

POK NEWS DIGEST

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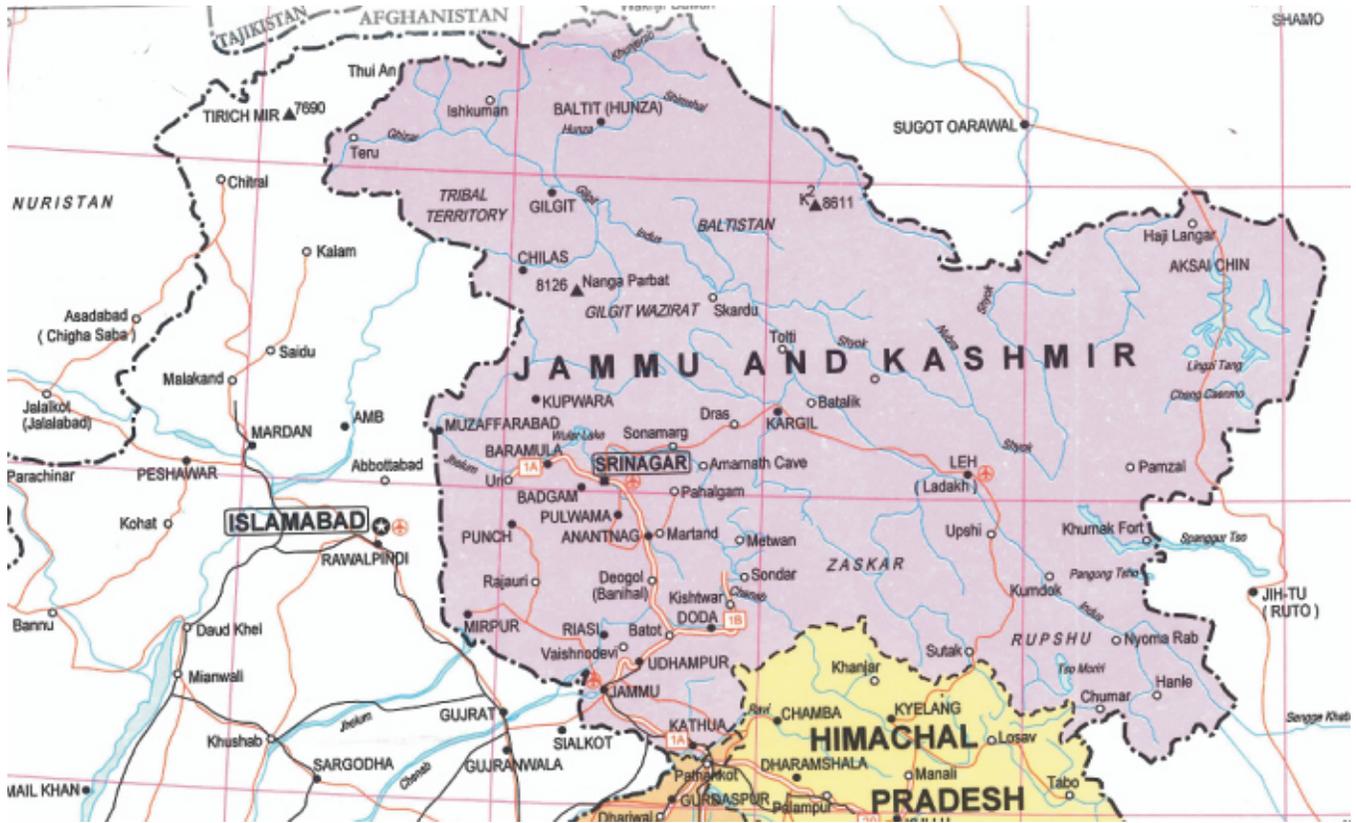
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Elections for the 49 seats of the AJK Legislative Assembly are scheduled to be held on the 26th of June, 2011. Out of the total 49 seats in the so called AJK, 41 members are directly elected, 12 are from different parts of Pakistan comprising the Kashmiri refugees and eight seats are for reserved candidates. The AJK Election Commission has unveiled the code of conduct and urged political parties to follow it. Pakistan's Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani paid a visit to Muzaffarabad to flag off PPP's election campaign there. Its alliance partner in the federal government, the PML-N is contesting the polls with the Jamaat I Islami (JI).

Meanwhile, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) has suggested that the PoK (so called AJK and Gilgit Baltistan) should be given to enjoy equal rights as bestowed on other provinces of Pakistan. PILDAT organized a forum 'Proposed Constitutional Amendments in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, for Empowerment of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan', on May 18 in Islamabad.

China's increasing foothold in PoK has been a cause of concern in India as indicated by several reports included in the issue. Chinese involvement in various infrastructure projects and the presence of Chinese engineers and workers in PoK is likely to impact India's interests in the long term. PoK is an integral part of India and Chinese presence in that region may complicate the future situation. Therefore, India should keep a constant check on the developments across the LoC and register strong protest against the Chinese interference there.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Parties gearing up for electoral alliances

The Nation, May 31, 2011

MIRPUR: With the announcement of schedule for general elections in Azad Jammu Kashmir, the electioneering by the intending contestants including independent candidates and political parties as well as the general public including supporters is swiftly gaining momentum across the state. A new alliance named after the All Parties National Democratic Alliance comprising some progressive parties has also emerged to fight for the membership of the state legislature.

Reports stated that several electoral alliances comprising prominent political groups are expected since various political parties are joining heads to reach into the electoral alliances to field the joint candidates in the elections to 49-seat Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu Kashmir to be held on June 26, 2011. May 26 was the last date for filing the nomination papers by the candidates intending to contest the polls, according to the elections schedule. Scrutiny of the nomination papers was being held on May 30 after which the first list of the eligible candidates will be made public.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/31-May-2011/Parties-gearing-up-for-electoral-alliances>

Shujaat Bukhari, Kashmir discourse dominates election campaign in PoK

The Hindu, May 30, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The battle among political parties in this Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to reach the Prime Minister's office has intensified with campaigning gathering pace for the June 26 elections. Issues of governance have been relegated to the background in the campaign due to an "overdose" of how the Kashmir problem should be resolved.

In the past five years, the PoK government has remained unstable because of differences in the Muslim Conference (MC), currently ruling the State. This has cast a shadow over the ongoing electoral process and completely changed the equations by bringing Pakistan's ruling People's Party and Nawaz Sharief-led Muslim League into the larger picture. "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" as it is officially known, faced the worst-ever devastation in the 2005 earthquake, but with generous aid from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE, reconstruction and rehabilitation was made possible.

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053058820900.htm>

EC urges candidates to follow code of conduct

The Frontier Post, May 29, 2011

MIRPUR: The Election Commission (EC) of Azad and Jammu Kashmir (AJK) has asked all the candidates and their supporters to follow the code of conduct of the commission. Official sources stated on May 28, the AJK general elections would be held on June 26. Election Commission has imposed ban on bringing out processions, carrying arms and using loud speakers, installing banners and posters during election campaign.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=20018>

AJK elections: KLP jumps into fray

The Express Tribune, May 30, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Labour Party (KLP) will take part in the forthcoming general election of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly scheduled for June 26, stated a press release of the party in Islamabad on May 29. The 49-seat semi-autonomous house has a power to elect its own prime minister and president, however it is the Federal Ministry of Kashmir Affairs that calls all the

shots and wields all the powers.

Of the total members, 41 are elected directly, 12 are elected from different parts of Pakistan by the immigrant Kashmiris and eight sent to the house on special reserved seats. The 12 immigrant Kashmir members play a decisive role in the election of the prime minister and president. "In these circumstances, Labour Party Pakistan decided not to be a silent spectator and let the rulers bulldoze the fundamental economic, political and social rights of Kashmiri people," noted the Labour Party Pakistan (LPP) General Secretary Tariq Farooq.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/178543/ajk-elections-klp-jumps-into-fray/>

Mango politics ahead of AJK polls

The Nation, May 29, 2011

SIALKOT: The "mango politics" are on its peak by the candidates ahead of the coming elections of AJK Legislative Assembly. The candidates were busy in holding the mango parties or sending the political "gifts" of the mangoes to lure their voters and supporters as well. The candidates have geared up their election campaign in different constituencies located in Sialkot district for the elections of Azad Jammu & Kashmir legislative Assembly after depositing their nomination papers, in this regard. Reportedly, the Kashmiri Muhaajireen residing in both neighbouring and bordering Sialkot and Narowal districts were showing keen interest in the coming elections of AJK Legislative Assembly. The candidates have also started displaying their electoral banners and giant hoarding boards in all the important places falling in their respective electoral constituencies in Sialkot district.

