in the overall uplift of the country as well as of the region. In a statement, the chief minister termed it as a step towards unprecedented development and stated special grants for completion of projects, overhauling of Karakoram Highway, establishment of Engineering faculty, upgradations of DHQ hospitals and setting up cadet college will change the fate of region while

the energy and water reservoir will score a tangible impact on the national economy and would usher country into a new era of development. Speaker GBLA Wazir Baig remarked that this project will help to overcome water and energy crisis and will put the country on the path of development.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=120850>

Pakistan-Tajikistan road to cost Rs.2 bn, IANS

October 9, 2011

ISLAMABAD: A road that would connect Pakistan with Tajikistan is estimated to cost Rs.2 billion. The proposed road between Gilgit-Baltistan and Tajikistan would open up new avenues of progress and prosperity in the region, as reported. The estimated Rs.2 billion road would connect Pakistan to the land-locked Central Asian states.

Pakistan is the only country through which the Central Asian states could do business with the world either through Gwadar port in Balochistan province or the proposed Gilgit-Tajikistan road. Pir Karam Ali Shah, Gilgit-Baltistan governor, had recently met both President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to apprise them of the importance of the 220-km-long road.

http://twocircles.net/2011oct19/pakistantajikistan_road_cost_rs2_bn.html

Diamer-Bhasha dam

Dawn, October 20, 2011

The Diamer-Bhasha dam with a projected capacity of producing 4,500MW of electricity is formally on course some three decades after the first feasibility report on the project was concluded during Gen Zia's rule. It has been a long journey signifying loss of precious time as well as the extreme difficulties such projects have to deal with. Experts will once again point out the shortcomings of the project, and inevitably, Kalabagh will crop up. Then there will be discussions of some practical problems Diamer-Bhasha itself is faced with. Almost 100km of the Karakoram Highway will have to be rebuilt to accommodate the dam; there will be loss of a stretch of agricultural land; and nearly 3,000 people will be displaced not to speak of the danger to the

petroglyphs in the area that connect us with the Silk Route of an age gone by.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/20/diamer-bhasha-dam.html>

PM lays Bhasha Dam foundation

The Frontier Post, October 19, 2011

CHILAS: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on October 18 termed the US 12 billion dollars Bhasha dam project a “life- line” for the national economy that would help meet country's future agricultural and power requirements. He was addressing the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the world's highest concrete dam on River Indus that would generate 19 billion units of electricity annually and enhance life of Tarbela Dam by over 35 years. Prime Minister Gilani termed it a historic day and appreciated the people of Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and their political leadership for standing united to initiate the mega project. He stated the gigantic project would generate 4500 MW electricity and store over 8 Million Acre Feet of water to meet country's growing power and irrigation needs, and was the outcome of consensus amongst all stakeholders

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=69336>

AJK President calls on Gilani

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 18, 2011

ISLAMABAD: President of Azad Jammu Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan called on Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in Islamabad on October 17 and exchanged views on the political scenario in AJK and other issues. The two leaders also discussed issues pertaining to judiciary in AJK, stated a press release. The PM assured the President that Government of Pakistan was committed to the development of AJK.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=160057&Itemid=2

Roshan Mughal, Assembly session ends, opposition walks out

The Express Tribune, October 19, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The first session of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) newly-elected

legislative assembly, chaired by Speaker Ghulam Sadiq, lasted for an hour before descending into chaos beginning with the opposition's decision to stage a walkout. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) legislator Raja Naseer and others protested the seating of Muslim conference legislators on opposition benches, asking why they were not allotted seats on the treasury benches because they are part of the reconciliation with PPP government. The short-lived assembly session concluded after Sadiq read the notification of adjournment.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/276849/assembly-session-ends-opposition-walks-out/>

Pakistan: Neelum Jhelum project work in full swing

October 18, 2011

MIRPUR: Construction work on all the three sites of AJK-based 969 mega watt MW-Neelum Jhelum hydroelectric project including intake and power house is in full swing. The amount \$ 2.16 billion is required for completion of Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Project, located in Muzaffarabad, the sources stated on October 17.

