

POK

News Digest

Volume 5 | Number 1 | January 2012

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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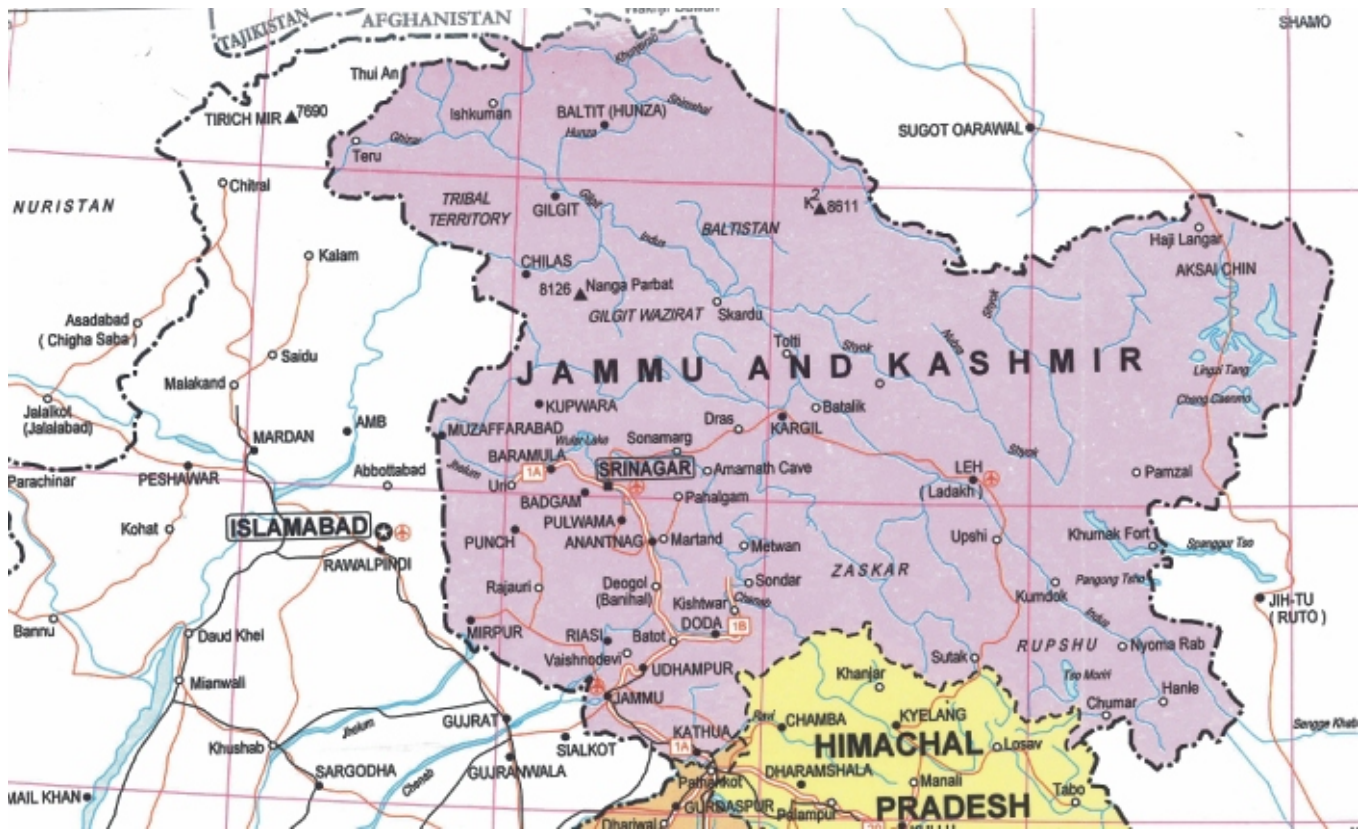
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

We wish all our readers a very happy and prosperous New Year! We also wish to thank you for your continued patronage and support. We are currently running in the fifth volume of the digest and on this occasion, we are presenting the PoK News Digest in a completely new look. Hope this liked by the readers.

In this edition, a great deal of focus has been laid on the controversial Diamer Bhasha dam situated in Gilgit Baltistan. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) which is supposed to lead the funding consortium held intense discussions with the WAPDA(Water and Power Development Authority) raising several pertinent pending issues such resettlement of displaced population, the resolution of the boundary dispute between Gilgit Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa etc. There were reports noting the ADB was initially reluctant to engage in the Diamer Bhasha project due to these problems. However, it later agreed to provide technical and financial supports to the project even though the agreement between ADB and the WAPDA is yet to be formalised in the form of an MoU.

China too has reportedly agreed to give \$ 4 billion towards the Diamer Bhasha project. The assistance would include financing of several components in the massive hydel project as stated in one of the reports included in the issue.

India has raised objections to the external financing of a dam which is located in a territory under Pakistan's unlawful control. Since objections in the past have failed to deter multilateral institutions such as the ADB and China to involve in a controversial project in PoK, India needs to make its stance on the issue more pronounced. And this is possible only if a more forthright and robust policy on PoK is formulated especially keeping in view recent developments across LoC.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Bhasha dam to prove milestone in energy sector: Kiramat

Pakistan Observer

PESHAWAR: Speaker, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kiramatullah Khan stated that launching work on Diamer-Bhasha Dam is a milestone in the development of energy sector in Pakistan, saying that after Turbela and Mangla power projects, the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam reflects the fulfillment of commitment by the PPP with the nation. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the Standing Committee on Power and Energy, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the conference room of the Assembly Building in Peshawar.

Those present on the occasion included chairman of the standing committee, Malik Badshah Saleh, member of the provincial assembly, Mufti Stated Janan, secretary assembly, Amanullah Khan, Special Secretary, Attaullah Khan and senior officials of Sarhad Hydropower Organization (SHYDO).

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=131139>

No possibility of change without exercise of right of ballot: Kaira

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 14, 2011

MIRPUR: Secretary Information Pakistan Peoples Party and former federal minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira stated that vote is the only way for bringing about any change in the country. "There is no possibility of any change in the country without the exercise of the right of franchise," Kaira stated while speaking at a ceremony in Mirpur, in connection with the election campaign for the office bearers of Pakistan Engineering Council. AJK Minister for electricity Arshad Hussain presided over the ceremony.

