

POK NEWS DIGEST

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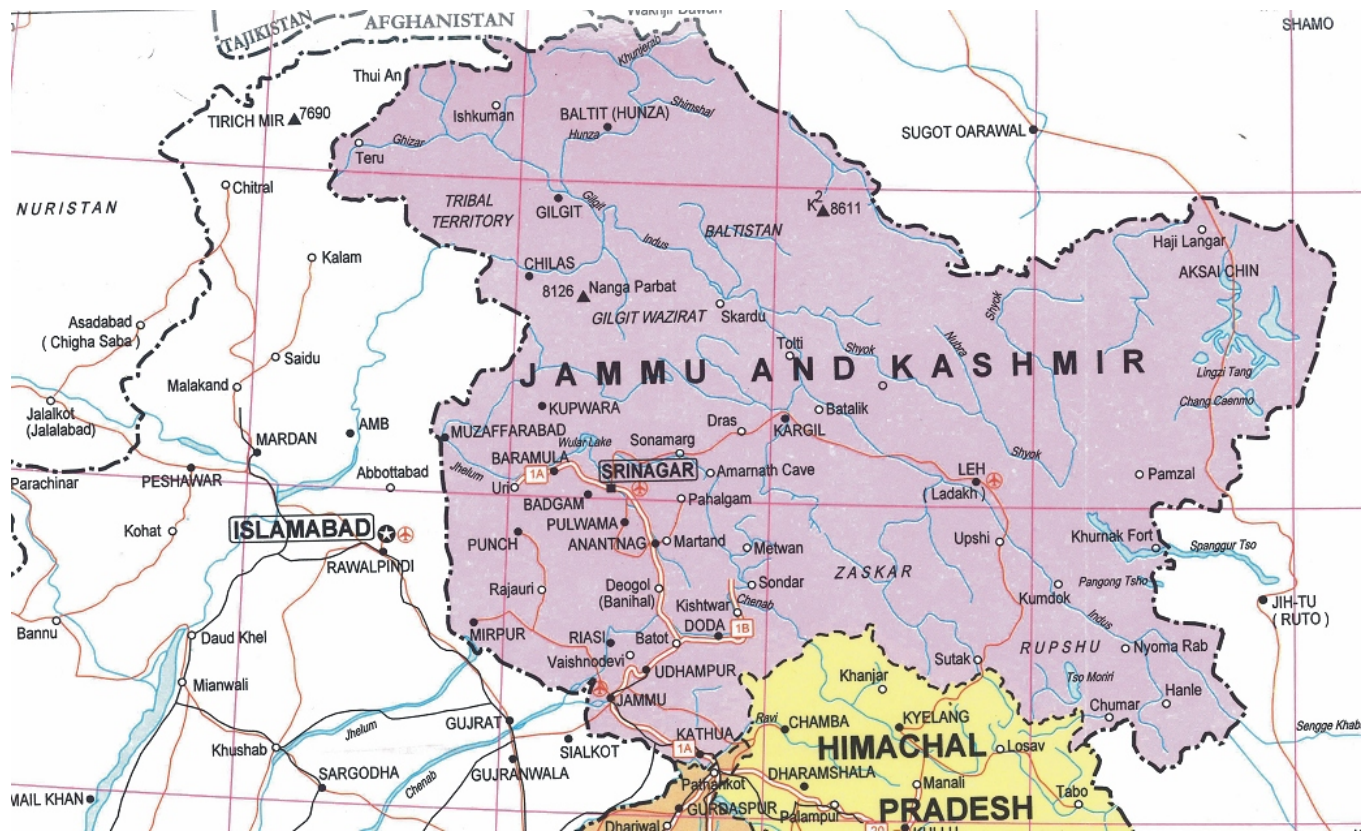
Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project -An Environmental Disaster

Construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam Starts in July



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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

We take great pleasure in presenting the current issue of IDSA's PoK News Digest in printed version. The journey for this newsletter which started in June 2008 has been overwhelming and the responses encouraging. The Newsletter has achieved considerable success in its endeavour to create awareness and disseminating information related to developments inside PoK since past two years. In addition, the newsletter has also featured commentaries which placed current developments in a historical perspective.

The current issue captures the continuing discontent amongst the people as a result of the natural calamity facing Hunza. Since there was no response from the state authorities, people seemed determined to start the widening of the Hunza spillway on their own- all this while the deadlines expired for the administration to take concrete steps in this direction.

Chinese involvement in PoK has begun to show its downside as there are reports which describe how the Chinese construction companies have dumped waste in the Neelum River without showing any sensitivity to environment hazards it may cause.

On the economic side, the cross LoC trade faced few procedural problems due to which it was interrupted for a while. Problems were resolved and the trading activities resumed as usual.

We hope that the printed version of the PoK News Digest will appeal to the readers.

Arvind Gupta

Political Developments

'Pakistan has no Locus Standi in Gilgit Baltistan'

A conference on "Ground Reality in Gilgit-Baltistan" was held in the United Nations Geneva during the 14th Human Rights Council to address the issues and concerns of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, which is a region of Jammu & Kashmir under Pakistani occupation. At the end of the conference, MEP Ryszard Czarnecki and Senge Hasnan Sering of Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress called the press to issue a joint statement. The MEP informed the audience about the partnership which has developed between the advocacy groups of Gilgit-Baltistan and the representatives of the EUP. He said that the partnership has helped promote the cause of self determination of Gilgit-Baltistan and highlighted the plight of the people. MEP expressed his concern that Gilgit-Baltistan is situated in a politically sensitive region and surrounded by three nuclear powers namely India, Pakistan and China. Moreover, if the genuine demands of the natives of this region are not respected then it can cause further instability. He said, "India and Pakistan must work together on the issue of Gilgit-Baltistan and constitute a working group involving the representatives of the governments of both countries as well as those from the civil society of Gilgit-Baltistan." MEP also expressed his concern for Pakistan's unilateral decision to use the land and resources of Gilgit-Baltistan to construct mega dams, which inundates local dwellings, farmland, pastures and also impacts the wildlife habitats.

