

POK

News Digest

Volume 5 | Number 3 | March 2012

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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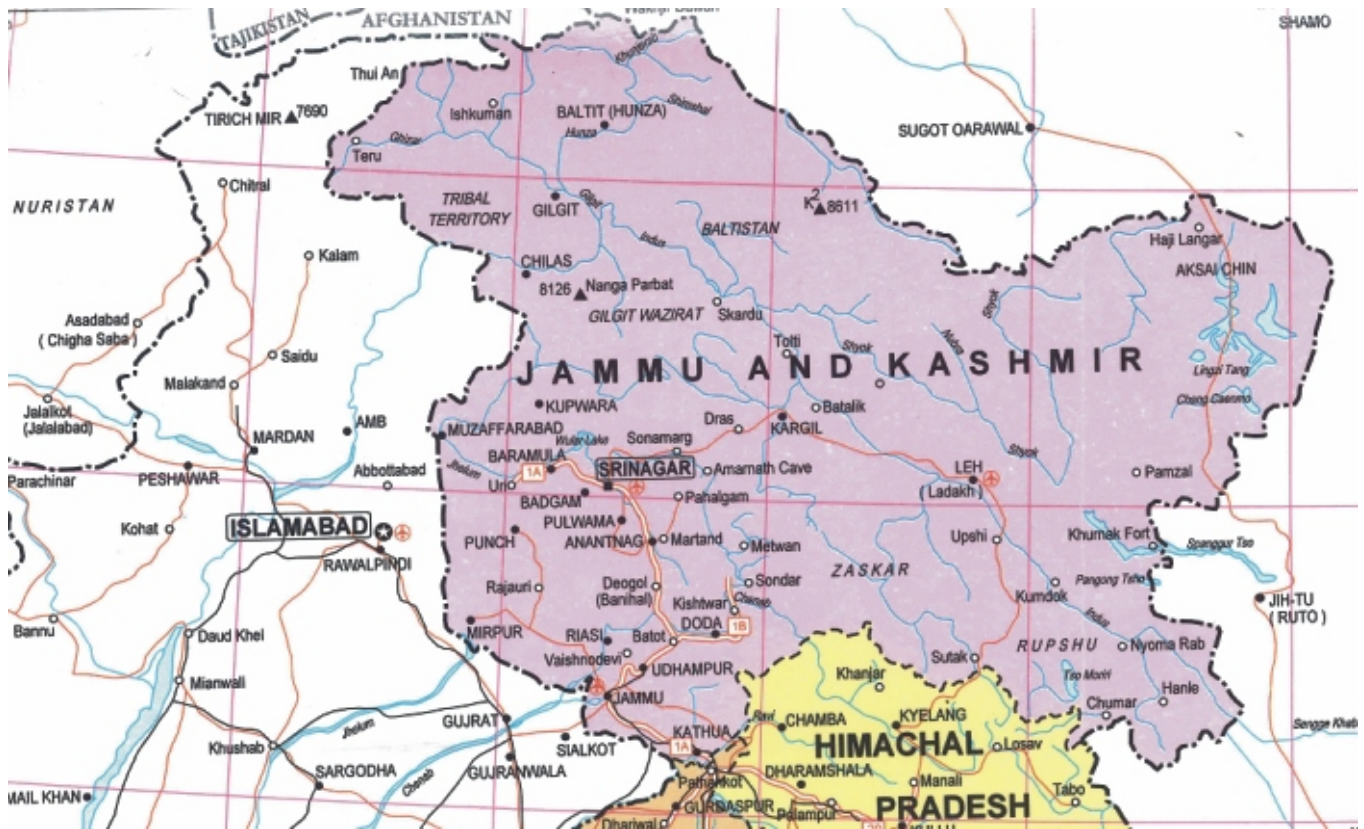
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Two significant developments took place in PoK in the month of February 2012, which have challenged existing systems and practices there. A grisly attack on Shia pilgrims took place in Kohistan on the Karakoram Highway on February 28, 2012. At least 18 pilgrims who were on their way back to Gilgit Baltistan were forced to disembark from a bus, identified as Shias and shot to death. The incident led to considerable unrest in the region amidst demands that perpetrators of the killings be brought to justice. Jandullah, a terrorist group with linkages to the Taliban claimed responsibility of the attack, stating clearly that these people were targeted as they were Shias.

Meanwhile, Ghulam Abbas, chairman of the Gilgit Baltistan National Movement filed a petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan questioning the overall authority and jurisdiction of Pakistan over Gilgit Baltistan. There is no mention of Gilgit Baltistan in the Pakistani constitution but it exercises de facto control on the region. The petition was filed demanding removal of a retired judge of the Pakistani Supreme Court who was appointed as the Chief Judge of Supreme Appellate court of Gilgit Baltistan. This judge being a non local was not acceptable to the people of Gilgit Baltistan. The court submitted the petition and asked the federal government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan (KAGB) to submit a report on the same.

Gilgit Baltistan is embroiled in a state of turmoil over such issues. The response from the government of Pakistan has been unsatisfactory. On the Kohistan attack, the Interior Minister of Pakistan, Rehman Malik, while facing pressure from all across to act, tried to shove the blame of the incident on external forces. Meanwhile, security at the Karakoram Highway has been stepped up with an increase in the number of check posts to ensure safety and security.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Nisar Ahmad Khan, Passengers hauled off buses and gunned down: 16 killed in Kohistan sectarian attack

Dawn, February 29, 2012

MANSEHRA: Gunmen in military uniform forced people going from Rawalpindi to Gilgit to disembark from buses in Kohistan's Harban area on February 28 and gunned down 16 of them after checking their names on their ID cards which invoked protests all over the country.

“Sixteen people were killed in the incident. The bodies were handed over to the deputy commissioner of Chilas after autopsy at Shital hospital,” Mohammad Ilyas, district police officer, Kohistan, noted. According to foreign news agencies, this was a sectarian attack as confirmed by a man claiming to be spokesman for the Jandullah faction of Taliban. He stated the 16 were killed by 'Mujahideen' because they were Shias.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Political_pri_soners_in_Pakistani_jails_Gilgit_Baltistan_in_chains,201238877.aspx

Syed Fazl-e-Haider, Terror threatens development of western China

The National, February 20, 2012

Once billed as symbol of Sino-Pakistan friendship, the Karakoram Highway, which connects China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region with northern Pakistan, is now developing into a source of trouble between the two. The highway, a vital trade route, is turning into a terror link for Islamist movements in western China. Beijing has accused terrorist training camps based in Pakistan of sponsoring attacks and supporting separatist Uighurs in Xinjiang.