In Constituency (LA- 32 Jammu-III), as many as 15 candidates (including AJK Minister for religious Affairs Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Ch. Muhammad Ishaq, Syed Ishtiaq-ul Hassan Gillani, Ch. Shaukat Wazir Ali and Ch. Noor Ahmed) have deposited their nomination papers before the returning officers at the office of Election Commission of Pakistan at Sialkot. Senior Vice President of PML-N Sialkot District Asif Mehmood Soni noted that the PML-N has nominated Ch. Muhammad Ishaq of

village Tilakpur-Sialkot as its candidate for this constituency.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/29-May-2011/Mango-politics-ahead-of-AJK-polls>

Early resolution of Kashmir demanded

The Nation, May 28, 2011

MIRPUR: An international conference on "Kashmir in Emerging Global Perspectives", organised by the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, was held at Muzaffarabad. In the conference, scholars and intellectuals from both sides of Jammu and Kashmir and from abroad participated. The conference consisted of two plenary lectures delivered by Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai from Kashmiri American Council and Prof. Kamal Chenoy from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India on the first and second day of the conference respectively. In addition, five academic sessions were held in which twenty eight papers were presented on various aspects of the Kashmir issue. Apart from these, one hour open panel discussion was held in which all the participants expressed their views.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/28-May-2011/Early-resolution-of-Kashmir-demanded>

65 candidates file papers

The Nation, May 27, 2011

MIRPUR: A total of 65 candidates in all four electoral constituencies of Mirpur district filed their nomination papers with the concerned Returning Officers on May 26 to join the race for the scheduled June 26 elections to Azad Jammu & Kashmir Legislative, official sources stated. May 26 was the last date for filing of the nomination papers and the candidates could file the nomination papers till 2400 hours on Thursday as according to the schedule announced by the AJK election commission.

According to details provided by concerned Returning Officers of all four electoral constituencies in the district, a total of 65

candidates, belonging to various political parties as well as independents, filed their nomination papers by the last day with the concerned Returning Officers. The 41 seats include 29 of all 10 districts of AJK and 12 seats meant for Pakistan-based refugees of Jammu & Kashmir.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/27-May-2011/65-candidates-file-papers>

New budget to envisage mass uplift: Wattoo

The Nation, May 24, 2011

DEPALPUR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Mian Manzoor Wattoo stated that in the budget for new financial year 2011-12, a number of development schemes will be proposed to improve the standard of living of people in district Okara. “A number of dams and power generation projects have been nearing completion which will help the power availability situation in the country. Mian Manzoor Wattoo was speaking at the inauguration of sui gas supply scheme to Koieko Bhalwal in Tehsil Depalpur. On the occasion, people of the area thanked the Federal Minister for his vision and services rendered for the welfare of people of Depalpur in particular and Okara in general.

Stocks of petrol and diesel have finished in the Skardu and Ghanche districts, and the district administration has taken control of a few petrol pumps to use the available stock in case of emergency.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/24-May-2011/New-budget-to-envisage-mass-uplift-Wattoo>

China`s role and interest in Kashmir must not be dispelled

May 25, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: China`s role and interest in Kashmir must not be dispelled by the stakeholders of Kashmir Issue. This was stated by Mr. Murtaza Shibli, Secretary General of World Kashmir Diaspora Alliance (WKDA) in his speech delivered in Kashmir International conference in Muzaffarabad.

Speaking on the subject of “Emerging new perspectives in Kashmir” Murtaza Shibli emphasized that for any settlement of Kashmir issue through dialogue, China has unique capability of becoming the guarantor of lasting peace given its geo political and geo economical proximity with Kashmir coupled with its growing military might in the region.

We must not become oblivious of the fact that a part of Kashmir is under the control of China which, as such gives it a position of default in any final solution of Kashmir. Shibli stated that China is subtly giving the indications and positioning itself with the presence of its boots in Gilgit and its incursions in Ladakh . Its measured decision to grant staple visa's to Kashmir's holding Indian Passport are signs of its interests and stakes in the region of Kashmir, which can not be disregarded as meaningless overtures.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/05/25/china-s-role-and-interest-in-kashmir-must-not-be-dispelled.html>

Mazhar Tufail, Foreigners, Afghans major threat in AJK

The News, May 25, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Whereas the presence of a large number of foreigners, particularly Afghans, in different cities of Azad Kashmir is a question mark on the performance of the security agencies, these aliens can pose a serious security risk in the days to come. “In their reports, the intelligence agencies have reminded the authorities in Azad Kashmir several times to be careful about the security matters, the rulers of Azad Kashmir are doing nothing except improving their political standing and taking steps for ensuring their victory in the next elections,” an official source stated.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=48983&Cat=2&dt=5/25/2011>

Party to emerge victorious in polls

The Nation, May 24, 2011

MIRPUR: PPP AJK Chief and leader of opposition in sitting Azad Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed declared that

his party awaits the landslide triumph in the scheduled June 26 AJK general elections as all is set to field the PPP candidates in all 41 seats of AJK legislature in the elections, he declared. Addressing a crowded news conference in Mirpur, Majeed asserted following the increased popularity graph of PPP among masses both across Pakistan and AJK, the party will emerge as the single majority party by winning 2/3 majority seats in the 49-seat AJK legislative Assembly to form the next government in AJK.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/24-May-2011/Party-to-emerge-victorious-in-polls>

Pck Premier Invites Indian PM to Muzaffarabad

May 23, 2011

SRINAGAR: The prime minister of Pak-controlled-Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan invited Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, to Muzaffarabad, advocating a joint tour by the Indian and Pakistani premiers of all the five regions of the divided state to know the views of the people.

“The leaders should undertake the joint tour for a first-hand account of what the people of the regions aspire for,” Khan stated at an international conference on Kashmir. He noted that there was no option but to resolve the Kashmir issue as both India and Pakistan had become nuclear powers. Khan advocated full opening of the Line of Control dividing the state for travel, trade, and intellectual exchanges to make the barrier irrelevant with the passage of time. “This military line should be erased for good to dismantle the barriers of hate,” he asserted.

http://www.kashmirobservers.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7706:pck-premier-invites-indian-pm-to-muzaffarabad&catid=3:regional-news&Itemid=4

Candidates gear up for getting tickets

The Nation, May 24, 2011

SIALKOT: The candidates have started their struggle for getting the tickets of the mainstream political parties for the upcoming elections of Azad

Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, along with gearing up their mass-contact campaign in AJK Legislative Assembly's two constituencies (LA- 31 Jammu-II and LA- 32 Jammu-III), both falling under Sialkot district. In constituency LA-32 Jammu-III, Ch Muhammad Ishaq and Ch Suhail Gujjar are in race to get the PML-N ticket to give tough time to AJK Minister for religious Affairs Hafiz Hamid Raza. A former PPP ticket-holder Ch Shaukat Wazir Ali and Syed Ishtiaq Gillani are trying to get the PPP ticket for contesting the election from the constituency.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/24-May-2011/Candidates-gear-up-for-getting-tickets>

PM Gilani inaugurates development projects in AJK

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 23, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on May 23 inaugurated a series of development projects for Azad Kashmir's different cities, in education and infrastructure sectors. The Prime Minister who was in Muzaffarabad on a day-long visit, inaugurated the Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot campuses of Azad Jammu and Kashmir University. He also inaugurated 25 model schools which have been constructed with a cost of Rs 340.50 million. The schools are fully equipped with the departments having tools of science and research. Prime Minister Gilani stated the government was striving to provide quality education to the people and bring improvement in their lives. He thanked the Saudi government for providing assistance in completion of these projects.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=139989&Itemid=38

AJK politics: PML-Q backs Kashmir alliance

The Express Tribune, May 23, 2011

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam) assured the Muslim Conference of Azad Jammu and Kashmir of its support for an alliance between the Conference and the Pakistan Peoples Party against the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

in the next general election. The next general election in the AJK is scheduled to be held on June 26, 2011. The assurance was given by PML-Q president, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attiq Ahmed, leader of the Muslim Conference, during a meeting at Hussain's Lahore residence on May 22, according to the PML-Q media cell. Shujaat assured Attiq that the PML-Q had no plans to register itself as a political party in the AJK. He noted his family had old ties with the Muslim Conference and would never want to contest elections against it.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/174033/ajk-politics-pml-q-backs-kashmir-alliance/>

Process Begins For Return of Youth

May 21, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The process for return of Kashmiri youth from Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) has begun under the Rehabilitation Policy launched by the Jammu and Kashmir government recently. According to sources, for the first time during the past 22-years, a team of officials from the Pakistani security establishment visited a Kashmiri refugee camp near Busnara here for 'ground check' and identified nine youth for their return to the Valley. The Pak officials during their visit to the camp verified the details of identity, refugee status and present occupation of the short-listed persons.

