

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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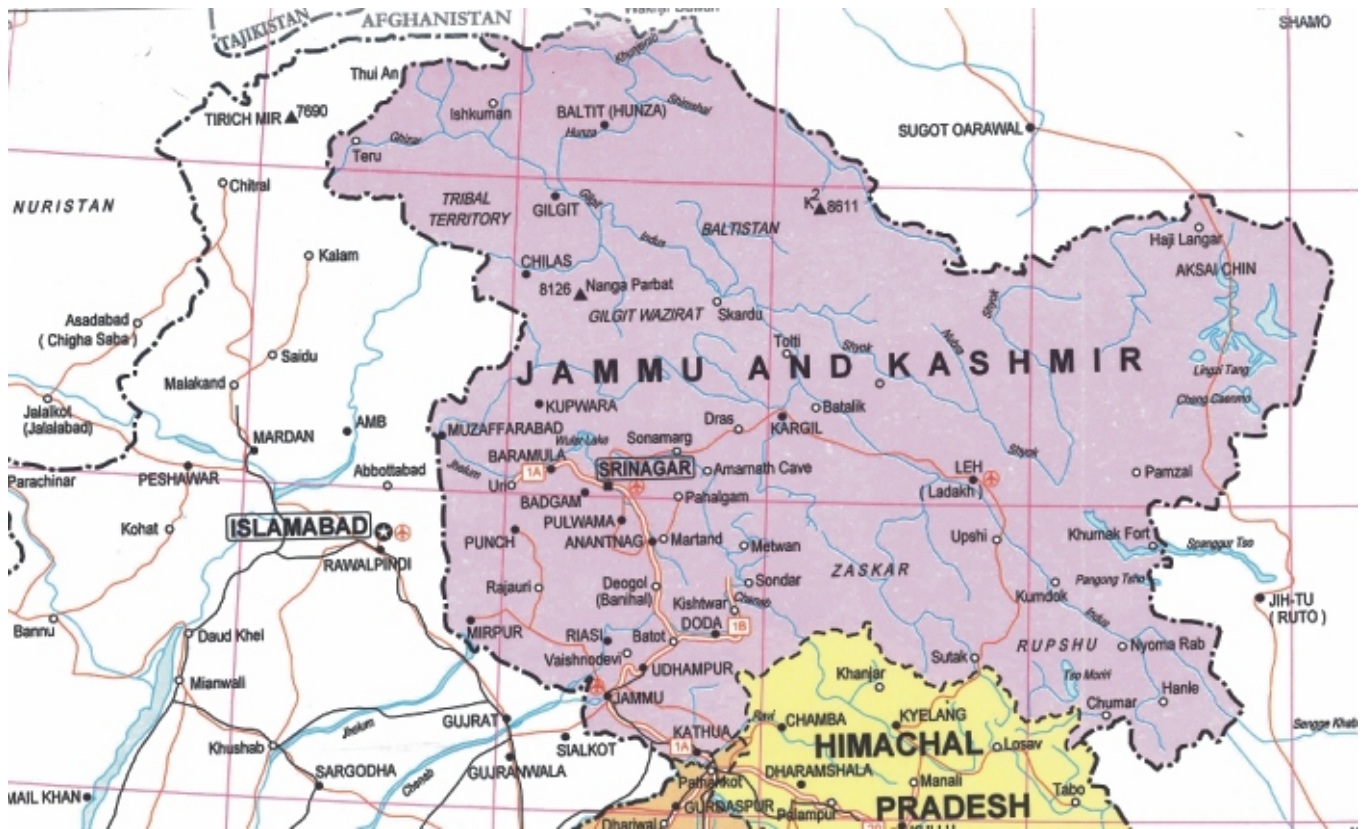
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The United States (US)-Pakistan Energy Working Group meeting was held in Washington in November 2013. During the meeting, the Pakistani representatives strived hard to convince their US counterparts for further supporting the ambitious Diamer Bhasha dam project located in Gilgit Baltistan. The US has already committed \$ 20 million for the project, part of which is supposed to be spent on conducting feasibility studies for the dam. Similarly, Ahsan Iqbal, Pakistan's minister for Planning, Development and Reform, made an earnest appeal in Washington to the international community and the international financial institutions (IFIs) to come forward and support this project, often described to be critical to Pakistan's future. Pakistan is facing acute energy crisis domestically and it hopes to improve the situation by building of this massive 4,500 MW dam.

Meanwhile, reports also suggest that since the World Bank has shown preference to the Dasu dam (a smaller project located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province), Pakistan has gone ahead and requested the Bank to complete formalities for approval of the \$ 700 million loan. At the domestic level, the government in Pakistan has been facing a lot of pressure as for not to give up so easily on the Diamer Bhasha project. While the government has been consistently stating that it is still very much committed to the project, the huge cost and unavailability of funding agencies has withheld the project for a long time. Since there was not much headway on the Diamer Bhasha project, it seems, Pakistan is thinking of at least getting started on one of the projects (read Dasu dam) which could partially address its growing energy requirements in the meantime.

The Silk Route festival was held successfully being attended by diplomats of a host of countries including Ukraine. Notably, at least 5 Ukrainian nationals were killed in Nanga Parbat massacre in June 2013. The Silk Route festival was held primarily to address the losses the tourism industry was facing post the ghastly terrorist attack on mountaineers near Nanga Parbat.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Shabbir Mir, “Seven acquitted in G-B politician's murder”

The Express Tribune November 22, 2013

GILGIT: A Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) court acquitted seven people accused of killing former G-B Assembly deputy speaker Asad Zaidi and his colleague. The decision was announced by G-B Chief Court Justices Wazir Shakil and Muhammad Alam, paving the way for their release. “The lack of evidence led to their exoneration,” a lawyer stated on November 21. The acquittal reverses a decision announced earlier by an anti-terrorism court in Gilgit. The court had sentenced Shakil Ahmad, Mansoor Alam, Mirbaz Khan, Amjad Wali, Farooq, Arshad Aman and Faizan to death last year, prompting them to appeal against the decision. Former deputy speaker Zaidi, a resident of Skardu, had been murdered in April 2009 in Gilgit city after assailants ambushed his vehicle on Park Road.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/635283/seven-acquitted-in-g-b-politicians-murder/>

Tariq Naqash, “Thousands demand AJK PM's removal”

Dawn, November 25, 2013

CHAKSAWARI: Thousands of people at a rally in the hometown of AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on November 24 demanded removal of “the corrupt rulers” in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. “The base camp of (Kashmir) freedom movement has practically fallen in the hands of thugs and robbers involved in massive corruption, but now the days of corrupt rulers are numbered,” stated AJK's former prime minister Barrister Sultan Mahmood at the gathering organised by the so-called Awami Ittehad, an alliance of local leaders. Barrister Mahmood stated that many Peoples Party AJK workers and a majority of the members of Legislative Assembly had lost faith in the leadership of Mr Majeed because of his alleged

incompetence and corruption. “I don't believe in hollow statements and unfounded allegations. I have proved with documentary evidence that Chaudhry Abdul Majeed is the most corrupt ruler in our history and his further stay in power would annihilate Peoples Party,” he stated. In July, Mr Mahmood was named as successor of Mr Majeed in a no-confidence resolution against the latter in accordance with a constitutional provision.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1058389/thousands-demand-ajk-pms-removal>

