

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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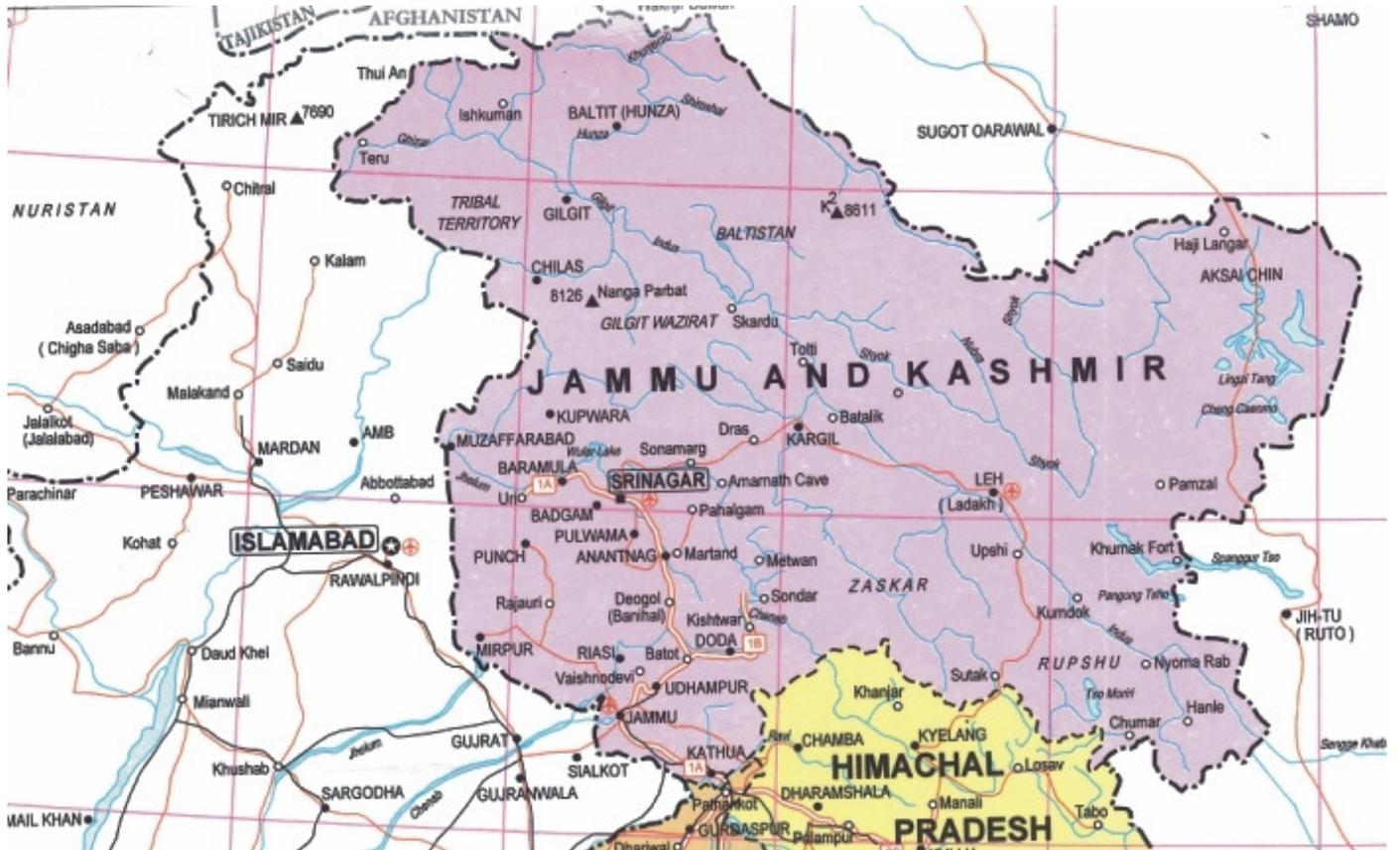
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

A report titled: “Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan” by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) came out in June 2018. The 49-page document produced ripples both in India and Pakistan as is indicated by a number of news reports included in the current issue. The report claims to describe human rights situation in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) including that of in both parts of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) - the so-called Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, albeit without having visited the ground zero to assess the actual situation. The report has been categorically rejected by India, and rightly so, as there are serious questions on the methodology adopted in drafting this report and also as to what sources form the data behind such unfounded and superfluous claims with regard to J&K being made therein.

The report smacks of bias and prejudice –one that reminds of the early years after India’s independence when India was equated with Pakistan with regard to the Kashmir issue especially by the western world. This was despite Pakistan being the brazen aggressor in this case who applied deceitful means to occupy a substantial chunk of territory of what constituted the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession in India’s favour in October 1947 conferring India the territorial control over the entire state. India’s broader position on Kashmir and PoK in particular will stay undeterred irrespective of such propagandist manoeuvres against it that have, in majority of cases, been pursued at the behest of Pakistan.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Ghulam Abbas, “GB Order 2018 comes into effect after president’s approval”

Pakistan Today, June 2, 2018

President Mamnoon Hussain on June 1 approved the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Reforms Order 2018, replacing the old GB Self Governance Order 2009, notwithstanding widespread opposition to the reforms package introduced by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government. The government officials claimed that as compared to 2009 empowerment act, the new order is considered as more comprehensive, wide-ranging and all-inclusive as the powers vested in the GB council, including passing legislation regarding mineral, hydropower and tourism sectors, have now been shifted to the GB Assembly. It is pertinent to mention here that a complete shutter down strike was observed across GB against the new order when former PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi visited Gilgit on May 27. Protest rallies were also carried out in 10 districts of the region rejecting the order as it is against the aspirations of the people.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/06/02/gb-order-2018-comes-into-effect-after-presidents-approval/>

Sabena Siddiqui, “Why Gilgit Baltistan should be a province of Pakistan”

Asia Times, June 2, 2018

Connecting Pakistan with China and the Central Asian states, the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) region is the starting point of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is also the “flagship corridor” of China’s Belt and Road Initiative mega-project. Having grown in strategic importance since the geo-economic realignment between China and Pakistan, the sovereignty of this region has been made controversial by India as it feels threatened by the

Chinese presence in its proximity. Staking claims over Gilgit Baltistan, the intention is to turn it into a disputed region and sabotage the project. Interestingly, India not referred to Gilgit Baltistan as “disputed territory” for many decades; the matter arose only after its two neighbours started their joint development projects there. Set to benefit even more after the four-track CPEC is completed, the region is bound to become a favourite tourist destination just like neighbouring Nepal, which thrives on tourism. Home to some of the world’s highest mountains, its three longest glaciers and 16 famous lakes, Gilgit Baltistan has a lot to gain from the ongoing upgrade in infrastructure.