The construction of the 800-mile highway was the outcome of a trade deal signed between Pakistan and China in 1963. Its construction took 12 years

(1966 to 1978) and was of immense geopolitical, economic and military importance. The route passes through the rough terrain of Pakistan's northern areas, known as Gilgit-Baltistan, connecting it to the ancient silk route, which runs approximately 1,300 km from Kashgar, a city in Xinjiang province, to Havelian in the Abbottabad district of Pakistan. The silk route links China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey.

<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/terror-threatens-development-of-western-china>

PM Gilani chairs meeting on power projects in AJK, GB

The News, February 16, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on February 15 reviewed progress on hydel power projects in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. During the meeting held at the Prime Minister House, the PM directed that the action plan should be implemented by the relevant ministries, adding that the projects below the capacity of 50MW should be completed on top priority.

The PM directed Secretary, Ministry of Water and Power to get Skardu and Gilgit connected with the national grid, which would smoothen the supply of electricity to a great deal. Chairman Wapda, Shakil Durrani apprised the meeting that the connectivity of Skardu and Gilgit with the national grid would be completed with an estimated foreign funding of \$100 million from the French Agency for Development.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-12494-PM-chairs-meeting-on-power-projects-in-AJK-GB>

Diamer-Bhasha Dam: `Corruption` in compensation being probed

Dawn, January 31, 2012

GILGIT: A two-member inquiry team headed by

home secretary Gilgit-Baltistan investigated alleged corruption in distribution of land compensation among landowners to be affected by the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam.

Official sources stated on January 30 Gilgit-Baltistan chief secretary Saifullah Chatta, taking notice of complaints by the people, initiated an inquiry against the assistant commissioner of Chilas, Diamer district, Zahid Mumtaz, who is a DMG officer, for allegedly committing corruption in distribution of compensation funds. On the directives of the chief secretary, the home secretary visited Chilas and recorded statements of the residents of Thore valley on the matter.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/31/diamer-bhasha-dam-corruption-in-compensation-being-probed.html>

Progressive measures: AJK police to be made a vibrant force

The Express Tribune, January 31, 2012

MIRPUR: In view of the increased population in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), an integrated plan has been chalked out to revamp the police force in line with international standards and the recommendations have been forwarded to the AJK government for approval. AJK Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Tariq Khokhar stated this at the inaugural ceremony of 15 Madadgar Swift Police Assistance Centre set up at the SSP office on January 29. The centre was inaugurated by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/329576/progressive-measures-ajk-police-to-be-made-a-vibrant-force/>

Gilgit-Baltistan divided into three divisions

The Express Tribune, February 1, 2012

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan has been divided into three divisions to ensure better administration. This was announced by the Chief Minister Mehdi Shah on January 31. "We have decided to divide the region into three divisions for better administrative control," Mehdi Shah informed media persons at his residence. He stated that a decision to this effect was taken in the cabinet meeting held on January 31. Giving details, he stated the first division would comprise towns including Gilgit, Hunza-Nagar and

Ghizer districts while Astore and Diamer districts would be included in the second division. Similarly he stated Baltistan would comprise the third division which has already been notified.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/330126/gilgit-baltistan-divided-into-three-divisions/>

Shabbir Mir, G-B seeks representation in Senate

The Express Tribune, February 1, 2012

GILGIT: As Senate elections draw near, a PPP office-bearer in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) has written to the president for seeking representation in the Senate. Advocate Amjad Hussain, Chairman Standing Committee G-B Council, stated, "The PPP government introduced a province-like set-up in the region which to some extent, redressed the grievances of the people of G-B." Since G-B is not represented in either the national assembly or the Senate, the people of G-B do not have a voice in the bi-cameral legislature and feel divorced from the political mainstream.

The election commission has announced Senate elections this year and awarding a ticket to a representative from G-B will strengthen the political process initiated by the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-governance Order 2009, he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/330128/g-b-seeks-representation-in-senate/>

Zeeshan Javaid, WAPDA claims to have disbursed Rs 66.347bn

Daily Times, February 1, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The mandatory body of the water and power sector, Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) claimed the disbursement of Rs 66.347 billion against resettlement work and payment of compensation to displaced people of Mangla Dam upraising project, costing Rs 101.364 billion.

Well-informed sources in the Ministry of Water and Power informed that WAPDA claims 'all is well' regarding the resettlement of displaced persons because of the billion-dollar Mangla Dam upraising project, but there are a number of flaws yet to be

removed to facilitate the affectees of the stated project, who have lost their shelter in the cited area.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C02%5C01%5Cstory_1-2-2012_pg5_19

Diامر-Bhasha Dam: Reference against official for fake award list sent to Establishment Division

The Express Tribune, February 2, 2012

GILGIT: A reference against assistant commissioner Diامر has been sent to the Establishment Division, while those who allegedly prepared bogus compensation papers have been suspended. "We have taken legal action against the officials and investigation is under way," Mehdi Shah, chief minister Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) noted before reporters at his residence on January 31.

He stated it was fortunate that the scam surfaced before payments to the people likely to be affected by the Diامر-Bhasha Dam were made since it would have resulted in huge losses to the national exchequer. He further stated the persons responsible would be punished.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/330545/diامر-bhasha-dam-reference-against-official-for-fake-award-list-sent-to-establishment-division/>

Abdul Hafeez, Terrorists from Gilgit, Chitral behind Karachi unrest: Malik

February 1, 2012

KARACHI: Interior Minister Rehman Malik stated that neither Sunni nor Shia are involved in recent violence in Karachi instead it is a conspiracy to destabilize Pakistan. Talking to media on February 1, the minister stated that the terrorists belonging to Chitral, Gilgit and adjacent areas were involved in the Karachi targeted killing. However; he noted people of Chitral and Gilgit should not bother as the terrorists would be arrested soon.

<http://www.thenewstribe.com/2012/02/01/terrorists-from-gilgit-chitral-behind-karachi-unrest-malik/>

Hameed Shaheen, Two amendments in AJK constitution soon

February 2, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Two important amendments in the

AJK constitution would be formally introduced in the form of bills in the forthcoming joint session of the Legislative Assembly and Kashmir Council on February 4, 2012 in Muzaffarabad. One of the amendments will make provision for an additional seat for women assembly member, while the other amendment seeks to augment the Kashmir Council elected membership strength from existing six to fourteen. The Council sits in Islamabad with Prime Minister/Chief Executive of Pakistan as its chairman. The AJK parliament comprises two Houses Legislative Assembly and Kashmir Council- with separate as well as concurrent lists of legislative subjects empowering both Assembly and the Council to make legislations separately. But the constitutional amendments require joint sitting for approval/disapproval.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2012/02/02/two-amendments-in-ajk-constitution-soon.html>

Interior Minister's aspersions

Chitral News, February 3, 2012

Interior Minister Rehman Malik in a press conference while commenting on the law and order situation in Karachi, indicted taking the names of Chitral, Gilgit Baltistan and contiguous areas producing terrorists, is hard blow on the image of Chitral and seems to be playing Russian roulette game with the people of Chitral which in turn disturbs all concerning peace and serenity prevails only in Chitral.