Besides other project related works, drilling of the adit and head-race tunnels up to the length of five kilometers and half a kilometer respectively has so far been completed, official sources stated. WAPDA is actively considering the use of state-of-the-art tunnel boring machine for completion of Neelum Jhelum project earlier than its schedule. Completion of the project is very vital to overcome the electricity crisis and for the economic development of the country.

http://www.hydworl.com/index/display/news_display.1522711244.html

Gilgit-Tajikistan Road to bring progress in region

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 19, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The proposed road between Gilgit-Baltistan to Tajikistan would open up new avenues of progress and prosperity in the region, besides turning Gilgit as an international city. The estimated

Rs. 2 billion Gilgit Tajikistan Road would connect Pakistan to the land-locked Central Asian states, where vast natural reserves await access to international markets. Pakistan is the only country through which Central Asian State could do business with the outer world either through Gawadar Port in Balochistan Province or the proposed Gilgit-Tajikistan Road.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=159985&Itemid=2

Hasnaat Malik Appointment of retired judges in G-B court SC issues notices to AGP, other respondents

Daily Times, October 18, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Accepting a petition for regular hearing against the appointment of retired judges as chief judge or judge of the Supreme Appellate Court of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), the Supreme Court (SC) on October 17 issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) and other respondents.

A three-member bench of the apex court, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and comprising Justice Khilji Arif Hussain and Justice Tariq Parvez, took up a petition filed by Advocate Muhammad Ikram Chaudhry on behalf of a social activist Dr Ghulam Abbas, recipient of the Jinnah Award and Quaid-i-Azam Awards and also chairman of the G-B National Movement. Chaudhry, counsel for the petitioner, submitted before the court that in the Supreme Appellate Court of G-B, the retired judges having over 70 years of age were appointed.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C10%5C18%5Cstory_18-10-2011_pg7_11

Gurmeet Kanwal, Continuing turmoil in Gilgit-Baltistan

Deccan Herald, October 19, 2011

The people are demanding genuine democratic rule and the right to govern themselves. Reports of a major Chinese presence in the Gilgit-Baltistan area have been pouring in. While Selig Harrison of the New York Times put the figure at 11,000, the Indian Army chief stated recently that about 4,000 Chinese

workers, many of them PLA soldiers, are engaged in construction and mining activities in the Northern Areas. This unprecedented Chinese presence is being deeply resented by the local people.

The Gilgit Agency and Baltistan in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), that now comprise the Northern Areas, were part of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) at the time of partition. The woes of the people of the Northern Areas began on November 4, 1947, soon after J&K acceded to India in terms of the Independence of India Act. A young British major who was commanding the Gilgit Scouts overstepped his authority and illegally declared the accession of the Northern Areas to Pakistan. It shall remain one of the quirks of history that a Major of the British Raj could violate good order and military discipline and seal the fate of the people of an area almost as large as England.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/198691/continuing-turmoil-gilgit-baltistan.html>

Diamer-Bhasha Dam: Kohistan villagers continue blockade of KKH for third day

The Express Tribune, October 17, 2011

DASU: The district administration failed to persuade angry land owners in Dasu, affected by the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, who continued to block the Karakoram Highway for the third consecutive day on October 16. They were protesting against the delay in payment of the compensation for the land the government had acquired for the dam as well as against the establishment of a police post by the Gilgit-Baltistan in the limits of Kohistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/275574/diamer-bhasha-dam-kohistan-villagers-continue-blockade-of-kkh-for-third-day/>

People's problems

Pakistan Observer, October 16, 2011

ASTORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) was joining the Gilgit-Baltistan government in larger national interest to resolve the problems of masses in a better way, stated member Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly of PML-Q, Amina Ansari on October 15. She stated the PML-Q

ministers after taking oath would work to strengthen different department under their ministries. She further stated steps would be taken to eliminate corruption from the government departments. She noted PML-Q had always worked for the welfare of masses and it would follow the same policy and work for the development of the region after joining the government.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=120032>

Senior Pakistani Shia cleric condemns the ban on Two Shia Organizations in Gilgit

Chief of Tehreek-e-Jaffaria Allama Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi condemned the Government decision to impose the ban on two peaceful Shia organization of Gilgit City and termed that these organizations were not associated with any kind of the act of terrorism. Senior Shia Cleric Allama Sajid Ali Naqvi termed the imposition of ban on Shia Action Committee Gilgit and Markazi Sabeel Committee Gilgit as an inhuman act of the Government noting that the Government has violated its limits by imposing the ban on peaceful Shia organizations of the Gilgit.

