

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Ever since the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was announced to be built with a whopping \$ 46 billion (via Gilgit Baltistan), there have been widespread concerns in the Gilgit Baltistan region on whether the local population will get a share in the benefits accruing from the billion dollar connectivity and infrastructure projects. Such concerns have been conveyed to the leadership in Pakistan by representatives from the region. Gilgit Baltistan has been under political subjugation for over six decades as Pakistan has deliberately subjected its political fate to the final resolution of the Kashmir issue. Similarly, the region is neither part of Pakistan's constitution nor does have a constitution of its own. This is unlike the so called Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) which is currently ruled under an interim constitution introduced in 1974.

As a measure to curb growing local apprehensions, the government of Pakistan decided to include the incumbent Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan, Hafeez ur Rehman in a committee that was constituted to derive national consensus on the CPEC. As indicated in a report included in the current issue, the decision to induct the Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan was taken at a meeting between Rehman and Senator Mushahid Hussain, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC. Rehman's induction is seen as a step to tide over the unrest that stemmed from Pakistan's gross neglect of Gilgit Baltistan till now in all issues concerning CPEC. According to the understanding reached at the meeting, either the Chief Minister himself or his nominated person will participate in all meetings relating to CPEC that would be held both inside Pakistan and abroad.

Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan was appointed as the next Governor of Gilgit Baltistan. Khan is known to the PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz)-led ruling establishment in Islamabad, and is especially close to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He took over from Chaudhary Muhammad Barjees Tahir, Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan (KAGB) who was simultaneously holding the charge of Governor of Gilgit Baltistan.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“‘AJK’ to resolve overseas issues”

The News, November 1, 2015

The “Azad Jammu Kashmir” (AJK) government decided to adopt Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab model to address the problems of overseas Pakistanis belonging to AJK and has requested OPC Punjab to extend cooperation for establishing an online system aligned to OPC Punjab to deal with the complaints of overseas Pakistanis. Secretary Industries of AJK has been nominated as focal person of AJK to liaison with the office of OPC Punjab. This was decided during a meeting between Commissioner, OPC Punjab Muhammad Afzaal Bhatti and Chief Secretary AJK Abid Ali. Khwaja Daud Ahmad, Director General, OPC, Shabbir Dogar Assistant Director, Haji Ehsan Danish, Chairman Gulf Region National Peace Council and Karamat Khan Overseas Pakistanis attended the meeting.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-5-348572-AJK-to-resolve-overseas-issues>

“Gilgit-Baltistan marks 68th Independence Day”

The Express Tribune, November 2, 2015

Gilgit-Baltistan observed its 68th Independence Day with austerity and paid tributes to its war heroes. The event was not celebrated with much pomp and zeal to show solidarity with families who had lost their loved ones in the recent earthquake. The official tribute “Our forefathers led us to independence from Dogra rule 68 years ago and today we stand as proud Pakistanis, honouring their commitment,” G-B Chief Minister Hafeez ur Rahman stated. He met all war heroes who were present on the occasion. Sitting with them in the historic garden Chinar Bagh home to the current G-B Legislative Assembly, he noted how much respect he had for all of them. “All of us salute you for the bravery you showed in liberating the region for us,”

Rahman added. He also paid tribute to all those who had sacrificed their lives for the emancipation of G-B. Along with other government officials, Rahman laid wreaths on the graves of war heroes who had fought valiantly in the armed struggle against Dogra rule, liberated the region and announced accession of G-B to Pakistan on November 1, 1947.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/983405/in-solidarity-gilgit-baltistan-marks-68th-independence-day/>

“Peaceful solution to Kashmir stressed”

The News, November 2, 2015

There is no way other than peaceful solution of Kashmir for both India and Pakistan. Unless meaningful and composite dialogue begins, Kashmir conflict will remain a flashpoint. Pakistan pulls all-out plugs to pave way for purposeful talks with India but its strenuous efforts are never reciprocated. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be a game changer for Pakistan economy and it should be completed with professional expertise repelling all adversities by India. These views were expressed by notable speakers at a seminar titled “Pak-India relations” held under the aegis of National Defence University (NDU), according to a press release issued on November 1. Punjab Governor Rafiq Rajwana, former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar and former federal minister Syeda Abida Hussain were also present on the occasion. The seminar was also attended by NDU Director General Maj-Gen Noyal Khokhar, Jahangir Badr and other dignitaries.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-5-348862-Peaceful-solution-to-Kashmir-stressed>

“Two SCO employees kidnapped from Diamer”

The Nation, November 5, 2015

Two employees of the Special Communication Organisation (SCO) were kidnapped from the Derail Valley of Diamer District. According to police sources, at least a dozen alleged terrorists

took part in the kidnapping incident. They reportedly tied the watchman of the cellular company's tower with ropes and took the two SCO employees namely engineer Essa, resident of Gilgit and operator Amjad Hussain, resident of Astor along with them. The SCO, which is part of the Pakistan Army, is providing telecommunications services in the region. Inspector General of police Gilgit-Baltistan Zafer Iqbal Awan visited the area and launched a search operation in the Darail Valley of Diamer District. Member GBLA Muhammad Shafi raised the issue in Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly. He stated that this was the result of negligence and failure of G-B police as well as the G-B provincial government. "Kidnapping of army employees is a serious issue," he further added. Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly constituted a seven-member parliament committee comprising Opposition leader Haji Shah Baig, Deputy Speaker Jafarullah, Minister Works Dr Iqbal, Minister for Forest Muhammad Wakeel, Minister for Excise and Taxation Ferman Ali, Minister for Food Haji Janbaz Khan and member Haider Khan to investigate the incident.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/05-Nov-2015/two-sco-employees-kidnapped-from-diamer>

