

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

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budget
TOURISM
Department
Gilgit-**B**altistan **Health** **System**
Constituency Management
Baltistan Police



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
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Political Developments

Development potentials of Gilgit-Baltistan

The Nation, Opinion, 22 June 2021

Over the last few years, the tourist flow along with capital flow has increased manifold in Gilgit-Baltistan but the figures do not match the immense potential of the mountainous province. The government departments are working but their manpower is not properly trained and is facing a shortage of funds. GB has about 100 peaks. A number of expedition parties visit GB and GB earns a huge chunk of foreign exchange. The region possess amazing potential in the food export industry as many kinds of eatables are exported from the GB region.

The KKH can help boost tourism but the road has no health care facilities and hoteling network. Proper workshops for vehicles does not even exist. Astore valley is famous for its scenic beauty but in the last 70 years the government never bothered to link it to other areas. The establishment of Hydel projects in the area has the potential to generate 50000 Megawatt.

GB has big water resources and cultivatable land which is still barren. The agriculture department has taken many measures but due to the shortage of technical staff and fund it could not prove its mettle so far. There is a need to use human capital and resources to maximize utilization of talent. Certified seeds and modern technology is required to be made operational.

The Pakistan government has shown immense interest in the development of GB. Thus all the above mentioned factors need to be taken into consideration and a comprehensive plan to tap the rich potential of GB needs to be put to work

<https://nation.com.pk/22-Jun-2021/development-potentials-of-gilgit-baltistan>

AJK Elections 2021: Security arrangement handed over to Rangers

Samaa News, 23 June 2021

The Ministry for Interior has allowed the AJK Election Commission to deploy Rangers for the upcoming Legislative Assembly polls in the region. A press release issued by the ministry said that the AJK chief election commissioner in a letter had requested the deployment of Rangers for security. The ministry said that the letter was forwarded to Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed and he approved the deployment of the paramilitary troops.

“Rangers will provide security for the AJK Legislative Assembly elections on July 25 and personnel would be provided to the AJK government as per their requirement,” said the notification. Direct elections on 45 seats of the Azad Kashmir legislative assembly are set to be held on July 25, Sunday. Four constituencies have been added to the elections this year.

<https://www.samaa.tv/news/2021/06/ajk-elections-2021-security-arrangement-handed-over-to-rangers/>

Electioneering gets momentum in AJK

Daily Times, 24 June 2021

The election campaigns for the upcoming General Elections in Azad Jammu & Kashmir is getting momentum after the returning officers unveiled the list of eligible candidates in all 45 constituencies of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) legislative assembly. The upcoming legislative assembly would consist of 53 seats out of which, upon 33 seats, candidates will be elected through direct elections whereas 12 are meant for Pakistan-based Jammu & Kashmir refugees. Out of 8 seats out of which, 5 are reserved for women, 1 for Ulama & Mashaikh, 1 for Technocrat and 1 for overseas Kashmiris, candidates will be elected indirectly.

In the wake of upcoming general elections in AJK, the political parties and the potential candidates for the slot of Prime Minister are in race to win over each other using modern technology to attract maximum voters. Many of them are using data science for managing their workers, elections teams, and mobilizing their voters to get results in their favor like Prime Minister Imran Khan's PTI did in 2018 general elections. AJK has a significant Diaspora living abroad having quite an exposure of modern technology and is also willing to put this to use in the upcoming elections. Following this trend, it is learnt through various sources, that many parties have contacted the team behind the

Constituency Management System (CMS) which enabled PTI to secure victory in 2018 elections.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/778664/ajk-general-elections-2021-building-momentum/>

824 candidates for 33 AJK constituencies and 172 candidates for 12 reserved seats to contest AJK elections: EC

Daily Heights, 24 June 2021

824 candidates have filed their nomination papers for 33 constituencies of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly while 172 candidates have filed their nomination papers for 12 seats reserved for Jammu and Kashmir refugees settled in Pakistan. From amongst the 824 nominations, 798 nomination papers were declared valid while 26 nomination papers were rejected. Similarly 160 nomination papers were declared valid while 12 nomination papers were rejected for 12 reserved seats for Jammu and Kashmir refugees settled in Pakistan.