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

=view&id=170051&Itemid=1

AH Nizami, Bridging gaps: AJK to launch Mirpur-Birmingham bus service in 2012

The Express Tribune, December 19, 2011

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) announced that its Mirpur city will directly be linked by road with the United Kingdom through a direct bus service between the city and Birmingham by the beginning of 2012. The new road route was disclosed by AJK Transport Minister Tahir Khokher while addressing a news conference at the Kashmir Press Club in Mirpur on December 18. Khokher stated that the proposed Mirpur-Birmingham bus service would be plied from Mirpur which has a significant population of UK-based Kashmiri expatriates via Quetta and Tehran (Iran) to the UK.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/308625/bridging-gaps-ajk-to-launch-mirpur-birmingham-bus-service-in-2012/>

Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Srinagar vs Muzaffarabad - True perspective

The Frontier Post, December 18, 2011

Those who have been closely watching the activities and writings of Dr Syed Nazir Gilani know it well that he has proved himself a useful pawn for Indian intelligence agencies. The objectives have been to discredit the Kashmir liberation movement, distract Kashmiris' attention away from their just cause and create disillusionment about Pakistan amongst the Kashmiri people. An example that can be quoted in this regard is Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani's latest writing; Srinagar v Muzaffarabad that is not more than a jumble of inaccuracies and blatant bias. The writer has raised many issues triggering doubts about the suitability of the AJK constitution of 1974, civil liberties and political authority in AJK, Kashmiris' participation in the legislation of the territory, the

way elections are being conducted, Pakistan governing AJK as its colony and the responsibilities of the Government of Pakistan under the UNCIP resolutions.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=93253>

Syed Nazir Gilani, An unimpressive manner

People of the State of Jammu and Kashmir are distributed under three administrations on either side of Line of Control (Cease Fire Line). The common character that binds them as a nation or as a legal person is the State Subject Law of 20 April 1927. Prime Minister of AJK has responded to my column published on 24 October 2011 and in fact is the first article contributed by any Prime Minister of AJK in any newspaper published from J & K. The effort made by Chaudhry Abdul Majeed is a good beginning in reaching out to people on the other side of LOC. Unfortunately he has failed to make a case on merit and has misquoted facts. I would restrain myself to the substantive merits of his opinions on Emma Nicholson's report on Kashmir and the comparisons of the preambles of the Constitutions of AJK and J & K.

http://www.kashmirobservers.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9862:an-unimpressive-manner-&catid=8:opinion&Itemid=9

Two permanent judges appointed in AJK Supreme Court

Business Recorder, December 17, 2011

Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan and sitting Adhoc Judge of AJK Supreme Court Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Zia on December 16 was sworn in as permanent judges of the apex court. Chief Justice of the AJK SC Justice Muhammad Azam Khan administered the oath to both the newly-appointed judges in a special ceremony held in the Supreme Court building Muzaffarabad. A senior officer of AJK Law Department earlier read the official notification about the appointment of the two judges.

Judges of the superior and subordinate judiciary including Chief Justices of AJK High Courts Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, Justice Chaudhry Munir

Hussain, former Chief Justice of AJK Supreme Court Justice Manzoor Hussain Gillani, senior lawyers from various parts of Pakistan and AJK, ministers, members of AJK Legislative Assembly, senior officials of AJK government, prominent social and political personalities and other dignitaries attended the ceremony.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/single/599/172/1261716/>

British Parliamentarians asked to help resolve Kashmir issue

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Former AJK Prime Minister and PPP (Azad Kashmir) Central Leader Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary stressed upon the British Parliament to exert pressure on their government to help resolve Kashmir issue as it was left unresolved by Britain in 1947. "Although, the British Parliamentarians have always intended to help resolve this issue but now the time has come to fully raise this issue at the world level," he made these remarks while addressing the All Parties Kashmir Committee in House of Commons of the British Parliament in London.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_search&Itemid=5

Shahbaz Rana, Diامر-Bhasha Dam: ADB asks govt to focus on people, not just water, power

The Express Tribune, December 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: While Pakistan frets over megawatts generated and million acre feet of water stored, the lead financier of the Diامر-Bhasha Dam says the country should focus on social aspects of the affected population and address issues of environmental degradation and revenue sharing between contesting territories.

With an estimated price tag of \$11.2 billion, the project is planned to be completed in 12 years. It will generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity, besides storing 8.5 million-acre-feet of water for agriculture purposes. Satisfactory resettlement "Pakistan has not been focusing on social aspects of

the project as much as one could hope,” stated Rune Stroem, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Head of Energy Division on December 13.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/306215/diamer-bhasha-dam-adb-asks-govt-to-focus-on-people-not-just-water-power/>

Javaid Hayat, Empowering Azad Kashmir

December 13, 2011

Nation-states are recognized by the international community as sovereign states as per the 'Westphalian sovereignty' concept. Notwithstanding, there are political entities on the world map, which are mostly driven by conflict or crisis and disputed or tangibly controlled by external powers. The Azad state of Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) is one of them. Defining AJK in a legal and constitutional context under United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolutions on Kashmir and in international relations remain a dilemma. At the time of the formation of the Republic of Azad Kashmir on 24 October, which intended a transition from autocracy to democracy, the provisional government of Azad Kashmir made a declaration that “The new government represents the united will of Jammu and Kashmir State. The provisional government entertains sentiments of the utmost friendliness and goodwill towards its neighbouring dominions of India and Pakistan and hopes that both the dominions will sympathise with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their efforts to exercise their birth right of political freedom. The provisional government is further anxious to safeguard the identity of Jammu and Kashmir as a political entity”.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/12/empowering-azad-kashmir/>

Petition, in GB Chief Court, to Challenge Exploration License to Mohsin Industries

Dardistan Times, December 13, 2011

The Chief Court of Gilgit-Baltistan has admitted a Writ Petition on December 12 for regular hearing wherein the issuance of Exploration Licenses to Mohsin Industries by the Government of Gilgit-

Baltistan has been challenged; a Press note, released by Sargin Law Associates, stated. The petitioners, M/S Pan Euro International, Bilchar Trade International and Skardu Gems and Minerals, have objected that the issuance of licenses to the Hong Kong based company is 'illegal, unlawful and against national interest'.