“AJK Supreme Court issues arrest warrants for Secretary Finance”

Business Recorder, November 29, 2013

The Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on November 28 issued bailable arrest warrant to secretary finance AJK on non-compliance of the court order and issued a contempt of court notice to him. A division bench of the apex court while hearing an appeal related to financial matters directed the official to appear before the court with necessary record for but he ignored the court orders despite several approaches by the court officials. The learned bench observed that this state of affairs, prima-facie speaks that the secretary and additional secretary finance were intentionally avoiding complying with court's directions. Therefore, the bench ordered to issue a bailable warrant of arrest to the secretary and directed to issue show cause notices to both the officers as to why a contempt of court proceeding may not be initiated against them. Both the officers were directed to file their comments before the next hearing on December 16.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1259417/>

Baqir Sajjad Syed, “Militants who killed mountaineers were trained in Miramshah”

Dawn, November 20, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The gunmen who killed 10 foreign

mountaineers and a local helper in Diamer (Gilgit-Baltistan) in June belonged to Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and had been trained in North Waziristan's town of Miramshah. "The attackers belonged to Tehrik-i-Taliban," Dr Ata-ur-Rehman, the home secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan, told the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee on November 19. The official placed before the committee a classified report about the incident, which stated the attackers were involved in sectarian killings in the country in 2012.

The official stated the attackers were trained in Miramshah, which has been a target of US drones. TTP chief Hakeemullah Mehsud was also killed in Miramshah in a drone attack. The government has sought to start a dialogue with the Taliban in an effort to make them end violence that has claimed thousands of lives. Some initial contacts were made by the two sides before the killing of Mehsud, which left the nascent peace process at a standstill.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1057385/militants-who-killed-mountaineers-were-trained-in-miramshah>

“Constitutional reforms basic right of AJK people: Barjees”

Associated Press of Pakistan, November 20, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Ch. Muhammad Barjees Tahir on November 20 stated that all political parties should work together to formulate comprehensive constitutional reforms which is basic right of people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The political parties must re-start working where they had left it incomplete, the Minister stated this while talking to AJK Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami, Abdul Rasheed Turabi, who called on him. He was accompanied by Noorul Bari, Naib Ameer and Mahmoodul Hassan, General Secretary. The Minister noted that promoting a culture of good governance and elimination of corruption is the priority of government as corrupt officers have been dismissed from AJK Council Secretariat.

Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami lauded the role of Minister in bringing good governance and eliminating corruption from AJK and lauded posting of

reputable Chief Secretaries and IG Police in AJK and GB. Abdul Rasheed Turabi brought into notice of Minister the culture of a huge cabinet in AJK government when there are economic challenges. He mentioned mushrooming growth of universities and Medical Colleges in AJK and also irregularities going on in these institutions regarding appointments.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=250195&Itemid=2

“Threat of violence: Hate-speech, arms display banned in AJK, Attock”

The Express Tribune, November 1, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD / ATTOCK: The use and sale of objectionable audio tapes and CDs fanning sectarian hatred has been banned in Attock district by District Coordination Officer (DCO) Muhammad Iqbal. Any hate-speech inciting violence against any community and display of weapons has been banned unless authorised by the government, he stated. Distribution of hate-filled literature and wall-chalking has also been banned in the district. Meanwhile, the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has banned the display of arms and ammunition and misuse of loudspeakers during Muharram to ensure sectarian harmony. This was decided in a high-level meeting headed by AJK Chief Secretary Khyzer Hayat Gondal. It was also decided in the meeting that peace committees comprising of members of the public would work to promote communal harmony.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/625470/threat-of-violence-hate-speech-arms-display-banned-in-ajk-attack/>

“Constitutional amendment: AJK bar association gives deadline”

The Express Tribune, November 24, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on November 23 threatened to launch a movement if the government fails to make proposed amendments in the Interim Constitutional Act 1974 till December 31. This was stated by AJKSCBA President Fazal Hussain Rabbani while addressing bar members. He asked the AJK government and

opposition parties to follow in footprints of other provinces of the country that made their people powerful after making amendments in their constitution. “All three pillars of the AJK State are being controlled by a third party which is a grave injustice with the Kashmiri people that would never be accepted,” stated Rabbani.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/636084/constitutional-amendment-ajk-bar-association-gives-deadline/>

“Red alert: Known terrorists have entered G-B, tells federal govt”

The Express Tribune, November 7, 2013

GILGIT: According to a threat-alert sent by the federal interior ministry to the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government on November 5, at least three terrorists Liaquat and accomplices have made their way into the region via the Karakoram Highway. The letter, addressed to the home secretary called for strict security measures along procession routes in the region to foil any terrorist attempts. “The month of Muharram is very important for Gilgit Town and we have completed our homework with regards to organising security,” stated SSP Muhammad Ali Zia on November 7. “The threat in Gilgit cannot be ruled out, given the whole country especially Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is in the grip of terrorism. Zia explained the measures taken to ensure entry and exit routes, sharing travellers, especially outsiders, are not allowed to enter without proper identification. “Intelligence officials in plain clothes are actively doing their job in this connection.” Data from 600 families living in rented houses in Gilgit has been collected as part of the security plan for Muharram, stated the SSP.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/628232/red-alert-known-terrorists-have-entered-g-b-tells-federal-govt/>

“Ch. Majeed has confidence of house to rule AJK: Khursheed Shah”

South Asian News Agency, November 1, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Syed Khursheed Shah stated that Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has majority in the house, saying that the person has the right to rule who has majority in

the house. He stated that challenging the appointment of the chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) makes no difference, saying that the PPP believes in the politics of reconciliation and strengthening of democracy. He stated that PPP has majority in the AJK assembly and Prime Minister AJK Abdul Majeed has confidence of the house and he is properly leading the government in AJK.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/ch-majeed-has-confidence-of-house-to-rule-ajk-khursheed-shah/>

“Staying strong: MWM stresses on unity between sects”

The Express Tribune, November 4, 2013

GILGIT: Sunni and Shia political and religious leaders called for sectarian unity in a conference held in Gilgit on November 3. The leaders made their remarks during a public rally organised by Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM). Many Sunni leaders, including Minister for Works Bashir Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader Advocate Mushtaq Ahmed also attended the gathering titled 'Difa-e-Watan.' “This is a multi-sect convention aimed at forging harmony in the region,” stated MWM Deputy Secretary General Allama Amin Shaheedi. He demanded that Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) be made the fifth province of Pakistan, adding that the existing political setup denies constitutional rights to its inhabitants. “When G-B attained independence, there were no sectarian rifts among its people. These rifts were infused to keep the region backward,” he stated. “There are many things in common among various sects that need to be promoted.” “Only if we are united can we make progress,” stated Bashir Ahmed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/626740/staying-strong-mwm-stresses-on-unity-between-sects/>

