

POK NEWS DIGEST

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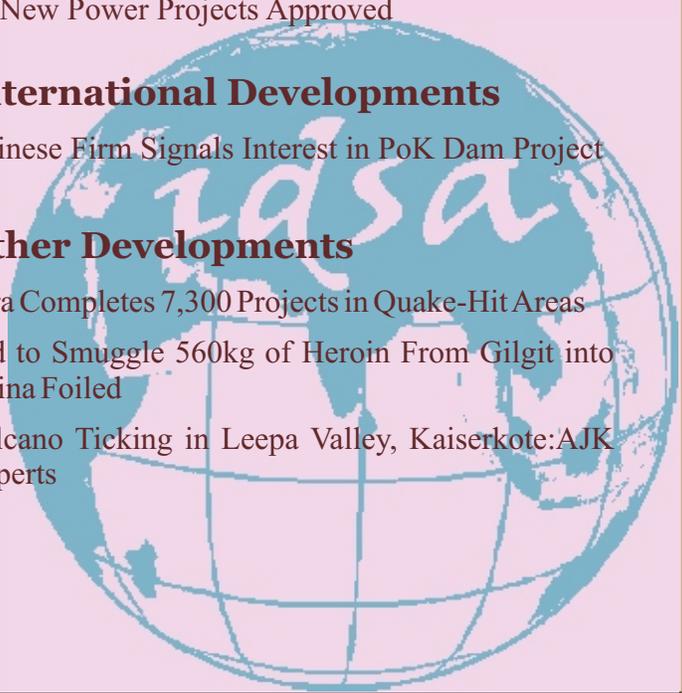
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

There was great deal of political upheaval over arrest of the leader of the GilgitBaltistan United Movement (GBUM) ManzoorHussainParwana by the Pakistani authorities. Parwanawas arrested while addressing an event of the BalwaristanNational Student Organisation(BSNO) where he raised the issue of the IDPs (Internally Displaced People) and the refugees from Ladakh in PoK. He noted that the India and Pakistan should open up the Line of Control betweenLadakh and GilgitBaltistan to facilitate free movement of people and for trading activities. This was followed by what is known as forced disappearance of several leaders from the region as the reports indicate. Protests were carried out in PoKopposing detentions and disappearances.

There are several reports which speak volumes about the Chinese interest in PoK. One of them notes China's involvement in harnessing the minerals and gems from the PoK. This has been opposed by local people who fear they would face economic drain if this is not checked. Representatives of the Sinohydro, a state owned hydropower firm in China have shown interest in funding the controversial DiamerBhasha Dam in PoK. Also, Pakistan and China are planning a special economic zone across PoK and Kashgar in Xinchiang. This is in wake of accusations from Chinese side thatUighursare getting support from Pakistani extremist groups across the border.

Meanwhile, the issue of US funding the DiamerBhasha Dam was discussed in the US- Pakistan Strategic Dialogue on Energy held on September 14-15, 2011. However, no formal commitment seems to have been coming from the US side till now.

On the economic side, the government in J&K has taken some initiative in making the cross LoC trade more feasible. The Governor of J&K, Shri N NVohrapromulgatedtwoordinances under Section 91 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir which seek amendment to the Value Added Tax Act of 2005 and another one in the J&K Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act 2006. Both amendments have come into effect immediately.

There are several reports in this issue which dwell on the power potential of PoK and how the government of Pakistan is planning to cash on them by undertakingmultiple projects.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

When the Ruler of Hunza Regretted Joining Pakistan

August 29, 2011

WASHINGTON DC: The former princely ruler of Hunza, Mir Ghazanfar Ali expressed regret over state-led terrorism and injustices in Pakistan controlled Hunza and announced a long march towards Gilgit city if the four dozen or so arrested IDPs were not immediately released. He stated, "We oppose the decision to establish seven security check posts between Karimabad and Aliabad. Hunza is the most peaceful area of Pakistan and these check posts are going to make it look like a war-zone".

