

POK

News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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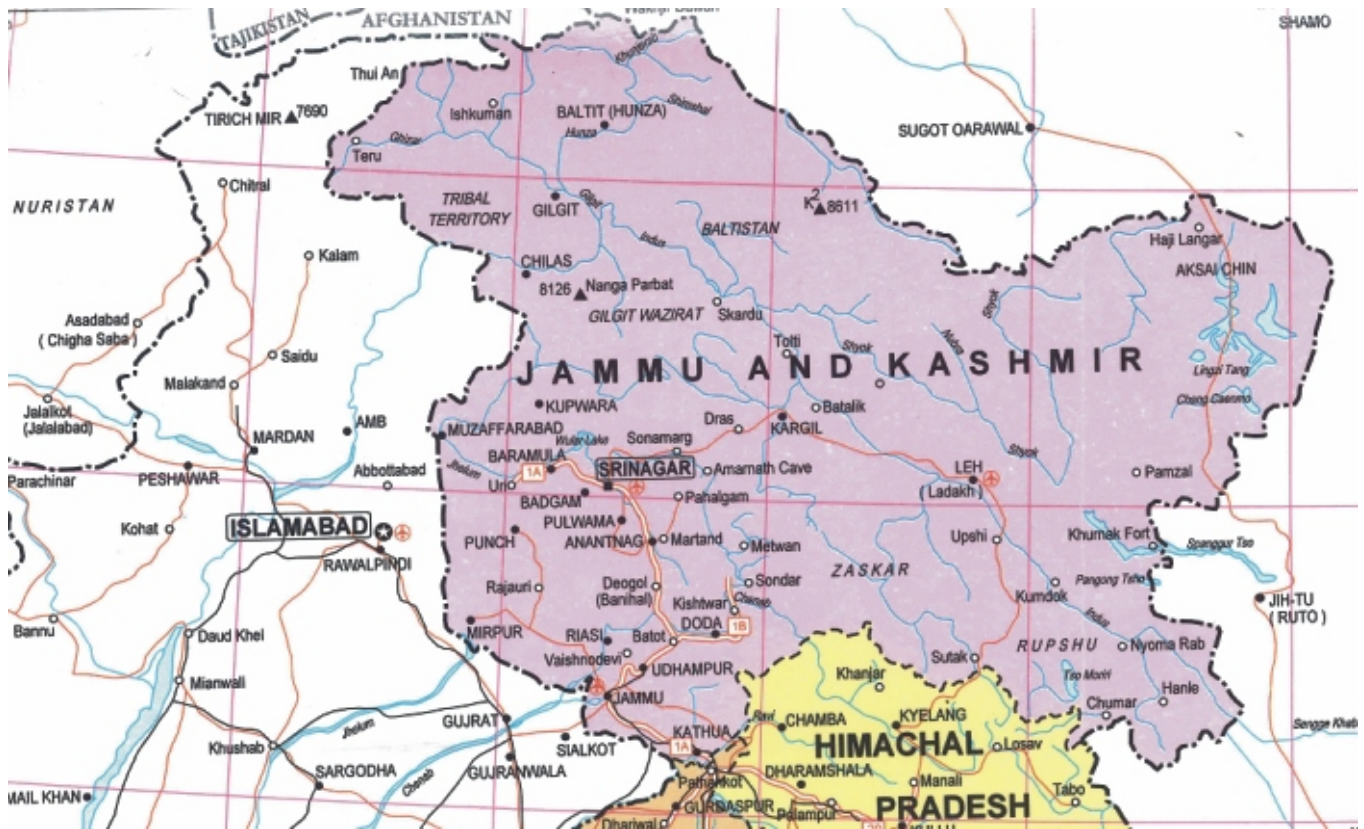
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The proposed Pakistan China Economic Corridor through Gilgit Baltistan has been in the pipeline for quite some time. Statements from the government of Pakistan reveal the high hopes that both Pakistan and Chinese side are pinning on the proposed economic zone. Several prospects have been discussed, as reports included in the current issue indicate, as to how after the corridor comes up, Pakistan will become an important link on the global transit map. Especially in Gilgit Baltistan, people are being given to understand that the corridor will usher in economic prosperity and development in the region. Gilgit Baltistan forms the crucial link between the all-weather allies- Pakistan and China and recently this fact was yet again reiterated by the Chairman of the Senate Defence Committee, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, in Islamabad. He urged that Gilgit Baltistan is very important politically, economically and strategically and in view of the growing relations between Pakistan and China, the region requires added attention.

Meanwhile, China has offered to invest \$ 22 billion in Pakistan provided it is given control on key projects such as the Diamer Bhasha dam, the Tarbela extension project etc without international bidding process.

Trade across the Line of Control (LoC) was disrupted for over a fortnight after a truck driver from 'AJK' (Azad Jammu and Kashmir), allegedly carrying narcotics, was arrested by the J&K (Jammu and Kashmir) police in January 2014. As reports noted, 114 kilograms of narcotics was found hidden in the consignment of almonds which was being traded across into J&K. Subsequent to the arrest, the crisis escalated and left several trucks stranded on both sides. The matter was taken up by authorities on either sides but no breakthrough could be achieved. As a fallout of the standoff, the bus service too was discontinued for some time. The deadlock could be resolved only in February 2014 after several rounds of talks were held.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“AJKLA-22 by-poll: PPP gives ticket to former minister's son”

The Express Tribune, January 2, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: The son of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's former Minister for Agriculture will contest by-elections for AJK Legislative Assembly (AJKLA-22) seat from Sudhnuti, Poonch-VI constituency. The ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has nominated Sardar Fahim Akhtar Rubbani to contest the by-polls for the LA-22 seat which was left vacant after the death of his father Sardar Akhtar Hussain Rabbani on December 25. President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan on December 31 made announcement during his visit to Chookiyan Baloch, some 200 kilometers off here where he had gone to offer condolence Rabbani's death with his family. The president stated the decision to give the ticket to the late minister's son had been taken during the PPP Azad Kashmir parliamentary party meeting at Naudero House Larkana, presided by Asif Zardari on December 28.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/653535/ajkla-22-by-poll-ppp-gives-ticket-to-former-ministers-son/>

“Pak-China Economic Corridor to bring prosperity in GB: Barjees”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 1, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Chaudhry Barjees Tahir has stated that Pak-China Economic Corridor would bring prosperity in the country, especially in Gilgit Baltistan (GB). During a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) from GB, the minister stated that Pak-China Economic Corridor would be proved as a milestone in the history. He stated that it would increase Pakistan exports and bring huge economic benefits to the region, adding that on the other hand Pakistan would become an economic transit in the global

map. The minister stated that this project would also promote the tourism in GB, which would ultimately be in the favour of local public. He stated that the Pak-Army troops would be deployed to make Shahrah Kurakuram safe. He further noted that it was the priority of the government to ensure peace and stability in GB. The delegation thanked the minister for taking interest in the issues of GB.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=257575&Itemid=1

Shabbir Mir, “Highway killings: ATC grants bail to five suspects”

