

POK

News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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India conducted surgical strikes in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) at the end of September 2016. The strikes were seen as a riposte to the gruesome attack on a military base at Uri in Jammu and Kashmir that resulted in several casualties. The strikes were conducted to target the terrorist launch pads situated on the other side of the Line of Control (LoC). The strikes were carried on successfully on least at 4 points across the LoC. PoK has remained a hotbed of militant training camps over the years and has been a sanctuary of terrorist groups targeted against India. The surgical strikes were widely discussed in Pakistan media as indicated in reports included in the current issue. The prime minister of the so called Azad Jammu and Kashmir went to the extent of rejecting India's claim of surgical strikes, alleging it was a deliberate attempt on India's part to divert attention from developments inside Jammu and Kashmir. Besides, another report suggests that expats from PoK protested in front of the Pakistan High Commission in London against using the PoK region as a terror breeding ground.

Gilgit Baltistan continues to be reeling under dual uncertainties- one pertaining to its decades-old undefined constitutional status and the other concerning its prospective share in the upcoming China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). There is widespread unrest in the region due to absence of political rights. Such political discontent has been further exacerbated due to lack of transparency that is being witnessed regarding the region's stakes in the connectivity corridor. Attempts have been made by the political class to convince the people at large, emphasizing the probable gains from the corridor in future. However, such efforts have failed to pacify the prevalent fears amongst the population- one that is based on the series of raw deals that people in PoK have been subjected to while dealing with the government in Islamabad.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Pakistani Sunni volunteers to protect Shia mourners in Gilgit-Baltistan”

ABNA, October 1, 2016

In a sign of religious harmony, Sunni residents of Gilgit have volunteered to escort Shiite mourning processions in the valley during Muharram of Imam Hussain (PBUH). The development is seen as a major step towards bridging the sectarian divide in a region which has been plagued by sectarian violence in the recent past. “This is what we should do and we will do,” stated Shah Raees, a resident of Gilgit’s Amphery area on September 29. “We will be there to guard our brethren so that they can perform their rituals peacefully,” Raees added. He was speaking at a Muharram security meeting which was also attended by Shia elders and police officials. G-B has been peaceful for some time now though security forces have been on red alert, especially during Muharram. G-B government has included over 200 people in schedule IV to keep their activities in check. According to officials, bank accounts of these people have also been frozen to stop that money from being used to foster any hostility. The decision of putting the suspicious people in the fourth schedule was taken as part of the national action plan against terrorism.

<http://en.abna24.com/service/central-asisubcontinent/archive/2016/10/01/782477/story.html>

“AJK PM rejects Indian claim of surgical strikes”

The News, October 2, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider on October 1 out rightly rejected the Indian claim of conducting surgical strikes and dubbed it as laughable; a desperate bit to divert world attention from Kashmir. Speaking at a news conference at Kashmir House, Farooq Haider claimed that the surgical strike claim by India was a gimmick by Premier Narendra

Modi’s government just to lift the morale of the army and neutralize Pakistan’s highly effective pleading of the Kashmir case at the recent held United Nations General Assembly session. “It is impossible for the Indian army to intrude into Azad Kashmir. I have been living near the Line of Control (LoC). Farooq Haider emphasised that it was impossible the Indian army had intruded some three kilometers inside AJK.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/154315-AJK-PM-rejects-Indian-claim-of-surgical-strikes>

“Political, Military Leadership Uprooted Terrorism from Country: Hafeez”

Radio Pakistan, October 3, 2016

Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman noted durable peace has been ensured due to effective policies of government in Gilgit-Baltistan. In a statement issued to Chief Minister Media cell, he noted that any kind of aggression against the state will not be tolerated. The Chief Minister also stated that people of Gilgit-Baltistan will stand along Army for the defence of country. He further stated that political and military leadership has uprooted terrorism from the country.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/02-Oct-2016/political-military-leadership-uprooted-terrorism-from-country-hafeez>

“Pakistan playing with sentiments of Kashmiris, says UKPNP”

The Financial Express, October 3, 2016

United Kashmir People’s National Party (UKPNP), spokesperson Nasir Aziz Khan on October 2 noted Pakistan only pretends to care about Kashmiris, but their real intention is just to exploit their rights for ulterior proposes. “The Kashmiris should understand that the issue of Kashmir was created because of Pakistan. Whenever Kashmir rises for freedom,

Pakistan has sabotaged their movement, whether it be 1947, 1988 or the ongoing situation. Pakistan has no affection for the people of Kashmir. If they loved them, they would have treated the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and the one they call as Azad Kashmir nicely,” Khan noted. Khan stated that Islamabad only wants to control the people of Kashmir, plunder their natural resources and has always succeeded in it by tactfully playing with the religious sentiments of Kashmiri youth. He asserted that if Islamabad really wanted to provide freedom to Kashmir, then they would have reached out through the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), but they did not take any measure, which shows they do not care for the people of Kashmir.

<http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/pakistan-playing-with-sentiments-of-kashmiris-says-ukpnp/401512/>

“Poonch, Kotli residents rally against India’s unprovoked firing at LoC”

Dunya News, October 3, 2016

Residents of Poonch and Kotli sectors in Azad Kashmir rallied against India and in the favour of Pakistan army on October 3. The rally was taken out in Tatta Pani Market located at the junction of Kotli and Poonch. It started from Kotli Chowk and transformed into a gathering after taking round of the market. The participants of the rally stated that Indian cannot deprive the Kashmiris of freedom for long. They demanded that international community while preventing India from violating the ceasefire agreement should help Kashmiris in attaining their voting right.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/355438-Poonch-Kotli-residents-rally-against-Indias-unpr>

“All Out Efforts being made to Provide Basic Amenities of Life to Masses: Haider”

Radio Pakistan, October 3, 2016

The AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan stated that all out efforts are being made to provide basic amenities of life to masses at their door steps.

Addressing a public gathering at Jaglri in district Bagh on October 3, he noted the government has evolved a comprehensive strategy to serve the masses with missionary zeal. Raja Farooq Haider Khan further stated Kashmir liberation movement, good governance and development of liberated territory are among the top priorities of PML-N government in Azad Kashmir. Strongly condemning the Indian Army’s unprovoked shelling along the Line of Control, the AJK Prime Minister noted that India could not demoralize the civilians residing at the LoC.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/03-Oct-2016/all-out-efforts-being-made-to-provide-basic-amenities-of-life-to-masses-haider>

“Sherpao for early completion of Diamer-Basha, hydel projects”

Daily Times, October 4, 2016

Qaumi Watan Party Chairman Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao called for timely completion of Diamer-Basha Dam and ongoing Hydel power projects so that power shortage may be curtailed for effective implementation of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Addressing a mass gathering at Shangla district, the QWP Chief stated that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif should treat all the federating units equally in order to strengthen the federation. Steps should be initiated to update the transmission lines in KP to avoid power losses and ensure sustainable supply of electricity to end user. Senior Minister for Irrigation Sikandar Hayat Sherpao and QWP Secretary General Hashim Baber were also present on the occasion. Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao announced developmental projects for the area which included allocation of Rs 90 million for flood protection projects, Rs 30 million for construction of bridges. Additionally, the provincial minister also announced construction of Gibal Irrigation Scheme for which the feasibility survey has already been completed. The scheme will irrigate more than 900 acres of land and will be completed with a cost of Rs 100 million during the next Annual Development Plan. “If we want to reap the benefits of the CPEC project, concrete steps should be taken to provide a feasible and conducive environment to the investors. Therefore, it is utmost

necessary to establish peace and that all ongoing energy projects in the province would be completed on fast track basis,” Sikandar Sherpao stated.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/khyber-pakhtunkhwa/04-Oct-16/sherpao-for-early-completion-of-diamer-basha-hydel-projects>

