

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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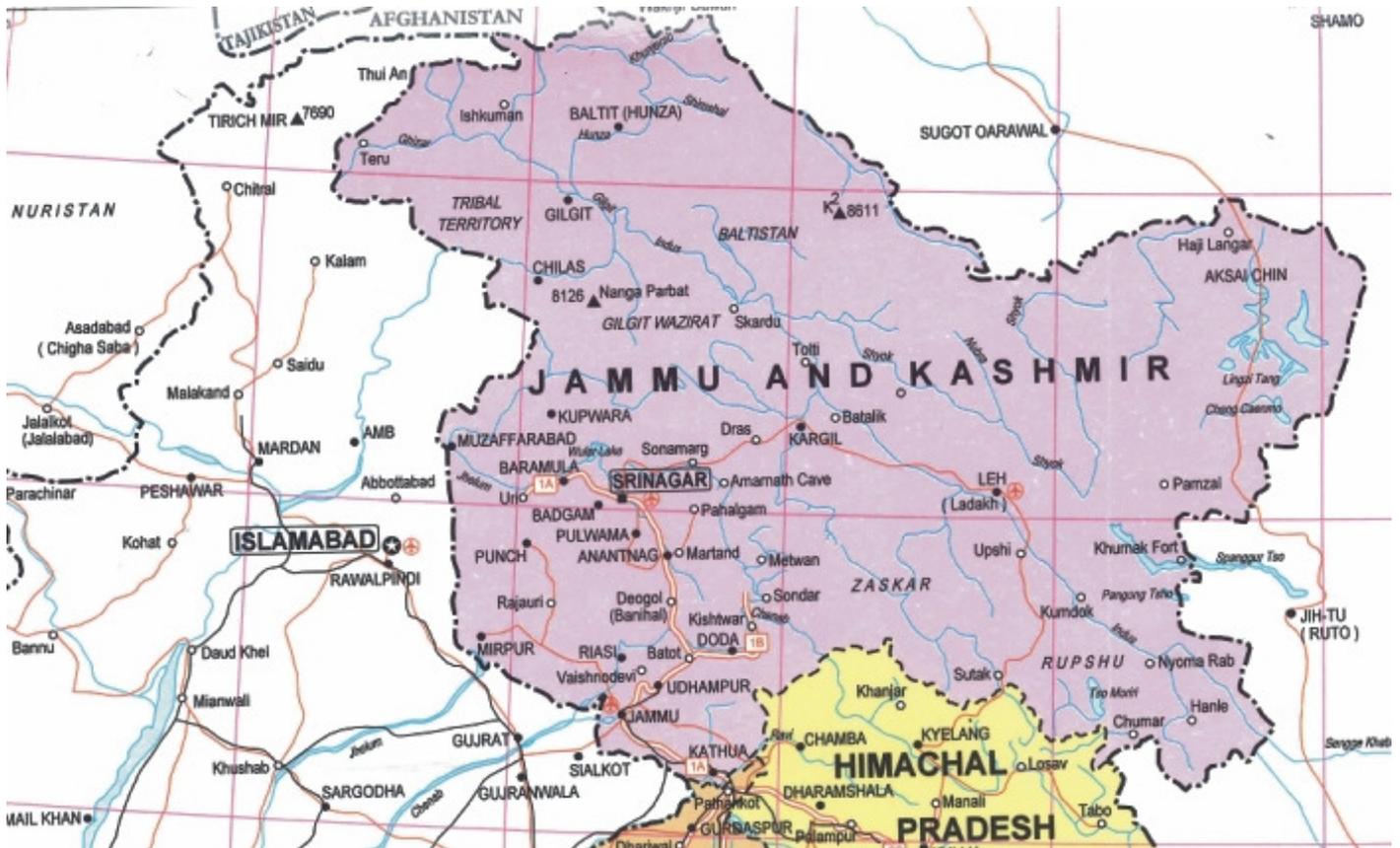
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Another constitutional committee has been constituted by the government of Pakistan to review the legal status of the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Before this Sartaj Aziz committee had already presented its report to the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif., Pakistan has been continuously integrating the whole PoK region but there are still demands from the local populace particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan who want to come out from the constitutional limbo. There are also voices who are opposing any move from Pakistan to make Gilgit-Baltistan a province. Although, mainstream political parties are in favour of granting Gilgit-Baltistan constitutional status and making it a fifth province but they don't want to antagonise the PoK leadership who are opposing any such move.

Therefore, it is very unlikely that in the near future Pakistan is going to provide any full-fledged constitutional legality to Gilgit-Baltistan. But with CPEC going through the region and dilly-dallying the decision of providing legal identity, the resentment and alienation level can only grow in the region.

Yaqoob ul Hassan

Political Developments

Jamil Nagri, “Maqpoon sworn in as Gilgit-Baltistan governor”

Dawn, October 1, 2018

Raja Jalal Hussain Maqpoon of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) took the oath as the sixth governor of Gilgit-Baltistan on September 30. Mr Maqpoon’s predecessor Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan was appointed by the previous PML-N government at the Centre. Mr Khan had resigned after the PTI government asked him to quit the office of governor following the party’s victory in the July 25 general elections in the country. After the PTI came to power in Islamabad, the authority of the PML-N government in GB had weakened as the region is under the dominancy of the federal government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436117>

Ikram Junaidi, “Indian army fires at AJK premier’s copter near LoC”

Dawn, October 1, 2018

The Indian army opened fire at the helicopter of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider from a post when he was travelling to a village near the volatile Line of Control (LoC) on September 30. The prime minister was travelling with two ministers and his personal staff officer in the helicopter that narrowly escaped the attack near Abbaspur village. The incident took place in broad daylight when PM Haider was going to visit one of his cabinet members to condole the death of his brother.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436122>

Fakhir Rizvi, “Solid Measures To Be Taken For GB’s Uplift: Governor Gilgit Baltistan Raja Jalal Maqpoon”

Urdu Point, October 2, 2018

He was expressing these views during a meeting with various delegations that called on him and congratulated him on being posted as governor GB. The governor said the provincial government in collaboration with Federal government would introduce several development projects for the socio-economic uplift of the area.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/solid-measures-to-be-taken-for-gbs-uplift-g-445724.html>

Syed Irfan Raza, “NA condemns Indian attack on AJK premier’s helicopter”

Dawn, October 2, 2018

The National Assembly on October 1 unanimously passed a resolution strongly condemning the recent attack on the helicopter of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider by the Indian army near the Line of Control (LoC).