Giving district wise detail of the nomination papers the election commission sources said that 95 candidates have filed their nominations papers in Mirpur district out of which 88 papers were declared valid. In Bhimber district 63 nomination papers were filed and two papers were rejected. In district Kotli 152 candidates filed their nomination papers and five were rejected. In Bagh district 112 candidates filed their nomination papers and 2 were rejected. 175

candidates have filed their nomination papers for the Assembly seats reserved for Sudhnoti district where 3 were rejected. In Neelum, 3 out of 70 nominations were rejected. In Muzaffarabad, 5 out of 158 nominations were rejected.

According to the election commission 94 candidates have filed their nomination papers against the reserved seats for Jammu valley out of which 86 papers were declared valid while 8 papers were rejected. While for Kashmir valley reserved seats 78 candidates have filed their papers out of which 74 were declared valid and four nomination papers were rejected.

<https://heights.com.pk/page-heights.php?id=1&edition=heights&dt=24-06-2021>

PTI trying to impose 'puppet' govt in AJK: Bilawal

Express Tribune, 27 June 2021

Addressing the Pakistan People's Party's packed election campaign rally in Kotli, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari fired a broadside at Prime Minister Imran Khan for allegedly trying to bring "a puppet government in Azad Kashmir". Bilawal went on to question the legitimacy of the government in Islamabad claiming that the present government came into power through election rigging itself and is now trying to rig elections in AJK. Bilawal warned both New Delhi and Islamabad rejecting any agreement that doesn't take the people of Jammu and Kashmir on board. "We want to make it clear to both Delhi and PTI

government that only Kashmiris will be allowed to decide their fate."

The PPP chairman inculpated the PTI government of malgovernance and causing increase in inflation, unemployment and poverty. He, thus requested the people of AJK to reject PTI and vote for PPP, which is resolute in its cause of resolving the Kashmir issue.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2307612/pti-trying-to-impose-puppet-govt-in-ajk-bilawal>

Economic Developments

GB has had around a million tourist visits so far in this season: Tourism Minister

Urdu Point, 22 June 2021

Speaking to the media, Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Minister Raja Nasir Ali Khan said around one million tourists had visited Gilgit-Baltistan during current season to enjoy its scenic view of mountains and cold weather conditions. He also said that millions of national and foreign tourists are expected to visit the province during the rest of the season. According to the Tourism Minister, the new Air Safari Bus service is a major reason for promotion of tourism in the region.

Mr. Khan also lauded PM Imran Khan for his keen interest in the tourism sector of the GB region in order to reduce unemployment. He also lauded the efforts of the GB government in maintaining strict Covid protocols while providing all necessary facilities

to the incoming guests. He reiterated the 'green, neat and clean and peaceful GB' goal of the incumbent government.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/around-one-million-tourists-visit-gb-so-far-1284222.html>

Licences of mobile phone firms for AJK, GB renewed

Dawn, 25 June 2021

PTA chairman Amir Azeem Bajwa and chief executive officers (CEOs) of Telenor, Jazz and Ufone along with senior representatives of these cellular mobile operators (CMOs) attended the licence renewal signing ceremony held at the PTA headquarters in Islamabad where the three CMOs deposited 50 per cent of the total 13.5 million dollar per company licence renewal fee with the PTA.

Federal Secretary for Information Technology (IT) Dr Sohail Rajput, Member Finance Mohammad Naveed and Member Compliance and Enforcement Dr Khawar Siddique Khokhar, of the PTA, the executive director of the Frequency Allocation Board (FAB), joint secretary of the GB Council, deputy secretary (finance) and deputy secretary (welfare and development) of the AJK Council and senior officers of the PTA also attended the ceremony. IT Minister Syed Aminul Haque, on the occasion congratulated the people of AJK and GB for this step which was necessary for the progress and development of the mountainous region.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1631321>

Rs105b GB budget for FY 2021-22 presented

The Nation, 27 June 2021

GB Minister for Finance Javed Manova presented the budget for fiscal year 2021-22 with an outlay of over Rs105 billion in the recent GB Assembly session. The budget speech which was the first of this PTI government was boycotted by opposition parties including Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and one independent lawmaker Nawaz Khan Naji.