On August 29, 2011 security forces arrested four more innocent residents from Hunza in connection with IDP protests. Sad enough that the security personnel, who are responsible for the extra judicial deaths of two innocent IDPs, still remain at large and enjoy freedom under government protection. Meanwhile, the president of the Hunza chapter of Pakistan Peoples' Party (the ruling party in Gilgit-Baltistan) has resigned protesting unwarranted detentions. He has accused the security personnel of barging into the houses in the Holy month of Ramadhan and violating religious sanctity as women have been harassed and manhandled.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/When_the_Ruler_of_Hunza_Regretted_Joining_Pakistan,201137475.aspx

J&K Govt Working on Plan for Return of Youth from PoK

PTI, August 29, 2011

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah stated his government was working on a plan for return of "misguided" youth from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). "We are working out something that does not need support of Government of Pakistan or Muzaffarabad," Omar

noted. He was responding to a question about the status of the rehabilitation policy for the return of youth from PoK who had crossed the Line of Control for arms training but wanted to join the national mainstream now. "We have received 900 applications from youth (from PoK). We are looking at the possibilities of how we can facilitate their return," Omar stated. The rehabilitation policy for Kashmiri militants in PoK was announced last year but no substantive progress has been made on the matter so far.

<http://news.outlookindia.com/item.aspx?732891>

Protest: Journalist rally against attack on newspaper office

The Express Tribune, August 26, 2011

GILGIT: Dozens of journalist on August 25 protested against the attack at the office of a regional Urdu newspaper in Skardu and attack on journalists of a private TV channel in Peshawar. They held placards inscribed with slogans of freedom of media. They marched towards the Chief Minister's Office from Gilgit Press Club (GPC), and camped outside the G-B Legislative Assembly. Several journalists, including Imtiaz Ali Taj, GPC President Sharfuddin Faryad, Union of Journalists General Secretary and Mehboob Khayam addressed the rally. The GPC had given a protest call on Wednesday, after a dozen armed men in Skardu attacked the office of a local newspaper. They reportedly beat up the guards and smashed the window panes of the office.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/239644/protest-journalist-rally-against-attack-on-newspaper-office/>

Sardar Yaqoob takes oath as 22nd president of AJK

Pakistan Tribune, August 26, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Haji Sardar Muhammad

Yaqoob Khan took oath as 22nd President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) at a ceremony at the premises of AJK Legislative Assembly on August 25. AJK Supreme Court Chief Justice Azam Khan administered the oath. The ceremony was attended by Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah, AJK Prime Minister Abdul Majeed, ministers, judges, government functionaries, politicians and other notables. Former AJK prime minister Sardar Attique, opposition leader Raja Farooq Haider, outgoing President Raja Zulqarnain, members of the Kashmir Council and Legislative Assembly were also present on the occasion.

Sardar Yaqoob is the third politician of AJK who has got the distinction of being the prime minister and president of the state after Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan and Sardar Sakinder Hayat Khan. After taking oath, Sardar Yaqoob, while addressing the ceremony, stated that his prime responsibility would be to guide the government in ensuring better governance and well being of the masses

<http://paktribune.com/news/Sardar-Yaqoob-takes-oath-as-22nd-president-of-AJK-243125.html>

Arrest of journalists and political activists and bloodbath in occupied Gilgit-Baltistan condemned: Manzoor Parwana