Speaking on the occasion, Shahbaz Sharif demanded formation of a parliamentary committee to look into frequent violations of the ceasefire agreement by Indian forces on the LoC and to condemn the Sept 30 incident of firing on the chopper of the AJK prime minister.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436265>

Jamil Nagri, “CAA team arrives in Gilgit to start work on Chilas airfield”

Dawn, October 3, 2018

A seven-member Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) team arrived on October 2 and started initial work on the reconstruction and renovation of the long neglected and dilapidated Chilas airfield as the airstrip was crucial for construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam. The seven-member team, formed by the CAA to initiate the project and headed by Ubaidur Rehman Abbasi, the chief operating officer of the CAA, arrived here and started the initial work.

The team will visit Chilas on October 3 to hold meetings with Wapda and local government officials. Chilas airfield consists of a runway of (4500×100) which was built by British rulers in 1927. After the independence, it was developed by the Frontier Works’ Organisation to support the construction of Karakoram Highway. Pakistan Air Force flew C-130 planes from there in late 1960 and early 70s. The all-weather airstrip is situated 160 kilometres from Gilgit town and its functioning would resolve the crucial weather issue which normally disrupts air travel in northern areas.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436512/caa-team-arrives-in-gilgit-to-start-work-on-chilas-airfield>

“Centre to settle GB constitutional status: governor”

Dawn, October 4, 2018

Newly-elected Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Raja Jalal Hussain Maqpoon on October 3 said Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government was seriously considering settlement of the constitutional status of GB. He announced that a committee was being formed for making recommendations to settle the region’s constitutional status. The committee would start its work soon, talking all the stakeholders on board, he maintained. He was talking to a delegation of Awami Action Committee at the Governor’s House in Gilgit. The delegation was led by its chairman Maulana Sultan Raees. The governor said that giving

GB the provincial status provisionally was part of the PTI manifesto during the GBLA elections in 2015. He said that he was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Imran Khan on October 7 to discuss the constitutional status of the region. He clarified that subsidy on wheat for GB people was not being cut and that rumours in that regard were baseless. He said the federal government was rather taking steps to control price hike. Mr Maqpoon said the government was taking steps to end power shortages in the region, and assured the delegation that all the longstanding demands of the GB people would be met. Earlier, ACC chairman Sultan Raees said GB people expected of the new governor to play role in protecting their rights. He asked the PTI government to implement the Supreme Court of Pakistan’s verdict of 1999 on people’s rights.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436766/centre-to-settle-gb-constitutional-status-governor>

Umer Jamshaid, “Al-Khair Foundation Chairman, Badshahi Masjid Khateeb Donate Rs10 Mln To Dams Fund”

Urdu Point, October 4, 2018

Al-Khair Foundation - UK Chairman Imam Qasim Rashid and Majlis-e-Ulema Pakistan Chairman and Badshahi Masjid - Lahore Khateeb Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad called on Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar. They presented a cheque of Rs10 million as donation to Prime Minister and Chief Justice of Pakistan Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dams Fund, a press release said.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/al-khair-foundation-chairman-badshahi-masjid-448137.html>

“AJK hopes CPEC to bring economic boom in Pakistan”

The Nation, October 5, 2018

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project will open new avenues of socioeconomic progress, and bring economic boom in Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, said Ch Saeed, the AJK

minister for sports and culture. The AJK minister disclosed that the government of Pakistan had, under the Mangla Dam raising project, approved a grant of over Rs1.94 billion for the completion of the giant Mirpur-Islamgarh bridge over Mangla Dam lake through the reputed Chinese construction company.

Elaborating the salient features of the CPEC and its upcoming unprecedented impacts on socio-economic progress of AJK, the minister said, "Under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its affiliate - CPEC - China has undertaken to provide advanced and sophisticated technologies. The Governments of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir too would diligently make sure that this zone does not cause environmental degradation and in fact meets the highest environmental standards."

<https://nation.com.pk/05-Oct-2018/ajk-hopes-cpec-to-bring-economic-boom-in-pakistan>

Faizan Hashmi, "31,700 Acres Acquired For Construction of Diamer Basha Dam: Senate Told"

Urdu Point, October 5, 2018

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on October 5 informed the Senate that about 31,700 acres of land has been acquired for the construction of Diamer Basha dam. Responding to a question in the question hour, he said, procurement process of consultancy services for the Dam is under process while the preliminary works including colony and resettlement works are underway. He said, that the PC-I of Mohmand dam project amounting to Rs. 309.558 billion was approved by ECNEC on April 26, 2018. He said the hiring of consultancy services and procurement of works is in progress. The project, he said, is expected to be completed in five years and eight months after commencement. The minister said, the tentative date of commencement is April, 2019 with expected completion in June 2024. The preliminary works including Colony and resettlement works are underway. He said, that the storage capacity of Mangla Dam Project has been increased by 30ft.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/31700-acres-acquired-for-construction-of-dia-448711.html>

Ghulam Abbas, "Young GB nationalist exposes 'plot' against CPEC"

Pakistan Today, October 6, 2018

In a surprising revelation, a young nationalist has exposed a 'plot' against the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Addressing a press conference in Gilgit on October 6, Afaq Ahmed, who remained associated with several nationalist parties like Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Abdul Hameed Group and Balawaristan National Students Organisation (BNSO), claimed that the "people working for foreign elements tried to make him their part".