"GB government warned of TTP attack"

Daily Times, November 5, 2015

The Interior Ministry warned the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) government that proscribed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) can attack and kidnap security forces to release terrorists involved in Nanga Parbat and Chilas incidents. The interior minister wrote a letter to the provincial government warning that TTP 'Hameed' group was planning an attack in the area. The letter stated the terrorists may also target police stations and jails. The GB government has been instructed to take all the necessary steps for ensuring security of important government installations. In 2013, terrorists in guise of security forces killed nine foreign tourists including a local guide at the Nanga Parbat base camp. Five of the culprits were apprehended while seven were declared as proclaimed offenders.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/05-Nov-2015/gb-government-warned-of-ttp-attack>

"Lawmaker Rehana Abbadi demands security from G-B govt"

The Express Tribune, November 6, 2015

Rehana Abbadi, a lawmaker in Gilgit-Baltistan, has demanded security from the government as she is receiving death threats. The request was made through a motion moved in Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on the third day of its proceedings on November 5. "I belong to a religious family and have been receiving threats from opponents," she informed the house. "I strongly urge the government to provide me with security. If they fail to do so, the government will be responsible for whatever happens to me." Abbadi is a member of Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) and was elected on a women's seat in June 2015. She is among the six women lawmakers in the 33-member legislative assembly. "I have been attacked by my opponents in the past as well," she stated. "However, the government did not take measures to ensure my security."

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/986010/assembly-session-lawmaker-rehana-abbadi-demands-security-from-g-b-govt/>

"Environment act to be passed in G-B Legislative Assembly"

The Express Tribune, November 8, 2015

An environment act will be passed in the next session of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly to ensure that work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project does not have a negative impact on the region. This was stated by G-B Parliamentary Secretary for Law Aurangzeb Khan on November 7 at a press conference in Gilgit. "We will pass the act to ensure the environment remains unaffected during the massive construction expected for CPEC," stated Aurangzeb. "This is one of the four acts we presented in the assembly recently and hopefully the house will pass it in the next session."

Mega construction is envisaged for the economic corridor that aims to connect Gwadar Port, in the southwest of Pakistan, with China. Aurangzeb also spoke about the recommended increase in the salaries of lawmakers, noting the demanded

increase is less than what their counterparts in the rest of the countries were enjoying.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/988310/saving-nature-environment-act-to-be-passed-in-g-b-legislative-assembly/>

“Rahman offered a seat at CPEC table”

The Express Tribune, November 11, 2015

The chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan will be kept in the loop for all activities related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). “This was decided in a meeting between the chairperson of the parliamentary committee on CPEC, Senator Mushahid Hussain, and G-B CM Hafeezur Rahman,” noted an official on November 10. Hussain is chairing the committee on CPEC, which was constituted recently to develop a national consensus on the \$46 billion economic corridor to join China's south-western region with Gwadar Port. According to the official, the two politicians also met in Islamabad on November 10 to settle matters. The announcement is considered an important step to bring stakeholders of the region on board where lawyers and politicians raised hue recently over neglecting G-B in the project. According to the official, either the CM or his nominee will represent G-B in all meetings and events taking place at a national or international level. CM Secretariat's spokesperson Sajjadul Haq stated an international conference will be organised next year in China to attract investment for G-B. “This conference is an outcome of the CM's meeting with Hussain in Islamabad,” noted the spokesperson. He added G-B's Karakoram International University will sign agreements with China's Sinkiang University to encourage research on CPEC and learn the languages of respective counterparts.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/989700/through-g-b-rahman-offered-a-seat-at-cpec-table/>

“KNP asks Pakistan to stop harassing Kashmiri leaders in PoK”

Big News Network, November 12, 2015

In a letter to Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Syed Ibne Abbas, the Kashmir National Party (KNP) has raised the issue of harassment of its workers in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Dr

Shabir Choudhry, Diplomatic Head of Kashmir National Party, noted in a statement, “We are seriously concerned about growing intolerance and curbing of political and economic rights in Pakistani Administered Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan”. It added, “We strongly oppose violence, religious intolerance and terrorism in any form or shape; and promote our struggle peacefully. This right is granted to us by the UN Resolutions on Kashmir, the UN Charter and the Constitution of Pakistan”. Dr. Choudhry has written to Pakistan High Commissioner that despite peaceful struggle the Kashmiri leaders and political workers in Azad Kashmir are systematically targeted and harassed under the cover of National Action Plan. In December 2014, Pakistan announced a national plan to fight terrorism.

A special military tribunal court to handle terrorism cases in the country was also formed a week after the deadly attack on a military school in Peshawar that killed 149 people, 133 of them children. However, political activists in Pakistan occupied Kashmiri alleges that in the shade of NAP, Pakistani forces are harassing them.