<http://www.atimes.com/why-gilgit-baltistan-should-be-a-province-of-pakistan/>

Mamir, “AJK President, PM commend passage of 13th amendment”

The Express Tribune, June 3, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan and Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan on June 2 held a meeting at the President House to discuss the successful passage of the 13th amendment to the AJK Interim Constitution Act, 1974, which devolves additional legislative, administrative and financial powers to the state government. Masood and Farooq noted that with these reforms, the government and the citizens had been further empowered, and AJK – being the base camp – would help inject new vigour into the struggle for right to self-determination. Both the leaders renewed their pledge to selfless dedication of their efforts in helping raise the profile of the Kashmir issue and thanked Pakistan for its continued support to the Kashmir cause.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1726424/1-ajk-president-pm-commend-passage-13th-amendment/>

Tariq Naqash, “AJK Legislative Assembly, council sitting approves amendments to constitution”

Dawn, June 3, 2018

The PML-N dominated joint sitting of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and the AJK Council on June 1 approved amendments to the AJK Constitution abolishing the council’s administrative and financial powers and reducing it to an advisory body. The opposition walked out in protest before the bill was put to a vote by Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir. The opposition then staged a walkout, and in its absence the 35 present PML-N members passed the bill. The house also approved a resolution moved by Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, minister for sports, youth and culture, whereby gratitude was expressed to Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Nawaz Sharif for approving constitutional reforms in AJK in accordance with the recommendation of the National Security Committee.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1411417/ajk-legislative-assembly-council-sitting-approves-amendments-to-constitution>

Jamil Nagri, “GB opposition warns of protests if traders’ demands not met”

Dawn, June 3, 2018

The combined opposition in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly (GBA) and Awami Action Committee (AAC) warned on June 2 that if traders’ demands were not accepted protests would be launched across the region. GB traders, transporters, and labourers continued their protest sit-in in Sust town on the fourth consecutive day on June 2, blocking Karakoram Highway, the entry point of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), against imposition of taxes and introduction of WeBOC (Web-Based One Customs) system at the Sust Dry Port. Traffic between Pakistan and China remained suspended. Containers and trucks loaded with import and export goods became stranded on both sides of the protest camp. Chinese and Pakistani citizens faced difficulty while travelling to each other countries via Khunjerab Pass. Trade activities between the two

countries have been suspended for the past two months as traders have boycotted import and export business till acceptance of their demands. Opposition members in the GBA, including opposition leader Mohammad Shafi, and AAC chairman Maulana Sultan Raees arrived in Sust to show solidarity with the protesters. In a nutshell, WeBOC is primarily aimed at trade facilitation and it is regrettable that clearing agents are the dry port and training sessions were held to educate the stakeholders regarding functioning of different modules of the software. MCC Gilgit-Baltistan has also operationalised a Trade Facilitation Centre at the dry port for traders and clearing agents to ensure speedy disposal of consignments.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1411663>

Dr Ejaz Hussain, “CPEC: the governance challenges ahead — I”

Daily Times, June 3, 2018

In 2013, China and Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding that served as the cornerstone of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Two years later, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan and formalised CPEC allocations at \$46 billion. By the end of 2017, the total loans and investment under CPEC crossed \$80 billion. To consolidate CPEC and bilateral economic cooperation, the Chinese and Pakistani governments concluded, at the sixth Joint Cooperation Council held in 2016 that they would set up Special Economic Zones. Initially, the total number of the zones varied from forty-six to over a hundred. However, later on, the Pakistani authorities, in particular the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform and the Board of Investment, reduced the number to nine.

Gwadar, the most crucial and sensitive component of CPEC, is seen as the tenth industrial zone by some Chinese policy circles. In the case of Gilgit-Baltistan, the region was projected itself as a perfect natural location to host an industrial zone, which may not be the case. Moreover, access to finance could be bracketed as an important impediment for CPEC’s overall growth. One wonders to what extent federal

and provincial governments could be interested in establishing legal administrative regimes to levy and collect taxes, and importantly, investing share of revenue in CPEC projects. Equally ambiguous is the notion of retributive justice with respect to allocation of CPEC profits with the regional and provincial governments.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/248520/cpec-the-governance-challenges-ahead-i/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan order to appease China: EFSAS”

ANI News, June 4, 2018

Pakistan’s new Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 is illegal and is aimed at appeasing China to ensure the success of the over USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a European think tank stated. An analytical report published by the European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS) stated the Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018, would only add to a long-list of issues already bedeviling Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), and added that China’s reaction to it proves its disregard for human rights. The EFSAS study further noted that China was well aware that a dispute exists between India and Pakistan on the Jammu and Kashmir issue, and that the status and future of GB formed part of that dispute, despite which, it signed the CPEC with one of the parties involved in the dispute and involving territory that forms part of the dispute.

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/gilgit-baltistan-order-to-appease-china-efsas201806041230340001/>

Qadeer Tanoli, “National policy aims to end religious terrorism”

The Express Tribune, June 4, 2018

Religious terrorism tops the list of four terrorism types pointed out in the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2018-2023 by the Ministry of Interior. Several sectarian outfits originated in Pakistan and continue to maintain a presence, the NISP admitted. They often use violent means to target prominent personalities, festivals, and places of worship belonging to other sects. Gilgit-Baltistan remained largely peaceful; but

there was some sectarian violence over there. Azad Kashmir mostly witnessed violence because of cross-border firing along the Line of Control (LoC). Otherwise, the region remained relatively peaceful. It stated that provinces would develop legislation for undertaking madrassa reforms. Despite much propaganda, the federal and provincial governments took fewer steps for registration and reforms in religious seminaries.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1726916/1-national-policy-aims-end-religious-terrorism/>

Dr Javaid Hayat, “Kashmir: deconstructing the grand narrative”

Daily Times, June 4, 2018

Narrative and framing are both discursive features of any social movement. The success and failure of any people resistance movement for political or social change or regime change profoundly depend on a well-articulated and holistically developed narrative. The Kashmiri freedom movement confronts a grave challenge that the political elite and intellectual fraternity across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) persistently underestimate the importance of developing and maintaining a familiar indigenous narrative as opposed to grand and dominant narratives. These grand narratives are ‘incorporated’ by the State Intelligentsia of India and Pakistan in their respective controlling parts of divided J&K and abroad.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/248476/kashmir-deconstructing-the-grand-narrative/>

Nayyar N Khan, “CPEC — a solution to the Kashmir issue?”

