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News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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STUDIES & ANALYSES
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Gilgit-Baltistan over a couple of years did not experience any big terrorist or sectarian attacks. But recently twelve schools, half of them all-girls', have been burnt down by unidentified militants in coordinated attacks in Pakistan's restive Gilgit-Baltistan. The burning of schools resulted in a protest by local residents who sought safety for educational institutions which are often attacked by terrorists. Initially, the local government tried to downplay the incidents and tried to control the damage by saying that the miscreants who were behind torching schools have been apprehended. But after a couple of days, it came into notice that the local police are facing it difficult to fight the terrorists who were hiding on the mountains. Sensing the backlash from the various quarters, the Pakistan administration finally decided to launch the military operation against terrorist in the Ghizer valley.

The attack on the girl schools is a grim reminder that the terrorists are down but not out in the region. They can make come back anytime on their will. The already sectarian divide in the Gilgit-Baltistan could again come under the scanner of the terrorist organisations particularly the Islamic State which has grown in strength and power in the Af-Pak region.

Yaqoob ul Hassan

Political Developments

Darakhshan Anjum, Rs 441.645 million Donation Received for the Construction of Dams in Pakistan

Research Snipers, August 1, 2018

Till now Rs441.645 million donation has been received for the construction of dams in Pakistan. For Diamer Bhasha and Mohmand dams construction, people have donated funds from all over the country. In accordance to the Supreme Court of Pakistan directive State Bank of Pakistan established “Supreme Court of Pakistan’s Diamer Bhasha and Mohmand Dams Fund”. The account was set up to raise funds for the construction of Diamer Bhasha and Mohmand Dams.

<https://www.researchsnipers.com/rs-441-645-million-donation-received-for-the-construction-of-dams-in-pakistan/>

Rukhshan Mir, AJK Lauds Pakistan Red Crescent’s Vibrant Working For Welfare Of Public

Urdu Point, August 2, 2018

Appreciating the vibrant role of Pakistan Red Crescent for the rehabilitation of the ailing humanity during both emergency and peace time, AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has said Pakistan Red Crescent is actively working for the welfare of the general public and offering support services including food, clean water, and medical treatment as and when needed.

The President praised the Red Crescent for effectively building resilient communities, and working extensively on training volunteers and also in expanding its network and programmes all over the country. He said the trained volunteer network of Pakistan Red Crescent is working extensively on

disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and contributing towards improving livelihood.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-lauds-pakistan-red-crescents-vibrant-wor-403691.html>

Pakistan reiterates full support to Kashmiris

The Nation, August 3, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan August 2 discussed with Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary Ms Tahmina Junjua the recent situation in “Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir” and strongly condemned the ‘Indian state terrorism’ in the valley. The AJK president said that the report released by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights has shone the light on the crimes against humanity being committed in “IOK” and helped expose India’s apparatus of state terrorism and state-sponsored violence. After the release of this report the international community, international organisations and the United Nations has no justification left in not taking necessary steps against India and helping Pakistan and Kashmir in ending the oppressive rule of India in the occupied territory.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-Aug-2018/pakistan-reiterates-full-support-to-kashmiris>

Militants burn down 12 schools in Pakistan’s Gilgit-Baltistan; locals protest for safer educational institutions

First Post, August 3, 2018

Twelve schools, half of them all-girls’, have been burnt down by unidentified militants in coordinated attacks in Pakistan’s restive Gilgit-Baltistan, triggering protest by local residents who sought safety for educational institutions which are often attacked

by terrorists, officials said on August 3. The schools in Chilas town, about 130-kilometre from Gilgit, were targeted late on August 2 night by the militants who set them on fire and damaged school property across Diamer district, police said.

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/militants-burn-down-12-schools-in-pakistans-gilgit-baltistan-locals-protest-for-safer-educational-institutions-4887491.html>

Schools burnt in GB after calls for dams' construction, says CJP

Geo News, August 4, 2018

The Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Mian Saqib Nisar remarked on August 4 that schools were burnt down in Gilgit-Baltistan after the call for construction of dams. He also urged the people of Pakistan to ensure the construction of Bhasha-Diamer dam. "I haven't done any favours pertaining to the construction of the dam," he said while addressing Multan bar. Reiterating the need for building dams to overcome Pakistan's acute water shortage, the CJP in his remarks during a case hearing observed that the Supreme Court has appealed [to the public] to gather funds for immediate construction of Bhasha and Mohmand dams.

