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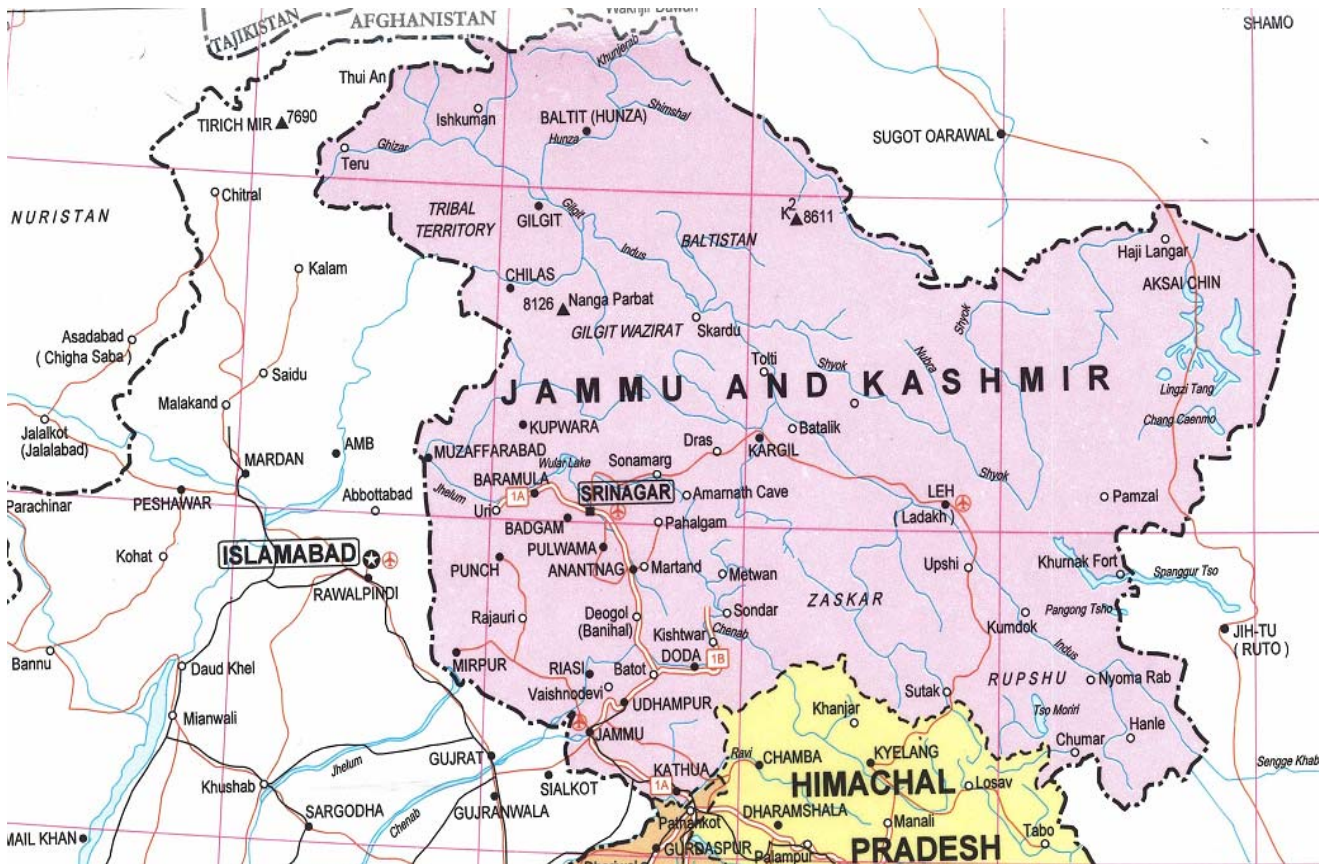
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

The suicide bomb attack in Muzaffarabad on January 6 has raised serious concerns amongst people in PoK which otherwise is a peaceful region. The spate of such attacks has been continuously hitting PoK ever since June 2009 attack in which an army base was targeted. Even though some groups have claimed responsibility of the attack, it is unclear as to who is behind these violent incidents. Militant training camps are operative in PoK for long; however bomb attacks in PoK is comparatively a new development. It has rung the alarm bells in the Pakistani establishment which already is struggling with the Taliban in the tribal regions.

PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif defended Chinese projects in PoK stating it is Pakistan's right to develop the region as is indicated in one of the reports. Sharif while reacting to India's opposition on the issue, perhaps failed to note that China's role in the region is bound by its own strategic calculations and not the so called friendship with Pakistan. To say that the Chinese presence in the region would be entrenched in the PoK in the next few years is no exaggeration. In the long run, the strong presence of the Chinese in the PoK may adversely affect Pakistan's own interest such a running terror camps in the region. The Chinese are very particular as far as the security of its citizens on a foreign land is concerned. Also, Pakistan may loose the little social leverage that it has on people in PoK, who having been deprived for decades might start looking more towards China to better their lives.

Cross LoC trade resumed after being suspended for more than two weeks. It is high time the authorities on both sides take note of the procedural complexities and undertake suitable measures to mend them.

Priyanka Singh

Leadership Crisis in Gilgit-Baltistan

*Senge Hasnan Sering**

With the world stepping into the second decade of 21st century, Gilgit-Baltistan continues to grapple with its failed endeavors of political and judicial autonomy. To date, natives of the region live under Pakistan's governor-rule which became possible through the newly promulgated Self-governance and Empowerment Order. The order strengthens Pakistan's role in local political decisions and its control over the natural resources. As a strategy to further strengthen its hold over Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan continues the policy of socio-economic neglect, where the resources of the region are developed and exploited but with minimal benefit to the locals.¹ Notwithstanding the divide and rule policy of Pakistani agencies, a fragmented society with no unified platform to demand political rights has failed to address the constitutional crisis. Grave implications continue to loom over South Asia as prolonged Pakistani stay in the region might destabilize the region. Although the onus rests on Pakistan to acknowledge its illegal presence in the region and withdraw after delegating authority to the local people, however, the leadership crisis in Gilgit-Baltistan is also to be blamed for Pakistan's prolonged stay. The region is largely dependent on federal handouts, which has led to formation of a ruling cadre whose loyalty to Islamabad precedes loyalty to their own land. These rulers tend to maximize personal benefits from their relationship with Islamabad and while the inter-dependency continues, a win-win situation allows Pakistan to advance its strategic interests in the region and conveniently absolve herself from the responsibility of alleviating socio-economic conditions of local masses.

Among the local politicians who champion Pakistan's cause in Gilgit-Baltistan, the name of Syed Asad Zaidi (SAZ) stands out as the speaker of Northern Areas Legislative Assembly. SAZ was native of the strategically located Kharmang valley, which borders both Leh and Kargil districts of Ladakh. Before getting shot and killed in 2009 by an anti-Shia group of Gilgit, the people of Kharmang elected him member of the Northern Areas Council twice and member of

the Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) once. During his political career, he established himself as a bona fide king's man and remained loyal to the ruling political party in Islamabad. Famous as a competent lawyer and flamboyant debater, he became a valuable resource for Pakistan to establish their firm rule in the region. For instance, when the local Shia leadership announced an election boycott in 1998 and brought the entire region to a standstill, it was SAZ who persuaded some local notables to contest the election, thereby breaking the deadlock and making the boycott ineffective.² Local Shia parties pose a constant threat to Pakistan's illegal rule in the region, which provide an opportunity to people like SAZ to play as Islamabad's savior. During the 1994 council election, he once again came to Islamabad's rescue and campaigned for the pro-establishment party. Although he lost his home constituency for opposing local Shias, he managed to win the goodwill of Pakistani rulers. Likewise, during the 2006 Indo-Pak Peace Conference held by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) of Singapore, SAZ tactfully praised establishment's role in the region and brushed aside the allegations of some participants about Pakistani's political, religious and cultural deprivation in Gilgit-Baltistan. In all these instances, he chose to represent the government of Pakistan in Gilgit-Baltistan rather than be a true representative of the local people. In return to his loyalty, the authorities fully supported SAZ and honored his every demand to help him become one of the leading regional politicians. For instance, when Pakistan bifurcated Baltistan into two districts of Skardo and Ganche, the people of Kharmang wanted to be part of the Skardo district. It is said that SAZ persuaded the authorities to implement the decision and gained instant popularity by doing so.