<http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&id=271889>

Governor, CM Gilgit-Baltistan call on President

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on October 13 stated that the laying of foundation stone of Diamer-Bhasha Dam Hydro Power Project early next week is a major step of the government for addressing the energy issues in the country. The President stated this during his meeting with Governor Gilgit Baltistan Pir Karam Ali Shah and Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah, who called on him on October 13. Spokesperson to the President Farhatullah Babar stated that matters relating to law and order situation and the status of various development projects initiated by government in Gilgit Baltistan came under discussion during the meeting. The Spokesperson noted that Diamer-Bhasha Dam would produce inexpensive hydro energy equal to 4,500 mega watts and ensure food and water security besides increasing the cultivable lands.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=159187&Itemid=2

Attabad Lake victims receive relief goods Over 100 containers with daily-use items reach G-B from China

The Express Tribune, October 14, 2011

GILGIT: Over 100 relief containers containing 3,434 tons of goods reached Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) from China on October 14 to provide relief goods to the victims of Attabad Lake in Hunza, officials and residents stated. "The relief package comprises cooking oil, flour, dry milk powder, rice, blankets, sugar, diesel and coal," stated an official in Sost, a town in Gojal Valley. More than 25,000 people in the valley have been stranded since January 2010 following a landslide that formed a 23-kilometre lake, submerging a major portion of the Karakoram Highway, cutting off the valley from rest of the country.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/273474/attabad-lake-victims-receive-relief-goods/>

'Only Gilani expressed solidarity with quake victims'

The Nation, October 10, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani was the only leader representing PPP who went to Muzaffarabad on October 8 to express solidarity with people of Azad Kashmir, who lost their children, brothers and sisters in the devastating earthquake on the fateful day of October 8, 2005. This was stated by Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majid on October 9. Former Prime Minister and President of Muslim Conference, Sardar Muhammad Attique accompanied the Prime Minister Gilani during his visit to Muzaffarabad.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/10-Oct-2011/Only-Gilani-expressed-solidarity-with-quake-victims>

Gilani to open Mangla Dam raising project

The Nation, October 11, 2011

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Ch Abdul Majeed disclosed on October 10 that Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani will inaugurate Rs101 billion Mangla Dam raising

project in Mirpur Azad Jammu & Kashmir placing a grand milestone of the speedy economic progress and prosperity of Pakistan including AJK especially to permanently combat the problem of loadshedding of power in the country.

“The Prime Minister of Pakistan will be accorded a historical rousing reception on his arrival in Mirpur in the near future where he will also inaugurate AJK's largest Dhan Galli bridge over Jhelum river on Dadayal-Rawalpindi Road in Mirpur district”, Ch Majeed announced while addressing a press conference at the PWD Rest House.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/11-Oct-2011/Gilani-to-open-Mangla-Dam-raising-project>

Students' hand over relief good to AJK President

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 11, 2011

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the students of Mirpur University of Science and Technology called on President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Yaqoob Khan and handed over him relief goods for the floods victims of Sindh. Vice Chancellor Engr. Ch Naib Hussain was leading the delegation that also comprised Director Students' Affairs Engr. Faisal Mehmood Butt. The President commended the enthusiasm of students for feeling the pain of their countrymen and collecting funds for them.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=158533&Itemid=2

Hameed Shaheen, 6th anniversary of 2005 earthquake: Gilani to inaugurate AJK mega projects

October 7, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir government will receive first major politico-morale boost on October 8 when Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani inaugurates a number of mega projects including first Medical College in Muzaffarabad, Patrini hydropower station and decades-delayed most vital Rajdhani bridge connecting UK expatriates richest Dudyal town to Rawalpindi's Kaller Syedan region, besides reviewing post-quake resettlement processes His

government also plans to complete motorway section from Lower Topa in Murree to Muzaffarabad, a project that can be extended even to Chakothi Common LoC point.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/10/07/6th-anniversary-of-2005-earthquake-gilani-to-inaugurate-ajk-mega-projects.html>

Turabi demands return of ERRA money from Gilani

October 8, 2011

RAWALPINDI: Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Azad Jammu and Kashmir Abdul Rashid Turabi demanded Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on the occasion of his visit to Muzaffarabad that he should announce the returning of billions of rupees of ERRA, for the timely completion of development projects. According to a statement issued on the occasion of 6th anniversary of the earthquake of October 2005, Abdul Rashid Turabi stated that coming generations would not forgive them if the development projects were delayed because of the funds shortage.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/turabi-demands-return-of-errra-money-from-gilani/>

