

POK

News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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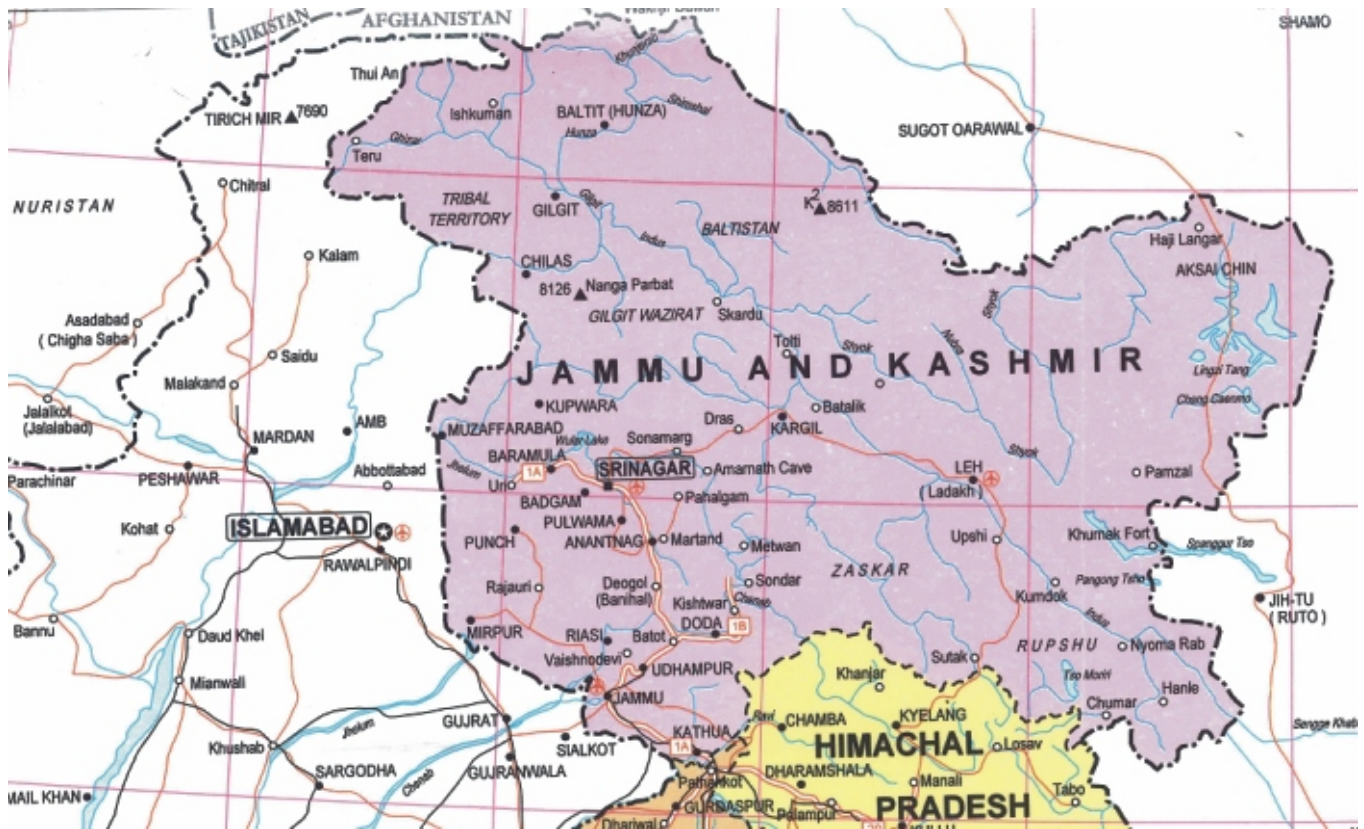
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Growing concerns on Chinese presence in the PoK region has been reflected in some reports included in the current issue. Some argue that China is in Gilgit Baltistan for long, in view of the far reaching strategic and economic goals, it wishes to accomplish in the coming years. Being the crucial link with its all-weather ally, Pakistan, Gilgit Baltistan is of utmost importance to China. Hence, China wants to exercise influence on the PoK region to fulfil future requirements. There is resentment on increasing Chinese foothold in PoK at the local level. Leader of the Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Manzoor Parwana, recently slammed the Pakistan government in this regard. In a press release, Parwana urged the Pakistan government to make public the details of the Sino Pak Border Agreement of 1963, through which Pakistan handed over to China large tracts of territory belonging to Gilgit Baltistan (part of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir).

Unprecedented delay in starting off the Diamer Bhasha dam project has led to widespread apprehension regarding its future. There has been a series of conflicting reports- on one hand they suggest that funds have been arranged for the mega dam, while others note that smaller projects such as the Dasu dam (in Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) shall be given preference. The Diamer Bhasha dam is a huge multibillion dollar project and hence its future rests entirely on external funding. Lately, international financial institutions such as the World Bank have been reluctant to fund the project owing to its location in a disputed region and also due to its overall infeasibility.

Meanwhile, cross LoC trade was disrupted and a meeting was held between the two sides to resolve the issue. There is great deal of anguish amongst traders on both sides as the meeting failed to break the deadlock.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“China expands footprint in Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Balochistan”

ANI, September 2, 2013

GILGIT: China is expanding its presence in Azad Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan with the help of governments in Pakistan - be it dictators or elected regimes who have ignored interests of the local people. The ruling PML (N) government has hailed the relationship with China as being "higher than the Himalayas and sweeter than honey". During his visit to China in July 2013, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed many agreements including an \$ 18 billion economic corridor from Xinjiang on China's western border to the Gwadar port in Balochistan. Sharif also called for an early completion of repair work on the Karakoram Highway, which runs from Xinjiang through Azad Kashmir. Experts say this is of economic and strategic interest to China and will not benefit the people of Pakistan or Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.aninews.in/videogallery9/15081-china-expands-footprint-in-azad-kashmir-gilgit-and-balochistan.html>

“Pakistan flips and flops on Bhasha Dam, then puts it on hold”

Malaysia Sun (ANI), August 31, 2013

In a series of gaffes, Pakistan's Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar first announced on 20th August that his government had supposedly arranged funds for the 4500 MW Diamer-Bhasha Dam estimated at a cost of 12 billion dollars. Pakistan media reported that the World Bank (WB) had withdrawn its condition of seeking a no-objection certificate (NOC) from India for releasing funds for the dam. Finance Minister Dar stated, " We have convinced the WB that it is not legally necessary to seek the NOC from a neighboring country" (read India).

If such a waiver had indeed been sought and provided, only Dar was aware of it. Neither India,

nor the World Bank, was aware of any change in the status of the proposed dam and its funding. No multilateral lending agency can fund projects in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or Azad Kashmir as Pakistan calls it, because the ownership of the area is disputed. For the past eleven years, the Pakistani Government has been contesting this clause. While India has not given up its legitimate right over PoK and still considers Pakistan an illegal occupier of the land, its position on the dam is ambiguous. One source stated that so long as the project proposals legally state that it is located in an area, which is disputed between India and Pakistan and its final disposition, is for parties to the dispute to settle and the project is meant for developmental assistance to Kashmiris, and then, India could take a favourable approach.