Shabbir Mir, “Water supply scheme for martyred soldier’s village”

The Express Tribune, October 5, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan government on October 4 announced a water supply scheme for the native village of Havaldar Jumma Khan, the Northern Light Infantry soldier who was killed by Indian firing along the Line of Control. The scheme, worth Rs1 million, was announced by the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Farman Ali. Havaldar Jumma, a father of three children, was a resident of Faqir Kot, a small village in Astore valley of Gilgit-Baltistan. “Jumma Khan is our hero and this [water supply scheme] is a small gift for the people of his village,” Ali stated. The minister had visited the village on October 4 and laid a wreath on Havaldar Jumma’s grave. The scheme is the first such project announced for the village where the martyred soldier’s wife, children and the rest of the family still live.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1193652/honour-water-supply-scheme-martyred-soldiers-village/>

“Indian military looking to attack Azad Jammu and Kashmir on ‘terror’ pretext”

The Express Tribune, October 4, 2016

Indian armed forces have demonstrated a classic example of operating in bad faith just when the National Security Advisors (NSAs) of both India and Pakistan resolved to defuse tension along the Line of Control (LoC). In barefaced contempt of their commitment to de-escalate tension, top defence officials informed the government that a medium-term strategic plan was needed to deal with Pakistan as minor skirmishes will not yield ‘meaningful results’. India’s armed forces have told the political

executive that “only a sustained six-month campaign will seriously damage the terror infrastructure in AJK.” Top brass and strategists have also told the government that India “should be prepared for repercussions in Kashmir” which may result as a consequence of their own actions. Lt Gen (retd) Nasser Khan Janjua and Ajit Doval recently held talks aimed at defusing the current standoff that virtually brought the two hostile neighbours to the brink of war.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1193150/indian-military-looking-attack-azad-jammu-kashmir-terror-pretext/>

MA Mir, “Countering Indian aggression: Civil defence teams formed in Rawalakot”

The Express Tribune, October 5, 2016

As Indian forces continued cross-border firing along the Line of Control on October 4, the district authorities in Rawalakot have decided to form local committees to protect the people in case of any misadventure from the Indian side. Rawalakot district administration, in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has formed Civil Defence Committees (CDCs) in the area to carry out awareness campaigns in order to educate people living near the LoC about safety measures they can take in the event of Indian cross-border aggression. Members of these CDCs will also apprise the people as what should be done in the event of an actual incursion by Indian troops.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1193651/countering-indian-aggression-civil-defence-teams-formed-rawalakot/>

“PPIB Okays issuance of LoIs for 408MW projects”

The Nation, October 5, 2016

The Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) on October 4 approved issuance of letters of interests (LoIs) for two hydropower projects, having combined generation capacity of 408 megawatts, in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The decisions were taken in the 107th meeting of the PPIB, which was presided over

by the Minister for Water and Power, Khawaja Muhammad Asif. The LoIs were issued to 350 MW Athmuqam hydropower project at Neelum River, in Azad Kashmir to the consortium led by Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Co Ltd and 58 MW Turtonas-Uzghor Hydropower Project at Golen Gol River, District Chitral to the consortium of Sinohydro Corporation Ltd, China & Sachal Engineering Works (Pvt), Ltd. Pakistan. The board also approved solicitation of proposals through local and international media for another two hydropower projects in the private sector, which are 197 MW Kalam-Asrit and 101 MW Gabral-Kalam located in district Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the Power Generation Policy 2015.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/05-Oct-2016/ppib-okays-issuance-of-lois-for-408mw-projects>

Shabbir Mir, “Muharram security: G-B govt to suspend traffic on KKH for Ashura”

The Express Tribune, October 6, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan government (G-B) has decided to suspend traffic for a day on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) as part of its security plan for Muharram. The decision will leave G-B disconnected from the rest of the country as KKH is the main highway linking the region to Rawalpindi and Islamabad. “The highway will be closed for traffic on Ashura (Muharram 10th),” Gilgit Deputy Commissioner Hamza Salick informed the media on October 5. Furthermore, the government has also requested the interior ministry to suspend cellular service in the region on Ashura. “We have forwarded a request for suspension of mobile service on Ashura and hopefully, it will be agreed upon,” Salick stated. Gilgit has been a flashpoint for sectarian tensions in the past, prompting the regional government to resort to some extreme measures. Another measure the G-B government has taken to ensure peace in the region is to impose a ban on the entry of firebrand clerics in G-B. A notification to this effect has already been issued banning five clerics.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1194224/muharram-security-g-b-govt-suspend-traffic-kkh-ashura/>

“Siraj urges govt, parliament to give roadmap for liberation of Kashmir”

The News, October 6, 2016

The Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Senator Sirajul Haq, called upon the government and the Parliament to give a roadmap for the liberation of Kashmir. Speaking at a reception hosted by him for the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider in Islamabad on October 5, he stated that the crisis in Kashmir had deepened and called for immediate notice. JI Azad Kashmir chief Abdur Rashid Turabi also addressed the gathering. Sirajul Haq stated that curfew was continuing in Kashmir for the last 68 days due to which there was acute shortage of eatables and medicines in the markets.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/155257-Siraj-urges-govt-parliament-to-give-roadmap-for-liberation-of-Kashmir>

“Pakistan’s lie nailed: Terror camps are thriving in PoK, confirm local people and leaders”

DNA, October 6, 2016

Terror training camps have been thriving in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) for years, according to people living across the area who have shown resentment to the Pakistan’s intelligence agency ISI for having made their region a haven for anti-social elements. Residents of Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Chinari, Mirpur, Gilgit, Diamer and various parts of the Neelum Valley say their lives has been made a living hell by the terror training camps as the lawless men, who train here, plunder local villages and molest the women of the area. They also noted that their region is being used by the ISI to further its proxy war against India. In various interactions, people and leaders in the region spoke about the daily extortion and harassment caused by the terror groups who are located near the Line of Control (LoC). “If management doesn’t end Taliban’s terror camps and ‘no-go’ areas in Diamer, Gilgit, Baseen and others, then we will take action,” a local leader of Gilgit was seen as noting.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-pakistan-s-lie-nailed-terror-camps-are-thriving-in-pok-confirm-local-people-and-leaders-2261804>

“Pakistan is a thief in Gilgit-Baltistan, can never be Kashmir’s friend: Senge Hasnan Sering”

Catch News, October 6, 2016

Terming Islamabad a “thief in Gilgit-Baltistan”, Senge Hasnan Sering, the Director of the Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress, criticised the country’s government for helping the Taliban kill American soldiers, and asserted that Pakistan, which occupies a third of Kashmir, can never be a friend of Kashmiris. Participating in an interaction organised by the Atlantic Council, a top American think-tank, Sering discussed Pakistani Senate’s Defence Committee chairman Mushahid Hussain’s argument by exposing in detail Pakistan’s acts of atrocities and discrimination against the people of Kashmir. “You occupy one-third of Kashmir, and an occupier cannot be a friend of Kashmir on the other side. You have been exploiting resources in Gilgit-Baltistan. Without paying royalty or compensation, a single penny for the last 70 years, I call you a thief in Gilgit-Baltistan and a thief in Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be a friend in Jammu and Kashmir. The only thing that is good is that the Pakistani Army wants to maintain a status quo because that is a money making machine in Kashmir,” he stated.