Pakistan asked to stop mineral loot and apartheid economic policies in Gilgit

October 5, 2011

GILGIT: GB Metals Minerals and Gems Association held an extra ordinary meeting on October 4, 2011, to renew its commitment to gear up momentum of the movement against the discriminatory action of GB Government regarding pushing away the local entrepreneurs and issuance of Exploration Licenses to a Hong Kong national Company Mohsin Industries, to safeguard the mineral resources of Gilgit Baltistan; to ensure transparency in Mineral Policy as per suggestions and proposals of GBMMGA and to fight for propriety rights of the locals over mines in Gilgit Baltistan. The Chairmant of GBMMGA, Mr. Shehbaz Khan, chaired the meeting.

The organization lamented the way government of Gilgit-Balistan has overlooked the aspirations and concerns of the local people in general and the

mineral related business community in particular by issuing Exploration Licenses to Mohsin Industries in a dishonestly fashion and discriminatory way. It was resolved and demanded that GB government must cancel Licenses to the controversial Mohsin Industries immediately. .

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Pakistan_asking_to_stop_mineral_loot_and_apartheid_economic_policies_in_Gilgit,201137968.aspx

Sino-Pak Drug Smuggling: Paramilitary troops to patrol border

The Express Tribune, October 5, 2011

GILGIT: Paramilitary forces will be deployed at the Sino-Pak border to stop cross-border smuggling of drugs, Chairman Standing Committee on Interior Senator Talha Mehmood stated on October 4. He stated that paramilitary forces such as the Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) would be deployed at the borders to check the drug trade. Mehmood was on an official visit to G-B to monitor the law and order situation in the region. The chairman stated that there were indications of the involvement of 'some foreign agencies in G-B', and insisted the government should focus more on strengthening law enforcing agencies to counter the external threat.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/266938/sino-pak-drug-smuggling-paramilitary-troops-to-patrol-border/>

Marvi files plea in SC against proposed tax imposition in GB

October 6, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The former member National Assembly (NA) Marvi Memon on October 5 filled an Application in Supreme Court (SC) to take suo moto action against proposed imposition of tax in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). She has stated in her Application that Gilgit-Baltistan has no presentation in National Assembly and Senate so therefore the imposition of tax at (GB), is an unconstitutional step. In her plea she has cleared that, if the tax would be taken from the masses of (GB) than the tax should be spend on the welfare of GB.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/marvi-files-plea->

[in-sc-against-proposed-tax-imposition-in-gb/](http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/marvi-files-plea-)

AJK President tanks Gilani for allocation of funds for completion of mega projects,

October 6, 2011

ISLAMABAD: President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, called on Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani here on October 5 at the PM's House and thanked the Prime Minister of Pakistan for generous allocation of funds necessary for completion of mega projects in the state. The President particularly made mention of the opening of three medical colleges and an agriculture university in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, adding that the graduates from these premier institutions would make qualitative difference in the provision of health facilities and in the agriculture sector.

[Http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/ajk-president-tanks-gilani-for-allocation-of-funds-for-completion-of-mega-projects/](http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/ajk-president-tanks-gilani-for-allocation-of-funds-for-completion-of-mega-projects/)

AJK Premier denies uplift funds paucity

The Nation, October 4, 2011

MIRPUR: Azad jammu & Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on October 3 categorically dispelled the impression his government was facing paucity of development funds, saying that there was no dearth of funds and all projects will be completed well in time.

Addressing a news conference in Muzaffarabad on October 3, the AJK Prime Minister stated "Government of Pakistan continues exhilarating development in the state." He continued that prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani had extended directions to complete reconstruction in earth quake hit areas as soon as possible. He stated that the appointment of principals at Muzaffarabad and Shaheed Banzir Bhutto Medical College Mirpur would be made in the next few days as Prime Minister Gilani would inaugurate both the medical Colleges very soon.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/04-Oct-2011/AJK-Premier-denies-uplift-funds-paucity-reports>

Protesters in Karachi demand release of detained Baba Jan

Dardistan Times, October 3, 2011

KARACHI: Dozens of protesters from Gilgit-Baltistan gathered outside Karachi Press Club, demanding immediate release of Baba Jan and other local residents arrested by law-enforcement agencies in Hunza. The demonstrators held banners reading 'Release Baba Jan and stop harassment', 'Compensate Attabad Affectees' etc. "People are paying the price for speaking up. The campaign to harass, arrest and detain political workers and normal people in Gilgit-Baltistan is in the milieu of the genuine demands for rehabilitation and compensation of the lake affected people," speakers at the gathering stated.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/protesters-karachi90-demand-release-detained-baba-jan23>