<http://www.malaysiasun.com/index.php/sid/216759199/scat/303b19022816233b/ht/Pakistan-flips-and-flops-on-Bhasha-Dam-then-puts-it-on-hold>

“LHC petitioned for construction of Bhasha Dam”

Daily Times, September 3, 2013

LAHORE: A lawyer, Chaudhry Ahmad Masood Gujjar, filed a petition in the Lahore High Court seeking directions for construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam to save billions of rupees. The petitioner has stated that the federal government had stopped the work on this important project. He stated that the president of Pakistan had on January 17, 2006 announced the decision for construction of five multi-purpose water reservoirs in the country within ten to twelve years. Gujjar stated that the Bhasha Dam was one of the most important projects and the Council of Common Interests had also unanimously approved its construction. He stated that now the government was not paying any attention to this project and postponing of the project would cause a loss of billions of rupees to public exchequer.

Gujjar argued that the physical work on the dam could be started and it could be completed in next seven years, but due to delay in the project the cost of the dam has been increased to \$14 billion from \$12.6 billion. He stated that Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar claimed to have convinced the World Bank to finance the Bhasha Dam without the requirement of no-objection certificate from India, and the Asian Development Bank has also agreed to become the lead finance for the project. The petitioner requested that the federal government be directed to immediately resume work on this dam and complete it to save the loss of Rs 24.843 billion, which has already been spent on this project.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\03\story_3-9-2013_pg13_4

“Gilgit-Baltistan's legislators call on President”

Daily Times, September 3, 2013

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of members of Legislative Assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan led by its Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah called on President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr on September 2. The delegation besides Chief Minister GB included Wazir Baig, Muhammad Jaffar, Musa, Muhammad Ali Akhtar, Ali Maddad Shah, Ismail, Nasir Khan, Sheikh Nisar and Aftab Hayder. Spokesperson to the President Senator Farhatullah Babar stated that Chief Minister GB Syed Mehdi Shah thanked the President for his keen interest in the development of Gilgit-Baltistan and granting self-rule to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan through promulgation of Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and self-governance) order. The Chief Minister stated that with the administrative and financial empowerment of Gilgit-Baltistan, a new era of progress and prosperity has begun in the region, adding that people of the area greatly value the steps taken by the previous regime for the uplift and welfare of Gilgit-Baltistan.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\03\story_3-9-2013_pg13_4

Rao Atiq, “AJK SC's direction”

Pakistan Observer, September 1, 2013

MIRPUR: The Supreme Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir on August 30 directed District

Administration of Mirpur to ensure the payment of the money to the local investors, which they had invested in the recently emerged much-attractive Online Ads Business 'Click' from the concerned operators of the business. The court fixed September 2 as next date of hearing of the case. A single-member bench of the apex court comprising Chief Justice Muhammad Azam Khan issued these orders on a petition of the organizers of the business challenging the recent verdict of the AJK High Court declaring the recent orders about sealing of the business as valid. The apex court issued directives to the district administration that the administration shall not allow the local operators of the Online Ads Business 'Click' to leave the jurisdiction of Mirpur.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=216889>

“Barjees seeks expats' help for country's development”

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 4, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan on September 2 stressed the need for cooperation of overseas Pakistanis for the progress and development of country. He was talking to Lord Qurban Husaain, Member British House of Lords, who called on him in Islamabad. Lord Qurban appreciated the positive role of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for the continuation of democracy and stated that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif never supported any illegal and unconstitutional act.

Qurban told the minister that some overseas Kashmiris wanted to serve the people of their country. The minister stated three medical colleges were being constructed in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The minister asked AJK Senior Minister Choudhry Mohamad Yaseen to cooperate with the stated doctor and hire his services for the medical college. Lord Qurban told the minister that Kashmiris from different parties were members of British Parliament. They have good relations and always cooperate with each other, he added.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=248984&Itemid=2

“Shelling near Kotli”

Dawn, September 3, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Indian and Pakistani troops traded fire in some areas of Nakial sector in the Kotli district of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on September 2. However, no casualties were reported. Official sources and local people noted that shelling took place in Lanjot, Balakot and Dheri Dabsi villages, but it remained largely from “post to post.” Confirming the shelling, Kotli Deputy Commissioner, Masoodur Rehman stated three state-run educational institutions in these villages had been closed for three days. “Shelling began after 10am and it restricted people to their homes and students to their respective institutions,” he further stated.

<http://dawn.com/news/1040182/shelling-near-kotli>

“AJK leaders call on President Zardari”

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 3, 2013

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the leadership of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) led by AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan and Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed called on President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr on September 2. The delegation, besides the AJK President and Prime Minister, included among others Speaker AJK Assembly Ghulam Sadiq, Senior Minister AJK Ch. Muhammad Yasin, Deputy Speaker Ms Shaheen Dar, Ch. Latif Akbar, Ch Pervez Ashraf, Ms Shazia Akbar and Mian Waheed.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=248960&Itemid=2

“G-B sets up task force to catch power thieves”

Dawn, September 1, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government on August 31 constituted a special task force to take action against illegal power users, including official residences, offices, commercial and industrial units. Relevant officials stated the task force consisted of water and power department and the local administration officials which would conduct raids

under the supervision of magistrates. They stated that the task force would fine power thieves and defaulters and send them to jail.

Meanwhile, the Federal Investigation Agency conducted raids at the offices of the education directorate, education and finance ministers and secretary finance and disconnected power supply to them for using it illegally. The FIA team led by deputy director Babar Khan also raided some other offices and cut their power supply.

“The raids are part of the ongoing campaign against power theft throughout the country,” stated an official, adding cases were registered against meter readers for overlooking the power theft in their respective areas. The official stated the FIA seized 12 air conditioners only from the education directorate. He stated offices of ministers and secretaries turned out to be defaulters of the water and power department as they had not paid bills outstanding against them since long.

<http://dawn.com/news/1039780/g-b-sets-up-task-force-to-catch-power-thieves>

Peer Muhammad, “Inspection team report: Contractors embezzle Rs80m in G-B funds”

The Express Tribune, September 2, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Contractors embezzled up to Rs80 million in funds in connivance with senior officers of Pakistan Works Department (PWD) without completing even a single project in a small tehsil of Ghizer district of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). This was revealed by an investigative report prepared recently by the head of the Inspection Team in G-B, which has commenced probing development projects across the region on the complaint that PWD officers have discharged funds by drawing huge commission from the contractors, who did not even bother to conclude a single project.

According to a report of the inspection team, in Yasin tehsil, development funds over Rs80 million have been disbursed for six projects well before the work even started. It was learnt that most of the contractors had affiliation with Pakistan Peoples Party and now they have joined Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in a bid to save their skin.