<http://www.catchnews.com/national-news/pakistan-is-a-thief-in-gilgit-baltistan-can-never-be-kashmir-s-friend-senge-hasnan-sering-1475740051.html>

“PEMRA Decides to Setup Regional Offices in Gilgit, Skardu”

Radio Pakistan, October 6, 2016

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has decided to set up regional offices in Gilgit and Skardu divisions and sub offices in Hunza and Diamer. The decision was conveyed by the Chairman PEMRA at a meeting with Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz-ur-Rehman in Islamabad. Chief Minister assured him to provide land for PEMRA offices in GB free of cost.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/06-Oct-2016/pemra-decides-to-setup-regional-offices-in-gilgit-skardu>

Interview with CM Gilgit-Baltistan: “Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman: Tourism top priority”

Dispatch News Desk, October 6, 2016

The Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman stated that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is meant to unite the entire nation and both the Chinese as well as the federal government are investing in the multi-billion dollar project. In an interview in Islamabad on October 6, the CM Gilgit-Baltistan stated that some CPEC routes are being built by the Chinese government while for some routes, the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) is releasing the funds. “No private sector or industry was thought to be established in Gilgit-Baltistan in next 50 years but now under the CPEC, industrial and economic zones are being set up which will create ample employment opportunities for people,” Hafeez-ur-Rehman noted.

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/interview-with-cm-gilgit-baltistan-hafiz-hafeez-ur-rehman/117602>

“Gilgit Baltistan CM expresses solidarity with Kashmiris”

Greater Kashmir, October 7, 2016

In a bid to show solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman, on October 7 paid a visit to Hurriyat office in Islamabad and conveyed his government’s full support to Kashmiris’ struggle for right to self-determination.

While appreciating the unprecedented sacrifices rendered by Kashmiri people, the Chief Minister, during an hour-long meeting with Hurriyat leaders, stated that the current phase of the movement has yet again brought Kashmir issue back on the limelight at international level besides making it emphatically clear that Kashmiris’ ongoing struggle was a legitimate, indigenous and peaceful movement. He stated that the mass.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/world/gilgit-baltistan-cm-expresses-solidarity-with-kashmiris/230341.html>

“Avtar Bhat, Modi Govt committed to retrieve PoK, Gilgit, Baltistan: Dr Jitendra”

Daily Excelsior, October 8, 2016

Reiterating that the agenda of Narendra Modi Government is to retrieve the Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan, Union Minister in PMO with Independent charge of North Eastern States, Dr Jitendra Singh noted that the present Government is committed to restore the J&K to erstwhile territorial position of Maharaja's kingdom. He also referred to Joint Parliament resolution of 1994 in this regard saying nation is committed to liberation of PoK from the forcible occupation of Pakistan. Addressing a function at Brig Rajinder Singh Auditorium at Jammu University today organised in connection with release of book on Maharaja Hari Singh, former ruler of the State, written by Dr Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri Vice Chancellor of Central University Dharamshalla HP, Dr Jitendra Singh stated that Modi Government is committed to maintain sovereignty and integrity of the country and there will be no compromise on the same. While giving a stern warning to terrorists, he noted the present Government is committed to crush terrorism with iron hands and there are no two thoughts about it. Moreover, there will also be no compromise with the dignity of the security forces, he added.

<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/modi-govt-committed-retrieve-pok-gilgit-baltistan-dr-jitendra/>

“Muharram security: Central control room set up in Gilgit”

The Express Tribune, October 9, 2016

The provincial home department has set up a central control room in Gilgit to ensure better coordination among security officials during Muharram. “The home secretary will be personally supervising Muharram activities from the room,” an official noted on October 8. Apart from coordinating with security officials deployed in Gilgit, the control room will keep close contact and liaison with other control rooms which have been set up in each district. The

superintendent police (SPs) and deputy commissioners (DC) in all 10 districts of Gilgit-Baltistan have been instructed to ensure their compliance. Apart from the control room, authorities have also set up a helpline which would allow citizens to phone in and report suspicious or malicious activity. Meanwhile security has been beefed up in the entire region with police and other security forces increasing their patrolling.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1195818/muharram-security-central-control-room-set-gilgit/>

“Gilgit police's claim of seizing bombs spreads panic”

Dawn, October 9, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan police on October 8 claimed to have recovered four locally made bombs planted at different places along the Karakoram Highway, but the devices turned out to be instruments of a project launched by some students in collaboration with the Karakoram International University's environmental science department to get information about earthquakes and aftershocks in the region in a bid to issue early warning of natural disasters. These instruments were fixed at various points along the KKH from Khunjerab to Mansehra district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The false claim of police to recover bombs near Gilgit city during the sensitive days of Muharram created unrest among the local people. On early October 8 morning, the Gilgit police informed the local media that they along with bomb disposal squad had recovered four homemade bombs from Manawar area near Gilgit city. Some TV channels aired the news which created panic and uncertainty among the local residents.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1288954/gilgit-polices-claim-of-seizing-bombs-spreads-panic>

“CM Directs for Completion of On-going Development Projects”

Radio Pakistan, October 10, 2016

Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman directed all concern authorities for completion of ongoing

development projects in stipulated time frame. Presiding over a meeting in Gilgit, he noted that twenty model schools costing seven hundred seventy million rupees would be constructed in all districts of Gilgit Baltistan for imparting quality education. On the occasion, Chief Minister approved building of Chief Court Complex at a cost of eight hundred seventy million rupees and directed the authorities to call tender for construction of Civil Secretariat building.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/10-Oct-2016/cm-directs-for-completion-of-ongoing-development-projects>

“Rs100bn released for Diamer-Basha dam: PM”

The Nation, October 10, 2016

PML-N’s central working committee reiterated its resolve to continue support to people of Occupied Kashmir. Nawaz Sharif chaired meeting of PML-N’s central working party on October 10. The meeting strongly denounced the Indian atrocities on innocent Kashmiris and human rights violations. The meeting lauded the address of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the United Nations General Assembly session with a special focus on Kashmir issue. It also stated that resolution of Kashmir issue is vital for lasting peace in South Asia. The meeting strongly condemned repeated ceasefire violations by India along Line of Control. Armed forces are fully prepared to respond to any foreign aggression in a befitting manner, the meeting added. Speaking on the occasion, Nawaz Sharif stated Pakistan is committed to Kashmir cause. “No power in the world can stop us from supporting the freedom struggle of Kashmiris”, he added. He stated government is striving to overcome all the challenges including terrorism and energy shortages.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Oct-2016/rs100bn-released-for-diamer-basha-dam-pm>

“High alert: Security intensified in AJK”