http://prusa.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=417117&Itemid=28

'Umar Farooq Advocate elected new chairman of Karakoram National Movement', Pamir Times, June 30, 2010

GILGIT: Central cabinet of the oldest nationalist party of Gilgit Baltistan, KNM, was held in Gilgit. Party leaders from Karachi, Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan, Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa and Hazara division casted their votes to elect the new chairman. Ijlal Hussain secured 20 votes while Advocate Umar Farooq obtained 42 votes, qualifying for the top party slot. Mamtaz Hussain Nagri acted as the Election Commissioner.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/06/30/umar-farooq-advocate-elected-new-chairman-of-karakoram-national-movement/>

'Govt can't ignore problems of AJK: Wattoo', The Nation, June 26, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo June 25 said the Finance Ministry will hold a meeting with his ministry on the Azad Kashmir budget and uplift schemes in the area. Talking to a delegation of the PPP, Azad Kashmir chapter led by Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, the minister said that Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani had asked the Ministry of Finance to have a meeting with his ministry on these matters, which included increase in salaries of the AJK police.

http://thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=29670

'Gilgit Baltistan government announces boycott of Shandur Polo Festival', Pamir Times, June 27, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The government of Gilgit Baltistan has decided to abstain from participating in the internationally acclaimed Shandur Polo Festival, scheduled to be held on 7-9 July. The GB government has condemned Khyber Pukhtunkhwa for monopolizing affairs of the polo festival. "Shandur is a historical part of Gilgit Baltistan but the Pukhtunkhwa government is managing the

festival”, chief minister Mehdi Shah noted. It is pertinent to note that Shandur is a disputed territory between Chitral and Ghizar district of Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/06/27/gilgit-baltistan-government-announces-boycott-of-shandur-polo-festival/>

Shabbir Mir, 'CM promises reforms, equality for G-B police', The Tribune, June 27, 2010

GILGIT: Reforms in the Gilgit-Baltistan police department will be introduced and all facilities given to the police in other provinces will be extended to officials in the region, said Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister (CM) Mehdi Shah on June 26.

He also announced Rs3 million as compensation for those who sacrifice their lives in the line of duty, Rs500,000 for people seriously injured and Rs300,000 for officials with minor injuries. “But for that, you will have to prove that you are committed to your job,” said Shah, while addressing a ceremony organised by the police in appreciation for the 100 per cent raise in their salaries.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/24072/cm-promises-reforms-equality-for-g-b-police/>

'AJK Bar delegation calls Law minister', June 24, 2010

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council and Kashmir Bar Association called on Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr Babar Awan in Islamabad on June 24. The delegation included Vice Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council Syed Nishat Kazmi, Member Bar Council Chaudhry Ishtiaq Ahmad, President District Bar Association Mirpur Razaq Kashmiri and Raja Sultan. The delegation told the Federal Minister about the financial constraints faced by the lawyers and invited him to attend Kashmir Lawyers Convention that will be held in July 2010.

<http://www.onepakistan.com/news/national/50002-AJK-Bar-delegation-calls-Law-minister.html>

'Gilgit Baltistan: Donors Must Put Aid in the Right Places', June 22, 2010

The following is a Statement posted in the Daily Ausaf, London on June 11, 2010 by Abdul Hamid Khan, Chairman of the Balawaristan National Front (BNF):

This is not the first time; citing the bitter experience of 2005 in POK earthquake where misuse of billions in aid by Military and Government of Pakistan and not to forget the plight of poor women in the hands of inhuman officials as a result of which the people of this region have witnessed disastrous Pakistani regime's apathy towards local people. This was the negligence of the government of Pakistan towards Attabad, Hunza's newly born natural lake which affected people. The colonial owner of the area and its military intentionally let the lake to inundate the whole area up to Shehnaki Kohistan, otherwise a local contractor could have burst the lake much earlier, if he had been given contract since January 2010.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/11251/236/>

'PML-N, Kashmiri leadership slam former minister's statement', June 23, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Strongly reacting to the proposal of establishing ties with India on the part of certain personalities by overlooking the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and Kashmiri leadership said the basic cause of contention between Pakistan and India is the issue of Kashmir. It is pertinent to mention that the Former Information Minister of Pakistan Javed Jabbar had said in a televised interview that Pakistan should set aside the Kashmir issue and establish relations with India

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/23/pml-n-kashmiri-leadership-slam-former-minister%E2%80%99s->

statement/

'Frustrated River Hunza IDPs clash with police', June 20, 2010

GILGIT: Hundreds of people displaced by flooding caused by an overflowing lake on the River Hunza in northern Pakistan breached police barricades last week to take matters into their own hands and attempt to widen the lake's spillway.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) from camps across the Gilgit-Baltistan area were joined by residents of Upper Hunza, who live upstream of the lake and crossed it by boat, and clashed with police as they moved into an area designated a high danger zone by the government. "We are tired of the government's wait-and-see approach. We want to try and drain the lake. We have been out of our homes and in camps for over a month and too little is being done to deal with this crisis," said an IDP.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89553>

'LCCI delegations calls on Mehdi Shah', June 20, 2010

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Lahore Chambers of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) called on Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah at Gilgit-Baltistan house. The LCCI delegation was lead by the Chairman Standing Committee on Automobiles, Mian Zahid Rasheed along with former president Peoples Party Lahore Maluvi Sikandar Hashmi, Rana Pervaiz, Ghulam Nabi, Mirza Idrees and others. The delegation assured its full support to Mehdi Shah for the relief work of Hunza IDP's.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/20/lcci-delegations-calls-on-mehdi-shah/>