The nine youth identified by Pak officials for return include Abdul Rashid Dar alias Hussain of Shopian, Fayaz Ahmad Ganaie of Pulwama, Mushtaq Ahmad Naik of Anantnag, Raja Sajjad Ahmad Dar of Anantnag, Abdul Rashid Dar of Baramulla, Sher Khan of Kupwara, Muhammad Sajjad Shah of Budgam, Muhammad Aslam of Tral and Ali Muhammad.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/21/process-begins-for-return-of-youth-41.asp>

MQM to contest AJK elections with manifesto to empower masses: Sattar

The News, May 20, 2011

ISLAMABAD: In the run up to elections in Azad

Kashmir next month, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) on May 19 unveiled a 28-point manifesto with aim to empowering the common man. At news briefing in Islamabad, MQM's Deputy Convener, Dr Farooq Sattar, who is also a federal minister, stated that the party had decided to field its candidate in each AJK constituency. The AJK elections are slated for June 26. The MQM leader pointed out his party had come up with a manifesto, whereas other political parties had been busy over there with no policy in hand or direction for the people of Kashmir.

“Our party manifesto encompasses revolutionary measures for students, health, industrial and economic development, reduction of poverty and unemployment and promotion of meritocracy,” he maintained while highlighting salient features of the manifesto.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=48026&Cat=2&dt=5/20/2011>

PILDAT proposes provincial status for AJK, G-B

Pakistan Tribune, May 19, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Experts agreed that the current constitutional arrangements for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan should be reformed to give the same quantum of autonomy as provided to the four provinces in a forum 'Proposed Constitutional Amendments in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, for Empowerment of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan', organized by Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) on May 18.

The forum was organized to initiate a dialogue on the proposed amendments in the Constitution of Pakistan so that the Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan enjoy equitable rights and facilities till the time a permanent settlement on the status of these regions is reached and the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir get their right of self-determination as provided in the United Nations Security Council resolutions. The legislative forum was participated by a large number of analysts and subject experts.

<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?239509>

Hameed Shaheen, Sinohydro to build six AJK power stations

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: The Sinohydro, a Chinese hydropower generation company known world over has offered soft loan and services for the construction of six medium power stations in AJK to produce 210 megawatts electricity. Mr Gao Fey, General Manager of the company who has already signed projects MoU with the AJK government, The company has set aside financial resources for investment on these hydro projects. Sinohydro is ready to give in advance as soft loan 85 per cent of the total cost calculated around US dollars 300-400 million.

However the initiation of the projects, experts note, is delayed due to the bureaucratic procedural snags. At this critical stage when the entire nation is facing acute power shortage, curse of prolonged load shedding the addition of 210 megawatts of electricity to the national grid is no less than a blessing. AJK has immense water resources but all not utilized to combat the power shortage in the country. Hundreds of medium power houses can be built across AJK within shortest time to augment national power grid.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=93457>

Qamar Zaman, AJK Elections: MQM to field candidates in every constituency

The Express Tribune, May 20, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) on May 19 announced to nominate its candidates from every constituency of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) in the upcoming elections. “The MQM stands by the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination and legitimate rights,” noted federal minister and deputy convener of coordination committee, Dr Farooq Sattar while revealing the party's manifesto for AJK at a press conference. “The MQM demands that the decision about the future of Kashmir should be made keeping in view the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/172387/ajk-elections-mqm-to>

[field-candidates-in-every-constituency/](#)

Favouring development: Uplift package for Bunji announced

The Express Tribune, May 20, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah, on May 19 announced a number of development schemes for the garrison town of Bunji, the regimental centre of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) in Astor District. Addressing a public rally at a local school after performing the ground breaking of a suspension bridge, the chief minister announced a grant of Rs40 million for provision of clean drinking water to the town located on the west bank of River Indus, 50 kilometres from Gilgit, the region's capital city.

The bridge was swept away by last year's floods and the town remained disconnected from rest of Gilgit for quite some time before the historic Partap Pul was renovated. An RCC bridge will also be constructed to link the town with the KKH. Shah also announced upgradation of the high school and a Rs50,000 grant for the boy scouts. He lauded the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government for empowering the people of G-B to solve their problems.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/172291/favouring-development-uplift-package-for-bunji-announced/>

Improving surveillance: Cameras to be installed in Gilgit

The Express Tribune, May 18, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) cabinet decided on May 17 to install close-circuit security cameras to assist in improving the law and order situation in Gilgit city. Costing Rs60 million, the project will be completed in six months, stated spokesperson of the G-B chief minister, Ali Madad Sher. Legislators also decided to turn the police recruitment and training centre into a complete school for better training and facilities to the police force, an official added.

“The meeting reviewed the pace of development and out of 258 targeted projects of the public works department, 198 have been completed while the rest

will be completed by June 30,” noted the spokesperson. An electricity and mineral board will also be established in G-B to enhance the region's productivity, he further added

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/170810/improving-surveillance-cameras-to-be-installed-in-gilgit/>

Misconduct, corruption: KIU management, teachers trade allegations

The Express Tribune, May 19, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah has warned against interference in official matters and irregularities in Karakoram International University (KIU). He stated this during a meeting with a delegation from KIU that called on him at his secretariat on May 18 to apprise him of the causes that led to the sacking of a teacher and putting three others on one year 'conduct probation'. However, the four teachers separately met the CM and described the KIU management action as 'injustice' and accusing it of involved in corruption and nepotism.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/171672/misconduct-corruption-kiu-management-teachers-trade-allegations/>

PPP AJK backs resolution passed by joint session

The Nation, May 19, 2011

MIRPUR: PPP AJK chief and leader of opposition in AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has fully endorsed and supported the recently-passed joint resolution by the national parliament of Pakistan about the current situation emerged after the Abbottabad incident and the national stance on the issue. He stated that the resolution passed by the national parliament must be entertained with full respect and honour. Majeed noted that the PPP-led government under the dynamic leadership of President Asif Zardari and the Prime Minister Gilani was acting upon the policies fully depicting the aspirations of 180 million people of Pakistan by maintaining full respect and honour of the masses and the country being a sovereign nation.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/19-May-2011/PPP-AJK->

[backs-resolution-passed-by--joint-session](#)

Azam Khan, Disputed territories: Call for true autonomy, equal rights for G-B, AJK

The Express Tribune, May 19, 2011

ISLAMABAD: A paradigm shift in Pakistan's decades old stance on Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) is needed alongside genuine autonomy and equal rights at par with other provinces without altering UN resolutions on Kashmir. This was the consensus of participants in a forum on “Proposed Constitutional Amendments in the Constitution of Pakistan for Empowerment of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan” organised by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT).