August 25, 2011

Manzoor Hussain Parwana condemned the bloodbath in Aliabad in the Holy month of Ramadhan; extra judicial arrests of dozens of activists belonging to Progressive Youth Front (PYF); attack on the office of Karakoram Publishing Network and Daily K-2 newspaper; and arrest and torture of journalists in Pakistan occupied Gilgit-Baltistan. Manzoor was being detained at Gilgit Central Jail for raising a voice for the flood affected IDPs and Ladakhi refugees of Gilgit-Baltistan and demanding from both India and Pakistan to resume trade and transit between Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh. While talking to the media representatives, Manzoor requested Amnesty International and foreign diplomatic missions to take serious notice of human rights violations in Gilgit-Baltistan especially continuous attack on freedom of expression and peaceful political

activity. He stated that the current puppet regime is violating fundamental democratic rights of the natives and using blatant force in the disputed region. He asked the international media to take notice of the worsening human rights records in Gilgit-Baltistan.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Arrest_of_journalists_and_political_activists_and_bloodbath_in_occupied_GilgitBaltistan_condemned_Manzoor_Parwana,201137445.aspx

Twenty people subjected to enforced disappearance in Pakistan controlled Gilgit

August 24, 2011

At around 3 AM on August 20, 2011, hundreds of law enforcement personnel entered Altit, Nasirabad, Aliabad, Karimabad and Murtazabad towns of Hunza district. While the residents were preparing midnight meals to observe the Holy month of Ramadan, the forces barged into the neighborhoods and detained more than twenty youth. The detainees were later charged for sedition and terrorism and taken to unknown location by the secret service agents.

Reports have come of influential leaders including Tahir Jan, Irfan Hunzai and Afsar Jan being taken in custody while the security personnel continue their search for Babajan Hunzai, the Chairperson of Progressive Youth Front. Local dignitaries including the president of Gilgit-Baltistan High Court Bar Association condemned these extra judicial arrests.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Twenty_people_subjected_to_enforced_disappearance_in_Pakistan_controlled_Gilgit,201137437.aspx

Pakistani Democracy at Peril: ISI increases interference in Gilgit-Baltistan

August 2, 2011

Manzoor Parwana is one of the leading politicians in Gilgit-Baltistan who opposes Pakistan's unilateral occupation of the disputed region, which is also claimed by India. He was abducted on July 28 by Pakistani security forces for raising voice for more than ten thousand Ladakhi refugees, who reside in different parts of Gilgit-Baltistan, and desire reunification with their relatives in India.

This happened at the time when Pakistani Foreign Minister, Ms. Khar, was on her visit to India. With no realization of detention and torture of political leaders in Gilgit-Baltistan, she was lecturing India on promoting freedom of expression and political activity in Kashmir. She was also provided with the relaxed environment to join Hurriyat leaders in their demand for the right of self-determination for Kashmir; something that Pakistan categorically denies for Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan. These two occupied regions are tightly controlled and largely out of bounds, which restricts both political and international humanitarian work.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Pakistani_Democracy_at_Peril_ISI_increases_interference_in_GilgitBaltistan,201137225.aspx

Shahbbir Mir, Hunza riots: G-B chief minister and speaker at daggers end

The Express Tribune, August 24, 2011

GILGIT: The killing of a man and his son and the ensuing incidents in Hunza last week widened the rift between Gilgit-Baltistan's chief minister and assembly speaker, weakening the position of both leaders in the region, sources stated on August 23.

“The incident at the first instance was a shock for speaker Wazir Baig, who himself belongs to Hunza,” a member of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) stated, while requesting anonymity. He added that the series of arrests that came in wake of the riots shattered the trust of the speaker who now holds CM Mehdi Shah and his government responsible. Baig faced relentless criticism from the people of Gojal who had been stranded in the valley due to the formation of the Attabad Lake and the submergence of Karakoram Highway.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/238072/hunza-riots-g-b-chief-minister-and-speaker-at-daggers-end/>

AJK apex court to take up compensation issue

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court directed the affected people of Mangla Raising Project to take up their issue of compensation before the relevant Azad Kashmir Supreme Court. A two-Judge bench of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and

Justice Ghulam Rabbani disposed of the issue after observing that it did not fall under its jurisdiction.