Tariq Naqash, 'AJK lawyers want judges' appointment on merit', Dawn, June 16, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: A top office-bearer of a lawyers' body on June 15 warned of an agitation if

the appointment of judges in the superior judiciary of Azad Jammu and Kashmir was not made on merit. The President of the Central Bar Association, Muzaffarabad, Syed Shahid Bahar, said the supreme and high courts of AJK were incomplete and an inordinate delay and backdoor manoeuvring about the appointment of permanent judges in them was creating doubts in the legal fraternity.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/ajk-lawyers-want-judges-appointment-on-merit-660>

'Gilgit Baltistan and Shafqat Inquilabi', June 16, 2010

For the first time in the past 63 years, rulers of Pakistani Administered Kashmir were allowed to visit Gilgit Baltistan, area of the State which has been under direct and oppressive rule of Pakistan. The State was partitioned after the war between India and Pakistan and puppet rulers of Pakistani Administered Kashmir signed away vast areas of Gilgit Baltistan to their political bosses in Islamabad; and limited their interest to the area known as Azad Kashmir.

Since 1947 bureaucrats and secret agencies of Pakistan ruled Gilgit-Baltistan with an iron fist, and rulers of Pakistani Administered Kashmir turned blind eye to the plight of unfortunate people; and enjoyed their rule and sincerely served their Pakistani masters. They continue to flatter Islamabad, even at the cost of interest of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://sify.com/news/gilgit-baltistan-and-shafqat-inquilabi-news-international-kgnpOdahiaj.html>

'Govt can't ignore problems of AJK: Wattoo', The Nation, June 26, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo June 25 said the Finance Ministry will hold a meeting with his ministry on the Azad Kashmir budget and uplift schemes in the area. Talking to a

delegation of the PPP, Azad Kashmir chapter led by Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, the minister said that Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani had asked the Ministry of Finance to have a meeting with his ministry on these matters, which included increase in salaries of the AJK police.

http://thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=29670

'A reply to Pakistani critics', June 16, 2010

I got a lot of response for my last article "Gilgit Baltistan and Shafqat Inquilabi". As always, some people have appreciated it and some have criticised it. It is not possible to reply to all the points raised by the respondents, but I would like to make the following submission, which I hope will help some people to understand some issues on the Pakistani side of the LOC.

1. I wholeheartedly condemn all human rights violations; and I demand that culprits must be punished for their crimes.
2. Can they condemn killing of innocent Kashmiris during the Tribal Invasion sponsored by Pakistan in 1947. Also can they condemn rapes, kidnapping of Kashmiri women and girls, and looting of my homeland - Kashmir, which was done in name of Jihad in 1947/8?
3. Can they also condemn Killings and imprisonment of people of Azad Kashmir at the hands of Pakistan during the Poonch rebellion in mid 1950s?
4. Can they also condemn arrest and inhuman torture inflicted upon people of Azad Kashmir by Pakistan during Ganga Hijacking investigations?
5. Can they condemn rapes and other human rights violations which still take place along the LOC on the Pakistani side of the divide, which people do not report due to social stigma and fear of repercussions; and no human rights organisation on the Pakistani side of the divide has courage to speak

about them?

<http://sify.com/news/a-reply-to-pakistani-critics-news-international-kgqnEdjdjia.html>

Dr Shabir Choudhry, 'Who Has Compromised In Gilgit Baltistan?', Countercurrents.org, June 14, 2010

Legally and constitutionally areas of Gilgit Baltistan are part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, but practically Pakistan has annexed these areas. Irony is Pakistan still present itself as a champion of Kashmiri peoples right of self determination and many people are so gullible that not only they accept this, but also urge others to fall in line or else they will be declared anti Pakistan or pro India.

These areas of Gilgit Baltistan have great strategic importance and it was because of this the British leased Gilgit Agency from the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir; and returned it only two weeks before the end of their Raj in India. This area was so important to them that when the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir refused to give them a lease, they in order to twist his arm, managed unrest in Kashmir which included the incident of 13 July 1931.

<http://www.countercurrents.org/choudhry140610.htm>

'G-B Empowerment Order challenged in SC: Azam Khan', The Nation, June 15, 2010

ISLAMABAD: To set aside the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order, 2009, a petition was filed on June 14 in the Supreme Court under the Article 184(3) of the Constitution. Shaukat Aziz Siddique, the counsel for the petitioner Mir Tariq Mehmood, besides raising several questions and objections over the above order, held in the petition that the area of Gilgit-Baltistan (Northern Area) was part of the disputed territory like AJK and Jammu & Kashmir.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily->

Noor Muhammad, 'When will the Hunza Lake IDPs return home?', Pamir Times, June 13, 2010

Gilgit-Baltistan is going through its biggest humanitarian crisis. Around 3,000 people, who have either lost their houses to the January 4 landslide or the 23-kilometer-long and 380 feet deep lake that Hunza River has turned into after being blocked by landslide debris, are living as IDPs at relief camps in Karimabad, Altit, Shishkat and Gulmit. Another 'group' of 20,000 people have been evacuated to dozens of camps established at safer locations in Hunza-Nagar, Gilgit and Diamer districts, on both sides of the Hunza River and Indus River, due to threat of flash floods.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/06/13/when-will-the-hunza-lake-idps-return-home/>

'Gilgit-Baltistan: Chairman Draws Attention to Human Rights Violations', June 8, 2010

BNF Chairman Abdul Hamid Khan addressed the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, drawing attention to violations of free speech and expressions.

The Chairman of the Balawaristan National Front (BNF) Abdul Hamid Khan has drawn the attention of the international community towards what he said rampant violation of freedom of speech and expression in Gilgit-Baltistan. He said under the 'colonial' rule of Pakistan, people in general and nationalists in particular in the disputed region, which is recognized as such under UNCIP resolution of 13 August 1948, even cannot dream of freedom of expression and speech.