The new chief secretary, Mohammad Younus Dhaga, has suspended a score of senior and junior level officers of PWD by taking action against serious irregularities.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/598537/inspection-team-report-contractors-embezzle-rs80m-in-g-b-funds/>

“Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan plays double standards”

Dardistan Times

The Chief Minister of GB, Mr. Syed Mehdi Shah has stated that the directive of the Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding repatriation of Hussain Asghar, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), to Islamabad to take up a corruption case does not apply to the official, for he serves under the government of Gilgit-Baltistan and the region falls outside of the ambit of Pakistan's constitution of 1973. He maintained that the government of Gilgit-Baltistan is not obligated to honour verdicts of the apex court of Pakistan.

Bravo! The statement looks daring and honest per se, nonetheless, oblivious to the repercussions and contrary to what he opined earlier. It seems, Shah is in denial of Supreme Court's authority over the region for constitutional reasons or whatever reasons one may infer. But hold on; what constitutional discourse he follows when he basks in the perks and privileges as a Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan? What ground he stands on when he so often shows off his democratic might and superficial political grandeur in the region? How much constitutional, if any, is the GB package, under which he is ruling a nation? These are the questions people ask; every which way Shah moulds the constitutional interpretation and the stature of the region.

http://www.dardistantimes.com/Opinion/816847074/chief-minister-gilgit-baltistan-plays-double-standards?qt-feature_artilces=1

“Inquiry ordered into GB appointments”

Dawn, September 29, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan chief secretary, Mohammad Yonus Dhaga ordered an inquiry into the recruitments made in the local education

department since 2008. Relevant officials noted on September 28 that there had been complaints that relatives of ministers and senior government officials were inducted through backdoor. They stated that degrees of teachers would be verified to know whether proper procedures were followed in their appointments. “Those who were given favour in sheer violation of law and merit will be fired after completing the due process,” stated an official on condition of anonymity. Meanwhile, the chief secretary also directed the works department to ensure timely completion of the ongoing development projects. He took serious note of delay in the projects.

<http://dawn.com/news/1046226/inquiry-ordered-into-gb-appointments>

Khaleeq Kiani, “Govt gets three bids for 590MW Mahl project”

Dawn, September 28, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The government on September 27 received three proposals from Chinese and local companies for setting up of 590MW Mahl Hydro power Project in Azad Kashmir at an estimated cost of about \$1 billion. The bids were opened by a committee, led by Secretary of Water and Power, comprising representatives of the governments of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, besides the Water and Power Ministry, National Transmission and Dispatch Company and Private Power and Infrastructure Board. The companies which submitted their proposals by the deadline on September 27 included CWE Investment Corporation and Sino hydro Group of Limited (both from China) and Nishat Group Associated, led by leading businessman Mian Mohammad Mansha. The Mahl Hydro power Project is to be located on dual boundary of Rawalpindi, Punjab and Bagh in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, downstream of Kohala Bridge and upstream of Dhalkot Bridge linking AJK with Punjab. The proposals opened on September 27 in the presence of bidding companies would be evaluated by the bid committee on the basis of technical and financial credentials of the applicants within a month.

<http://dawn.com/news/1045894/govt-gets-three-bids-for-590mw-mahl-project>

“GB, Chitral are open avenues for trade with China”

Pakistan Observer, September 28, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The development in the area of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral will open avenues for trade with China and other regions. Regional Centres of ICIMOD and ICARDA come up for our support for the strategic plan development of Mountain Agricultural Research Centre (MARC) in the region for the improvement and betterment of crops, fruits and livestock production. This was stated by Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Chairman, Dr Iftikhar Ahmad in Islamabad while presiding over a high-level 'Consultative Workshop with Stakeholders for MARC Strategic Plan Development' at PARC Headquarters. ICIMOD Consultant, Dr Jochen Currie currently on a consultancy mission to develop strategic plan for MARC Juglot, Gilgit-Baltistan was given a presentation on 'Strategic Development of Agricultural Research in Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral'

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=219371>

Waqar Ahmed, “On strategic projects and security issues”

The News, September 28, 2013

The Chinese ambassador in Islamabad has lately expressed concern over the lack of proper safety for its workers in Pakistan and conveyed the Chinese government's request for firm steps to be taken to ensure proper safety of Chinese workers, according to reports. The envoy, Sun Weidong, conveyed the Chinese government's concerns to Pakistan during his meeting with Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar. “China needs more security for its engineers, workers they are not too much satisfied with the current available security in Gwadar, etc,” Weidong was quoted as saying by a senior official of the Interior Ministry.

Reports stated that the Chinese ambassador was dissatisfied over the poor security measures adopted for its engineers working in Sui, Gilgit-Baltistan and Karakorum Highway. Meanwhile, Chaudhry Nisar stated that his ministry was taking

solid steps and strictly following the SOPs for the safety and security of the Chinese working on projects in Pakistan. A committee is already working in the ministry whose task is to constantly look after the security of Chinese nationals in the country. He promised that “Pakistan would leave no stone unturned to look after the security and well-being of Chinese friends working in Pakistan.” There have been several alarming incidents with regard to the safety Chinese nationals in the country.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-204934-On-strategic-projects-and-security-issues>

“Diamer jirga threatens to end govt support”

Dawn, September 28, 2013

GILGIT: The chief of the Diamer Jirga, Qazi Inayatullah on September 27 stated the forum wouldn't accept any pressure from any organisation or the government as it wasn't on anybody's payroll. He stated that the arrest of culprits involved in various incidents of violence in the area became possible only because of the cooperation of the jirga, which was working only for safeguarding interests of the state. “We have handed over four accused booked in the terrorism cases to the police and despite that we are being accused of not doing our bit, which is uncalled for,” he added.

Mr Inayatullah stated the jirga wanted peace, tranquillity and communal harmony in the region as the people of Diamer were peace loving and patriotic. “The jirga has handed over those wanted in anti-state activities to the authorities,” he noted. He stated that Ulema and public had unanimously decided to stand by the security forces in hunting anti-peace elements.

<http://dawn.com/news/1046023/diamer-jirga-threatens-to-end-govt-support>

“Shia Man Rehman Shah Shot Martyred by Taliban Terrorists in Gilgit”

Ahlul Bayt News Agency, September 25, 2013

GILGIT, Armed Militants of Sipah-e-Sahaba gunned down a Shia man when he was returning home in Shrote Nullah at Gilgit late night. Sipah-e-Sahaba militants have shot martyred thousands of innocent Shiite Muslims and common citizens, but

government and law enforcement agencies have failed to eliminate the nexus of Saudi and American funded terrorists of Takfiri militants of Sipah-e-Sahaba and Taliban.

<http://www.abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&id=466471>

Shabbir Mir, “Safe passage: Additional check posts to be set up along Karakoram Highway”

The Express Tribune, September 26, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government decided to set up 17 more check posts on the strategic Karakoram Highway (KKH), which links the region to the rest of the country along with China. The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting held in Gilgit chaired by G-B Chief Minister Mehdi Ali Shah. “The purpose of erecting more check posts on the highway is to ensure a safe journey for commuters,” spokesperson for the Chief Minister’s Secretariat, Sajjadul Haq stated on September 25.