The Petitioners charged that Explorations Licenses to Mohsin Industries is an abuse of process, act of discrimination and encroachment on local property rights. The government of Gilgit-Baltistan has ignored several applications submitted by local, national and international companies including those of the petitioners pending for the last three years. While, issuing the licenses to Mohsin Industries, the government has shown extra legal and judicial leniency.

The petitioners charge that in the matter of issuance of the Exploration Licenses, the fundamental rights of the local people granted in the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009 have been violated. The petitioners also contend that the GB government has betrayed its own Cabinet decision that has sought ban on issuance of exploration licenses and mining leases until further orders.

On June 7th this year, the GB Legislative Assembly has passed a resolution that sought an immediate ban exploration and export of precious mineral resources from the region. But the government continued contravening the GB Rules of Business (2009) too.

The petition pointed out the gross violations of Northern Areas Mining Concession Rules 2003 that, according to the petitioners, has been committed by the Mineral Department of Gilgit Baltistan. The petition further contends that Wang Zunyu's application was processed and approved through extra-ordinary processes despite his application being defective and incomplete. More than 200 other applications, including those of the petitioners, passed through nobody's table.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/petition-gb-chief80-court-challenge22exploration-license-mohsin1-industries>

Sajid Chaudhry, Diامر-Bhasha Dam project: ADB suggests Pak resolve revenue sharing

Daily Times, December 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB), the lead financier of the Diامر-Bhasha Dam on December 13 suggested Pakistan to focus on resolution of revenue sharing issue between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) as well as affected population and address issues of environment degradation for smooth execution of the mega project.

ADB's Head of Energy Division Rune Stroem while speaking to a select group of journalists along with the ADB's Country Director to Pakistan Werner Liepach after conclusion of his visit to Pakistan aimed at 'critically reviewing the mega project'. He stated, "ADB is fully aware that there will be strong debate on revenue sharing and ADB can give advice but at the end the issue will have to be decided by the Council of Common Interests." The KP government is disputing over the ownership of 18 kilometres long belt with GB government in a bid to get share in income from the power generation. The GB legislative assembly has passed the resolution against the provincial government claim and intends to take the matter to the Supreme Court if it is not amicably resolved.

"Pakistan has not been focusing on social aspects of the project as much as one could hope," Stroem noted and added that the success of the project hangs on local people satisfaction with resettlement activities. "The resettlement work has been done but still there are gaps where the government needs to bring in improvement as per international standards," he added.

Explaining the gaps, Stroem noted individual activities were going on at relatively small scale and lots of pilot projects have been initiated. He further stated that the legal dispute over sharing of revenues between GB and KP has to be worked through and on environment no sufficient work has been done yet.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C12%5C14%5Cstory_14-12-2011_pg5_9

Zafar Bhutta, Spiralling cost: PM reconstitutes Neelum-Jhelum project board

The Express Tribune, December 13, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani has reconstituted board of directors of Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Company, a special purpose vehicle created for executing the project whose cost has escalated to Rs330 billion from Rs130 billion because of delay in work and modification in design after the 2005 earthquake, sources noted. Under the restructuring, chief secretary of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and a representative of the finance ministry have been made board members of the strategic 960-megawatt hydropower project.

The prime minister gave the directives for reconstituting the board during a briefing by the Ministry of Water and Power on the project at the Prime Minister's House on December 12.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/305660/spiralling-cost-pm-reconstitutes-neelum-jhelum-project-board/>

Shabbir Mir, Diامر-Bhasha Dam: G-B opposition backs govt over boundary issue

The Express Tribune, December 13, 2011

GILGIT: Amid escalating tensions between the two neighbouring regions, the opposition leader in the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly Janbaz Khan downplayed Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's (K-P) decision to take the boundary issue to the Supreme Court, asserting that K-P has full rights to move the apex court with documented proof to establish its claim on the Diامر-Bhasha Dam. "It's not a big issue if the boundary dispute is taken to the apex court. We can also go to the Supreme Court to establish our claim on the dam," Janbaz Khan noted on December 12.

His remarks came after the K-P government earlier this week decided to take the Diامر-Bhasha Dam boundary issue to the Supreme Court after G-B's Legislative Assembly last month passed a unanimous resolution against K-P's claim over part of the dam which can displace approximately 22,000 people in 30 villages of the Diامر valley.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/305817/diامر-bhasha-dam-g-b-opposition-backs-govt-over-boundary-issue/>

AH Nizami, Lingering dispute: 'Kashmir resolution to prevent nuclear conflict'

The Express Tribune, December 10, 2011

MIRPUR: Calling for an early and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stressed that the settlement be in line with the aspirations of the people of AJK. "The early and peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute is key to speedy progress and prosperity in nuclear-armed South Asia," Majeed stated in a statement issued in Muzaffarabad. The premier observed that peace in South Asia would remain under threat until the Kashmir issue was resolved.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/304449/lingering-dispute-kashmir-resolution-to-prevent-nuclear-conflict/>

Nisar Ahmed Thokar, PaK leaders to attend conference at Allahabad

December 11, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The former speaker of PaK Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir and other leaders from PaK and Gilgit Baltistan are all set to attend a two day joint convention of "Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy" scheduled to be held from December 29 to 31, 2011, at Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. PML-N central leader Shah Ghulam Qadir stated that he had received formal invitation and would leave for India in last week of this month. He stated that he would be accompanied by other leaders of his party including the sitting legislator Showkat Ali Shah. He stated that he had not received the visa yet but his case was under process.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Dec/11/pak-leaders-to-attend-conference-at-allahabad-67.asp>

Shahbaz Rana, Diamer-Bhasha Dam: ADB agrees to provide technical, financial support

The Express Tribune, December 10, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for technical and financial cooperation in the

construction of multi-billion-dollar Diamer-Bhasha Dam. The MoU will be inked next week, stated the Ministry of Water and Power after a meeting between Water and Power Minister Naveed Qamar and the Manila-based lending agency's Director of Energy Wing Rune Stroem on December 9.