So why was SAZ like that? One can accuse him of being selfish and of desiring fame, power, money and influence, which come only by aligning with the Pakistani ruling elite. But the real question is: under the Pakistani occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan, did he really have any alternative path to achieve his goals? Could he afford to think independently; side with his people; and at the same time survive as a successful politician? SAZ (as well as the rest of the political

leadership of PoK) are actually a victim of Pakistan's colonial system. Ruling these regions with an iron fist, Pakistan formulates policies, which prolongs its unjust rule and inhibits political empowerment for locals. Pakistan may claim itself as a welfare state and the guardian of Muslims of South Asia, but willfully refuses ample funds and sustainable socio-economic development for the natives of the region. The collaboration between leaders like SAZ and the Pakistani authorities has adverse impact on the local socio-polity. It keeps the society divided thereby weakening the efforts of those who desire basic rights and withdrawal of Pakistani armed and civilian forces from their homeland. As the local politicians are weak and timid in their demands for the rights, Pakistan uses its leverage to slow down the political evolution. This is evident from the fact that after sixty-two years of Pakistani rule, Gilgit-Baltistan still lacks a political institution with the freedom to legislate.

As members of a toothless political body like Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA), which is legislative in name only, local politicians are given a role no different from that of government project coordinators. When the voters demand of their representatives to obtain funds for infrastructural development, the politicians have to look towards the federal bureaucrats who design and approve the budget, and have absolute authority over the local chief minister. Likewise, Pakistani army officers hold complete sway in Gilgit-Baltistan. Chief Secretary, Inspector General Police, regional judicial chief, as well as the governor and chief minister wait for a cue from the regional Field Command Force (FCGB) before undertaking any decisions. Successive wars with India have literally converted Gilgit-Baltistan into an army garrison. Today, the army is the biggest provider of employment to the locals who become cannon fodder during unfortunate affairs like the Kargil war.

Kharmang valley bore the actual brunt of the Kargil war. Imposed by Pakistan on the masses of Baltistan and Ladakh, this war led to destruction of many villages of Kharmang and killing thousands of people, while many more were forced to abandon their homes and become refugees. Pakistan army has a long-term agenda in Gilgit-Baltistan and maintains a permanent

presence in Kharmang. In order to sustain its existence, the army inevitably gets involved in the politics and infrastructural development of the valley. A truck-able road constructed for the army that goes all the way to the LoC, also connects Kharmang with the rest of Baltistan. Metal bridges, pony tracks and dirt roads in border villages enable the soldiers to reach valleys along the LoC. In the same manner, medical centers, water supply schemes, telephone lines, hydro-electric schemes and ration depot exist to facilitate the armed forces. These facilities are still a dream in parts of Gilgit-Baltistan without armed forces. Sparsely populated villages like Rganogs, Dansar, Watsara and Bresil on the LoC have motorable roads and metal bridges which densely populated valleys like Basha of Shigar lack. "If our villages were situated on the Indian border, we would have enjoyed the same benefits" is the message which Baltis of Shigar and Rongyul valleys convey regularly.³ They envy the infrastructural projects allocated to Kharmang, many of which are undertaken with civilian budget but to benefit the armed forces. Such statements and a desire to live in a war zone depict the height of desperation that villagers of Baltistan show. To their dismay, their local leadership fails to fulfill their basic needs.

SAZ cashed on the presence and infrastructure of the armed forces. His loyalty to the army officers provided the leverage to claim many of these projects as his own achievements. But the same leader refused to demand to open Skardo-Kargil road, even though this is the lifeline of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in general and for the people of Kharmang in particular.⁴ Opening this road alone could eliminate dependency on Pakistan's funds and eradicate poverty and unemployment in Gilgit-Baltistan. SAZ knew that an economic empowerment through trade and tourism via the Skardo-Kargil road could liberate his voters from the clutches of Pakistani rulers. In the end, SAZ preferred to promote the greater interests of Pakistan over the genuine interests of his own people.

Local nationalists claim that SAZ collaborated with the Pakistani agencies to spread sectarian violence in Gilgit-Baltistan. They refer to his notorious anti-Sunni speech of 1971, which he along with Agha Barmas delivered in the Gilgit town. Mr. Shakeel, who is alleged to have murdered SAZ, also blamed him for

promoting an anti-Sunni agenda. The murder of SAZ is a sheer failure on part of Pakistani authorities to provide protection to local politicians, which induce fear among the locals. After his death, schools and business remained closed for weeks causing irreparable socio-economic damage. In the name of maintaining law and order, the authorities tightened their grip and increased interference in the local matters. The incident enabled the authorities to beef up armed forces, station Khyber Rifles, Chitral Scouts and Frontier Constabulary at Gilgit on permanent basis, ghettoize Gilgit town by creating no-go areas, arrest hundreds of innocent people on suspicion and torture many more on unfounded pretexts. Imposition of successive curfews for weeks crippled local economy and restricted free movement. The actual killers are never caught and rather live under the protection of the agencies. With no choices available, poor people fall back on Islamabad to provide security and maintain peace. A vicious cycle of dependency on Pakistan thus continues.

The local nationalists further claim that such murders are orchestrated by government agencies and help divert attention of the masses from real issues like the political and constitutional limbo looming large over Gilgit-Baltistan since 1947. They believe that the agencies used this incident as an opportunity to spark off sectarian riots, since SAZ was killed in Kashrote, which is a Sunni neighborhood of Gilgit town. Some pro-Pakistani elements also used this occasion as an opportunity to create ethnic tensions in Baltistan. Politicians staged protests and delivered inflammatory speeches accusing the people of Gilgit for the death of SAZ. They demanded that Baltistan be separated administratively from Gilgit. Others talked about ousting the Gilgiti nationals residing in Skardo. Few weeks after his death, Islamabad announced the creation of a separate commissionerate for Baltistan. Although this might bring more job opportunities for Baltis, but the timing of this decision raises suspicion on Pakistani plans to sow seeds of severance and make the people of Gilgit-Baltistan weak in their capacity to demand the right of self-determination. The ethnic divide between Baltis and Gilgitis will further distort the perception of nationality among those Shinas who are citizens of Baltistan for

centuries.⁵ For instance, as a reaction to the anti-Gilgit speeches, many local Shinas stopped attending prayers at the Balti Mosques. Authorities could not be happier with the timing of these speeches and rallies since it has encouraged both sectarian and ethnic conflict in Gilgit-Baltistan at the same time. Such conflicts have strategic implications for India where Shias and Buddhists co-exist in Ladakh.

Death of a talented politician like SAZ is an unfortunate incident. During his life time, authorities used him to promote Pakistan's strategic interests in Gilgit-Baltistan and after his murder, for which the agencies are equally blamed, the same valuable resource became an opportunity to intensify socio-political divide and tighten Islamabad's grip on the region. Both situations are extremely shocking and have a message in them for the local leadership. Had SAZ been loyal to his people and the land rather than championing the cause of occupiers, his fame and political success would have been eternal.

People of Gilgit-Baltistan were living peacefully for centuries despite religious and ethnic differences. In the last four decades, these differences have been exploited by Pakistani authorities to promote their own interests of divide and rule. Only Pakistan's withdrawal from Gilgit-Baltistan will expedite a just solution of Kashmir issue and improve Indo-Pak relations and regional stability. At the same time, it will restore peaceful atmosphere and brotherhood among different ethnic and religious groups that once existed in this part of Jammu & Kashmir.