A single case of cross-boarder attack few months ago on the militia in Chitral does not suffice to justify naming Chitral in the heinous activity and phenomenon around the world. It shows lack of the political sagacity of the Minister on judging the root causes of the issue. It is also incongruent and illogical while specifically stressing on the deteriorating situation in Karachi, taking the name of Chitral. It is also very difficult to politically connect Karachi with Chitral with respect to the law and order situation. No party, faction, group, community has remained exempt from allegations in our country on target killing, bombing, suicide attacks, extortion and ransom. Only Chitral and Chitrali people had not yet been alleged, now our

Minister used the last option he had, used it, which is devoid of reality.

<http://www.chitralnews.com/Rehman%20Malik-03-Feb-2012.htm>

India expresses concern over Chinese troops presence in AJK

Pakistan Observer

BEIJING: India's concern over the presence of Chinese troops in Azad Kashmir (PoK) was raised by External Affairs Minister S M Krishna in his talks with leaders in Beijing. Krishna who met four Chinese leaders including Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi stated India's concerns in this regard were conveyed during the talks.

“On the issue of Chinese presence of AJK, Pakistan is in illegal occupation of certain areas of Jammu and Kashmir,” Krishna noted in a media briefing after his talks with Chinese leaders while answering a question. “This has been brought to the attention of the Chinese leadership repeatedly and there it stands,” he stated. Earlier, Indian Army Chief Gen V K Singh had stated in New Delhi that around 4,000 Chinese including the troops of the People's Liberation Army of China are in AJK. Pakistan has repeatedly stated that there are no Chinese troops in Azad Kashmir and only Chinese engineers are working at some hydro power development projects.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=139466>

Shabbir Mir, As Gilgit plunges into darkness, G-B govt plans power rate hike

The Express Tribune, February 10, 2012

GILGIT: As the capital city of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) experiences the worst power crisis ever, the regional government has decided to revise power tariffs in an attempt to streamline affairs at the water and power department, officials stated on February 9. The government is considering revising power tariffs, a senior government official stated. The new plan will be presented to the cabinet for approval.

On February 8, G-B secretary power and water Ghulam Mehdi, while talking to reporters, stated that Gilgit would be supplied electricity for two hours every six hours because of lower production.

Load management was necessary due to the damage suffered by the main water reservoir of Naltar hydel power plant. However, 14 hours after the briefing, Gilgit barely lit up for two hours and that too from 2am to 4am.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/334208/as-gilgit-plunges-into-darkness-g-b-govt-plans-power-rate-hike/>

Shakeel Anjum, 5 nominated for disturbance at oath-taking of GB judge

The News, February 10, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Five persons including Advisor to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), President People's Students Federation (PSF) of GB and a petitioner who has challenged the appointment of Chief Judge of GB in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, have been booked in Islamabad on the allegation of creating strife during the oath taking ceremony in GB House in Islamabad on February 8 in the presence of Governor of GB Pir Karam Ali Shah and Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah.

The Secretariat police confirmed that FIR has been lodged against five persons on the complaint of administrator GB House in Islamabad. The police sources stated that Dr Ghulam Abbas, who has challenged the appointment of Chief Judge in the Apex Court, Manzoor Bagoro, Advisor to the CM GB, Babu Astori, President PSF GB, Mohammad Kashir Bajanni and Malik Nadeem are among the accused nominated by the administrator GB House.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=92000&Cat=6>

Shabbir Mir, Judicial controversy: G-B's top judge appointed with PM's approval: law minister

The Express Tribune, February 9, 2012

GILGIT: After lawyers and activists from Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) rejected the appointment of the new chief judge of the Supreme Appellate Court (SAC), G-B law minister stated, on February 9, that the prime minister had made the appointment using his discretionary powers.

Prime Minister Gilani approved the summary sent by the regional government for the appointment of a

permanent chief judge, stated law minister Wazir Shakil. Two weeks earlier, the G-B government had suggested appointing an acting chief judge of the SAC from amongst the senior most judges in another summary. The appointment of Justice Rana Muhammad Arshad Khan as chief judge of the G-B SAC has triggered a sharp reaction in the region as lawyers have threatened to launch a protest movement in the region against the decision.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/333644/judicial-controversy-g-bs-top-judge-appointed-with-pms-approval-law-minister/>

Shabbir Mir, Judicial controversy: Protests against appointment of G-B chief judge

The Express Tribune, February 8, 2012

GILGIT: Lawyers in Gilgit, on Tuesday, rejected the appointment of the new chief judge of the Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) for being illegal and in violation of the Self-governance order 2009. “The newly appointed chief judge doesn't fulfil the criteria set down in the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-governance Order 2009,” stated a statement issued soon after a general body meeting of the G-B Supreme Appellate Court Bar Association in Gilgit. “Therefore we don't accept him as chief judge of the apex court,” it added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/333176/judicial-controversy-protests-against-appointment-of-g-b-chief-judge/>

Unruly scenes mar oath-taking of GB judge

The Nation, February 8, 2012

ISLAMABAD: An unexpected protest of Peoples Students Federation (PSF) on February 6 led to delay in the oath-taking ceremony of newly appointed Chief Judge of Gilgit Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court. The students from PSF tried to occupy the main venue of ceremony and demanded a resignation of Chief Minister GB Syed Mehdi Shah. According to details, on the occasion of oath-taking ceremony of Chief Judge Rana Muhammad Arshad, who had also served in Lahore High Court as a judge, dozens of students stormed the specific venue and chanted slogans against him and GB Chief Minister. However, upon intervention of Provincial Ministers and Deputy Speaker, the

agitating students left the area. A huge contingent of Islamabad police was also summoned.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/islamabad/08-Feb-2012/unruly-scenes-mar-oath-taking-of-gb-judge>

Appointment of GB Chief Judge is challenged in the Supreme Court

Dardistan Times, February 6, 2012

The judicial Hullabaloo continues in Gilgit-Baltistan as the recent appointment of the Chief Judge of GB apex court has been challenged in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Ghulam Abbas, chairman Gilgit-Baltistan National Movement (GBNM) has filed a petition in the supreme court of Pakistan seeking an injunction against the appointment and a stay order on the oath taking ceremony of the new judge.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/appointment-gb0chief-judge98-challenged-supreme-court34>

Divided Kashmiri families seek world attention

Pakistan Today, February 5, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: As the Pakistani nation and people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir observe Kashmir Solidarity Day today (Sunday), the divided families on both side of the Line of Control seek the world's attention to help them reunite. More than 5,000 families, who migrated from different areas of Indian held Kashmir in 1989 due to insurgency there, were anxiously waiting for the settlement of the issue to return to their homes. Manzoor Shaikh, a resident of Mahajer Colony No 2 in Muzaffarabad migrated from Karna area of Kapwara district in 1993.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/02/05/news/national/divided-kashmiri-families-seek-world-attention/>

Shabbir Mir, Draining Attabad Lake: FWO to brief stakeholders on progress and future strategy

The Express Tribune, February 5, 2012

GILGIT: The Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) will hold a briefing for Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) legislators and representatives of affected people to

share the difficulties and future strategy for draining Attabad Lake, sources stated on February 4.