The Express Tribune, January 1, 2014

GILGIT: A court in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) on December 31 accepted the bail plea of five men accused of attacking buses and killing passengers on the Karakoram Highway in 2012. The decision was made by Justice Raja Shahbaz Khan of the anti-terrorism court, paving the way for the temporary release of the accused languishing in a jail in Chilas, headquarters of Diamer Valley since last year. “The court has granted bail to Maulana Muzammil Shah, Qari Qayyum, Rizwan, Mohamad Yasir and Mahmoodul Hassan,” a lawyer stated. The five accused had surrendered to police in Chilas town through a local jirga after being nominated in the sectarian violence that had gripped the whole of G-B in 2012, resulting in the killing of more than 70 people in separate incidents.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/653248/highway-killings-atc-grants-bail-to-five-suspects/>

“Govt urged to encourage agri entrepreneurs”

Dawn, January 31, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Agriculture experts have urged the government to encourage entrepreneurship along the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor for development of horticulture and related sectors, starting from Gilgit-Baltistan to Gwadar. This would promote agriculture as well as generate

employment opportunities, they stated. Since the economic corridor was on the cards, the government should gear up to fully exploit the potential of agricultural sector along the vast corridor, they added. These views were expressed by the experts during a visit of the members of National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security to the National Agricultural Research Centre on January 30. Despite low spending on agriculture, the sector was producing promising results, they stated. Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Chairman, Dr Iftikhar Ahmad, informed legislators that the PARC was running a considerable number of projects with foreign financing. However, increased funding by the federal government to projects aimed at further developing agriculture should be forthcoming.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1083867/govt-urged-to-encourage-agri-entrepreneurs>

Shabbir Mir, “Gilgit-Baltistan's chief executive undecided over anti-corruption drive”

The Express Tribune, January 31, 2014

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister (CM) Mehdi Shah is apparently double minded about whether or not to support the ongoing drive against corruption in the region. In a seemingly no-win situation, if he supports the drive, it is highly likely that many appointments made in his tenure will be reversed. This will cause Shah to lose support within the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for being “subservient to the bureaucracy” as one source put it. If Shah does not extend his support, he may run the risk of having his public image as a clean politician tainted a blow to him and PPP as the region heads to elections in 2014.

G-B Chief Secretary Younus Dagher earlier ordered an inquiry into illegal appointments in government departments as he was flooded by complaints immediately after assuming office last year. In the past week alone, at least 80 employees were sacked and many more from the Excise and Taxation department are likely to follow suit as a result of the inquiry.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/665510/gilgit-baltistans-chief-executive-undecided-over-anti-corruption-drive/>

“Rs19m disbursed to families of accidents victims: Minister”

The Nation, January 31, 2014

MIRPUR: AJK Minister for Transport Tahir Khokher disbursed Rs4.50 million as financial assistance to 15 bereaved families of road accidents victims occurred in various parts of Mirpur district in 2013. The minister distributed cheques for Rs300,000 each to 15 bereaved families of the victims of the traffic mishaps reported in the district during last year, at a special ceremony held at Municipal Hall. He was flanked by City Administrator Ghulam Rasool Awami, former AJK Transport Authority secretary Adil Mahmood Khan, sitting Secretary Abdul Hameed Kiyani, and RTA Secretary Syed Abdul Hameed Gardeizi, Assist Secretary Ghulam Murtaza Khan, Mirpur division Additional Commissioner Hafiz Muhammad Niaz, SDM Ch Amjad Iqbal and heirs of those killed in dozens of road accidents, were present on this occasion.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/national/31-Jan-2014/rs19m-disbursed-to-families-of-accidents-victims-minister>

“Gilgit-Baltistan has potential to generate 59,000 megawatts power: Senate body told”

Business Recorder, January 30, 2014

The Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs was informed on January 29 that Gilgit-Baltistan has the potential to generate 59,000 megawatts electricity if effective policy is put in place. The committee meeting chaired by Senator Baz Mohammad Khan, was told by the officials of Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs that the abundance of water has not only the capacity to generate 59,000MW electricity, but also meet the water scarcity for cultivation of fertile land.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193/1148377/>

Ahmad Mehdi, “Taliban Could Attack Tourists in Northern Areas”

January 29, 2014

It was recently reported from Islamabad that Taliban might be planning attacks on the tourists

who visited the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Last year 10 foreigners were massacred and the incident is still quite fresh in the minds of the people. Several tourists travel to Gilgit and Baltistan during their vacations. The mountains, glaciers and the second highest peak in the world, K2, attracts tourists to visit Pakistan despite the current security conditions.

Most recently a militant attack took place in recent weeks and now officials are warning about another attack which might take place in the Northern Areas. A senior officer of the Gilgit-Baltistan administration was interviewed and while talking about the security conditions he stated, "The interior ministry has officially informed Gilgit-Baltistan that the Pakistani Taliban can strike the region. The interior ministry warned of suicide bombings and attacks on tourists in the region."

<http://www.newspakistan.pk/2014/01/29/taliban-attack-tourists-northern-areas/#sthash.O73ZiPfa.dpuf>

Saleem Shaikh and Sughra Tunio, "Pakistan's timber mafia threaten forest protection plans environmentalists"

Thomson Reuters Foundation, January 29, 2014

CHILAS: Nestled on the west side of Pakistan's Indus River, the remote town of Chilas is notorious for its timber smugglers, who operate freely in the northern district of Gilgit-Baltistan. "I don't think any conservation efforts will really save Pakistan's rapidly shrinking forests as long as the government does not deal with the timber mafia with an iron fist," stated environmentalist Ghulam Ali, who lives in Chilas, 211 km (132 miles) north of Islamabad. Pakistan's timber mafia is made up of organised gangs that cut trees from state-owned forests and sell them illegally, often working at night. Ali stated Chilas is now grappling with the consequences of large swathes of denuded forest. It is experiencing warmer summers and winters, fewer rainy days, frequent landslides, a rise in pest attacks on crops and a decline in the bird population, he stated. Some 43,000 hectares of forest are cleared annually in Pakistan, which has the highest deforestation rate in Asia, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Each of Pakistan's five provinces has its own forest laws, intended to

regulate forest conservation and timber harvesting according to local needs.

<http://www.trust.org/item/20140128134348-w6xb1/>

Shabbir Mir, "Allegations of nepotism: G-B govt shows door to illegal appointees"

The Express Tribune, January 29, 2014

GILGIT: At least 69 employees from Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) Excise and Taxation Department have been sacked while many are awaiting their fate as the regional government expedites a drive against corruption. This is part of the overall drive launched on the instructions of the chief secretary against corruption and illegal practices in regional government institutions," a district administration official stated on January 2. A section officer in the department, who allegedly bypassed rules to make such appointments, was also suspended from duty and will face an inquiry committee that will recommend a final decision.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/664580/allegations-of-nepotism-g-b-govt-shows-door-to-illegal-appointees/>

"Indo-Pak Chakothi bridge standoff meeting over stranded trucks proves futile"

ANI, January 29, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The standoff is the result of the arrest of an Azad Jammu and Kashmir truck driver, who was detained by the Indian authorities on account of smuggling drugs. The Chakothi bridge meeting held by official delegations from the Indian and Pakistani Line of Control (LOC), to resolve the issue of stranded trucks, has reportedly yielded no results. Following an eleven-day standoff, the meeting was held at the Chakothi bridge, which divides the state of Jammu and Kashmir, to discuss the issue of stranded trucks and the continuation of Muzaffarabad-Srinagar Bus and Truck services.