Over three dozen check posts manned by police and Frontier Constabulary personnel already dot the highway from Gilgit to Besham. However, two separate terror attacks on the route last year claimed the lives of at least 30 passengers. The importance of the highway has been compounded by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s recent agreements with the Chinese government regarding a railway route passing through G-B.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/609343/safe-passage-additional-check-posts-to-be-set-up-along-karakoram-highway/>

Tariq Naqash, “AJK govt employees’ donation for relief”

Dawn, September 26, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The gazetted and non-gazetted employees of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government have decided to donate their one-day salary for the survivors of September 23 devastating earthquake in Balochistan, saying it is a token gesture in recognition of the overwhelming response they received after a similar tragedy eight years ago.

“Soon after the tragedy struck Balochistan, I received a number of calls from government officials suggesting reciprocation of the amiable

gestures by their Pakistani brethren in the aftermath of the October 2005 quake through donation of their one-day salary for the earthquake victims in Balochistan,” AJK Chief Secretary Khizar Hayat Gondal stated at a press conference on September 25.

<http://dawn.com/news/1045545/ajk-govt-employees-donation-for-relief>

Shabbir Mir, “Conflict of interest: Religious party calls for withdrawal of governance order”

The Express Tribune, September 24, 2013

GILGIT: A regional religious organisation has called for the withdrawal of 'Self Governance Order 2009' in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), saying the order has blocked G-B's representation in the parliament. Under the G-B's empowerment and self-governance order, its status was brought at par with that of a province with a chief minister and governor installed for the first time in the region's history. The demand was made by Tanzeem Ahle-Sunnat Wal Jamaat's (TASWJ) General Secretary, Mohammad Nawaz and other leaders during a press conference held on September 23. “We want G-B to either be given the status of a 5th province or its affairs handled by the centre,” stated Nawaz.

The organisation was registered during 1956 and its office bearers, as they say, have no affiliation with the banned Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat (ASWJ). They have representation in the Kohistan district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. “The politics has not only damaged the interest of the people of G-B, it has also hampered the Kashmir issue,” stated TASWJ's general secretary. TASWJ leaders further noted that the development has eluded G-B since the new system of governance was introduced by the Pakistan Peoples Party.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/608365/conflict-of-interest-religious-party-calls-for-withdrawal-of-governance-order/>

“Gilgit Baltistan: Chinese Presence Causes Concern”, UNPO

September 23, 2013

The chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM) demanded that the Pakistani

government clear up certain questions about Chinese presence in the region, and also disclose details about the 1963 border agreement between the two countries. Manzoor Parwana, the Chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), demanded that the Pakistan Government come clean on Chinese activities in Gilgit Baltistan.

The government, he stated, should also disclose details of the Sino-Pak border agreement of 1963 under which Pakistan is stated to have handed over 19,360 square kilometers of Gilgit Baltistan to China. "Pakistan gifted to China large tracks of Aghil, Shimshal, Raskam and Shaksgam valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan," he claimed. Addressing the media, Parwana stated that the hurried visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to China after the massacre of foreign tourists at Nanga Parbat was a reminder of "the great game, which the Chinese, Pakistanis, Americans and British are playing in the Karakoram and Himalayan mountains to gain global supremacy."

<http://www.unpo.org/article/16406>

Hasebur Rahman, "Rally to demanding justice for displaced Hunza Valley villagers"

September 24, 2013

A terrible disaster unfolded in 2010 in the Hunza Valley in Gilgit Baltistan (formerly self-governing territory occupied by Pakistan since 1948). Protesting for people's rights in the aftermath of this disaster, three left-wing activists have been sentenced to 10 years jail. In July 2010, a huge landslide blocked the Hunza River and formed a gigantic 19 kilometre-wide lake, which submerged four villages. About 25 people lost their lives and 6000 people were displaced.

These internally displaced people (IDPs) were moved to the towns of Gilgit and Hunza. The Pakistani PM and other officials visited the IDPs in Hunza and promised compensation. More than a year later, people took to the streets in protest for not getting the promised compensation. The police killed a man and his son in broad daylight by opening fire on the peaceful protest. A riot followed. In the riot, 25 demonstrators were injured. When

Progressive Youth Front leader, Baba Jan and his comrades protested against this brutality, they were arrested. Most of those arrested were released soon after, but Baba Jan and four others were kept by police. They were tortured and brutally beaten. An international solidarity campaign helped secure Baba Jan's release after a year in detention, but his four comrades were kept in jail.

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/55007>

"Two more accused of Chilas tragedy nabbed"

Pakistan Observer, September 19, 2013

GILGIT/RAWALPINDI: The police on September 18 made important development in Chilas tragedy case as they arrested two more accused involved in murder of security officials and foreigners. According to police, two accused of Chilas shootout, identified as Habib and Kafayatullah, were arrested from Rawalpindi and Chilas respectively.

The arrests became possible due to information provided by the previously arrested accused, involved in the incident. It should be mentioned that five accused involved in killing foreigners, SSP, Pakistan Army Colonel and other officials have been detained so far while another was still at large. The nabbed culprits were shifted to an undisclosed location for further investigations.

<http://pakobserver.net/201309/19/detailnews.asp?id=218545>

"Proof of AJK govt corruption will be given to PM Nawaz: Lord Nazir"

Pakistan Today, September 21, 2013

A British lawmaker of Kashmiri origin, Lord Nazir Ahmed, stated on September 21 that he had collected evidence of corruption committed in several development projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and would share the same with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. While presenting the documents before media, he alleged that Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Majeed and his cabinet members are involved in mega corruption scandal. He called for taking concrete steps to ensure transparency in the utilization of development funds so that Azad Kashmir could enjoy the benefits of speedy progress. Lord Nazir

stated that action under criminal act must be taken against those involved in corruption scandals.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/09/21/news/national/proof-of-ajk-govt-corruption-will-be-given-to-pm-nawaz-lord-nazir/>

Shabbir Mir, “Intimidation: Security officials receive death threats in wake of Diامر operation”

The Express Tribune, September 22, 2013

GILGIT: A banned militant group has allegedly given death threats to security officials involved in an operation against terrorists. Security officials from Gilgit-Baltistan police, Scouts and the Pakistan Army undertook an extensive operation in parts of Diامر valley, arresting a dozen suspects in the killing of a police official and two military personnel who were investigating the massacre of 10 foreign tourists and their Pakistani guide at the base camp of Nanga Parbat in June 2013.