Stroem is leading a delegation to assess detailed engineering design of the dam, which will store 8.5 million acre feet of water for irrigation purposes and generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/304366/diamer-bhasha-dam-adb-agrees-to-provide-technical-financial-support/>

Controversial figure: 'Lord Nazir's entry not banned in AJK'

The Express Tribune, December 10, 2011

MIRPUR: There is no ban on the entry of Kashmir-born member of the British House of Lords, Lord Nazir Ahmed, into Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), an AJK government spokesperson stated on December 9.

"No restriction has been imposed by the AJK government," the spokesperson stated in a statement issued in Muzaffarabad. He added that Lord Nazir had started levelling baseless allegations against the AJK government and had himself created propaganda regarding a ban on his entry into AJK, merely to gain popularity, the spokesperson stated. "The Lord should refrain from hurling baseless and concocted allegations at the AJK government," he advised.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/304459/controversial-figure-lord-nazirs-entry-not-banned-in-ajk/>

Azad Kashmir, East Turkistan and Gilgit Baltistan: The Unknown Lands

December 8, 2011

BRUSSELS: Hosted by Ms. Kristiina Ojula and Jürgen Creutzmann, Members of the European Parliament, with the support of the Friends of Gilgit Baltistan in the European Parliament and the SADF, the European Parliament debated the situation of Azad Kashmir, East Turkistan and Gilgit Baltistan on December 7.

"Human rights are universal and inviolable and therefore must be secured to the inhabitants of disputed areas," Kristiina Ojulang stated. "The right of self-determination of the people of Azad Kashmir, East Turkistan and Gilgit-Baltistan may neither be ignored by the EU nor the regional major powers." Writer and human rights defender Roy Strider pointed out that Gilgit-Baltistan is being denied even the status of an official province of Pakistan. According to European principles the power games of great countries may not overrun the principles of human rights and self-determination," Roy Strider noted. "The solution would be a referendum on the independence. People must have the possibility to take decisions on their future as well as on the use of mineral and natural resources of their homeland."

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/azad-kashmir-east-turkistan-and-gilgit-baltistan-the-unknown-lands-135247823.html>

Di Amer Bhasha Dam : ADB mission discusses financial plan with Wapda

Business Recorder, December 9, 2011

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Consultation Mission, headed by the Director Energy Division Rune Stroem, visited Wapda House and had a meeting with Wapda Chairman Shakil Durrani and members of the Authority to discuss the matters relating to financing Di Amer Basha Dam Project. Experts from the USTATED and the project consultants were also present.

In his welcome remarks, the Chairman stated that Wapda is implementing several projects to cope with the increasing demand of water and electricity in the country. Among the projects, he stated, 4500 MW-Di Amer Basha Dam is vital, as this mega project will usher in accelerated socio-economic development in Pakistan. He further stated that Wapda looks forward to a close co-operation of the international financial institutions, the ADB in particular, to implement this mega project.

ADB Director Energy Division, appreciating the progress made so far on Di Amer Basha Dam Project, stated that the technical preparation of the project is quite impressive. Since the project is a major one,

there are challenges as well. The issues relating to resettlement of the affectees and the environment need further study with international consultants.

However, we hope to tackle these challenges in close co-ordination with each other, he added. During the briefing, the ADB Mission was informed that the \$12 billion Di Amer Basha Dam is a multi-purpose project with the objectives to store water for irrigation, mitigate floods and generate low-cost and environment-friendly hydel electricity.

On completion, the project will store 8.1 million-acre feet (MAF) of water besides generating 4500 MW electricity. The project will add about 20 billion units of electricity annually to the national grid. The annual benefits of the project have been estimated at about \$2.3 billion, it was further told. The Mission was informed that a sum of Rs 18 billion has been allocated in PSDP for the project during the current fiscal year.

As many as 1260 acres of land have so far been acquired for construction of Wapda offices, contractor's camp, colonies and infrastructure in the project area. The delegation was also briefed about the resettlement and financial plans of the project.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/single/624/183/1259094/>

China to provide \$4b for Di Amer Bhasha dam project

Pakistan Today, December 8, 2011

ISLAMABAD: China has assured Pakistan that it will be providing financial assistance up to \$4 billion for 4500 MW Di Amer Bhasha Dam project to be built on Indus River in Di Amer district in Gilgit-Baltistan. An official source stated assistance from China will be in the form of project financing for various components of the \$11.2 billion project. He stated assurance from China has helped expedite the project which will have gross capacity storage of 8.1 million acre feet (MAF) of water.

He stated construction activities of main project will commence from next fiscal year and will take nine years for completion. Government has allocated Rs18 billion for land acquisition during

current fiscal year. Government has also allowed the executing agency, Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) to raise funds of Rs20 billion under the government guarantee from market through TFCs or Sukuks. It will be repaid by WAPDA from its own resources.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/12/china-to-provide-4b-for-diamer-bhasha-dam-project/>

ADB discusses Bhasha Dam financial plan with WAPDA

LAHORE: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Consultation Mission visited WAPDA House on Thursday and discussed Diamer Basha Dam financial plan. The mission was headed by the Director Energy Division Rune Stroem, and had a meeting with WAPDA Chairman Shakil Durrani and Members of the Authority to discuss the matters relating to financing Diamer Basha Dam Project.

The Chairman stated that WAPDA is implementing several projects to cope with the increasing demand of water and electricity in the country. Among the projects, he stated, 4500 MW-Diamer Basha Dam is vital, as this mega project will usher in accelerated socio-economic development in Pakistan.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=186784>

Zeeshan Javaid, ADB reluctant to fund Diamer-Bhasha Dam project

Daily Times, December 9, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) seems reluctant to pledge financial assistance for the billion-dollar Diamer-Bhasha hydropower mega project having generation capacity of 4,500 megawatts (MW), because of loopholes detected in its construction including the disputed area between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) region of eight kilometres in Diamer village.