The Express Tribune, October 11, 2016

Security has been intensified across Azad Jammu and Kashmir to maintain complete peace and order on

the sacred day of Ashura, the 10th of Muharaamul Haraam, falling on October 12. The AJK government has ordered adequate arrangements through deputation of additional security staff including police force headed by magistrates at all the places of worship particularly, Imambarahs and traditional routes leading to such worship places. The security alert is meant to avert any threat of terror attack on the religious gatherings. Official sources noted on October 10 that district magistrates and the district police chiefs, as well as heads of all the police stations in AJK have been directed by the state government to patrol in their respective jurisdictions to ensure peace and order in the area before and after all scheduled events during Muharramul Haraam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1196884/high-alert-security-intensified-ajk/>

“Shabbir Mir, Chief Court’s premises: G-B govt finally approves construction of new courthouse”

The Express Tribune, October 11, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan government October 10 approved Rs480 million to build a new complex for the chief court of the region. “The complex will be constructed in Jutial area,” stated Sajjadul Haq, a spokesperson for the Chief Minister’s Secretariat on October 10. He added that approval for the project had been granted by G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman. The inauguration ceremony for the new project is scheduled to be held on October 15. The chief court, which is equivalent to a high court in the rest of the country, currently operates in a building in Konodas area. A lawyer who practices in the court stated that the existing building is old and does not have enough space to meet all the requirements of the staff, judges and lawyers. Last year, the G-B government had allocated 50 Kanals of land to build the new building for the court. However, the allocated land was near an artificial forest and threatened the existence of 5,000 trees. The project was finally shelved after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also objected to the plan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1196882/chief-courts-premises-g-b-govt-finally-approves-construction-new-courthouse/>

Shabbir Mir, “Safe city project: Gilgit gets 285 security cameras to monitor streets”

The Express Tribune, October 12, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan government installed 285 high-resolution cameras with night vision capability throughout the city as part of the “safe city” project. The project was inaugurated just a day ahead of Ashura, considered to be one of the most sensitive days for the city. “We are happy that the project has been complete at the right time,” stated G-B chief minister Hafeezur Rehman after he inaugurated the project. Force commander FCNA Maj Gen Saqib Mehmood, G-B chief secretary, IGP Zafar Iqbal Awan, Minister for Works Dr Iqbal and other senior police and administration were also present on the occasion. Rehman noted that equipment for the project was procured in a transparent manner while the project was completed in just four months. The cameras, which are part of the security plan for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, have night vision capabilities, can auto focus and store recordings for up to four months. The cameras can also detect number plates of vehicles roaming in the city, even during night.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1197591/safe-city-project-gilgit-gets-285-security-cameras-monitor-streets/>

“Non-Availability of storage Facilities Cause 29 MAF Water Loss Annually”

Business Recorder, October 13, 2016

As many as 29 million acres feet (MAF) was wasted due to non-availability of water storage facilities every year. According to official sources, currently there were only two major reservoirs Tarbela and Mangla in the country to store water and no major dam was constructed in last few decades. They stated the storage capacity had also reduced due to silting. Seven studies had been carried out regarding de-silting of dams but it was very expensive process adding that the idea of de-silting could not be materialized due to cost and other factors. However, they stated various steps were taken to increase/

maintain present storage capacity of both the reservoirs for agriculture purpose. The sources stated that the government was working on a plan to construct new dams in the country and some dams were under implementation stage which would help store some 7.7 MAF water. These projects included Darwat dam, Nai Gaj dam, Kurram Tangi dam, Naulong dam and Diamer Bhasha dam, they noted. Similarly, some other projects including Pelar dam, Winder dam, Papin dam and Garuk dam were also ready for implementation which could store 6.242 MAF water. The sources further noted that recently Mangla Dam has been raised to store 2.9 MAF additional water.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/322708-non-availability-of-storage-facilities-cause-29-maf-water-loss-annually.html>

“BISP Playing Commendable Role in Poverty Alleviation: AJK President”

Business Recorder, October 14, 2016

Poverty is a curse and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is playing a commendable role in its alleviation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K). This was stated by President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Masood Khan while speaking at plenary conference during which BISP Progress Report 2014-16 was presented in the AJK capital city on October 13. The program has achieved admirable results for poverty reduction, primary enrolment and women empowerment, he added. Minister of State and Chairperson BISP MNA Marvi Memon, Deputy Speaker AJ&K Legislative Assembly Farooq Tahir, Minister for Works Chudary Aziz, Minister for Education Barrister Iftikhar Gillani, Minister for Health Dr. Najeeb Naqi, Minister Forests Mir Ali Akbar, Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Ms. Raja Noreen Arif, Secretaries of various departments, representatives of NGOs and civil society, journalists and BISP beneficiaries attended the event.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/pakistan/322813-bisp-playing-commendable-role-in-poverty-alleviation-ajk-president.html>

“Kashmir tour: Mamnoon to address AJK joint sitting today”

The Express Tribune, October 15, 2016

President Mamnoon Hussain arrived in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) for a three-day visit during which he will address the joint session of AJK Legislative Assembly and Kashmir Council on October 15. Upon his arrival in the capital city of AJK, President Mamnoon was received by AJK President Sardar Masood Khan, Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider and Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir. Soon after his arrival, he called on different delegations and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest while AJK President Masood Khan hosted a dinner in his honour. The president is to address the joint sitting which has been convened to discuss the prevailing circumstances in Kashmir. Later, the president would meet ministers of the AJK government and members of the Legislative Assembly and attend a lunch hosted by the Speaker Legislative Assembly in his honour at the Assembly compound.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1199129/kashmir-tour-mamnoon-address-ajk-joint-sitting-today/>

“Infrastructure: Bridge over Gilgit River opens”

The Express Tribune, October 15, 2016

Gilgit Baltistan Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman stated that his government is determined to complete the on-going development projects in stipulated time. This he noted while inaugurating an RCC bridge project in Gilgit on October 15. The bridge constructed over Gilgit River to connect Jutial with Karakoram International University has been completed at a cost of over 97 million rupees in seven years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1199706/infrastructure-bridge-gilgit-river-opens/>

“Senate Committee to Discuss Projects of AJK, GB”

Business Recorder, October 17, 2016

Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and

Gilgit Baltistan will be held on October 18 to discuss the ongoing development projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. During the meeting, the committee will discuss the funds allocated and released under Public Sector Development Programme for projects of AJK and Gilgit Baltistan. The Senators will also consider petition sent by Syed Muzammil Shah, ex-Senator and others regarding issues of land and encroachments in districts Mansehra and Diamer. The committee will review implementation status of the recommendations made in the previous meetings.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/323355-senate-committee-to-discuss-projects-of-ajk-gb.html>

Shabbir Mir, “CPEC windfall: Gilgit-Baltistan mulls environment tax”

The Express Tribune, October 18, 2016

In its bid to generate extra funds from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government is planning to introduce an ‘environment tax’ on transporters. “This environment tax will help us boost our revenue,” G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman informed reporters late on October 16. However, the move is easier said than done and the G-B government will have to legislate to introduce the new tax. “We will soon make laws [for it],” Rehman asserted, while adding that the revenue would be spent on environmental rehabilitation. A similar idea was floated by a Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) Senator in a meeting that members of the Senate had in G-B with local legislators to get first-hand information about CPEC. The delegation was headed by Senator Taj Haider of the Pakistan Peoples Party. “Details of how to impose this tax will be sorted out with the help of legal and environmental experts,” stated another G-B government official. Environmentalists have stated that the mountainous region will suffer due to increase in vehicular traffic after the completion of the project. “Besides omission of gases and dust, noise and noise pollution will also add to the destruction of the environment,” noted Ahmad Amir, an activist.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1201390/cpec-windfall-gilgit-baltistan-mulls-environment-tax/>