“We have received handwritten letters addressed to about six officials by name,” a security official in Gilgit stated on September 21, without revealing the identities of officials mentioned in the purported letter. The letter bears the name of the Hafsa group of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and contains death threats to the officials, he added. Following the massacre of security officials in Chilas, the headquarters of Diامر valley, several key suspects including the alleged mastermind of the Nanga Parbat incident, Qaribullah alias Hassan, his accomplices Mushtaq alias Commander Ghazi and four other suspects were arrested.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/607522/intimidation-security-officials-receive-death-threats-in-wake-of-diامر-operation/>

“Punjab Police in Gilgit-Baltistan: Mehdhi Shah”

Dardistan Times, September 20, 2013

The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan bitterly criticized the performance of the local police department and has warned to seek the services of Punjab Police if the local police continues its sluggishness. “I have increased their incentives and almost doubled their salaries but their performance is still zero” He commented on the performance of

the local police. The Chief Minister stated that security in Gilgit-Baltistan is the top priority of the PPP Government. The police have to improve performance and tackle the trend of target killing and terrorism effectively. The chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan has been continuously criticizing, discouraging, defaming and blaming the local civil servants in the name of transparency and good governance. Although his derogatory and discouraging statements have been making the headlines, his own government, however, has been alleged by the opposition, of mass corruption, nepotism and malpractices.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/punjab-police-11gilgit-baltistan-mehdhi-shah22?page=51>

“AJK President discusses Kashmir issue with diplomats”

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 19, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan expressed hope that diplomatic community will convey the viewpoint of Kashmiris to the world and continue their political, diplomatic and moral support on Kashmir issue. The President was talking to diplomats and military attaches of embassies of 34 countries on September 17 night at a dinner hosted by him. The diplomats were on an educational trip to Azad Kashmir. President Yaqub told them about the overall political, economic and social conditions in Azad Kashmir, background of the Kashmir issue. Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Khizer Hayat Gondal, Inspector General of Police, heads of different departments and secretaries attended the dinner.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=239752&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, “Skardu by-elections: PML-N candidate's claims of unopposed victory quashed”

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 17, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Six ministers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), who have rejoined the cabinet after their resignations during a no-trust move

against Prime Minister Ch Abdul Majeed, were allotted portfolios on September 16. According to a notification, Sardar Akhtar Hussain Rabbani was given the portfolio of Agriculture and Livestock Department, Majid Khan Rehabilitation and Population Welfare, Chudhary Rasheed Public Works, Afsar Shahid Zakat, Azhar Gilani Law and Ali Shan Soni Revenue Department.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=239311&Itemid=2

Iftikhar A. Khan, “Lord Nazir alleges corruption in AJK projects”

Dawn, September 14, 2013

ISLAMABAD: A British lawmaker of Kashmiri origin, Lord Nazir Ahmed, stated on September 13 that he had collected evidence of corruption committed in several development projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and would share the same with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the latter's visit to London next week.

Addressing a press conference with former AJK prime minister, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry in Islamabad, he stated billions were being wasted by the AJK administration in several development projects, according to reports of the inquiry committees formed by the government. He called for taking concrete steps to ensure transparency in the utilisation of development funds so that Azad Kashmir could enjoy the benefits of speedy progress. He observed that those who had plundered national wealth should not be allowed to go scot-free.

<http://dawn.com/news/1042770/lord-nazir-alleges-corruption-in-ajk-projects>

“Government assigns priority to Bhasha Dam: Ahsan Iqbal”

Daily Times, September 15, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Prof Ahsan Iqbal stated government assigned highest priority to Bhasha Dam because a serious water crisis was looming in next five to ten years, which would be much bigger than electricity crisis. We are following an integrated approach towards solving energy

challenge in the country. The dam will not only rectify our energy mix but also provide storage for 8.1 million acre feet (MAF) of water, which is equal to lost capacity of Mangla and Tarbela Dam due to silting, he stated. The meeting held with World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to discuss power sector reforms in line with purposed loan for power generation projects. World Bank, ADB and JICA delegation visited Minister for Planning Development and Reforms regarding drafting development of policy matrix and formulating financing plan for energy sector programme loan.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\15\story_15-9-2013_pg5_3

Shabbir Mir, “On their toes: G-B govt alerted of possible sectarian attack”

The Express Tribune, September 15, 2013

GILGIT: The interior ministry has sent a 'threat alert' to the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government, asking it to beef up security along the main road linking Gilgit with Ghizer Valley. “Terrorists can attack passenger vehicles on the road,” read a letter received by the G-B government. It added security on the road should be increased to ensure the safety of commuters. The letter maintained followers of a particular sect could be targeted to sabotage peace and sectarian harmony. It added the terrorists are trained and residents of Gilgit. Except for a few incidents, Gilgit has largely remained peaceful this year. Last year, however, over 70 people were killed in various incidents of sectarian violence. Several among the dead were passengers killed on Karakoram Highway (KKH) by banned militant outfits. The letter identifies Hainzal, which is about 25 kilometers from Gilgit, as one of the areas where the terrorists may strike.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/604353/on-their-toes-g-b-govt-alerted-of-possible-sectarian-attack/>

“AJK wants cross-LoC trade on the agenda”

The Nation, September 15, 2013

MIRPUR: An AJK business tycoon suggested that the promotion of cross-LoC trade should be on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting between Prime

Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the side-line of the UN General Assembly session in New York. Talking to newsmen on September 14, Abbasi, who headed the first trip of official trade delegation of AJKCCI to Jammu & Kashmir, stressed the need for promoting the cross-Line of Control trade between Azad and Jammu & Kashmir.

Jammu & Kashmir Joint Chambers of Commerce & Industry former president Zulfiqar Abbasi emphasised the need for facilitating cross-LoC trade for its survival besides assuring full support to the Kashmiri businessmen to continue trade successfully. He pointed out that the trans-LoC trade was currently suspended after the recent tension on the LoC. Abbasi called for expanding the existing list of permitted items, including those being produced and manufactured at both the sides of the LoC, for promoting exchange of bilateral trade between the Kashmiri business community. He expressed grave concern over the reported attempt of reducing the existing list comprising 21 items for cross-LoC trade.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/15-Sep-2013/ajk-wants-cross-loc-trade-on-the-agenda>

“Govt to take up Dasu hydropower project soon”

The Nation, September 16, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to immediately take up Dasu hydropower project at a cost of six billion dollars. According to official sources, work on the project can be initiated within six months without any major paper and technical work. The power generation can also start within two to three years as reported on September 15.

The World Bank has been asking Pakistan to prefer 4,320 MW Dasu project to 4,500 MW Diamer-Bhasha dam. Dasu project will also provide storage of 8.5 acre-feet of water and enhance the life of Tarbela Dam and barrages downstream. However, work on Diamer-Bhasha project will also continue and completed at a cost of 14 billion dollars. The project will take 10 to 12 years to complete.