A senior official of the Ministry of Water and Power on condition of anonymity informed that Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) could not satisfy Asian Development Bank officials, while briefing over Diamer-Bhasha hydropower project with estimated cost of \$12 billion.

The ADB Consultation Mission, headed by the Director Energy Division Rune Stroem met WAPDA Chairman Shakeel Durani on December 7 to discuss matters relating to financing Diamer-Bhasha Dam project accompanied with experts from the United States Assistance for International Development (USAID).

Sources further revealed that claims of power managers regarding construction of the billion-dollar project, which was expected to start in November, went into delay because of insufficient funds as well as not to resolve the issue of disputed land between both neighbouring provinces KP and GB. The federal government is yet to resolve the differences between two neighbouring provinces GB and KP over the land dispute of Diamer village likely to cause delay in 4,500 MW Diamer-Bhasha hydropower mega project of \$12 billion.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C12%5C09%5Cstory_9-12-2011_pg5_7

Government trying to upgrade Gilgit Baltistan education sector: Abudeen

Business Recorder, December 8, 2011

Director Planning, Education department Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Muhammad Abudeen stated on December 7 that the government was trying best to upgrade education sector in the region. Talking to media persons, he stated the government is providing quality education to the students. He noted, "We have set up vocational training centre in each district of GB and offering six courses including electric wiring, house keeping, food-processing, wood work and gemstone cutting, and polishing. Massive numbers of students are getting benefits."

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/single/599/172/1258707/>

Khalid Mustafa, Power sector to gobble over 2.5pc of GDP this year

December 8, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The economic woes of the cash-starved government have multiplied as the chasm in the power sector -- that sucks 2.5 percent of GDP amounting to Rs300-350 billion every year -- has

become ever wider and deeper on account of the failure to raise power tariff by six percent under monthly fuel adjustment, a senior official at the Finance Ministry noted.

This means that the power sector will now suck more than 2.5 percent of GDP in the current financial year. In just over three years, the power sector has eaten up over Rs1 trillion, which is equal to the cost of the country's biggest future dam, Diamer-Bhasha. The failure to increase the power tariff by 2 percent surcharge from July this year and 4 percent from August this year has exposed the government to an additional loss of Rs24-30 billion so far. Likewise, the government has also been barred by the court from increasing the power tariff under fuel adjustment, which would inflict Rs5 billion per month loss if fuel prices at the world market remains at the existing level.

He stated, "We have set up vocational training centre in each district of GB and offering six courses including electric wiring, house keeping, food-processing, wood work and gemstone cutting, and polishing. Massive numbers of students are getting benefits."

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=10839&Cat=13>

International conspiracy underway against Pakistan: AJK PM

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 6, 2011

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister (PM) Chaudhary Abdul Majeed has stated an international conspiracy is underway to destabilize Pakistan. Addressing a joint press conference on December 5, along with visiting Finance Minister of KPK Hamyun Khan and other ministers of his (AJK PM) cabinet, in PM House Muzaffarabad, he stated all the stake holders (first time ever in the history) including political leadership, armed forces and agencies were on the same page to drag Pakistan out of the intrigues. He stated the leadership and the people of Pakistan were commendable for their unity for the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=168703&Itemid=2

AH Nizami, Justice delayed and denied: No apex court for AJK litigants

The Express Tribune, December 6, 2011

MIRPUR: Owing to a number of vacancies in the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the court is yet to be constituted as prescribed under the state's constitution. Under sub-section 3 of section 42 of AJK's Interim Constitution Act 1974, the state SC comprises a chief justice and two judges. But while the court currently has a chief justice, no permanent judges have been appointed to the apex court. Only one ad hoc judge is part of the court right now. Thereby, in the constitution's language, the court does not exist.

Current AJK Chief Justice Muhammad Azam Khan took office on June 25. He was the only permanent judge when former CJ Khawaja Shahaad Ahmed retired on May 15.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/302830/justice-delayed-and-denied-no-apex-court-for-ajk-litigants/>

AH Nizami, Mangla dam raising project: Govt will honour its commitment, says Prime Minister Majeed

The Express Tribune, December 6, 2011

MIRPUR: A day after the Mangla Dam Affectees Action Committee (MDAAC) threatened to stage a long march to pressurise the government to honour its commitment with people displaced because of higher water level in the reservoir, Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) visited New Mirpur City to assure them they would get all they had bargained for.

The committee had accused the AJK government of colluding to strike down the package for rehabilitation for additional families affected by the Mangla Dam and planned a long march to the Mangla Dam powerhouse if the government failed to accede to their demands within 15 days. The protest was called off after personal assurances by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, who visited New Mirpur City to reiterate the

pledge to resettle the families at residential sites exclusively planned for them.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/302732/mangla-dam-raising-project-govt-will-honour-its-commitment-says-prime-minister-majeed/>

Shabbir Mir, Diamer-Bhasha Dam: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to take boundary dispute to apex court

The Express Tribune, December 6, 2011

GILGIT: The back-and-forth between Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan continued, as K-P decided to take the Diamer-Bhasha Dam boundary dispute to the Supreme Court on December 5. The move comes after the G-B Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous resolution against K-P's claim over part of the dam last month, sources stated.

“The decision to take recourse to the Supreme Court was taken by the K-P government after the G-B assembly passed a resolution last month rejecting K-P's claim over part of the land near the dam,” sources stated. Terming G-B's resolution 'meaningless', the K-P government noted that G-B was exceeding its limits by rejecting K-P's claim since at least eight kilometres of the land near the 4,500-MW dam belonged to K-P.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/302804/diamer-bhasha-dam-khyber-pakhtunkhwa-to-take-boundary-dispute-to-apex-court-national/>

Imran Ali Kundi, Govt releases funds for Bhasha Dam only

The Nation, December 6, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Contrary to the tall claims of government to resolve power crisis, it has released funds for a single power project out of 43 during the first five months (July-November) of the ongoing financial year 2011-12. According to documents of the Planning Commission of Pakistan, the government has released funds only for one of the mega projects Construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam project land acquisition (4500MW), among total 43 developmental projects set for the current fiscal years.