“Gilgit Baltistan: False Accusations of Violence against Students”

UNPO, November 29, 2013

Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement chairman Manzoor Parwana condemned allegations that students from Gilgit-Baltistan were involved in the

sectarian violence in the Rawalpindi tragedy on the Ashura day i.e. 15 November 2013. In a statement issued here, he stated that under a conspiracy the people of the disputed territory, who were still deprived of their basic rights, were being trapped in the name of their involvement in the violence and they are being denied their right to free movement by blocking the Karakoram Highway on them.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/16647>

“GB govt accused of creating artificial flour crisis”

Dawn, November 29, 2013

SKARDU: Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly member from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Haji Fida Mohammad Nashad on November 28 accused the Pakistan People's Party government in the region of creating an artificial flour crisis by stopping wheat supply to local mills. The lawmaker alleged that the regional government wanted to defame the PML-N-led federal government by withdrawing subsidy on flour on the pretext of artificial crisis. He stated the federal government continued to give subsidy on flour but the regional government wanted to withdraw it. Mr Nashad further noted wheat supply to mills had been suspended for 10 days adding to the people's misery.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1059312/gb-govt-accused-of-creating-artificial-flour-crisis>

“Pakistan pushes UNESCO for third biosphere reserve in Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Express Tribune, November 28, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on November 28 pushed the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the country's third biosphere reserve in Pamir, Gilgit-Baltistan. Minister for Science and Technology, Zahid Hamid in a meeting with a UNESCO delegation stated that the government has completed documentation for the third reserve. The UNESCO delegation extended its support in soliciting approval for the Karakoram Pamir biosphere reserve, and is expected to be made official during the visit of the DG UNESCO to Pakistan in June 2014.

Pakistan currently has two biosphere reserves the

Lal Sohanra National Park located in the Cholistan Desert, which was approved by UNESCO in 1977. The second is the Juniper forest of Ziarat, believed to be the second largest of its kind in the world, which was approved in May 2013.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/638400/pakistan-pushes-unesco-for-third-biosphere-reserve-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Owners seek higher price for land”

Dawn, November 25, 2013

GILGIT: Residents of Diamer district have demanded of Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) to revise rates of the land being acquired for construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam. They stated in view of rising inflation the agreement reached over the land acquisition years back needed to be reviewed. Asif Raza, Chilas assistant commissioner, who is also the collector lands, confirmed that the dwellers had raised the demand. “I have asked the residents to submit their demands to me and I will forward the same to the concerned authorities,” he noted. Mr Raza stated a committee had also been formed to negotiate the issue with the revenue department.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1058456/owners-seek-higher-price-for-land>

Shabbir Mir, “Contempt of court: G-B's former AGPR chief renders apology”

The Express Tribune, November 26, 2013

GILGIT: The former regional chief of Accountant General Pakistan Revenues (AGPR) on November 25 submitted an unconditional apology before the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) apex court for not attending court earlier. On November 23, the Supreme Appellate Court of G-B had asked the police to arrest Mutahir Shah and produce him in court handcuffed for failing to attend case proceedings. “Shah came to the registrar's office [on November 25] and submitted an unconditional written apology pleading he did not receive any summons from the court,” stated a court spokesman. “As a result, the hearing has been put off till March.” Based on an application from a former judge justice Altaf Hussain, the apex court had issued contempt notices to Mutahir Shah and the deputy accountant general

[DAG] Jangi Banadur for discontinuing pension and other privileges of some retired judges in G-B. In the last hearing, the DAG tendered an unconditional apology in the court and was pardoned.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/637033/contempt-of-court-g-bs-former-agpr-chief-renders-apology/>

“Repeating history: Jail warden injured in clash between inmates, officials”

The Express Tribune, November 25, 2013

GILGIT: A jail warden was injured in a clash between inmates and police officials in Gilgit Jail, located in the residential area of Kashrot on November 23. A police official, requesting anonymity, confirmed the incident. The fight broke out when officials tried to lock two key prisoners in a separate barrack in the prison. Other inmates started protesting. Enraged prisoners set a barrack on fire, forcing the police to resort to tear gas and aerial firing, stated the official. Warden Akbar Ali sustained minor injuries as a result of the riot.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/636411/repeating-history-jail-warden-injured-in-clash-between-inmates-officials/>

“PoK refugees observe Martyrs' Day in Jammu”

Business Recorder, November 24, 2013

JAMMU: Hundreds of refugees who fled Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on November 24 observed Martyrs' Day in memory of their family members killed during fights with tribals and Pakistani Army in November 1947. The refugees held a huge rally at Maheshpura Chowk Netaji Park in Bakshi Nagar area of the city. Jammu and Kashmir Refugees Front president Rachpal Singh Chib claimed that about 18,000 men, women and children were killed during attacks by tribals (Qabailies) and Pakistani Army post Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/pok-refugees-observe-martyrs-day-in-jammu-113112400581_1.html

“Diaram-Bhasha Dam a 'lifeline' for national economy”

Business Recorder, November 24, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Diaram-Bhasha Dam project on

River Indus is a "lifeline" for national economy, which will go a long way in meeting country's future agricultural and electricity requirements. A spokesman of Ministry of Water and Power in a statement noted Diaram-Bhasha Dam has three important objectives, including flood-control, power generation and storage of water. He stated the gigantic project will generate 4500 megawatts electricity and store over eight million acre feet of water to meet the country's growing power and irrigation needs. He further stated the dam will also enhance life of the Tarbela Dam by over thirty five years.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/145713-diamer-bhasha-dam-a-lifeline-for-national-economy.html>

“Continued lack of implementation of special package for Gilgit Baltistan”

November 19, 2013

A Special Package was introduced for Gilgit Baltistan, a few years ago. The idea was to empower the beleaguered people of the region through promulgation of rights and liberties for their emancipation, and provide healthcare, education and proper sanitation services towards basic needs. But all the promises made by Pakistan in this Special Package were left unfulfilled, and came to a naught.

<http://www.aninews.in/videogallery7/17766-continued-lack-of-implementation-of-special-package-for-gilgit-baltistan.html>

“In defiance: G-B govt 'rejects' withdrawal of wheat subsidy”

The Express Tribune, November 21, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government categorically 'rejected' the federal government's decision to withdraw subsidy on wheat and impose a ban on recruitments. The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mehdi Shah in Gilgit, G-B Information Minister Sadia Danish stated on November 20. Under a special package for the region, G-B has been receiving two million wheat bags annually from the federal government on subsidised rates since a long time. If the subsidy is now withdrawn, a 40

kilogramme bag will cost more than double the current price, which is Rs740.