Endnotes

- 1 Per capita income of Gilgit-Baltistan is one-fourth of national average (AKRSP SESNAC 2005) and literacy rate is less than 15% (World Bank Assessment of 1997)
- 2 In 1997, Pakistani authorities created additional constituencies in Gilgit for the Sunni members, which marginalized Shias in the council. As a reaction, all political parties boycotted Northern Areas Council elections of 1998;
<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/icg449/icg449.pdf>
(pp:16)
- 3 Expressed by the people of Shigar in 1999 during the signature campaign demanding opening of Skardo-Kargil Road

- 4 A signature campaign to drum up local support to persuade Pakistan to open Skardo-Kargil Road was carried out in 1999, which enabled many politicians, religious leaders, businessmen, tour operators, educators, and other members of the society to unify their voices. Unfortunately, SAZ refused to support the cause.
- 5 Shinas are a predominant ethnic group of Gilgit and constitute less than 7% of the total population of Baltistan. They are related to the Kashmiris and speak a similar Dardic language.

* *The Author is Visiting Fellow at IDSA. The views expressed are his personal and not that of IDSA.*

Political Developments

“10 killed, 81 hurt in Muzaffarabad blast, PM announces aid for Muzaffarabad blast victims,”

Pakistan Tribune, December 28, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: At least 10 people were killed and 81 injured on Sunday after a suicide bomber blew himself up at the gate of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Muzaffarabad. Meanwhile, Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir has announced financial support of Rs.200,000 for the victims. According to reports, a suicide bomber blew himself up near CMH in Muzaffarabad. Pakistani Army reached the scene after the incident and initiated rescue work. Injured were shifted to the CMH. Hospital sources confirmed that six dead bodies of policemen were brought in.

<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?222756>

“Three soldiers killed, 11 hurt in suicide attack in PoK,”

PTI, January 6, 2010

ISLAMABAD: A suicide bomber struck an army barrack in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on Wednesday, killing at least three soldiers and wounding 11 more in the latest in a wave of terrorist attacks across the country. The bomber targeted the barracks close to an army hospital at Tararkhal, over 90 km from PoK capital Muzaffarabad, police said. Part of the barracks was destroyed by the blast. There were about 35 soldiers in the facility at the time of the attack on Wednesday morning. Three soldiers were killed instantly and 11 more injured. The wounded were taken to the army hospital. Police said the bomber detonated his explosives after guards stopped him at the gate of the barracks.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/5415921.cms>

Aziz Ali Dad, “Discontent in Gilgit-Baltistan,”

Pamir Times, January 22, 2010

The announcement of the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Ordinance in September 2009 gave some hope to the optimists

that it would pave the way for democratic governance and political rejuvenation of the moribund governance structure and stagnant political culture of Gilgit-Baltistan. Sceptics, however, dubbed it as an eyewash to hide the real mechanics of power, which are under the direct control of the federal government. It was hoped that the fervour of debate for and against the empowerment package would gradually subside and give way to an objective view after the elections. Now that a new set-up is in place, there are some factors that lend credence to the sceptics' argument. These can prove detrimental to the nascent democratic process and damaging to the reputation of the ruling party in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/01/22/opiniondiscontent-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Press Release: Muzaffarabad,

January 13, 2010

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan instructed the concerned departments to accomplish all projects and schemes of Hydal Power within time. The Prime Minister further said, “The development of Azad Kashmir mainly depends on power generation. The Prime Minister ordered to appoint project director, at once for Jagran phase-2 and Gheing Hydal Power projects. The Prime Minister also advised the concerned departments to compile working plan for new projects in order to use its reserved fund in time.

<http://pmajk.gov.pk/press%20release2.asp?id=150>

“China-Pakistan border open for providing relief good to Hunza,”

Gilgit Baltistan Times, January 25, 2010

HUNZA: The Pak-China border was opened in order to provide relief goods to the people of Upper Hunza (Gojal) who were strapped and cut off from the rest of Hunza due to the disastrous land slide in Attabad. Attabad Land slide blocked the KKH highway, the only link between upper Hunza with the rest of the world. The blockage of the KKH has resulted in acute shortage of basic necessities such as food, medicines and fuel in the area. The people of Hunza were

demanding to open the Pak-China border which remains closed for trading during the winter. However, the Government of Pakistan requested China to open the border for providing all necessary items from the Chinese province of Xingjiang. Although the border is open for relief items it will remain closed for trade and tourism purpose. The border is opened by Chinese for the first time in the 25 year history of the KKH.

<http://gbtimes.wordpress.com/2010/01/25/newschina-pakistan-border-open-for-providing-relief-good-to-hunza/>

“TTK accepts responsibility for suicide attacks in AJK,”

Regional Times, January 21, 2010

MIRANSHAH: The Tehreek-e-Taliban Kashmir (TTK) accepted the responsibility of two separate suicide attacks on the Pakistan Army in Azad Kashmir. Talking to BBC, Abu Dojana, the spokesman of the TTK said that the reason of attacks on the Army was the U-Turn in the Kashmir policy and the US drones attacks in the tribal areas.

<http://www.regionaltimes.com/21jan2010/backpagenews/ttk.htm>

“Pak-China friendship caravan to attend Kashghar Trade Fair,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 20, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan-China Institute Mushahid Hussain will be leading a friendship caravan of 60 people from Gilgit to Kashghar in China by road to attend the Kashghar Trade Fair for further cementing the Sino-Pak ties. Hussain stated the Pakistan-China Institute is the first non-governmental, non-party and non-political organization with equal number of experts, scholars and intellectuals from China and Pakistan. “It is the first Pakistan-based think tank to promote, strengthen and expand Pakistan-China relations in different fields”, he further said. The decision regarding friendship caravan from Gilgit to Kashgar was taken at a consultation meeting of the institute on January 4.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=94515&Itemid=1

“PM directs Gilgit-Baltistan govt to ensure good governance,”

Pakistan Times

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani directed the Gilgit-Baltistan government to ensure good governance, transparency and equal treatment to all regardless of their political affiliation. Talking to the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah in Islamabad, the Prime Minister said the PPP government has given autonomy to the area and would release the required funds for its development.

<http://pakistanimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=8141>

Press Release: Muzaffarabad,

January 18, 2010

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan advised his cabinet ministers to curtail their expenditures and adopt the policy of contentment. He further said that attacks on security forces would not be tolerated. Orders had already been placed for the establishment of peace committees and ministers would monitor those peace committees. The Prime Minister further noted, “Terrorism is a critical issue and needs prompt consideration.”

<http://www.pmajk.gov.pk/press%20release2.asp?id=154>

“G-B LA gives Feb 10 deadline for meeting demands,”

The News, January 30, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) belonging to district Diamer on January 29 gave February 10 deadline to the federal government and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) to meet the demands of more than 34,000 affected families of the proposed Diamer-Bhasha dam. They said a charter containing 16 demands of the residents of district Diamer had already been given to the concerned quarters, adding “if the demands were not met by February 10, a new charter of demands would be given increasing compensation amount besides launching a campaign against the dam.”