<http://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/238491561/knp-asks-pakistan-to-stop-harassing-kashmiri-leaders-in-pok>

“Gilani seeks provincial status for AJK, G-B”

The Express Tribune, November 12, 2015

Former chief justice of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Supreme Court has sought provincial status for the two disputed territories of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). Justice (retd) Manzoor Hussain Gilani, chairman of the Association for the Rights of People of Jammu and Kashmir, noted that both G-B and AJK are parts of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir, under control of Pakistan. He stated the present de-facto provincial arrangements in G-B and AJK need to be formalised in the Constitution. The lack of this formalisation has hampered the commitment of the Pakistani government, and retarded democratic growth of the areas, while denying them their legitimised status under the country's constitution, he stressed. “Both territories need similar, simultaneous constitutional reforms to

be empowered as 'special territories of Pakistan akin to provinces', with representation in all policy and decision-making institutions under the Constitution," Gilani stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/989538/constitutional-reforms-gilani-seeks-provincial-status-for-ajk-g-b/>

“Tripartite talks stressed to solve Kashmir dispute”

The Nation, November 12, 2015

Speakers called for early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue in line with the aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir without further delay through tripartite talks among Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir. Speaking at a reception hosted in his honour on November 11 by Central Senior Vice Chairman J&K Peoples National Party Zulfiqar Ahmed Raja Advocate, Gilgit/Baltistan Legislative Assembly member Nawaz Khan Naaji stated that Jammu & Kashmir state, comprising five units of AJK, GB, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh regions, is inalienable entity and no power on earth could divide. Former chief justice of AJK High Court and President Jammu & Kashmir Liberation League Justice (Retd) Abdul Majeed Mallick, ex Mirpur District Bar Association Presidents Sardar Ejaz Nazir Advocate and Azeem Dutt Advocates, Aslam Watnoof, Amin Beg Advocate and others also addressed the ceremony.

They stated that people of Jammu & Kashmir from across the LoC should be included in the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan to ensure the early resolution of the decades old Kashmir dispute in line with the aspirations of the people of the state. The speakers noted that international community including America and the western world were also showing keen interest for the early peaceful solution to Kashmir issue.

“It could be assessed through the fact that major powers including United States and the western world are stressing for the early peaceful solution to the issue through meaningful dialogue between India and Pakistan.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/12-Nov-2015/tripartite-talks-stressed-to-solve-kashmir-dispute>

Arshad Shaheen / Khalid Qayyum, “Increasing interference: AJK to lodge protest with federal govt”

The Express Tribune, November 15, 2015

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led government in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) decided to lodge a protest against the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led federal government for its increasing involvement and bans on recruitment and development projects. According to sources, the AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed is convening a meeting of the cabinet in which he will take the ministers into confidence on the protest programme. The AJK government holds Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Barjees Tahir responsible for the cessation of its harmony with the centre. Sources noted the federal government has postponed the implementation of Rs800m development package for the AJK. Implementation of Rs10.5b annual development programme has also been placed on the back burner. The education policy given by the federal government five years back stated the primary schools will be upgraded. However, even the first phase of this programme has not been implemented. There will be elections for the AJK in July 2016. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had announced projects of billions of rupees during his visit to AJK in September 2015.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/991731/increasing-interference-ajk-to-lodge-protest-with-federal-govt/>

“NOC to be made compulsory for tourists”

The Express Tribune, November 15, 2015

The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) decided on November 14 that a No Objection Certificate will now be made mandatory for the adventure tourism in the area; a notice in this regard will soon be issued by the tourism department. Tourism Department of AJK has asked people from all the four provinces who want to scale peaks, raft, paraglide or rock climbing in the area to first get an NOC for the concerned department. Earlier in September 2015, Islamabad based climbers Usman, Imran and Khurram aged between 30 and 35 years had gone missing while trying to scale the Sirwali peak in the Kel area of Neelum Valley. On

September 16, the Neelum District administration called off the rescue operation and declared both the missing climbers dead who had gone Neelum Valley for climbing without any NOC.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/991557/preemptive-measures-noc-to-be-made-compulsory-for-tourists/>

“Key suspect in Nanga Parbat massacre escapes police raid”

Dunya News, November 17, 2015

A key suspect in the 2013 massacre of foreign climbers in Pakistan is on the run after he hurled grenades at officers who were pursuing him, injuring 10 of them, officials stated on November 16. The suspect, named by police as Rahimullah, has a bounty on his head of one million rupees (\$10,000) over his alleged involvement in the attack on the base camp at Nanga Parbat, Pakistan's second highest mountain. Gunmen dressed in police uniforms stormed the camp and shot dead 10 foreign mountaineers and their guide in an assault that shocked the world and scarred the country's climbing tourism industry. Police had tracked Rahimullah down to a house in the Tangir area in northern Gilgit-Baltistan province and cordoned it off, a local police official noted on telephone. "We raided that house and warned the militant to surrender, but he hurled grenades over the raiding team," Mehr Ghani stated, referring to Rahimullah, who also goes by the alias Azizullah. "We retaliated and the exchange of fire continued for the whole night. When we entered the house in the morning, the suspect had already escaped." Ten officers were injured in the stand-off and a male relative and a woman who were in the house were taken into custody, Ghani noted. Muhammad Wakeel, spokesman for the local police, stated that Rahimullah is one of seven high profile suspects who are still being hunted by investigators in connection with the 2013 attack.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/308829-Key-suspect-in-Nanga-Parbat-massacre-escapes-police>

“Army trains force to deal with terrorism”

The Express Tribune, November 19, 2015

The Pakistan Army has trained a special high altitude force in GilgitBaltistan to encourage

foreign tourists to visit the region. A ceremony was held on November 18 to mark the completion of the training. G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rahman attended the event as a chief guest. Force Commander Major General Asim Munir was also present on the occasion. On November 18 after the ceremony, Rahman stated the force was trained by the army because traditional training was not adequate enough to protect climbers at high altitudes. "In the past, a series of reservations were expressed over police performance," he noted. "However, with a force that has been trained diligently, similar complaints can now be avoided." According to Rahman, the new force has been trained by Special Service Group commandos and is equipped with special gear and equipment to respond to emergencies.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/994296/new-tactic-army-trains-force-to-deal-with-terrorism/>

Saira Begum, “How to curb intolerance and extremism from GB?”