“The session is planned for February 14 when senior officials of FWO will share their experience with elected representatives including members of the legislative assembly and G-B Council,” stated officials requesting anonymity as they were not authorised to interact with the media. Responsible for executing the project to widen the lake's spillway, the FWO has been severely criticised for the past one year for its failure to drain the lake that has submerged almost four villages upstream.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/332012/draining-attabad-lake-fwo-to-brief-stakeholders-on-progress-and-future-strategy/>

M.M. Alam, Overseas Kashmiris should invest in AJ&K: Yaqoob

Pakistan Observer

KARACHI: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, claiming that his last government almost succeeded in transforming AJ&K into a model state, informed that so far two Medical Colleges, IT University, Women's University, Cadet College and an Agricultural University had been established. He was speaking at a reception hosted by Sardar Muhammad Rafiq Khan Chairman Bukhari Group in his honor at Karachi Club. AJ&K President told that during his meeting with the Governor State Bank he had suggested special packages for AJ&K to discourage money laundering. Lamenting that banks in AJ&K were not investing in social sector he appealed the overseas Kashmiris to invest in their homeland. He thanked the Chinese government for investing in AJ&K.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=138909>

Taha Siddiqui, Mission 'lost cause': The tale of a Kashmiri 'jihadi'

The Express Tribune, February 5, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: In the mid 1990s, the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border between Pakistan and India, was relatively porous, with many migrating from Srinagar (Indian-Kashmir) into Azad Kashmir. Some arrived in pursuit of a

better life and others with hopes to win back Kashmir. I was around 18 years old when I decided I had enough. I had hoped that Pakistan, being a Muslim country, will help us win back Kashmir, but I was wrong,” stated Omer, refusing to give his last name. Omer's exploits nearly two decades ago landed him with fighters who were training anyone and everyone for Jihad in Kashmir during the 90s.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/332156/mission-lost-cause-the-tale-of-a-kashmiri-jihadi/>

Shabbir Mir, Fresh appointment: Gilgit-Baltistan judicial crisis ends

The Express Tribune, February 5, 2012

GILGIT: The judicial crisis in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) ended on February 4 following the appointment of new chief judge for the region's apex court. According to a notification issued from the Prime Minister Secretariat, Justice Rana Mohammad Arshad Khan, a former judge of the Lahore High Court, has been appointed as the chief judge of the G-B Supreme Appellate Court (SAC). “Justice Khan will take oath of his office on Feb 8, 2012,” it stated. The position of chief judge fell vacant after Mohammad Nawaz Abbasi's contract expired last month. The decision to grant an extension to Abbasi was revoked by the G-B government after it developed differences with him over an extension issue.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/332173/fresh-appointment-gilgit-baltistan-judicial-crisis-ends/>

The rally from Yasin expands, Thousands other join the march to Gilgit

Dardistan Times, February 6, 2012

GAHKUCH: More than 15000 people have set off a long march rally towards Gilgit city against the government wheat subsidy cut. The rally participants have threatened to besiege Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly, if the government does not make a retreat from wheat-subsidy cut. The rally also demands for a curb on the transport fare hike.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/rally-yasin3-expands0-thousand3s-other-have-8joined-rally-towards-gilgit>

SC directs govt, KANA to file replies

The Nation, February 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the federal government and the Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (KANA) to file concise statements, regarding appointment of judges as chief judge or judges of the Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan after the promulgation of Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009, within fortnight. A three-member bench headed by Justice Mian Shakirullah Jan and comprised Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali and Justice Tareq Pervaiz heard the maintainability of a constitutional petition moved by Dr Ghulam Abbas, Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan National Movement.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/islamabad/23-Feb-2012/sc-directs-govt-kana-to-file-replies>

Azam Khan, Unclear status: SC seeks statement on status of G-B

The Express Tribune, February 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A fresh debate on the status of Gilgit-Baltistan was at the forefront of a Supreme Court hearing on February 22 of two identical petitions regarding the enforcement of fundamental rights and appointments of judges in the G-B Supreme Appellate Court. Attorney General Maulvi Anwarul Haq submitted, before a three-member bench of the apex court, that the Gilgit-Baltistan Self Governance & Empowerment Ordinance 2009, under which the affairs of the area are currently being run, was issued by the federal government.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/340473/unclear-status-sc-seeks-statement-on-status-of-g-b/>

Shabbir Mir, Flight of resources: Lawmakers ask centre to return revenue earned from G-B

The Express Tribune, February 23, 2012

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) lawmakers opposed the utilisation of G-B revenue by the federal government and stated the regional government should ask for the amount collected and details on expenditure on the third day of

proceedings at the G-B Legislative Assembly (G-BLA). "The federal government must make efforts to return the money collected from the region," stated former finance minister and PML-Q lawmaker Mirza Hussain. Revenue collected annually from minerals, forests, tourism, wildlife and other natural resources amounts to billions, but goes directly into the federal government's accounts.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/340368/flight-of-resources-lawmakers-ask-centre-to-return-revenue-earned-from-g-b/>

Shabbir Mir, Upholding the law: First woman DSP takes on traffic mess, violators

The Express Tribune, February 16, 2012

GILGIT: After just two months in the job, Tahira Yasub, Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) first DSP traffic has already made her mark in Gilgit, trying to streamline traffic in a congested city, where violations are the norm. A graduate in International Relations from Karakoram International University, she adopted the profession fully aware of the challenges associated with it, especially for women and as promoted to the rank of DSP in December 2011.