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=221545

“Govt seeks development of Gilgit-Baltistan resources,”

Daily Times, January 29, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad on January 28 said Gilgit-Baltistan was full of natural resources, especially water resources and the government is determined to develop the region to bring its people in the main stream of development path. He expressed these views during a meeting with high level delegation headed by Syed Mehdi Shah, CM Gilgit-Baltistan.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C29%5Cstory_29-1-2010_pg5_12

“AJK Speaker Attends Interactive Dialogue at EU Parliament,”

Kashmir Watch, January 27, 2010

BRUSSELS: Mr. Shah Gulam Qadir, speaker of the AJK assembly attended an Interactive Dialogue in the European Parliament organised by the Kashmir Centre, EU Mr. Qadir has been encouraged by the position expressed by the MEPs and asserted his confidence that some progress can be made on the issue. He noted that a single European Policy on the Kashmir conflict would see much greater progress.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1264724674&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

Zafar Iqbal, “The Other Face of ISI,”

Countercurrents, January 28, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: The capital of Pakistan administrated Kashmir sparked with protest demonstrations against the human rights violations by Pakistan’s security agency- Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) whose officials were blamed for detention and torture of four local citizens. Hundreds of women and young girls took protest rallies against, what they called ‘atrocities of the ISI by torturing and kidnapping our sons and brothers’. First time in the history of the region, streets and roads of Muzaffarabad echoed with the feminist but vociferous slogans against the ISI and government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://www.countercurrents.org/iqbal280110.htm>

Tariq Naqash, “Two troops injured in AJK suicide bombing,”

Dawn, January 17, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Two army personnel were injured after a teenaged suicide bomber attacked their vehicle in the southern Poonch district of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This is the fifth attack in the region since June 2009. The attack took place near Dothan village, 16km from Rawalakot. Remains of the bomber were collected by the police.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/two-troops-injured-in-ajk-suicide-bombing-710>

“10 injured as bomb explodes while being diffused in PoK,”

ANI, January 27, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: At least 10 persons were injured, including three policemen, when a bomb exploded while security personnel tried to diffuse it in Rawalkot district of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) on January 27. The bomb was planted in front of a school in a milk casket and exploded as the bomb disposal squad tried to diffuse it. “Ten people including three policemen and four civil defence personnel were injured. Officials said that while the school may have been a target of the plotters. Investigations were still on to determine the motive of planting the bomb outside a school building.

<http://news.oneindia.in/2010/01/27/10injured-as-bomb-explodes-while-being-diffused-in-pok.html>

“Govt taking practical steps for improving lot of the poor: Kaira,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 26, 2010

MANSEHRA: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Qamar Zaman Kaira stated on January 26 that the Pakistan Peoples Party government was fully committed to improving the lot of the poor masses and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was a unique scheme launched to achieve this goal. The minister was addressing a public rally held in Mansehra as part of election campaign of the PPP candidate for NA-21 bye-elections.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=95040&Itemid=1

Tariq Naqash, “Army to train AJK police in fighting terrorism,”

January 08, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir government on January 7 decided to get its police personnel trained by the armed forces to effectively combat terrorism, which has lately found its way in this peaceful region. This and many other important decisions were taken at a high level meeting, chaired by AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider. The meeting reviewed the capacity and functioning of the AJK police and decided to impart them training from army institutions after the GOC offered cooperation to the AJK government in this regard. The army could train the AJK police personnel in using latest weapons, removing and destroying explosive materials and collecting secret information, Maj-Gen Ahmed was quoted as saying in an official statement.

<http://www.dawnnews.tv/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/army-to-train-ajk-police-in-fighting-terrorism-810>

“AJK Govt decided to collect particulars of foreigners”

RAWLAKOT: Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has decided to take action against illegal Afghan citizens under foreign act and decided to collect particulars of other citizens while peace committees also are being constituted at village level. Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Raqeeb told that that the registration work of foreigners has been completed in the jurisdiction of Rawlakot Municipal Corporation.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=157432>

“Pakistan has to move out its troops from POK,”

January 20, 2010

International Council Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party (IC JKNAP) leaders demanded that Pakistani state must immediately move out its troops from populated areas of POK as soon as possible, after series of suicide attempts have been made on them. It is quiet clear that army has split in groups and fighting has been broken out among army groups and we do not want this hostile army to stay here in our peaceful region to harm our innocent people who are

already victims of this occupied army. We demand that in the first phase the army should immediately relocate and second phase Pakistan army can leave this part of Kashmir, as soon as local Kashmir army could be restored and takes over the responsibilities of the region. Azad Kashmir army must be immediately restored without wasting any more time. It is the need of time and Pakistani army has completely failed to get even a little support from local population. The local people have not accepted this army as their own.

http://australia.to/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=578:pakistan-has-to-move-out-its-troops-from-pok&catid=100:just-in

“Bhim Singh welcomes India’s stand on ‘Gilgit-Baltistan’,”

January 5, 2010

Prof. Bhim Singh, Chairman, National Panthers Party and Member, NIC today hailed the reaction by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India on Pakistan’s attempt to legalize its occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan by treating this part of Indian Territory as 6th Province of Pakistan. Prof. Bhim Singh expressed satisfaction vis-à-vis India’s commitment on Gilgit-Baltistan, a Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which was occupied by Pakistan in 1947 by kidnapping and illegally detaining the then Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, Brig. Ghansara Singh. Since then this area of Chitral, Gilgit and Baltistan comprising 32,500 sq. miles continues to be under the illegal occupation of Pakistan.

<http://kashmirihindu.wordpress.com/2010/01/05/bhim-singh-welcomes-india%E2%80%99s-stand-on-%E2%80%98gilgit-baltistan%E2%80%99/>

Shabir Choudhry, “KNP concerned over growing extremism PAK,”

January 18, 2010

Kashmir National Party leader, Dr Shabir Choudhry expressed great concern over growing extremism in Pakistani Administered Kashmir. He said, “People of our region are suffering because of wrong policies of Pakistani agencies which continued unhindered in this area for many years ago.” KNP leader said, “It was a deliberate policy of Pakistani agencies to promote policies of extremism and they exported terrorism in

disguise of Jihad for many years and now those policies have come to haunt them”. Dr Shabir Choudhry said, “Our region is peaceful and terrorism and suicide bombing are alien to our culture and society. Because of policy of extremism our people in Pakistani Administered Kashmir have suffered continued harassment and humiliation for many years.”

http://australia.to/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=548:knpc-concerned-over-growing-extremism-pak&catid=103:dr-shabir-choudhry&Itemid=140

“PM propels relief items for hunza victims,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 16, 2010

ASTORE: Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Babar Yaqoob on January 16 stated that said that Prime Minister (PM), Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani has sent two C-130 planes containing relief items for Hunza landslide victims. He further stated said the goods were shifted from Gilgit airport to the affected areas by the local administration. The relief items include tents, blankets and quilts. The local administration said that these items would be helpful in rehabilitation work and resolving the problems of the victims.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=94164&Itemid=1

“Pakistan has right to develop Kashmir region, says Nawaz,”

Daily Times, January 16, 2010

BEIJING: Pakistan has the right to carry out development activities in Kashmir and establish economic cooperation with China for the region’s development, PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif said on January 15. Nawaz, currently in China, was referring to India’s objections to China’s involvement in ongoing projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. “The criticism is not fair. It is the basic right and requirement of Pakistanis in the Kashmir region to benefit from such projects and no one can deprive them of these rights,” he said. Around 10,000 Chinese workers are involved in 120 projects in Pakistan.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C16%5Cstory_16-1-2010_pg7_9

Sher Afzal Hunzai, “Time to Explore Gilgit Baltistan Package,”

Hunza Times, January 5, 2010

Gilgit Baltistan Package 2009 is said to be the first step towards the development and rehabilitation of the People of Gilgit Baltistan .The time has arrived to prove that “what in reality the Package has in it for the People of Gilgit Baltistan. All the people of Gilgit Baltistan know what happened in elections of 2009 .GBLA cabinet is formed under shadow of President Asif Ali Zardari. District Hunza Nagar representative is been given a key position in Gilgit Baltistan legislative assembly.

<http://www.hunzetimes.com/archives/4051>

“AJK premier urges Pak to revisit Kashmir policy,”

Dawn, January 6, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider on January 5 called for a joint session of Pakistan’s parliament to “revisit the national Kashmir policy” which he said had seen deviation under Gen (ret) Pervez Musharraf. “Pakistan needs to reaffirm its decision of 1949 from its most supreme forum of parliament,” Mr Haider noted in his welcome address to President Asif Ali Zardari during a special joint sitting of the AJK assembly and AJK council in Muzaffarabad.

Mr Haider suggested that a ‘national security policy’ should be formulated to rid the country of problems it was facing.