Dardistan Times, November 19, 2015

In retrospection, I have a vague but hazardous memory of my childhood. I was coming back from school in a frosty winter morning when I heard uninterrupted firing for several hours. The dismal state of affairs was indicating something serious but I was unaware of what was going on until our car was intercepted on the road and warned us to move back. Then, one of the men broke the news of murder of Zia-ud-Din Rizvi, leading Islamic Shia scholar in Gilgit Baltistan. During this turmoil, several innocent people lost their lives without being indulging in any conflict. Later on, curfew was imposed for couple of weeks and business in the vulnerable disputed area came to halt. For months, Shia, and Sunni conflicts became talk of the town, from a ten years kid to a grown up man, everyone was discussing and striving hard to surpass in breeding extremism, conflict and hatred in society. Meanwhile, schools re-opened after a month but there was a wave of fear all around, the fear of indoctrinating young minds with religious extremism and hatred. Diabolical forces succeeded in inculcating extremism, fundamentalism, sectarianism and intolerance which have damaged

peace and tranquillity of Gilgit. Anyhow, this was my first memory of knowing about Shiite and Sunni cleavages that rifted peace of the area apart, before this, I was not cognizant with any sectarian cleavage. Young generation of my age has been poisoned with this kind of hatred.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/articles/1528704017/how-curb-intolerance-and-extremism-gb>

“Gilgit-Baltistan part of JK: PaK President”

Greater Kashmir, November 20, 2015

Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan stated that Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) were part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and any change in this position could deal a blow to the stand of Kashmiris as well as Pakistan on the lingering dispute. “I have always spoken for the rights of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, but it's not an appropriate time to discuss proposals that can dent our principled stand on Kashmir issue,” he stated, while talking to a delegation of Capital Journalists Forum on November 19. “Instead, we should devote ourselves to the settlement of the larger issue, which has far reaching benefits more for Pakistan than the Kashmiris,” he added. He recalled that during his visit to the US to attend OIC contact group meeting, Sartaj Aziz, advisor to PM Pakistan on foreign affairs, told him that a committee was being constituted on Gilgit-Baltistan status issue, but his (Khan's) response was that this issue should not be discussed there.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/pak-administered-kashmir/gilgit-baltistan-part-of-jk-pak-president/202071.html>

“Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan new GB governor”

The Nation, November 21, 2015

Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan, a veteran politician and close associate of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has been appointed as the governor of Gilgit-Baltistan on November 20. Ghazanfar, a sitting member of the region's legislative assembly from Hunza district, is considered to be a close friend of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Earlier, Minister for Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Chaudhry Barjees Tahir was appointed governor of G-B on February 15, 2015 after the amendment of

G-B Governance and Self-Rule Order. The president has approved, on the prime minister's advice, the appointment of Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan as Governor Gilgit-Baltistan. He also served as the chief executive of the then Northern Areas' Legislative Council (NALC).

<http://nation.com.pk/national/21-Nov-2015/mir-ghazanfar-ali-khan-new-gb-governor>

“Staving off a crisis: Attack on Chilas police station repelled”

The Express Tribune, November 22, 2015

Police officials repelled an attack on a police station in Chilas town of Diamer district on November 21 “Jal police station in Chilas town was attacked at 3:30am,” a police official noted. “Armed attackers opened fire on the police. A group of officials were on high alert owing to recent attacks in the districts and retaliated. The attackers managed to flee.” Later in the day, commendation certificates were awarded by Diamer DC Usman Ahmad to officials who had repelled the attackers. According to the police official, no casualties have been reported so far. The attackers are believed to be involved in the kidnapping of two Special Communication Organisation (SCO) officials that happened earlier in November 2015.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/996101/staving-off-a-crisis-attack-on-chilas-police-station-repelled/>

“Altering Gilgit-Baltistan status will be blunder: Amanullah Khan”

Greater Kashmir, November 23, 2015

The supreme head of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Amanullah Khan, has urged Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to desist from taking any decision regarding Gilgit Baltistan's merger with Pakistan, saying that any attempt to convert the region into a province would be a blunder. The JKLF founder voiced these concerns in a letter addressed to the prime minister of Pakistan, Mian Nawaz Sharif. He maintained that any such move by the incumbent government 'will bring Pakistan at par with India in many ways.' Besides annoying a big number of Kashmiris, Khan observed, any attempt to change the status of the region would also adversely affect the world

opinion about Kashmir issue. "It is for these sound reasons that the people and political parties of Azad Kashmir (AK) do not make such demands," he stated. So far as the question of granting rights to the people of the region is concerned, he pointed out, there were many other ways of meeting the genuine demands of the people of the region.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/south-asia/altering-gilgit-baltistan-status-will-be-blunder-amanullah-khan/202384.html>

“26 Kashmiris travel by trans-LoC Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus”