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir delegation was led by Pakistan's Director General Travel and Trade Authority (Tata) Brigadier Retired Muhammad Ismail while the Indian team was led by Secretary Industries Muhammad Javid Khan. The standoff is the result of the arrest of an Azad Jammu and Kashmir truck driver, who was detained by the

Indian authorities on account of smuggling drugs. Meanwhile, another meeting has been scheduled for January 30 to resolve the matter.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/indo-pak-chakothi-bridge-standoff-meeting-over-stranded-trucks-proves-futile-114012900490_1.html

Mariana Baabar, “Pakistan hopeful for diplomatic solution, Trucks row at LoC”

The News, January 26, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on January 25 remained hopeful that the continuing week-old row with India with trucks detained on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and the bus services for Kashmiris halted, will be 'solved diplomatically'. About 50 trucks from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) are presently parked in J&K as the drivers of these trucks refuse to return to AJK without their fellow drivers who have been picked up on charges of trafficking drugs and are presently in custody while investigations continue. Since January 17, they are parked at the Salamabad trade centre in Baramulla district. Meanwhile, Pakistan stated that 27 trucks which have crossed over into AJK have been detained in retaliation but the drivers are not under arrest.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-228750-Pakistan-hopeful-for-diplomatic-solution>

Shabbir Mir, “In solidarity: G-B Assembly adopts resolution against terrorism”

The Express Tribune, January 23, 2014

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) legislative assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on January 22 against the ongoing wave of terrorist attacks in the country.

Mutabiat Shah, a lawmaker from Hunza, tabled the resolution referring to incidents including the attack on security forces in Bannu and Royal Artillery Bazaar, Rawalpindi. “This house expresses solidarity with families that lost their dear ones in these terrorist attacks,” stated the resolution passed by the house unanimously. “The rule of law is nowhere to be seen and the recurrence of such heinous incidents is testament to that,” the lawmaker stated in the session being chaired by

Speaker Wazir Baig. Chief Minister Mehdi Shah, who was in Islamabad, could not attend the session after his flight got cancelled. Rahmat Khaliq of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) blamed the absence of a concrete foreign policy for the deteriorating law and order in the country, adding unless that changes, things are likely to remain the same. In response to a question, Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Engineer Mohammad Ismail stated the Local Bodies Act would be submitted in the house for approval once it has been vetted by experts including the advocate general. On a point of order, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock Sheikh Nisar Hussain Sarbaz of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) stated Rs280 million has been allocated for development of agriculture in the region.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/662172/in-solidarity-g-b-assembly-adopts-resolution-against-terrorism/>

“Kashmiri truckers stranded in new India-Pakistan row”

The Express Tribune, January 24, 2014

The 49 truck drivers, grizzled men from the mountains of Kashmir, were on a routine job dropping goods across the LoC between Pakistan and India when a drugs bust left them stranded. For more than a week, the men from the Pakistani side of the divided region, one of the world's most sensitive faultlines, have been stuck in the middle of a row that reflects the difficulty in boosting regional ties through trade. On January 17, Indian police along the treacherous mountain road leading between the two sides seized a truck and arrested its driver after 114 kilograms of heroin were found concealed in a consignment of almonds. Pakistani authorities then refused to let the other trucks in the convoy, or the 48 other drivers, back across the heavily militarised Line of Control unless the arrested man was returned as well. They also detained 27 Indian trucks and their drivers, who had crossed over on the same day to deliver goods as part of a barter trade agreement that was started as a “confidence-building measure” in 2008.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/662829/kashmiri-truckers-stranded-in-new-india-pakistan-row/>

“Cross-border trade: FO help sought to resolve spat”

The Express Tribune, January 25, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Officials of the Cross LoC Travel and Trade Authority (Tata) have sought help from Foreign Office (FO) to intervene to get the trucks released from the detention of authorities in J&K. The cross-border trade and travel have remained suspended after J&K police arrested a truck driver from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) accusing him of smuggling heroin. The Indian administration has also detained 49 other trucks from this side, prompting Pakistan to halt the cross-border trade and bus travel. Sources noted that the Tata officials met senior officials of the FO on January 23 to get the issue resolved at the earliest. Tata officials were told that the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi was already in contact with Islamabad on the issue. The FO officials assured the Tata officials that highest level of diplomacy will be used to solve the spat.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/662911/cross-border-trade-fo-help-sought-to-resolve-spat/>

Shabbir Mir, “Fresh alerts: G-B lawmakers ask CM to review security measures”

The Express Tribune, January 24, 2014

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Assembly speaker on January 23 directed Chief Minister (CM) Mehdi Shah to immediately review the region's security arrangements in light of new terrorist threats. Speaker Wazir Baig made the comments after Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawmaker from Ghizer, Ayub Shah, referred to a “threat alert” from the interior ministry which revealed that terrorists are planning attacks in the region. “The matter is quite serious and warrants adoption of pre-emptive measures on a war footing,” stated Baig, asking the CM to immediately to hold a meeting with security heads of the region to ensure fool proof preventive arrangements.

Shah stated the letter warned of attacks by terrorists in the guise of security officials. Minister for Water and Power, Didar Ali, demanded an in-camera

briefing for lawmakers in the wake of renewed threats and stated downplaying of the matter may lead to a catastrophe. The CM, however, termed the alerts a routine matter but vowed to hold a session with security chiefs to ascertain the situation. A copy of the decisions taken in the meeting would be forwarded to the house, he assured the speaker. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker from Baltistan, Sultan Ali, called for provision of official accommodation for parliamentarians from remote areas as they do not feel secure in hotels. “The parliamentarians from remote areas visiting Gilgit officially don't feel secure in the town,” he further stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/662579/fresh-alerts-g-b-lawmakers-ask-cm-to-review-security-measures/>

“Barjees directs AJK police to help eliminating corruption”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 23, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir January 22 directed Azad Jammu and Kashmir police force to cooperate in eliminating corruption and providing justice to the people. Addressing a passing out parade of 500 policemen at Azad Kashmir Police Training School, he expressed concern about the scarcity of resources for AJK Police and assured providing them necessary equipment. The government of PML-N is being faced with several challenges including terrorism, corruption, and energy crisis but due to excellent performance of the government, country's economy is being termed as most promising economy of the world. He stated PML-N government strives for establishing the supremacy of institutions.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=261628&Itemid=1

Imaduddin, “9,000 MW hydropower potential of AJK to be materialized: Ahsan Iqbal”