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/10/06/young-gb-nationalist-exposes-plot-against-cpec/>

Imaduddin Ahmed, "Seismic costs"

Dawn, October 7, 2018

When considering investment in an infrastructure project, responsible investors or donors would ask: what is the need? What are the financial, social and environmental costs? What are the risks and the unknowns? Is the project likely to yield higher costs than benefits? Is the project the best option to address the need? Pakistan's judiciary and government have called upon Pakistanis to invest in the Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dam Fund, and yet they have insufficiently addressed these questions. The Supreme Court's online appeal is not accompanied by a feasibility study. From the outside looking in, this is a red flag. Mega projects are inherently political, according to Andrew Edkins, UCL professor of the management of complex projects. Harvard international development professor Lant Pritchett predicts that policy advocates withhold information about a project's effectiveness when they believe this information would deter support; they instead use emotive rhetoric to hoodwink prospective supporters. One cannot doubt the sincerity of the new government or the judiciary. One does wonder, however, at the politics of the policy advocates.

Pakistanis should demand answers to hard questions before they part with their money.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1437384/seismic-costs>

“Construction work on Diامر-Basha and Mohmand Dams to start in 2019”

Pakistan Today, October 8, 2018

In compliance of the Supreme Court’s decision for the timely completion of Diامر-Basha and Mohmand Dams, Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt Gen (r) Muzammil Hussain informed in a briefing that the procurement of consultancy services and other main works was being done on war footing whereas the construction of both dams would start in 2019.

In a briefing to the Federal Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Faisal Vawda on October 8, the WAPDA chairman highlighted the factors leading to the threatening water emergency and crisis in Pakistan and said that there was a dire need to make efforts towards addressing the issue of water shortage in the country and the construction of dams.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/10/08/diامر-bhasha-dam-case-sc-asks-centre-kp-gb-govts-to-submit-response-to-define-boundaries/>

Masud Ahmed, “The mystery of Silk Road through Gilgit-Baltistan”

Daily Times, October 8, 2018

There is a story before the birth of Christ, a Chinese named Chang Chien was sent on a mission to the western region of China by Emperor Wu-Ti. This journey is considered one of the most important missions in history as it resulted in birth of the Silk Road. Another important discovery was Ferghana (Uzbekistan) and its fast, large and powerful horses as compared to the weaker and slower Chinese horses. The emperor realised that Ferghana horses would be ideal for cavalry warfare against the troublemaking Huns. Chang is the person who opened routes

westwards linking imperial China with Imperial Rome and he is described as the father of Silk Road. Silk route in Chinese is translated is ‘SichouZhi Lu’ and in Uyghur ‘YipekYdi’. Silk was a major form of currency for some early Chinese dynasties and was also used for soldiers’ salaries. During the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) when facing economic difficulties and unable to mint bronze coins, three commodities were recognised as currency; bronze coins, grains and silk. Soldiers stationed in the North West region of China were paid in silk. The Chinese were indeed the first people in the world to make silk as early as 4000 BC. Besides silk, chemicals, spices, metals and leather products, glass and paper were also common trade commodities. China bound caravans were laden with gold, woolen and textiles, ivory, amber, precious stones which was not manufactured in China until the Fifth Century.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/307443/the-mystery-of-silk-road-through-gilgit-baltistan/>

Mohammad Ali, “AJK Terms Unresolved Kashmir Issue, A Permanent Threat To Global Peace”

Urdu Point, October 8, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan October 8 said that Kashmir is the core dispute between Pakistan and India adding that if there is war between the two nuclear-capable countries, it would have devastating consequences. He urged the international community to responsibly persuade India to settle the Kashmir conflict through dialogue and diplomatic means in order to avoid any escalation in the region/ The President made these comments while addressing a two-day international conference on “Kashmir Conflict: Changing Dynamics and the Prospects for Peace” organized by Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) in collaboration with Higher education Commission (HEC).

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-terms-unresolved-kashmir-issue-a-permane-451003.html>

Rukhshan Mir, “AJK President Emphasizes Ulema To Focus For Promoting Tolerance, Interfaith Harmony”

Urdu Point, October 9, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has emphasized the need to present true teachings of the religion of Islam based on love and respect and unveiling real face of Islam before the world to remove the misconception that Islam and terrorism are interconnected. “The fact of the matter is that tolerance, interfaith harmony and love to humanity remains basic tenets of Islam since its advent,” President Masood said while talking to a delegation of Ulema and Mushaikh from United Kingdom (UK) and headed members of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Peer Ali Raza Bukhari.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-president-emphasizes-ulema-to-focus-for-p-451622.html>

“Azad Kashmir PM requests Imran not to cut uplift funds”

The News, October 10, 2018

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider who had meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan here at the Prime Minister Office (PMO) on October 9 asked the federal government not to impose cut on the developmental funds for Kashmir. The federal government has indicated that it is going to slash developmental funds for Azad Kashmir by 25 percent. Azad Kashmir Prime Minister reminded Khan that it wouldn't be acceptable for the people of Azad Kashmir. Information Minister Azad Kashmir Mushtaq Minhas told The News after the meeting that Prime Minister Khan has assured to consider the demands made by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider. Raja is heading Azad Kashmir government of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and had meeting with Khan with prior consent of PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif who asked him to contest for the rights of his people. Mushtaq Minhas said that Raja Farooq Haider also raised the question of diversion in Jhelum River and

its linking with Neelum River that has caused great difficulties of the people of Azad Kashmir. He demanded that Azad Kashmir should also be given berth in IRSA so that it should safeguard the interests of the Azad area. Raja Farooq Haider also raised the issue of environmental degradation in Azad Kashmir especially in its capital Muzaffarabad due to ill planning in use of water resources for power generating. Raja Farooq Haider briefed Prime Minister about the law and order situation in Azad Kashmir. The sources pointed out that it was a meeting confined to agenda business and hence no political discussion took place on the occasion.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/379181-azad-kashmir-pm-requests-imran-not-to-cut-uplift-funds>

Rukhshan Mir, “Law Minister Holds Meeting With Prime Minister AJK, Discusses 13th Amendment In AJK Constitution”