The News, November 24, 2015

As many as five residents of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) left for Srinagar while two Kashmiris from the Jammu and Kashmir crossed over into this side of the Line of Control (LoC), AJK, by the trans-LoC bus operating between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad on November 23, official sources stated. A total of 19 people from both sides, the AJK and the Jammu and Kashmir, also crossed sides by the bus at the LoC in the Chakothi-Uri Sector on the ancient Muzaffarabad-Srinagar Road. Official sources noted on November 24 evening that five AJK residents, including four women, left for Srinagar by the weekly bus. They reached the LoC moving point at the Chakothi-Uri sector and then walked through the ancient Peace Bridge for their onward journey to Srinagar to meet their relatives separated in 1947. The sources noted that eight Kashmiris from the Jammu and Kashmir, who had come to the AJK, also returned to Srinagar after completing their stay with their relatives living in the AJK. They included three women and a child. Meanwhile, two residents of Kashmir crossed to this side of the LoC to meet their relatives, sources noted. As many as 11 AJK residents, including three women, who had gone to Srinagar on a previous bus trip, also returned to their homes.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/15825-26-kashmiris-travel-by-trans-loc-muzaffarabad-srinagar-bus>

“Azad Kashmir base camp of Kashmir liberation struggle”

Greater Kashmir, November 27, 2015

The Prime Minister of Pakistan-administered

Kashmir has noted that the region is the “base camp of Kashmir liberation struggle”, in his interview with media. Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated that “people and government of Azad Jammu-Kashmir (AJK) will never leave their brethren alone struggling for their right to self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir.” He noted this while addressing a meeting of Apex committee held in PaK capital Muzaffarabad, as Radio Pakistan reported. Majeed also lauded the role of Pakistan Armed Forces for conducting a successful operation against terrorists in the country.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/pak-administered-kashmir/story/202704.html>

“AJK IIC mulls woman induction as 'Qazi”

The Nation, November 28, 2015

The Islamic Ideological Council of Azad Jammu & Kashmir discussed at length the appointment of woman being 'Qazi' in the state judicial system and payment of loan from Zakat fund for higher education. The AJK IIC also reviewed implementation of the previous recommendations made during its last meeting. The 91st session of the eight-member AJK IIC was held with its Chairman Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, the AJK Supreme Court Chief Justice, in the chair. The council reviewed the AJK Auqaf Act - 1960, The official Secrets Act - 1923, the reference landing from Law, Justice, Parliamentary Affairs and Human rights regarding the appointment of a woman being 'Qazi' in the Islamic-oriented judicial system of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and payment of loan from Zakat fund for higher education. The meeting discussed the issue in response to a reference moved by the AJK government seeking opinion, under the doctrine of the teachings of Islam, about the induction of a woman in capacity of Qazi in the AJK's judiciary, following a reference reached from the AJK Department of Law, Justice, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights. The members including leading scholars representing different schools of thoughts including Secretary Council Syed Fida Hussain Gardezi, Additional Secretary Law and Justice Waheedul Hassan Chaudhry, Ch Munsif Dad Advocate, Mufti Syed Kafayat Hussain Naqvi, Maulana Muhammad Ishaq Madni, Allah Syed

Ghulam Yasin Shah Gillani, Maulana Muhammad Imriaz Sadiqqi, Maulana Muhammad Khursheed Khan, Dr Muhammad Iqbal Majadadi and others reviewed in depth all the aforementioned issues.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/28-Nov-2015/ajk-iic-mulls-woman-induction-as-qazi>

“APHC (M) stands for reunification of all five regions of erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir”

Scoop News, November 28, 2015

Terming the statement of former chief minister, Farooq Abdullah, as historically incorrect, a spokesman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) on November 27 stated Kashmir is an internationally accepted disputed territory and the resolution of the dispute would be possible only by resolving it in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Kashmir. APHC spokesperson noted that Hurriyat stands for the re unification of all five regions of the state of Jammu Kashmir which includes Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. He stated nobody's personal viewpoint could change the disputed character of Kashmir or change the political and historical realities of the issue. The spokesman noted there are United Nations resolutions on the issue. He stated the dispute could only be resolved either by implementing the UN resolutions or through a meaning full dialogue among the main stakeholders India and Pakistan.

<http://www.scoopnews.in/det.aspx?q=52429>

“Majeed calls for resolving Kashmir issue”

Radio Pakistan, November 29, 2015

The Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated resolution of Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiris is imperative for durable peace in the region. Talking to various delegations in Muzaffarabad on November 28, he noted Kashmiris will never accept any formula designed to divide on Kashmir. Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated that Kashmiris are rendering unprecedented sacrifices for the liberation of their motherland from the Indian clutches and accession of whole state to Pakistan. Azad Kashmir Prime Minister further

noted Kashmiris will never accept any formula designed to divide on Kashmir.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/newsdetail/81080/1>

Shabbir Mir, “Constitutional limbo: G-B lawyers vow to resist move to thwart reforms”

The Express Tribune, November 30, 2015

Lawyers in Gilgit-Baltistan have vowed to resist any move to curtail powers of elected representatives in the constitutional reforms proposed for the region. Speaking to the media on November 29, G-B Bar Council Vice Chairman Shehbaz Khan stated the legal fraternity will not accept a symbolic provincial status for the region. The remarks come at a time when Adviser to PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and his team are preparing to amend the G-B Empowerment and Self-Rule Order 2009. The committee which also includes G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rahman is expected to present the draft document to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in December 2015. According to Shehbaz, the federal government should retain control over defence, foreign affairs, communication, finance and currency. “The regional assembly should have jurisdiction over the rest of the affairs,” he added. The lawyer insisted if G-B cannot be declared the fifth province of the country owing to the Kashmir dispute, it should at least be given provisional constitutional status.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1000828/constitutional-limbo-g-b-lawyers-vow-to-resist-move-to-thwart-reforms/>