Business Recorder, January 20, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) will get prime focus in Vision 2025, in order to harness its due potential in hydroelectric power

production, tourism, minerals, rural agriculture, cottage industry and fisheries. This was stated by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Professor Ahsan Iqbal while addressing as the chief guest at Consultative Meeting on Vision 2025 and 11th Five year Plan 2013-18 in AJK. He stated that government is committed to invest vigorously in human resource and infrastructure development projects through exploiting true potential of private sector in this regard.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/108-pakistan-top-news/154031-9000-mw-hydropower-potential-of-ajk-to-be-materialized-ahsan-iqbal.html>

“Justice served: ATC sentences killers of JUI-F leader”

The Express Tribune, January 21, 2014

GILGIT: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on January 20 awarded the death sentence to Syed Alam for murdering Ubaidur Rehman, a politician belonging to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl's (JUI-F) Gilgit chapter, in 2012. Two other accused, Manzar Abbas and Nazir Ahmed, were handed life imprisonment and fines worth Rs300,000 each in the verdict announced by Gilgit ATC Judge Raja Shehbaz Khan. “Besides the death penalty, the main accused has also been sentenced to seven years imprisonment,” stated a lawyer dealing with the case. Rehman, the former deputy secretary general of JUI-F, was shot dead by gunmen outside his home in Gilgit city on November 30, 2012. The news of his killing had resulted in protests, with demonstrators condemning the incident across the city.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/661151/justice-served-atc-sentences-killers-of-jui-f-leader/>

“Stalemate: Talks collapse on release of trucks”

The Express Tribune, January 19, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Indian authorities have refused to release a truck driver from Azad Kashmir who was detained for allegedly smuggling drugs in the garb of cross-Line of Control (LoC) trade. Officials from the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Travel and Trade Authority (Tata) on January 18 met with their counterparts from Indian Kashmir on

Chakothi Bridge, officials stated. Officials in J&K stated they were willing to return 48 trucks and their drivers from Azad Kashmir while the one that allegedly smuggled drugs would not be released. In response, AJK travel and trade officials refused to release 27 trucks from J&K. The trucks have been detained on either sides of the border for the past two days.

“We have a proper scanning mechanism at the Chakoti Trade Facilitation Centre and it is not possible to smuggle drugs across the LoC,” Tata Director General Brig (retd) Muhammad Ismail noted. “If the Indian trade authorities have any proof of drugs smuggling they should share it with us, we will investigate and punish the culprits.” “I think this is a conspiracy hatched by the Indian side to close the cross-LoC trade,” Brig Ismail added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/660627/stalemate-talks-collapse-on-release-of-trucks/>

“Protesting power woes: In AJK, traders observe shutter-down strike”

The Express Tribune, January 18, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Traders in Azad Kashmir's capital city on January 17 observed a complete shutter-down strike and staged a protest rally against frequent power outages and unannounced loadshedding. The protesting traders, who marched from Madina Market to Geelani Chowk, shouted slogans against the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), as well as the federal and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir governments. The AJK chapter of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, the Pakistan People's Party (Barrister Sultan Group), the Central Bar Association, the All-Motors Association and the All-Parties Conference also supported the protesting traders.

Traders' Joint Action Committee Chairman, Abdur Razaq Khan, stated that Wapda was illuminating Islamabad with their electricity, while plunging the region into darkness.

He stated that the people of AJK even sacrificed the graves of their ancestors to allow upraising of the Mangla Dam but, in return, the Wapda has pushed

them into darkness by resorting to frequent cuts. He stated that this move by the Wapda has created a rift between the people of the AJK and Pakistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/660020/protesting-power-woes-in-ajk-traders-observe-shutter-down-strike/>

“GB council meets to discuss logging policy”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 16, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit Baltistan Council met on January 15 under the Chairmanship of Governor Gilgit Baltistan Pir Karam Ali Shah to discuss policy for logging. The policy is being formulated on the directive of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Chairman of Gilgit Baltistan. The members of the Council expressed their views on sustainable forest management, legal framework for private forest management, mechanism for commercial harvesting and transportation of Timber-1970 regulation, ban on commercial exploitation of forests, Adhoc Timber disposal policies, National Forest Policy 200 and current state of affairs, noted a press release.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Ch. Barjees Tahir stated the PML (N) government believes in merit and follows transparency in its policies, accordingly. Governor Gilgit Baltistan stressed the need for formulating a policy that could benefit both the land owners and the general public. The Members of the Council unanimously passed a resolution to express gratitude to Prime Minister for holding the meeting of GB Council at Gilgit and giving directives to Federal Government for increasing the Development Budget of Gilgit Baltistan, finalize procurement of land for Diamir Bhasha power project, establishment of Cardiac Hospital in Gilgit, well-equipped police force to be raised in Gilgit Baltistan for the protection of Kara Highway (KKH).

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=260305&Itemid=2

Hadi Aziz, “Demand raises to make Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan provinces of Pakistan”

January 14, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and

Gilgit Baltistan have sent the recommendations to Prime Minister Secretariat, to amend the constitution for raising the number of provinces from 4 to 6 declaring Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan part of Pakistan. According to recommendations, United Nation resolutions already recognized residents of Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan as Pakistan citizen so both the provinces should be included in Pakistan as two new provinces. They also recommended that the committee to be constituted comprising of secretaries from ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit and Baltistan, foreign ministry, Law ministry to consider these recommendations.

Sources stated that these recommendations have been tabulated by ex-chief justice of Azad Kashmir Manzoor Hussain Gillani and ex-IG Sindh Afzal Shigri after reviewing all legal and constitution options and with the mutual consultations with all stake holders of Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan including all religious and political parties. Foreign ministry sent back these recommendations to the ministries of Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, with the inner house consultation. These recommendations were then also sent to Law ministry to seeking for Legal and constitutional opinion.

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2014/01/14/demand-raises-to-make-kashmir-gilgit-baltistan-provinces-of-pakistan/>

“Minister for facilities to Kashmir refugees, children”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 18, 2014

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Chaudhry Barjees Tahir stated on January 17 that it was the duty of the ministry to provide maximum facilities to Kashmiri refugees and their children in the country. During his visit to Girls Vocational Training Centre at Faridkot, the minister directed the department concerned to submit him a detailed report on the working and performance of all girls vocational centres. Earlier, the Principal of the centre briefed the Minister about the working of the centre and stated 25 courses of different duration were offered to students.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=260722&Itemid=2

“PPP veteran dubs AJK PM conmen's patron”

The Nation, January 12, 2014

MIRPUR: Former AJK prime minister and People's Party leader Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry on January 11 asked the AJK government to immediately move for the recovery of over Rs5 billion plundered under the guise of online advertisement business “Click”, and termed the present premier patron of the plunders. “People of Mirpur will be constrained to take to the streets under a mass movement if the government fails to recover the looted money within the deadline,” stated Sultan addressing the victims and party workers. He named the scam as “Double Mujawer - Rather Triple Mujawer Scandal” in view of the exceptionally attractive 300 percent profit of the “business” which swept the huge money belonging to the local population who invested in the business.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/national/12-Jan-2014/ppp-veteran-dubs-ajk-pm-conmen-s-patron>