Immediately after taking charge, she ordered the removal of tainted windows and screens, which the traffic sergeants ensured, much to the annoyance of many influential persons in town. Nearly 100 cars were fined for not complying with the order and over a 100 drivers have received tickets for traffic violations in the city.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/337150/upholding-the-law-first-woman-dsp-takes-on-traffic-mess-violators/>

Shabbir Mir, Top judge's appointment: Fissures in local PPP ranks

The Express Tribune, February 14, 2012

GILGIT: For publicly criticising the appointment of the chief judge of the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) apex court, regional secretary information Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has accused senior party leaders of creating a rift in the party. Such elements within the party seriously dent its credibility, claimed Rana Nazeem, PPP's regional secretary information, pointing fingers at Finance Minister Muhammad Ali Akhtar and Wazir Ibadat, member

G-B Council, who had openly criticised Chief Minister Mehdi Shah and Governor Karam Ali Shah for recommending a non-resident and an undeserving person as chief judge of the Supreme Appellate Court (SAC). They had termed the decision against the region's interest.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/335915/top-judges-appointment-fissures-in-local-ppp-ranks/>

Diامر-Bhasha dam affectees to get compensation soon: Chattha

Business Recorder, February 13, 2012

GILGIT: Chief Secretary (CS) Gilgit-Baltistan Saifullah Chattha assured Diامر-Bhasha dam affectees that they will be paid compensation for their land soon. The Chief Secretary visited village Thore, Diامر on February 12 where different delegations from Thore and Hudur called on him and demanded to make payment of the land acquired for the dam.

He assured the delegations that the compensation would be paid soon after the funds were released by the Water and Power Development Authority. Later, Chattha met the relatives of Abdul Wakil, who was killed in Gilgit, and assured them that the culprits would be brought to justice.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/politics-a-policy/45609-diامر-bhasha-dam-affectees-to-get-compensation-soon-chattha.html>

WAPDA provides accommodation to Diامر Bhasha Dam affectees

Daily Times, February 22, 2012

LAHORE: In a major departure from existing practice in land acquisition and resettlement, Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has decided to provide temporary housing facilities to all families whose lands have been acquired in Thore Valley for construction of the Diامر Bhasha Dam.

The provision of temporary accommodation, in accordance with the weather requirements of the area, is in addition to the full payment for the land and establishment of permanent townships in five years. Diامر Bhasha Dam Project was formally

initiated in October last year. For \$12 billion project, the process to acquire land is in progress, while 12 contracts for construction of WAPDA offices, colonies, contractors camps, roads infrastructure etc in the project area have already been awarded.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C02%5C22%5Cstory_22-2-2012_pg5_13

Mazhar Iqbal, Considering Representation For Gilgit Baltistan on Pakistani Parliament

February 12, 2012

A senior lawyer-cum-politician from Gilgit Baltistan (GB)-a territory disputed between India and Pakistan and currently governed by Pakistan-backed government, has recently sent a communiqué to the president of Pakistan soliciting representation for this region in the upper house of the parliament. Advocate Amjad Hussain, member Gilgit Baltistan Council and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader expressed his opinion in a letter addressed to President Asif Ali Zardari. He is among one of those members of ruling PPP who have been extraordinarily active to put pressure on Islamabad-controlled government in Gilgit Baltistan to hastily make administrative changes in this area. A recent announcement by the chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan to divide whole region into three administrative divisions is part of such political advancements.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/12022012-considering-representation-for-gilgit-baltistan-on-pakistani-parliament-oped/>

Pakistan considering leasing Gilgit-Baltistan to China for 50 years

February 12, 2012

WASHINGTON: Seeking to fortify its strategic ties with China amid strains in relations with US, Pakistan is considering a proposal to lease the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region to Beijing for 50 years, an eminent US-based think tank has claimed, citing local media.

The Pakistani move is aimed at cementing its all-weather relations with China amid the irreparable rupture in US-Pak ties over the past year, stated

Middle East Media Research Institute in a report released on February 11, which was based on news reports in this regard in local Urdu newspapers. The decision to launch the Pakistan-China Strategic Programme for Gilgit-Baltistan was probably taken during army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani's visit to China in January 2012, it stated.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/pak-considering-leasing-gilgitbaltistan-to-china/229430-56.html>

Khaleeq Kiani, Delays in AJK power projects under probe

Dawn, February 11, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Inspection Commission (PMIC) has launched an investigation into alleged deliberate delays in the construction of hydropower projects in Azad Kashmir. PMIC member Bashir Ahmad stated an investigation had been launched but he was not authorised to comment on it. He further stated the commission's Chairman Malik Amjad Noon was away. According to sources, the broader investigation was launched after departmental inquiries and probe by intelligence agencies.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/02/11/delays-in-ajk-power-projects-under-probe.html>

India should stand firm on PoK issue'

Daily Pioneer, February 23, 2012

NEW DELHI: Former External Affairs Minister and senior BJP leader Yashwant Sinha stated that India should shed its defensive posturing on the issue of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Northern Areas and raise its pitch against the neighbour in the international forum. Sinha was airing his opinion at the inaugural address of a day-long international seminar 'POK and Northern Areas-Present Status and Way Forward' organised by Centre for Security and Strategy.

“India has for long been one of the good boys in the international arena. Now is the time to behave like a bad boy on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and send the message loud and clear that India means business,” he stated stressing on the need for the country to vehemently decry the “ceding of these

regions by Pakistan” and press for its undoing. Lamenting the fact that the world did not know about the plight of the people of POK and the “brutal suppression of dissenting voices there,” the BJP leader termed these areas as “dark and secluded.”

<http://dailypioneer.com/nation/44830-india-should-stand-firm-on-pok-issue.html>

Shabbir Mir, G-B Assembly slams bill on Balochistan

The Express Tribune, February 22, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (G-BLA) on February 21 unanimously passed a resolution condemning the bill introduced in the US Congress on Balochistan, and termed it an attempt to sabotage ties between the two nations.

The resolution was tabled by Law Minister Wazir Shakil. The session, saw a one-sided debate as the legislators, including JUI-F's Maulana Sarwar, and independent member Raziuddin voiced their disdain at the bill which was presented in the US House of Representatives. It called upon Pakistan to recognise the Baloch right to self-determination.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/339976/g-b-assembly-slams-bill-on-balochistan/>

Seminar: Speakers demand political rights for G-B

The Express Tribune, February 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Highlighting the geographical and historical importance of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), speakers at a seminar on the region's historical and cultural importance urged the government to give the region representation in the bi-cameral legislature on February 27. Speaking on the occasion, G-B Finance Minister Muhammad Ali Akhter stated the people of GB had themselves fought against Dogra and British regimes and chosen to accede to Pakistan. Akhter stated there was no political set-up in G-B till 1973 and that it was PPP's founding father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had taken the initiative after he came to power.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/342680/seminar-speakers-demand-political-rights-for-g-b/>

Jahangir Badar named Gilgit-Baltistan Council member

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Giliani/Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan Council, nominated Senator Muhammad Jahangir Badar as Member of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council. The Gilgit-Baltistan Council was established under Article 33 of the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Government) Order, 2009 and comprises of 15 members out of whom 6 members are nominated by the Prime Minister of Pakistan from amongst Federal Ministers and Members of the Parliament.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=189653>