Daily Times, June 8, 2018

In December 2017, China offered the Afghan government a chance to become part of their ambitious \$50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). At the same time, they made it clear that the project was not in any way directed against India and that no third party should be concerned with its progress. This came after India complained that

the corridor passes through Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) in Pakistan-administered Kashmir which is a territory claimed by both India and Pakistan. After negotiating a border stand-off at Doklam Plateau (China-Bhutan disputed border) both India and China indicated that they wanted to build peaceful relations by solving their bilateral disputes through diplomacy instead of armed conflicts. Pakistan wants to follow the same path, and open a dialogue with India in order for CPEC to develop without any problems. However, another solution could be that the government of Pakistan could instead refer to the people of this region. The Kashmiris and the people of GB could also be brought into the loop. They could finally have the plebiscite that was promised these people by the UNCIP resolution many years ago. But this will never happen. However, current leaders are not brave enough to make these sacrifices and are, instead, happy to take whatever scraps Islamabad throws at them. What the region needs is a strong group of leaders who are not afraid.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/250530/cpec-a-solution-to-the-kashmir-issue/>

Umer Jamshaid, “PML-N To Strengthen Kashmir’s Ideological Relationship With Pakistan: Raja Farooq Haider Khan”

Urdu Point, June 8, 2018

PML (N) AJK Chief and the State’s Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan stated that the historic much-needed amendment in Act 1974, Financial Autonomy and unprecedented increase in the development budget is the result of the hard work of PML-N workers in last general elections. Dispelling the impression that AJK has got nothing concrete after transfer of power from Kashmir Council to AJK government, the prime minister noted that AJK has more powers than the provinces of Pakistan as no province in Pakistan can collect taxes while AJK has powers to collect the taxes after new amendments in the constitution. The Prime Minister urged the party workers to get ready for participation in the forthcoming local parties election with zeal and zest.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/pml-n-to-strengthen-kashmirs-ideological-rel-367045.html>

Basil Nabi Malik, “The Gilgit-Baltistan question”

Daily Times, June 8, 2018

As the Prime Minister made his way to the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly, as it was known then, he was greeted along the way by locals waving shoes in the air. The Prime Minister was making his way to the Assembly to unveil the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order, 2018. Unsurprisingly, he was taken aback by the protests, and could not understand as to why the locals were so unhappy with a law which was supposedly bringing them at par with the rest of the country. But in actuality, it was not. The 2018 Order, for what it’s worth, does in fact make efforts to establish a system similar to that present in the four provinces of Pakistan, albeit, without affording provincial status to the region. And that is where the problem lies. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan are entitled to representation in the institutions which are to make decisions for them, and a stake in the affairs of the entity which governs them. Affording them such a status would go a long way in addressing the growing concerns of the local populace.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/250522/the-gilgit-baltistan-question/>

Adam Garrie, “Should the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Attempt to Solve the Kashmir Crisis?”

Eurasia Future, June 6, 2018

In 2017 when both India and Pakistan joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the group made it clear that its official position was to treat the Kashmir crisis as an internal matter for both India and Pakistan and, therefore, the SCO would not directly mediate in the conflict nor offer possible solutions unless both sides voluntarily approached fellow SCO members to request such assistance. The SCO’s move was pragmatic and in many ways remains so because utilising the SCO to solve the issues arising from the post-colonial crisis in Jammu and Kashmir could backfire and sow further discord between members of a group whose primary mission is collective security cooperation with an increased

emphasis on the Chinese win-win model for peace through prosperity in the form of enhancing trading relations across the SCO.

<https://www.eurasiafuture.com/2018/06/09/should-the-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-attempt-to-solve-the-kashmir-crisis/>

“AJK terms Pakistan a ray of hope for all Muslims”

The Nation, June 11, 2018

Describing Pakistan as a great gift of Almighty Allah, Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan noted that no power on earth could resort to any harm to the country. He stated that Pakistan is not only the ray of hope for the people of Jammu and Kashmir but also for the entire Muslim world. He asked the people of Kashmir and Pakistan to pray for the safety and security of the country. He urged the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to pray for the security of Pakistan in the blessed night of Shab-e-Qadar. “Pakistan came into being after matchless sacrifices of tens of thousands of people and only those who are deprived of the blessing of freedom can realize the value of a free country like Pakistan,” he noted.

<https://nation.com.pk/11-Jun-2018/ajk-terms-pakistan-a-ray-of-hope-for-all-muslims>

“AJK president for removing misperception about Islam”

The Nation, June 12, 2018

While acknowledging the significance of interfaith dialogues and understanding, AJK President Sardar Masood stated that the awareness of differences and commonalities among civilizations can positively contribute to the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. The president made these comments during a meeting with Professor Dr Akbar Ahmed, Ibn Khaldun, Chair of Islamic Studies in the School of International Service at American University in Washington, who called on the president at Jammu

and Kashmir House. Speaking on the peace and security situation in the subcontinent, the president noted that till this day, India has not accepted the partition of the Subcontinent, neither has it acknowledged the issue of Kashmir as a conflict. He stated that being nuclear states, the two neighbours need to work out their differences, especially addressing the pertinent issue of Kashmir. He also invited Professor Akbar to visit Azad Kashmir, interact with the intelligentsia and address the students and academicians at the public sector universities in AJK.

<https://nation.com.pk/12-Jun-2018/ajk-president-for-removing-misperception-about-islam>

“India lodges ‘strong protest’ with Pakistan over amendments to ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir Constitution”

First Post, June 12, 2018

India stated it has lodged a strong protest with Islamabad over any “action to alter the status” of territories illegally occupied by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir and asked it to vacate all such areas. It was reacting to the changes to the ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution’ (13th Amendment) Act, 2018, which abolished the AJK Councils’ administrative and financial powers, reducing it to an advisory body. Last month, India had summoned Pakistan’s Deputy High Commissioner Syed Haider Shah and lodged a strong protest over Islamabad’s latest move relating to administrative authority over the Gilgit-Baltistan region, saying any action to alter the status of any part of the territory under its “forcible and illegal occupation” has no legal basis. The MEA noted that it conveyed to Shah that the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, which also includes ‘Gilgit-Baltistan’ areas, is an integral part of India by virtue of its accession in 1947.

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/india-lodges-strong-protest-with-pakistan-over-amendments-to-azad-jammu-and-kashmir-constitution-4506473.html>

“Bhasha, Mohmand Dams get Rs25b to start construction”

The Nation, June 11, 2018

The government made special allocation to start the construction of Bhasha Dam and Mohmand Dam and enhanced water sector allocation from Rs 36 billion to Rs 65 billion for the next fiscal year. Pakistan is facing acute water scarcity requiring special interventions and that is why authorities concerned increased allocation to conserve water and its augmentation during 2018-19. The Annual Development Plan (ADP), highlighting initiatives under Public Sector Development Programme for the next fiscal year, on June 10 showed that to start the construction of Bhasha Dam and Mohmand Dam, Rs 23 billion and Rs 2 billion have been earmarked respectively.