“GB tied in undividable ties with Kashmiris: Mehdi”

January 12, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah stated that the people of Gilgit and Baltistan are tied in inseparable relations with the Kashmir. Addressing a function in Muzaffarabad on January 11, the AJK Prime Minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, stated that AJK government has earmarked quota in medical colleges for students of Gilgit Baltistan and also aim to give quota in services to the people of that region.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=249616&catname=Pakistan>

Shoaib-ur-Rehman Siddiqui, “PM's loan Scheme to bring revolutionary change: Marvi Memon”

Business Recorder, January 10, 2014

SKARDU: Coordinator to Prime Minister Youth Loans Scheme, Marvi Memon on January 10 stated that PM's loan scheme will bring a revolutionary change in the country. Addressing a public gathering in Skardu, she stated that this programme

will be implemented purely on merit basis. She stated conditions were made easy for this loan programme and proposals and suggestions will be considered in respect of Gilgit Baltistan youth's representations. She stated that business will enhance the economy and unemployment would be reduced in the country through this programme. She also announced that more programmes for welfare on the people will also be introduced soon. On this occasion she administered oath to the youths practically to make success prime minister's programme in G.B.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/1-front-top-news/152666-pms-loan-scheme-to-bring-revolutionary-change-marvi-memon.html>

“APO secretary, GB cabinet call on Mamnoon”

The News, January 9, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Mari Amano, Secretary General, Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr on January 8. Mari Amano apprised the President of the Asian Productivity Organization, Japan, its various activities and projects aimed at enhancing productivity in various sectors of economy in Pakistan. He informed that the APO-Japan is a Regional Inter-governmental Organization, established in 1961, comprising of 20 member countries with the mission to contribute to the socio economic development of Asia Pacific region through mutual cooperation by enhancing productivity of all economic sectors, enabling APO member countries to become more productive and competitive.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-225434-APO-secretary,-GB-cabinet-call-on-Mamnoon>

“Jamaat seeks clarification on Gilgit-Baltistan status”

Pakistan Observer, January 9, 2014

GILGIT: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Maulana Abdul Sami asked the federal government to clarify the status of GB before launching mega projects. On January 8, Mualana Abdul Sami warned that without ensuring the security and protection of rights of local population and their consent, initiating

development work on mega projects can lead to chaos and disruption in law and order situation. He stated that former Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led federal government in the name of so-called packages deprived the people of GB of their rights. The packages instead of removing the miseries of people increased sectarian violence, lawlessness, corruption as the government rewarded and protected select people, he alleged.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=229801>

“GB Govt striving for poor welfare”

Pakistan Observer, January 9, 2014

ASTORE: Member Gilgit Baltistan Council, Wazir Ibadat stated that Gilgit Baltistan government is striving hard for the welfare of poor people. He stated that many welfare programmes under different names are currently running in Gilgit Baltistan for the welfare of people. Some major programmes including Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Wasela-e-Haq, Watan cards for flood affectees are running successfully in all the districts of Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=229804>

Peer Muhammad, “Electricity generation: Unlocking the potential of small power plants”

The Express Tribune, January 8, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The government is planning to involve the World Bank in unlocking the untapped hydropower potential of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) somewhere close to 42,000 megawatts (MW), according to one report in order to overcome the energy crisis. A high-level meeting to discuss the matter was held in Islamabad on January 7, attended by representatives of WB, International Finance Corporation (IFC), water and power ministry and the G-B administration. A top government official, who was part of the meeting noted that as many as 220 potential sites for hydropower production in G-B had been identified. He stated that WB and IFC representatives agreed to visit these sites in March 2014.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/656276/electricity-generation-unlocking-the-potential-of-small-power-plants/>

“Uplift of Gilgit Baltistan a priority: President”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 9, 2014

ISLAMABAD: President Mamnoon Hussain on January 8 stated the federal government accords high priority to the development of Gilgit Baltistan and assured that all possible steps would be taken for the wellbeing of the people of Gilgit Baltistan. The President expressed these views in a meeting with the delegation of cabinet members of Gilgit Baltistan led by its Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Overall situation in Gilgit Baltistan came under discussion during the meeting. The Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan briefed the President about developmental activities in Gilgit Baltistan and the various steps being taken for the welfare and uplift of the people of the area. The delegation appreciated the keen interest of the President in development of Gilgit Baltistan and lauded the various measures being undertaken by the federal government for the development of the northern area.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258901&Itemid=1

“Creating energy: Mir Ghazanfar for generating electricity from Attaabad Lake”

The Express Tribune, January 7, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan, former deputy chief executive of Gilgit-Baltistan, asked for turning the Attaabad lake disaster into an opportunity by generating 20 megawatt of electricity from the reservoir. “I have presented a written application to the prime minister during my meeting with him in this regard requesting him to initiate 20 MW of electricity sufficient to meet the demand of the entire Hunza district of Gilgit Baltistan.” Khan observed that Gilgit-Baltistan including Hunza district were facing shortage of electricity which was hampering the economic activities in the area also affecting their sources of livelihood of the people. He stated the Gilgit Baltistan chief secretary has also prepared a feasibility report for the construction of 20MW electricity on the site of Attaabad lake.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/655691/creating-energy-mir-ghazanfar-for-generating-electricity-from-attaabad-lake/>

“Nanga Parbat incident: Agencies claim arrest of another suspect”

The Express Tribune, January 7, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Seven months after the murders of 10 foreign mountaineers and their Pakistani cook at a Nanga Parbat base camp in Diamer District of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), security agencies on January 6 claimed they have arrested a key suspect from the federal capital. G-B authorities previously announced that they had arrested 11 suspects including an alleged mastermind connected to both the Nanga Parbat incident and an attack that had left an army colonel and two police officers investigating the case dead in Chilas in August 2013, according to published reports.

Unofficial statements by police officials suggest a joint team of G-B and Islamabad Police made the latest arrest from a seminary in the capital over the weekend. The suspect, who has been handed over to the G-B law enforcers, has been identified as Rahim Khan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/655597/nanga-parbat-incident-agencies-claim-arrest-of-another-suspect/>

Imaduddin, “Concrete measures afoot to control subsidized wheat smuggling”

Business Recorder, January 7, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan has taken concrete measures to control the smuggling of subsidized wheat and flour from Gilgit Baltistan. An official source stated that lack of an effective control mechanism had encouraged some influential persons to indulge in smuggling of subsidized wheat and flour from GB. It noted that the government has taken various steps to curb this practice by improving transportation and distribution system of the commodity. The existing dealer system has been discontinued and the Food Department has set up sale points, being monitored by in collaboration with the district administration.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/business-a-economy/152016-concrete-measures-afoot-to-control-subsidized-wheat-smuggling.html>

Rebecca Hawke, “Pakistan bans Shia channels

in Gilgit-Balistan”

January 7, 2014

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has banned four Shia TV channels in the country's northern Gilgit-Balistan province, according to local reports. Karbala Arabic channel, Hidayat TV, Hadi TV and the Shia news channel - all such TV are all reportedly to be taken off air by cable operators in the province, situated in the disputed Kashmir region. Shia parties and leaders have condemned the ban on the channels in what is a Shia majority province, as reported in the Shia Post. The PEMRA Gilgit-Balistan department claims the action followed complaints about the channels. Last month PEMRA also banned the relay of popular Afghan television channels RTA, ATN, Shamshad and Lemar by cable operators in the province of Balochistan.