“Part and parcel: G-B assured of inclusion in CPEC”

The Express Tribune, November 4, 2015

The federal government has approved the establishment of two economic zones in GilgitBaltistan (G-B) as part of the multibillion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Lawmakers learnt this at G-B Legislative Assembly's session on November 3. “Two zones will be set up in G-B and have been approved by the federal government,” Parliamentary Secretary for Law Aurangzeb Khan noted before the house which was being chaired by Speaker Fida Muhammad Nashad. G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rahman was

unable to attend the session as he was unwell. “The regional government has been asked to select the venues and this will be done soon,” stated the lawmaker in an assuring tone. Politicians and other stakeholders have time and again questioned the federal government's resolve to include the region in the project linking China to the Gwadar port. PPP's Imran Nadeem expressed reservations over Aurangzeb's statement, saying the establishment of an official body was a prerequisite for such zones. “The body has not been formed yet; forget about other things,” he stated. “Normally, it's the responsibility of the provincial governments to arrange finances for the economic zones.”

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/984615/part-and-parcel-g-b-assured-of-inclusion-in-cpec/>

“PM Sharif announces construction of Gilgit-Skardu expressway”

ARYNews, November 24, 2015

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has announced to construct Gilgit-Skardu Express at a cost of Rs 50 billion rupees. He made this announcement while addressing the cheque distribution ceremony for earthquake affectees in Gilgit on November 24. He stated that the expressway will be connected with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for generation of economic activities in the area. Mr. Sharif stated an airport in Gilgit would be constructed for jet service. The Prime Minister further noted the federal government is spending billions of rupees in the areas for better communication facilities and other welfare oriented development projects. The PM also stated work on various power projects including Bhasha Dam is in progress to tackle energy crisis. He directed for early payment of compensation money to the earthquake affected people.

<http://arynews.tv/en/pm-sharif-annordu-expressway/>

“Govt keen to develop infrastructure in Azad Kashmir”

Radio Pakistan, November 29, 2015

Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal stated funds will be issued on priority to expedite development in Azad Kashmir. He was talking to Azad Kashmir

Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed in Islamabad on November 30. The Minister noted the federal government is keen to develop infrastructure in Azad Kashmir, and several mega development projects have been launched in various areas. Earlier, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed briefed the federal minister about the pace of work on the ongoing development projects in Azad Kashmir. Chaudhry Abdul Majeed briefed the federal minister about the pace of work on the ongoing development projects.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/newsdetail/81061/1>

“Govt likely to remove PPP condition”

The Nation, November 30, 2015

The government is likely to waive off the Central Development Working Party's (CDWP) condition regarding Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for the construction of Hanzil Hydropower project at Gilgit. Gilgit Baltistan has requested the federal government to remove the CDWP condition of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for the construction of Hanzil Hydropower project, the working paper of the project noted. The proposed project is a medium head run of the river scheme which envisages construction of 20 MW hydropower project located on the right bank of Gilgit River, a tributary of Indus River at about 12 km from Gilgit town.

The total cost of 20 Megawatts (MW) Hanzil Hydropower Project, would be Rs 6.248 billion and would be completed in four years. Rs 1 billion have already been allocated in the PSDP 2015-16, while the project has a Foreign Exchange EC component of Rs 948.37 million. The Ministry of Water and Power Gilgit Baltistan requested that the condition of PPP mode be deleted from the CDWP decision because PPP mode is not possible in GB due to various reasons.

The reason forwarded by Gilgit Baltistan (GB) government for waiving off the CDWP conditions includes: National Grid is not connected to GB and Nepra jurisdiction cannot be extended to the area. There also exists no local policy for PPP or IPP mode. The load and diversity factor are very low in

the area as there exists no heavy industries due to which repayment to the investors through tariff is not possible. In October 2013, a meeting was held on the request of GB where the representative of IPDF, Finance Division also acknowledged that PPP mode is not viable option for the implementation of these projects.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/30-Nov-2015/govt-likely-to-remove-ppp-condition>

“Even all Indian troops can't tackle militants, says Farooq Abdullah”

Dawn, November 30, 2015

A day after he was criticised for saying that Azad Kashmir would remain with Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir with India, National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah stated his remarks were not new. He actually went a step further and declared that Indian forces could not “defend against terrorists and militants”. He had noted on November 28 that “Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)” would remain

with Pakistan and that war was not an option. On November 29, he apparently attempted to clarify his statement but ended up repeating what he had stated earlier. “PoK will be a part of Pakistan; J&K will be a part of India. It is not something new that I have stated,” the former J&K chief minister stated. “All of India's forces can't defend against terrorists and militants,” he was further quoted as saying. Abdullah was assailed for his remarks, even as his son and former J&K chief minister Omar defended him by saying that this was the long-standing belief of his father. Farooq Abdullah suggested that interaction between people on the two sides of the divide should be enhanced, instead of focusing on territorial disputes. “People-to-people contact is essential. That is how fear is fought,” he stated.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1223061/even-all-indian-troops-cant-tackle-militants-says-farooq-abdullah>

Economic Developments

“Trophy hunting programme: G-B sets \$67,500 as hunting fee for markhor”