According to the budget documents, Rs 44.4 billion have been allocated for development schemes and Rs 51.5 billion for non-development schemes. Rs 60.1 crore have been earmarked for the health department while Rs34 crore have been set aside for education, Rs1.2 billion for works department and Rs1.3 billion have been allocated for power department. Rupees 10 billion have also been allocated to the subsidy on wheat. This budget is being scrutinized with great interest as it is the first budget after the allocation of the large upliftment package was announced by the Prime Minister.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2021/rs105b-gb-budget-for-fy-2021-22-presented>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

GB appellate court orders secretary home to resolve police issues immediately

Daily K2, 22 June 2021

A division bench of Gilgit-Baltistan Appellate Court consisting of Chief Justice Syed Arshad Hussain Shah and senior judge Justice Wazir Shakeel Ahmed heard 22 cases, gave decisions for five cases and issued notices in 17 cases.

During the hearing, the court asked the General of Police, Gilgit-Baltistan, how many notorious criminals have been arrested so far. He also asked why the entire Baltistan division has been handed over to a lady police officer.

During the hearing, the Honorable Court expressed displeasure with the Secretary Home GB and said that senior officers should be aware of responsibilities. The esteemed court directed the Secretary Home GB to solve all the problems of Baltistan Police immediately. As per the directives of the court, "Police should be assisted by all law enforcement agencies to catch the notorious criminals. This is a matter of protection of life and property of the people and it is the first responsibility of all of us. The court will not tolerate any negligence in this regard." The court directed the Secretary Home and Inspector General of Police to submit a detailed report to the court at the next hearing

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/2469>

Qureshi asks India to hold referendum in Kashmir regarding the August 5 move

Jang, 23 June 2021

In an open challenge, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Tuesday asked India to hold a referendum among the Kashmiris the world over and get their opinion on the unilateral revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

"If Kashmiris around the world reject these unilateral measures as a result of this referendum, India will have to reconsider its decision," he said to a private television channel. Qureshi said the Kashmiris, in any part of the world, are united against India's illegal step of August 5, 2019. He said India's announcement to convene an all-party conference on June 24 indicated that "everything is not alright".

On Afghanistan, the foreign minister said Pakistan as a neighbor wanted peace and stability. He said it could be a matter of concern if talks with Taliban remain stalled even after sixty percent of foreign troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan.

[https://e.jang.com.pk/06-23-](https://e.jang.com.pk/06-23-2021/laure/pic.asp?picname=1022.png)

[2021/laure/pic.asp?picname=1022.png](https://e.jang.com.pk/06-23-2021/laure/pic.asp?picname=1022.png)

AJK Elections and previous traditions

Muhaasib, Editorial, Professor Riyaz Asgar, 23 June 2021

History from 1970 to 2016 has been a witness to the fact that whichever political party holds power in Islamabad also goes on to form the

government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Never have we seen an exception to this rule in the last 50 years of our political history. From an uneducated laborer to a PhD, we all vote with the same mentality of giving in to whoever is at the helm of affairs at the centre. This trend is not only unconstitutional and undemocratic but it is also unethical. We, the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir do not judge a candidate for public office based his/her merit but based on the goodwill he/she invokes in Islamabad. It shows that our name “Azad Jammu Kashmir” is a lie. We are not free but slaves of political expediency. The public opinion has lost its acumen and five decades of political history proves that.

We do not question the credibility of turncoats and defection just before the elections to the party which seems likely to win has become a norm. This time too, PTI has accumulated enough electable turncoats to win this election. The trend that has been going on from 1970 when Muslim Conference won the election because of Yahya Khan supported them, this trend is likely to continue. A departure from this trend will be miraculous. But in addition of being miraculous, this unlikely exception can also be the beginning of a new democratic tradition in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

<https://mahasib.com.pk/epaper/page.php?id=2&edition=muzzaffarabad&dt=23-06-2021>

AJK High Court lifts ban on transfers and appointments

Jammu Kashmir Times, 27 June 2021

Calling the Election Commission’s order on government affairs as misplaced and illegal interference, the AJK High Court has lifted the ban on appointments, transfers and policies pertaining to other public affairs which had been imposed by the Election Commission as a part of the Code of Conduct guidelines. The court also ordered the relevant departments to carry out such pending work in a time bound manner. In the Judgment of the case filed in the High Court by former DG Development Authority Mirpur, Anwar Ghazi, the Court said that interference in the developmental and governance works of the government is not within the powers held by the Election Commission. The government was advised to continue managing their affairs in a time bound manner.

The Election Commission on the other hand, has started discussion on taking this matter to the Supreme Court.

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/1-5.jpg>

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Disclaimer

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