Sectarian Violence: Upgrade security forces, says Senator

The Express Tribune, October 4, 2011

GILGIT: There is a strong need to upgrade and equip our security forces to effectively deal with disturbances in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). This was stated by Senate Standing Committee on Interior Chairman Talha Mahmood during a press conference at Gilgit Press Club on October 3. Senator Mahmood is currently on a two-day official visit to G-B to monitor the law and order situation in the region that has witnessed sectarian violence for the past three decades. The senator stated the issue of Attabad Lake was a minor issue, as the lake could have been drained out in its initial days of formation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/266203/sectarian-violence-upgrade-security-forces-says-senator/>

Economic Developments

Over Rs 482m GB Council budget approved

The Nation, October 8, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan Council, which met here at the Prime Minister House on October 7 under the leadership of Premier Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in his capacity as Chairman of GB Council, unanimously approved the budget of GB Council for the period of 2011-12. The budget estimates consist of Rs 482.665 million for the financial year 2011-12. According to the budget documents, non-tax revenues are Rs 280 million, capital receipts are 0.200 million while development expenditures are Rs 180 million and non-development expenditures are Rs 302.665 million making total expenditure to the extent of Rs 482.665 million.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Islamabad/08-Oct-2011/Over-Rs-482m-GB-Council-budget-approved>

CWDP approves Rs 9.85b mega uplift plans in AJK

The Frontier Post, October 27, 2011

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Central Working Development Party (CWDP) October 26 approved Rs. 9.853 billion mega development projects related to Health, Transport & Communication and Power sectors in AJK. "To overcome power crisis in the country, CWDP on recommendations of AJK Electricity Department and Hydro Electric Board, sanctioned Rs. 7.05 billion for the establishment of 48 MW Jagran-II Hydro Power project in Neelum district," sources noted. Sources further stated that in order to improve health facilities in the area the CWDP meeting accorded formal approval of Rs. 399.533 million. In transport and communication sector, the CWDP accorded approval of Rs. 1.79 billion for reconstruction and rehabilitation of road infrastructure damaged due to devastating flood and heavy rains in various parts of AJK last year, sources added.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=72862>

Regional development: AJK govt to set up new industrial zone in Mirpur

The Express Tribune, October 10, 2011

MIRPUR: In a bid to revive the 'skilled and green Kashmir' initiative and provide impetus to the stagnant process of industrial uplift in Azad Jammu Kashmir, the government is contemplating setting up a new mega industrial zone in Mirpur, official sources revealed. The new mega industrial zone is to be constructed near Moori village on Mirpur Jatlan Road for which the required land was being acquired by the government to materialise the plan. The AJK government, sources stated, intended to provide the existing and upcoming entrepreneurs facilities on a par with those available in Punjab and the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa "to ensure speedy uplift of the industrial sector".

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/270660/regional-development-ajk-govt-to-set-up-new-industrial-zone-in-mirpur/>

Shabbir Mir, Revenue generation: Govt formally decides to tax Gilgit-Baltistan

The Express Tribune, October 2, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government will generate nearly Rs10 billion from taxes on the corporate sector, registered firms, corporations and salaried class. This was stated by G-B Public Accounts Committee Chairman Muhammad Ibrahim on October 1, as the government formally decided to bring the region under the tax net on September 30. He stated that the tax will be imposed on all people who earn over Rs50, 000 per month, adding that the poor segment of society will not be affected by the decision.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/264830/revenue-generation-govt-formally-decides-to-tax-gilgit-baltistan/>

Rs8352m AJK Council budget unveiled

Associated Press of Pakistan, The Nation, October 2, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Mian Manzoor Wattoo

presented the AJ&K Council's Budget estimates of Rs 8352.234m for the year 2011-12 and revised estimates of Rs 8632.065m for the year 2010-11. Receipt target of Rs 6192m was proposed for third budget of AJ&K Council for 2011-12 in which proposed estimated expenditure is Rs 8352.234m.