“Schools’ relocation ordered under NAP”

The Nation, October 18, 2016

Under the Nation Action Plan, the district administration ordered early relocation of the private schools and colleges situation on the Defence Road at Sector F/2 in Mirpur city. The administration issued directives to the managements of the F/2 based schools and colleges in a meeting held at the DC office with Deputy Commissioner Ansar Yaqoob in the chair. In addition to the owners and representatives of the private schools, SSP Irfan Sali, ADC Raja Farooq Akram, Assistant Commissioner Raja Qaiser Aurangzeb were also present. The district administration issued these directives to the managements of the private schools and colleges under National Action Plan. The deputy commissioner advised the managements to shift their educational institutions from the existing locations instantly. The meeting decided to hold another meeting of the managements of those F-2 main Defence Road based schools and colleges on October 10.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/18-Oct-2016/schools-relocation-ordered-under-nap>

“PPP plans protest in GB against centre”

Dawn, October 18, 2016

The opposition Pakistan People’s Party local leaders on October 17 announced to start a protest movement across Gilgit-Baltistan from November 1 against the federal government for allegedly denying GB people their due rights. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by PPP regional president Amjad Hussain at the party’s secretariat in Gilgit. PPP vice-president Jamil Ahmed and other office-bearers, including Sadia Danish, Javed Hussain, Mohammad Musa, Aftab Haider and party representatives from all the 10 districts of GB attended the meet, according to a press release. The PPP leaders stated they had decided to hold a demonstration on the GB’s Independence Day on November 1 at Danyor Gilgit to start the protest movement against the central government’s ‘apathy’ in giving the region its ‘due’ share in CPEC,

and ensuring them land ownership and constitutional rights.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1290679/ppp-plans-protest-in-gb-against-centre>

“New Transport Policy Being Prepared in AJK: Nisar”

Radio Pakistan, October 19, 2016

The AJK Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Raja Nisar Ahmed Khan stated that a New Transport Policy is being prepared in Azad Kashmir to ensure legitimate use of official vehicles. Talking to newsmen in Muzaffarabad on October 19, he noted that the Cabinet in its recent meeting has decided to prepare a new transport policy in the state. Raja Nisar Ahmed Khan noted the policy would discourage unlawful use of government vehicles throughout the state. To a question he stated local bodies’ election in the state would be held in the end of 2016.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/19-Oct-2016/new-transport-policy-being-prepared-in-ajk-nisar>

“Administrative Reforms being introduced in AJK: Haider”

Radio Pakistan, October 20, 2016

The AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan stated that administrative reforms are being introduced in Azad Kashmir to ensure the direct public participation in the functioning of the state government. He was addressing a delegation of 20th Senior Management Course of National Management College Lahore in Muzaffarabad on October 20. AJK Prime Minister stated that while only government jobs could not bring prosperity in the state other resources are also being explored in Azad Kashmir. Referring to recent Kashmir situation he stated that Kashmiris have set an unprecedented example of courage and commitment to achieve their internationally recognized right to self-determination. Raja Farooq Haider Khan stated that it is prime responsibility of the government in the base camp of Kashmir liberation struggle to highlight plight of

Kashmiris at all available international forums.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/20-Oct-2016/administrative-reforms-being-introduced-in-ajk-haider>

“Govt’s reply sought on SC’s jurisdiction over GB”

The News, October 21, 2016

The Supreme Court October 19 sought the federation’s reply on some legal and constitutional points pertaining to the jurisdiction of the apex court over the territory of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). A two-member bench of the apex court, comprising Justice Mian Saqib Nisar and Justice Iqbal Hameed-ur-Rehman, resumed hearing on six different petitions filed including Gilgit Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Bar Association, Gilgit Baltistan Bar Association and Shaheen Air International on the matter. Senior lawyers Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan and Khawaja Haris were appointed amici curie (Friends of Court) to assist the court on legal and constitutional questions raised in the petitions regarding the legal and constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan, jurisdiction of Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan and the jurisdiction of Supreme Court of Pakistan over the territory of Gilgit Baltistan.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/158718-Govts-reply-sought-on-SCs-jurisdiction-over-GB>

“False Propaganda Being Fanned against CPEC: CM Gilgit-Baltistan”

Business Recorder, October 22, 2016

Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez ur Rehman stated on October 21 that a false propaganda was being fanned against China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) while people of Gilgit Baltistan knew that they were living in stone age before the construction of Karakoram Highway. He was addressing the annual get-together of Gilgit Baltistan students at Al Raazi Hall. Punjab University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mujahid Kamran, Chairman Senate Standing Committee for Gilgit Baltistan Ashraf Sadaa, Registrar Prof Dr Liaqat Ali, President Academic Staff Association Prof Dr Sajid Rashid,

Secretary Dr Mahboob Hussain and a large number of students were present on the occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Hafiz Rehman noted that with the construction of one road, the Karakoram Highway, there had been significant change in all the sectors of the region. He further stated that India invested money to spoil Kalabagh Dam project and if the dam could have been built, the country could have benefited from it and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could have avoided flood-generated damages every year.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/324234-false-propaganda-being-fanned-against-cpec-cm-gilgit-baltistan.html>

“UKPNP urges Pakistan to withdraw its forces from Gilgit-Baltistan Muzaffarabad (POK)”

The Financial Express, October 22, 2016

Observing a “Black Day”, the United Kashmir Peoples National Party (UKPNP) urged Pakistan to hold peaceful talks with India and withdraw its forces from Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) and Kashmir. “Today is a very important day in the history of Kashmir as on 22 October 1947, Pakistan had sent its armed forces and Kabailis into Kashmir and had violated the standstill agreement. This day today is observed as black day,” UKNP leader Zamil Masood noted. “Today, our party, the United Kashmir People’s National Party, its UK branch, Europe and all Kashmiris from Pakistan demand that Pakistan remove its forces from Gilgit-Baltistan and from Azad Kashmir and should hold peaceful table talks with India. They should take the initiative by ending the proxy war and speed up efforts for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, because, a proxy war or any other kind of war is not the solution”, he added. Masood also stated that it is the 21st century and Pakistan should give rights to people and keeping their problems in mind, and should hold peaceful talks with India. People in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) are observing October 22 as a “Black Day” as it was on this day in 1947 that Pakistani Army disguised as tribal invaders had attacked the Princely undivided State of Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/uknpn-urges-pakistan-to-withdraw-its-forces-from-gilgit-baltistan-muzaffarabad-pok/426731/>

“JKUF asks people to support to Modi govt on PoK Baltistan”

Business Standard, October 22, 2016

The Jammu and Kashmir Unity Foundation (JKUF) delegates hailed the Narendra Modi government for raising the issue of PoK and Gilgit, Baltistan into the national and international focus and announced to extend its support to the cause. The delegates also resolved to mobilise world opinion about the human rights violation taking place in these areas by Pakistan. JKUF Convenor Ajaat Jamwal termed October 22 as a black day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. “We have assembled here to observe October 22 as black day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir as on this day in 1947, Pakistan invaded the state and captured one-third of its territory,” he stated.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/jkuf-asks-people-to-support-to-modi-govt-on-pok-baltistan-116102200791_1.html

Muhammad Saleem, “GB heaps praise on Shahbaz, PITB flagship projects”