[http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-](http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/16-Sep-2013/govt-to-take-up-dasu-hydropower-project-soon)

[english-online/business/16-Sep-2013/govt-to-take-up-dasu-hydropower-project-soon](http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/16-Sep-2013/govt-to-take-up-dasu-hydropower-project-soon)

“Gilgit-Baltistan: Call For Judicial Commission Against Corruption”

UNPO, September 13, 2013

Chairman of Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement, Manzoor Parwana stated that a judicial commission should be formed in Gilgit-Baltistan to proceed against those who violate merit and involve in corruption in government organisations. This was demanded in a statement issued on September 11. He stated that if solid steps were not taken against corruption and violation of merit the government departments in GB would be destroyed. “What a pity that people are forced to give respect and protocol to corrupt persons who are defaming our society,” he noted. He stated accountability of corrupt government officials was a must to save government organisations. Mr Parwana further stated that it was ironical that those indulged in corruption and bribery were being encouraged. He stated that 3,000 teachers had been appointed on political basis in the region in violation of merit.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/16374>

“Alleged killer of three security officials arrested”

Dawn, September 13, 2013

GILGIT: The suspected leader of the death squad which had allegedly killed three security officials was arrested on September 12. A police official, who is investigating the murder of an SSP, a colonel and a captain, confirmed that Hameedullah was arrested by security forces from Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The slain security officials were investigating the murder of 10 foreign climbers at a base camp of Nanga Parbat.

Diamer District SSP Mohammad Navid stated the arrested man was suspected to be the leader of the squad which attacked the vehicle carrying the three officials. He noted intelligence agencies helped police to reach the hideout of the key executor of the terror plan which was aimed at sabotaging the investigation into the killing of foreign climbers. He further stated with the latest arrest, Diamer police

had traced all culprits in the case. A few more arrests would be made, he added.

<http://dawn.com/news/1042512/alleged-killer-of-three-security-officials-arrested>

“AJK govt to hold local bodies polls in April”

Daily Times, September 13, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government will hold local bodies elections in April 2014 under the framework of old local bodies law. This was announced by Senior Minister, Chaudhary Yaseen while addressing a press conference on September 12. He stated the decision was taken by AJK Prime Minister, Chaudhary Abdul Majeed after consultations. “Local bodies are essential to empower people through their representation at grassroots level”, he added. He stated that a committee has been constituted to prepare the roadmap for holding elections. He further stated elections would be held on a party-basis and a local bodies election commission would be constituted to hold them. He noted deputy commissioners would be appointed as returning officers.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\13\story_13-9-2013_pg7_9

“Earthquake-affected areas: 15 projects okayed for 3 cities of AJK”

Daily Times, September 13, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The Steering Committee on Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Urban Development Programme on September 12 approved 15 projects for earthquake-affected three cities Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot. Overall satisfaction was expressed on reconstruction work nearing completion and it was informed that 90 percent reconstruction work has been completed on three mega projects worth Rs 436 million in Muzaffarabad, 97 percent reconstruction of Bagh Ring Road and 75 percent of Bagh Bypass Road worth Rs 390 million has already been completed, while the pace of reconstruction is being accelerating on Rawalakot City development project, which was slow in past.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\13\story_13-9-2013_pg5_8

Shabbir Mir, “ATC verdict: Two sentenced to death for DSP's murder”

The Express Tribune, September 10, 2013

GILGIT: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) sentenced two people to death on September 10 on charges of assassinating DSP Muhammad Ibrahim in Gilgit last year. In addition to the death penalty, ATC Judge Raja Shahbaz Khan also handed down a 10-year imprisonment sentence to Azhar Hussain and Shaukat Hussain alias Major for the high-profile killing. The offenders are residents of Barmas and Khomer. Two others charged in the case include Wajahat Hussain and Sajid Hussain and were sentenced to life imprisonment and fined Rs300,000 each. Wajahat and Shaukat are yet to be arrested, while Azhar and Sajid are in police custody. Advocates Manzoor Hussain and Ansar Ali were representing the offenders. Lawyer Imran Hussain stated those charged for the offence can submit an appeal to the court within 10 days.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/602540/atc-verdict-two-sentenced-to-death-for-dsps-murder/>

“Small dams being developed in addition to big projects: Ahsan”

The Nation, September 10, 2013

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting to review small dam projects in Balochistan and Katchi Canal project was held in Planning Commission under the chairmanship of Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning Development and Reforms. Chief Secretary Balochistan, Chairman WAPDA, Additional Secretary W&P, Engineer in Chief Pakistan Army and Provincial Irrigation Secretaries of Punjab and Sindh participated. Purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of work on Katchi Canal and also to review water development projects of the country especially of Balochistan. Minister stated that food security is essential for human security and that in an arid country like Pakistan, it is essential to create water reservoirs. Therefore, Government assigns top most priority to construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam. Small dams are being developed in addition to big projects.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/10-Sep-2013/small-dams-being-developed-in-addition-to-big-projects-ahsan>

“Pen-down strike as MDA clerk arrested”

The Nation, September 11, 2013

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Accountability Bureau arrested a senior clerk of Mirpur Development Authority on the charges of corruption, malpractices and irregularities while the MDA staff went on a pen-down strike against the arrest. Shaheen Akram was nabbed late September 9 by a raiding team for his alleged involvement in preparation of files of fake allotment of a plot in a local housing sector. According to the preliminary investigation, the single plot was allotted to two applicants in two different occasions following the fake entries by the accused a few months ago. However, the then director general of the MDA had cancelled the fake allotment of the plot.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/11-Sep-2013/pen-down-strike-as-mda-clerk-arrested>

“6 AJK ministers take oath”

Daily Times, September 6, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Six members of Azad Jammu and Kashmir cabinet took oath on September 5. AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan administered the oath to the members. Among those who took oath included Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhary Rashid, Chaudhry Ali Shan Soni, Akhtar Rabbani, Chaudhry Afsar Shahid and Azhar Gillani. The oath-taking ceremony was held in Kashmir House in Islamabad.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\06\story_6-9-2013_pg7_6

“Gilgit Baltistan: Pakistan Pushes For Mega Dam Construction”

UNPO, September 4, 2013

Despite the lack of financial support from international monetary organizations and banks and the disastrous consequences for its population, the Pakistani government continues the construction of megadams in the disputed region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Manzoor Hussain Parwana, the chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement, declared before the media that after international monetary

organizations and banks refused to provide funds to Pakistan for the construction of the Diامر dam, the Pakistani government launched the construction of the Bunji dam. Mr. Parwana added that “the people of Rondu would not even allow Pakistan to build a small lake in the area let alone a mega dam”. With the construction of the Bunji dam, the historic town of Shingus would be severely damaged including partial flooding of the area and the loss of traditional lands rich in minerals and precious stones. Local residents would also be deprived of grazing grounds, a major environmental issue compelling the indigenous populations to migrate to other areas.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/16342>

Farooq Ahmed Khan, “Security beefed up at all jails in Gilgit Baltistan: official”

Dawn, September 3, 2013

GILGIT: Jail authorities in Gilgit Baltistan stated extraordinary security measures have been adopted to avoid any untoward incident as eight prisoners were shifted from District Jail Gilgit to District Jail Ghizer in northeast of Pakistan on September 1 . “We have deployed law enforcing agencies around the Jails and personnel of police have also been placed at the disposal of jail authorities to make sure that inmates live in a peaceful atmosphere” Inspector General Prisons Wasil Khan noted. The official stated situation in the whole country was not a hidden secret and since most of the prisoners were facing cases in sectarian violence, enhancing security was the need of hour.