Urdu Point, October 10, 2018

Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Farogh Naseem held a meeting with Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, and other officials from AJK to discuss the 3th Amendment in The AJK Interim Constitution Act, 1974. The aim of the meeting was to discuss issues related to the amendment and close coordination with the AJK Government on the matter, said a press release. Prime Minister of AJK was of the view that people of AJK want to have greater authority through their elected representatives. He said that devolution of additional legislative, administrative and financial powers to the State Government will be helpful in a number of ways including eradication of corruption. He was also of the opinion that Indian propaganda regarding the Amendment needs to be countered as India is always busy exploiting the situation. Federal Law Minister thanked the AJK Prime Minister for attending the meeting and ensured that the purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the laws and constitutions of both Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir were not violated. He ensured the Prime Minister of full support from the Pakistani Government for the eradication of corruption. Parliamentary Secretary for

Law and Justice Ms. Maleeka Bokhari and Secretary Law Justice A. S. Paracha were also present at the occasion.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/law-minister-holds-meeting-with-prime-minister-452667.html>

“AJK CJ for bringing laws in conformity with Quran”

The Nation, October 11, 2018

Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Justice Ch Ibrahim Zia on October 10 emphasized that all existing laws should be brought in conformity with the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah.

The CJ was of the view that the AJK Islamic Ideological Council's role is very important to harmonize the prevalent laws to Quran and Sunnah for the establishment of Islamic society and mould the collective and individual lives of state's Muslims as ordained by the Islam. According to State's constitution, Islam is our religion, he pointed out, adding that said under amendment of principle of policy Islam has not been declared state's religion but it wields constitutional significance.

<https://nation.com.pk/11-Oct-2018/ajk-cj-for-bringing-laws-in-conformity-with-quran>

“SBP receives Rs4.7b in Dam fund”

Pakistan Observer, October 11, 2018

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has acknowledged around Rs4.7 billion as collection of fund for the construction of Diamer, Basha and Mohmand Dams on October 10. As per the details on October 10, donations figures the SBP collected Rs4.69 billion till October 09, 2018. The SBP on September 07, 2018 directed banks to change the title of the Fund account to the 'Prime Minister and Chief Justice of Pakistan Fund for Diamer Bhasha and Mohmand Dams.' All commercial and microfinance banks are accordingly advised to change the title of the fund account in their system and books of accounts. The SBP said that respective account number and IBAN of banks shall, however, remain the same and the banks shall

continue to collect donations and settle the same with SBP as per existing arrangements. Considering water scarcity in the country the Chief Justice of Pakistan decided to take initiative for construction of mega reservoirs for future of the country. The statistics are showing donations from July 06, 2018.

<https://pakobserver.net/sbp-receives-rs4-7b-in-dam-fund/>

Salman Farrukh, “PEC offers construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam for Rs500 mn”

Pakistan Today, October 12, 2018

Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) Chairman Javed Saleem Qureshi on October 11 offered his institution's services for the construction of Diamer Basha Dam with an approximate cost of Rs500 billion. He demanded of the government to eliminate all non-engineers from the project and hire professional engineers on these posts. He said the hiring of non-professional engineers would cause the hefty increase in the circular debit of Rs1.5 trillion.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/10/12/pec-offers-construction-of-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

“People affected by dam seek resettlement”

Dawn, October 12, 2018

The people affected by Diamer Bhasha Dam project staged a protest here on October 11 and demanded of the government to make immediate arrangements for their resettlement. The protesters alleged that officials of Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) were creating misunderstandings between the government and the affected people. Holding placards inscribed their demands, the protesters gathered outside Gilgit Press Club and chanted slogans against Wapda and government. Later addressing a press conference, Diamer Bhasha Dam affected people committee president Ataullah said that federal government had promised in 2010 to set up three model villages in Diamer to resettle the affected people. He said that Rs1 billion had been approved for the model villages.

He said that Wada was tasked to establish the model

villages. Atallah said that Wapda completed nearly 70 per cent work of one model village but then stopped work. He said that it created uncertainty among the affected people. Dilbar Khan, another representative of the affected people, said it was a conspiracy against the dam project. He said that Wapda officials were responsible for it. Mr Khan said that the attitude of Wapda chief in Diamer was also insulting. He said so far 90 per cent payment was made to owners of the land, acquired for the dam project. However, he said that the issue of resettlement of the affected people was ignored. The affected people said that they were concerned about their future. They said that both the Gilgit-Baltistan and federal governments were not serious to resolve the issue. They demanded of the government to fulfil its commitment with them and set up three model villages for their resettlement in Diamer.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1438382>

Ghulam Abbas, “NAB to probe ‘graft’ in land acquisition for Diamer-Bhasha Dam”

Pakistan Today, October 12, 2018

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had decided to investigate the alleged financial embezzlement of billions of rupees in the land acquisition process for the Diamer-Bhasha Dam project, Pakistan Today has learnt. According to sources, the anti-graft body has initiated a probe into the land acquisition process which may or may not have been as transparent as claimed by the previous governments. Although the officials at the bureau did not confirm the development, sources claimed that the NAB has started collecting documents/data and evidence of the land purchase process which was started in 2007 and continued till 2015. Residents of the area have been demanding an investigation against the land acquisition process as the influential and ‘corrupt’ government officials had allegedly pocketed billions of rupees by showing the land’s value as high.

As per the initial findings of the investigation, sources claim, a large sum from the national kitty was allegedly siphoned off through the purchase of private land at extraordinarily high rates. In several cases,

the payment of one-acre land for the Bhasha Dam had been made around Rs 10 million (one crore for one acre), whereas the actual rate of the land, consisting of mountains and rocks, is hardly one lac rupees (Rs0.1 million), they added.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/10/12/nab-to-probe-graft-in-land-acquisition-for-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

Munawar Hasan, “In a key policy shift, Wapda wants local firms to spearhead dams’ projects”

The News, October 13, 2018

In a radical policy shift, Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has decided to hand the helms of mega infrastructure schemes, like the upcoming hydroelectric projects, to local consultants’ engineers, officials said on October 12. “A major step has been taken by Wapda in principle to give the lead role to the local/domestic consultants’ engineers for construction of long awaited Diamer Basha and Mohmand dams”.