“The chief minister will take up the issue of subsidies with the prime minister shortly to ensure it continues or is at least withdrawn gradually,” Danish, who has recently been given charge of the information ministry noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/634621/in-defiance-g-b-govt-rejects-withdrawal-of-wheat-subsidy/>

Shoaib-ur-Rehman Siddiqui, “Rally terms Rawalpindi incident pre-planned external conspiracy”

Business Recorder, November 22, 2013

MIRPUR: Thousands of people from diverse segments of society participated the protest rallies on November 22 in different parts of AJK to condemn the recent tragic incident in Rawalpindi and demanded of the government to bring the culprits to justice. Addressing the rally, eminent scholars and ulema including Mufti-e-Azam AJK and central Naib Amir of JUI, AJK Chapter Moulana Mufti Muhammad Rowais Khan Ayubi, Muhammad Ayub Muslim of Jamaat-e-Islami, Moulana Qari Gulzar Abid of Altouheed Wal Sunna, Moulana Muhammad Rizwan Makki of Ahle-e-Sunnatal Jamaat AJK, Moulana Mubashir Azam, termed the Raja Bazar carnage a pre-planned external conspiracy. They demanded immediate arrest of the accused to bring them to justice through trials to avert similar further incidents in the country.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/108-pakistan-top-news/145510-rally-terms-rawalpindi-incident-pre-planned-external-conspiracy.html>

“G-B in limbo”

The News, November 20, 2013

This refers to the excellent article by Ghazi Salahuddin, 'Getting to know G-B' (November 17). The writer is correct in saying that if the constitutional issues are not addressed in time in Gilgit-Baltistan, the dissent there has the potential to transform into a massive nationalistic movement. However, it may not be appropriate to consider the 2014 elections of the GBLA for fully understanding the differences there. First, because the nationalist

parties do not have a significant presence in all constituencies and second, federalist and religious-political parties are gaining ground in the region, capitalising on sectarian grievances. Third, because the establishment will do all it can to contain the nationalist parties or alliances. There is a strong possibility, however, that the 2014 elections in Gilgit-Baltistan will be contested on the slogans of protection of sectional or sectarian interests.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-11-215149-G-B-in-limbo>

Ghazi Salahuddin, “Getting to know G-B”

The News, November 17, 2013

When we reflect on sectarian strife in Pakistan, some atrocities committed in Gilgit-Baltistan stand out, along with terrorist attacks on the Hazara community in Quetta. It seems so outrageous and even unreal that this should happen in locations that are so serene and picturesque. After all, people living in high mountains and in remote valleys are historically very peaceful and open minded. So, what has changed in recent years in these otherwise blissful surroundings?

These were some of the thoughts I carried with me when I visited Gilgit-Baltistan about three weeks ago as a member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's fact-finding mission. In that sense, it was not a touristic excursion to some of the most enchanting scenery in the world. A conscious effort was made to probe the state of affairs at a human level. And this became a very educative experience. There were many surprises revelations.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-214691-Getting-to-know-G-B>

“Ill-planned: AIOU Gilgit campus plan runs into snags”

The Express Tribune, November 14, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The plan to construct a regional campus of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Gilgit city has run into snags, as government officials and locals have raised objections about its current location. The university's Vice-Chancellor Dr Nazir Ahmad

Sangi had to face an embarrassing situation when he along with Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah reached the site on the bank of Gilgit River to perform the ground-breaking ceremony of the campus. The locals and officials of G-B government expressed skepticism about location of the campus, saying the building, if constructed, would be at the risk of floods in the summer. The governor also argued that such a huge building could not be constructed on the bank of the river.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/632055/ill-planned-aiou-gilgit-campus-plan-runs-into-snags/>

Shabbir Mir, “Permanent status: Govt regularises 1,537 health dept employees”

The Express Tribune, November 14, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government regularised the services of more than 1,537 contract employees in the health department. According to a notification issued by the government on November 12, these include accountants, drivers and lady health supervisors working in various projects run by the health department. The employees made permanent include 1,385 lady health visitors (LHVs) who had earlier boycotted a polio vaccination drive in the region. The regularisation will be effective from July 1, 2013, read the notification. However, the fate of 183 contract teachers sacked earlier still hangs in the balance. Earlier, the teachers had protested against the decision to terminate their services.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/631685/permanent-status-govt-regularises-1537-health-dept-employees/>

“Preventive measures: In AJK, security on high alert for Ashura”

The Express Tribune, November 15, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Security has been put on high alert across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) for Ashura after a hand grenade blast in Bagh in which a terrorist was killed and another injured during a police operation on November 12. The security plan for Muharram has been revised after the Bagh terrorist incident, stated a senior police officer who is also a member of the investigation team tracking

the terrorists' links, requesting anonymity. Four districts, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Bagh and Mirpur have been declared sensitive during Ashura. Additional policemen have been deployed in sensitive districts to avert any untoward incident during the Ashura processions.

Apart from the district administrations, commissioners and deputy inspectors general will monitor security in highly sensitive districts. All vehicles entering Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Rawalakot will be checked at main entry points. “We are trying to find out a clue to who provided logistic support to these terrorists, which area and installations they wanted to target and which entry point they used to reach Bagh,” stated the police official stated, while talking to The Express Tribune.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/632246/preventive-measures-in-ajk-security-on-high-alert-for-ashura/>

Dr Shabir Choudhry, “Coal in Kotli exploited by Pakistan”

November 14, 2013

In my last article on the subject of economic exploitation, 'Our Green Gold exploited by Pakistan' I provided details how Pakistan is making millions of dollars annually from so called Azad Kashmir from our forests. A few days ago it was discussed in the social media that Pakistan is also taking out coal from Kotli district of Azad Kashmir. Dr Aftab Hussain asserted that he has seen trucks loaded with coal and leaving the area. Also someone pointed that why is that we people are unaware of what are our natural resources and what goes on in this small territory called Azad Kashmir.