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/206117-cjp-urges-pakistanis-to-ensure-construction-of-diamer-bhasha-dam>

Faizan Hashmi, Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman Condemns Torching Of Girl Schools In GB, Seek Report From Commissioner Diamir

Urdu Point, August 3, 2018

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman here August 3 strongly condemned torching of girls schools at Diamir district and sought report from Commissioner Diamir. The Chief Minister directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against elements involved in putting on fire of the girls' schools. He said those elements taken law in hands would not be spared and strict action would be taken against them under the law. He directed

Commissioner Diamir to submit report of the incident and informed him accordingly.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/chief-minister-gilgit-baltistan-hafiz-hafeez-404190.html>

Pakistani police kill prime suspect in torching of 14 Gilgit-Baltistan schools during search operation

First Post, August 5, 2018

Pakistani police on August 5 killed the prime suspect behind the brazen arson attacks targeting 14 schools, mostly all-girls', in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, according to a media report. The schools were burnt down over a period of two days in coordinated attacks in Gilgit-Baltistan's Diamer district, triggering protest by local residents who sought safety for educational institutions. "The prime suspect believed to be responsible for the torching of 14 girls' schools over a period of two days in Gilgit-Baltistan's was killed during a search operation in the Tanger area today," Diamer Police Spokesperson Muhammad Wakeel was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/pakistani-police-kill-prime-suspect-in-torching-of-14-gilgit-baltistan-schools-during-search-operation-4896031.html>

Sadia Kazmi, CPEC: A Boon for Gilgit-Baltistan

Modern Diplomacy, August 5, 2018

Gilgit-Baltistan being the only entry point between China and Pakistan holds immense significance which translates into this region being strategically important not just for China but for Pakistan as well. Neglecting this region in anyway will not reap the promised benefits of CPEC for Pakistan, and this is already clearly understood by the Pakistani policy makers. Although some serious irritants remain to be resolved including the mainstreaming of Gilgit-Baltistan. Nonetheless, the problems shouldn't hold back the development of the region. CPEC which connects the Gwadar port in Baluchistan to Kashgar in China, has a number of projects distributed among

the provinces of Pakistan. Similarly, the Gilgit-Baltistan region sets to gain from the Moqpondaas Special Economic Zone. The 250 acres of land have been identified which is allotted for this SEZ and the initial feasibility report has already been shared with the Chinese counterpart. The type of industry this SEZ offers include Marble, Granite, Iron ore processing, Steel industry, Food processing, Leather industry and Mineral processing industry.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2018/08/05/cpec-a-boon-for-gilgit-baltistan/>

MA Mir, AJK PM warns India not to abolish Article 35A

The Express Tribune, August 5, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan has warned India not to play with fire by trying to abolish Article 35A of the Constitution and changing special status of the occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking on the Indian move to abolish Article 35A of the Indian Constitution that triggered widespread protests across Kashmir, he said, “If the Indian government touches Article 35A of the Constitution, the Kashmiri nation will resist the move on both sides of the Line of Control with tooth and nail.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1773654/1-ajk-pm-warns-india-not-abolish-article-35a/>

Israr Khan, Pak-India water dispute: New govt to approach WB again

The News, August 7, 2018

With the changing geo-political situation, the new political government would knock again at the door of the World Bank regarding Indian government’s violation of the Indus Water Treaty 1960 and demand setting up a ‘court of arbitration’ to settle the water disputes between the two countries, sources told The News.

India and Pakistan are disputing the construction of 330MW Kishenganga and 850MWs of Ratle hydropower projects being built by Indian on River

Jhelum and River Chenab respectively where Pakistan has right of unrestricted use under the treaty. Pakistan has severely objected to the designs of these controversial projects and Islamabad has been requesting the Bank for the constitution of court of arbitration since long, while India is asking for appointment of a neutral expert to look into the issue.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/351503-pak-india-water-dispute-new-govt-to-approach-wb-again>

Mian Abrar, Military operation in Gilgit-Baltistan likely

Pakistan Today, August 6, 2018

The situation in violence-hit areas of Tanger and Darel districts of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) remains tense as the local administration has failed to take action against the suspects involved in setting over a dozen schools, almost half of them for girls, on fire, as the authorities are set to hold a key meeting with local jirga on August 7 to help bring the culprits to justice.