Mr Khan was addressing the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) at Geneva. Mr Khan lamented that fundamentalist religious groups and pro-Pakistani parties were given full freedom in expressing their views and continuing their movements in the region. The BNF chief said more

than 200 activists and leaders including him were facing sedition charges for trying to express their views in the public peacefully.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/11192/256/>

'Greed brings GBLA, Council members to war', Weekly Baang Karachi, June 15 -21, 2010

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Council and People's Party Parliamentary Committee Gilgit-Baltistan are at loggerheads over distribution of powers. The federal members of Gilgit-Baltistan Council have demanded to take the reins of forestry, minerals, tourism and water and power departments besides wanting a say in the budget making process Gilgit-Baltistan. In a meeting of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary Committee GB chapter held here under chair of the chief minister, members of the committee aired their reservations regarding the demands of Gilgit-Baltistan Council and termed them a ploy aimed at "clipping the wings of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly". A source present in the meeting on condition of anonymity told this scribe that the parliamentary committee had vowed to forcefully resist the demands of Gilgit-Baltistan Council.

http://weeklybaang.blogspot.com/2010/06/weekly-baang-karachi-volume-03-issue-16_13.html

'CJ AJK calls on PM', Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Supreme Court, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Justice Khwaja Shahad called on Pakistan's Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and exchanged views on various constitutional and legal matters related to Azad Kashmir. On the occasion the PM congratulated Chief Justice Supreme Court, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Justice Khwaja Shahad on his appointment. Sources stated that PM expressed his satisfaction over the peaceful resolution of the clash regarding appointment of Judges of in AJK and expressed the hope that the new CJ would ensure speedy justice to the people. PM also assured complete support of the federal govt. in addition,

PM emphasized that the government believes in free judiciary.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=36097>

Ahmed Mir, 'Experts to decide repatriation of displaced people: Baig Shabbir', The Tribune, June 12, 2010

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government has said that it will seek experts' opinion on the repatriation of thousands of people displaced by the Attabad artificial lake to their homes. The lake was formed on January 4 when a massive landslide blocked the flow of the Hunza river, submerging villages upstream and damaging the strategic Karakoram Highway (KKH). "The decision to evacuate people from vulnerable villages downstream was taken on the advice of experts and now their repatriation will also be done on their advice," Wazir Baig, Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly stated on June 11.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/20670/experts-to-decide-repatriation-of-displaced-people-baig/>

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, 'Kashmir: no rushed solution, please', The News, June 12, 2010

Save me from my friends and I'll look after my enemies! In other words, the first duty of a friend who cannot be helpful is at least to do no harm. Has Pakistan been a good friend of Kashmir? It is often said we cannot sacrifice Pakistan for the sake of Kashmir. But no Kashmiri asks Pakistan to do such a thing. They are, in fact, as one in saying if Pakistan is harmed it would be a calamity for Kashmir. All they need from us is consistency. Otherwise, they will be progressively alienated from the idea of any real association with us.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=244611>

'HRCP probe finds manipulation, politicization of judiciary in AJK', Kashmir Watch, June 11, 2010

LAHORE: The recent controversy over the

appointment of judges to the superior courts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has exposed constant manipulation of the judiciary by the executive and the consequent politicization of the judiciary in AJK, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) stated. Launching the report of an HRCP fact-finding mission into the upheaval in the AJK judiciary, on June 10, the Commission said that political interference must end in order to strengthen the justice system in AJK.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1276275114&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

'Gilani nominates 6 MNAs as members of Gilgit-Baltistan Council', Pakistan Times

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani nominated 6-members of the National Assembly as members of Gilgit-Baltistan Council with effect from May 31. A notification of Gilgit-Baltistan Council Secretariat issued states, "In exercise of the powers conferred by article 33(1) of Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order, 2009, the chairman Gilgit-Baltistan Council/Prime Minister of Pakistan has been pleased to nominate the following members of the National Assembly as nominated members of Gilgit-Baltistan Council with effect from 31 May 2010."

<http://www.pakistantimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=11927>

'Zulqarnain for boosting education standard in AJK', Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: AJK President Raja Muhammad Zulqarnain Khan lauded the role of private and government educational institutions in raising literacy rate in the state. Speaking at a seminar, he noted, as compared to the public sector educational institutions, the private sector institutions were performing well in dispensing quality education to the youth, adding, "the current challenges of extremism and terrorism can only be encountered through furnishing the youth with education."

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=35366>

'AJK govt rejects call of industrial plots owners', Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: AJK government had categorically turned down the recent demand of certain local business fraternity elements seeking grant of proprietary rights of highly-valuable industrial plots, allotted to them on lease for a set term since past many years, in old and new industrial estates of the city, official sources noted. The demand was declined by the government in a recent meeting with a delegation of AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry, official sources further stated.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=35223>

'Protest sit-in at Gilgit helipad', Dawn, June 6, 2010

GILGIT: A group of people from Gojal Tehsil of Hunza-Nagar District staged a sit-in at the helipad here on June 5 after the authorities refused to airlift them to their native town as they were stuck up in the city for the last seven days. Barkatullah Baig, a resident of Sost, complained that he was visiting the helipad for the last seven days but unable to get a chance to be airlifted to his native town.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/protest-sit-in-at-gilgit-helipad-660>

'Azad Kashmir president reaches Gilgit with aid', May 31, 2010

KASHMIR: Azad Kashmir President Raja Zulqarnain and Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider reached Gilgit on May 31 bringing aid worth Rs 10 million for Hunza IDPs. While talking to media, Raja Farooq said that Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir are like two bodies bearing one soul. "We are with the Gilgit citizens and the government in this difficult time," said Farooq. He demanded that the government should provide a prime minister

and a president to Gilgit just like Azad Kashmir.

http://www.samaa.tv/News20597azad_Kashmir_president_reaches_Gilgit_with_aid.aspx

'Gilgit-Baltistan is integral part of Kashmir-PM Azad Kashmir', Gilgit Baltistan Times, June 1, 2010

The Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan visited Gilgit-Baltistan and affected areas of Attabad Disaster. He donated Rs. 100 million to the affectees along with 250 tents. On the occasion, talking to media Haider stated that "Gilgit-Baltistan is an integral part of Kashmir and both these regions have centuries-old historic and cultural ties which can't be broken. It will be better if a joint setup is granted to both these regions. We will have no objection to it."