During proceedings, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) officials stated that they had paid about Rs50 billion to the AJK government for distribution of compensation to the affected people. The project is expected to significantly contribute to the socio-economic upliftment of the country as it would help store additional 2.9 million acre feet of water, besides generating 644 million additional units of electricity annually from the existing Mangla Power House, according to data provided by WAPDA.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=110433>

Nisar Ahmed Thokar, PaK cabinet hails McCain visit

August 21, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The cabinet meeting presided over by AJK Prime Minister Chudhary Abdul Majeed on August 20 sought United States' proactive role to settle the Kashmir dispute in order to diffuse tension between the two South Asian nuclear armed neighbours. The extraordinary session hailed the US Senator John McCain's visit to Islamabad, Srinagar and Ladakh and termed his recent address to media in New Delhi as a positive and encouraging development vis-à-vis Kashmir and demanded that the international community should play its much-needed role to address the issue.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/21/pak-cabinet-hails-mccain-visit-20.asp>

AJK cabinet condemns Nawaz remarks

Pakistan Observer

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK cabinet in its meeting in Muzaffarabad under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Abdul Majeed Chaudhry unanimously condemned PML-N President Mian Nawaz Sharif's alleged objectionable remarks vis-a-vis “Two Nation Theory” in a recent Lahore SAFMA event that drew criticism from other public quarters as well. An official handout issued after the cabinet meeting termed the alleged Mian remarks

“a conspiracy against democracy and democratic norms” describing it “against the constitution of Pakistan, charter of democracy and a betrayal of Kashmir cause.”

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=110202>

Wang Zunyu a security threat to Gilgit-Baltistan, take note of it': GBMMGA

Dardistan Times, August 21, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit Baltistan Metals Minerals & Gems Association (GBMMGA) reiterated its concerns about the encroachment made by Mohsin Industries on the resources of Gilgit-Baltistan. After a severe criticism and resistance by the indigenous people of the region, the foreign company head has started passing on threats through media. In a press conference at Skardu on July 24, 2011, he threatened: “Stand by me if you want Gilgit-Baltistan to be like Islamabad, if not, then make it BALOCHISTAN”.

In a Press Release issued on August 19, 2011, the GBMMGA stated, “We consider this a serious threat to the region and ask the security institutions to take note of it. We are surprised to see the government num over his open threat. We have been keeping an eye on the suspicious activities of Mr. Wang Zunyu since 2008 and we believe he is a security risk to the region. His illegal and suspicious activities already have been reported. Mining, processing and transporting of molybdenum and black metal which contain considerable contents of Uranium have been exposed too.”

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/%E2%80%984wang-zunyu22-security-threat-gilgit-baltistan32>

AJK president meets Wynne

August 20, 2011

RAWALPINDI: The President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) Raja Zulqarnain Khan called on General Khalid Shameem Wynne, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) at Joint Staff Headquarters, Chaklala in Rawalpindi on August 19. The President of AJ&K remained with General Wynne for some time and discussed the Kashmir situation, national security and other mutual interest issues. On the occasion General Khalid Shameem

Wynne congratulated Raja Zulqarnain Khan over successful completion of presidential tenure and hailed the services of AJK president for the masses of the area and Kashmir cause.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/08/ajk-president-meets-wynne/>

Govt starts relief programmes for masses

Pakistan Observer

DIAMER: Central leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Imran Nadeem stated that government of PPP has started several relief programmes for welfare of people of the area. He told APP that the government had helped the people of area through Benazir Income Support program (BISP), Watan cards program, increase in salary of police force, established a passport office and KIU campus at Skardu. Thousands of poor families of the region are getting benefits through these programmes, he added.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=109933>

Ananth Krishnan, Pakistan seeks closer links with Xinjiang

The Hindu, August 20, 2011

Pakistan has sought closer economic links with China's far-western Xinjiang region and has pledged to assuage the country's security fears in the wake of recent attacks which Chinese officials have blamed on Pakistan-based terror groups. Pakistan was working towards “integrated border management” with China and in creating a trans-regional economic zone with rail linkages between the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and neighbouring Xinjiang, stated its Ambassador to China Masood Khan in Beijing on August 19.