Participants also called for an end to bureaucratic rule and interference from Islamabad in the internal affairs of the two regions and ensuring genuine democracy in AJK and G-B. The participants, including political leaders, former presidents, prime ministers of AJK, former diplomats, retired military officers, journalists and legal experts, were near unanimous that Pakistani rulers are treating the two regions like colonies and are not honouring the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolutions regarding Kashmir and G-B. They called for giving equal representation to the people of AJK and G-B in Pakistan's parliament.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/171665/disputed-territories-call-for-true-autonomy-equal-rights-for-g-b-ajk/>

Govt mulling closure of AJK TV

The Nation, May 17, 2011

MIRPUR: The government is seriously contemplating closure of AJK TV (Azad Jammu and Kashmir Television) following the severe financial crunch. Being the sister concern, AJK TV based at Muzaffarabad, was established by Pakistan Television Corporation in 2004 primarily for the projection of case of Kashmir Liberation through production and transmission of programmes and neutralization of anti-Pakistan propaganda, sources stated on May 15.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily->

Altaf Hameed Rao, Electioneering kicks off,

The Nation, May 18, 2011

MIRPUR: With the announcement of the general elections schedule in Azad Jammu Kashmir by the AJK Election Commission, the electioneering by the intending contestants including independent candidates and political parties as well as the general public including supporters has begun with an immense enthusiasm in Mirpur on May 17. Various political parties are joining heads to reach into the electoral alliances to field the joint candidates in the elections to 49-seat Legislative Assembly.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/18-May-2011/Electioneering-kicks-off>

62 employees of Food dept fired

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: The Food department fired more than 62 employees serving on contract and contingent basis with immediate effect, official sources stated. Sources further noted that the directives for termination of their services were issued by the Secretary Food which was endorsed by the directorate. Official sources noted these employees were working since July 2010 and were even not paid salaries since then, though there were pressing demands from the employees to pay them off. Those who were terminated from Gilgit district gathered in front of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and protested against termination.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=92892>

Rajnish Sharma & Ashraf Wani, China increases its presence in PoK with multiple projects

India Today, May 17, 2011

There has been a sharp increase in Chinese activity in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, according to a highly confidential government report. The intelligence report says that China's People's Liberation Army is

playing a crucial role in Gilgit and Baltistan regions of PoK, by supplying engineers, technicians and computer professionals for infrastructure projects.

The report states nearly 11,000 Chinese engineers and technicians are currently employed in various infrastructure projects in PoK. Half of these are believed to be military engineers and technicians from the People's Liberation Army. One of PLA's battalions was also stationed at Khunjerab Pass in PoK for the security of Chinese workers. The battalion, however, was withdrawn in May 2010 after sustained international pressure.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story/china-increases-its-presence-in-pok-with-multiple-projects/1/138484.html>

Chinese presence near LoC a cause of concern: Army

India Today, May 14, 2011

A senior Army commander on May 14 stated there is considerable Chinese presence in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), terming it a "cause of concern". "There is a considerable amount of Chinese presence in PoK," General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of Army's northern command Lt General K T Parnaik noted in Srinagar. He further stated the Army has been officially informed that the Chinese presence in areas close to Line-of-Control was of engineers and workers for infrastructure development.

"Now their presence is mainly because of infrastructure development. We are aware that the Chinese are assisting in construction of a highway...a large number of dams and infrastructure projects have been developed by the Chinese in PoK as well as the northern areas. These areas are very close to the LoC," Parnaik noted.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story/chinese-presence-near-loc-a-cause-of-concern-army/1/138202.html>

Rally in support of Pak-army in Muzaffarabad

The Nation, May 16, 2011

Large number of people belonging to different organizations of the civil society took out separate rallies here in Muzaffarabad on May 16 in support

of Pakistan army for its role in the defence of the motherland. Muslim conference youth wing and refugees in Azad Kashmir took out separate rallies in support of the Pakistan army praising its contributions for the defence and stability of Pakistan.

Participants of Refugees in Azad Jammu and Kashmir rally marched from the press club in Muzaffarabad to the United Nations Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan. Demonstrators in the rally were holding banners and placards inscribed with slogans in support of the Pakistan army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) while chanting slogans against the American intelligence agency CIA.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/16-May-2011/Rally-in-support-of-Pakarmy-in-Muzaffarabad>

Rashid Turrabi calls for the election of right people in AKJ parliamentary elections

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 17, 2011

LONDON: Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami, Azad Kashmir, Abdur Rashid Turrabi noted forthcoming general elections in Azad Kashmir are an opportunity to elect right people. AJK which was supposed to serve as base of Kashmiri people's struggle for their right to self determination has been turned into a camp for power struggle. This is the right time for the freedom loving people of Azad Kashmir to take step towards right direction for the future of their coming generations, Turrabi noted while speaking at a reception hosted in his honour by UK Islamic Mission in Birmingham.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=139498&Itemid=2

Need to give a shut-up call

The Nation, May 16, 2011

Prime Minister Gilani stated that the Punjab government must not be toppled as his PPP-led government respected the people's mandate. His saying so was as significant as who he said it to, for he was addressing an AJK workers' convention while his party's ally, the AJKPP, is about to go into

a general election in alliance with Sardar Attique's AJK Muslim Conference faction. Because the AJKMC has a deep link with the PML-N ruling the neighbouring Punjab, the PPP's behaviour there matters, not to mention the recent developments of the PPP pulling out of the government there to go into opposition, followed very quickly by the PML-Q going into alliance with it.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Opinions/Editorials/16-May-2011/Need-to-give-a-shutup-call>

Roshan Mughal, PM promises Kashmir uplift, if PPP elected

The Express Tribune, May 15, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani assured Kashmiris that their unprecedented sacrifices will not be in vain and they will witness 'the dawn of freedom' soon. "I assure you that your martyrdoms for liberation will not prove futile," he noted while addressing a Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) workers' convention in Mirpur on May 13.

He noted the PPP was founded on the basis of Kashmiri struggle for freedom and the party stands with Kashmiris politically and morally. The premier noted Pakistanis are a responsible and honorable people who do not want their peace ruined by terrorists. Referring to the allocation of funds, Gilani said no cuts will be imposed on AJK in the upcoming budget. Despite the financial crunch, no cuts were imposed on the state's budget last year either, he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/168944/pm-promises-kashmir-uplift-if-ppp-elected/>

Gilani urges people to vote for PPP in AJK elections

Daily Times, May 15, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on May 14 urged the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to vote for candidates of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which is committed to empower people and protect their rights. Addressing leaders and workers of the PPP AJK

chapter at a convention, Gilani pledged that the elections will be transparent and fair and the people will be free to express their choice. He was confident that people would support the PPP candidates in the upcoming elections in AJK. The prime minister stated the PPP was founded on the basis of the Kashmir issue as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto raised the slogan that he would fight for the rights of the Kashmiris for a thousand years.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C05%5C15%5Cstory_15-5-2011_pg7_17

Two more AJK ministers resign

Dawn, May 15, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Two more members of Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan's cabinet have stepped down as his government has lost majority having the support of only 18 members in the currently 48-member Legislative Assembly. Those who tendered resignation were Minister for Health Services and College Education, Dr Najeeb Naqi and Minister for Transport, Hafiz Ahmed Raza Qadri. Both joined the AJK chapter of the PML-N.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/15/two-more-ajk-ministers-resign.html>

AJK Public Service Commission

Pakistan Tribune, May 14, 2011

There are many flaws in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Public Service Commission. It is very slow in conducting exams and the candidates become discouraged because of the slow process. Some vacancies were advertised in July 2010 for which exams have not been conducted so far. The competitive exam for the posts of section officer was held from July 27 to August 10, 2010. During the exam, the candidates were facilitated by the 'booty mafia', especially in the everyday science paper, at the cost of merit. In the interview, there was no criterion to judge the capability of the candidates. Questions like how many lakes are there in Kashmir and who was the first speaker of the AJK Legislative Assembly were asked. No question requiring reasoning was asked of anyone.

<http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?239326>

Sino-Pak friendship: Celebrating 60 years of diplomatic relations

Pakistan Tribune, May 14, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Chinese Overseas Association (G-BCOA) organised a ceremony to mark 60 years of diplomatic relations with China. They paid rich tributes to the leadership of both the countries for maintaining exemplary ties over the years. In Pakistan, the occasion was officially marked on January 1 this year, at a ceremony hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chinese embassy at the Pakistan-China Friendship Centre, presented to Pakistan as symbol of friendship.