<https://nation.com.pk/11-Jun-2018/bhasha-mohmand-dams-get-rs25b-to-start-construction>

Aziz Ali Dad, “Hegemony and its malaise”

The News, June 13, 2018

This article tries to situate Gilgit-Baltistan within the power dispensation structure of Pakistan, and attempts to take stock of the kind of ideas and political sentiments such a system creates. It will also help us dig deep into the political consciousness and diagnose the source of real malaise that infects the society and politics. So far, Gilgit-Baltistan has been viewed from political, economic and social perspectives, but no attempts have been made to explore the nature of the interface between political hegemony and social psychology. By making Gilgit-Baltistan politically and existentially mute, the state apparatus has snuffed the life out of the region’s society and politics. A politically poor and psychologically subjugated society like Gilgit-Baltistan lacks the capacity to give birth to new ideas. Such a society provides a fertile soil for dehumanising orders and sanguinary ideas to nourish. The War of Independence was fought to end all wars of the colonial era. But the post-colonial period has only allowed a semblance of politics to exist by inducting a cadre of local politicians in the

hollow governance structure. Owing to the region’s dependency on the centre, the political leaders in the peripheries have become mouthpieces of their masters.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/329012-hegemony-and-its-malaise>

“Pakistan rejects India’s opposition to ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir Constitution”

The New Indian Express, June 14, 2018

Pakistan rejected India’s protest against its move to alter the status of territories occupied by Islamabad in Kashmir, saying New Delhi’s claim over the region has no legal basis. India this week had lodged strong protest with Pakistan over the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution (13th Amendment) Act, 2018, which abolished occupied Kashmir’s Council’s administrative and financial powers, reducing it to an advisory body. The Foreign Office (FO) noted in a statement that Pakistan categorically rejects India’s protest as “fallacious and baseless claim” over Kashmir as an integral part of India. The FO stated that the disputed status of Kashmir was enshrined in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, which stipulated that the final status of Jammu and Kashmir will be determined through the democratic method of a transparent, free and fair plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations to ascertain the wishes of the Kashmiris. These resolutions, pledging the right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir, are accepted by India, Pakistan and the international community, it noted.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2018/jun/14/pakistan-rejects-indias-opposition-to-azad-jammu-and-kashmir-constitution-1828164.html>

“Rights violation in PoK structural in nature: UN report”

Deccan Herald, June 14, 2018

The human rights violations in Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) are of “a different calibre or magnitude and more of a structural nature” compared to those in Jammu & Kashmir, a United Nations report

noted on June 14. The report by the Office of the of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) dealing with the human rights situation in PoK noted that the people in ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’ and ‘Gilgit-Baltistan’, which are in the control of Pakistan, “do not enjoy” all the rights and protections available under Pakistan Constitution. The OHCHR also referred to the acquisition of land for the controversial China Pakistan Economic Corridor in Gilgit-Baltistan where people were “forcibly evicted” without any consultation or giving proper information on the move that affected their lives and livelihood. Another point highlighted in the report was the “institutional discrimination” against the Ahmadiya community in PoK by treating them as non-Muslims going by the Pakistan Constitution.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/rights-violation-pok-more-structural-nature-un-report-674937.html>

Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, “Nationalist movement brews as Pakistan refuses to mainstream Gilgit-Baltistan”

Asia Times, June 14, 2018

Last month, Pakistan introduced the Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 as the latest set of laws designed to govern the region located at a strategical point sharing borders with China, Afghanistan and India. The Self-Governance Order nine years ago finally ratified the name Gilgit-Baltistan for what had hitherto been called the Northern Areas of Pakistan and gave the region its first legislative assembly. It gave Gilgit-Baltistan de facto province-like status without constitutionally making it a part of Pakistan or giving its inhabitants the rights an average Pakistani citizen enjoys. Locals see the government’s latest refusal to bring Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) into the mainstream and put it under the jurisdiction of the constitution as continued denial of basic human rights. “People were expecting constitutional rights with membership in [the] Pakistani parliament and access to the judicial system. They were expecting more autonomy in administrative matters and more legislative powers. They were expecting something similar to what the Indian Kashmiris enjoy,” Senge Hasnan Sering,

director of the Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress, noted.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/nationalist-movement-brews-as-pakistan-refuses-to-mainstream-gilgit-baltistan/>

Ramananda Sengupta, “India rejects UN report on human rights violation in Kashmir as fallacious”

The New Indian Express, June 14, 2018

India on June 14 reacted strongly to the first-ever UN human rights report on Kashmir, which calls for international inquiry into multiple violations in the region. The report also examines a range of human rights violations in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir which, according to the report, are of “a different calibre or magnitude and of a more structural nature. In addition, the report says, restrictions on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and in Gilgit-Baltistan have limited the ability to obtain information about the situation.”

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/jun/14/india-rejects-un-report-on-human-rights-violation-in-kashmir-as-fallacious-1828143.html>

“Widespread pain, anguish at Bukhari’s murder”

The Nation, June 16, 2018

Azad Jammu Kashmir on June 15 widely mourned and condemned the brutal killing of Kashmiri journalist Syed Shujaat Bukhari Srinagar. Funeral prayers for the martyred eminent journalist, writer and analyst in absentia was offered at various district headquarters including the capital town of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Bhimber and other places under the auspices of the main Press Clubs of the concerned districts. Besides, the journalist fraternity and intellectuals, social and political workers, peace and human rights activists, serving and retired public servants, members of the business fraternity, lawyers and others offered the funeral prayer.

<https://nation.com.pk/16-Jun-2018/widespread-pain-anguish-at-bukharis-murder>

“Protest erupts in Gilgit-Baltistan over Chief Secretary Babar Hayat Tarar’s derogatory remarks”

Deccan Chronicle, June 15, 2018

Protest erupted in Gilgit-Baltistan after a video showing Chief Secretary Babar Hayat Tarar scolding a local activist went viral on social media. The Chief Secretary was confronted by representatives of the Falahi Committee of Ghanche, a local welfare organisation, over poor health facilities in the area. In the video, the Chief Secretary is seen scolding Khadim Hussain, an activist, for calling the region a disputed territory. He also stated that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan were lax in paying their taxes.