First thing to remember is that research and studies are sponsored by different government departments and universities in independent countries; and as we are not independent and the government imposed on us is there to care for interests of Islamabad and not to investigate about our resources and how they are exploited by those who occupy us.

http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13160:coal-in-kotli-exploited-by-pakistan-dr-shabir-choudhry&catid=48:dr-shabir-choudhry&Itemid=79

“Combating terror: Passing-out parade of AJK police held”

The Express Tribune, November 13, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The passing-out parade of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Anti-Terrorist Police was held on November 12 at Pakistan Army's Chinar Division Training Centre in Patiaka, some 20 kilometres from Muzaffarabad. On the occasion, police commandos demonstrated their newly-acquired skills in combating terrorism. Azad Jammu and Kashmir Inspector General of Police (IGP) Malik Khuda Bakhsh Awan stated the training would help the state police deal with incidents of terrorism and street crime. The IGP stated the trained commandos would also serve as instructors in police lines in Azad Kashmir to teach newly-appointed policemen. He stated that the training programme consisted of various segments, including VIP security, protection of vital installations and fighting street crime.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/631134/combating-terror-passing-out-parade-of-ajk-police-held/>

Tariq Naqash, “Agency official, suspect die in AJK blast”

Dawn, November 13, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD, Nov 12: An intelligence official and an alleged terrorist were killed in a village in Azad Kashmir on November 11 as the latter detonated a hand grenade when taken to a hideout where arms and ammunition were stashed, police stated on November 11. Israr, son of Altaf, was in the custody of an intelligence agency for interrogation after being declared a proclaimed offender in connection with blasts in Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot. An eight-member intelligence team led by a colonel took Israr to his native village Dhokan Rawli for the recovery of weapons and explosives. However, the team did not inform the local police. Witnesses stated that two men wearing police uniform and the rest of the team members in civvies were led by the handcuffed Israr to a house of his relative Rashid, who runs a goods forwarding business with his Lahore-based brother Arshad.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1055964/agency-official->

suspect-die-in-ajk-blast

Shabbir Mir, “Guiding the gunmen: Suspected drivers of Nanga Parbat assailants arrested”

The Express Tribune, November 14, 2013

GILGIT: The two men who allegedly drove the assailants of foreign trekkers camping at the base of Nanga Parbat in their car have been arrested in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), police stated on November 13. In June this year, gunmen disguised as Gilgit Scouts killed 10 foreign trekkers and their Pakistani guide. The militants had reportedly abducted two local guides to take them to the remote camp. Habibur Rahman and Muhammad Alam, residents of Chilas Town, are believed to have driven the assailants as far as Buner Nullah, the last point before Nanga Parbat beyond which the road ends. It is one of the three access points which the terrorists followed to reach the base camp after a trek of nearly 10 hours.

“They (the suspects) have been arrested from Niyat village and booked under clauses of the Anti-Terrorism Act,” stated a police official in Chilas, headquarters of Diamer Valley. The vehicle used for the purpose has also been seized from the residence of Habibur Rahman. The police official claimed Muhammad Alam assisted Rahman in dropping off the gunmen to Buner Nullah, which is about 40 kilometres from Chilas town. Superintendent Police Jhangir Khan, who was part of the investigation team until recently, stated the men were arrested some days back following information received from intelligence agencies.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/631690/guiding-the-gunmen-suspected-drivers-of-nanga-parbat-assailants-arrested/>

“Pakistani Taliban creates havoc in Gilgit Baltistan”

November 11, 2013

GILGIT: Despite the death of its commander Hakimullah Mehsud in a US drone strike, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is on a rampage in Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. The TTP, an umbrella organization of various Islamist militant groups based in North Waziristan, is not only responsible for targeting Shias, but also for killing

foreign tourists. The outlawed group recently issued a warning about targeting the Shia community in Gilgit Baltistan. Such open threats expose the inadequate security measures put in place by the administration for the safety of the people of Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.aninews.in/videogallery9/17477-pakistani-taliban-creates-havoc-in-gilgit-baltistan.html>

Shabbir Mir, “Heated exchange: Police initiate case against G-B health minister”

The Express Tribune, November 11, 2013

GILGIT: Police in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have registered a case against regional health minister Gulbar Khan for threatening a government official of 'dire consequences'. “The case has been registered on a complaint lodged by Tangir Valley Assistant Commissioner (AC) Asim Raza,” stated a Chilas Town police official on November 10. According to the police, AC Asim Raza accused Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) senior leader Gulbar Khan of threatening him after a verbal altercation a few days ago. Khan, a resident of Diamer Valley, became part of Mehdi Shah's G-B cabinet after an alliance was struck between the JUI-F and Pakistan Peoples Party. Both officials had a run in on the eve of Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif's visit to Diamer Bhasha Dam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/630143/heated-exchange-police-initiate-case-against-g-b-health-minister/>

“Streamlining: G-B government departments reshuffled”

The Express Tribune, November 12, 2013

GILGIT: The government of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) has made changes in various departments in a bid to streamline its affairs. A summary in this regard has been approved by the chief minister (CM), confirmed a government spokesperson on November 11.

The department of services, for instance, has been separated from general administration. Saad Sikandar will now look after both departments as secretary. Similarly, the departments of prison and information have also been made separate entities.

Adviser to CM on Tourism Sadia Danish has been assigned additional responsibilities as minister for information a post earlier held by Muhammad Ismail.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/630541/streamlining-g-b-government-departments-reshuffled/>

Nadeem Alvi, “Terrorists plan to hit Muharram processions in KP, Gilgit”

The News, November 5, 2013

LAHORE: The terrorists hailing from North Waziristan and Khyber tribal agencies are jointly planning to launch suicide attacks in Peshawar and Gilgit during Muharram processions. This was exposed in letters sent by federal National Crisis Management Cell to the home secretaries and inspectors general of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. It was further revealed in the letters that a terrorist, Jamil, along with his accomplices had given final shape to visit Gilgit in this connection. It was directed to the officials to make special arrangements for security to avert any untoward incident.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-26488-Terrorists-plan-to-hit-Muharram-processions-in-KP-Gilgit>

Shabbir Mir, “Clerics shun sectarian differences, offer prayers together”

The Express Tribune, November 8, 2013

GILGIT: Shia and Sunni clerics offered Maghrib prayers together in Gilgit Town on November 7 to promote sectarian harmony. Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Secretary General Liaqat Baloch visited the office of the Shia Ulema Council (SUC), a party headed by renowned Shia cleric Allama Sajid Naqvi, along with other party leaders and local elders as part of a goodwill gesture. “It was time to offer Maghrib prayers when Baloch reached the Shia Ulema Council office located on Khazana Road with his delegation,” stated Nazakat Ali, a local who also joined in the prayers. “The Shia clerics then invited Liaqat Baloch to lead the prayers, which he accepted.” Shia clerics who offered prayers together included SUC President Mirza Ali, Syed Azhar, Sheikh Shahadat and MPA Didar Ali.

Sunni clerics included JI leaders Abdur Rasheed Turabi, Maulana Sami and others.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/629290/promoting-harmony-clerics-shun-sectarian-differences-offer-prayers-together/>

“On alert: Section 144 imposed across the region ahead of Muharram”

The Express Tribune, November 6, 2013

PESHAWAR / DERA ISMAIL KHAN / GILGIT / PARACHINAR: Section 144 has been imposed in various districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit town and Kurram Agency ahead of Muharram. Gilgit SSP Ali Zia noted Section 144 had been imposed in Gilgit town and clerics from outside Gilgit-Baltistan have been barred from entering till the end of the religious month. “Procession routes have been digitally mapped to ensure foolproof security for the mourners and 24 CCTV cameras have been installed along the way,” stated Zia. At least 11 imambargahs in Gilgit town have been declared “highly sensitive”. The SSP stated security personnel including police, Rangers and scouts have been deployed at key points in the town and community policing is also being introduced. “At least 200 men have been put on a 'suspects list' to keep their activities under watch,” shared SSP Zia.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/627673/on-alert-section-144-imposed-across-the-region-ahead-of-muharram/>

“Two NA standing bodies elect chairmen”

Pakistan Observer, November 7, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The meetings of the National Assembly Standing Committees on Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and Law, Justice and Human Rights were held separately in Parliament House, Islamabad on November 6 for election of their Chairperson. MNAs Malik Ibrar Ahmed and Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk have been unanimously elected the Chairmen of Standing Committees on Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and Law, Justice and Human Rights, respectively.