Diamer Basha Dam is proposed to be constructed on River Indus, 40 kilometers downstream of Chilas town. The dam site is located in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 315 kilometer upstream of Tarbela Dam. The project has three main objectives including flood mitigation through effective water regulation, provision of water for agriculture through water storage in the reservoir and generation of low-cost hydel electricity. It will have a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 million acre feet (MAF) and live water storage capacity of 6.4 MAF with a generation capacity 4500 megawatts.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/380072-in-a-key-policy-shift-wapda-wants-local-firms-to-spearhead-dams-projects>

Sadia Abbas, “Gilgit Baltistan CJ for Swift Disposal Of Cases”

Urdu Point, October 15, 2018

Wazir Shakil Ahmed has said that provision of in time and inexpensive justice to the people is our top most priority and no compromise towards this end would be tolerated. Addressing the lawyers at

Diamer, Justice Wazir Shakil Ahmed said after fulfillment of legal formalities soon the circuit bench of Chief Court will be established at Diamer and Astore. On this occasion he also visited sessions and civil courts where he was briefed on under trial cases of these courts. The CJ appreciated the performance of judges and directed for swift disposal of the cases. He also assured provision of books at the library of the Diamer District Bar and other missing facilities. The CJ also thanked the court staff and lawyers for extending a warm welcome to him. The lawyers thanked the CJ for taking interest in resolving their issues. Registrar Chief Court, Ahmed Jan, Additional Sessions Judge Suhail Ahmed, Senior Civil Judge, Ameer Hamza and Civil Judge Pervez Alam and large number of lawyers were present on this occasion

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/gilgit-baltistan-cj-for-swift-disposal-of-cas-455970.html>

Tariq Naqash, “AJK president to take up Leepa tunnel project with federal govt”

Dawn, October 16, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) president Sardar Masood Khan on October 15 said he would request the federal government for construction of a tunnel to keep the strategically important Leepa Valley connected with the rest of the liberated territory round the year. He gave this assurance to a 5-member delegation of political and social activists from Leepa Valley which called on him almost a week after the PTI led central government dropped, altogether, seven projects for AJK from the federal Public Sector Development Project (PSDP) including Leepa tunnel. The delegation was led by Shaukat Javed Mir, a renowned PPP leader. “Leepa valley is a strategically and economically important area of Azad Kashmir and we cannot leave its residents at the mercy of the fate,” the president told the delegation. Home to some 80,000 people, the picturesque valley, located some 100kms southeast of Muzaffarabad is famous for its paddy fields, apple orchards, red beans and walnuts.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1439264/ajk-president-to-take-up-leepa-tunnel-project-with-federal-govt>

MA Mir, “KLC must play a vibrant role in Kashmir struggle”

The Express Tribune, October 16, 2018

Praising efforts of the Kashmir Liberation Cell (KLC) for projecting the Kashmir issue globally and highlighting gross violations of human rights by India in the Occupied Kashmir, President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan, urged officials of KLC to make the institution more progressive and result-oriented. He expressed these views during a briefing given by KLC Secretary Mansoor Qadir Dar about performance and functioning of the cell. The briefing held at President House was also attended by Director General Kashmir Cultural Academy, Shafqat Ali Chaudhry and Director KLC, Raja Sajjad Ahmed Khan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1826652/1-klc-must-play-vibrant-role-kashmir-struggle/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan, legality & Kashmir issue”

Pakistan Observer, October 18, 2018

While a tyrant occupier India euphorically claims the Vale as an integral part of India, New Delhi unjustifiably affiliates the disputed Kashmir sovereignty with Gilgit Baltistan’s region (an integral part of Pakistan). The Modi government levels objections to the CPEC’s development in that region by arguing its stipulated link to the would-be Occupied Kashmir plebiscite. This Indian stance is unacceptable under international law, which rightly argues that if a dispute arises as to sovereignty over a portion of territory where one party has actually displayed sovereignty (Pakistani), it is not enough for the other party (India) to show the sovereignty once existed. On October 04, Pakistani government announced that it will soon fix the constitutional status of Gilgit- Baltistan. Pakistani government has smoothly performed the administrative functions in Gilgit-Baltistan region ever since the partition of Subcontinent in 1947 under the very principle of continuous and peaceful display of the functions of state within a given region, which remains a constituent element of customary international law.

Gilgit-Baltistan is located between Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China, Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan, the Ladakh region of Indian Occupied Kashmir, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/gilgit-baltistan-legality-kashmir-issue/>

Shoaib Ur Rehman, “AJK President meets Minister for Kashmir Affairs”

Business Recorder, October 18, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan on October 17 met Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan and discussed the current Kashmir situation besides other matters of mutual interest. The President on this occasion also congratulated him on assuming his new position in the Federal Cabinet. He invited the Federal Minister to visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir which the Minister accepted to visit AJK on October 27 which is marked by Jammu Kashmir people as the Black Day every year at both sides of the Line of Control against the Indian invasion on Jammu Kashmir by forcibly landing her troops in Srinagar this day in 1947.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2018/10/18/446720/ajk-president-meets-minister-for-kashmir-affairs/>

“AJK, GB grant raise issue sent to finance ministry, Senate body told”

The News, October, 18, 2018

The Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit- Baltistan was told on October 17 that the issue of grant increase to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan was referred to the Ministry of Finance and the Law Division. The panel was informed that the ministry was coordinating with the ministries of Information, Broadcasting and Foreign Affairs for effectively highlighting the issue of Indian atrocities in Indian held Kashmir on different media platforms and international forums respectively in light of HRCP report.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Senator Prof Sajid Mir here at the Parliament House

and was attended, among others, by senators Nighat Mirza, Anwar Lal Deen, Sirajul Haq, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan; Ali Amin Gandapur, Secretary of the ministry Tariq Mahmood Pasha and other senior officials of the ministry. The ministry officials said that the issue of grants to AJK and GB and how the grants could be increased in prevalent constitutional structure had been referred to the Law Division and Ministry of Finance. The committee decided to take up briefings on development work in AJK and GB and facilities of tourism in these areas in separate meetings to be able to have detailed discussion and to come up with sound proposals.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/382235-ajk-gb-grant-raise-issue-sent-to-finance-ministry-senate-body-told>

“AJK lauds Pakistan’s strong stance on Kashmir”

The Nation, October 19, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan on October 18 met Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Ali Amin Khan Gandapur and discussed the current Kashmir situation besides other matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the AJK president invited the Federal Minister to visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir which the Minister accepted and decided to visit AJK on October 27 which is marked as Black Day in condemnation of India’s illegal military occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.