Mr. Khan stated China's plans to build a Special Economic Zone in the border city of Kashgar would bring the two countries closer by strengthening trade links, and pledged support to addressing security concerns that some Chinese analysts fear may impact cross-border trade ties. While Chinese officials hope Kashgar's development into an SEZ will raise incomes in Xinjiang's south, a region seen as the source of

unrest, authorities have also expressed increasing concern over growing cross-border terror linkages, blaming recent tensions on local Uighurs in southern Xinjiang who had reportedly travelled to terror camps in Pakistan.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2373637.ece>

Rehab of Mangla Dam affectees begins on emergency grounds

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 19, 2011

MIRPUR: The phased rehabilitation and resettlement of over 50,000 affectees of Mangla dam raising project had begun on emergency grounds and would be completed by December 31, 2011 official sources stated. Since over 90 per cent of affectees of the project had so far been compensated with stipulated financial relief and other means at New city and four small towns in the district, WAPDA was all set to raise water level in the reservoir to the level of 1210 feet by the mid of next month (September) at the first leg of the project, the divisional Commissioner Dr. Mahmood-ul-Hassan Raja noted on August 17. The ongoing process of resettlement and rehabilitation of Mangla dam affectees is all set to be completed by the stipulated day of December 31, this year, since the construction work for raising of the dam has, by now, completed. Besides the divisional and district administration, Mangla Dam Resettlement Organization, WAPDA and its concerned contractors as well as various nation building departments were actively engaged in providing necessary facilities and assistance to the dam affectees for their rapid shifting to the new locations of their residences in New Mirpur city.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=45865>

CM GB rules out mid-term elections

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Syed Mehdi Shah, commenting on statement of PML-N Chief Mian Nawaz Sharif regarding immediate elections, stated a person with a democratic approach, will not demand elections before the end of the incumbent government's tenure. In a

statement issued on Friday, he stated the demand of elections before stipulated time, was undemocratic. He stated the nation had elected the Pakistan Peoples Party and it would once again elect PPP in the next elections as the party had deep roots in the public across the country. The Chief Minister was of the view that the elements who want PPP out of power, should wait till year 2013, and added the rejected elements must respect the public mandate.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=109949>

Shabbir Mir, Disaster in the making: Gilgit-Baltistan govt to relocate Talus village residents

The Express Tribune, August 2, 2011

GILGIT: The government is planning to relocate residents of Talus village where floods and landslides swept away more than 80 houses, officials stated on August 1. "Rehabilitation of residents within the village doesn't seem to be a viable option now," Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah stated in Skardu on the same day.

He stated that the people affected by the catastrophe will be compensated and relocated to a suitable place. "But until then, the government will provide food and shelter during Ramazan," Shah assured the village residents. Resident of the remote village in Baltistan were struck by landslides and floods in a glacial stream, sweeping away over 80 houses and damaging another 100 in the village where last year's floods killed 12 people. At least one person was reported missing.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/222190/disaster-in-the-making-gilgit-baltistan-govt-to-relocate-talus-village-residents/>

Hameed Shaheen, Gilani to open AJK power project

August 18, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani would inaugurate the completion of a 150-megawatt hydropower station near Muzaffarabad in the first week of September 2011. Understandably he will also lay foundation stone of Muzaffarabad Medical College, a centuries-old wish of AJK people to have their own medical education institution.

The private sector Patrind hydropower station built over the Kunhar river flow near Muzaffarabad will produce 150 megawatts of electricity, to be added to the national system. This far the proven Azad Jammu & Kashmir hydropower potential is beyond 18,000 megawatts, but it is all unutilized

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/08/18/gilani-to-open-ajk-power-project.html>

Involvement of Pak rulers in AJK elections not right: Asima

August 19, 2011

MIRPUR: President Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association Asima Jehangir has stated that we are incomplete without Kashmiri people. The involvement of Pakistani rulers in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir election is not fair.