The Express Tribune, November 1, 2015

The Gilgit-Baltistan government announced the licence fee for this year's hunting season with Pakistan's national animal Markhor topping the list at \$67,500. The permit auction ceremony was held in Gilgit on October 31. It was presided over by G-B Forest and Wildlife Secretary Sajjad Haider and attended by a large number of wildlife department officials. The hunting permits for four markhors, 60 ibexes and eight blue sheep were auctioned in Gilgit this week. The licence fees for markhors, Himalayan blue sheep and ibexes have been set at \$67,500, \$8,800 and \$3,000, respectively. According to an official of G-B wildlife department, auctioning trophy hunting was a step towards conserving wildlife. Speaking on October 30, the official further stated the initiative will lead to the implementation of more techniques of preservation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/982886/trophy-hunting-programme-g-b-sets-67500-as-hunting-fee-for-markhor/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan Seeks Share of CPEC Pie”

Business Recorder, November 1, 2015

The government of Gilgit-Baltistan urged the federal government to initiate some development projects for the territory under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The federal government has so far signed at least 51 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) of different energy and development projects with China but none of them is for Gilgit-Baltistan. A major chunk of the funds is allocated for construction and installation of new power projects to overcome the ongoing energy crisis. Gilgit-Baltistan Minister for Works Dr Muhammad Iqbal noted on October 30 that his government has taken up the issue with the federal government as zero projects under the CPEC for GB is a clear cut case of discrimination against the

people of the territory. “The federal government has promised to construct two economic zones in Gilgit-Baltistan but these projects are not part of the CPEC,” he stated. The Minister further stated the federal government should not ignore the people of the territory “who need development projects under the CPEC the most. We hope the federal government would pay heed to our demands and include the territory in the CPEC.” A senior government official, however, stated the government has refrained from announcing any projects for the Gilgit-Baltistan under the CPEC as it does not want to make the entire corridor controversial.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-stories/0/1241912/>

“Six-year delay increases cost by 157pc to Rs 8.6b”

The Nation, November 7, 2015

The delay of six years in the implementation of 26MW Shagharthang Hydropower has increased the cost of the project by 156.7 percent from Rs3.35 billion to Rs 8.6 billion. The shortage of funds, red-tapism, depreciation in rupee value, location in low priority areas etc are the main reasons for the cost escalation and it is a routine matter with most of the hydropower projects, an official source noted. The delay, in the projects, is costing hundreds of billions of rupees loss to the national exchequer annually, the source added. According the working paper, the project was originally approved on August 20, 2009 with the cost of Rs 3.35 billion which reached to Rs 4.84 billion in 2011 and finally got the CDWP approval at Rs8.6 billion. Out of the total cost of Rs 8616.015 million, the Foreign Exchange Components (FEC) is Rs 71843.13 million. The project will be financed from Multi tranche Financing Facility, Tranche-III of Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan provided from RESDIP and will be completed in four years. The

total allocation for the project in the PSDP 2015-16 is Rs 100 million. The main reason for the delay in the construction of 26MW Shagharthang Hydropower was its financing issue as in 2013 the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet refused to take on the responsibility for repaying foreign loans sought by Gilgit-Baltistan. In 2013, the matter of re-lending and repayment of loans by the Gilgit-Baltistan government for, 26 megawatts hydropower project to be developed in Shagharthang Skardu, came to ECC for discussion.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/07-Nov-2015/six-year-delay-increases-cost-by-157pc-to-rs-8-6b>

“Ripe for investment: Vast opportunities in AJK”

The Express Tribune, November 9, 2015

Vast investment opportunities are present in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and our traders and industrialists should come forward to avail them, stated AJ&K President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, while talking to a delegation of the Pak-China Club. “Local and foreign investors could get the best results by investing in AJK. There is no law and order problem here,” he stated, adding that his government was giving priority to education and currently the region's literacy rate stood at 75%. Meanwhile, Pak-China Club President Javed Asghar Arain noted in order to boost the industrial sector, reduction in taxes and custom duty was needed. “There are so many taxes and they keep on increasing the cost of production of our goods, making them uncompetitive in the international market. “China is fully committed to helping Pakistan in terms of economic development and many Chinese companies have assured heavy investment in the country,” added the Pak-China Club Chief Adviser Huang Junqiang.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/988321/ripe-for-investment-vast-opportunities-in-ajk/>

“7100MW Bunji Project: WAPDA Submits PC-1 to Planning Commission”

Business Recorder, November 16, 2015

The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) submitted PC-I of the 7100-MW Bunji

Hydropower Project located on Indus River 83 kms from Gilgit to the Planning Commission for approval. In a report to the Gilgit Baltistan government, WAPDA Chairman Zafar Mahmood stated the Prime Minister attaches highest importance to the exploitation of hydropower potential, which exists in Gilgit-Baltistan. According to Mahmood, Pakistan has the potential to produce 100,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power. Of this, the identified potential stands at 60,158MW, but only 6,919MW has so far been tapped. He stated the Indus Cascade, located in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the future energy corridor for Pakistan. PC-I of the 7100-MW Bunji Hydropower Project PC-I consisting of Land Acquisition, Preliminary activities, Civil & Electro Mechanical works has been sent to the Planning Commission for approval. PC-I of some of the projects on Indus Cascade are yet to be readied. "To execute such mega projects in private sector, WAPDA has submitted a policy to the Ministry of Water and Power for approval", he further added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193/1247010/>