Business Recorder, October 22, 2016

Gilgit Baltistan (GB) government will replicate e-vaccination, Punjab’s Safe City and police projects to eradicate polio, terrorism and crime. The Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman noted this during his visit to the Punjab IT Board (PITB) on October 21. The Chairman PITB Dr Umar Saif, who is also vice-chancellor of IT University Lahore, briefed him on the diverse ICT interventions initiated in Punjab. Hafeez was acquainted with ICT interventions in the fields of education, health, law & order, e-governance and citizen facilitation services. Talking to media, Hafeez thanked PITB and Punjab government for extending generous support towards Gilgit Baltistan. He noted, “The modern technology has brought change in almost every sector of the Punjab government and we hope that they will equally be helpful in GB. We want to make GB free from polio, crime, disease, illiteracy and terrorism and looking forward towards the Punjab government

to assist us through flagship projects of PITB.” He also stated the GB government is already working in collaboration with the Punjab government in many fields. “I am highly inspired by the Chief Minister Punjab Shahbaz Sharif and seek guidance from him to make GB more efficient. The work done by Punjab government in e-Governance is remarkable for that other provinces are benefiting from it.”

<http://www.brecorder.com/it-a-computers/206/95689/>

“AJK business community wants COAS to stay”

The Nation, October 24, 2016

Continuation of the incumbent COAS in service for an indefinite period is imperative to the national interest at this crucial juncture, AJK business community opined. Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajran (Ittehad Group) Mirpur President Ch Mahmood Hussain vehemently suggested the government to grant extension in service of Army Chief Gen Raheel Shareef. Talking to media men, he noted that in view of the prevailing extraordinary situation, Pakistan is faced with multifarious challenges both at internal and external fronts. “Grant of due extension in the service of the Army Chief is need of the hour in the greatest interests of the nation and country - especially at a time when war against terrorism is nearing its logical end under the dynamic leadership of Gen Raheel Shareef,” he pointed out.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/24-Oct-2016/ajk-business-community-wants-coas-to-stay>

“MPs body seeks details of evacuation, transmission plan”

The Nation, October 27, 2016

The Parliamentary Committee on CPEC asked the Ministry of Water and Power to provide details of the evacuation and transmission plan for power projects being executed under the corridor. This was disclosed by Chairman Parliamentary Committee on CPEC, Mushahid Hussain, while talking to newsmen after the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of

the CPEC. Mushahid noted that Gilgit-Baltistan was being fully included in CPEC through eco-friendly economic projects and an economic zone will be established in Gilgit Baltistan. He also stated that the committee was briefed on the projects of Western Route and it was as per the decisions of the 28 May All Parties Conference.” We have asked the ministry to provide complete evacuation plan for the CPEC energy projects in the next meeting of the committee,” he maintained. Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman, while talking to media noted on the occasion that the parliamentary committee has assured him that the province will be fully incorporated in the project and they will get the same treatment as per the other four provinces. “I was assured that GB will also get an Economic Zone and other projects,” he added.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/27-Oct-2016/mps-body-seeks-details-of-evacuation-transmission-plan>

Shabbir Mir, “Pens down: G-B clerks continue sit-in to demand promotions”

The Express Tribune, October 27, 2016

Hundreds of clerks working in various government departments across Gilgit-Baltistan continued their sit-in on October 26, demanding promotions and an increase in perks and privileges. The call for a pen-down strike, given by the G-B Clerks Association, a body representing more than 2,000 members, has affected official work. “God-willing, we will continue this strike until a notification is issued in our favour,” noted president of the association, Bahadur Khan. “We have suffered a lot, but are determined to get our rights at all costs,” Khan informed the media at the secretariat in Gilgit where the protest continued. Khan further stated that their demands included promotions and the associated financial benefits as afforded to clerks in the rest of the country. “Despite court orders, which were in favour of the clerks, the government failed to implement them,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1211424/pens-g-b-clerks-continue-sit-demand-promotions/>

“Work on Gilgit-Skardu Road to be Initiated Soon: CM”

Radio Pakistan, October 27, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman stated that work on Gilgit-Skardu road would be initiated soon to provide better travelling facilities to the people. Talking to media in Islamabad on October 27, he noted the Tender of this project will be opened on October 28. Hafiz-ur-Rehman further stated that some parts of four bridges to be set up on Indus River will be imported from USA and 160 km long road project would be completed within three years.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/27-Oct-2016/work-on-gilgit-skardu-road-to-be-initiated-soon-cm>

Shabbir Mir, “CPEC project: PPP vows to protect land of G-B locals”

The Express Tribune, October 28, 2016

Pakistan Peoples Party on October 27 vowed to launch a movement to ‘protect’ the land of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) which could be “illegally” snapped up for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). “Under the law, the land belongs to locals, but the government does not recognise that,” noted PPP G-B President Amjad Hussain. He was referring to some land allotted for the CPEC project in the region. In Diamer district of G-B, the government had already allocated a substantial piece of land for the Pakistan Army to establish its headquarters and ensure security for the multibillion dollar project. However, the government reportedly identified a large chunk of barren land in Gilgit and Diamer districts for CPEC-related projects. To quell the unease surrounding the news, G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman recently stated that owners of these lands would be paid as per market rates as and when a decision comes from the court.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1212538/cpec-project-ppp-vows-protect-land-g-b-locals/>

“Energy Needs: G-B govt set to harness hydropower”

The Express Tribune, October 30, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman noted the government is taking measures to harness potential in hydropower sector to overcome energy shortage. Talking to a delegation in Gilgit on October

28, he noted the provincial government has prepared feasibility report for production of 388 megawatt hydropower in Gilgit-Baltistan. The CM also stated a regional grid is being set up to ensure smooth distribution of electricity.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1214673/energy-needs-g-b-govt-set-harness-hydropower/>

Economics Developments

MA Mir, “Revenue wars: AJK cabinet blocks council from collecting duties”

The Express Tribune, October 18, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Cabinet decided on October 17 to stop the Kashmir Council from collecting the general sales tax (GST) and excise duty in the region. However, Kashmir Council can collect the other taxes. The decision has been taken in the wake of the AJK government’s plans to establish its own department to collect these taxes. The taxation and excise departments in AJK are directly controlled by the federal government through Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan. “The AJK government will establish its own department to collect GST and excise duty to increase its income,” noted Finance Minister Dr Najeeb Naqi and Information Minister Mustaq Minhas while briefing the media after a cabinet meeting. The cabinet, presided over by Prime Minister Farooq Haider Khan, also decided to privatise the recently built Prime Minister House, which was constructed at a cost of Rs700 million under the Urban Development Programme in earthquake-hit area of Muzaffarabad.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1201392/revenue-wars-ajk-cabinet-blocks-council-collecting-duties/>

“GB-Xinjiang Cooperation to Usher in New Chapter in CPEC: Ahsan”

Business Recorder, October 18, 2016

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal stated on October 18 that cooperation between Gilgit-Baltistan and Xinjiang province of China in different fields would usher in new chapter in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework. Talking to Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeez ur Rehman, he noted, both Gilgit-Baltistan and Xinjiang province needed cooperation in education, health and tourism. The

minister further stated, the government was working to improve living standards of people in remote areas. During the meeting, the progress on ongoing development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan was reviewed.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/323533-gb-xinjiang-cooperation-to-usher-in-new-chapter-in-cpec-ahsan.html>