<http://dawn.com/news/1040297/security-beefed-up-at-all-jails-in-gilgit-baltistan-official>

Imaduddin, “Food Dept sets up 70 sale-points to ensure flour supply”

Business Recorder, September 8, 2013

GILGIT: Food Department, Gilgit-Baltistan set up 70 sale-points and appointed 70 salesman and 10 supervisors for providing wheat flour to local people. The step has been taken after wheat quota of flour mills was terminated. Official source stated on September 8 sale-points have been set up only in Gilgit in first phase. Additional sale-points would be set up in other areas after getting positive results,

they added. They stated earlier wheat was being provided to mills to supply flour which was reportedly smuggled to other areas.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/business-a-economy/134944.html>

“NJPMC meets today: Pak, AJK to ink MoU for bilateral cooperation in judicial sector”

September 7, 2013

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting of National Judicial (Policy making) Committee (NJPMC) was held on September 7. In the meeting chaired by Chief Justice, Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, the judiciary of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir would sign a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for bilateral cooperation in judicial sector.

The meeting will be attended by Justice Agha Rafiq Ahmed Khan, Chief Justice Federal Shariat Court Justice Qazi Faez Essa, CJ Balochistan High Court Justice Dost Mohammad Khan, Court Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Umar Ata Bandal, Court Justice Lahore High Court Justice Mohammad Anwar Khan Kasi, Court Justice Islamabad High Court justice Faisal Arab, Judge High Court of Sindh and SC Registrar.

Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, Chief Justice AJK justice Rana Muhammad Arshid, Chief Judge SC Gilgit-Baltistan Justice Ghulam Mustafa, Chief Justice High Court Azad Jammu and Kashmir Mustafa Ghulam, Justice Sahib Khan, Chief Judge Chief Court of GB will also attend the meeting on special invitation.

The meeting is slated to review the performance of district judiciary with respect to disposal of old cases. The committee will also consider the reports regarding submission of challans, further project status of Model Jail Islamabad and statistics of tax cases. The committee will also examine the

implementation status of its earlier recommendations and efforts made by the government to strengthen the district judiciary in terms of human resource and infrastructure.

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/NJPMC+meets+today:+Pak,+AJK+to+ink+MoU+for+bilateral+cooperation+in...-a0342296369>

Economic Developments

“Kashmiri traders hope UN meeting will ease tensions”

The News, September 29, 2013

CHAKOTHI: Traders in Kashmir have expressed the hope that this weekend's meeting between the Pakistani and Indian prime ministers will ease rising tensions that have seen trade across the border grinding to a halt. Barter trade across the Line of Control (LoC) began in 2008 as part of the peace efforts. Mounting tensions and deadly skirmishes along the heavily militarised LoC in recent months have seen the trade come to a standstill for more than three weeks. Violence flared on August 6 when five Indian soldiers were killed in an ambush Delhi blamed on Pakistan, militants stormed an army base on the Indian side, killing 10. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh are due to meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York this weekend the first top-level dialogue in three years.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-204949-Kashmiri-traders-hope-UN-meeting-will-ease-tensions>

Tariq Naqash, “Meeting fails to break impasse in intra-Kashmir trade”

Dawn, September 20, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: A meeting between officials from both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) on September 19 failed to break the impasse in intra-Kashmir trade. The meeting was held at the Chakothi-Uri crossing point where the barter trade was suspended on September 3, following India's refusal to accept items which it stated were not of Azad Kashmir origin. At September 19 meeting, the AJK side was represented by Trade and Travel Authority director general, Brig (retired) Mohammad Ismail and Trade Facilitation Officer in

Chakothi, Basharat Iqbal, while four officials came from across the LoC who introduced themselves as trade facilitation officers and representatives of the regional passport office in Srinagar. During the meeting Indian officials reiterated that in accordance with a notification issued by India's Central Board of Excise and Customs they could not accept items that were of Pakistani origin. While putting a ban on goods of Pakistani origin, the notification stated that Indian-origin goods would continue to be traded across the LoC until a decision about them was taken by India's ministry of home affairs.

<http://dawn.com/news/1044208/meeting-fails-to-break-impasse-in-intra-kashmir-trade>

Tariq Naqash, “India returns mangoes sent across LoC”

Dawn, September 17, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The intra-Kashmir trade through the two crossing points on the Line of Control (LoC) may meet a tragic fate as Indian officials have refused to accept items which they allege are not from Azad Jammu and Kashmir. On August 29, Indian authorities at their trade facilitation centre in Salamabad, on the other side of Chakothi, returned two trucks from AJK carrying mangoes, saying that the produce belonged to Pakistan, and not Azad Kashmir. The decision caused anger among traders on both sides. They went on a strike on September 3, saying the standard operating procedure (SOP) had no mention of the origin of a product. The same day, Indian officials conveyed to their counterparts in AJK that trade could not be carried on for some time because the traders on their side had gone on a strike.

<http://dawn.com/news/1043451/india-returns-mangoes-sent-across-loc>

International Developments

“Kashmiri leaders call on Thai Premier in Geneva”

September 10, 2013

GENEVA: An APHC-AJK delegation called on Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand during a photo exhibition on the sidelines of the 24th session of United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. The delegation included Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Altaf Hussain Wani and Sardar Amjad Yousuf.

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/2013/09/10/faiz-naqshbandi-calls-on-thai-premier-in-geneva.html>

“Gilgit-Baltistan Palace gets UNESCO award”

Pakistan Observer, September 18, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The ceremony of “UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award 2013 for Cultural Heritage Conservation” was held at the prestigious Khaplu Palace in Gilgit Baltistan to recognize the efforts of Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan- winner of this year's award. The Director and Representative UNESCO Islamabad, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata during the ceremony handed over a plaque to the representative of Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan (AKCSP), noted a statement issued by UNICEF in Islamabad on September 17.

At this occasion, Dr. Nagata applauded the efforts of those architects, designers, experts and individuals involved in reinstating the lost grandeur of Khaplu Palace, built in 1840s by Raja of Khaplu. She highlighted in her speech that Pakistan stands 3rd in the ranking of achieving UNESCO awards for conservations in the whole Asia-Pacific region and the credit goes to the consistent and valuable efforts of AKCSP in the field of conservation.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=218450>

“US supports Diamer Bhasha, Dasu projects”

Daily Times, September 13, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Robin Raphel on September 11 informed that the United States has agreed in principle that both Diamer Bhasha Dam and Dasu projects are important for Pakistan and US supports them. Raphel, US Ambassador Richard G Olson and Energy Expert Dr Robert Ichord called on Finance Minister Ishaq Dar at his office. Raphel congratulated Dar on his assumption of the office of Finance Minister of Pakistan. Dar while welcoming the US delegation thanked US for its support in the passage of International Monetary Fund's (IMF) programme and informed the delegation that the programme, which Pakistan had concluded with IMF was unanimously passed by the executive board of IMF.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\09\12\story_12-9-2013_pg5_10

Syed Mussarat Khalil, “Azad Kashmir minister honored by Pakistani community”

Saudi Gazette, September 6, 2013

JEDDAH: A luncheon reception was hosted for senior Minister of Hydro Power Projects, Chaudhary Muhammad Yasin by chief organizer of PYO Saudi Arabia, Mubbeen Jett and Chaudhary Aftab. “In Azad Kashmir overseas expatriates have large opportunities to invest in tourism, hydroelectric field and other business.