<http://www.dawnnews.tv/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/12-ajk-premier-urges-pakistan-to-revisit-kashmir-policy—bi-11>

“Pak contemplating provincial status for Gilgit-Baltistan,”

January 7, 2010

LAHORE: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah stated that the Pakistan Government would constitute a legal committee to determine if the region could be given the status of the country’s fifth province. “We are currently working within the given constitutional autonomy, but will raise the matter before the legal committee to determine whether the region

can be given the status of a full-fledge province,” Shah further noted.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/pak-contemplating-provincial-status-for-gilgit-baltistan_100300328.html

“Elections in Gilgit-Baltistan,”

January 03, 2010

While reporting on the recent elections - a first - in the Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan (in an attempt to bring democratic processes to this region), Zafar Iqbal asks whether this is truly a dawn of a new democracy or a continuing of a flawed political process. The election of Northern Areas Legislative Assembly has completed the most considerable constituent of the Constitutional Package enforced by the Government of Pakistan to empower the local population in Pakistan Controlled Gilgit-Baltistan region, however, allegations of massive procedural irregularities, government interference and rigging have been levelled against the ruling Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) which emerged as the single largest party in the election on November 12, 2009 with 11 seats from total 23.

http://www.thesouthasian.org/archives/2010/elections_in_gilgit_baltistan.html

“Safi elected new APHC AJK Convenor”

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference (Geelani) of AJK chapter elected Ghulam Mohammad Safi of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, as its Convenor for the next three years. The decision was taken in full session of the APHC AJK, presided over by Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and former Convenor of the APHC (G).

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2010/01/14/safi-elected-new-aphc-ajk-convenor/>

“Appointment of Arif Aslam as Governor Gilgit-Baltistan demanded”

ISLAMABAD: The Diamer Bhasha Dam Committee has supported the appointment of a senior politician Arif Aslam as Governor Gilgit-Baltistan instead of a woman. The committee opined that the local politician who is aware of matters related to forests construction

of Diamer Dam and interested in solving other development matters and to be acceptable for the local people should be appointed as Governor Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=156921>

“Lashkar-e-Zil behind Azad Kashmir suicide hits”

Investigations carried out by the Pakistani authorities into the rising incidents of suicide bombings in Azad Kashmir indicate the involvement of the Lashkar-e-Zil (LeZ) or Shadow Army, which is a loose alliance of the al-Qaeda and Taliban-linked anti-US militant groups active in Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to those investigating the recent suicide bombings in Azad Kashmir, there are clear indications that the January 6, 2010 attack targeting a military installation in the Sudhnoti district of Azad Kashmir, which killed four Pakistani soldiers had similar connection.

<http://www.pakspectator.com/lashkar-e-zil-behind-azad-kashmir-suicide-hits/>

Maqbool Malik, “N’ demands GB governor slot,”

The Nation, January 11, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Lobbies representing different political parties have intensified their efforts to secure the prestigious position of Gilgit-Baltistan’s woman governor to be appointed by the President Asif Ali Zardari. According to the sources, apart from smaller political parties, PPP and the PML-N have stepped up their efforts to secure the slot. Sources further noted both the PPP and PML-N have short listed names of their probable nominees and were in talks to cut the deal.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/11-Jan-2010/N-demands-GB-governor-slot>

“Pak can’t afford abandoning UNSC resolutions regarding Kashmir: TeK UK President,”

January 9, 2010

LONDON: Speakers at a function held in connection with Right to Self Determination emphasized that

honest implementation of UN Security Council Resolution is only way forward to resolve long-standing Kashmir issue. Speaking on the occasion, prominent Kashmiri community leader and Senior vice President Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK , Chaudhry Mohammad Sharif stated Pakistan cannot afford abandoning of UNSC resolutions as these resolutions provides internationally recognized legal frame work to sort out the Kashmir issue.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2010/01/09/pak-can%E2%80%99t-afford-abandoning-uns-resolutions-regarding-kashmir-tek-uk-president/>

“Gilgit CM delinks region from J&K, annoys India Delhi,”

January 01, 2010

India, reacting strongly to the newly-elected chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan declaring the region Pakistan’s “fifth province,” said the area was part of Jammu and Kashmir. “The entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India by virtue of its accession to India in 1947. Any action to alter the status of any part of the territory under the illegal occupation of Pakistan has no legal basis, and is completely unacceptable,” External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vishnu Prakash stated on January 7. The Indian reaction came amid reports quoting Gilgit-Baltistan’s first CM, Mehdi Shah, saying the recent November elections meant the region was a separate province and had “no connection to Kashmir”.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/newdelhi/Gilgit-Baltistan-is-part-of-Kashmir-asserts-India/Article1-492780.aspx>

“Security beefed up in AJK after suicide attack in Tarar Khal”

MUZAFFARABAD: Security has been intensified in Azad Kashmir after suicide attack in Tarar Khal as vehicles entry has been banned in the jurisdiction of Prime Minister Secretariat and Assembly. According to details, strict police vigilance has been started at entry points from Pakistan to Kashmir. Patrol has been increased at border of Kashmir with NWFP and Punjab.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=156740>

“Spreading terror;”

Dawn, January 8, 2010

For the most part, Azad Jammu and Kashmir managed to escape the violence that has engulfed Pakistan in recent years. But the last six months or so have seen a spike in terrorist activity, the most recent being the January 6 deadly suicide attack outside a military barracks in Tararkhel. Security forces in AJK were earlier targeted by a suicide bomber in June 2009, an incident that claimed the lives of two soldiers. Then, in November 2009, three men blew themselves up after they were besieged by police and residents in Muzaffarabad. About a month later, a suicide bomber killed at least seven mourners participating in a Muharram procession in Muzaffarabad. January 6 bombing was reportedly the first such attack outside the AJK capital.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/19-spreading-terror-hh-01>

M Taqi Akhunzada, “Presidency in search of woman governor for Gilgit-Baltistan,”

The News, January 07, 2010

SKARDU: Some women from Gilgit-Baltistan were being interviewed at the Presidency in view of President Asif Ali Zardari’s announcement on the eve of the second death anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto that a women governor would be appointed in Gigit-Baltistan. The idea floated by President Asif Ali Zardari was warmly appreciated among womenfolk across Glgit-Baltistan, saying it was an encouraging sign and would go a long way towards gender equality and create vast opportunities for women of the area in the field of politics.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=217287

Gilgit Baltistan: Press Release,

January 04, 2010

Balwaristan National Front head condemns Pakistan suicide attacks and plundering of natural resources in the region. Balwaristan National Front head condemns Pakistan suicide attacks and plundering of natural resources in the region. Chairman Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Abdul Hamid Khan stated

suicide attacks are condemnable acts and the nation will never support such extreme rhetoric to get their demands fulfilled.

In a press statement issued on January 1 2010, Khan stated Nawaz Khan Naji's announcement that suicide attacks were justified against cruel rulers was in fact a conspiracy against the nationalists of the region. He said the statement of Mr Naji was condemnable at all levels. Mr Khan said such statements were being issued at the behest of security agencies in order to pave the way for deployment of outsider troops and law enforcers in all parts of Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/10537/254/>

“Indian raises objections over China's role in AJK projects”

NEW DELHI: Taking exception to China's involvement in several projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, India the other day described it as “illegal” and said it had conveyed its concern over this as well as supply of Chinese weapons to Pakistan. External Affairs Minister S M Krishna is expected to visit Beijing in April 2010, said “India lives in a difficult neighbourhood” and national security and terrorism originating from “across our borders” would remain a major challenge in 2010.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2010/01/05/indian-raises-objections-over-china%E2%80%99s-role-in-ajk-projects/>

“NA body seeks opposition leader in Gilgit Baltistan Assembly,”

January 2, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas asked the Chief Secretary to initiate necessary legislation for the provision of opposition leader in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly. To the dismay of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, it was informed under the current rules, there was no provision of opposition leader in the house.