This she stated while addressing the District Bar at Mirpur, adding that the authority to appoint the chairman of supreme council should be with the president instead of prime minister, adding that the government should not make clashes with the judiciary and respect the decisions of judiciary. She stated that we are well aware about the problems of Kashmiri community and fully informed with the political situation of AJK.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/08/involvement-of-pak-rulers-in-ajk-elections-not-right-asima/>

GBUM will continue struggle for free Gilgit-Baltistan: Manzoor Parwana

August 4, 2011

The Chairperson of Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Manzoor Parwana, vowed to continue the struggle for freedom of Gilgit-Baltistan. He was talking to the media from the Gilgit jail, where he is being held indefinitely for demanding cross line of control (LOC) travel and trade between Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh and withdrawal of Pakistani security forces from the disputed region. Gilgit-Baltistan is a UN-declared disputed territory which remains in Pakistani occupation since 1947.

He criticized Pakistani rulers for suppressing the voices of local people who have been demanding their constitutional rights since last six decades. He

stated, "Our freedom struggle will remain peaceful despite government's intentions of using brutal force against us. Our goal is to gain fundamental human rights including political emancipation. We are fighting against an apartheid regime and will be able to liberate this last surviving colony of the world". He thanked his party workers and friends for supporting him and braving Pakistani brutality.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/GBUM_will_continue_struggle_for_free_GilgitBaltistan_Manzoor_Parwana,201137253.aspx

GB Government urged to rehabilitate flood affectees

Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: Ex-member Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) Mehboob Ali Khan appealed the GB government to start rehabilitation work in the flood effected area. He noted that massive people affected in the floods and rains across GB and he appealed the government to rehabilitate them. He hoped the provincial government will take steps in this regard. Since the 2010 floods in Sindh, thousands of children are still out from their schooling and social activities as they are confined to the camp life at the tent villages in Karachi, says a field survey conducted by Roshni Helpline.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=106832>

Remnants of Attabad Lake disaster: Zardari orders quick realignment of Karakoram Highway

The Express Tribune, August 3, 2011

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari ordered to expedite the realignment of a portion of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), for which funds have been provided by China. The portion, along with many villages in Hunza Valley, was submerged during the formation of the artificial Attabad Lake triggered by a landslide in January last year.

The directives were issued at a meeting chaired by Zardari at the Presidency held on August 2 to review the progress made so far over the decisions regarding the Attabad Lake disaster that were made during a meeting held in July 2010. Participants discussed the reconstruction of the KKH and the

progress made on lowering water levels of the Attabad Lake through controlled blasting and mechanical excavation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/223027/remnants-of-attabad-lake-disaster-zardari-orders-quick-realignment-of-karakoram-highway/>

Hameed Shaheen, Raja Farooq Opposition Leader in Azad Kashmir

August 2, 2011

ISLAMABAD: In the newly inducted 49-member Azad Jammu & Kashmir Assembly ex-Premier Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider who returned on PML (N) tickets successful from two Muzaffarabad district electoral constituencies in June 26, 2011 polls has been elected as Opposition Leader. The 12-seater PML (N) enjoys a position inside the Assembly that can give tough time to the government of first-timer AJK Premier Abdul Majeed Chaudhry. However the legal notification of Opposition Leader has yet to be issued by the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry in Muzaffarabad.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/08/02/raja-farooq-opposition-leader-in-azad-kashmir.html>