<http://gbtimes.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/news-gilgit-baltistan-is-integral-part-of-kashmir-pm-azad-kashmir/>

'Marvi seeks charter of demands for Hunza people', Daily Times, June 1, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) MNA Marvi Memon asked Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani to announce a charter of demands for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. In a letter addressed to the PM, Marvi states that for the last 5 months, "she has been giving recommendations to the government on how to prevent the natural disaster from becoming a man-made disaster". She stated that despite numerous letters, interventions in the assembly, standing committee meetings, long march and protests all her efforts seem to have "fallen on deaf ears". She further states that the compensation announced by the government was rejected by the people and thus by the PML since it is tantamount to a joke. "The compensation package as discussed with deputy commissioner (DC) Hunza and agreed by the internally displaced persons (IDPs) should be immediately implemented and announced".

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C0>

Mumtaz Alvi, 'AJK president, PM visit GB first time in 63 years', The News, June 1, 2010

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, President Azad Kashmir Raja Zulqurnain Khan and Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider on May 31 visited Gilgit-Baltistan. This was the first-ever official tour of Kashmiri leadership to the region in 63 years.

President Zulqurnain and Premier Haider landed in Hunza by a helicopter and stayed with GB leadership for a few hours and spoke to the affected of the artificial lake. A few attempts were made in the past to visit the then Northern Areas but the federal government did not let this happen due to unknown reasons, stated sources in Kashmir House.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=242444

'Mehdi Shah announces compensation for affectees', The Nation, June 06, 2010

SKARDU: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah stated that the Government will take all effective and immediate steps to rehabilitate the affected people during the heavy land sliding in Kindirik area. The Chief Minister while talking to the affectees here on June 5, announced Rs 500,000 for the family of eight persons dead and Rs 100,000 each for 12 injured persons. He also announced that the collapsed houses and mosque would be built by the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Skardu.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/International/06-Jun-2010/Mehdi-Shah-announces-compensation-for-affectees>

'Political parties wrestle to gain the upper hand', The Tribune, June 3, 2010

GILGIT: The Attabad landslide and the ensuing chaos in Gilgit and Hunza have triggered fierce competition between mainstream political parties,

who are all trying to gain support from the locals. The crisis began when a massive landslide struck a small village Attabad in Hunza on January 4. The response to the calamity was initially slow, angering those affected by the rising lake water. But by mid-March, the media began monitoring the situation closely and a number of high-ranking politicians headed to Gilgit and Hunza, aid packages in tow. They addressed public meetings and met with IDPs in camps.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/18338/political-parties-wrestle-to-gain-the-upper-hand/>

Economic Developments

'AJK cabinet ratifies Rs47.33 budget for 2010-11'

The Azad Kashmir government announced on Friday an overall consolidated budget of Rs.47.332 billion for the fiscal year 2010-11 with a record deficit of over Rs.17.6050 billion and an allocation of Rs.11.1749 billion for annual development program (ADP). Azad Kashmir Minister for Finance, Raja Nisar Ahmad Khan presented the budget in the AJK legislative Assembly, which was the first budget of the Farooq Haider led government.

http://www.dunyatv.tv/main_category_eng.php?nid=13834&catid=2&flag=d

'Cut in AJK budget termed inappropriate', Dawn, June 15, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider on June 14 expressed concern over alleged reduction by the central government in the budget of his region, saying the action was inappropriate. "While the central and provincial budgets have seen increased, our budget has been slashed. Such a treatment with the jugular vein of Quaid-i-Azam's Pakistan is incongruous," he said at a public meeting in the town of Thorar in the Poonch district. The function was held to mark the elevation of Thorar as a subdivision.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/local/islamabad/cut-in-ajk-budget-termed-inappropriate-560>

'Deficit in AJK's next budget inevitable', Dawn, June 21, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Minister for Finance and Planning and Development Raja Nisar Ahmed

Khan has maintained that deficit in the AJK budget for the next fiscal year was inevitable due to certain reasons, "unparalleled cuts by the central government in developmental grants" being one of them. "It's not that we are spending money on luxuries. As far as the recurring expenditures are concerned, they were bound to scale up following unavoidable raises in salaries, allowances and pensions of government servants," he said in response to questions at the post budget press conference in Muzaffarabad on June 19.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-ewspaper/local/islamabad/deficit-in-ajks-next-budget-inevitable-160>

'Rs12.98 billion budget for Gilgit-Baltistan', Dawn, June 24, 2010

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government presented on June 23 its first budget with an outlay of Rs12.984 billion and Rs6.404 billion non-development expenses. Finance Minister Mohammad Ali Akhtar told the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly that Rs1.227 billion would be required to increase the salary of government employees by 50 per cent and medical allowance of employees up to BPS 15 by 100 per cent and higher pay scales by 15 per cent. He also announced a 50 per cent raise for police personnel and revision of their pay scales to bring them at par with other provinces.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/rs12.98-billion-budget-for-gilgitbaltistan-460>

'A progressive budget', Dawn Editorial, 25 Jun, 2010

There are a number of pleasant surprises in Gilgit-Baltistan's first budget. Firstly, the territory has

divided the Rs12.98bn budget almost down the line, with Rs6.4bn earmarked for non-development expenditure and the rest going towards development spending. The creation of 1,500 new jobs has been announced. But perhaps the most welcome aspect is that a quarter of the budget for FY2010-2011 has been set aside for education. The number of scholarships for students from Gilgit-Baltistan studying in other parts of Pakistan has also been doubled. This indicates that the Gilgit-Baltistan government has its priorities right. Its finance minister also announced austerity measures, saying that the government's operating expenses had been reduced by 26.5 per cent while expenses on entertainment, gifts and purchase of physical assets had been frozen.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/editorial/21-a-progressive-budget-560-sk-12>