However, the government did not release single penny for other 42 power projects. According to figures, some of the power sector projects are the foreign funded and some are local funded projects.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/06-Dec-2011/Govt-releases-funds-for-Bhasha-Dam-only>

Tariq Naqash, Resolution against Lord Nazir challenged in AJK High Court

Dawn, December 3, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: A recent resolution of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) cabinet, declaring United Kingdom's first Muslim lifetime peer as 'persona non grata', was challenged in the AJK High Court, here on December 2, “for being an infraction of AJK laws and national Kashmir policy as well as a contempt for the sentiments of the Kashmiri people.”

A petition to this effect was filed by Syed Manzoor Hussain Gilani, a former judge of the AJK Supreme Court who now heads a non-governmental organisation Association for the Rights of the People of Jammu and Kashmir wherein he had arrayed the AJK chief secretary (cabinet secretary) and federal secretary for foreign affairs as real and pro-forma respondents, respectively.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/12/03/resolution-against-lord-nazir-challenged-in-ajk-high-court.html>

AJK join global campaign against gender abuse

Business Recorder, December 3, 2011

Civil Society Organisations in Azad Kashmir on December 2 urged the government to tighten laws to protect women from violence and discriminations. In order to create awareness among general masses about women rights a 16-day campaign is underway in Azad Kashmir since November 25. The campaign will end on December 10, International Human Rights Day. The 16-day campaign to end violence against women (VAW) has the theme "UNITE: Stop VAW, Now".

In a joint press conference officials of various Non-governmental organisations working for the rights

of people and human development including Press for Peace (PFP), Justice Foundation, Aurat Ki Awaz Forum - Yousaf Kashmiri, Imran Gillani, Sardar Javed Iqbal and Zahid Gillani vowed to continue joint efforts for the protection of women rights.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/single/599/172/1257438/>

Hameed Shaheen, Pak defence is faith article: AAWA

December 2, 2011

BARAL/PALLANDERI: The Al Awan Welfare Association (AAWA) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in a resolution condemned the brutal attacks of the NATO and ISAF on the two border posts of Pakistan in Mohmand Agency on November 26, 2011, declaring that the defence of Pakistan and accession of Kashmir with Pakistan are an article of faith of the Association. These twin objectives are inter-related and sacred with every Kashmiri, the resolution says passed unanimously in an urgent meeting held on December 1. Association's president Malik Abdul Majeed Awan, retired Headmaster presided and praised the post- attacks vital decisions taken by the Government of Pakistan as bold and timely measures.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/12/02/pak-defence-is-faith-article-aawa.html>

AH Nizami, Mangla dam: Affected people threaten to stage long march

The Express Tribune, December 4, 2011

MIRPUR: The Mangla Dam Affectees Action Committee (MDAAC) threatened to stage a long march towards the Mangla Dam powerhouse to pressure the authorities into accepting their demands within 15 days. The committee has accused the incumbent AJK government of conspiring to abolish the announced package for rehabilitation of additional families who have been affected by the Mangla Dam.

Speaking at a news conference at the Kashmir press club, the committee's, President Mirza Ashiq Hussain Jiraal, stated that the affected people had

called off their protest after AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed assured them that the relief package would be implemented in its entirety.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/302025/mangla-dam-affected-people-threaten-to-stage-long-march/>

Nasir Khan, Excesses against PPP will dismember Pakistan: AJK PM

December 3, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has stated that Pakistan would be dismembered if excesses were committed against Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as reported on December 3. The prime minister also stated that he had no hope in Mian Nawaz Sharif as he was the product of dictatorship. Observers are of the view that the statement is part of anti-Supreme Court campaign launched by the PPP leader Babar Awan after the apex court accepted former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's petition on memogate scandal, involving former Pakistan ambassador to US Hussain Haqqani.

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2011/12/03/pakistan-will-dismember-ajk-prime-minister/>

Government launches plan to raise fish production in dam

Business Recorder, December 4, 2011

The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has kicked off a plan to raise the production of fish in Mangla dam at least four thousand metric ton annually, stated Honorary Game Warden of Fisheries and Wild Life department AJK Ramzan Dutt Advocate. Talking to media men on December 3, he launched the fish breed in Mangla dam formally inaugurating the drive for fish breeding in the huge reservoir of the country.

Dutt stated the AJK government has already chalked out an integrated plan to meet the local demand of fish in AJK. The fish will be provide local consumers at cheap rates, he added. He stated that it is the collective responsibility of all of us to safeguard the natural resources.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/single/624/183/1257718/>

Ali Hussain, AJK government criticised for declaring Lord Nazir persona non grata

Business Recorder, December 4, 2011

PML-N Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter on December 3 lashed out at AJK government for declaring Lord Nazir Ahmad, a Kashmir born British parliamentarian, as persona non grata, and termed the move as an attempt to appease India. PML-N AJK chapter organising committee secretary Ghulam Qadir stated that the AJK government had done what India could not do. Qadir is a former speaker of AJK legislative assembly.

He strongly criticised the step in which Lord Nazir has also been threatened to revoke his nationality. Recently, Nazir has been declared "persona non grata" by AJK government cabinet reportedly due his alleged undemocratic activities with former Sindh Home Minister Zulfiqar Mirza in London and his lack of interest towards Kashmir issue and using the issue for personal gain and popularity.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/single/599/172/1257710/>

MFN status to India not to affect Kashmir stance

Pakistan Observer

LALAMUSA: Prime Minister Azad Jammu & Kashmir Chaudhry Majeed stated the Kashmir issue will not be affected by declaring India as Most Favoured Nation. Speaking at Dera Kaira, he stated the Kashmiris had been struggling for their independence for 65 years. He stated that Shahbaz Sharif could not hold elections at four polling stations for a Kashmir seat ,how he was demanding election across the country. He added that Nawaz Sharif was political grown up under the shelter of a dictator so he could not be expected as a well wisher of the country.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=128664>

Shabbir Mir, G-B to be declared tax-free zone

The Express Tribune, December 1, 2011

GILGIT: After deferring the decision of imposing

taxes in Gilgit-Baltistan due to its controversial status, the federal government has planned to declare the autonomous region as a tax-free zone with an objective to attract foreign investment. "The decision has been taken in view of G-B's disputed constitutional status which had also forced suspension of tax imposition in the region," sources stated on November 30.