Special Secretary (Admin), National Assembly Syed Munawar Abbas conducted the election of the Chairmen. While felicitating the newly elected Chairmen of the Standing Committees on behalf of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker and Murtaza Javed

Abbasi Deputy Speaker, National Assembly the Special Secretary assured the new elected Chairperson, National Assembly Secretariat's full cooperation for smooth functioning of the Standing Committees.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=223007>

“New beginnings: Progress made on Diamer Bhasha project”

The Express Tribune, November 7, 2013

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Syed Raghیب Abbas Shah visited the Diamer Bhasha Dam project site. He was accompanied by senior officials of WAPDA and project specialists. The Diamer Bhasha Dam had been temporarily relegated by the Pakistani authorities because of financial issues. On this occasion, Wapda chairman revealed that the organisation has paid Rs5.5 billion to the Gilgit-Baltistan government to acquire the land. Speaking at the event, Shah stated that because of the keen interest taken by the prime minister and the efforts put in by the Ministry of Water and Power and Wapda around 17,000 acres of land had been transferred by the government of Gilgit-Baltistan to Wapda for the Diamer Bhasha Dam project.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/628163/new-beginnings-progress-made-on-diamer-bhasha-project/>

“Questionable promotions: AJK govt weighs on proposal to favour matriculates”

The Express Tribune, November 6, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: After lifting the qualification bar on the promotion of non-gazetted employees of the civil secretariat to grade 17, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government is weighing in on a proposal to allow promotion of matriculates and intermediate degree holders to grades 18, 19 and 20. Sources noted that a summary in this regard has been moved for approval. They stated the move would affect graduate officers who have been promoted to grades 18 and 19. The AJK government in July 2010 had given a special two-year grace period for matriculate employees working in grade 17 to be promoted to grades 18 and 19. However, the grace period ended in July 2012, and since then

promotions to grades 18 and 19 were made on the basis of graduation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/627662/questionable-promotions-ajk-govt-weighs-on-proposal-to-favour-matriculantes/>

Shahbaz Rana, “Key project: Islamabad approaches World Bank for Dasu Dam”

The Express Tribune, November 5, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has put the Diamer Bhasha dam on the back burner and approached the World Bank (WB) to finance the \$7.5 billion, 4,320-megawatt (MW) Dasu hydropower project, conceding to a major demand by international lenders who were reluctant to fund the Diamer Bhasha project. The federal government wrote last month to the Washington-based lending agency to start the process for the approval of a \$700 million loan for the Dasu hydropower project, according to sources in the Ministry of Finance. The letter was sent to the WB by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), marking the beginning of a departure from the current government's stated policy of first building Diamer Bhasha and then starting work on Dasu. An official of the EAD confirmed that the government approached the WB to finance the project. As the WB was more than willing to finance the Dasu project over the 4,500-MW Diamer Bhasha dam, it immediately started the process and an appraisal mission of the WB is already in town, according to sources in Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda). The mission will hold wrap-up meetings in Islamabad this week and decide a date for presenting the project in front of the Board of Directors of the WB to approve a \$700million loan, the sources stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/627129/key-project-islamabad-approaches-world-bank-for-dasu-dam/>

“Staying strong: MWM stresses on unity between sects”

The Express Tribune, November 4, 2013

GILGIT: Sunni and Shia political and religious leaders called for sectarian unity in a conference held in Gilgit on November 3. The leaders made their remarks during a public rally organised by Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM). Many

Sunni leaders, including Minister for Works Bashir Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader Advocate Mushtaq Ahmed also attended the gathering titled 'Difa-e-Watan.' “This is a multi-sect convention aimed at forging harmony in the region,” stated MWM Deputy Secretary General Allama Amin Shaheedi. He demanded that Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) be made the fifth province of Pakistan, adding that the existing political setup denies constitutional rights to its inhabitants. “When G-B attained independence, there were no sectarian rifts among its people. These rifts were infused to keep the region backward,” he stated. “There are many things in common among various sects that need to be promoted.” “Only if we are united can we make progress,” stated Bashir Ahmed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/626740/staying-strong-mwm-stresses-on-unity-between-sects/>

“Muharram security: Seven areas in AJK declared sensitive”

The Express Tribune, November 5, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Seven areas were declared sensitive in Azad Jammu and Kashmir during Muharram, a top police official stated on November 4. The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Malik Khuda Bukhsh Awan stated seven areas among 90 have been declared sensitive during the month of Muharram. Besides the police 1,500 government employees and scouts would assist the law enforcement personnel to maintain peace, sectarian harmony in the state during Muharram. Awan stated 4,000 policemen would be deployed to protect the processions at 1,181 places where the display of arms and misuse of loudspeakers have already been banned. He stated that peace committees comprising of members of the public would work for the promotion of sectarian harmony while 68 ambulances will be provided to the mourners during the processions and rallies.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/627174/muharram-security-seven-areas-in-ajk-declared-sensitive/>

Economic Developments

Peer Muhammad, “Year 2013-14: Rs14.48b AJK budget unveiled”

The Express Tribune, November 18, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Council on November 17 presented a deficit budget worth Rs14.483 billion for the year 2013-14. The budget was presented by Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Chaudhry Barjis Tahir. The council indicated receipts target of Rs10.932 billion, whereas the estimated expenditure is Rs14.483 billion. Thus, there is a deficit of Rs3.551 billion and the council has requested the Prime Minister of Pakistan, who is also the chairman of the council, to provide grant to meet the deficit.