<http://www.rapidtvnews.com/index.php/2014010731622/pakistan-bans-shia-channels-in-gilgit-balistan.html>

Lieutenant General Muhammad Zubair (Retd), “Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project Seismic argument”

Business Recorder, January 8, 2014

Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-electric Project is a flagship mega project of immense national importance. The Project is located in Muzaffarabad district in the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) at an approximate latitude 34°20'N and longitude 73°40'E, between elevation of 600m and 1100m above sea level. It envisages the diversion of Neelum River water through a tunnel and after producing power, out-falling into the Jhelum River. The Project utilises a gross head of about 420m by diverting the Neelum River at Nauseri by construction of Composite Dam (Gravity + Rock fill), to the lowest reach of the Jhelum River at Zaminabad through a 52 km long tunnel system including Tailrace Tunnel. A Composite Dam, 160 m long and 60 m high is being constructed on Neelum River at Nauseri 41km north east of Muzaffarabad. 39.2km of the Headrace Tunnel is twin tunnel having dia of about 8.5m each.

<http://www.brecorder.com/articles-a-letters/187/1141442/>

Munawar Hasan, “Notices issued to directors of hydropower project”

The News, January 5, 2014

LAHORE: The High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir issued notices to the director general of Private Power Cell and chairman of Hydro Electric Board of AJK and the managing director of Sunny Power Company over the petition against the illegal allotment of 70 MW-Harigel-Arja-Tain-Dhalkot hydropower project and the respondents will give final arguments before the court on 16 January, 2014. The notices were issued to the respondents after Syed Ehtisham Haider Zaidi of Manzur & Sons through counsel Muhammad Yaqoob Khan Mughal filed a petition in the court against Sheikh Zaheer Ahmed, director general of Private Power Cell, and Muhammad Yaseen, chairman of Hydro Electric Board of AJK government and Fahad Yaqoob, managing director of Sunny Power Company.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-224515-Notices-issued-to-directors-of-hydropower-project>

“AJK Prime Minister pays glowing tributes to ZAB”

Business Recorder, January 6, 2014

AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed paid glowing tributes to former prime minister of Pakistan and PPP founder Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on his 86th birth anniversary. Addressing a ceremony at Mirpur, he stated that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed was the world-famous leader of the Islamic world who wanted to make the Islamic world stronger. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto hosted the first Islamic Conference in Lahore bringing the Muslim countries on the forum of the historic Islamic Summit.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1140953/>

“Elements involved in Chillas, Nanga Parbat terrorism arrested”

January 4, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Shahid ullah Baig, briefed National Assembly's standing committee for

Kashmir and Baltistan Affairs about arrest of majority of terrorist elements involved in Chillas and Nanga Parbat tragedies. The committee chaired by Malik Abrar Ahmad on January 3 was also assured of arresting remaining seven terrorists as soon as possible , while among three arrested include, Habib s/o Yaseen, Hazrat Bilal s/o Munir Shah, and Qadeerullah s/o Syed Hussain Shah , who had brought shame and disrepute to federation on international level. Similarly terrorists involved in Chillas tragedy, which included Mushtaq Ahmad, Hamid ullah, Liaqat, Rahmat ullah, Muhammad Nabi and Dilbar Khan had also been arrested. The committee was also briefed that approval for deploying a special police force at various check posts to tackle terrorist acts , making Karakoram Highway a safer place to travel, had been made.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=248770&catname=Pakistan>

“Pak-China Economic corridor to ensure progress in GB: Abbasi”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 3, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly, Murtaza Javed Abbasi, on January 2 stated establishment of Pak-China Economic corridor would be beneficial for achieving progress and prosperity in Gilgit-Baltistan. “Proper utilization of immense economic and tourism potential in Gilgit-Baltistan could lead Pakistan and GB to progress and prosperity” he stated while talking to Speaker of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Wazir Baig, who called on him alongwith a delegation. Abbasi stated that Gilgit-Baltistan was an important part of the country and rich in natural resources and human potential.

He stated the present government was committed to bring the region in mainstream by providing economic activity, education and provision of basic amenities. He stated that establishment of Pak-China Economic Corridor was a step forward in relation of the commitment of the incumbent political leadership. The Deputy Speaker stated that administrative and financial autonomy has been ensured to the GB. He assured all out support of the National Assembly Secretariat for the capacity

building of members and staff of Legislative Assembly.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=257932

Shoaib-ur-Rehman Siddiqui, “Democracy strengthening in GB: Nayer”

Business Recorder, January 3, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Nayer Hussain Bokhari January 3 stated that democracy was strengthening in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Parliament would fully support the legislative Assembly. He expressed these views while talking to members GB legislative assembly who had come on the invitation of the chairman.

The Chairman stated that it was the democratic periods in which the basic rights were given to the people of GB. GB council was also established in the democratic era, he added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/1-front-top-news/151450-democracy-strengthening-in-gb-nayer.html>

“Bhasha dam DPs being resettled”

Dawn, January 4, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan was informed on January 3 that 20 per cent of the resettlement process to facilitate the construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam had been completed. Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Secretary, Shahidullah Baig, told the committee during its first meeting that Minister for Kashmir Affairs Birjis Tahir had directed the ministry to acquire the required land and resolve other related issues in three months. Coming to other issues, he stated:

“Three terrorists involved in the murder of 11 foreign tourists at Nanga Parbat in June 2013, including the mastermind, have been arrested.”

As part of confidence-building measures for foreign tourists, he added, the ministry had organised Silk Route Festival which was attended by diplomats from 22 countries. The prime minister has announced that a well-equipped special police force

comprising 1,500 personnel will be raised to ensure safe journey on the Karakoram Highway.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1078312/bhasha-dam-dps-being-resettled>

Shabbir Mir, “Nanga Parbat tragedy: Key suspects to be shifted to jails outside G-B”

The Express Tribune, January 3, 2014

GILGIT: Key suspects involved in high-profile cases in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) are likely to be shifted to jails outside the region during trials, stated a government official on January 2. Those who are to be moved to other prisons include the suspects of the Nanga Parbat massacre and the murders of their investigators. The decision was taken during a government meeting chaired by chief secretary Younus Dagha on the federal government's instructions. The suspects would be shifted to jails in Rawalpindi and other cities to prevent any incident of jailbreak.