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/videos/news/protest-erupts-in-gilgit-baltistan-over-chief-secretary-babar-hayat-tarar-s-derogatory-remarks.html>

“Masood welcomes first ever UN report on HRs violations”

Pakistan Observer, June 16, 2018

AJK President Masood Khan welcomed the publication of the first-ever United Nations report on massive human right violations and abuses in the Indian Kashmir. The President noted in a statement that the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights chronicles violations of human rights, especially after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016. President AJK stated that the people Azad Kashmir and Pakistan were extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Any allegations to the contrary, he stated, were not grounded in reality.

<https://pakobserver.net/masood-welcomes-first-ever-un-report-on-hrs-violations/>

Jawed Naqvi, “India not yet ready to confront truth on Kashmir”

Dawn, June 16, 2018

India’s summary rejection of the UN human rights report on Kashmir has predictably found allies in the

opposition parties, chiefly the Congress. This is partly because the Congress party is crammed with nationalists who are difficult to differentiate from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Also the subject of discussing military in a critical light is treated like a hot potato. With the general elections looming less than a year away any acceptance of criticism of state institutions is deemed risky.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1414423>

Raghav Pandey, “UN report on alleged human rights violations in Kashmir is tilted heavily in Pakistan’s favour, ignores need for army action”

First Post, June 18, 2018

After the United Nations on June 14 released a report on the state of human rights in Kashmir, the Government of India was quick to reject it. The Opposition, too, unanimously condemned it. The problems with the report begin right from its title — ‘Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan’. Such is the atmosphere Pakistan has created that Indian forces are expected to tackle. It was always a covert but full-fledged war, and never merely insurgency, in Kashmir, and it would be highly unfair to demand that the armed forces function without AFSPA. Moreover, the Supreme Court has neither read down nor struck down the law, which it examines routinely on the touchstone of the Constitution. Therefore, a UN report is not something that should be used as an instrument to patronise India.

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/un-report-on-alleged-human-rights-violations-in-kashmir-is-tilted-heavily-in-pakistans-favour-ignores-need-for-army-action-4522601.html>

“Team lauds UN report on human rights violations in Kashmiri”

The Nation, June 20, 2018

A Kashmiri delegation met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr Zeid

Ra'ad Al Hussein during 38th session of United Nations Human Rights Council at Geneva late on June 18. The delegation thanked the High Commissioner for his first ever report on the human rights situation on Jammu and Kashmir in which he asked the respective governments to respect the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir protected under International law. AJK Prime Minister also announced to start construction work on Sharda Greater Water Supply Project to provide drinking water for the population of the area and extension of Neelum Valley Authmaqam Road up to Tawo Butt. He noted that the government would provide liquid petroleum gas (LPG) to the people of the valley on subsidised rates for the purpose of fuel to save precious forests of the valley.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Jun-2018/team-lauds-un-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-kashmiri>

Kallol Bhattacharjee, “Right on Kashmir’s rights?”

The Hindu, June 20, 2018

The first ever report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Jammu and Kashmir, including Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, published last week, has been in production since 2016. A new wave of violence had then hit the Kashmir Valley, when protests sparked by the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen militant Burhan Wani were met with force by security personnel; about 51 protesters and civilians were killed in the months that followed, while more than 9,000 were injured by pellets and bullets. Consequently, the OHCRC asked India and Pakistan to allow its team’s access to the State, a request that was refused. Apart from being irked by the report’s criticism of India’s handling of the protests, alleged extra-judicial killings and hard tactics, the Ministry of External Affairs is also upset by the terms used to describe militants. For example, Hizbul Mujahideen, which is regarded as a terrorist organisation by India, was described in the report as an “armed group”. Wani, regarded as a terrorist by Indian security forces, was described as the “leader” of the organisation. India in its official statement stated the report “undermines the UN-led consensus

on zero tolerance to terrorism”. Finally, it makes specific recommendations aimed at India, including removing the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act from areas and instituting inquiries into alleged human rights violations.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/right-on-kashmir-rights/article24213245.ece>

Jamil Nagri, “Appellate court suspends GB Order 2018”

Dawn, June 21, 2018

The Supreme Appellate Court on June 20 suspended the newly-promulgated Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018. In a short order, it also issued contempt of court notice to respondents — former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi as chairman of the GB Council, federal minister for Kashmir affairs and GB and joint secretary of the council — for violation of law. In its latest hearing on June 20, the two-member bench of the court comprising Chief Judge Rana Shamim and Justice Javed Ahmed issued suspension order of the new order. The chief judge observed that despite stay order of the court, GB Order 2018 was introduced which was violation of law. Member of council Saeed Afzal, elected from GB Legislative Assembly, had filed a petition in Supreme Appellate Court earlier in April under Article 61 of the GB Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009, pleading the court to declare the GB Order 2018 illegal and issue a stay order. During the hearing of the case on April 24, GB Supreme Appellate Court Chief Judge Rana Muhammad Shamim issued a stay order till disposal of the case. However, the federal government promulgated GB Order 2018 during the last days of its government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1415071/appellate-court-suspends-gb-order-2018>

“Hands creating disturbances in CPEC projects will be crushed”

Dawn, June 22, 2018

Major-General Ahsan Gulrez, general officer commanding of the newly raised Special Security

Division for providing security to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), stated the hands trying to create disturbances in the CPEC projects, including Thar coalfield, will be crushed. The major-general noted after visiting coalmines being operated by the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) that the huge coal reserves were a great asset of Pakistan and all required arrangements had already been made to provide fool proof security to all people associated with it. He also noted that fully-fledged coal supply would start from third quarter of 2018 and the first electron would be generated from the EPTL power plant in December 2018. He further stated that they had completed 16 million safe man-hours while removing 90 million cubic meters of overburden (earth) five months ahead of schedule, targeting a saving of US\$110 million.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1415255>

Umer Jamshaid, “Ali Zafar Calls Ministerial Meeting To Resolve Basha Dam Issues”

Urdu Point, June 21, 2018

Federal Minister for Water Resources, Syed Ali Zafar on June 20 directed for calling the meeting of Ministerial Committee, which has already been constituted, to resolve the issues of Diamer Basha Dam Project (DBDP), with representation of Gilgit Baltistan government to resolve the issue of resettlement. The direction was given during a meeting convened by the minister, noted a press release issued on June 20.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/ali-zafar-calls-ministerial-meeting-to-resolv-377288.html>

“Pakistan wants UN team to visit both AJK, held Kashmir”