The deficit includes Rs1.443 billion as liability of AJK for 2012-13 and Rs0.283 billion for 2011-12 and Rs2.202 billion as the share of AJK 80 per cent more as compared to last year. The receipt target includes Rs10.8 million income tax collection. The development expenditure is estimated at Rs2.628 billion, Rs712 million more than last year. The operational expenses are proposed at Rs1.54 billion. This expenditure is 19 per cent higher than that of last year's non-development expenditure due to substantial increase in pay and allowances on the analogy of the government of Pakistan. The budget has also imposed 30 per cent cut on operational expenditure as well as other austerity measures. The 80 per cent net share of income tax collection is proposed to be Rs8.385 billion.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/633058/year-2013-14-rs14-48b-ajk-budget-unveiled/>

“Govt released Rs 21b for Bhasha Dam in four years”

The Nation, November 18, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The government has released Rs

21 billion for the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam in the last four years (2009-10 to 2012-13), says a document of the Ministry of Water and Power. According to the document, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), United States Agency for International Development (USTATED) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has indicated willingness for providing funds for the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam Project (DBDP). The total cost of Diamer Bhasha Dam Project is Rs 1,257.74 billion. As many as Rs 11,401 million has been spent on the project till September 2013. A sum of Rs 25 billion has been allocated for Diamer-Bhasha Dam in the current financial year. The PC-I for Diamer-Basha Dam Project was approved by ECNEC on 20-08-2009 for an amount of US\$ 11.178 billion (Rs. 894.257 billion) with gestation period up to year 2020-21.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/business/18-Nov-2013/govt-released-rs-21b-for-bhasha-dam-in-four-years>

“Rs 5.5b paid for Bhasha Dam land”

The Nation, November 13, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The WAPDA paid a sum of Rs. 5.5 billion to the Govt of Gilgit-Baltistan for its disbursement to the people for acquiring private land for Bhasha Dam project. The government of Gilgit-Baltistan has also transferred 17,000 acres state owned land to WAPDA for this mega project. They stated that the Government accords high importance to Diamer Bhasha Dam Project and in view of its significance, the Ministry of Water and Power, through WAPDA, is implementing it as a priority project. They stated work on various sites of the project is progressing smoothly and the work for resettlement of the affectees at Harpan Das model village has also been started. The sources stated that construction work at WAPDA offices, residential facilities, roads and other

infrastructure at Thor and Shatial by-pass is also progressing satisfactorily.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/business/13-Nov-2013/rs-5-5b-paid-for-bhasha-dam-land>

Mukeet Akmal, “JK business delegation's visit to Pakistan hits roadblock”

November 4, 2013

SRINAGAR: The much-hyped proposed visit of a Jammu and Kashmir business delegation to Pak has hit a roadblock with state government allegedly stalling the process. According to the sources, the state government has “not cleared the name of eight delegates from the group that was supposed to visit to Pak from this side.” “State government is not in favor of business delegation from this side at a time when LoC and border skirmishes have battered the relation between the two neighbors,” sources stated. The sources alleged that the state government was not keen right from the beginning to allow the delegation from this side. “As a result clearance of delegates is still pending.” President, Jammu and Kashmir Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JKJCCI), Mubeen Shah stated. “We have not got any positive response from the state government so far. Our clearance is still pending and despite meeting CM, it has not yielded any

results.” “State government has sabotaged our visit by not issuing clearance,” Shah who is among eight delegates whose clearance is still awaiting government nod, stated.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Nov/5/jk-business-delegation-s-visit-to-pakistan-hits-roadblock-34.asp>

“Rs3.5 bn released for Bhasha Dam land acquisition”

The News, October 31, 2013

GILGIT: The government of Gilgit-Baltistan received an amount of Rs3.5 billion which would be disbursed on land acquisition for the construction of Diامر-Bhasha Dam. This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner of Diامر, Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti on October 30. He stated that the amount had been transferred to the accounts of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and soon the amount would be transferred to the accounts of the district magistrate. The official stated that once the amount was transferred, the papers for payment shall be completed and within 45 days payment shall be made.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-211329-Rs3.5-bn-released-for-Bhasha-Dam-land-acquisition>

International Developments

“Pakistan seeks greater US support for Diamer-Bhasha dam”

Dawn, November 14, 2013

WASHINGTON: Pakistan has urged the United States on greater support in completion of the multi-billion dollars Diamer-Bhasha dam project in view of its tremendous water storage and power generation significance to the country. The Pakistani delegation, taking part in the fifth Energy Working Group meeting, emphasized the need for enhanced US assistance in the construction of large hydroelectric projects, particularly the Diamer-Bhasha, the Pakistani embassy in Washington stated.

Convened immediately after the official visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Washington last month, the Working Group discussed the whole range of Pakistan-US Energy Cooperation to help Islamabad overcome its energy shortfall in line with the priorities identified by the leadership in their joint statement. Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Federal Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, co-chaired the meeting with US Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1056146/pakistan-seeks-greater-us-support-for-diamer-bhasha-dam>

“Pakistan resolved to build Diamer-Bhasha dam; mutual trust must for successful 2014 transition: Ahsan”

Associated Press of Pakistan, November 5, 2013

WASHINGTON: Describing Diamer-Bhasha dam as critical to future progress of Pakistan, Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, Ahsan Iqbal stated the country would bring into use all available resources as well as international support to materialize the multi-

billion dollars projects. Ahsan Iqbal, who outlined Islamabad's development plans under the 2025 vision to a Washington audience of experts, later also stressed in a media interaction the need for Pakistan and all international partners to work in an environment of mutual trust to accomplish the goals of regional stability with 2014 transition in Afghanistan.

If we do not build this dam which will take around nine years for its completion we will face a dire water shortage crisis --- our food security is dependent on this very project, he stated, addressing an event at the International Food Policy Research Institute. He appealed to the international community and international financial institutions to support the country in building this energy and water reservoir project, which domestically enjoys tremendous national consensus of all provinces.

In his presentation, Iqbal earlier underscored the criticality of the Diamer “Bhasha dam to the country's development by likening it to the importance that Pakistan's nuclear program had to its defense and was pursued at great financial cost. Together with Dasu, he stated, Diamer Bhasha dam will form lifeline of water supplies and energy for Pakistan. He stated the U.S. Congress has already endorsed financial support for initial work on Diamer Bhasha dam and expressed the hope that with broader support from international partners a consortium would be established in near future to push the project.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=247798&Itemid=2

“Energy crisis: US govt commits over \$20 million Diamer-Bhasha dam”

The Express Tribune, November 26, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The United States government has so far committed \$20.56 million for

construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam, according to a US embassy official. Out of this amount, \$560,000 is for three additional feasibility studies for the dam, the official stated. He also noted that as part of its ongoing programmes in Pakistan, the United States government will spend \$14 million on the installation of smart meters for gauging electricity use at substations and countering the problem of power theft.

The Bhasha dam project has been revived by the current government. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Syed Raghob Abbas Shah recently announced that the Gilgit-Baltistan government had transferred 1,700 acres of land to WAPDA for the project, and further work was underway.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/637306/energy-crisis-us-govt-commits-over-20-million-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

“President AJK inaugurates 'Kashmir-EU Week' at EU parliament in Brussels”

Associated Press of Pakistan, November 13, 2013

BRUSSELS: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan inaugurated 'Kashmir-EU Week' a week long programme on Kashmir at European Parliament in Brussels. The programme is being organized by International Council for Human Development (ICHD) with collaboration of other organization including Kashmir Council EU and World Kashmir Diaspora Alliance at the

EU parliament. The Kashmir-EU Week 2013 offers a three-day exhibition of Kashmiri art, literature, handicrafts, paintings, photographs and music, reflecting the plight and courage of the Kashmiri people.