'Gas production plan', Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: An integrated plan was being evolved soon to make the country self sufficient in natural gas production, official sources stated. Sources further noted that the government had chalked out a comprehensive policy to provide natural gas to maximum population across the country including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The government had already launched several projects to extend gas facility to the masses through pipelines and in the form of LPG, sources added.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=34383>

'Traders for enhancement of import, export across LOC', June 1, 2010

RAWALPINDI: An emergency meeting of various Intra-Kashmir trade unions was held at Rawalpindi on May 31 in which the participants enhance the number of the import and export items across the Line of Control. The meeting was attended by office bearers of Intra Kashmir Union Rawalpindi, Jammu Kashmir trade union Muzaffarabad, Intra Kashmir trade union Tattrinote, Azad Jammu Kashmir LoC

trade union, Muzaffarabad-Srinagar trade council, association of Intra Kashmir Traders.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/01/traders-for-enhancement-of-import-export-across-loc/>

'Cross-LoC trade in jeopardy', The News, June 6, 2010

MIRPUR: Cross-LoC trade at Poonch-Rawlakot route was once again halted as the J&K traders have threatened to go ahead with the boycott that started last week, till fulfillment of their demands. On the other hand, the authorities are insisting that they can not go beyond the standing operation procedures (SOPs) to facilitate trade. "The trade was suspended by the businessmen of J&K on June 2 after Trade Facilitation Authorities of the valley refused to allow import of Ajwain from AJK on the ground that it was not figured in 21 items approved for import-export by the Indian and Pakistani governments," the report stated. The report also said the businessmen of the J&K, engaged in cross-LoC trade, were opposed to abrupt ban on items by the authorities.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=243276>

Iftikhar Gilani, 'Kashmir traders to use Indian rupee for all transactions', Daily Times, June 16, 2010

NEW DELHI: With no banking facilities for cross-Line of Control (LoC) trade as yet, traders on both sides of the border have settled down to accept the Indian rupee as the currency for cash transactions. They also decided to settle down for their own exchange rate for payments of goods bought and sold. The latest exchange rate that was decided early this week in a meeting of the traders from AJK and J&K was that the Indian rupee would be equivalent to Pakistani rupee 1.82. The rate will remain valid for the next three months. The earlier exchange rate was Rs 1.62.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C06%5C12%5Cstory_12-6-2010_pg7_23

International Developments

'Pak, China energy pipelines to contribute long-term economic interest of both sides: Masood Khan', Gilgit-Baltistan Times, June 15, 2010

BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China Masood Khan stated on June 14 that “Energy pipelines between Pakistan and China are feasible”. When asked to comment on a report which appeared in an English Daily that China is considering the construction of new pipelines through Myanmar and Pakistan to diversify its import routes, Ambassador Masood Khan said that “we are working on them. One day this dream will become a reality”. Ambassador Khan made it clear that “Security situation in Pakistan should not be a cause for concern. It is a transient phenomenon. Pipelines will promote long-term economic interests of Pakistan and China”. Securing stable, long-term oil supply is paramount and will drive China's foreign policy over the coming decades, writes Hongyi Lai in its Comment “Sating resource appetite” in China daily.

<http://gbtimes.wordpress.com/2010/06/15/news-pak-china-energy-pipelines-to-contribute-long-term-economic-interest-of-both-sides-masood-khan/>

'International Kashmir Conference to be attended by prominent Pakistani politicians and AJK Prime minister', Kashmir Page, June 15, 2010

A number of prominent Pakistani politicians as well as AJK Prime Minister have confirmed their participation in the International Kashmir Conference being staged on July 25 in Birmingham under the aegis of the UK-based Tehreek-e-Kashmir. According to TeK announcement, AJK Prime Raja Farooq Haider Khan, Chairman, Pakistan Muslim League(N), Raja Zafarul Haque, Secretary General Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Liaqat Baloch, Convener APHC, Ghulam Mohammad Safi

and JI Azad Kashmir Amir, Abdur Rashid Turrabi have confirmed their participation in the international moot. The conference aims to explore new ways and means to give an impetus to the ongoing struggle for Kashmiri cause.

<http://www.kashmirpage.com/2010/06/international-kashmir-conference-to-be.html>

Tariq Naqash, 'Chinese company 'dumping' waste in Neelum River', June 6, 2010 J

MUZAFFARABAD: An official body dealing with the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad has taken exception to the alleged dumping of earth into River Neelum by a Chinese construction company, something which is being committed with impunity by many other contractors for long notwithstanding its hazardous impact on environment on the one hand and life of Mangla Dam on the other. Brig (retired) Shiraz Baig, project director of Muzaffarabad City Development Project (MCDP), confirmed that he had sought explanation from the China International Water and Electric Corporation through a letter after receiving reports to this effect from some quarters.

<http://pressforpeace.blogspot.com/2010/06/chinese-company-dumping-waste-in-neelum.html>

'Gilgit Baltistan: Italian Party takes BNF Chief into its Fold', June 7, 2010

The Radical Party in the Italian parliament has given membership to BNF Chairman Abdul Hamid Khan in recognition of his services for highlighting the plight of the people of his region at the international level and suffering exile for it.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/11182/254/>

Other Developments

'Zardari efforts to protect AJK mountains from deforestation lauded', June 29, 2010

MUZAFARABAD: Speaker Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir stated they are thankful to President Asif Ali Zardari who issued strict directives to the concerned quarters to protect the rich mountains from deforestation. To a query by opposition leader Abdul Majid Khan, he said that the beauty of scenic Kashmir valley was linked to the trees packed forests, which were considered as a backbone for Kashmir's economy.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/29/zardari-efforts-to-protect-ajk-mountains-from-deforestation-lauded/>

'Neelam Jhelum Hydroelectric Project - an environmental disaster', June 28, 2010, ANI

LONDON: Neelam Jhelum Hydroelectric Project is located near Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistani Administered Kashmir. It aims to dig a tunnel and divert water of Neelam River from Nauseri, about 41 KM East of Muzaffarabad. A powerhouse will be constructed at Chatter Kalas, 22 Km South of Muzaffarabad; and after passing through the turbines the water will be released in Jhelum River, about 4 Km South of Chatter Kalas. Once completed, the Neelam Jhelum Hydroelectric Project will produce 969 MW of electricity annually at the cost of US 2.16 billion dollars.