Though the GB government claims that the situation is returning back to normal, several sources have informed Pakistan Today that the militants have taken control over Tanger and Darel. They said that a mob attacked the Tanger Police Station and freed around half-a-dozen suspects arrested for putting the schools on fire.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/08/06/military-operation-in-gilgit-baltistan-likely/>

Jamil Nagri, Four more picked up for torching schools in Diamer

Dawn, August 7, 2018

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman on August 6 said that four suspected militants believed to be involved in torching of girls schools in Diamer had been arrested in the Tangir area during a search operation. Addressing a press conference along with his adviser on information Shams Mir, the CM said that a joint investigation team had been constituted to probe the incident. According to Mr Rehman, 12 schools were partially damaged while two schools

were completely torched using explosive material.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1425432>

Melting glaciers threaten villagers' existence in Gilgit-Baltistan

Dawn, August 7, 2018

When a glacial lake burst in Gilgit-Baltistan in July, Sher Baz watched helplessly as the waters swept away his family home. Residents of Badswat village, which lies in the Ishkoman valley at the foot of the Hindu Kush mountain range's snow-capped peaks, were at the mercy of the flash flood that carried off homes, roads and bridges, as well as crops and forest. "Thank God we are alive, but everything we owned was washed away by the floods when the glacial lake burst," said Baz, a 30-year old father of four.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1425431>

13th amendment a landmark achievement for AJK: Masood Khan

Pakistan Today, August 7, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan on August 6 said that the 13th amendment to the AJK's Interim Constitution Act, 1974, is a landmark achievement and reflects the popular demand and aspirations of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The president expressed these views while addressing the inaugural session of the seminar on Constitutional Reforms 2018, organised by the Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) at its main campus.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/08/06/13th-amendment-a-landmark-achievement-for-ajk-masood-khan/>

Experts hope speedy uplift in AJK

The Nation, August 7, 2018

Speakers hoped that the constitutional reforms would bring about socio-economic uplift and speedy progress in all the spheres of life through the

empowerment of AJK government.

President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the 13th Amendment to the AJK's Interim Constitution Act, 1974, reflects the popular demand and aspirations of the people. AJK President Masood Khan, who is also Chancellor of the AJK-based state-run AJK Universities, expressed these views while addressing the inaugural session of a seminar on "Constitutional Reforms 2018". It was organized by the state-run Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) at its main campus here on August 6.

The AJK president highly applauded the role of Prof Habibur Rahman, the vice chancellor, for taking the timely initiative to host the seminar on Constitutional Reforms 2018 and inviting some of the best minds and experts on the subject to analyse the reforms.

<https://nation.com.pk/07-Aug-2018/experts-hope-speedy-uplift-in-ajk>

Ikram Junaid Construction of dams to begin in 2019, apex court told

Dawn, August 08, 2018

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar, who has been taking a great deal of interest in the construction of dams, was informed on August 7 that work on their construction would start after his retirement. The CJP's retirement is due in January 2019.

Retired lieutenant general Muzam-mil Hussain, chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), was briefing a four-member bench of the Supreme Court on the work of the Implementation Committee of Diامر-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams (ICBMD) that he heads.

The bench was informed that in view of the procurement, the time frame determined by the ICBMD, work on the construction of Mohmand dam project was expected to commence in the early 2019, whereas all-out efforts were being made to start the construction of Diامر-Basha dam project next year.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1425657>

MA Mir, Attempts to alter Kashmir demography slammed

The Express Tribune, August 11, 2018

The Opposition leader in Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (AJKLA) Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen on August 10 condemned the Indian government for changing the demography of “Occupied Jammu and Kashmir”. He accused India of converting Muslim majority of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir into a minority for political gains.