Attack on Gilgit-bound bus a conspiracy: Rehman

Business Recorder, February 29, 2012

Interior Minister Rehman Malik stated the firing on a passenger bus in Gilgit was a conspiracy to destabilise the country and directed the investigation team incident and submit a report within three days. Rehman Malik stated this after a meeting with Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah. Soon after the incident strict directives were issued to Inspector General of Police Gilgit Baltistan for taking security measures in order to avoid any untoward incident. The minister stated that 18 persons were killed during the sad incident, of which eight belonged to Gilgit, seven Hunza Nagar and three were from Astore district of Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1160159/>

3-day mourning announced in Gilgit

GILGIT: The Government of Gilgit-Baltistan announced three days of mourning on February 28 after 18 men were killed in a terror attack in Kohistan. All educational institutes and public offices will remain closed in Gilgit for three days to mourn the massacre. Grief and pain gripped Gilgit as soon as news about the killing of 18 people reached there. All markets have been closed and transport is off the roads.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=189671>

Shabbir Mir, People's woes: Leaders absent as

Gilgit-Baltistan heads towards chaos

The Express Tribune, February 13, 2012

GILGIT: With public representatives living in reprieve, people of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have been left at the mercy of target killers, inept bureaucracy in harsh weather. The G-B chief minister has spent about 70% of his time in Islamabad in the past year, according to sources close to him. Moreover, since the beginning of the winter season most lawmakers, including G-B Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah, Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed, Senior Minister Wazir Jaffer, adviser to chief minister and several other officials have stayed in Islamabad and other cities.

“The capital city is bleeding while the chief minister and his cabinet members are living in luxury in Islamabad,” stated Imtiaz Khan, a local resident while referring to the recent attack on JUI-F information secretary.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/335501/peoples-woes-leaders-absent-as-gilgit-baltistan-heads-towards-chaos/>

Govt criticised for harassing nationalist leader's wife

The Express Tribune, February 12, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Nationalist parties and human rights activists from Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have strongly condemned the government's move to bar a nationalist leader's wife from travelling abroad. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had stopped Balawaristan National Front (BNF) chief, Abdul Hamid's wife Zaibul Nigar at Benazir Bhutto International Airport last week when she was about to leave for Bangkok. She was later informed that her name had been put on the Exit Control List (ECL). Khan, who has taken political asylum in Belgium, has been demanding that G-B to be declared a separate state under the United Nations resolutions.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/335148/govt-criticised-for-harassing-nationalist-leaders-wife/>

PM directs ERRA to focus on projects 50% complete

Daily Times, February 29, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza

Gilani on February 28 directed the Earthquake Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (ERRA) to focus on projects which have been completed over 50 percent to ease problems of the earthquake-affected people. In a meeting, Gilani reviewed progress on projects under the ERRA. The meeting was briefed on development activities covering highways/roads, schools, health and municipal schemes. The prime minister instructed that projects that were more than 50 percent complete must be undertaken to ensure that the benefits reach the earthquake victims.

Chinese authorities are using different tactics to oppress local people; by denying them political and socio-economic autonomy; by controlling and exploiting natural resources and means of production; and by changing ethnic and religious demography of the region. Authorities encourage ethnic Hans to settle in the urban centers of East Turkestan and offer the settlers special socio-economic and political incentives to hasten the process.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C02%5C29%5Cstory_29-2-2012_pg7_11

Hoti calls CM Gilgit Baltistan over tragic bus firing incident

Business Recorder, February 28, 2012

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Haider Khan Hoti called Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah by phone and expressed heartfelt sympathies and solidarity on the incident of firing on a bus en-route to Gilgit from Rawalpindi. He strongly condemned this coward and brutal act. He stated that elements involved in this incident would be brought to book. He further stated that the culprits would be unveiled and brought to justice through collective efforts.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/47565-hoti-calls-cm-gilgit-baltistan-over-tragic-bus-firing-incident-.html>

Perpetrators of Kohistan killings will be taken to task: Malik

Dawn, February 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rehman Malik on February 28 stated the firing on Gilgit-bound bus

in Kohistan was a conspiracy to destabilize the country and its perpetrators would be taken to task. Talking to media persons after having a meeting with Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah, the Interior Minister stated President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani soon after the incident issued directives for taking security measures in order to avoid such incidents in future. He noted out of 18 victims, eight belonged to Gilgit, seven to Hunza Nagar and three to Astore district of Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/02/28/those-responsible-for-kohistan-killings-will-be-taken-to-task-malik.html>

AJK govt to resolve residential problems

Pakistan Today, February 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Members of Jammu and Kashmir Co-operative Housing Society, Islamabad, in its Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) on February 26 unanimously gave approval of a number of decisions and projects to make all the on-going and new schemes of society fully functional by provision of required facilities.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/02/26/city/islamabad/%e2%80%98ajk-govt-to-resolve-residential-problems%e2%80%99/>

Suggestions for AJK Public Service Commission

Pakistan Today, February 22, 2012

The AJKPSC is going to conduct the competitive examination against the post of ACs and Tehsildars in some months. According to authorities concerned, there is a problem of examination centres being available in Muzaffarabad, capital of AJK. This examination consists of around ten papers which require the centre to be available for at least five days, two papers each day. But the Commission takes one paper each day which not only wastes times but also brings myriad of problems. Some papers, with considerably less score weightage can be held on one day, in the morning and evening. It will save time of the candidates and the Commission. Moreover, the commission holds such exams in June or July which is not an appropriate weather-wise for the aspirants who hail from different parts of Pakistan. The

following suggestions can be analysed and put to practice if found suitable:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/02/22/comment/editors-mail/suggestions-for-ajk-public-service-commission/>

Kristiina Ojuland MEP, The dangerous presence of Chinese troops in Gilgit-Baltistan

February 21, 2012

China has been deploying troops in the area of Gilgit-Baltistan for quite some time. In October 2011, the Indian Army Chief General V K Singh had mentioned the unease created by the presence of thousands of Chinese soldiers in the area. Some 4,000 Chinese were known to be in Gilgit-Baltistan - this number included the troops of People's Liberation Army of China.

Indian Air Chief Marshal N A K Browne had also raised the same issue in an interview stating that China's increasing presence in Pakistan Administered Kashmir warrants India's attention. New Delhi has been voicing concerns over China's presence and activities in Gilgit-Baltistan, quite frequently. Especially, since last year, when about 11,000 Chinese troops were reported to be in the Azad Kashmir region.