Dawn, June 22, 2018

Pakistan on June 21 expressed its willingness to receive the United Nations’ Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), but again conditioned it with New Delhi also agreeing to the commission’s visit to India-held Kashmir. Pakistan

was ready for a commission of inquiry to visit both AJK and Kashmir, Foreign Office spokesman Dr Muhammad Faisal stated at the weekly media briefing apparently linking the acceptance of the commission to its visits to both parts of Kashmir. The valley was put under the governor rule on June 20 after PDP-BJP coalition government collapsed as the two allies decided to part ways.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1415317/pakistan-wants-un-team-to-visit-both-ajk-held-kashmir>

“Ensuring transparency: AJK enforces PPRA rules: minister”

The Express Tribune, June 25, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Minister for Works and Communication Chaudhary Muhammad Aziz on June 24 noted that the government saved Rs680.28 million by introducing Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules in the state. Addressing a press conference, he noted, “Present government for the first time took a revolutionary step to ensure transparency and competitive bidding system in Azad Kashmir by awarding contracts of 37 projects of 445 kilometres roads and 764 meters bridges under the PPRA rules and ended decades old direct contracting system and blackmailing of the contractor mafia.” All 37 development projects of 445 kilometres roads and 764 meters bridges of estimated cost Rs8.13 billion were awarded through the transparent bidding system, which resulted into huge saving of public money. Aziz invited the media persons to visit the under construction projects in all districts of Azad Kashmir and point out anomalies in the construction work, if they found any.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1741745/1-ensuring-transparency-ajk-enforces-ppra-rules-minister/>

Fahad Shabbir, “AJK President Terms Constructive Dialogue Key To The Peaceful Resolution Of International Issues”

Urdu Point, June 25, 2018

Leading academician, researcher and scholar, Prof Akbar Ahmed, Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies

in the School of International Service at American University in Washington on June 25 called on President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Masood Khan at the President House. Prof Akbar, during his two-day visit to Azad Kashmir, will be delivering lectures at Azad Jammu and Kashmir University, Muzaffarabad and Mirpur University of Science and Technology, on common misconceptions related to the Muslim world, countering global Islamophobia elements and the resulting clash of civilisation between the east and the west.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-president-terms-constructive-dialogue-key-381426.html>

“AJK Cabinet approves Tax Amnesty Scheme”

Pakistan Observer, June 27, 2018

Azad Jammu Kashmir Cabinet approved tax amnesty scheme on the pattern of Pakistan on June 26. The cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan decided to adopt the scheme under which people of the state will declare their foreign and local assets voluntarily. The cabinet approved Foreign Estate Ordinance 2018, Voluntary Declaration of Domestic Ordinance 2018 and Reorganization of AJK Information Technology Board. The cabinet also approved Allopathic System Act 2017. Under this act, neither non- registered doctors will not be allowed to prescribe medicines to patients nor unregistered surgeons to operate.

<https://pakobserver.net/ajk-cabinet-approves-tax-amnesty-scheme/>

“Political leaders for making GB province”

Dawn, June 27, 2018

Speakers at a multiparty conference demanded that Gilgit-Baltistan should be declared a constitutional province of Pakistan. The national conference on GB’s constitutional rights called by Gilgit-Baltistan Awareness Forum was held in Skardu. The speakers pointed out that if declaring GB as constitutional province of the country was not possible then the region should be given the status of a provisional province till settlement of the Kashmir issue. He

asked why GB was not being declared E-zone for people’s rights. GB Minister for Law Aurangzeb Khan noted GB Order 2018 was a step forward achieving the goal of granting the people their rights. He questioned if GB people were Pakistanis why they were not being treated as full citizens of the country.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1416387/political-leaders-for-making-gb-province>

Fahad Shabbir, “Effective measures in place to cope environmental challenges: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiq Hafeez-ur-Rehman”

Urdu Point, June 28, 2018

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiq Hafiz-ur-Rehman on June 27 stated that the government was taking pragmatic steps for preserving natural environment and cope with climate challenges to the region. He noted that important organization like Disaster Management was ignored in the past, but his government had made it fully operational by allocating one billion to purchase heavy machinery and other essential equipment. He further stated that former federal government and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had fully supported development and progress of Gilgit-Baltistan, noted a press release.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/effective-measures-in-place-to-cope-enviromne-382871.html>

“Declaration of senate body on Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan”

Kashmir Media Service, June 27, 2018

The Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir affairs and Gilgit Baltistan met in an urgent session to examine the increasingly deteriorating situation of human rights in Kashmir. Among those who attended the meeting included Chairman Kashmir Committee, Sajid Mir, Raja Zafarul Haq, Lieutenant General (retired) Salahuddin Tirmzi, Lieutenant General (retired) Abdul Qayyum, Tehmina Junjwa Secretary Foreign Affairs, Dr Faisal Spokesman Foreign Office, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Abdul Hameed Lone, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqoob, Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, Abdul Majeed

Mir, Syed Aijaz Ahmed Shah, Abdul Majeed Malik and Khadim Hussain.

<https://kmsnews.org/news/2018/06/27/declaration-of-senate-body-on-kashmir-gilgit-baltistan/>

Naveed Aman Khan, “Socio economic Impact of CPEC on Gilgit Baltistan”

Pakistan Observer, June 27, 2018

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is part of One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative of the Chinese government to expand its economic horizon around the globe. CPEC is famously coined as a “Game Changer” for Pakistan, as it is expected to enhance economic development in the country. However, some have also argued that it is “the end of the game”, basing their arguments on the challenges associated with this gigantic project. CPEC aims to develop Special Economic Zones in Pakistan through a combination of infrastructure projects including transportation, energy and port development. It will connect western China with Gwadar Port in Balochistan. China transports 80% of its oil, through Strait of Malacca to Shanghai on ships and covers a distance of 16000 km which takes around two months, whereas via CPEC, it will cover 3218 km, shrinking down the shipment time to a few days. The initial budget for CPEC was projected nearly \$45 billion. However, the portfolio is grown to \$110 billion.

It is important to note that CPEC is not just a road rather a network of connectivity, industrialization, energy generation, promotion of trade and tourism. The importance of Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be neglected because it is the gateway for CPEC and also the proverbial Chicken Neck. The mighty Karakorum Highway, known as the 8th wonder of the world, was built in 1968-78 to connect China to the Western World by giving access to Arabian Sea. CPEC will continue to build on the existing Karakorum Highway, passing through the mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Karakorum Highway will be improved and a few new roads will be constructed

for smooth travel, moreover new bridges, tunnels and railway track is expected to construct to connect Kashgar city of China to Havelian in Pakistan. As Gilgit-Baltistan shares its border with China, therefore, the business terms have remained friendly between this region and China for past many years, although the Free Trade Agreement was signed between the two countries in 2006.