“CPEC to cause unemployment in Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Express Tribune, November 16, 2015

The much-publicised China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) may benefit many, but it will render more than 10,000 people of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) jobless once the existing dry port is relocated from Sost in G-B to Havelian in Hazara division of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. There is no industry in the whole of G-B and more than 10,000 people are associated with the Sost dry port including businessmen, transporters, hoteliers and other people, whose livelihood is directly and indirectly linked with the port. The people of G-B are concerned about their future as the federal government has not given any concrete assurance in black and white for establishing economic zones in the region to compensate the people. At present, trucks and containers loaded in China are off-loaded at the Sost dry port for customs clearance, which automatically generates economic activities for local traders, labourers, transporters and trade

agents. It is stated that unlike the existing situation, under the CPEC, all the containers and trucks will be loaded in any city of China and then off-loaded at Havelian and there will be no activity at the Sost port.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/992728/anticipating-effects-cpec-to-cause-unemployment-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

“AJK approves Rs390m health project”

The Nation, November 25, 2015

The AJK government approved a project worth Rs390 million for the up-gradation of Mirpur Divisional Headquarter Hospital through the construction of a state-of-the-art building in the existing hospital complex. Mirpur DHQ Teaching Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Bashir Chaudhry briefed newsmen about the salient features of the plan. Affixing priorities for providing instant healthcare for the population, the AJK health authorities have started implementing the plan with the induction of doctors in the hospital to serve the people with zeal, he stated. He further noted that the existing Divisional Head Quarter Hospital Mirpur was being expanded with latest facilities of medication and surgery particularly through the recent induction of professor doctors of various medical faculties. The medical superintendent noted that anti-snake vaccine has been made available round the clock in the DHQ hospital for the instant treatment of the victims. It attained the distinction of teaching hospital after the emergence of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College in Mirpur about 4 years ago. Dr Bashir stated that at the same time DHQ hospital had so far been furnished with all requisite services for indoor and outdoor patients. The divisional headquarter hospitals at Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot were elevated under a decision taken by the AJK government.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/25-Nov-2015/ajk-approves-rs390m-health-project>

“Proposal to introduce pre-paid electricity meter system in AJK”

The News, November 29, 2015

The AJK government is seriously contemplating to install pre-paid electricity meter system in AJK to

ensure absolutely correct billing, official sources revealed. The sources noted that the plan for installation of pre-paid electricity meter system also involved the introduction of meter reading card. The sources further noted that the government is taking these steps in the light of frequent complaints by general consumers of electricity in the AJK about wrong billing. Besides initiating the phased plan for introduction of pre-paid electricity meter system, the government is also contemplating to computerise the billing of electricity. Monitoring teams, headed by SDOs, have been established at all district and Tehsil levels to receive public complaints about wrong and over billing from the consumers. At present the electricity bills for all sorts of consumers are compiled manually by Revenue Wing of the State Electricity Department. Complaints by the consumers about supply of incorrect electricity bills have become a routine. The sources disclosed that the government has also decided to keep the posting of a line man or a meter reader in an area only for a period of three-months. No line man or meter reader could complete more than the stipulated three-month period in any area and their transfers would be made in rotation under the proposed new policy, the sources noted. The government has also directed the State Electricity Department to gradually change all of the old meters and power supply lines.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/78651-proposal-to-introduce-pre-paid-electricity-meter-system-in-ajk>

International Developments

“European Parliament criticizes China, Pakistan for role in PoK, Gilgit-Baltistan”

India News, November 25, 2015

International human rights defenders and members of the European Parliament severely criticized both China and Pakistan for what they called growing human rights violations in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) including Gilgit-Baltistan. Seven of the over 120 participants taking part in the conference on the theme of “China in Pakistan: Growing Human Rights Concerns” were particularly severe in

their opinions about the role being played by both of these countries in territories seen as having disputed status. The participants were from the European Parliament, civil society and the European Union.

<http://www.india.com/news/world/european-parliament-criticizes-china-pakistan-for-role-in-pok-gilgit-baltistan-736298/>

Other Developments

“Glaciers declared dangerous in Gilgit Baltistan”

Daily Times, November 18, 2015

Thirty-six glacial lakes in different valleys of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) have been declared dangerous, and seven of them pose the most serious threat to the people, noted the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) chief on November 17. The PMD head was on an official visit to the GB, where flash floods triggered by monsoon rains and melting glaciers have wreaked havoc on the infrastructure in various valleys, causing loss of billions of rupees. “These lakes carry the risk of outburst,” stated PMD Director General Dr Ghulam Rasul, adding it could

cause severe damage to lives and properties. He was addressing a workshop titled 'Disaster awareness and the role of the media', which was organised for Gilgit-based journalists by Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS), an international group of agencies for provision of emergency relief. Around two-dozen journalists from the print and electronic media attended the event.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/18-Nov-2015/glaciers-declared-dangerous-in-gilgit-baltistan>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Total area of Jammu and Kashmir	222,236 sq kms
Area of under illegal Pakistani occupation (PoK = AJK + Gilgit Baltistan)	78114 sq kilometres
Area of J&K under Chinese occupation <i>Area ceded to China by Pakistan</i>	42,685 sq kms 5,180 sq kms
Together Pak-China	120,799 sq kms
Area with India	101437 sq kms

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

Area ceded to China by Pakistan: 5180 sq. kilometres (Area of Shaksgam Valley)

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

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

POK NEWS DIGEST



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