In a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani held in Islamabad during October, the decision of imposing tax was deferred after the G-B government sought its share in the NFC award in return for levying taxes. However, legal experts briefed the government that G-B could not claim its share in the NFC award unless it was declared the fifth province of the country through an amendment in the constitution of Pakistan. Gilgit-Baltistan government had earlier principally decided to bring the employees earning more than Rs50,000 per month into the tax net to increase the income of the government.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/300422/g-b-to-be-declared-tax-free-zone/>

President AJ&K offers free of cost land to investors

Associated Press of Pakistan, December 14, 2011

KARACHI: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) has immense potential for new investment in various fields, President AJ&K, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan stated. He stated instead of looking towards foreign investors the business community should look towards local investors and provide them with necessary facility to invest in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

He invited business community to invest and establish industrial and power generating units in Azad Kashmir. Talking to members of Site Super Highway Association of Trade and Industry (SSHATI), he invited business community to visit Azad Kashmir to see and evaluate investment opportunities and make plan for investment. He stated that they are holding National Identity cards and Passports issued by the Government of Pakistan

and they are bonafide citizens of Pakistan under section 14-B of Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951.

He further noted “the matter being of immense importance, ECP called Attorney General to address the commission on the point and Attorney General supported the view that section 14-B of Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951 does not make a distinction between the people of AJK and therefore state citizens if they fulfill the requisite of section 6(2) of the Electoral Rolls Act, 1974 are entitled to cast their votes in any election to the National and Provincial Assemblies”. He added that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has no objection to voting by AJK domiciled individuals residing in Pakistan and holding Pakistan National Identity Cards.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=167779&Itemid=2

Funds crunch delaying Neelum-Jhelum project

Pakistan Tribune, December 26, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Neelum-Jhelum hydropower is facing serious liquidity problem, which has slowed down the pace of construction mainly because of the inordinate delay by China in releasing \$448 million credit. If funds do not come to Pakistan in the next 3-4 months, then the project would be further delayed, a senior official at the ministry of water and power told our sources.

"The Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project is likely to face Rs16 billion deficit this financial year and if the Chinese credit gets materialised it will help cope with the deficit. In the current month alone the project is facing over Rs2 billion deficit." Meanwhile, the official made the alarming disclosure that that India has become active in AJK to kill or abduct the Chinese workers so that the construction work on this vital project could come to a standstill.

Meanwhile, the official made the alarming disclosure that that India has become active in AJK to kill or abduct the Chinese workers so that the construction work on this vital project could come to a standstill. To a question, the official replied that NJHPC needs Rs32.28 billion in the current

financial year against the budgetary allocation of Rs10 billion. In the first 6 months of the current financial, about Rs13 billion have been spent and after that NJHPC is facing the deficit which needs immediate attention of the top authorities. He noted the company spends Rs6 billion collected on electricity bills as Neelum-Jhelum surcharge.

To another question, the official stated China inked the agreement to extend \$448 million loan for the said project in 2009 and promised to release the amount in 2010; now it is the end of 2011 and the NJHPC has not received the loan yet. The official further stated top-level intervention alone would help release the Chinese credit for the project of paramount importance.

<http://paktribune.com/news/Funds-crunch-delaying-Neelum-Jhelum-project-246164.html>

Sehrish Wasif, Earthquake 2005: For victims, it's a new beginning

The Express Tribune, December 29, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Six years after a devastating earthquake hit northern Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) survivors are still haunted by the tragic events of October 8 and reminisce over what they have lost. A visit to various schools and health institutions reconstructed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under The Earthquake Emergency Assistance Project (EEAP) which has been recently completed, revealed a host of issues survivors have to contend with.

“Our parents have now restricted our movement because of strangers who stare at us when we go out, which makes us feel uncomfortable and insecure,” stated Shiza, 18 and Mahnoor. Both girls study in Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Lower Chatter, Muzaffarabad, and were pleased with the new school building. They were studying in tents and attending classes in the rain was a challenge. “My city was very beautiful, it has lost all its scenic after the earthquake, however,” Shiza commented.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/313400/earthquake-2005-for-victims-its-a-new-beginning/>

Aftab Maken, Ministry seeks ECC action

The News, December 31, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan has submitted a summary with the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet for the regularisation of 9,566 Non-Custom Paid (NCP) vehicles plying in Gilgit-Baltistan, noted an available summary of the ministry.

“The cut-off date for the indexation of vehicles may be fixed as June 2011 with a grace period of one

month upto July 2011 for all Non-Custom Paid (NCP) vehicles to get indexed and avail the facility for their regularisation,” noted the summary. “The NCP vehicles may be allowed depreciation in value in the same way as is currently available to vehicles of foreign origin which are up to five years old. However, the leviable taxes may be calculated on 30 percent of depreciated value and this facility may also be available to vehicles which are more than five years old.”

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=84960&Cat=3>

Economic Developments

Reconstruction work in quake-hit AJK becomes difficult

The News, December 26, 2011

The reconstruction work in the earthquake-affected areas is facing the biggest challenge as maintenance of buildings, roads and bridges will be an uphill task owing to non-availability of flow of funds from Islamabad.