China's deployment of troops in a highly contentious region of Pakistan and India is a worrisome factor not only for India but for the world at large. Gilgit-Baltistan region is festering with revolt against the Pakistani rule and the direct involvement of Beijing in this issue makes any

hopes for future negotiations or understanding between India and Pakistan, all the more tenuous. It can only contribute to creating more distrust and unease between the two nations, which have historically been suspicious of each other's moves.

<http://www.neurope.eu/blog/dangerous-presence-chinese-troops-gilgit-baltistan>

Shabbir Mir, Chief judge's appointment: Baltistan bar terms decision illegal

The Express Tribune, February 22, 2012

GILGIT: Following the example of their colleagues in Gilgit, lawyers in Baltistan have also objected to the appointment of the new chief judge of the Supreme Appellate Court (SAC). The appointment of the new chief judge is illegal and should be withdrawn immediately, read a statement issued by the Baltistan Bar after a general body meeting held in Skardu on February 20.

Earlier this month, lawyers in Gilgit had also voiced their reservations on the appointment of the chief justice which was confirmed after Justice Muhammad Nawaz Abbasi had completed his tenure. The meeting chaired by advocate Shaukat Ali rejected the appointment of judges on an ad hoc basis and stated that the retirement age of the judges should be fixed at 65 years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/339876/chief-judges-appointment-baltistan-bar-terms-decision-illegal/>

Economic Developments

Over Rs14mn goods traded across LoC in a day

The News, February 17, 2012

MIRPUR, AJK: Goods containing permitted items of worth over Rs14.278 million were traded between AJK and Jammu & Kashmir across LoC at Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point in Rawalakot on February 16, officials stated. As many as 25 trucks rolled out from Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) at Ranger in occupied Poonch to Azad Jammu & Kashmir by the stipulated time late Thursday carrying bags of chilli, onion, coriander, herbs and tamarind of worth Rs. 5.251 million, the sources noted on February 17.

From AJK, 10 trucks carrying bags of almonds, dry dates, oranges, herbs, embroidery items and Peshawari sandals of worth Rs. 9.027 million crossed to Jammu & Kashmir, the sources added. The Trade Facilitation Centre officials at both the sides of the LoC monitored the transportation of these goods at the crossing point twice during the day from 12:30 pm to 01:00 pm and 04:30 pm to 05:00 pm, the sources stated.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-35797-Over-Rs14mn-goods-traded-across-LoC->

Erra body approves development projects for Muzaffarabad city

Business Recorder, February 10, 2012

The Steering Committee of Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority (Erra) on February 9 approved different projects worth rupees one billion for Muzaffarabad city. A meeting to oversee progress on Urban Development projects in Azad Kashmir was held at Erra Headquarters with Erra Deputy Chairman Lieutenant General Sardar Mahmood Khan in the chair.

The meeting approved reconstruction of 600-metre Tali Mandi Road and flood protection wall alongside Neelum River, water supply scheme, and Tariqabad bypass Road to Langar Airport. The committee also approved Nauman Pura Bridge approximately costing over 300 million for Bagh, Sabir Shaeed Stadium for Rawalakot.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-economy/single/672/189/1152319/>

AH Nizami, Joint Kashmir chamber calls for free movement for traders

The Express Tribune, February 7, 2012

MIRPUR: The apex business body of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian-held Kashmir called for early introduction of a liberal regime, ensuring free movement of traders between the two sides to make trade meaningful, objective and a complete success. Federation of Jammu and Kashmir Chambers of Commerce and Industry President Zulfiqar Abbasi stated free movement of business community from both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) was imperative for promotion of trade. He demanded the introduction of a liberal policy for swift issuance of travel documents to traders with multiple-entry facility. Abbasi asked both Pakistani and Indian governments to issue a special travel pass to the traders with validity of a couple of years on chamber's recommendation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/332582/joint-kashmir-chamber-calls-for-free-movement-for-traders/>

JKJCCI urges authorities to declare LoC as free-trade zone

MIRPUR: The Jammu and Kashmir Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JKJCCI) has demanded of the authorities concerned to declare the Line of Control (LoC) as free-trade zone for the promotion of cross-LoC trade. Addressing a joint news conference, the newly

elected President JKJCCI, Dr. Mubeen Shah in his telephonic address from Srinagar urged both India and Pakistan to make the cross-LoC trade a complete success. Former President Zulfiqar Abbasi also addressed the conference from Mirpur.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=189258>

M.M. Alam, Tax holiday, free land, power for investors in AJ&K assured: Majeed

Pakistan Observer

KARACHI: Prime Minister Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) Chaudhry Abdul Majeed while announcing incentives for Pakistani investors has stated that his government would immediately grant free land and 100 percent tax holidays, while the projects would be provided free electricity within eighteen months. He was speaking at a dinner reception hosted in his honor by Sardar Muhammad Rafiq Khan Chairman Bukhari Group at his residence in Karachi.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=140195>

AH Nizami, New president of AJK joint chamber elected

The Express Tribune, February 11, 2012

MIRPUR: Dr Mubeen Ahmed Shah, eminent businessman of Srinagar and former president of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has been elected president of the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JKJCCI), a spokesperson for the chamber announced on February 10. JKJCCI is a body of businessmen representing all regions on both sides of the line of control (LoC) in Kashmir. Shah, who takes over from founder-president Zulfiqar Abbasi, got support of nine out of 11 members representing the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kashmir Traders and Manufacturers Federation (KTMF) and other traders in a meeting held in Srinagar on February 9, the spokesperson stated while talking to the media.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/334639/new-president-of-ajk-joint-chamber-elected/>

Erra approves Rs1b projects for Muzaffarabad

The News, February 11, 2012

The Erra Steering Committee approved projects worth one billion rupees for Muzaffarabad to provide basic amenities of life to the people. During a meeting held to oversee progress on Urban Development projects of AJK, the participants were informed that the programme for Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot is currently focusing on 62 priority projects related to education, health and other sectors. Giving briefing to participants of the meeting Erra Director General (Planning), Brigadier Zafar Walha stated out of these Sabir Shaheed Boys High School has been completed and handed over to the government of AJK while 20 projects are nearing completion.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=92139&Cat=6>

Altaf Hamid Rao, Shah for declaring LoC as economic free zone

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: The newly-elected President of Jammu & Kashmir Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the only forum of the business fraternity from both sides of the Line of Control has demanded declaring of the Line of Control as the Economic Free Zone for the promotion of cross-LoC trade between both sides including AJK and Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing joint news conference the newly elected Jammu & Kashmir Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry Dr. Mubeen Shah stated in his telephonic address from Srinagar and the outgoing JKJCCI President Zulfiqar Abbasi personally at the AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry demanded the governments of Pakistan and India to allow a liberal regime to make the cross-LoC trade complete success and for the economic betterment and uplift of both sides of the line of control in Jammu & Kashmir and AJK.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=140374>

International Developments

Khalid Mustafa, Kuwait extends \$40m for Neelum-Jhelum power project

The News, January 31, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Kuwait has extended \$40 million to Pakistan for the construction of the de-sander a vital part of the strategic \$333.3 billion Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project. The Economic Affairs Division (EAD) and Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project Company (NJHPC) signed a Subsidiary Loan Agreement on January 30, which was a legal requirement to make the loan agreement between Kuwait and Pakistan effective. A loan agreement amounting to \$40 million was signed between Pakistan and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) on November 25, 2010 for the purpose of construction of Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=90300&Cat=3>

AJK, Korea sign Hydro Power Project accord

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: The governments of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and South Korea have signed implementation agreement on Patrind hydro power project which would add additional 147 MW electricity, that would help to reduce energy crises in the country. This project would be completed within four years from the date of commencement of major construction after financial close.