The receipt target includes Rs 6000 million as income tax collection. Development expenditure is estimated at Rs 2200 million inspite of acute financial crunch. The operational expenses are proposed at Rs 970 million. This expenditure is 12 per cent higher than that of the last year's non-development expenditure despite substantial increase in pay and allowances proposed to be allowed on the analogy of the Government of Pakistan. The 80 per cent net share of income tax collection is proposed to be Rs 4635.985 million.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/02-Oct-2011/Rs8352m-AJK-Council-budget-unveiled>

PM directs Chairman ERRA to complete ongoing projects

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 1, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani directed Chairman Earthquake and Reconstruction Authority (ERRA) to focus on completion of ongoing projects followed by operational plans to benefit people traumatized after devastating earthquake in October 2005. The Prime Minister stated this while addressing the 13th convention of the ERRA Council in Islamabad on September 30 at Prime Minister Secretariat. The Prime Minister stated that the meeting was unique in its composition with representation from Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Gilgit/Baltistan in addition to existing members from Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa and AJK.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=156811&Itemid=2

Hameed Shaheen, AJK govt not to default on payments: Latif Akber

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister of AJK, Ch Latif Akber has, via media, debunked widely circulated impression that the government of Azad Kashmir

has financially defaulted as “it is no longer in a position even to make monthly payments of salaries to its serving civil servants and pensions to its retirees and the old aged”. The impression got substance from the protest calls of the pensioners of AJK repeatedly made via State media following issuance of a reported government/AG office circular to the State Bank of Pakistan in Muzaffarabad not to disburse money against AJK bills presented to it for payments, a defaming base for pensioners protest press statements.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=117317>

Mumtaz Alvi, GB govt to impose income tax on corporate sector

The News, October 1, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit-Baltistan government on September 30 formally decided to impose income tax on corporate sector, registered firms and corporations and salaried class and piece of legislation is expected to be tabled in Gilgit-Baltistan Council session, commencing on October 3. Interestingly, Gilgit-Baltistan Finance Minister Muhammad Ali Akhtar was not present during the deliberations. Sources stated he would resist such anti-people step on the floor of the legislature. He warned people will take to streets in case the government pushed ahead with the imposition of income tax and things may turn ugly for Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah.

[Http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=9250&Cat=13](http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=9250&Cat=13)

WAPDA denies Diامر-Bhasha Dam profit distribution news

Daily Times, October 18, 2011

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority's (WAPDA) spokesperson refuted a news item attributed to WAPDA chairman regarding net hydel profit distribution of Diامر-Bhasha Dam between Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a matter of fact, the spokesperson stated, WAPDA Chairman Shakeel Durrani did not talk to any media person on the issue at all. The spokesperson further clarified that a commission, appointed by Pakistan Supreme Court (PSC) and Gilgit-Baltistan Appellate Court, will decide the

matter pertaining to demarcation of land. Hence, the news item attributed to WAPDA is baseless and contrary to the fact, the clarification concluded.

[Http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C10%5C18%5Cstory_18-10-2011_pg7_25](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C10%5C18%5Cstory_18-10-2011_pg7_25)

Shabbir Mir, Conference: 'Make economic policy true to G-B's goals'

The Express Tribune, October 17, 2011

GILGIT: Participants of a seminar urged the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government to formulate an economic policy that aims to harness the region's natural resources. This was stated at a seminar on industrial development and poverty alleviation which was organised by Step, a non-government organisation (NGO), in Gilgit on October 16. The region is full of natural resources like water, minerals, tourism, forests and wildlife but these are not being exploited in the absence of a friendly economic policy, the participants added. It was noted that the PML-Q ministers would work to strengthen different departments under their ministries. Steps would be taken to eliminate corruption from government departments.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/275576/conference-make-economic-policy-true-to-g-bs-goals/>

Shabbir Mir, Decision to impose tax in Gilgit-Baltistan deferred

The Express Tribune, October 11, 2011

GILGIT: The federal government deferred a decision on levy of corporate tax in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) on the request of G-B government, sources stated on October 10. "The prime minister has accepted the request of G-B Chief Minister Mehdi Shah for delay in enforcement of the tax," a source stated. "In a meeting, Shah pressed the prime minister to award G-B's share in the National Finance Commission (NFC) award before imposing the tax," the source stated, adding Gilani assured the chief minister that G-B would be given its share in NFC in due course of time and with necessary amendments in the Constitution.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/271249/decision-to-impose-tax-in-gilgit-baltistan-deferred/>