<http://news.oneindia.in/2010/06/28/neelamjhelum-hydroelectric-project-an-environmentaldisas.html>

'Deadline for widening Ataabad spillway expires', June 29, 2010

HUNZA: The administration has asked for three more days as the deadline to widening the Ataabad Lake spillway expired, sources stated on June 29. The affectees of Shishkit and Gilmat had given the

administration the deadline of June 29, 2010 but the Force Commander Gilgit-Baltistan General Javed Bajwa asked for three more days for the widening of Ataabad Lake spillway. "Negotiations will be held with the affectees of Shishkit and Gilmat with the consultation of Frontier Works Organization," noted Force Commander Gilgit Baltistan.

http://www.samaa.tv/News21891-Deadline_for_widening_Attaabad_spillway_expires.aspx

Tariq Naqash, 'AJK healthcare facility gets teaching hospital status', Dawn, June 23, 2010

MUZAFFARABAD: A major healthcare facility of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir capital, built by the UAE government as a gift to the earthquake stricken people of the area, has been granted full accreditation in seven more specialties by the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP).

<http://dawnnews.tv/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/local/islamabad/ajk-healthcare-facility-gets-teaching-hospital-status-360>

'Water level in Attabad Lake rises', The News, June 28, 2010

ISLAMABAD: Water outflow from the Attabad Lake in Hunza has reached 15,300 cusecs as more areas in the upper Hunza Gojal have been submerged with the rising level of the lake. Meanwhile, the local residents were blasting big boulders to widen the spillway resulting in enormous outflow of water from the lake. The water discharge from the lake has reached 15,300 cusecs whereas the inflow is 12,100 cusecs. Many houses and fields have been submerged in upper Hunza Gojal due to the rise in water level.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=247620>

'Relief goods of Rs 800,000 handed over to Hunza Ataabad affectees', Associated Press of Pakistan, June 28, 2010

SKARDU: President AL Khidmat Foundation Gilgit-Baltistan Attaullah Khan and Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Mushtaq Ahmed Advocate informed they had handed over the relief goods of Rs 800,000 to the affectees of Ataabad up till now. They further stated their president, Naimatullah Khan had already visited the affected areas of Hunza Ataabad and distributed relief goods among the affectees.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=107617&Itemid=1

'GB hospitality industry, like locals, waits for improvement', The Tribune, June 22, 2010

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah had recently blamed the media for creating unrest in the region and said that they were bent on ruining Gilgit-Baltistan's lone industry tourism. Turns out, tourism is yet another casualty of the landslide lake that has already robbed thousands of people of their land, property and businesses. "The fear of the lake bursting its banks has become one of the major reasons why tourists are avoiding visiting the scenic valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). There is a dominant perception among the people in the southern areas of the country that the people of GB are sitting atop a ticking bomb that is set to explode anytime," the manager of a private transport company noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/22913/gb-hospitality-industry-like-locals-waits-for-improvement/>

'Urgent steps urged to control TB', The News, June 21, 2010

GILGIT: Doctors in a workshop on June 19 warned that the deadly tuberculosis (TB) could wreak havoc in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) if concerted efforts are not taken immediately. "I warn that the matter is very urgent, it needs immediate attention," noted Dr Farman, in-charge TB Round-6 programme at Aga

Khan Health Service (AKHS). The speakers in the workshop organised by some NGOs The Global Fund, AKHSP, Mercy Corpse, and National TB Control programme called on the government to expedite efforts to control the disease killing many people in the country every year.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=246314

'Construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam starts in July', Pakistan Observer

SKARDU: The much awaited construction work on Diamer-Bhasha Dam will be inaugurated by President Asif Ali Zardari in the second week of July at an impressive ceremony at the site of the multi-billion dollar dam. The high profile ceremony for the first Mega Project of the present PPP led Government will be attended by Chief Ministers of the four Provinces, Governor and Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Federal Ministers in addition to senior officials.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=37328>

'Experts to review condition of Hunza spillway', Dawn, June 19, 2010

KARACHI: A team of experts will take off from Islamabad to Gilgit to assess the possibility of widening the Attabad spillway. According to Chairman NDMA General (retired) Nadeem, the team will review the task to broaden spillway. The outflow from the lake has now reached to 8,900 cusecs. General Nadeem said that three big stones were hampering the flow of the lake. If the stones were removed, the river stream could reach 15,000 to 20,000 cusecs, which would cause a gradual fall in the water level.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/03-experts-to-review-condition-of-hunza-spillway-ss-07>

Zulfiqar Ali Khan, 'Locals start widening Hunza lake spillway', Dawn, June 18, 2010

HUNZA: Section 144 was imposed as hundreds of local people took upon themselves a much-awaited task of widening the spillway of the Hunza lake amid protests in Aliabad town against police torture of volunteers leaving for the site. Meanwhile, more homes in the Gojal area could be inundated as water outflow from the Attabad lake spillway rose to 6700 cusecs. The volunteers broke police barriers and reached the spillway, where they were joined by about 200 people from Gojal, who had arrived by boats.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/locals-start-widening-hunza-lake-spillway-860>