“The suspects will be tried under the 'Protection of Pakistan Ordinance 2013' that was extended to the region during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to G-B,” the official stated, adding 11 out of 17 terrorists involved in the killing of foreign tourists and their investigators in G-B have been arrested so far, including the mastermind.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/654045/nanga-parbat-tragedy-key-suspects-to-be-shifted-to-jails-outside-g-b/>

Imaduddin, “GB pivotal for Pakistan's ties with China: Mushahid”

January 2, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Defence Committee, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, on January 2 stated that Gilgit-Baltistan is an important unit of Pakistan strategically as well as politically and economically which needs special attention. In the current context, he stated Gilgit-Baltistan is also pivotal for Pakistan's relations with China, particularly in the context of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor. He was addressing a capacity building workshop for the members of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and Council

organized by Association of Global Humanists and Ethics (AGHE Pakistan).

A delegation of 27 members of the GB Assembly led by the Speaker, Wazir Beg, participated in the workshop. Senator Mushahid Hussain, who is also Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute, stated that Gilgit-Baltistan is a neighbour of the Chinese autonomous region of Xinjiang. He stated that China has been involved in development of the region, while recently earmarking billions of dollars for mining, dam building, and industrial and telecom growth. He urged for the establishment of a special industrial security force for the safety of Chinese workers and projects in GB and other provinces of Pakistan all along the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/108-pakistan-top-news/151320-gb-pivotal-for-pakistans-ties-with-china-mushahid.html>

“Ministry of KA&GB adopts multi-pronged strategy for development”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 3, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan (KA&GB) is effectively pursuing its projects for achieving development and prosperity in the region. As part of such efforts, the ministry has adopted multi-pronged approach to address all its administrative and allied issues. According to an official source, the Minister had issued clear directions to improve efficiency, eradicate corruption, ensure discipline and punctuality besides improving coordination between Ministry and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan government. The source further stated that such strategy would also help utilize development funds properly, reduce non-development expenditure and evolve improved management mechanism for Jammu and Kashmir state property.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=257800&Itemid=1

“Gilgit-Baltistan CM visits Wapda”

The News, January 3, 2014

LAHORE: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah visited Wapda House on January 2 and held a meeting with Wapda Chairman Syed Raghob Abbas Shah, a statement noted. Matters pertaining to water and hydropower projects, including Diamer-Bhasha Dam, Bunji hydropower project, Satpara Dam Phase II, Harpo and Basho hydropower projects located in Gilgit-Baltistan came under discussion during the meeting, it stated. Shah noted that the region possessed enormous hydropower potential, adding that the construction of various hydropower projects will go a long way in achieving the socioeconomic development of not only Gilgit-Baltistan but also transform the economic landscape of Pakistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-224034-Gilgit-Baltistan-CM-visits-Wapda>

“Hurriyat leader demands J&K-POK route opening”

India Blooms News Service, January 4, 2014

SRINAGAR: Moderate Hurriyat Conference and APHC Chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on January 3 demanded the opening of ancient routes connecting Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Calling upon India and Pakistan to take immediate steps and open the natural routes connecting the divided Kashmir, Mirwaiz stated apart from Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, a number of routes like Sialkot-Poonch route including other entry points exist between two Kashmirs and they should be made motorable to give economic boost to the Kashmiris living across the man-made divided line.

<http://www.indiablooms.com/NewsDetailsPage/2014/newsDetails030114z.php>

Economic Developments

“ECNEC approves ten projects totalling Rs 218.554 Billion”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 1, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) on December 31 approved ten projects totalling Rs 218.554 billion, including irrigation, water, power, infrastructure, education and for distribution of 100,000 laptop computers under the Prime Minister's Scheme for youth. The ECNEC further approved a project sponsored by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan titled “Basic Education for All” to open schools in Azad Jammu and Kashmir districts at a cost of Rs 1224.093 million. The ECNEC directed the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan to ensure that there was no duplication. The ECNEC also approved a 14 MW Hydropower Project Naltar-V at a total revised cost of Rs 3843.753 million. The objective of the construction of the project is to meet the power requirements of Gilgit Town.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=257524&Itemid=2

“Rs7 bn allocated for Mangla Dam victims”

The News, January 28, 2014

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government and WAPDA with the liberal financial assistance of the federal government have allocated Rs7 billion for the rehabilitation of the families displaced due to Mangla dam raising project. Official sources noted on January 27 that two mega projects of public welfare have been launched which include water supply and sewerage exclusively and two kilometres long “Rathua Harayam” bridge over picturesque Mangla Lake to link Mirpur with the adjoining historic Islamgarh town. The bridge

will reduce the distance between Mirpur and adjoining town of Islamgarh to a greater extent, they stated.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-28225-Rs7-bn-allocated-for-Mangla-Dam-victims>

“Diامر-Bhasha dam 'lifeline' for national economy”

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 6, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Diامر-Bhasha dam project on Indus River is a 'lifeline' for national economy, producing cheaper electricity and saving \$2.216 billion annually. The dam will go a long way in meeting country's future agricultural and electricity requirements. A spokesman of Ministry of Water and Power stated Diامر-Basha dam has three important objectives, including flood control, power generation and storage of water. He stated the gigantic project will generate 4500 megawatts electricity and store the water to meet the country's growing power and irrigation needs. The reservoir has the capacity to store 6.4 MAF and will save \$0.63 billion. He stated the dam will also enhance life of the Tarbela Dam by over thirty five years.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258268&Itemid=2

International Developments

Imaduddin, “Sweden keen to increase economic ties with Pakistan: Ambassador”

Business Recorder, January 23, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden, Tomas Rosander on January 23 stated that his country was keen to increase its economic ties with Pakistan. The Ambassador called on Finance Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed bilateral economic matters. The minister stated that the focus of the government desired expansion of economic relations with other nations with focus on trade and investment. The Swedish Ambassador stated that Sweden is keen to increase its economic ties with Pakistan. During the meeting the Swedish Ambassador also discussed the (30.4 MW) Jagran-1 Hydro Power Project constructed in collaboration with a Swedish Company in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The Finance Minister assured the Swedish Ambassador that he would look into the issue of outstanding payment of the Swedish Company and take up the matter with relevant authorities of AJK Government for its expeditious resolution.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/1-front-top-news/154620-sweden-keen-to-increase-economic-ties-with-pakistan-ambassador.html>

Nasir Khan, “Pleasant news for Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistanis from Germany”

January 28, 2014

ISLAMABAD: A pleasant news emerges for Gilgit-Baltistan people in particular and for Pakistanis in general that Germany promises to give € 20 million for construction of 35 megawatt hydropower project in Skardu, the base to K-2. The project's name is Harpo hydropower project. According to officials, German and Pakistan officials have signed on the agreement regarding the project. The project will laid down for the first time 132 KV

transmission line stretching over an area of 30 kilometers besides three grid stations. Apart from this, Germany's Economic Cooperation and Development ministry commits for € 1.5 million for capacity building, transmission improvement and distribution management system for Gilgit Baltistan Water and Power Department.