<http://gbtribune.blogspot.com/2010/01/na-body-seeks-opposition-leader-in.html>

Economic Developments

“LCCI plans moot for diplomats in Gilgit,”

Dawn, January 9, 2010

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry has decided to convene an ambassadors’ conference in Gilgit-Baltistan in April 2010 to brief them about investment opportunities in the area. The LCCI president made the announcement at the concluding ceremony of Gilgit-Baltistan investment week held in Lahore on January 8. He also announced four post-graduate level scholarships for outstanding students belonging to Gilgit-Baltistan. Two scholarships would be given for Agriculture University Faisalabad while the remaining two would be given for the Punjab University.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/business/lcci-plans-moot-for-diplomats-in-gilgit-910>

Tariq Naqash, “AJK Council’s indecision costs govt Rs11m,”

Dawn, January 16, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has paid more than Rs11 million in mark up on an overdraft it was compelled to obtain during the current financial year following the alleged dilly-dallying by the AJK Council with regard to release of the funds. The AJK Council is responsible for collection of taxes through Income Tax department whose administrative expenditures are drawn from this income. The remaining amount is distributed between the government and the council in the ratio of 80:20. For long, there have been calls by the successive Azad Jammu and Kashmir governments for revision of this ratio on the grounds that spending of the funds generated from the AJK territory should be the prerogative of the government in Muzaffarabad.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/ajk-councils-indecision-costs-govt-rs11m-610>

GR Chandio, “BISP to end quota system in Gilgit-Baltistan: Farzana Raja,”

Regional Times, January 26, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme will provide financial assistance to all

deserving families of Gilgit-Baltistan and would end the quota system, said Federal Minister/Chairperson of the BISP, Farzana Raja on January 25. In a meeting with the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah, who visited the BISP Secretariat along with a delegation, the BISP Chairperson stated that the financial assistance will be provided based on a criteria being followed in other provinces and noted that the quota system has been ended.

<http://www.regionaltimes.com/26jan2010/nationalnews/bisp.htm>

Shujaat Bukhari, “LoC trade remains suspended,”

The Hindu, January 8, 2010

Trade across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir remained suspended for the second week even as a limited number of trucks crossed Uri-Muzaffarabad on January 6. Traders from both sides have reiterated their decision to suspend business until their governments remove the bottlenecks. Traders from both sides of the LoC met at the Chakan da Bagh crossing point and discussed, among other issues, the ban on some items, which they said was a setback.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/states/other-states/article77276.ece>

Shujaat Bukhari, “LoC trade resumes following assurance,”

The Hindu, January 12, 2010

After remaining suspended for two weeks, the trade across the Line of Control (LoC) resumed on January 12 with 24 truckloads crossing to other side from Chakan Da Bagh in Poonch and 40 from Uri side. The trade had been suspended by LoC Traders Association on December 22 demanding that restrictions on certain items be removed. The trade on Chakan Da Bagh side had crossed over Rs. 150 crores in past one year but dropped soon after Moong Dal was banned for export from Pakistani side.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article79629.ece>

“Members of the European Parliament Disappointed With the Comments of Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan,”

PRNewswire, January 11, 2010

BRUSSELS: A group of Members of the European Parliament are extremely disappointed to note that the Pakistan media has reported the newly elected Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan as saying that his government would constitute a legal committee within a month to determine whether the region could be given the status of Pakistan's fifth province. They would like to emphasise that Gilgit Baltistan has, for the first time, been finally given a modicum of democracy after 1947. It is essential that democratic institutions and the democratic ethos be allowed to take root before seeking to hurriedly fashion the future status of the region. It should not be forgotten that Gilgit Baltistan is part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir which Pakistan itself calls disputed territory.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/members-of-the-european-parliament-disappointed-with-the-comments-of-chief-minister-of-gilgit-baltistan-81134847.html>

“Pakistan Senators delegation visits Kashmir Centre Brussels,”

Kashmir Watch, January 25, 2010

BRUSSELS: The Kashmir Centre EU today hosted a dinner for a delegation of Pakistan Senators who were currently on a visit to Brussels in order to interact with the institutions there. The visiting dignitaries included Senator Farooq Hamid Naek Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood, Senator Kazim Khan, Senator Mir Muhammad Ali Rind, Senator Gulsham Saeed and Senator Dr. Khatu Mal Jeevan.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1264494822&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news

“Pak, Kuwait ink \$50 million accord,”

Daily Times, January 5, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development on January 4 signed a loan agreement amounting to \$50 million to finance the Reconstruction of Higher Education Institution Project in the earthquake affected areas of AJK. Economic Affairs Division Secretary Sibtain Fazal Halim and Deputy Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Director-General Hesham Al-Waqayan signed the loan agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C05%5Cstory_5-1-2010_pg5_2

“Indonesia willing to invest in Gilgit-Baltistan agriculture sector,”

Daily Times, January 6, 2010

LAHORE: Gilgit-Baltistan has huge investment opportunities in agriculture and medicinal herbs as the area is not only the gateway to China and Central Asian States, but also has a well-established infrastructure. This was the crux of the presentations given at Gilgit-Baltistan Investment conference held at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on January 5. Speaking on the occasion, Indonesian Ambassador stated that Indonesia was ready to extend maximum cooperation to Gilgit-Baltistan government in exploration of coal and mining.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C06%5Cstory_6-1-2010_pg5_5

Other Developments

“Landslide-hit Hunza villagers demonstrate,”

Daily Times, January 25, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Over a hundred residents of Attabad in Hunza on January 24 staged a demonstration outside National Press Club against the Gilgit-Baltistan government for delaying reconstruction of their riverside village destroyed by landslides last month. Carrying placards and banners with slogans against Gilgit-Baltistan government, they said the landslide-affected families had been waiting for start of reconstruction work in their village. They said the regional government had even failed to provide them alternative shelter until reconstruction of their houses.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C01%5C25%5Cstory_25-1-2010_pg7_41

Tariq Naqash, “AJK PM seeks end to class-based education system,”

Dawn, January 13, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider on January 12 directed the education department to formulate a new education policy with the help of experts, laying emphasis on elimination of class-based education system. The class-based education system is widening the gulf between the rich and poor on the one hand and narrowing opportunities for the poor to excel in different walks of life on the other, he said during a meeting held to review the working of the department.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/ajk-pm-seeks-end-to-classbased-education-system-310>

“Wapda asked to finalize Diamer-Basha dam formalities,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 23, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Stressing the need for well coordinated efforts for timely completion of Diamer-Basha dam, Minister for Water and Power, Raja Pervez Ashraf asked Wapda and all other concerned departments to finalize all the matters relating to the dam at the earliest. Presiding over the 2nd meeting of

(Other Developments continued after Abbreviations)

ABBREVIATIONS

AJKHEB	Azad Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Electric Board
AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
BNF	Balawaristan National Front
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CDP	Community Development Programme
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBR	Federal Board of Revenue
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
JIAJK	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
KAC	Kashmiri American Council
KKH	Karakoram Highway
KNM	Karakoram National Movement
LoC	Line of Control
NLI	Northern Light Infantry
NALA	Northern Areas Legislative Assembly
NAEDC	Northern Areas Executive Development Committee
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PoK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POGB	Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan
PPP	Pakistan Peoples' Party
UJC	United Jihad Council
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority

Ministerial Committee constituted by the Prime Minister on diamer-basha dam project in Islamabad on January 19, he said that the government would take all possible steps for betterment of the area and funds have been allocated in this regard.