<https://nation.com.pk/19-Oct-2018/ajk-lauds-pakistan-s-strong-stance-on-kashmir>

Hasnaat Malik, “President Alvi calls for engaging India in water talks”

The Express Tribune, October 19, 2018

President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the Foreign Office and the concerned stakeholders to engage in ‘a constructive dialogue’ with India to achieve bilateral and multilateral arrangements on trans-boundary water matters. “Pakistan should also make efforts towards safeguarding our ‘Water Rights’. Issue(s)

pertaining to the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is one such example. This would require meticulous thinking on our part and engaging with our neighbours to avoid potential conflicts in the future,” said Dr Alvi on October 19. The president was addressing a two-day International Symposium on ‘Creating a Water-Secure Pakistan’ held at the Supreme Court premises. He said about 2 million drought-ridden and impoverished residents of Tharparkar and Cholistan amplified the human side of the problem.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1829565/1-criminal-negligence-cjp-laments-lack-efforts-construct-dams-past-40-years/>

Masud Ahmad Khan, “Future of Gilgit Baltistan”

Daily Times, October 20, 2018

It was the night of 31 October, 1947, when Gilgit Scouts surrounded the house of the dogra governor of Gilgit Brigadier Ghansara Singh. On the morning of 1 November, 1947, governor Brigadier Ghansara Singh surrendered to Gilgit Scouts. It was an auspicious morning when the Dogra flag was pulled down and Pakistan’s flag was raised. Immediately on taking control of Gilgit, the interim setup sent a special courier to Pakistan for taking over the administration of the area. On 3 November, 1947, Dogra and Sikh troops of 6 Jammu and Kashmir Battalion of State Force fled and deserted Bunji Cantt. Subsequently, the liberation forces under the able command of officers of 6th Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Scouts liberated the remaining area fighting against the weather, the terrain and logistics.

The people of Gilgit Baltistan are completely loyal to Pakistan as there is no anti Pakistan sentiment or slogan against CPEC. The people of Gilgit Baltistan feel highly privileged in holding Pakistan’s flag as high as possible. At the same time the constitutional status needs to be addressed by the government according to wishes of people of Gilgit Baltistan. A provisional/interim province like status may be given linking it with the final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue. Representation in the National Parliament may be given according to its population by electing three members from each division of Gilgit Baltistan. Proper representation may also be

given in National Economic Council (NEC), Council of Interest (CCI) and Indus River System Authority (ISRA) with the power to participate in decision making. We hope that the Prime Minister Imran Khan will steer Gilgit Baltistan in the right direction.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/312203/future-of-gilgit-baltistan-2/>

“Diامر-Bhasa dam shouldn’t be politicised like Kalabagh: Hamza Shehbaz”

Ary News, October 20, 2018

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hamza Shehbaz has said that Diامر-Basha Dam is a national issue and should not be made controversial like the Kalabagh Dam. The PML-N leader was addressing media while attending an international symposium on ‘Creating a Water Secure Pakistan’ organised by chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar. The moot was inaugurated yesterday by President Dr Arif Alvi.

<https://arynews.tv/en/diامر-bhasa-dam-politicised-kalabagh-hamza/>

Shakil Durrani, “A tale of two dams (Opinion)”

The News, October 22, 2018

Financing the Diامر Basha Dam and Mohmand Dam should never be seen as obstacles. We know that money is never the major constraint; poor resolve is what should be feared. In short then: what is most crucial is spawning ‘the idea’ and thereafter the ‘will to achieve’. These are the real challenges.

Admittedly, the combined cost of the Diامر Basha Dam and Mohmand dams is staggering. The Diامر Basha Dam would cost \$14 billion over a construction period of 8-9 years while the Mohmand Dam would take six years at a cost of \$3 billion. That is a grand total of Rs1800 billion. The Supreme Court initiated the process of mobilising the people of Pakistan and helped collect five billion rupees so far. However, finding resources should not be problematic.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/383775-a-tale-of-two-dams>

Faizan Hashmi, “Naya Pakistan Housing Project Launched In Muzaffarabad”

Urdu Point, October 22, 2018

Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Ali Ameen Gandapur on October 22 launched ‘Naya Pakistan Housing project’ here under which low cost houses will be built for common masses. Ali Ameen inaugurated the project with ribbon cutting ceremony held here at Municipal corporation Hall which was attended by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) member legislative Assembly Abdul Majid Khan, party leader and former Minister Khawaja Farooq, Secretary Housing AJK Idrees Abbasi and other officials.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/naya-pakistan-housing-project-launched-in-muz-462056.html>

Tariq Naqash, “PML-N wins AJK by-election”

Dawn, October 22, 2018

The ruling PML-N party clinched victory in a by-election held on October 21 in the Poonch district of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The seat fell vacant after the death of Khan Bahadar Khan, senior adviser to the AJK prime minister on Aug 27. Though there were nine candidates in the fray, the real contest was between Sardar Amir Altaf of the PML-N and Sardar Ghulam Sadiq of the PPP.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1440582>

Tariq Naqash, “Kashmir affairs minister condemns controversial remarks made by Fayaz Chohan”

Dawn, October 22, 2018

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Ali Amin Gandapur on October 21 condemned the controversial remarks made by Punjab Information Minister Fayazul Hassan Chohan, assuring that the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf would take action in this regard.