“This year reflects our love for both the countries and a friendship which stands taller than the Karakoram mountains,” stated G-BCOA General Secretary, Abdur Rehman Bukhari. G-BCOA is a regional body of Chinese Uyghur expatriates, a Muslims community now settled in Gilgit-Baltistan and Rawalpindi. They had migrated from China's Sinkiang province before partition. Around 5,000 Uyghers families in Pakistan have ties with their relatives in Kashgar and other parts of Sinkiang.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/168368/sino-pak-friendship-celebrating-60-years-of-diplomatic-relations/>

PML-N & JI to contest AJK elections jointly: Nawaz

May 12, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and Quaid of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has stated that federal government should end its interference in elections of Azad Kashmir, adding that Muslim League-N would participate in the election with the Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/05/12/pml-n-ji-to-contest-ajk-elections-jointly-nawaz/>

Shabbir Mir, Government plans to use Attabad Lake as a hatchery

The Express Tribune, May 10, 2011

GILGIT: Authorities in Gilgit-Baltistan are considering converting the Attabad lake into a

hatchery for breeding a variety of fish, sources in the directorate of fisheries noted on May 7. "It is an option but let us see if the result of the feasibility study being conducted there are encouraging or not," the official stated. The lake was formed on January 4, 2010 after a massive landslide blocked the Hunza River. The lake expanded up to 23 kilometres upstream, submerging four villages in Gojal Tehsil of Hunza-Nagar District.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/165311/turning-calamity-into-opportunity-government-plans-to-use-attabad-lake-as-a-hatchery/>

Shabbir Mir, Abbottabad aftermath: Security monitoring increased in G-B

The Express Tribune, May 10, 2011

GILGIT: Security monitoring has been enhanced in Gilgit-Baltistan after the killing of al Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden in Abbottabad, a region linked with Abbottabad via the Karakoram Highway. Boosting vigilance at all levels, security forces started gathering and updating data regarding people from other areas living or visiting the region. "Not only are the roads leading to the Gilgit region being monitored closely but also places like bus terminals, rented houses and hotels are being observed closely so that no terror suspects can elude the agencies," sources stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/165422/abbottabad-aftermath-security-monitoring-increased-in-g-b/>

Delay in border pass issuance hamper trade

The Express Tribune, May 9, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government has not yet issued border passes to traders and tourists intending to visit China, sources stated on May 6. It has been nine days since Pakistan officially opened its border with China, however the government has not issued border passes to traders so far, noted Abdur Rehman Bukhari, general secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan Overseas Chinese Association (G-BOCA), a body of Uyghur ethnic minority Muslims who migrated from Sinkiang province of China to Gilgit city and Rawalpindi before 1947. Now totalling around 5,000 families, the community continues to maintain links with

their relatives in Kashgar and other parts of Sinkiang.

The strategic Karakoram Highway (KKH) connects Pakistan with China via the Khunjerab Pass in G-B. Every year, the Pakistan-China border is closed for trade and tourism between the two friendly countries on November 1 and reopened on the 1st of May, when the snow melts away at the 16,500 feet (5,030 meters) high Khunjerab pass, through which KKH passes.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/164768/delay-in-border-pass-issuance-hamper-trade/>

G-G-B hospitals: Gilgit hospital to be upgraded

The Express Tribune, May 9, 2011

GILGIT: In view of growing population and related health issues, Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah announced the upgradation of District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) Gilgit on May 6, besides announcing facilities for doctors and other staff. During a visit to the hospital, the chief minister announced that the hospital will be upgraded to 400 beds from the existing 200 beds. He also announced the setting up of a cardiac unit in the hospital, which is the biggest health facility in the region. The chief minister also visited various sections and wards of the hospital where patients complained about lack of facilities in the hospital. Taking note of the complaints, Shah directed the hospital administration to serve the people with professional commitment or be prepared to face the consequences.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/164767/g-b-hospitals-gilgit-hospital-to-be-upgraded/>

Balawaristan National Front Conference in Brussels criticizes Pakistan and China's Role in Occupied Gilgit-Baltistan

May 7, 2011

Press Release by Balawaristan National Front (BNF) May 6, 2011

Balawaristan National Front (BNF) held a seminar titled "A Critical But Unknown Pivot of South Asia Under Threat" at the University Foundation Club, Brussels. Dr. Michael Penders chaired the first

session of the conference and Ngawang Choephel chaired the second session. Mumtaz Khan of ICFPD was the moderator for both sessions on May 5, 2011. On May 6, Senge Sering of GBNC presided over conference titled "Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Destruction and Vanishing Indigenous People". Prominent among the speakers were, Prof. David Pentley, Prof. Dr. Hermann Kreutzmann, Dr. Dirk Terwel and Dr. Lakhumal Luhana, Paul Beersmans, Afzal Tahir.

In his inaugural speech, Ngawang Choephel, Chairman of UNPO brought narratives from Xinjiang and Tibet to state that China's interventions in Gilgit-Baltistan will bring the same kind of destruction to flora and fauna, local culture and religious beliefs and demographic structures. He stressed that LOC should open to allow the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh to travel to Tibet.

[http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Balawaristan National_Front_Conference_in_Brussels_criticises_Pakistan_and_Chinas_Role_in_Occupied_GilgitBaltistan,201136277.aspx](http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Balawaristan_National_Front_Conference_in_Brussels_criticises_Pakistan_and_Chinas_Role_in_Occupied_GilgitBaltistan,201136277.aspx)

Shabbir Mir, PML-Q legislators demand place in G-B cabinet

The Express Tribune, May 7, 2011

GILGIT: Following the coalition at the Centre, legislators of PML-Q in Gilgit-Baltistan have been mounting pressure on Chief Minister Mehdi Shah to make a decision about their 'due' share in the regional government, sources stated on May 6. "There have been increased attempts on the part of the PML-Q politicians in G-B with ruling party leaders for adjustment in the government," noted a senior politician of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in Gilgit. "But the issue isn't under consideration at the moment at any level," he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/163577/pml-q-legislators-demand-place-in-g-b-cabinet/>

AJK AB nabs three PWD officials on corruption charges

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 6, 2011

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Accountability Bureau (AB) on May 6 arrested three officials of Public Works Department (PWD) on the charges of indulging in massive corruption, malpractices and embezzling public funds, it was noted. The principle accused of the case - Chief Engineer Buildings (North) PWD, Muzaffarabad, Muhammad Illayas Abbasi- reportedly escaped and raids are being conducted by the Accountability Bureau for his arrest, stated a press release issued by the Bureau in Mirpur on May 6.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=138591&Itemid=2

Pak violating constitution, international law through jackboot Gilgit-Baltistan policy: JK NLF chief

May 5, 2011

NEW DELHI: Describing the situation in Gilgit-Baltistan as not ideal, the chief of the Jammu Kashmir National Liberation Front (JK NLF) accused Pakistan of violating its Constitution and going against the tenets of international law. Speaking in an interview to the Power Politics magazine, Arif Shahid stated that since 1947 "Gilgit-Baltistan has been under the jackboot of Pakistan. People have no identity and no representation whatsoever." He further noted what was of great interest was the fact that the Pakistan Constitution does not even recognize the existence of Gilgit-Baltistan, and added that Pakistan's Supreme Court has rejected several writ petitions that asked specifically for the status of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Shahid charged Islamabad authorities with exploiting and plundering the resources of the region, and this had resulted in the people facing "wretched poverty, illiteracy and backwardness." He suggested the motive was to detach Gilgit-Baltistan from the Kashmir dispute unilaterally, and annex it and make it a part of Pakistan. Commenting on the upcoming polls in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, Shahid claimed the results have been pre-decided.

"Pakistan wants to maintain the status quo in PoK and GB - If a referendum is held in PoK and GB

under the supervision of the UN, with confidence I say people will prefer to join India without giving a second thought," he noted. He also noted that the All Party Hurriyat Conference had no representation in either Indian or Pakistan Kashmir. "The fact is that the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) was created by Pakistan's secret agencies, according to their own requirements, and they later got them divided according to their strategy," he further stated.

<http://www.dailyindia.com/show/438229.php>

Shabbir Mir, Fear forgone: Locals relieved Bin Laden was not in G-B

The Express Tribune, May 6, 2011

GILGIT: The killing of Osama Bin Laden at his house in Abbottabad refreshed the memories of people in Gilgit who remembered being shocked to hear three years ago that the world's most wanted man was hiding in the K2 Mountains of northern Pakistan. Arabic television network, Al-Arabiya, had reported on May 26, 2008, that Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was hiding in northern Pakistan, creating panic among the local people. The report also said US secret service agency was intending to drive him out in a major military operation in the northern tribal belt.

The Dubai-based network also said in its report that in the past few days, US security and military officials had a top-level summit at a military base in the Qatari capital, Doha, to plan an operation to hunt for the Al-Qaeda leader.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/162738/fear-forgone-locals-relieved-bin-laden-was-not-in-g-b/>

Plan evolved to promote higher education in AJK

The Frontier Post, May 6, 2011

MIRPUR: To provide modern higher educational facilities to the women of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the state government had evolved a broad-based plan to set up a world class Women University in AJK in near future, official sources stated.