Addressing the media, Yaseen said that Article 35A debate in Indian Supreme Court is just a bid of Baratiya Janata Party (BJP) and Modi government to open the way for the settlement of Hindus in Kashmir aimed to change its population ratio.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1778107/1-attempts-alter-kashmir-demography-slammed/>

Dr Syed Nazir Gilani, Prime Minister Imran Khan’s Kashmir test

Daily Times, August 13, 2018

Kashmiris living in all the four provinces of Pakistan have voted for National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies on July 25. They have 12 seats in the Azad Kashmir Assembly. The Kashmiri vote in Pakistan represents a strong constituency of interest for the government and the people of Pakistan. They have a provincial, national, regional and international legal personality. Their importance in a future UN-supervised vote in Kashmir’s referendum has not been properly appreciated.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/282492/prime-minister-imran-khans-kashmir-test/>

S. Binodkumar Singh, Pakistan: Deception In Gilgit Baltistan

Eurasia Review, August 14, 2018

The Gilgit Baltistan Order 2018 was promulgated by the former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on

May 21, 2018, and replaced the Gilgit Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009, with the ostensible aim to provide the ‘same rights enjoyed by the other citizens of Pakistan to people of Gilgit Baltistan’. The new order purportedly provides political, administrative, financial and judicial powers to people in the region. However, the order shifted powers from the Gilgit Baltistan Council — including those related to passing laws relating to minerals and tourism — to the Gilgit Baltistan Assembly. A comparative analysis of the 2009 and 2018 Orders indicates that the ‘special rights’ the people of Gilgit Baltistan enjoyed have been curtailed further. For instance, the Legislative Power, according to the 2009 Order, was vested in the Gilgit Baltistan Council (though this was led by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, but also had representatives from Gilgit Baltistan) and the Gilgit Baltistan Assembly. As per the 2018 Order, this power lies with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Gilgit Baltistan Assembly. Furthermore, as per 2018 Order, the “Government of Pakistan may, if it deems necessary to acquire any land situate in Gilgit-Baltistan for any purpose, require the Government to acquire the land on behalf, and at the expense, of the Government of Pakistan or, if the land belongs to the Government, to transfer it to the Government of Pakistan on such terms as may be agreed mutually”. There was no such provision as per 2009 Order. This inclusion appears to be intended to facilitate massive acquisitions to house the CPEC project. Further, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Report on Human Rights Concerns in Gilgit Baltistan released on June 14, 2018, the 2018 Order retains restrictions on freedom of expression and association of people that existed under the 2009 Order. Article 9(2) under the fundamental rights section states, “No person or political party in the area comprising Gilgit-Baltistan shall propagate against, or take part in activities prejudicial or detrimental to the ideology of Pakistan.” This provision has been employed in sweeping initiatives to quash any dissent in the region.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/14082018-pakistan-deception-in-gilgit-baltistan-analysis/>

AJK observers black day on India's independence

The Express Tribune, August 16, 2018

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, people on August 15 observed India's Independence Day as a black day to register strong protest against continued forced illegal occupation of a large part of Jammu and Kashmir State by India.

The Indian Independence Day was marked with protest rallies in all small and major towns across the liberated territory. Addressing these rallies speakers vehemently condemned the frequent incidents of unprovoked firing by the Indian troops on the line of control and the working boundary by the Indian army targeting the civilian population dwelling at the forward areas.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1781842/1-ajk-observers-black-day-indias-independence/>

Faizan Hashmi, AJK Calls For Negotiated Settlement of Kashmir Issue

Urdu Point, August 16, 2018

Describing Kashmir as political dispute, Azad Jammu Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan August 16 urged India to pursue diplomacy with Pakistan to settle the issue amicably. "Kashmir is an international dispute still pending on agenda of the UN Security Council as one of the dispute that needs to be addressed under relevant UN resolution," President Khan said during his meeting with AJK Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Chaudhry Javed Iqbal, who called on him at President House on August 16.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-calls-for-negotiated-settlement-of-kashmi-412205.html>

Fahad Shabbir, Tribute Paid To Gilgit Baltistan Police Martyrs

Urdu Point, August 15, 2018

Member Gilgit Baltistan Assembly Raja Jahanzaib August 15 paid tribute to police martyrs and said they

are symbol of courage and bravery. He said that three police martyrs fought bravely with terrorists at Kargha police check post and embraced martyrdom. He expressed solidarity with the bereaved families. He said the terrorists who destroyed schools in Diyamir deserve strict exemplary punishment and urged the government to bring the culprits to justice. Raja Jahanzaib urged GB government to ensure surveillance on all entry and existpoints of GB while strengthening the security measures.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/tribute-paid-to-gilgit-baltistan-police-marty-411223.html>