After the completion of this project it would be operated and maintained for 30 years by K-water

Korea water Resources Corporation under an operation and maintenance contact and after this duration this project would be handed over to the government of AJ&K without any cost. The total cost of the project is about \$ US 400 million while Korean sponsors would contribute 25% of while 75% would be financed by international lenders.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=139874>

Japan's grant for Women Centre in Shigar

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has decided to extend financial support of US\$ 97,210 (approx. Rs 8.2 million) to the Al-Shehbaz Tanzeem Khawateen for the construction of Women Vocational Training Centre in Tehsil Shigar Gilgit-Baltistan. The agreement for the project was signed between Mr. Hiroshi OE, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and Ms. Skina Bi, President of the NGO on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Islamabad. The grant will be utilized for the construction of Training Centre and procurement of furniture and other required equipment for vocational training.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=141584>

Other Developments

Shabbir Mir, Weathering the cold: Revolutionising 'warmth' in G-B

The Express Tribune, February 3, 2012

GILGIT: Necessity is the mother of invention. A traditional heating system is now being widely used across Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), created from the need to counter the region's otherwise bitter cold. In the absence of facilities such as electricity and gas, the device is the most economical option cherished by many for heating homes, offices and schools. One of its greatest advantages is that you can cook food and at the same time your family can cluster around it and warm themselves. "It's economical because you can use it for heating, cooking and warming water," stated Shaukat Ali, a senior citizen residing in Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/331172/weathering-the-cold-revolutionising-warmth-in-g-b/>

Blackout: Major power breakdown hits Gilgit

The Express Tribune, February 8, 2012

GILGIT: Residents of Gilgit once again experienced prolonged power breakdown exceeding 36 hours after the cracked walls of the main water reservoir of the Naltar Hydel Power Project, repaired last week by experts, failed to stop the leakage. Barely two weeks ago, the two experts called in by the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government from Lahore, had repaired the cracked walls of the reservoir of the 18-megawatt Hydel Power Project at Naltar, restoring power to the city. Gilgit had witnessed a complete blackout for five consecutive days in the last week of January.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/333171/blackout-major-power-breakdown-hits-gilgit/>

Shabbir Mir, Gender issues: 'Almost 90% women in G-B facing violence at home'

The Express Tribune, February 17, 2012

GILGIT: Almost 90 per cent of women in Gilgit-

Baltistan (G-B) have been subjected to domestic violence at least once in their lives. This was the consensus among speakers during a seminar on gender-based violence held at a local hotel on February 16. The seminar stressed on the fact that most women are subjected to physical abuse, mental torture and in some cases, even sexual abuse at home, which often go unreported due to lack of education and tribal norms.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/337483/gender-issues-almost-90-women-in-g-b-facing-violence-at-home/>

Protest: Young doctors continue boycott for 17th day

The Express Tribune, February 16, 2012

MIRPUR: Patients suffered and were not properly attended after young doctors working in public-sector hospitals and subordinate medical units across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) continued their indefinite strike for the 17th consecutive day.

Young doctors went on strike after the Young Doctors' Association AJK gave a call for the boycott to press the AJK government to accept their long-standing demands which include raises in salaries and allowances at par with their counterparts working in provincial and federal government hospitals in Pakistan. Young doctors had earlier observed a token strike to protest against the indifferent attitude of the AJK government towards them.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/337133/protest-young-doctors-continue-boycott-for-17th-day/>

Shabbir Mir / Muhammad Sadaqat, Removing blockade: Attabad Lake's spillway dynamited,

The Express Tribune, February 28, 2012

GILGIT/HARIPUR: Around 50,000 cusecs of water gushed out of the Attabad Lake in Hunza after Pakistan Army engineers dynamited the temporary blockade on the lake's spillway, witnesses and officials stated on February 27.

“So far the situation is under control since the outflow of water isn't too dangerous to affect the population downstream,” an army spokesman noted soon after the blasts that were carried out in the presence of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister Mehdi Shah and G-B Force Commander Major General Ikramul Haq. The spillway had been blocked recently to further deepen it. However, it is believed that the blasts wouldn't completely drain the lake that has submerged part of the Karakoram Highway and four villages upstream.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/342776/removing-blockade-attabad-lakes-spillway-dynamited/>

Pakistan dam develops cracks, IANS

February 21, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A committee will probe the cause behind cracks that have appeared in a dam in

Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region. Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Speaker Wazir Baig February 20 constituted the committee to investigate reasons behind the cracks that appeared in the water reservoir of the 18MW power station in Naltar. Syed Raziuddin Rizvi, a lawmaker, stated in the assembly that there was likelihood of calamity in case the water reservoir burst due to the cracks. Water and Power Minister Wazir Shakil noted the reservoir had accumulated tonnes of silt due to last year's flashfloods. He further stated experts had been hired to clean the reservoir.

http://twocircles.net/2012feb21/pakistan_dam_develops_cracks.html

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Total area of Jammu and Kashmir | 222,236 sq kms |
| Area of under illegal Pakistani occupation (PoK = AJK + Gilgit Baltistan) | 78114 sq kilometres |
| Area of J&K under Chinese occupation <i>Area ceded to China by Pakistan</i> | 42,685 sq kms 5,130 sq kms |
| Together Pak-China | 120,799 sq kms |
| Area with India | 101437 sq kms |

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Seven

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche 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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly: Total 33 members (24 members directly elected)

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

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

Political Parties and Groups: Balwaristan National Front (BNF), Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum, Gilgit-Baltistan, United Movement (GBUM), Baltistan National Movement, Karakoram National Movement, Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA), Gilgit Baltistan National Alliance (GBNA), All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

(Sources: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk>, & website of the Balwaristan National Front, <http://www.balawaristan.net>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Disclaimer

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

POK NEWS DIGEST



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