Sources stated that since the federal government

had already accorded formal approval to extend required assistance for the establishment of a women university in AJK, the government was taking several steps for the improvement of education system in the state. The proposed women university would have the faculties of general and professional education to post-graduate level including the studies in science, IT and computer, the sources added.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=10790>

Iftikhar Gilani, Former PoK PM puts off New Delhi trip at last minute

May 2, 2011

Former PoK PM puts off New Delhi trip at last minute His party advised him to avoid India because of elections in PoK An inter-Jammu and Kashmir conference, where top Kashmiri leaders from across the Line of Control (LoC) were to be present, has been postponed. The organisers said they were compelled to put off the high-profile meet after former prime minister of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), 86-year old Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, reported sick in Rawalpindi, hours before flying to New Delhi.

Sources in Islamabad, however, stated that Khan's party members forced him to cancel the visit. They felt a visit to India would cast a shadow over the election prospects of his party, the Muslim Conference. Elections to the PoK assembly are scheduled for June 2011 and the Muslim Conference is heading the government.

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main49.asp?filename=Ws020511KASHMIR.asp

AJK PM offers to fulfil Pakistan's power needs

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 1, 2011

LAHORE: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Atique Ahmed Khan has offered to fulfil Pakistan's electricity needs, as the AJK has the potential to generate 20,000 mega watt power. Sardar Atique termed the visit of Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani to India successful, saying that it would not only help reduce Pakistan-India

tension but also prove to be instrumental in resolving their mutual disputes through dialogue.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=138148&Itemid=2

Nishaa Ishtiaq, G-B by-election: Not so free, not so fair

The Express Tribune, May 3, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The by-election held on April 28 in Ghizer-I was marked by high voter turnout, suspicious voting patterns and procedural irregularities. This was said by Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its preliminary observation report on Ghizer-I by-election. The report is based on FAFEN's observation of polling

processes at 33 polling stations nine male, nine female and 15 combined. The detailed FAFEN report on this by-election will include the findings from all the observed polling stations.

FAFEN observed suspicious voting patterns at 16 polling stations. It also noted that arrangements for voters were inadequate and disparate, and the whole process was marked with certain procedural irregularities that precluded the election officers deputed at these polling stations from reliability identifying the genuine voters.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/160186/g-b-by-election-not-so-free-not-so-fair/>

Economic Developments

Peer Muhammad, Traders' woes: G-B should be declared a free trade zone

The Express Tribune, May 30, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Already disaster stricken, traders of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) have demanded of the federal government to declare G-B a free trade zone. GB's trade solely depends on the Karakoram Highway (KKH), which connects Gilgit with China, but the trade route was cut off after a massive landslide at Attabad in Hunza on January 4, 2010, which left 23 kilometres of the road and a number of villages completely submerged under the artificial Attabad Lake. All forms of trade were severely affected and it is estimated that the region's traders have suffered around Rs2 billion in losses since then.

G-B Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (GBCCI) President, Javed Ahmed, stated that subsequent disasters in G-B "ruined all businesses in the area" including trade, tourism and other economic activities, pushing people into extreme poverty and economic degradation. "The cost of business has doubled due to the boat services at Attabad Lake, substantially decreasing profit margins for businesses," noted the GBCCI president. He demanded that the government declare G-B a free trade zone by exempting Sost Dry Port from sales tax and custom duties in a bid to facilitate and compensate local traders.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/178540/traders-woes-g-b-should-be-declared-a-free-trade-zone/>

Traders suspend Cross-LoC trade

The Nation, May 30, 2011

SRINAGAR/POONCH: Carrying forward their boycott call, the traders of both routes of state i.e., Uri-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawlakot decided to suspend cross LoC Trade from both routes. This was disclosed by Pawan Anand, Chairman

Chamber of Cross LoC traders of J&K after a meeting with the traders at Anand Hotel Poonch.

Meanwhile at Srinagar also, the traders engaged in cross LoC trade across the two halves of J&K demanded immediate removal of administrative and procedural anomalies. They threatened if the government did not respond to their demands, the trade started in October 2008 would come to a halt. In this connection, the group of traders belonging to "Salamabad Chakoti Traders Union" held protest demonstrations in summer capital demanding immediate redress of their grievances. At Poonch, addressing media persons, Anand stated that traders decided to further suspend cross LoC trade from Chakkan-Da-Bagh and Salamabad route for next two weeks as the government failed to solve their grievances.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/30-May-2011/Traders-suspend--CrossLoC-trade>

Hameed Shaheen, Intra Kashmir trade receives new spur

May 20, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The intra Kashmir trade will receive new spur when the three points agreed between officials of AJK and J&K get approval from their respective foreign offices. Officials from AJK and J&K on May 19 held a day long meeting at Chakothei, the common crossing point on the Line of Control and agreed to raise the current 2-day per week duration of trade to four days, holding of monthly meetings between the traders from each side and crossing of trucks and buses to each side of the LoC. These recommendations would be sent to the foreign offices of Pakistan and India for approval. In the intra Kashmir trade, banking system is also to be inducted soon.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/05/20/intra-kashmir-trade-receives-new-spur.html>

Fiscal over-indulgence

Dawn, May 16, 2011

The fact that over 4,000 of the Gilgit-Baltistan government's employees have not been paid salaries for between three and seven months, as reported on May 14, is unacceptable. With high inflation and its decimation of people's budgets, it is difficult to imagine how the workers and their families coped. Reports indicate that the Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister has taken notice of the situation and has ordered release of the funds, which means the workers should be paid in the days to come. Nevertheless, it needs to be ascertained why the crisis grew to such proportions in the first place.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/16/fiscal-over-indulgence.html>

Federal Govt to assist AJK to counter tax evasion in cigarette industry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government is planning to chalk out a comprehensive action plan with cooperation of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government to stop tax evasion in cigarette industry which is causing a billion of rupees revenue loss to AJK's exchequer. According to the press release, federal government would provide assistance to AJK government to enhance its capability to crackdown again tax evaders especially in cigarette manufacturing industry of AJK.

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) sources revealed that tax rate in cigarette industry in AJK and other parts of Pakistan are same. "Federal government is taking concrete steps with cooperation of AJK to remove bottlenecks in way of implementing tax," sources stated adding that proposed measures will strengthen ability of AJK government to crack down tax evaders in cigarette industry.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=179596>

Plan for industrial uplift in AJK

The Nation, May 22, 2011

MIRPUR: With the allocation of proposed funds in

the forthcoming fiscal year 2011-12 AJK budget, the AJK government has principally decided to ink an integrated plan to promote and encourage the collective and mutual potentials of private and public sectors for the industrial progress and to accelerate the business activities in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, official sources stated.

Sources further stated that since close liaison and interaction between the private and public sectors in the field of industries as well as in small business sector is imperative to promote and gear up the business activities in the area, the government decided to encourage the production of quality goods through utilization of the raw material from the concerned indigenous areas in the liberated territory.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/22-May-2011/Plan-for-industrial-uplift-in-AJK>

AH Rao, Cross-LoC trade remains suspended

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: Weekly trans LoC trade between Azad Jammu Kashmir and Jammu & Kashmir via Taitrinote- Chakan-Da-Bagh Line of Control (LoC) point on Rawalakot- Poonch route has been suspended for another two weeks by the cross-LoC traders in protest against slapping of Sales Tax and VAT on the trading commodities by the government in J&K, stated a report from across the line of control. "We have decided to suspend cross-LoC trade between the traders of Jammu & Kashmir and Azad Jammu Kashmir via Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point in protest against the J&K Government's move to slap Sales Tax and VAT on the trading goods", Pawan Anand president of LoC Traders Union in J&K after a meeting of the cross-LoC traders in Poonch, the report stated. The AJK and J&K traders had exchanged allowed traded goods under barter system in terms of worth Rs 134 crores in Indian currency (export) and Rs 232 crores in Pakistani currency (import) since beginning of trade via Taitrinote - Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point in Poonch district of the State on October 2008

till now. The traders had earlier suspended the trade for past four weeks in protest against J&K Government's decision, the report noted.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=90399>

Wages wanted: Agriculture dept employees stage sit-in

The Express Tribune, May 5, 2011

GILGIT: Employees of state-funded projects of the agriculture department staged a sit-in in Gilgit on May 5 against what they called 'non-payment of salaries' for the last two years. The protestors gathered at the gate of the chief secretary's office and remained there till the Chief Secretary Saifullah Chatha let them in them for negotiations, noted a representative of the protestors.