“Our Government is committed to support and provide good conditions to the investors,” stated Yasin at the gathering. He stated a new educational package is also being launched in Azad Kashmir under which a number of educational institutions would be set up.

<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130906179411>

Other Developments

“Learn and interact: Two-day education expo begins in Gilgit”

The Express Tribune, September 27, 2013

GILGIT: A two-day education expo kicked off in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) on September 26, providing students and teachers a rare opportunity to learn and interact. More than 110 schools participated in the expo held at Women Degree College Gilgit, and set up stalls depicting student art work. A speech and quiz competition, book fair along with comedy skits were also part of the event which was organised by the Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ). “The idea behind this event was to provide students, parents and teachers an opportunity to interact and learn from each other,” stated Basharat Hussain, AFAQ's regional head. Some teachers and students were also given awards for their contribution to education. The venue remained crowded throughout the day as parents, teachers, students and other residents of the area swarmed the 80 plus stalls set up by students from both private and government schools.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/609854/learn-and-interact-two-day-education-expo-begins-in-gilgit/>

Shabbir Mir, “Abductions: Missing shepherd's body found, policeman yet to be recovered”

The Express Tribune, September 25, 2013

GILGIT: The body of a missing shepherd was recovered in Gilgit on September 24, while the policeman who was abducted along with him is also believed to be dead. Two policemen from Baseen police station and a shepherd identified as Firadonhad went missing on night of September 23 in Sharote, 25 kilometres from Gilgit town, from a road which links Gilgit with Ghizer valley. One of the constables managed to escape and reached Baseen police station to report the incident. He told police unidentified armed men had overpowered them while they were on duty in the area and taken

away his colleague Rahman Shah and a shepherd. He on the other hand had been tied to a tree from where he managed to escape. SSP Ali Zia, while confirming the incident, stated police has been sent to the area to investigate.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/608789/abductions-missing-shepherds-body-found-policeman-yet-to-be-recovered/>

“Silk Route festival next month”

Dawn, September 23, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan administration has decided to organise the Silk Route International Festival in the capital city of the region during the last week of October 2013 in the hope that the event will pull in both local and foreign tourists and traders in large numbers. The decision was made during a recent meeting chaired by Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Secretary Yonus Dhagga, according to the officials in the know. They noted that the participants agreed that there was a need for organising the festival to revive local tourism and trade, and raise the soft image of the terrorist-hit region. The officials stated the tentative schedule of the event had been conveyed to all stakeholders for necessary preparations, while the exact date of the opening would be announced shortly. “The tentative dates of the festival's start and conclusion are October 25 and October 27 respectively,” an official stated. The official stated the chief secretary had formed many committees to make preparations for the big event and raise funds for the event.

<http://dawn.com/news/1044835/silk-route-festival-next-month>

“World Peace Day observed in AJK”

The Nation, September 22, 2013

MIRPUR: Universal Peace Day was observed in Azad Jammu Kashmir on September 21 with a unanimous call for establishment of durable and ever-lasting peace across the globe, especially in the

conflict zones of South Asia. A special ceremony was held here under the auspices of Jammu & Kashmir Liberation League (JKLL). JKLL President Justice (r) Abdul Majeed Mallick chaired the function. The participants on the occasion also prayed for the establishment of durable peace across the world. Key speakers including JKLL president, Ch Munir Hussain, Muhammad Sabir, AH Rao, J& K Journalists Organization's President Hafiz Maqsood and others called upon international community to perform their due role for durable and everlasting peace in South Asia.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/22-Sep-2013/world-peace-day-observed-in-ajk>

“Gilgit-Baltistan: Students Protest against Insecurity”

UNPO, September 18, 2013

Some mysterious unknown motorcyclist captured three junior college students of Gilgit-Baltistan and attempted to kill them. Kumail, Ruhulallah and Zahir were passing through the busy commercial market of Satellite Town, when two motorcyclists provoked them to initiate a clash. Later they called up a contingent of violent men who arrived on the spot in two vehicles equipped with iron rods, clips and knives. They attacked the GB students. Two of the students were soaked in blood with injuries on head. Kumail was taken into the vehicle and was transferred to unknown torture cell where he was physically tortured for two hours and was left with broken arm. The mysterious miscreants first tortured the students and then took the students to new town Police Station for further trouble in the hands of Rawalpindi Police.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/16389>

“Transporters' strike: Life in Muzaffarabad comes to a standstill”

The Express Tribune, September 19, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Life in the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was paralysed as more than 300 public transport vehicles were off the road on September 18 due to a strike called by the AJK Transporters' Association (AJKTA) against

government's ban on old vehicles. Passengers in Muzaffarabad were wandering from pillar-to-post looking to hitch a ride to reach their destinations. Attendance in schools, banks and government offices was very low as most people the area rely on public transport.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/606152/transporters-strike-life-in-muzaffarabad-comes-to-a-standstill/>

Waqas Naeem, “Karakoram anomaly: Research needed to understand glaciers' complex behaviour”

The Express Tribune, September 11, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The glaciers in Karakoram ranges are more stable than the ones worldwide but more data and research are needed to understand their complex behaviour. These views were expressed by local and foreign experts at a scientific conference on “Karakoram Resources and Climate Change: Glacier, Water and Ecosystem”, organised by EvK2-CNR an Italian research organisation that has been working in Gilgit-Baltistan for the past 25 years. The conference was part of a two-day centennial celebration of Italian explorer Fillippo de Fillippi's 1913 expedition to Central Asia and the Karakorams. The event included a photo exhibition and a mountain film festival.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/602603/karakoram-anomaly-research-needed-to-understand-glaciers-complex-behaviour/>

Shabbir Mir, “Under duress: Professors hold 'token strike' against suspension of colleagues”

The Express Tribune, September 11, 2013

GILGIT: Professors and lecturers across Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have launched a 'token strike' against the suspension of their colleagues, threatening to intensify their protest if their demands are not met within four days. “This is the first phase of our strike and we will expand it if our demands go unnoticed,” G-B Professors and Lecturers Association President professor Muhammad Zaman noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/603070/under-duress-professors-hold-token-strike-against-suspension-of-colleagues/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche, Skardu, Kharmang and Shigar districts

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

Ethnic Groups: Shin, Balti, Puriki, Ladakhi, Wakhi, Yashkun, Tibetan, Mongol, Tatar, Mon, Pashtun, Khowar, Dom, Gujjar, Rajput and Kashmiri

Religious Groups: Shia (Twelvers), Nurbakhshi (Twelvers), Ismaili, Sunni, and Ahlehadith

Languages: Shina, Balti, Wakhi, Khowar, Gujjari, Burushaski, Puriki, Kashmiri, Pashto

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

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

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

Chief Minister G-B: Syed Mehdi Shah

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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