GB CM's degree challenged

Dawn, August 18, 2018

The educational degree of Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman was challenged in the GB Supreme Appellate Court on August 17. The petitioner, Pakistan Peoples Party's GB chapter senior vice president Jamil Ahmad, has requested the region's top court to disqualify the chief minister as member of the GB Assembly as his education degree was fake. Through his counsel Malik Kifayatul Rehman, Mr Ahmad said in the petition that the educational degree submitted by the chief minister during the election on a technocrat seat in GBLA in 2009 was fake. The petition argued that as the chief minister was not Sadiq and Ameen (honest and truthful), he, should, therefore, be removed from the post as he stood disqualified.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1427767>

Troops deployed after militants torch police check post in GB's Ghizer valley

The Express Tribune, August 19, 2018

Pakistan Army troops were deployed alongside local security officials in Gilgit Baltistan's (GB) Ghizar valley after militants attacked and torched police check posts on August 19. According to sources, militants torched a seasonal check post and police camps near Saingal village in Ghizar valley. Following an exchange of fire with the security officials, the militants managed to escape from the incident site with ammunition. The security parameters were heightened and police officials were stationed in Ghizar for the last two weeks in

anticipation of terrorists' involved in Diamer school attacks finding refuge in the valley.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1784650/1-troops-deployed-militants-torch-police-check-post-gbs-ghizer-valley/>

SCO providing digital telecom facilities in AJK

The Nation, August 20, 2018

In Azad Jammu Kashmir has been provided with digital telecom facilities through the inter-linking of all its areas including those located in far flung and top mountainous belts by the Special Communications Organization, the state institution that runs the telecom system in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. A grand dinner was hosted by the SCO to celebrate its 42nd Founding Anniversary at its Mess. The SCO is determined to deliver the quality telecom services in AJK and GB. Commanding Officer SCO Mirpur Division Syed Ayad Hassan cut the 42nd anniversary cake of the SCO on the occasion. Ayad reiterated his organisation's resolve to furnish its valued subscribers with all possible latest telecom facilities harmonious to the need of the modern age to bring the country in the ranks of the developed nations. He highlighted the salient features of the achievements of his organisation since its inception in 1976.

It is delivering quality telecom facilities to its subscribers in Azad Jammu & Kashmir including in all three districts of Mirpur division including Mirpur, Kotli and Bhimbher.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Aug-2018/sco-providing-digital-telecom-facilities-in-ajk>

Mehtab Haider, New planning minister briefed on dams, CPEC

The News, August 21, 2018

Newly appointed Minister for Planning Makhdom Khusro Bakhtyar was informed on August 20 that the government allocated Rs23 billion for Basha and Rs2 billion for Mohmand dams in the current fiscal year, and estimated time needed to complete Basha dam was ten years. The minister visited his office in the

ministry in P Block of the Secretariat after taking oath on August 20, where he urged for the need to find innovative ways to complete Basha Dam. He attended the three-hour long briefing, and advised the concerned officials to focus on the social sector, without knowing that the social sector had been devolved to the provinces in the aftermath of the 18th constitutional amendments.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/357844-new-planning-minister-briefed-on-dams-cpec>

Famine, drought will get worse if steps aren't taken: Khusro Bakhtiar,

Duniya News, August 24, 2018

Federal Minister for Water Resources Makhdom Khusro Bakhtiar on August 24 said that if emergency steps are not taken, problems such as famine and drought will deteriorate. During meeting with Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain, federal minister was briefed about water and power projects which are in progress. However, the minister also discussed Diamer Basha, Dasu, Karam Tangi Dam projects with WAPDA chairman, on the other hand, situations of water reservoirs in all four provinces were remained under consideration during congregation. Besides all these, Federal Minister for Water Resources stated that the strategy to resolve energy crisis will be developed; and to choose the alternative sources of energy are indispensable if we want to triumph over energy crises, while talking about solution of water resources, new water basins must be insured, he further added.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/453844-Famine-drought-will-get-worse-if-steps-aren/%27t-taken-Khusro-Bakhtiar>