“Developing G-B: Govt plans infrastructure upgrade”

The Express Tribune, October 23, 2016

The federal government allocated billions of rupees for development projects like hospitals and universities in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). An official of the ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan stated the government was taking revolutionary steps for developing the area. He also stated the government was planning to establish a cardiology centre at the G-B University in Skardu. The official noted that the government was all set to announce a 30-year Forest Working Plan, Timber Policy and Tourist Policy for the region with the collaboration of G-B Council. He further stated the high level officials were reviewing the development schemes announced by G-B Council for clearance of funds. Renovation of Skardu airport was in progress and feasibility report for widening of Gilgit airport had been prepared, the official noted. He also stated the government had acquired land for Diamer-Bhasha Dam to meet the energy crisis in the country.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1206961/developing-g-b-govt-plans-infrastructure-upgrade/>

“8 under-construction projects in AJK, GB, Balochistan to revive tourism: PTDC”

Pakistan Observer, October 24, 2016

Ch. Abdul Ghafoor Khan, MD PTDC visited the under construction project of PTDC Motel at

Hawksby, Karachi while talking to the media, he noted that PTDC Motel Project at Hawksby will be completed soon, which will have 14 rooms, restaurant and other allied facilities for visiting local and foreign tourist. He also stated Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation's (PTDC) Eight major development projects across the country are nearing completion, the under construction projects located in Gwadar, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan,

Balochistan would help revive tourism sector in the country. The Azad Jammu and Kashmir projects would be completed at a cost of around Rs25 million, while Tourist Facilitation Centre in Gilgit-Baltistan would cost around Rs20 million.

<http://pakobserver.net/8-under-construction-projects-in-ajk-gb-balochistan-to-revive-tourism-ptdc/>

International Developments

“Former AJK PM to lead million march in Brussels for IHK people”

The News, October 4, 2016

Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and President Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Azad Kashmir) Barrister Sultan Mahmood announced on October 3 to stage a million march in Brussels (Belgium) on October 27. He stated after million marches in London, New York, it was necessary to hold a million march in Brussels. “The million march in Brussels on October 27 is imperative because of India’s naked aggression in occupied Kashmir and Modi government’s war hysteria,” he told a press conference. Sultan Mahmood noted he would himself lead the million march while similar protest rallies would be held in London, New York and other cities of the world. He also stated, the basic objective of this million march was to prepare the Kashmiris living on both sides of Kashmir to demolish Line of Control (LoC) like the Berlin Wall. Therefore, on that day, there should be a million march on both sides of Line of Control and Kashmir could cross LoC any time.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/154759-Former-AJK-PM-to-lead-million-march-in-Brussels-for-IHK-people>

“PoK Gilgit expats protest in London against terror camps, Pakistan aided cross-border terrorism”

Business Standard, October 12, 2016

The diaspora community from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including Gilgit and Baltistan, staged protests outside the Pakistan High Commission in London on October 9 and demanded that terror camps operating in PoK and Gilgit must shut down. The demonstration was organised to attract the world’s attention to issues concerning Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The main focus of the protest was to

highlight the presence of terrorist camps of the banned Jamaat-ud-Dawa and the Hizbul Mujahideen in the region. The demonstrators demanded a dismantling of the terror infrastructure in the region. They also urged the Pakistan Army to leave PoK and Gilgit Baltistan. Pakistan was also urged to stop cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, restore democracy in PoK and release political prisoners like Baba Jaan. The protesters demanded a free and independent investigation into the murder of former All Party National Alliance Chief Arif Shahid and called for the suspension of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which they claimed will adversely affect the region’s environment and only create jobs for Pakistanis and Chinese. They stated that the CPEC should be suspended until a consensus is built. The PoK and Gilgit Baltistan diaspora resolved to carry on with their protests until world reacts appropriately and urgently to end the ongoing atrocities in the region.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/pok-gilgit-expats-protest-in-london-against-terror-camps-pakistan-aided-cross-border-terrorism-116101200078_1.html

“India opposes Pakistan’s project in Gilgit-Baltistan”

Times of India, October 14, 2016

In what could raise eyebrows at the ongoing meeting of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in South Korea, India on October 13 opposed one of Pakistan’s climate projects in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of that country. The project is meant to reduce the risk of floods caused by bursting glacial lakes. India, however, is not opposed to Pakistan’s other climate projects and argued that its opposition to the particular project was because it was “flawed” and may lead to disastrous consequences in the region. Dinesh Sharma, special secretary in the finance ministry noted during his submission that the region had seen 900-odd lake bursts in the past two decades and it

was ecologically too fragile to sustain the project. Sharma noted that the project's success was predicated on there being no glacial outbursts during its five-year tenure, which was unlikely considering the frequency of such outbursts in the region. The project, if cleared, will be funded by the GCF, a multilateral fund under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-opposes-Pakistans-project-in-Gilgit-Baltistan/articleshow/54842160.cms>

“Foreign missions: Pakistan to set up special Kashmir Desk”

Business Recorder, October 14, 2016

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan stated that all political forces in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan are unanimous for the cause of Kashmir and his government would make all possible efforts to highlight the issue at international level. Speaking at the All-Parties Kashmir Co-ordination Council on October 13, he stated India fabricated the story of surgical strike. Haider lauded the role of Pakistani Government, armed forces, media and civil society in highlighting the Kashmir issue. Kashmiri political leadership and others have requested Pakistan to establish special Kashmir Desk at all the foreign missions.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/93190/>

“AJK President embarks on weeklong visit to UK, Norway”

Business Recorder, October 23, 2016

The president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan on October 22 left for the United Kingdom (UK). During his stay in London he will have meetings with MPs, MEPs, Members House of Lords, renowned think tanks and address gatherings of Pakistani and Kashmiris community. President Masood Khan would meet Members of All Party

Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Kashmir and participate in Youm-e-Tasees of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Kashmir Black day events, a statement noted. He will address a Kashmir Women Conference at British Parliament and talk to the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London a renowned think tank. He has scheduled meetings with Baroness Saeeda Warsi, Ex Minister, Mark Lyle Grant National Security Advisor and Mayor of London Muhammad Sadiq besides his meetings with local mayors, Councillors, MPs and MEPs.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/95959/>

“AJK PM to be chief guest at ‘Kashmir-EU Week’”

Pakistan Observer, October 30, 2016

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Raja Farooq Haider Khan, will participate as chief guest in the upcoming “Kashmir EU-Week” at the European Parliament. The Kashmir Council European Union (KCEU) would launch the week long programme on Kashmir from November 7, 2016. The programme, which would continue till November 11, is being hosted by member EU Parliament (MEP), Dr Sajjad Karim. The KCEU Chairman, Ali Raza Syed, chaired a meeting of the Council to review the whole programme of the Kashmir EU-Week. During the meeting, it was announced that along with the AJK Prime Minister, the Senior Minister of AJK, Chaudhary Tariq Farooq, would also attend the Kashmir EU-Week. The ‘Kashmir EU-Week’ would be comprised of an international conference, seminars, debates, a workshop, video casting of a documentary and a photos and handicraft exhibition on Kashmir. The programme is being organised by KCEU in collaboration with other EU-based Kashmiri organisations and a large people specially members of European parliament, experts, intellectuals, human rights activists and scholars from Europe, US, Canada, Pakistan, AJK and Indian Kashmir would attend the programme.