“We apprised the chief minister that more than 200 employees of the agriculture department have been deprived of their salaries for nearly two years,” stated Sohail Ahmed, one of the protestors with the delegation. He noted that they also told Chatha that their services have not yet been regularised, despite the government's policy on the matter.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/162035/wages-wanted-agriculture-dept-employees-stage-sit-in/>

Truckers' strike enters fifth day

The News, May 2, 2011

BISHAM: Strike by truckers protesting the growing incidents of robberies on the roads in Gilgit-Baltistan entered the fifth day on May 1. Observed on the call of Truck Owners Association, the strike has led to shortage of food items in the area and also in the Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Long queues of trucks loaded with food items including vegetables, flour and fruit were seen parked from Thakot to Bisham on the Karakoram Highway.

Addressing the protesters, office-bearers of the association including Gul Mohammad, Asfandyar and Yusuf Khan stated they would not end the protest unless the problems being faced by the transporters were not resolved. They further stated they had asked the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid provincial chief Amir Muqam to raise the issue in the National Assembly.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=44651&Cat=7&dt=5/2/2011>

International Developments

Roshan Mughal, Unicef opens 16 schools in Azad Kashmir

The Express Tribune, May 26, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Unicef formally opened 16 new primary schools in a ceremony in Muzaffarabad on May 25, as part of an ambitious program to construct almost 700 schools following the devastating 2005 earthquake. Unicef constructed the 16 schools in Muzaffarabad and Bagh districts, with significant financial support from the European Union (EU), in support of the Government of Pakistan's "Build Back Better" programme.

The new schools are beautiful, modern structures that are resistant to earthquakes and designed with child-friendly features. Each student in these schools will get a minimum space that is in line with international standards. The schools have been furnished with high quality furniture and educational material. The schools have separate toilets for girls and boys, solid boundary walls, and ramps and railings that facilitate access to

physically-challenged children.rea capital Gilgit and 40 km downstream of Chilas.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/176113/improving-education-unicef-opens-16-schools-in-azad-kashmir/>

Kashmiris concerns conveyed to British Foreign Office

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 18, 2011

LONDON: The concerns of the Kashmiri Diaspora in the UK over the lack of progress towards the settlement of Kashmir issue have been conveyed to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Ameer, Jamaat-e-Islami, Azad Kashmir, Abdul Rashid Turabi addressing a news conference in London on May 17 that he along with Muhammad Ghalib, President, Tehreek-e-Kashmir held a 45-minute meeting with the FCO official for South Asia and explained the need to include Kashmiri leadership in the dialogue process between Pakistan and India.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=139604&Itemid=2

Other Developments

Fawad Hashmey, Azad Kashmir Prime Minister for UK's role in solution of Kashmir issue

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 10, 2011

LONDON: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan urged Great Britain to lead international initiative on untangling the Kashmir issue. Speaking at a round table conference on 'Indo-Pak relations and impediments to a way forward on Kashmir' at the British Parliament, he pointed out that Kashmir issue is a legacy of the British colonial rule in the sub-continent. "The strategic location of the State of Jammu and Kashmir demands a robust international role for a final, peaceful negotiated settlement. It needs geo-pragmatic approach," he noted.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=138805&Itemid=2

First Gilgit Baltistan Environment Conference Concludes in Brussels with Concern at Human Impacts of Climate Change and Development Plans

May 9, 2011

The conference 'Gilgit Baltistan: A Critical but Unknown Pivot of South Asia under Threat' organized by the UNPO and the Balawaristan National Front (BNF) drew academics, scientists, and commentators from a range of fields to discuss and posit solutions to dramatic changes underway in one of the most politically contested areas of the world. In the first in-depth assessment of climate change and development on one of the world's most sensitive ecosystems, International experts gathered in Brussels to highlight the emerging but overlooked environmental threats facing Gilgit Baltistan. The conference, organized by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) and the Balawaristan National Front (BNF) and entitled 'Gilgit Baltistan: A Critical but

Unknown Pivot of South Asia under Threat' drew academics, scientists, and commentators from a range of fields to discuss and posit solutions to dramatic changes underway in one of the most politically contested areas of the world. Opening the conference, Ngawang Choephel, President of the UNPO, drew parallels with the environmental degradation facing Tibet, remarking that the "misguided policies of the Pakistan government" risked repeating the irreversible damage that were the result of similar policies pursued by Beijing on the Tibetan Plateau. Participants were briefed on the current situation of Gilgit Baltistan by Abdul Hamid Khan, chairman of the Balawaristan National Front and a longstanding advocate for the environmental rights of Gilgit Baltistan before introductions by Mumtaz Khan, vice chairman of the International Kashmir Alliance.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/12392>

Shabbir Mir, Global Warming: G-B at high risk of suffering from effects of climate change

The Express Tribune, May 26, 2011

GILGIT: Environmentalists warned on May 25 that climatic changes not only affect people but also trigger floods, leading to the destruction of crops and infrastructure. They stated that if people in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) want to avoid this, they will have to adjust their lifestyles according to the ever-changing needs of the day.

"Proper town planning, the introduction of public transport, construction of dams and irrigation of barren land may be some of the measures that can slow down environmental degradation to ease life in the years to come," stated participants in a workshop organised jointly by One UN Joint Programme on Environment and Ministry of Environment. More than two dozen environmentalists representing government and

non-governmental organisations participated in the workshop that sought their input before finalising the draft report of the “National Climate Change Policy”.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/176117/global-warming-g-b-at-high-risk-of-suffering-from-effects-of-climate-change/>

Plan to raise fish production in Mangla Dam

The Nation, May 26, 2011

MIRPUR: “Under the spirit to raise the production of fish, the AJK government has kicked off a plan to raise the production of fish in the huge reservoir of Mangla dam up to at least 4000 metric ton annually,” stated Advocate Ramzan Dutt, Honorary Game Warden of AJK Fisheries & Wild Life Department.

Dutt noted on the eve of launching of fish breed in Mangla dam reservoir that the AJK government has already chalked out an integrated plan to meet the increased local demand for fish in Mirpur and rest of AJK under the private-public partnership joint ventures. The plan included the phased launching of the fish breed of the superior races in Mangla Dam this year also aimed at ensuring the supply of fish to local consumers at the inexpensive rates, he added.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/26-May-2011/Plan-to-raise-fish-production-in-Mangla-Dam>

Gilgit Baltistan: Water, Water, Everywhere, Nor Any Drop To Drink

May 24, 2011

As the Gilgit Baltistan glaciers melt, residents of Gilgit Baltistan are left facing hygienic water shortages. “It's been four days since there was water in our homes,” stated Waqar Ahmed, a resident of Gilgit, as the crisis intensified forcing people to go out in search of water with buckets in their hands. “We are not able to wash up nor do we have water for drinking,” noted Shaista Khan, a schoolteacher living in Jutial. Officials at the Water and Sanitation Department (WASA) stated that floods triggered by melting of snow at glaciers swept away the main water reservoir at Kargah, forcing the suspension of

water supply to the city. More than 20,000 people in Jutial, Khomer, Konodas, Kashrote, Nagral, Majini Muhalla, Yadgar Muhalla, and Barmas have been affected by the water shortage. In Kashrote, people complained that the water filtration plants also shut down the day tap water stopped flowing. People in Jutial stated that they tried to hire a water tanker but noted that drivers demanded Rs1,500 for one trip. “It was too expensive for people like us to bear,” stated Latif Ali, another resident of the town.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/12670>

Fuel shortage: Nine days dry

The Express Tribune, May 25, 2011

SKARDU: The damage to Alam Bridge, Baltistan's only connection with the rest of the world, has not been repaired despite the passage of nine days, leading to scarcity of petrol and diesel severely hitting the two districts of Baltistan. Alam Bridge is located 180 kilometres from Skardu towards Gilgit. The bridge has been closed for nine days, after a steel support cable broke. Since then, heavy traffic over the bridge has been suspended, however, light traffic is running.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/175260/fuel-shortage-nine-days-dry/>