'Passport office starts functioning in Skardu', The Nation, June 17, 2010

SKARDU: New machine-readable passport office started functioning in Skardu, Baltistan region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Senior Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Muhammad Jafar inaugurated the passport office in a simple function attended by large number of people including Commissioner Baltistan Division Dr Sajid Muhammad Chuhan, Deputy Commissioner Skardu Muhammad Ali Yougooni, President PPP Skardu district Muhammad Yousaf Numberdar and General Secretary Abdullah Hadari.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/International/17-Jun-2010/Passport-office-starts-functioning-in-Skardu>

'Gilgit- Baltistan Journalists' group leaves for AJK tour', June 17, 2010

MUZAFARABAD: An eleven members group of Gilgit-Baltistan press club left for Azad Kashmir from Gilgit on four days tour on the invitation of President and Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir to attend the AJK budget session scheduled to be held on June 18. The delegation headed by President Gilgit press club Khurshid Ahmad left for Kashmir through Shakra-e-kara Koram on June 16. The Gilgit Baltistan Journalists delegation will

participate in the budget meeting to be held on June 18.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/17/gilgit-baltistan-journalists%E2%80%99-group-leaves-for-ajk-tour/>

Shabbir Ahmed Mir, 'Explosives not to be used to widen the spillway', June 9, 2010

GILGIT: The outflow from the Attabad landslide lake has increased by 300 cusecs per day as authorities have once again ruled out the possibility of using explosives to widen the spillway. "The option of using explosive is not under consideration," Hunza's administrator, Zamir Abbas stated. He said that the outflow of water from the lake might be slightly greater than the inflow. "The outflow may be slightly over 5000 cusecs per day," he said. Officials earlier dismissed the option of broadening the spillway using explosives saying that the rocks of the valley are loose and such an act could trigger more landslides in the area. The spillway is said to be about 37-feet wide.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/19881/explosives-not-to-be-used-to-widen-the-spillway/>

Shabbir Ahmed Mir, 'Major flood in Attabad less likely, say officials', The Tribune, June 1, 2010

Officials have downplayed the possibility of a major flood occurring in Attabad in the next three days, as outflow from the 'landslide lake' has increased steadily. "There is no chance of a flood occurring in the next three days as the erosion of the spillway is slow," said district administrator Hunza, Zamir Abbas on May 31. "But that doesn't mean that the lake will never breach its banks," he said, adding, that the danger was still very real and officials were aware of all possibilities. The slow discharge of lake water from the spillway has overturned expert's predictions that the area would be flooded 24 hours after the water reached the spillway.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/17753/major-flood-in-attabad->

less-likely-say-officials/

'Massive landslide 'did not occur overnight', The News, June 3, 2010

ISLAMABAD: A critical situation confronting people in Hunza-Nagar and Gilgit after blockage of Hunza River and formation of an artificial dam due to massive landslide never emerged overnight, as research reports and analysis carried out in the recent years gave clear indications about potential threats, thanks to unusual ecological developments in the area. Richard Hughes, Consultant Aga Khan Cultural Services, in his research report compiled in 2003 first raised the issue of cracks in the mountains of Attaabad and suggested various steps to avoid any untoward situation.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=242823

'Opposition MLAs demand judicial inquiry of Hunza Lake disaster', Pamir Times June 4, 2010

GILGIT: Opposition leaders in the Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) thrashed the government for 'negligence' on resolution of the Hunza Lake disaster. On first day of the assembly's fresh session the opposition leaders demanded judicial inquiry against the government of GB, FWO, NDMA and other responsible organizations for not being able to attain the planned 30 meter reduction in height of the lake barrier. Delays in resolution of the issues being faced by displaced people of Attabad Hunza have also been criticized by the members of GBLA.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2010/06/04/opposition-mlas-demand-judicial-inquiry-on-hunza-lake-disaster/>

'WAPDA providing technical support to Gilgit-Baltistan, NDMA', June 2, 2010

LAHORE: WAPDA has been providing technical support to the Gilgit-Baltistan administration and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for the last five months regarding the natural lake

created in the wake of massive land sliding near Ata Abad, in Hunza. This was stated by WAPDA Chairman Shakil Durrani during his meeting with the Governor Dr. Shama Khalid & Syed Mehdi Shah Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Administration after visiting the land slide site in Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.onepakistan.com/news/local/lahore/46740-WAPDA-providing-technical-support-Gilgit-Baltistan-NDMA.html>

'Landslide kills eight in Skardu', Daily Times, June 5, 2010

GILGIT: A landslide triggered by rain killed eight people, including six women, in Taleema village on June 4, officials said. The incident struck Kaindiric in Skardu district, east of Gilgit, police officer Mukhtar Ahmed said. Fifteen houses were completely destroyed by the landslide and nine people injured, he told AFP. Police and local volunteers recovered the bodies from the debris, police official Manzoor Hussain stated.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C06%5C05%5Cstory_5-6-2010_pg7_10

'Rescue activities underway at Hunza', Daily Mail, June 6, 2010

HUNZA: The water inflow and outflow from landslide created Attabad Lake is persistently raising as the relief activities were underway in the region. Meanwhile, the authorities have announced that Gilgit-Hunza section of Karakoram Highway remained open till 4pm in the evening, sources stated on June 5. Sources said that outpouring from the spillway stood at 4,150 cusecs and the seepage is 350 cusecs, which adds up to 4500 cusecs of outflow from the Lake, which is receiving 5000 cusecs.

<http://dailymailnews.com/0610/06/Brief/Brief3.php>

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK): An Overview

Pakistan occupied 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

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 its own 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 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 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.

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, 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

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.

Governor of G-B: Dr Shama Khalid

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 will continue to function in Gilgit-Baltistan.

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/thenewspaper/national/gilgitbaltistanpackage-termed-an-eyewash-089>
7. <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0012.html>
8. AKRSP Socio-economic Survey of Northern Areas and Chitral (SESNA-C) 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>

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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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