Mega GB development projects

Pakistan Observer

SKARDU: Many mega projects were underway in Gilgit- Baltistan by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led government to put these remote areas on the road of development and prosperity. This was stated by minister Local Government and Rural Development GB Mohammad Ismail. He stated that Karakoram Highway from Alam bridge Gilgit to Skardu and five R.C.C bridges would be constricted with cooperation of China. The minister stated that many other projects were in pipeline which ultimately would facilitate people of the area and tourism industry. He stated that Dumsum-Gongma road was being carpeted in five phases in Siachen. "Rehabilitation of flood affectees of Ghanche and other areas was our top priority and Rs. 8 billion would be distributed among them by Saudi Arabia", he stated.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=118406>

Delay in establishment of industries

Business Recorder, October 3, 2011

MIRPUR: The AJK government had principally decided to cancel the allotment of those industrial plots, located in various industrial estates, owners allottees had defied the prevalent rules and regulations by not setting up industrial units on the plots within the stipulated timeframe, official sources noted. Sources added that the decision to this effect was taken in a high level meeting of AJK Industries Department. The department had so far cancelled the allotment of scores of such industrial plots including those belonging to the sick units which were not used for the required purpose by the allottees despite the expiry of the stipulated timeframe

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/industries-a-sectors/30316-delay-in-establishment-of-industries.html>

International Developments

Amir Mir, China has no military presence in Gilgit or AJK

The News, October 11, 2011

XINJIANG: The Chinese authorities have strongly refuted the Indian Army Chief General VK Singh's recent claim about the presence of the Peoples' Liberation Army's (PLA) troops in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, saying the charge is totally baseless and proves its ulterior motives.

Even though the supposed Chinese military presence in the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA) of Pakistan has been a matter of intense speculation in New Delhi, it was the first time that a serving Army Chief went public with the Indian military establishment's assessment about the kind of Chinese presence in the northern areas of Pakistan. "Around 4,000 Chinese including troops of the People's Liberation Army are present in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, Army Chief General VK Singh told Indian on October 5 in New Delhi.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=71961&Cat=2>

World Bank accused of dithering over Bhasha dam

October 25, 2011

ISLAMABAD: With the United States seeking a gradual increase in the water tariff to recover the full cost of its delivery both for irrigation and urban uses as part of its proposed financing for the \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam, the World Bank has come under severe criticism from international development lenders for not funding this 'highest priority project'.

Sources noted on October 24 that the forthcoming strategic dialogue between the United States and Pakistan ahead of a fresh round of discussions of the water sector task force (WSTF) of the so-called Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) would focus on Islamabad's precise plans for water sector

reforms and the World Bank's lack of interest in the Diamer-Bhasha dam project. The two events are expected early next month.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/10/world-bank-accused-of-dithering-over-bhasha-dam/>

Pakistan: US funding dams in Pakistan: official

Right Vision News, October 7, 2011

WASHINGTON: The United States has provided support to complete the final phases of two hydroelectric dams in Pakistan: Satpara in Gilgit-Baltistan and Gomal Zam in South Waziristan, the State Department stated. "We are considering doing more in the sector," stated the department's spokesperson Victoria Nuland, as media reports suggested that the US would also support the giant \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam project. Ms Nuland noted that Pakistan had requested international community's support for development of the Diamer-Bhasha project.

"We recognise that such a hydroelectric project would help meet many of Pakistan's long-term energy and water needs, as well as advance social and economic development," she stated. "We are considering how we can best support Pakistan's request, as are other bilateral donors and multilateral financial institutions." The US, she stated, had not yet made a final decision on this giant project but noted that providing support to such projects was part of a broader signature energy programme in Pakistan that the US announced in 2009. "We continue to work with the government of Pakistan to determine how best to use US civilian assistance," Ms Nuland stated.

http://www.hydroworld.com/index/display/news_display.1516428976.html

Hameed Shaheen, SPAPEV project completion event

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Public Assistance for

Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV) held its Health Project Completion certification distribution ceremony. Regional Director SPAPEV, Dr Khalid M Z Al-Othmani is hosting the event. SPAPEV played a helping role in relief and rehabilitation processes in 2005 earthquake hits zones in Pakistan and in AJK. The SPAPEV assisted projects range from education, health, sanitation and housing, earning affectees applause for timely and solid aid for their rehabilitation. This ongoing program was launched under special instructions of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud to help earthquake affectees.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=118309>