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2014/01/28/pleasant-news-for-gilgit-baltistan-and-pakistanis-from-germany/>

Khalid Mustafa, “China reveals its cards for investing \$20 billion in Pakistan”

The News, January 20, 2014

ISLAMABAD: China is demanding that all mega power projects, including the Bhasha Dam, Gaddani and Lakhra coal plants, the Tarbela Extension project and many transmission lines, be handed over to China without any international bidding process, and Beijing will directly invest \$22 billion in Pakistan. The Nawaz Sharif government is eager to accept this huge Chinese offer, and a loophole in the PPRA rules is being used to hand over all these mega projects to China. “Beijing will extend the preferential and medium term soft loans of \$22 billion to Pakistan against the guarantees of the government of Pakistan”, a senior official who was part of the recent meeting of the Pak-China Joint Working Group (JWG) held on January 7-8 in Beijing noted. “We have carved out a plan to capitalise on the opportunity that Beijing has extended to Pakistan. Under the plan, Chinese companies will be offered the coal and hydropower and huge transmission line projects under a direct contracting regime which is not against the PPRA rules,” the official stated.

[http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-28050-China-reveals-its-cards-for-investing-\\$20-billion-in-Pakistan](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-28050-China-reveals-its-cards-for-investing-$20-billion-in-Pakistan)

Other Developments

Shazia Mehboob, “Seminar: Archaeologists urge preservation of monuments in Azad Kashmir”

The Express Tribune, January 2, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a region most famous for being at the core of India and Pakistan's differences, has much more to offer the world than just the wars fought over it. A team of archaeologists and research students who undertook the documentation of 100 archaeological sites in Muzaffarabad Division presented their findings during a seminar earlier this week.

Sharing their observations, the researchers stated heritage sites built by Mughals, Dogras and Sikhs represented historical treasures which were under threat due to neglect and natural calamities. During the seminar held at the Quaid-i-Azam University Taxila Institute of Asian Civilisation (TIAC), they urged the concerned authorities to preserve heritage sites, which in turn would also attract foreign tourists.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/653419/seminar-archaeologists-urge-preservation-of-monuments-in-azad-kashmir/>

Jamal Shahid, “Illegal hunting leopards now threatened species”

Dawn, January 27, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Wildlife conservation efforts, particularly for the common leopard in the hills of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), have had little effect as more than 60 common leopards have been illegally hunted in the past four years. According to game wardens in the AJK Wildlife Department, seven common leopards were killed in November and December 2013 alone. In some cases, automatic weapons are being used to kill the endangered species listed as 'near threatened' by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). “It's like the annihilation of an exotic

species,” stated a helpless game warden in Kotli when contacted over the phone. Giving a recent example, the game warden talked about a female leopard which was killed using automatic weapons on December 28, 2013.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1082971/illegal-hunting-leopards-now-threatened-species>

Shabbir Mir, “Diامر-Bhasha Dam: Diامر embarks on 'plantation drive' for better compensation”

The Express Tribune, January 27, 2014

GILGIT: As the cycle of demand and supply goes, Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) Diامر Valley has recently seen a rise in the demand for plants as saplings are being imbedded in vast tracts of barren land to obtain higher compensation amounts from authorities. The federal government has acquired thousands of acres for the construction of the Diامر-Bhasha Dam, categorising the land into barren and cultivable. As per the law, owners of cultivable land are entitled to double the amount of compensation given to owners of barren land. Over the past few months, administration officials have distributed millions of rupees in compensation among residents and the process will continue in the coming couple of weeks. Thus, in a bid to hoodwink the government and make an extra buck, locals have begun planting saplings on their barren land so as to receive more money from the government.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/663842/diامر-bhasha-dam-diامر-embarks-on-plantation-drive-for-better-compensation/>

Sba Salik, “Skardu Radio a tool for social change”

The Nation, January 26, 2014

SKARDU: Radio Pakistan Skardu is a major instrument for social change, development and prosperity, highlighting government policies,

national interest and airing of informative programmes especially to people of these most sensitive and less-developed areas of Pakistan. These remarks were made by the speaker of the one-day workshop arranged by the Pak-US-Alumant network in Skardu. Syed Bahadur Ali Salik spoke on Radio Journalism (Role of Radio Pakistan) especially Radio Pakistan Skardu. He stated that Radio Pakistan Skardu played its vital role to promote national heritage, traditions, poetry, folklore, folktales, language, music and literature and also promoted these dying things.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/national/26-Jan-2014/skardu-radio-a-tool-for-social-change>

Zafar Sultan, “A plea for overseas Mirpurians”

Pakistan Observer, January 23, 2014

Mirpur is a prosperous city of AJK, and a sizeable number of Mirpuris are well settled abroad, especially in England. Veritably, those Mirpuris have contributed generously in the health and education sector. I wonder why Government Girls' High School Kalyal, Mirpur AJK could not grab the attention of those philanthropists. I visited the schools a few days back but was shocked to see the deplorable conditions in which our young girls the future mothers of the nation were facing the brunt of the cold weather under open sky or in the airy rooms with broken window pans. Maybe the children of only have-nots go to this underprivileged government school.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=231247>

Aditi Khanna, “Britain's Balti Cuisine Seeks EU Protection”

Outlook, January 22, 2014

LONDON: Cuisine from the Indian sub-continent has taken on different forms in Britain and among the popular ones is "Balti" from Birmingham, which has applied for protected name status across the European Union. The Balti cuisine is a reference to the flat-bottomed metal dishes the food is cooked and served in, besides a nod to the origins of the Pakistani immigrants to the city from the region of Baltistan. The application, made in October 2013, remains pending but if it is successful, the name

"Birmingham Balti" would be given EU protected name status alongside a series of other British foods such as Bramley Apple Pie. A protected name status benefits big producers of well known protected names such as Champagne as well as small industries and brands who might have a traditional way of making a product known by the region's name.

<http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=825784>

“Tremors felt in upper parts of KP”

The News, January 16, 2014

PESHAWAR: An earthquake measuring five on the International Richter Scale rattled Swat, Mansehra, Chitral, Gilgit-Baltistan, Ghazir and adjacent areas during midnight of January 14 and 15. According to the Met Office the tremors were felt at midnight in Diamer, Chitral, Swat, Mansehra and Gilgit-Baltistan districts. The epicentre of the quake was in the mountainous range of the Hindukush in Afghanistan. The tremors forced people in some areas to spend the chilly night under the open sky. However, no loss to life or property was reported.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-27968-Tremors-felt-in-upper-parts-of-KP>

“Karakorum reserves to be declared 3rd biosphere reserves”

Pakistan Observer, January 12, 2014

ISLAMABAD: UNESCO has assured support for approval of the Karakoram Pamir Biosphere Reserve in Gilgit Baltistan as the third Biosphere Reserve in Pakistan. The project would be signed during the scheduled visit of the Director General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO to Pakistan in June 2014. Pakistan has only two Biosphere Reserves. One is Lal Sohanra National Park located in Cholistan Desert which was approved by UNESCO in 1977 and also the Juniper forest of Ziarat, is believed to be the second largest juniper forest of its kind in the world.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=230034>

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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