Masud Ahmad Khan, Terror threats to Gilgit Baltistan loom ahead

Daily Times, August 26, 2018

The location of Gilgit Baltistan is strategically very important as it borders Indian occupied Kashmir, China and Afghanistan. Gilgit Baltistan is as important as it was in 1880s during the great game

when Russia occupied cities like Bokhara, Samarkand and Khiva and were pressing Pamirs, Oxus and Afghanistan. Russians were just short of British India by a few hundred miles, and the British were desperate to make sure that this part of their border was clear so that the Russians could not sneak down through the Pamir mountains into Chitral and Gilgit. A Russian officer, Colonel Gromchevtasky, along with Cossacks, entered Hunza through Pamir and met Mir of Hunza and his presence was taken as the start of the great game.

However, at the present, the game has changed, and is now being played between America and China, with less involvement by Russia. It revolves around China's OBOR and CPEC projects.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/287996/terror-threats-to-gilgit-baltistan-loom-ahead/>

Imtiaz Ali Taj, Bid to attack Gilgit-Baltistan girls' school foiled: police

Dawn, August 26, 2018

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) police on August 26 claimed to have foiled a terror bid targeting a girls' school in Ghizer district and arrested 13 suspected terrorists. According to Deputy Inspector General Gohar Nafees, all the arrested suspects are students of a local seminary run by a local named Inayatullah. According to Alif Ailaan's Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017, GB received a score of 63.18, getting fourth position in the list of eight Pakistan territories with respect to quality of education.

However, Diamer is the lowest-ranking district in terms of quality of education, with a score of 36.37, and among the 10 lowest-ranking districts in Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1429064>

Gitanjali Sharma, Trapped voices from 'Azad Kashmir'

The Tribune, August 27, 2018

Helplessness. This is a strong feeling that accompanies you as Anam Zakaria takes you on a

journey to 'Azad Kashmir', a place in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir which Human Rights Watch report has concluded is anything but azad (free).

The journey "between the great divide" acquaints you with a region that is almost set in oblivion, of which little is known to the outside world and whose residents almost don't appear to count to powers that be or to a nation that professes to administer it.

It is a journey that makes you meet generations that have not stepped out of turmoil.

They live in constant fear of shelling and violence and don't enjoy basic rights and privileges in a land they want to call their own but whose fate is only getting more uncertain each passing day.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/sunday-special/book-reviews/trapped-voices-from-azad-kashmir/642845.html>

India wants to expel Kashmiri Muslims to grab land for Hindu settlers: Masood

Pakistan Observer, August 27, 2018

Now Indian government, President Masood went on to say intends to settle so-called refugees of West Pakistan and its citizen from Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar and other Indian states. He assured the refugees from "occupied Kashmir" that the government of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir will take care of all their needs by providing them food, residencies, and facilities of health and education to their children. He said that government will never discriminate between the local population and the refugees from occupied Kashmir. T

he President also assured that quota reserved for the children of refugees in government jobs and educational institutions will be implemented in letter and spirit. President Masood further said that the government will consider the demand of the refugees for the provision of land for the graveyard, construction of the road within the camp and provision of clean drinking water. The gathering was also addressed by commissioner rehabilitation of AJK Government Atallah Ata, President refugees camp

Shaheem Ahmed, Ghulam Hussain Butt, and Abdul Ahad Lone.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-wants-to-expel-kashmiri-muslims-to-grab-land-for-hindu-settlers-masood/>

Sumaira FH, GB Govt Accords Priority To Resolving Youth's Problems: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman

Urdu Point August 28, 2018

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman said August 28 that government was taking tangible measures for welfare of the youth. Taking with members of the youth parliament, the GB CM said since youth played important role in socio-economic development of a country, GB government was investing more resources for creating opportunities for them to gear them up for their future role.