4th extension to raise Tarbela capacity

The Nation, May 24, 2011

MIRPUR: Total generation capacity of the Tarbela Hydropower Station would rise to 4828 megawatt (MW) after the installation of 1350 MW units as part of 4th Extension Project, official sources noted. “This was stated by Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Shakil Durrani during his visit to the project. Tarbela Dam Project General Manager, Project Director and other officers concerned were also present during the visit,” sources noted on May 25. Terming it a significant development, the Chairman noted that the consultants, engaged for preparation of detailed engineering design, tender documents and project cost (PC)-I, have established in their findings that three turbines of 450-MW each could

be installed instead of two turbines of 480-MW each, as envisaged in a study conducted earlier in 90s. He stated that the independent panel of international experts has also endorsed these findings. This is a good omen in view of the increasing requirements of electricity in the country, he added.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/24-May-2011/4th-extension-to-raise-Tarbela-capacity>

Mysterious helicopters seen roaming in Muzaffarabad

The News, May 24, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Eight mysterious helicopters were seen roaming about in the skies of Muzaffarabad at around 1:15am, as Geo News reported. The copters including seven small and a large remained in the skies for several minutes and returned after inspecting the mountains in Dolai area of AJK capital. The roaming of these helicopters has created panic among the people of the area. Military officials however claimed that these helicopters were of Pakistan and that these were on night mission.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=15998>

Water level in Mangla, Tarbela dams rises

The Nation, May 22, 2011

MIRPUR: Following the swift melting of snow in the top mountainous catchments, the water level in country's largest Tarbela dam and the second biggest reservoir - Mangla dam is rapidly rising since last 24 hours, it was officially declared. Water level in Mangla dam raised to 1149.60 feet against the dead level of 1140.00 feet on May 21, Wapda sources noted. The inflow of the Jhelum River in Mangla dam was recorded as 80500 cusec on May 21. Similarly, the water level in Tarbela dam touched 1425.25 feet against the stipulated dead level of 1378.00 feet. Since the inflow of Jhelum River into Mangla dam was recorded 80500 cusec, outflow of the river remained 45000 cusecs, sources stated. Similarly the inflow of Indus river water into

Tarbela dam was recorded on May 21 as 159500 cusec against the outflow of 90000 cusecs, the sources added.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/22-May-2011/Water-level-in-Mangla-Tarbela-dams-rises>

Scorching heat coupled with loadshedding paralyses life in Mirpur

The Express Tribune, May 21, 2011

MIRPUR: Consumers raised due and cry after the life was paralysed mid last night in several parts of Mirpur district, the major economic hub of AJK, following the sudden long power breakdown besides the frequent unscheduled load shedding of power slapped by PEPCO that lasted for over three to four hours twice without any pause.

The power supply for Mirpur district and several other adjoining parts of AJK was abandoned at 9.00 am on May 18 and it remained shut till 12.15 am without any pause reportedly due to the serious fault developed in Mangla power grid station and other reasons best known to the authorities of PEPCO.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/21-May-2011/Scorching-heat-coupled-with-loadshedding-paralyses-life-in-Mirpur>

Shabbir Mir, Mountaineering institute to be set up in Skardu

The Express Tribune, May 16, 2011

GILGIT: Inspired by Hassan Sadpara's ascent of Mount Everest, chief minister Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Mehdi Shah stated his government will set up an institute in Skardu to promote mountaineering as a sport in the region. "We will set up a mountaineering institute in Skardu so we can have more people like Sadpara who make us proud," Shah noted on May 15. Sadpara, a mountaineer from Skardu, recently scaled Mount Everest without oxygen supply and with little monetary support and training. "He has demonstrated the potential we have in the country," Shah stated.

The chief minister said G-B possessed immense

talent, especially in the field of climbing and mountaineering, but, he added, proper patronage and support was required to polish this talent.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/169388/mountaineering-institute-to-be-set-up-in-skardu/>

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Flood havoc not over from Neelum valley

Associated Press of Pakistan, May 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: People hailing from the Neelum valley, the picaresque fantasy of which mesmerizes tourists, are still deprived of the basic necessities of life after the devastating floods that affected major parts of the country in July 2010. District Neelum, one of the most severely affected districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) during floods, where cloud bursts lashed heavy rains, raising the water level in Neelum River and in many other Nullahs causing massive destruction. Neelum, a 260 km long valley beside Neelum River has historically been a hazard prone area due to natural and man made disasters.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=139309&Itemid=2

Tremor jolts towns near LoC in AJK

The Nation, May 12, 2011

A moderate earthquake hit the areas adjacent to the Line of Control (LoC) in Azad Kashmir on May 12 morning but no causality was reported. According to the reports, the quake of lower intensity was felt in the border areas of Chanari, Chakthi, Bagh and Neelum Valley at 7:18am on May 12. According to the Met Office the epicenter of the quake was Baramula and its intensity was 2.4 on the Richter scale. No casualty was reported from any part of Azad Kashmir.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/12-May-2011/Tremor-jolts-towns-near-LoC-in-AJK>

Landslide blocks KKH

Dawn, May 12, 2011

GILGIT: Landslides blocked the Karakoram

Highway at Raikot in Diamer district on May 11 afternoon suspending all kind of traffic, officials stated. The officials of Northern Area Transport Corporation noted the passengers crossed the blockade on foot to proceed towards their destinations. Meanwhile, traffic was also suspended on Skardu-Gilgit road due to a landslide at Haramosh, stranding passengers. Passengers stated the landslides might have been caused by blasting being carried out for the expansion of the KKH. Meanwhile, PIA flights to the region remained suspended for the fourth straight day on May 11 on account of inclement weather.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/12/landslide-blocks-kkh.html>

Local flavour: Peace Culture Festival concludes today

The Express Tribune, May 12, 2011

GILGIT: The three-day 'Peace Culture Festival', organised by the Gilgit Arts and Culture Council (GACC) in Gilgit continued on the second day on May 11, attracting a large audience who were enthralled by the music and poetry presented by local artists. The festival in Gilgit City Park started on May 10 and attempted to create a positive atmosphere in the otherwise strife-ridden capital city of Gilgit-Baltistan, which has seen a number of bloody clashes between rival sects in recent months.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/166812/local-flavour-peace-culture-festival-concludes-today/>

Commuting: Bridging distances, easing hardships

The Express Tribune, May 6, 2011

GILGIT: The RCC Bridge in Konodas has finally been constructed after five years. Chief Minister Medhi Shah inaugurated the bridge on May 5. The project of the bridge had been sanctioned during the government of General Pervez Musharraf, whose era saw considerable development work in the region including road networks, bridges and educational institutions. However, the contractor of the bridge left the project without completing it

after Musharraf's government was ousted in the general elections of 2008.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/162728/commuting-bridging-distances-easing-hardships/>

Shabbir Mir, Development shouldn't come at the cost of environment

The Express Tribune, May 3, 2011

GILGIT: Speakers at a conference in Gilgit highlighted the role of education in sustainable development, urging people not to overstep their limits for the sake of development. “The development shouldn't be at the cost of environment and its natural resources,” said Ishtiaq Yaad, a development expert, while addressing the conference “Role of Education in Sustainable Development” in Gilgit. The conference was organised by Association For Academic Quality (AFAQ), a non-governmental organisation. A number of educationists, environmentalists and researchers participated in the conference.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/160193/development-shouldnt-come-at-the-cost-of-environment/>

Shabbir Mir, Attabad in the making: Another village under threat

The Express Tribune, May 1, 2011

GILGIT: Recurring seismic phenomena and visible cracks in the ground points to an impending disaster in another village in Gilgit-Baltistan just like the one that hit Attabad village last year. Local residents and officials agree that these signs are recurring with increasing intensity in Kholto-Haramosh village, a village off the road between Skardu and Gilgit. The people of the village stated that they had sent a letter to the government, detailing the risks. Stressing the need for urgent measures for the safety of villagers, the letter noted that the village, which has a population of about 300 people, might be completely swept away by a landslide. Early last year, a massive landslide swept away Attabad, a small village in Hunza, killing nearly 20 people. The landslide also blocked River Hunza, cutting off 25,000 people living in the upper reaches of the Hunza Valley.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/160364/attabad-in-the-making-another-village-under-threat/>

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,, 010)

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: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

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: Wazir Baig (officiating)

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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