UNDP to provide 150 shelters to affectees

Pakistan Observer

SKARDU: A project to provide provisional shelters to the flood affected people of Talis, Ghangche, was

started by UNDP in collaboration with PRCS and NDMA. Gilgit-Baltistan Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Haji Mohammad Ismail inaugurated the scheme. The minister stated the government was striving to provide relief and rehabilitation to the affected, and in this regard, Rs. 100,000 would be given to each affected family soon. He stated aid was already given to the victims by the District Zakat Committee Ghangche, Maarfi Foundation and GB Cooperative Bank and other NGOs. Ismail Khan paid rich tributes to the affected families for showing tolerance during the hard time. Commissioner Baltistan Division Dr. Sajid Mehmood Chauhan also spoke on the occasion and threw light on the rehabilitation work.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=117840>

Other Developments

Shabbir Mir, Power crisis: Gilgit-Baltistan heading towards a dark winter

The Express Tribune, October 7, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) is heading towards a dark winter, with daylong power breakdowns becoming common in most parts of the region. “The power crisis is worsening with each passing day, with the city experiencing complete blackouts thrice a week, even on Sundays,” stated Saifur Rehman, a resident of Gilgit. The capital city of the mountain region was hit by the longest power cut, when power was suspended for 20 hours continuously, bringing life to a complete standstill.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/268535/power-crisis-gilgit-baltistan-heading-towards-a-dark-winter/>

Quake-hit people, Dawn

Dawn, October 15, 2011

In November 2005, almost a month after the 7.6 magnitude of earthquake struck AJK and tribal areas of Pakistan, the Asian Development Bank estimated that a sum of \$5.2 billion was needed to reconstruct lost assets and restore services in quake-hit areas. Subsequently, the international community provided over \$5.4 billion aid for the rehabilitation process.

Although only two weeks after the disaster, the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority was established to supervise the process, the New Balakot City has yet to be established to accommodate the homeless people. A sufficient number of quake-affected people are still homeless. There are 1,200 schools in the calamity-hit areas where no proper shelter is available for children.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/15/quake-hit-people.html>

More Mangla Dam like raisings needed

Pakistan Observer

After many years, a vital water storage project, the raising of Mangla Dam, was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, which would add to power

generation and provide additional irrigation water. Pakistan at this point of time needs similar other initiatives without losing time and only then the crushing issue of power and water shortage can be addressed. Water and power shortages have been chronic issues and despite availability of hundreds of sites for construction of mega, media and small size dams. This sector is the most neglected one. Over the last sixty four years, we have been able to build only Tarbela and Mangla dams which contributed a lot in bringing more areas under cultivation and added significant quantity of electricity in the national grid. In the last four decades, no such project had been initiated while silting was reducing the storage capacity of the two dams. In this scenario, the raising of the Mangla dam was a welcome development as it would enhance the power generation capacity by 664MW and raise the water storage capacity by 2.09 million acre feet of water.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=119852>

Spillway widening: New deadline to drain Attabad Lake

The Express Tribune, October 5, 2011

GILGIT: The Attabad Lake was a minor issue as it could have been drained at the time of formation; however the lack of attention and flawed policies of the government worsened the situation for the people of the region. This was stated by Standing Committee on Interior Chairman Talha Mehmood in Gilgit on October 4. The lake was formed after a massive landslide at Attabad village in January 2010. More than 25,000 people in Gojal were stranded as the lake expanded, submerging villages and blocking the Karakoram Highway, a vital trade route to China. Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) was tasked with draining the lake; however the spillways dug by the FWO have proven to be ineffective, with several deadlines already passed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/267069/spillway-widening-new-deadline-to-drain-attabad-lake/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Total area of Jammu and Kashmir	222,236 sq kms
Area of under illegal Pakistani occupation (PoK = AJK + Gilgit Baltistan)	78114 sq kilometres
Area of J&K under Chinese occupation <i>Area ceded to China by Pakistan</i>	42,685 sq kms 5,130 sq kms
Together Pak-China	120,799 sq kms
Area with India	101437 sq kms

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: 5180 sq. kilometres (Area of Shaksgam Valley)

(Source: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.jammukashmir.nic.in/>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 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, Hattian

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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 Parties and 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)

(Source: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www. www.ajk.gov.pk/>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Seven

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche 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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: 24 members directly elected

Governor of G-B: Wazir Baig (officiating)

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

Political Parties and 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)

(Sources: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk>, & website of the Balwaristan National Front, <http://www.balawaristan.net>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

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 'Gilgit Baltistan' 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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