The PPP-led government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir has so far remained unable to achieve progress. While the bureaucracy is suggesting to rulers of Muzaffarabad to seek net hydel profits in accordance with AGN Qazi formula as was done in case of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. It could provide Rs10 to 15 billion per annum as currently only water charges to the tune of Rs700 million are paid to the AJK government.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=84148&Cat=6>

BISP distributes Rs 2 billion among deserving in AJK

Daily Times, December 25, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Over Rs 2 billion have been distributed among the beneficiary families of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), stated BISP Chairperson Farzana Raja on December 24.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) to launch Waseela-e-Taleem initiative was signed between BISP and AJK government on priority basis, she stated while addressing a ceremony held at Assembly Secretariat to distribute Waseela-e-Haq cheques among 26 beneficiary families of BISP. Under the Waseela-e-Taleem, non-school going children of beneficiary families will be sent to schools, she further stated.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C12%5C25%5Cstory_25-12-2011_pg7_13

Power generation: Plan to make AJK self-sufficient

The Express Tribune, December 24, 2011

MIRPUR: The government is devising a comprehensive plan to make Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) self-sufficient in hydel power generation, stated AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed during a news conference on December 13. Majeed stated the government has fulfilled its promise of establishing two medical colleges in Muzaffarabad and Mirpur and now the government is focusing on establishing a state-of-the-art university for women within the next two months to encourage higher education. "The government is answerable to the people and we intend to uphold their trust," he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/311231/power-generation-plan-to-make-ajk-self-sufficient/>

Dry port: AJK Chamber seeks swift construction

The Express Tribune, December 23, 2011

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called for immediate start of construction work on the much-awaited dry port in the industrial city of Mirpur. Pakistan government should give the go-ahead to the dry port, which had been approved over 10 years ago in August 2001, AJK Chamber President Dr Muhammad Akram Chaudhry noted on December 22.

Expressing concern over inordinate delay in the dry port construction, he stated certain quarters sitting in Islamabad were allegedly creating hurdles in the way of the project while on the other hand several dry ports were functioning successfully in various parts of the country.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/310584/dry-port-ajk-chamber-seeks-swift-construction/>

Earthquake 2005: Financial crunch hinders reconstruction in AJK

The Express Tribune, December 23, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: In spite of the government's claims to build back better, most plans for new schools, hospitals and infrastructure remain on the drawing board, mainly due to financial crunch and delay in releasing funds. In contrast, nearly all national and international donor agencies have completed reconstruction and rehabilitation projects in earthquake-hit areas in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

At the current pace, AJK authorities believe underfunding by the Pakistan government might cause an overrun in cost and time and delay reconstruction and rehabilitation activities by at least 20 years or maybe even beyond. This was stated by Secretary State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (SERRA) AJK, Dr Syed Asif Hussain, while briefing media persons on December 22.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/310664/earthquake-2005-financial-crunch-hinders-reconstruction-in-ajk/>

Large quantity of Indian origin goods seized

Business Recorder, December 23, 2011

Customs authorities have seized a large quantity of Indian origin goods including coconut, black paper, red chillis, black tea and onion from tariff areas of Pakistan which were traded through Cross Line of Control (LOC) Trade. Sources noted on December 22 that the Cross LOC Trade is to facilitate the Kashmiri people of both the sides. The primary aim of the Cross LOC Trade is to encourage the trading between the Kashmiri businessmen of Pakistan and India. However, the Indian origin goods imported through the Cross LOC Trade are meant for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and these goods have to be consumed within the non-tariff area of the AJK.

The goods traded under the Cross LOC Trade could not be sold and consumed in the tariff areas of Pakistan. Contrary to this, the goods seized by the customs authorities included those Indian origin items which were sold in the tariff areas of Pakistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-a-economy/single/672/189/1263789/>

International Developments

AJK govt's decision on Lord Nazir condemned

The News, December 14, 2011

LONDON: The All Party Parliamentary Group on Kashmir (APPG) condemned the Azad Kashmir cabinet decision to declare the first Muslim British peer and group's Chairman Lord Nazir Ahmed as Persona non grata and also rejected his resignation from chairmanship of the group. It also adopted a resolution condemning the AJK government calling the cabinet decision as an insult to Lord Nazir Ahmed and demanded its withdrawal.

The meeting was held in a committee room of House of Lords on December 12. Chief guest Barrister Sultan Mahmood assured the parliamentarians to look into the matter when he is back in Azad Kashmir. He also stated that he would personally welcome Lord Nazir when he will visit Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=82232&Cat=2>

Barrister Sultan Mahmood visits Kashmir Centre, Brussels

December 2, 2011

BRUSSELS: The ICHR Kashmir Centre EU hosted a luncheon debate on December 1 with Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu & Kashmir as the keynote speaker. Attendees included members of the European Parliament, NGO representatives, staff of the European Commission, journalists, and other interested parties. Opening remarks were made by Frank Schwalba-Hoth, former MEP and political strategist.

Barrister A. Majid Tramboos thanked the former Prime Minister for taking the time to attend the event at the Kashmir Centre.EU. He went on to discuss the many ways in which the European Union can assist in finding a resolution of Kashmir.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/12/02/barrister-sultan-mahmood-visits-kashmir-centre-brussels.html>

Other Developments

AH Nizami, AJK to get new women's varsity

The Express Tribune, December 15, 2011

MIRPUR: In order to provide higher educational facilities to women in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the government plans to set up a world class university in the valley in the near future, official sources stated. Sources stated the proposed varsity will comprise all faculties of general and professional education to the postgraduate level, including sciences and information technology (IT). The university will provide higher education exclusively to women. The federal government has agreed to extend assistance for its establishment.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/306822/ajk-to-get-new-womens-varsity/>

AH Nizami, Traditional harmony witnessed in AJK

The Express Tribune, December 8, 2011

MIRPUR: Ashura was peacefully observed across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in line with tradition. Alam, Zuljinah and Taziya processions were brought out from imambargahs in all 10

district headquarters including Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Havelian, Hattiyani, Kotli, Bhimber, Bagh, Sudahnati, Rawalakot and Neelam Valley.

There has never been any incident of sectarian violence in AJK since its liberation from the Dogra ruler in 1947. Interfaith harmony is witnessed on religious occasions and festivals. Commenting on the traditional brotherhood among Muslims in AJK, a Sunni scholar and former chief justice of AJK High Court Justice (retired) Majeed Mallick stated, "Muslims have traditionally enjoyed close social relations.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/303309/traditional-harmony-witnessed-in-ajk/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Seven

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: 24 members directly elected

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

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

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

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

Disclaimer

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

POK NEWS DIGEST



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