The inaugural seminar “Kashmir Conflict The forgotten territory of South Asia” was addressed by Sajjad Haider Karim, MEP (ECR) (host of the event), Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan President Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Ali Raza Syed, Chairman of ICHD (organizer of the event), Jean LAMBERT MEP Chair. Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia, Pakistan's Ambassador to EU Munawar Saeed Bhatti, Farooq Siddiqi, Chairman of World Kashmiri Diaspora Alliance (Canada), Farzana Yaqoob Minister of Social Welfare Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Danielle Caron, Member of Brussels Parliament (Belgium), Laura Schuurmans, Research scholar on Kashmir conflict (Indonesia), Marjan Lucas, Human Rights Activist (The Netherlands), Zouhour Wani, Attorney at Law (New York, USA), Shujaat Bukhari, Chief Editor, Rising Kashmir, Srinagar (Kashmir) and Altaf Hussain Wani Rep APHC Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=249313&Itemid=1

Other Developments

“Silk Route Festival opens new avenues of trade and cultural exchange”

Business Recorder, November 2, 2013

The three-day Silk Route Festival (SRF) 2013, opened new avenues of trade, cultural exchange and it was an attempt to boost tourism industry of the country. The SRF which opened on October 27, at the Karakoram International University, Gilgit, was well attended by diplomats of several countries in Pakistan, including Ukraine, Egypt, China, Italy, Japan, Indonesia, Syria, North Korea, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

The three-day festival featured art and craft show, gems and jewellery expo, polo match, visits to ancient Budha site, view points of popular peaks connected to old Silk Routes, visits of delegates to Alit and Baltit forts, traditional food fiesta, and traditional dances and instrumental performances to show the regional attires and way of living of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-economy/189/1247350/>

Khurshid Zaman, “Attabad Landslide”

Business Recorder, November 1, 2013

In January 2010, Attabad Landslide, was a natural disaster of such magnitude which shook the whole administration of Gilgit-Baltistan and National Highway Authority (NHA). Pakistan Army was asked to tackle the critical situation, as the lake created by the landslide was swelling each day. A spillway cut by FWO solved the problem and threat of lake burst was averted. In phase-II it was decided at the highest level to bring the water level down by 30 meters and FWO won this difficult project by competing with high ranking US and Chinese companies.

Work started in the month of October 2010 when the

temperature was freezing cold and first coffer dam was blasted in January 2011 which brought the lake level down by 1.5 meter. The second coffer dam was blasted in March 2011 and it lowered the lake level another 2.5 meter thus making an encouraging start of 4 meter in one season. It is to be noted that work on this project was only possible during winter season when flow of water into river Hunza was minimum and it was the most difficult time to work due to icy cold weather. During summer there was no possibility of making a coffer dam due to high flow of water. So only 6 months were available in a year for working on the actual project.

The 3rd coffer dam was blasted in February 2012 and lake water came down by another 6 meters. After the concerted efforts of motivated and dedicated workforce of FWO, the lake level was reduced by 27 meters during last winters. The work will again start in October 2013 and we are hopeful to achieve the target of 30 meters at the end of this year.

<http://www.brecorder.com/supplements/88/1247167/>

“Sheltering refugees: Foreign charity to construct 200 houses”

The Express Tribune, November 29, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: A Saudi Arabian charity on November 28 inaugurated a 200-unit housing project worth Rs2 billion for Kashmiri refugees settled in Azad Jammu and Kashmir since 1989. The International Islamic Relief Organisation Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) will construct 20 houses in the first phase while the remaining will be completed in the second phase of the project. AJK President Sardar Yaqoob Khan and representatives of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Azad Kashmir chapter, were present on the occasion.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/638436/sheltering-refugees-foreign-charity-to-construct-200-houses/>

Shabbir Mir, “A two-week wait: KKH to finally open for traffic today”

The Express Tribune, November 27, 2013

GILGIT: Traffic along the Karakoram Highway (KKH) will resume on November 28, announced the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government on November 27, ending the plight of stranded passengers after two weeks. “We decided in a meeting to allow traffic on the KKH November 28 onwards,” stated Minister for Information Sadia Danish.

The highway was sealed from November 14 a day before Muharram 10 to avoid any untoward incidents. However, in the wake of the Rawalpindi incident on Ashura, the suspension was prolonged due to protests along the 600 kilometre-long highway. The G-B government has remained in contact with the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government over the closure but delayed the decision to reopen the KKH as it didn't get clearance from K-P.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/638005/a-two-week-wait-kkh-to-finally-open-for-traffic-today/>

“Alarming: Malnourishment in AJK widespread, says report”

The Express Tribune, November 10, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The health department of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has failed to reduce malnutrition and infant mortality across the region. According to a recent United Nations (UN) survey, out of nearly 17,000 pregnant or lactating women and more than 60,000 children who were examined 38 per cent women and 21 per cent children were found malnourished. The World Food Programme-funded survey, revealed in a report recently, was conducted in Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Neelum and Hattian Bala. It stated that malnourishment was causing physical and mental disabilities on a wider scale and was also a major cause of infant mortality. AJK health officials say the infant mortality rate in the region is 56 per 1,000 live births.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/629678/alar-ming-malnourishment-in-ajk-widespread-says-report/>

“Cultural festival: Silk Route event aims to lift sagging tourism”

The Express Tribune, November 8, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The three-day Silk Route Festival (SRF) 2013 has provided the locals of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) with an opportunity to attract foreign and national tourists to experience their unique culture and landscape. The occasion gave the locals a chance to exhibit their art, culture and traditional heritage to the delegates of the Silk Route member states which include several countries such as China, Egypt, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Indonesia after almost 13 years. The event was aimed at reviving tourism and trade in the region as the Silk Route was the first bridge formed to connect the East and West. G-B governor Pir Karam Ali Shah, who inaugurated the event at the Karakoram International University (KIU) stated “G-B has much to offer to the rest of the world and its potential can be utilized by making investments in the region”.

Ukraine ambassador Volodymyr Lakomov became the first official from his country to visit Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), after five of his Ukrainian compatriots were murdered alongside five other trekkers at Nanga Parbat in June 2013. This incident was a serious setback to the region's tourism industry. Chief Secretary Youns Dhaga in his speech stated, “the objective of the event was to explore future collaboration between the Silk Route countries, we are overwhelmed by the response of foreign delegates”. The event was not only focused on the tourism industry but it also involved the interaction of foreign delegates with the local communities through which they were exposed to the rich cultural legacies of this area.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/628801/cultural-festival-silk-route-event-aims-to-lift-sagging-tourism/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

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

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

Chief Minister G-B: Syed Mehdi Shah

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

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

Disclaimer

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

POK NEWS DIGEST



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