<https://pakobserver.net/socio-economic-impact-of-cpec-on-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Pakistan briefs diplomats over Kashmir situation”

The Express Tribune, June 28, 2018

Foreign Minister Abdullah Hussain Haroon on June 27 urged the international community to move beyond political and economic expediencies and help resolve the longstanding Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. The statement came during a briefing arranged by the foreign office for the heads of diplomatic missions in Pakistan on the current situation in Indian Kashmir.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1744442/1-pakistan-briefs-diplomats-kashmir-situation/>

Fakhir Rizvi, “Former Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Mehdi Shah Appointed As President Of PPP Skardu”

Urdu Point, June 28, 2018

Former Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Mehdi Shah, has been appointed as president of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Skardu. According to a notification issued by the office of PPP General Secretary Engineer Ismail, Mehdi Shah has also served as president of PPP GB. However, the political circles of the area stated Mehdi’s demotion was due to PPP’s defeat in last general election of GB.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/former-chief-minister-gilgit-baltistan-gb-383634.html>

Sumaira FH, “Chief Minister (CM) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman Issues Directives For Timely Completion Of School Building”

Urdu Point, June 29, 2018

Chief Minister (CM) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman on June 29 showed displeasure over the slow pace of construction work on Begum

Waqarun Nisa Government Higher Secondary School, Kasrot and issued strict directives to Secretary Education and concerned officers for completion of the school building within the stipulated time period. He commended the performance of school teachers owing to which the school achieved three positions in board examination during his visit.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/chief-minister-cm-gilgit-baltistan-gb-ha-384326.html>

Economic Developments

Jamil Nagri, “GB govt unveils Rs63bn budget amid opposition protest”

Dawn, June 8, 2018

The Gilgit-Baltistan government on June 7 unveiled over Rs 63 billion budget for fiscal 2018-19 amid protest by members from opposition benches. The major portion of the budget is allocated for non-developmental expenditures. The budget session of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly was chaired by Deputy Speaker Jaffarullah Khan while the budget was presented by Finance Minister Akbar Taban. In the budget, Rs28 billion and Rs26 million have been allocated for non-development expenditures and Rs18 billion for development, Rs7 billion for food subsidies and Rs8 billion PSDP projects. The members of opposition benches including Leader of Opposition Mohammad Shafi, PPP member Javed Hussain, PTI member Raja Jahanzeb and BNF's Nawaz Khan Naji tore the copies of budget and chanted slogans against the government. Mr Taban criticised the opposition for the protest and stated that it was unethical to chant slogans before listening budget speech.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1412814/gb-govt-unveils-rs63bn-budget-amid-opposition-protest>

Sadia Abbas, “The Azad Jammu And Kashmir Development Working Party (AJK DWP) Approves Rs. 3.52 Billion Development Projects Of Mass Public Welfare”

Urdu Point, June 8, 2018

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Development Working Party (AJK DWP) accorded formal approval of over Rs. 3.52 billion worth 21 development projects of mass public welfare in AJK State. The approval of the projects pertaining to industries, agriculture, wildlife/fisheries, foreign aid, physical

planning & housing, education, sports, youth and culture communication and works, research and development and information technology sectors were reviewed at a meeting held with Additional Chief Secretary Syed Asif Hussain Shah in the chair on June 7. Resurfacing of Road with Cadet College Pallandri, District Sushnuti, Provision of Furniture with 325 High and Higher Secondary Schools in AJ&K, Centralized Biometric Times Attendance/Monitoring System for Elementary & Secondary Education, Construction of Sikandar Hayat Sports Stadium, District Kotli, Construction & Reconditioning of Baloch-Jhanda Bagla via Talwari Road, District Sadhnuti, Resurfacing of Chinar Rest House to Poonch Medical College Road, Improvement & Metalling of Kel-Taobutt Road, District Neelum and Infrastructure Setup for Master Implementation Plan (MIP) in AJK.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/the-azad-jammu-and-kashmir-development-workin-367016.html>

Sadia Abbas, “PML-N Govt Gives Rs 1.5bn Mega Projects To GB: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman”

Urdu Point, June 21, 2018

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman on June 21 stated the PML-N Government has given Rs 1.5 billion mega projects to the province during last five years for improvement of its infrastructure. Talking to Director General of Walled City at Lahore, Kamran Lashari, the CM stated that efforts were underway for promotion of private sector in the northern areas. The GB has been exempted for five years from tax under GB order 2018 in order to promote private sector. Special tax remission has also been granted to import of materials for hotel industry in GB. Hafeez noted that no incident of terrorism was reported during last year in GB. The CM informed that Gilgit-Chitral and Chakdara Swat

expressway have been approved and the construction work will start soon.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/pml-n-govt-gives-rs-15bn-mega-projects-to-gb-377174.html>

Mamir, “AJK govt liable to collect tax after 13th Amendment”

The Express Tribune, June 23, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir government spokesperson on June 22 termed a news item published in a section of the press as baseless and unfounded, regarding collection of corporation tax by Federal Board of Revenue. The spokesman clarified that collection of all kind of taxes including income tax is responsibility of Inland Revenue Department, which has been transferred to AJK government under the thirteenth amendment. The spokesman further clarified that after the enforcement of 13 Amendment in the Constitution, “all kind of amounts collected on account of taxes including income tax would be deposited in the Consolidated Fund setup by the AJK government.” He termed the propaganda directly or indirectly linked to efforts to sabotage the historical achievement of the AJK government to get the administrative and financial powers transferred from Kashmir Council to the state government.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1740465/1-ajk-govt-liable-collect-tax-13th-amendment/>

Sumaira FH, “Azad Kashmir Govt Saves RS. 680.28 Million Under PPRA Rules”

Urdu Point, June 25, 2018

AJK Minister for Works and Communication Ch.Muhammad Aziz noted that the government has saved Rs 680.28 million by introducing Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules in the state. Talking to reporters late on June 24, he noted that the present government took a revolutionary step to ensure transparency and competitive bidding system in Azad Kashmir by awarding contracts of 37 projects of 445 kilometers roads and 764 meters bridges under the PPRA rules and ended decades old direct contracting system. He also stated that all 37 development projects of 445 kilometers roads and 764 meters bridges of estimated cost 8.13 billion were awarded through the transparent bidding system that resulted into huge saving of public money. Chaudhry Aziz invited the media persons to visit the under construction projects in all districts of Azad Kashmir and point out anomalies in the construction work, if they found any.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/azad-kashmir-govt-saves-rs-68028-million-un-381234.html>

International Developments

“Call to put Kashmir on centre of global agenda”

The Nation, June 2, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan stated that the Jammu and Kashmir issue should be put on the centre of the global agenda for its early solution. Pakistan is emerging as a major economy and the world order is in flux and needs a reset for peace, he added during his various engagements in Vienna which included a dialogue with the Austrian think tanks hosted by the Austrian National Defense Academy, according to a message reaching and released to the media. Sardar Masood Khan noted that emerging world order should be rule-based, more representative and more democratic. It should ensure full representation of developing countries as stakeholders. The world, he noted, had become multipolar and embraced multilateralism for tackling global problems. This would help in promoting the rule of law at the international level. The AJK president also visited the prestigious Sigmund Freud University and invited its Rector, Alfred Pritz, to visit Azad Kashmir and explore his university's collaboration with Azad Kashmir's five public sector universities in Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Rawalakot, Kotli and Bagh.