He said that establishment of youth parliament in GB was a good step which would be encouraged at all forums, adding the parliament should forward suggestions for improving governance in the area. He was of the view that efforts should be made to establish a youth think-tank as well as to resolve all outstanding issues through practical measures.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/gb-govt-accords-priority-to-resolving-youths-419511.html>

Sadia Abbas , AJK Vows To Carry Forward Mission Of The Jammu & Kashmir Martyrs

Urdu Point, August 29, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the freedom loving people of Occupied Jammu Kashmir are struggling to complete the mission of the martyrs of 1947 freedom war for completion of the unfinished agenda of the division of the sub-continent . He expressed these views while addressing a public meeting held in connection with Youm-e- Shuhadah-e- Dothan in Rawalakot on August 29. "It is our moral, religious and political obligation to take voice

of the oppressed Kashmiri people to the world by highlighting their just and legitimate struggle," Sardar Masood said.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-vows-to-carry-forward-mission-of-the-jamm-420704.html>

WAPDA chairman presents report on dams to CJP

Pakistan Today, August 30, 2018

Implementation Committee of Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dams (ICDBMD)/Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (r) called on the Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Mian Saqib Nisar here at Supreme Court on August 30. He presented him the comprehensive report of the ICDBMD for early commencement and timely completion of the two vital multi-purpose projects namely Diamer-Basha Dam and Mohmand Dams with cumulative gross water storage capacity of 9.3 million acre-feet (MAF) and electricity generation capacity of 5300 megawatts (MW).

The ICDBMD report encompasses issues relating to the construction of the two projects, recommendations to overcome the impediments and the strategy to be adopted for initiation of work on Mohmand and Diamer-Basha Dams as soon as possible.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/08/30/wapda-chairman-presents-report-on-dams-to-cjp/>

Tackling terrorism

The Express Tribune, August 31, 2018

The interior ministry has informed the Senate of Pakistan that more than 16,022 people have been arrested from all over the country between 2013 and 2017 on terrorism charges, and out of them 2,525 have been awarded punishment. The fact that most of the arrests — i.e. 10,993 — have been made in Punjab shows that the country's largest province is

performing better than all other provinces and regions. The figures of arrests at other places are: 2,728 in Sindh, 1,967 in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, 147 in Balochistan, 126 in Gilgit-Baltistan and 61 in the federal capital. However, details of arrests from Fata and Azad Kashmir were not available. In case of

convictions also, Punjab stands ahead of all at 1,970, out of a total of 2,525 punished. Besides, convictions from Sindh stand at 255, K-P 234, Balochistan 54, Gilgit-Baltistan 10 and the federal capital 10. Of those convicted, 376 were awarded death sentence.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1791627/1-tackling-terrorism-2/>

Economic Developments

MA Mir, AJK approves projects worth Rs1.31 billion

The Express Tribune, August 17, 2018

The Azad Kashmir government on August 16 approved three projects of roads worth Rs1.31 billion. The approval was granted in the meeting of Central Development Working Committee (CDWC), which was chaired by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan for the financial year 2018-19 held on August 15. The meeting was also attended by the members of AJK Cabinet, chief secretary, additional chief secretary (Development), secretary finance, secretary of respective line department and officers of the Planning and Development.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1782716/1-ajk-approves-projects-worth-rs1-31-billion/>

Elizabeth Ingram, Fund to build Diamer Basha and Mohmand dams in Pakistan reaches nearly INR1 billion

Hydro World, August 17, 2018

Nearly INR1 billion (US\$14.3 million) has been raised in just over a month to build the Diamer Basha and Mohmand dams in Pakistan. As of August 17, the Supreme Court of Pakistan Diamer Basha and

Mohmand Dam Fund, at the State Bank of Pakistan, stood at INR964,228,751. The fund was established July 4 by a INR1 million donation from the personal account of Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, following a decision by the court that said "construction of the dams could be implemented in letter and spirit."

The most recent donation came from the chief executive of Murree Brewery. Other donors include the Pakistan Broadcasters Association and the Punjab Caretaker Minister, Agriculture, Food, Planning and Development. All employees of the Supreme Court announced that officers would donate two days' salary and staff would donate one day's salary. The fund may receive donations from domestic and international donors.

<https://www.hydroworld.com/articles/2018/08/fund-to-build-diamer-basha-and-mohmand-dams-in-pakistan-reaches-nearly-inr1-billion.html>

Fact Sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

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 Muhammad Masood Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

AJK Council: Total 17 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.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: Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan

Chief Minister G-B: Hafiz Hafiz-ur-Rehman

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 to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been edited and abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

POK NEWS DIGEST



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