Chohan, while talking to reporters in Lahore a few

days back, repeatedly used the word “Kashmiri” with the names of Sharif family members, reportedly in a scornful way, which stirred up widespread outrage among the Kashmiri people.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1440647>

Dr Nyla Ali Khan, “Realpolitik relegates human rights to the background”

Daily Times, October 23, 2018

It is essential to create a non-militarised, non-militant and humane environment to ensure the rights of citizens to peacefully protest and to be heard by their political representatives. To that end, an environment that ensures all citizens that they have a voice and that their voices will not go unheard must be created.

In any society, when people are in survival mode and trying to avoid being criminalised, to the extent that they are unable to participate in their governments, forces of power, greed and special interests take over. Bigotry and hate are at the root of this violence.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/313436/realpolitik-relegates-human-rights-to-the-background/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan important part of CPEC: President Alvi”

The Nation, October 24, 2018

President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi on October 24 has said Gilgit-Baltistan is an important part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). President Alvi while talking to media in Skardu said, Gilgit-Baltistan is one of the most attractive areas in the world and its economy could get a boost from tourism and trade with CPEC. He also vowed that the residents of this region will be provided maximum benefits from this mega project. The government wishes for the development of the residents of GB through trade activities, he further added.

<https://nation.com.pk/24-Oct-2018/gilgit-baltistan-important-part-of-cpec-president-alvi>

“Habib Metro Bank contributes Rs20m to dam fund”

The Express Tribune, October 26, 2018

In support of the Supreme Court, the initiative of the Government of Pakistan and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), HabibMetro Bank contributed Rs20 million to the Supreme Court and the Prime Minister of Pakistan’s Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dam fund. This included voluntary contributions by the bank’s staff. The bank has also promoted the cause among its customers and encouraged the general public to donate to the worthy cause as well.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1834057/2-habibmetro-bank-contributes-rs20m-dam-fund/>

“Kashmir key plank of Pakistan’s foreign policy: Qureshi”

The Express Tribune, October 26, 2018

Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan wanted good neighbourly ties with India but bilateral relations will naturally remain strained until Kashmir dispute is taken to its logical end. Addressing a seminar titled “Kashmir is calling/ Kashmir Pukaar Raha Hai” held at National Press Club on October 25, he said the whole nation was united on the Kashmir issue which was also a main component of Pakistan’s foreign policy. He added that Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) is not part of India.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1834115/1-kashmir-key-plank-pakistans-foreign-policy-qureshi/>

“India’s claim to Gilgit-Baltistan strong: Ram Madhav”

Business Standard, October 26, 2018

India’s claim to the Gilgit-Baltistan region is much stronger than Pakistan’s as it was handed over to the Pakistani army by two “deceitful” British military officials, BJP leader Ram Madhav said on October 25. He said the region was strategically important to

India as it provides a link to Afghanistan and further to Central Asia. The Belt Road Initiative of China, which has been opposed by India, also passes through this region, he said.

While Pakistan annexed parts of Jammu and Kashmir, the Gilgit-Baltistan region, then a part of the princely state of J&K, was handed over to the Pakistani army by two “deceitful” British military officials, he said. “Our case, as far as Gilgit Baltistan goes, is even more stronger for the important reason that when (the princely state of) Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India, technically Gilgit Baltistan was an integral part of the then state of Kashmir and Jammu, under Maharaja Hari Singh,” Madhav said. The region was not annexed through any army encroachment, he said. Madhav was speaking at the launch of a book ‘Gilgit Baltistan and its saga of unending human rights violation’. Although under the control of Pakistan, India considers Gilgit-Baltistan a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-s-claim-to-gilgit-baltistan-strong-ram-madhav-118102600012_1.html

Imran Khushal, “Pak-India tensions and life at LoC”

Daily Times, October 27, 2018

Quality of education must be improved and admission criteria at local universities should be relaxed for students from villages along the LoC. As well as, quota for Kashmiri students at Pakistani universities should be redefined in favour of such students and similar measures should be taken in granting scholarships and employment opportunities.

Tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi do not directly affect Pakistanis and Indians as they do Kashmiris, particularly people living across the Line of Control or LoC. Pakistan, that claims Kashmir its ‘shehrug’ (jugular vein), and India, that calls it its “atoot ang” (integral part), seem least bothered how their enmity affects the Kashmiris on either sides. Whether it is a diplomatic crisis between Islamabad and New Delhi or a full-scale war between the two

nuclear states it was these people who have suffered most throughout history.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/314883/pak-india-tensions-and-life-at-loc/>

Tariq Naqash, “Kashmiri separatist leaders issue plea for ‘full military support’”

Dawn, October 27, 2018

Warning that the situation in ‘occupied Kashmir’ was worsening beyond control in the wake of unprecedented atrocities by Indian forces, leaders of various armed Kashmiri separatist groups on October 26 called on Islamabad to extend them “full military support”. “India’s entire leadership and institutions are unanimous in their nefarious designs to annihilate the Kashmiris and their economy [...] Their brutalities and bloodlust is unprecedented in history and the situation is getting out of control,” observed Syed Salahuddin, head of the United Jihad Council (UJC), at a press conference at Muzaffarabad’s Central Press Club. The UJC brings together around a dozen groups fighting the Indian occupation of Kashmir, of which Salahuddin’s Hizbul Mujahideen is the largest constituent.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1441750>

Fakhir Rizvi, “Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) To Celebrate Independence Day On Nov 1”

Urdu Point, October 31, 2018

The 70th Independence Day of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) will be celebrated with traditional zeal and fervor on 1st November. On November 1, 1947, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan had revolted against Dogra Raj and liberated 72,000 square kilometers of geo-strategically located land. GB government has declared an official holiday on the occasion.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/gilgit-baltistan-gb-to-celebrate-independen-469277.html>

Economic Developments

“AJK president invites investors to Mirpur SEZ”