<https://nation.com.pk/02-Jun-2018/call-to-put-kashmir-on-centre-of-global-agenda>

“PoK activist made intervention during 38th Session of UNHRC”

Business Standard, June 29, 2018

Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) Human Rights Activist Jamil Maqsood made an intervention during the on-going 38th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), saying, there is a situation regarding PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) that requires the council's attention. “Mr Chairman, our organisation is constantly requesting this August forum to use its office to protect and promote fundamental rights of the people of Pakistani administered Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Despite several internal recommendations, Pakistan continues to exclude people of Gilgit-Baltistan from any meaningful participation in democratic processes. Systematically shift power by successive ordinances to Islamabad. Pakistan continues to abuse and has failed to observe state subject rule, hence, local people are forcefully evicted from their land and property,” Maqsood noted.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/pok-activist-made-intervention-during-38th-session-of-unhrc-118062900183_1.html

Other Developments

“Hunza people protest power outages”

Dawn, June 25, 2018

The residents of Hunza on June 24 organised a protest sit-in outside the residence of Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Mir Gazanfar Ali Khan in Karimabad against prolonged power outages in the district. A large number of people, mostly women, gathered at the main gate of the residence of GB governor, who

also belongs to the district. The protesters also blocked the Karimabad road for three hours, chanting slogans against the governor for making no effort to resolve their problem. The blockade of the road caused problems to the commuters. Later, Rani Atiqa, the governor’s wife, who is also a member of the GB Legislative Assembly, came out and negotiated with the protesters.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1415873>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

Mohammad Ashraf Din Faryad, “Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018: Concerns, Reservations and Aspirations”

Daily Salaam, June 1, 2018

Gilgit-Baltistan Governance Order 2018 has elicited mixed reaction. On the one side, the ruling party are happy, on the other, the opposition parties and the members of Awami Action Committee are making a hue and cry. In their press conference, the opposition threatened to launch massive protests in every district of the region. The opposition parties made it clear that the Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 is not acceptable to them. Patience has run out. Until we are fully integrated with Pakistan and given full constitutional identity, we will not accept any other package from the government. Pakistan’s Prime Minister Abbasi visited Gilgit-Baltistan and also addressed the G-B assembly. In his address, Abbasi noted that the 2018 Order will bring peace and prosperity to the region. We do not agree with Abbasi’s statement that 2018 Order will confer all rights to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. However, the Opposition parties should rely on agitation and create instability. The Order may bring some reforms but would not be accepted as an alternative to the constitutional status. The recommendations provided by the Constitutional Committee regarding representation in the National Assembly and Senate, if accepted, would have been best course for the region. It could have addressed the political aspirations of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Nevertheless, we should take this 2018 Order as a step towards a larger plan of integration. This Order does provide some autonomy in administration also and this opportunity should not be let go. We should desist from the policy of criticism for the sake of criticism. When our opposition parties are opposing the Order, our neighbour India also joined the fray. India rejected the order by saying that the region is a disputed territory.

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

“Will not Accept 2018 Order of Noon League and Politics of Hafeezur Rehman: Amjad Advocate”

Baad-e-Shimal, June 3, 2018

The president of Pakistan People’s Party Gilgit-Baltistan, Amjad Advocate, stated that the 2018 Order is unacceptable to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. He noted that people of the region have woken up now. They know what is happening in the name of 2018 Order. He further stated that we will not get swayed by the politics of Hafeezur Rehman. This Order is a conspiracy hatched by the Noon League against the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Our further action on this so-called Order will be decided after a copy of this order is received. According to Advocate, Hafeez and his party members were behind this order. It is the PML-N who wanted to handover all the powers to the Prime Minister. The first tragedy of this order would be the Chief Minister himself. People will make sure in the coming days that the region remains a disputed one.

<http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/?dt=MDYtMDMtMjAxOA%3D%3D>

“In My Opinion Gilgit-Baltistan is a Fifth Province: Farhatullah Babar”

Baad-e-Shimal, June 25, 2018

Senior leader of the Pakistan People’s Party, Farhatullah Babar, stated that in his opinion, Gilgit-Baltistan is the fifth province of Pakistan. While interacting with media, Babar noted that if there are any hurdles in providing G-B a constitutional status, those can be easily removed by giving it all those rights which other provinces are enjoying. Pakistan must give G-B what it has given to other provinces, demanded Babar. Babar further noted that if 21st amendment regarding military courts can be

implemented to Gilgit-Baltistan then why can't be 18th Amendment be also implemented in the region. He further noted that the 2009 Order was a step towards G-B's constitutional identity. We were also expecting that such orders in future will further strengthen G-B's constitutional guarantee but unfortunately the 2018 Order has closed all the doors.

<http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/?dt=MDYtMjUtMjAxOA%3D%3D>

“Industrial Zones and Economic Development”

Daily K2, June 26, 2018

Under CPEC, two places in Diamer region- Drang Das and Khaplu and two in Baltistan- Chomaq and Goal Das, are being considered for setting up industrial zones. Some progress has also been made as far as Baltistan region is concerned. To develop these industrial zones, electricity is a pre-requisite. For that, there is need to construct a tunnel on river

Sind. Through this tunnel, water can be taken to the Bonji Das where electricity can be produced. About 40 MW electricity can be produced for the industrial zones from Sind river. These industrial zones will create thousands of jobs. There is a need to continue the policies of the previous government on CPEC. To complete these developmental projects under CPEC, there is need to transfer technology from China and funds from other foreign sources, but that will take time. According to experts, there is also need to strengthen legal and financial aspects of these projects. There is also need of coordination from other departments. For human resource, we need institutions also. More importantly, we need social cohesion. These developmental projects more often create social divides that takes shape of a political rift. We need to be very cautious that these developmental projects are based on equality also.

<http://www.paper.dailyk2.com/index.php?pid=4&eid=1&nid=1&tnid=8659&date=1529971200>

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

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

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 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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