<http://pakobserver.net/ajk-pm-to-be-chief-guest-at-kashmir-eu-week/>

Other Developments

“People Suffer Due To Huge Power Crisis in Gilgit Baltistan”

Bihar Prabha, October 5, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan is experiencing acute power shortages. Load shedding and power breakdowns are routine and result in disruption of businesses, educational institutions and other health facilities. Students face the brunt particularly as their studies are affected badly. The existing power plants and their capacity of power generation are on the decline and the shortfall is widening. The local administration has consistently failed in delivering up to the promises. And due to government’s lack of interest, the region’s resources have not been optimally utilized. Adding to this, none of the power projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been announced for the region.

<http://news.biharprabha.com/2016/10/people-suffer-due-to-huge-power-crisis-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

Shabbir Mir, “Food insecurity: Why should we grow crops, ask Gilgit farmers”

The Express Tribune, October 17, 2016

While sprawling buildings and urbanisation may have left little land for farming in Gilgit city, provision of wheat on subsidised prices has dealt a double blow to agriculture in the mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan region which is fast losing its breadbaskets. The region, where hardly two per cent of land is arable but has a teeming population of over 1.4 million people, is in danger of facing acute food shortages especially in the wake of another natural calamity such as the creation of the Attabad Lake or if Islamabad decides to withdraw the massive subsidy it provides for wheat. “We used to harvest wheat and maize until a decade ago,” recalls Muhammad Ayub, a former farmer who lives in Kashrote area of Gilgit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1200344/food-insecurity-grow-crops-ask-gilgit-farmers/>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“Value the Sacrifices of the People of Gilgit-Baltistan”

Daily Salaam, October 2, 2016

Few days ago a Pakistani soldier was martyred on LoC by Indian shelling. He was from Skardu. We the people of the region yet again proved that we are ready to sacrifice our lives for Pakistan. Before that we fought in the Kargil war, 1971 and 1965 wars. We gave our blood to defend Pakistani territory. Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman while condemning Indian aggression on the border stated that people of the region are prepared to sacrifice for the protection of Pakistan. People of Gilgit-Baltistan have offered their full support to the Pakistani military against India. After fighting against Dogras, we wholeheartedly joined Pakistan. But unfortunately the leaders did not value our sacrifices. Instead of giving us full constitutional rights, leaders of Pakistan put us in a limbo. Sometimes they made us part of unresolved Kashmir issue and sometimes a quasi-independent entity without rights. Even after 70 years we do not have voting rights. We have no representation in the National Assembly and the Senate. It is a matter of shame that we are not even included in NFC award. Our leaders should take note of the sacrifices we rendered for Pakistan. It is the right time to give us constitutional and political rights. It is time to integrate to Gilgit Baltistan with Pakistan. It is the time to announce that Gilgit-Baltistan is an integral part of Pakistan. Leaders at the top should make it clear to the rest of the world that Gilgit-Baltistan is a jugular vein of Pakistan. When India can give representation to the people of Ladakh, Kargil and Kashmir in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha then what is stopping Pakistan from giving the people of GB representation in the National Assembly and the Senate.

<http://www.dailysalam.com/index.php>

“Five Nationalists Booked Under Terrorism Act”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, October 5, 2016

Ghizer police booked several nationalists under Terrorism Act for publishing anti-national literature. According to the Ghizer police, official anti-Pakistan literature, pamphlets, and books have been recovered from many nationalist elements who were apprehended recently. These nationalist are misleading the youth of Gilgit-Baltistan. These anti-national elements are playing in the hands of external enemy.

<http://epaper.pknewspapers.com/daily-baadeshimal.html>

“Gilgit-Baltistan has no share in CPEC: Deputy Speaker”

Daily Salaam, October 10, 2016

Deputy Speaker of Legislative Assembly of Gilgit Baltistan Jafferul Khan noted that Centre has fixed 72 billion budget for Gilgit-Baltistan. He further noted that Gilgit-Baltistan has no share in the CPEC. According to Khan, they came to know about it in China that Gilgit Baltistan has no share in the CPEC. During his recent visit to China, Khan noted that the Chinese officials did not share anything regarding Gilgit-Baltistan’s role in the CPEC. The federal ministers are discussing these issues only verbally. There is nothing in written or concrete for Gilgit-Baltistan. Khan further stated that the first feasibility study will be done and then it would be decided what type of projects and infrastructure Gilgit-Baltistan could get from the CPEC.

<http://www.dailysalam.com/index.php>

“Bang-e-Sahar Chief editor in Police Custody”

Daily Slaam, October 14, 2016

The Chief Editor of Daily Bang-e-Sahar published

in Gilgit surrendered to police. An arrest warrant was issued in his name. Since then, he was hiding from the police. He later surrendered to the Gilgit police. He is been accused of publishing anti-Pakistan literature. However, the daily newspaper Bang-e-Sahar was banned from publishing in mid-September 2016. Both print and electronic publication of this newspaper has been banned.

<http://www.dailysalam.com/index.php>

“Constitution Committee Report”

Daily Salaam, October 18, 2016

According to media reports, a Constitution Committee spearheaded by Sartaj Aziz has finally completed the report and has handed over the report to Nawaz Sharif. According to some media sources close to the PM house, it is believed that the report does not contain anything important for Gilgit-Baltistan. Gilgit-Baltistan is not being made a province of Pakistan. Also, there is nothing like Kashmir type setup or a special status. In the report, emphasis has been laid to transfer the Gilgit-Baltistan Council powers to the Chief Minister of the region and the Legislative Assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan. Probably powers of Chief Minister would be enhanced. He would be made at par with the chief ministers of the other provinces. He would have the power of appointing and transferring officials.

<http://www.dailysalam.com/index.php>

“Constitutional Rights: People only want to become a Province”

Baad-e-Shimal, October 25, 2016

Legislative Assembly Speaker Fida Mohammad Nishad stated if aspirations of Gilgit-Baltistan are not

taken into consideration, constitutional rights would be a farce. In conversation with the media, he noted that both the Legislative Assembly and people are on the same page. We want to become a constitutional province. As a Speaker I will never entertain any other setup except for a full provincial status for the region. Nishad also stated that he is hopeful that federal government would look into matter and take all stake holders on board before taking a decision. If we are not given full provincial rights not only will it disappoint us but will not be a good omen for the centre. It makes no sense if aspirations of people are not taken into consideration. We should not be comparing Gilgit-Baltistan with Kashmir or Azad Kashmir. Here people of Gilgit-Baltistan have unanimity on becoming a province whereas in Azad Kashmir few want independence and few want to join Pakistan. After partition of the subcontinent, Muslims had a right to decide their future. Therefore, we should also be given opportunity to decide our future. We want our rights, they should be given to us. We want representation in the National Assembly and Senate so that we could represent our views. We want to be treated at par with other provinces. Since long we have been given excuses that Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be made a province without resolving the Kashmir issue. We also heard that provisional provincial setup would be given. However, now we also hear that the proposed setup would affect the Kashmir issue. It seems that till the Kashmir issue is not resolved, Gilgit Baltistan will not get constitutional identity. We gave sacrifices for Pakistan and we want is to become a province in return.

<http://epaper.pknewspapers.com/daily-baadeshimal.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. 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 abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

POK NEWS DIGEST



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