<http://skardu.wordpress.com/2010/01/23/wapda-asked-to-finalize-diamer-basha-dam-formalities/>

“200 stranded people airlifted to Gilgit,”

The News, January 11, 2010

HUNZA: As many as 200 people stranded in Sost valley of Hunza over land sliding were airlifted to Gilgit by helicopters. According to local authorities, the restoration of the Karakoram Highway could take one month. According to the spokesman of Gilgit-Baltistan Disasters Management Authority, 200 people, including traders, truck drivers and laborers, were stranded in Sost valley over land sliding on Karakoram Highway. They were airlifted to Gilgit by helicopters, relief items have been dispatched to the snow-hit victims of Attabad by the Red Cross.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=95838>

“Neelum-Jhelum project to generate 969 MW by 2016”

ISLAMABAD: The construction of Neelum- Jhelum Hydropower Project is expected to be completed in November 2016, which will add 969 megawatt electricity to the country’s transmission system. Work on the dam was initiated in January 2008 and was set to be completed in June 2013, however; now the project will be completed in 2016 according to the revised schedule.” They said the preliminary cost (PC-I) of the project was estimated at Rs.84, 502 million.

http://www.pakwatan.com/business_detail.php?id=7117

Hameed Shaheen, “Saudi Relief builds 3000 houses in AJK quake zones,”

Pakistan Observer, January 21, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV) has completed 3000 pre-fabricated houses in quake-hit Muzaffarabad to provide residential facilities to the affected. This was

stated by Dr.Khalid M. Al-Othmani, Regional Director of SPAPEV saying the affectees have actually moved into these house and living comfortably. A similar project of housing is in the last phase of completion at Bagh (AJK) and 1000 units would be handed over soon to the displaced families for residential purpose, he further added.

<http://pakobserver.net/201001/21/news/topstories08.asp>

“16 bodies recovered from Pakistan’s 2005 quake,”

AFP, January 14, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Rescue workers recovered 16 bodies on January 14, more than four years after a devastating earthquake buried them under tons of rubble in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, police noted. “We have recovered 16 dead bodies from the rubble. These people were trapped by the earthquake while travelling in a passenger coach,” senior police official Sardar Ilyas, stated in Muzaffarabad.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hWzRvFcchzAeWQeLCUz_LYwM_8Zg

Kalbe Ali, “Work on Diamer-Bhasha dam to begin this year,”

Dawn, January 15, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water and Power Raja Pervez Ashraf stated on January 14 that work on Diamer-Bhasha dam would begin this year and the Asian Development Bank had given assurance of financing the project. Presiding over a meeting of ministerial committee on the project, he said the dam would open a new era of economic development and prosperity. Wapda chairman briefed the meeting on matters relating to land acquisition, upgradation of Karakoram Highway and resettlement plan. It would be the highest roller compacted dam in the world with a height of 272 meters, he said. The minister asked Wapda to immediately undertake the resettlement plan.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/13+work-on-diamerbhasha-dam-to-begin-this-year-510-za-07>

“AJK varsity needs attention of its Government”

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has not changed its curriculum from the last many years as lack of funds and no support by the Azad Kashmir government restricts varsity to allow its students to take admission only in limited old subjects. According to the sources the university has not even had the departments of Urdu and Islamic Studies and also unable to offer its services to the students who wanted to take admission in Mass Communication, Political Science Psychology and Engineering.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=156927>

Shabbir Ahmed Mir, “GB CJ takes suo moto notice of load shedding,”

The News, January 10, 2010

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Chief Justice Saturday took the notice of growing power crisis in the town and asked Water and Power Department to explain why the city was facing a blackout every day ever since the winter set in. Following growing complaints over the prolonged unannounced load shedding, Supreme Appellate Court Chief Judge Mohammad Nawaz Abbasi took suo moto action and issued notices to the secretary Water and Power and the chief engineer asking them to submit a report to the court within two weeks.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=217869>

“50,000MW power potential in G-B,”

The Nation, January 09, 2010

KARACHI: 50,000 MW of electricity can be produced through the available resources of Gilgit Biltistan which will resolve the energy crises of the country.

Addressing a press briefing at Karachi on January 8, Chief Minister Gilgit Biltistan Mehdi Shah said that the 50,000MW electricity can be generated through the resources of Gilgit Bitistan. He also invited the private sector to invest in the tourism sector.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Karachi/09-Jan-2010/50000MW-power-potential-in-GB>

“Mangla Dam raising project opening protested,”

The Nation, January 06, 2010

MIRPUR: Affectees of Mangla Dam raising project protested against inauguration of the project before completion of their rehabilitation. They chanted slogans against Wapda for its sheer negligence and failure in the completion of process of rehabilitation of over 1.25million affectees falling dislocated due to raising of the dam.

They said there was no justification of inauguration of the project since the process for rehabilitation and resettlement of over 12,000 families comprising over 1.25million affectees could not yet be started so far. They pointed out that it was strange that even the residential plots could not be made by Wapda in its much-publicised under-construction new residential sites meant for affectees.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Islamabad/06-Jan-2010/Mangla-Dam-raising-project-opening-protested>

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK): An Overview

Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) is constitutionally an integral part of the Indian Union and remains under Pakistani occupation since 1947¹, when Pakistan's Army engineered a tribal invasion and took control of more than 114,500 square kilometers of J&K. Pakistan declared its occupied part as 'Azad' or free and conferred to J&K Muslim Conference, a pro-Pakistani local political party, to constitute its first titular government.

Subsequent to occupation, Pakistan embarked on the agenda of usurping J&K. First to be annexed was Gilgit-Baltistan, which went under the direct control of Pakistan in 1949, as the leaders of AJK Muslim Conference were forced to hand over these regions of J&K through the 'Karachi Agreement'. Likewise, Shinaki Kohistan and Chitral, which constituted parts of Jammu & Kashmir before its partition in 1947, were also annexed and merged into the NWFP of Pakistan in 1955 and 1970 respectively. Later, when Pakistan and China agreed to demarcate 'international border' in 1963, Pakistan provisionally ceded 19,313 sq. kilometers of trans-Karakoram track of J&K including the segment of Baltistan known as 'Shaksgam' and part of Gilgit called 'Raskam' to China.²

Salient features of PoK are as under:

Total Area of PoK (under the current form): 85,793 sq. kilometer

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: 19,313 sq. kilometer

Area of Chitral: 14,850 sq. kilometer

Area of Shinaki-Kohistan: 5,398 sq. kilometer

AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR (AJK)

The Muzaffarabad district of Kashmir province, Mirpur and parts of Poonch districts of Jammu

province have been under Pakistan's control since the tribal invasion of 1947. Pakistan amalgamated these districts together and created the so-called AJK. AJK is the south-western political entity of the former princely state of Jammu & Kashmir. It borders the present-day Kashmir province to the east, Jammu province to south-east (both separated from it by the Line of Control), the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan (NWFP) to the west, the Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan Region (FAGB) of J&K to the north, and the Punjab Province of Pakistan to the south. AJK is envisaged as an autonomous region by Pakistan. The government of AJK is considered as a parallel government, which was established to challenge the legitimacy of the J&K government in Srinagar. Despite the fact that AJK is neither a country nor a province of Pakistan, it has its own President, Prime Minister, High and Supreme Courts, Penal Code, national anthem and a flag. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature and real authority lies with the federal government of Pakistan. Significant matters such as defence, tax revenues, supposed 'foreign policy', rehabilitation of refugees and the financial control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan.

Currently, the parts of Kashmir province under PoK is divided into three districts of Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Neelum, while the parts of Jammu province under PoK is divided into five districts namely Poonch/Rawalakot, Sudhnati/Pallandari, Bhimber, Kotli and Mirpur.

Area of AJK: 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

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

President: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Farooq Haider Khan

Political Structure

Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan:

Pakistan' KAGB is the de-facto supreme authority in both AJK and FAGB in regards to matters on finances, project approval, resource control and key political decisions.

AJK Council: Total 12 members, selected by Prime Minister of Pakistan, six each representing governments of AJK and Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49, of which 29 are directly elected from the AJK, 11 are elected from various districts of Pakistan under the provision for the 'Kashmiri refugees', whereas 8 seats are reserved for females, overseas Kashmiris and the technocrats.