The News, October 7, 2018

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan has invited business community to explore investment opportunities in AJK, especially in the Mirpur Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which is getting ready to welcome potential entrepreneurs. Sardar Masood visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) House and discussed matters of mutual interest with its office bearers. AJK president appreciated FPCCI's role in economic development, and said only a strong private sector could ensure economic prosperity and stability of the country. He invited the FPCCI members to visit Azad Kashmir and explore the possibilities of introducing handicraft of the area, like shawls, carpets and a number of other items manufactured locally, in Pakistani as well as international market. FPCCI Senior Vice President Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir condemned the attack on AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq, and said India and Pakistan were main players of the SAARC region, which represented 90 percent of SAARC income. He said without peaceful relations between Pakistan and India, the SAARC region could not be on path of prosperity and development.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/377513-ajk-president-invites-investors-to-mirpur-sez>

“Govt to allocate Rs15b for GB projects”

Pakistan Today, October 8, 2018

Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar has said that the federal government accords the highest priority to the timely completion of the ongoing development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), adding that Rs 15

billion will be given to the federating unit for the said purpose. He stated that the PTI-led government is committed to bringing the region at par with other areas of the country in terms of socio-economic development. The minister was talking to GB Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman who called on him here at Islamabad on October 8. Planning Secretary Zafar Hasan and senior officials were also present in the meeting. The minister said that the GB would gain maximum benefit from the CPEC adding that the gamechanger project would not only usher in prosperity in the region but also lead to infrastructure development. During the meeting, the minister apprised the CM about rationalisation of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) under which Rs 15 billion would be given to the GB for its development schemes for the ongoing financial year. The GB chief minister thanked the federal government for approving Gilgit-Skardu road project, adding that its completion would reduce the distance from 09 hours to 02 hours. He requested the federal government to consider sharing the cost of a sewerage treatment plant project in Gilgit which stood at Rs 4 billion as there was no proper sewerage system in the city.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/10/08/minister-assures-timely-completion-of-gb-projects/>

“Three AJK cities’ developed with \$345m: ERRA”

Pakistan Observer, October 23, 2018

Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has completed three modern cities including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) state capital Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Bagh along with 120 other development projects at the cost of US \$345 million. Talking to media, Acting Deputy Chairman ERRA, Brig Muhammad Latif, said the

authority had undertaken the projects with the assistance of a Chinese loan of US \$300 million while US \$45 million were contributed by ERRA.

He said the projects after completion have improved the infrastructure, transport facilities and road

accessibility to reach the far-flung areas of the state. The cities developed by ERRA are reckoned to be more urbanized and modernly designed cities across the country, which adds another feather to ERRA's cap.

<https://pakobserver.net/three-ajk-cities-developed-with-345m-erra/>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“If you want to construct Dam, G-B has to be taken along: Chief Minister”

Daily Salam, October 4, 2018

In a press conference held in Islamabad, G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman said that with CPEC and Basha Dam, the importance of the region has increased. You can't think about CPEC and Basha Dam without G-B. Four provinces have decided to construct a dam but where Dam is supposed to be built no one is asking them. If not today but tomorrow voices would emerge on the ownership of the project. Gilgit-Baltistan has a capacity of 50000 MW of electricity. For that reason 2 billion were kept from national grid. For Gilgit-Skardu road, 7 billion were allocated but now 2 billion have been cut from the budget. There was a project for the women's college that has been now halted. Till date only 10 percent of our budget has been released.

<https://www.dailysalam.com/index.php>

“Centre has removed important projects of G-B from the PSDP”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, October 7, 2018

Development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan are in danger now. For 19 projects 6.5 billion rupees were allocated for the region. Now Central government has decided to cut the development budget. Now out of 6.5 billion the region will only get 55 Crore rupees only. This will result in jeopardizing many on-going projects. Not only that, 2 billion was also cut from the 17 billion allocated for developmental work.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=10-07-2018&img=10-07-2018page-1-1

“Want response from the Centre on Sartaj Aziz Committee Report”

Daily K2, October 16, 2018

Supreme Court has asked centre government to present Sartaj Aziz Committee report on Constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan within 14 days. Chief Justice Saqib Nisar has said that there is need to address the constitutional appeals regarding G-B's constitutional status. It is a matter of fundamental rights. He asked government to take this issue on priority basis. He further said that if India can give a special status to the 'occupied Kashmir' what's then stopping Pakistan from providing a constitutional identity to the region. People of Gilgit-Baltistan are using Pakistan passport then they should also be given political and other rights said Justice Gulzar. There is a need to highlight the love of people of the region towards Pakistan at international level said Justice Omer Atha.

<http://www.paper.dailyk2.com/index.php?eid=1&nid=1&date=1539648000>

“Constitutional Status and Assurance from Imran Khan”

Daily K2, October 20, 2018

Prime Minister Imran Khan has again given assurance of granting G-B a constitutional status. He said that discussion regarding it is taking place. While talking with Governor Raja Jalal Maqpoon, Imran Khan said that subsidy of wheat is not being cut. He also said that like other provinces, G-B will get new projects under PSDP and will try best to complete the construction of Basha Dam on time.

Like other political leaders, Imran has also given assurance of providing constitutional status to G-B.

Imran Khan highlighted many issues G-B is facing but most important one is lack of having constitutional identity. Every country has its identity, every nation provide its citizen basic rights. But G-B is the only region in the world where neither international norms are applied nor national laws are implemented. 70 years have passed, people are still begging for the political identity. People are basic

rights in return of love they shower on Pakistan. But every time we have been shown only dreams and lies. Every political party has verbally supported granting G-B a constitutional status. Let's see how PTI government fares now in the National Assembly and how other political parties support that move.

<http://www.paper.dailyk2.com/index.php?pid=4&eid=1&nid=1&tnid=8992&date=1539993600>

Fact Sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

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 Muhammad Masood Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

AJK Council: Total 17 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.ajk.gov.pk/>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche, Skardu, Kharmang and Shigar 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 Assembly: Total 33 members (24 members directly elected)

Governor of G-B: Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan

(GBDA), Gilgit Baltistan

Chief Minister G-B: Hafiz Hafiz-ur-Rehman

National Alliance (GBNA), All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

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

(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 to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

POK NEWS DIGEST



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