Judicial System: AJK has its own High and Supreme Courts, which are assisted by district session and magistrate courts. Further, AJK has a Bar Council and Penal Code. However, approval of chief justices for High and Supreme Courts comes from Pakistani-dominated AJK Council. In addition, Pakistan's military tribunals, Hudood Ordinance and Shariat Courts also function in AJK. The Chief Secretary, regional commissioners, and Inspector General of Police are also appointed by Pakistani minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan (KAGB), previously known as Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (KANA).

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 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)

Federally Administered Gilgit-Baltistan (FAGB)

Gilgit-Baltistan was previously referred to by Pakistan as the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA). It is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) and is under direct control of the Islamabad government. The area, after separation of Chitral and Shinaki Kohistan, is still five and half times bigger than AJK. It borders Ladakh and Tibet to its east; East-Turkestan to its north; Afghanistan and Tajikistan to its north-west; Chitral to its west; Dir, Swat, Kohistan and Kaghan districts of NWFP to its south while AJK and the Kashmir Valley lie to its south-east. Before 1947, Baltistan was part of Ladakh region and ruled through the Jammu provincial government, while Gilgit was ruled under the authority of Kashmir province. When Pakistan occupied these regions, they were amalgamated under the garb of so-called 'Northern Areas' and thereby received the status of federally controlled region in 1974. However, the status of Gilgit-Baltistan is left undefined in the successive constitutions of Pakistan. Pakistan accepts Gilgit-Baltistan as part of the Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir, however, does not consider it as part of AJK. Due to a direct control imposed from Islamabad, the locals still await constitutional and judicial rights. For instance, they lack representation in the Pakistani Parliament, Council of Common Interests (CCI), Hydro-electric Board, Indus River System Authority (IRSA), National Judicial Council and National Finance Commission (NFC). Further, they cannot access the provincial high courts and the Supreme Court of Pakistan for justice. The Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in Gilgit-Baltistan who is a political figure nominated by the Minister for KAGB.

After occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan in 1949, Pakistan administered the region under the draconian and inhumane Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) for around 20 years.³ PM Z.A. Bhutto of Pakistan abolished FCR in 1974 and introduced an ad-hoc presidential ordinance to govern the region. Since then, Gilgit-Baltistan has been ruled by presidential ordinances, which have come under repeated

amendments. In 1994, PM Benazir Bhutto promulgated Northern Areas Governance Order which was later renamed as Legal Framework Order (LFO) by President Musharraf in 2007.⁴ In essence, they all remained as ad-hoc ordinances without any constitutional cover.⁵ As pressure from both local and international political and human rights organizations increased with demands of genuine political and judicial rights for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan announced the so-called 'Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order' on October 26, 2009.⁶ Unfortunately, this order is yet another presidential ordinance with no parliamentary backing, and replaces the current LFO with some amendments.⁷ The term 'self governance' is coined as a strategic move to defuse pressure of the international organizations, which promises to introduce administrative, political, economic and judicial reforms in Gilgit-Baltistan. Although the ordinance is claimed as a replica of the AJK political and judicial system; it refuses the post of president, prime minister to the locals and establishment of penal code, and High and Supreme Courts. Further it lacks provisions to re-instate State Subject Rule.

According to the order, Northern Areas will be called Gilgit-Baltistan and the current Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) will be replaced by Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA), which will have the right to legislate and choose a chief minister. Further, Pakistan will replace the existing Chairman of NALA with a governor to ensure federal government's control over the region. Gilgit-Baltistan would also have its own public service commission, a chief election commissioner, an auditor general, and a boundary commission to settle boundary dispute between Pakistan and J&K. The legislative assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan would have a total of 33 members, including six reserved seats for women and three for technocrats. Further, similar to AJK Council, Gilgit-Baltistan Council will be constituted to ensure representation of federal government in the region. The council will enjoy legislative powers over 60 odd subjects. It will have 15 members which shall be presided over by the prime minister of Pakistan. While the Assembly is given the powers to propose the budget, approving authority will be ministry of KAGB

in Islamabad. Compared to the provinces of Pakistan, where the chief minister is the supreme authority, the newly proclaimed order rests all administrative, political and judicial authority with the Pakistani governor which will eventually make the assembly a toothless tiger. Governor will be the executive authority and custodian of tax and revenues. He will administer Gilgit-Baltistan council on behalf of the prime minister of Pakistan, and oversee public service commission, election commission, boundary commission, judiciary, and auditor general's office. He will be the authority to appoint heads of public service commission, election commission, boundary commission, commissioner of excise and taxation, chief judge of appellate court, auditor general, regional cabinet members and advisors. He will have the right to approve the budget, and dissolve the assembly and impose emergency under prescribed conditions. Further, the Inspector General of Police, Chief Secretary and all departmental secretaries, directors of departments, and commissioner and deputy commissioners of districts will be appointed by the governor. Likewise, it will not be the Assembly but the Council under the governor, which will legislate on natural resources of Gilgit-Baltistan, including minerals, forests, electricity and water storage, industries, school curricula, tourism, cinematography etc.

Salient Features of FAGB are as under:

Area of FAGB: 72,496 sq. kilometer

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: seven

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ganche and Skardu districts

Gilgit Region is divided into Astore, Diamer, Ghizer, Hunza-Nagar and Gilgit districts

Ethnic Groups: Shin, Balti, Puriki, Ladakhi, Wakhi, Yashkun, Tibetan, Mongol, Tatar, Mon, Pashtun, Khovar, 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

Political Structure: In July 2009, NALA was dissolved before it could complete its 5-years term, and along with that, advisors to the Chairman including the Chief Executive were also sacked. Subsequently, election for GBLA was held on November 12, 2009 under the newly proclaimed self-governance and empowerment order. Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the ruling party of Pakistan, won two-third majority in GBLA and formed government.

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members, selected by Prime Minister of Pakistan; 7 representing government of Gilgit-Baltistan and 8 representing government of Pakistan. The Gilgit-Baltistan Council is headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Further, Chief Minister, Governor, Minister for KAGB and Prime Minister of Pakistan are voting members of GBC.

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: GBLA has 24 directly elected members while 6 female and 3 technocrats come through selection.

Acting-Governor of G-B: Ch. Qamar Zaman Kaira, a Member of Parliament from Gujrat ditrict of Punjab is the current governor of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan: Pakistan' KAGB is the de-facto supreme authority in both AJK and FAGB in regards to matters on finances, project approval, resource control and key political decisions.

Minister for KAGB: Mian Manzoor A. Wattoo, who is currently a Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan elected from Okara district of Punjab province.

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

Political 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)

Judicial Structure: Instead of High and Supreme Courts, Gilgit-Baltistan will have an appellate court which will be headed by the chief judge. The chief judge, as well the session and district judges will be appointed by the Pakistani prime minister. In addition to the appellate court, there will be a chief court in Gilgit. The number of judges has been increased from three to five. In addition, Pakistan's military tribunals, Hudood Ordinance and Shariat Courts will continue to function in Gilgit-Baltistan. Further, Pakistan's Penal Code applies in FAGB.

Literacy rate: 15% male; 3.5% female (World Bank estimates of 1997)

Per Capita Income: PCI of Gilgit-Baltistan is around one-fourth of Pakistan's average (US\$264 compared to Pakistan's US\$ 1,071).⁸

State of Infrastructure: More than two-thirds of the villages lack potable water, electricity, telephone, health units, girls' schools, paved roads, ration depot, and pony tracks.

Endnotes

- ¹ Baltistan was occupied by Pakistan a year later in 1948
- ² <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2754976?seq=7>
- ³ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/pakistan/law.htm>
- ⁴ <http://ips-pk.org/content/view/234/259/>
- ⁵ <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>
- ⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/gilgitbaltistan-package-termed-an-eyewash-089>
- ⁷ <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>
- ⁸ AKRSP Socio-economic Survey of Northern Areas and Chitral (SESNA) 2005; http://www.finance.gov.pk/finance_blog/?p=238; <http://finance.kalpoint.com/pdf/highlights/todays-pick/per-capita-income-falls-to-1071.pdf>

Disclaimer

PoK News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit-Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

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