18-member AJK cabinet administered oath

Daily Times, August 3, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: An 18-member cabinet of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) took oath at the assembly's secretariat on August 2. AJK President Raja Zulqarnain administered oath to the new ministers. AJK Prime Minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Speaker of AJK Legislative Assembly, Sardar Ghulam Sadiq, Deputy Speaker Shaheen Kausar Dar, PPP Secretary General Jahangir Badr, member of PPP Central Executive Committee Qazi Sultan Mehmood, Rizwan Qureshi, Chief Secretary Arbab Shehzad, members of the Legislative Assembly and high officials attended the ceremony held at the lush green lawns of the assembly's secretariat. No MQM leader attended the function.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C08%5C03%5Cstory_3-8-2011_pg7_2

MQM decides to re-join govt

August 2, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Muttahida Quami Movement

(MQM) has once again decided to re-join the government on August 1. According to a private TV channel the decision was made after discussions between MQM Chief Altaf Hussain and Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani. Sources stated that MQM will first become a part of the AJK government and Salim Butt would take oath as minister in AJK cabinet, meanwhile, in the second phase in Sindh government and at the third phase in federal government. According to the sources, Prime Minister Gilani had telephonic conversation with Altaf Hussain five times in last five days and made him agree to re-join the government.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/08/mqm-decides-to-re-join-govt/>

Zulfiqar Abbasi, Why Azad Kashmir lags

The News, August 17, 2011

The recently formed People's Party government in Azad Kashmir has to confront several challenges, but two prominent issues seek close attention. The first is the stalled process of reconstruction of earthquake-hit areas of the northern part of Azad Kashmir Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot. The second is the resettlement of those affected by the construction of Mangla Dam. This poses a potentially serious socio-political challenge to the PPP government in Mirpur division, where the victims are resisting the refilling of the dam until their complete resettlement.

Apart from these issues, the new government has to address the growing sense of alienation and deprivation among various segments of the society such as youths and women. According to available statistics, youths form 65 percent of Azad Kashmir's population (25 percent of the young people are below the age of 25) and are mostly unemployed. Even qualified women are jobless due to the limited scope for employment in the public sector. While the already shrunk private sector has been unable to cope with the emerging needs and challenges of employability due to the short-sighted policies of the successive governments in the past.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=63238&Cat=9>

Gilgit Baltistan: Opposition Leader Arrested At Student Rally

August 4, 2011

Manzoor Hussain Parwana, the Chairman of the GilgitBaltistan United Movement has been arrested by Pakistan Rangers, FC and Gilgit City Police commandos after his speech in the convention of Balawaristan National Students Organization on 28th July 2011. He was already framed in sedition charges by the occupation regime of Pakistan, because he was exposing Pakistan Forces and their intelligence agencies' illegal activities in Gilgit Baltistan, a newly created province of Pakistan.

It is reported that Mr. Manzoor has been taken to Inter Services Intelligence service (ISI) Centre at Sonikote Gilgit, where he will be interrogated by ISI, MI and other forces. It is obvious that he will be tortured and will be framed in any fake case to malign the nationalist movement in this disputed area, so the attention of arrest of ISI agent Ghulam Nabi Fai by FBI in Washington is neutralized. Mr. Fai was arrested in the USA on the charges of being a spy of Pakistan.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/12996>

AJK panacea to end worst power crisis

The Nation, August 10, 2011

LAHORE : Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Chaudhary Abdul Majeed while claiming that energy crisis could be overcome in next the four years if the Pakistani entrepreneurs invest in AJK and take up new hydel power projects. AJK prime minister, who is also a senior PPP leader, expressed these views while addressing a reception hosted by party leader, Ghulam Mohiyuddin Deewan on August 9. On this occasion, he while inviting the Pakistani industrialists for investing in hydel power projects as well as the tourism and other sectors of AJK stated that he would give special incentives to the investors.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/10-Aug-2011/AJK-panacea--to-end-worst-power-crisis>

Ishfaq-ul-Hassan, Kashmiri pandits hope to visit

closed shrine in PoK

August 8, 2011

SRINAGAR: Hopes have rekindled for Kashmiri pandits to resume the pilgrimage to ancient Shardha temple in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) after 63 years of partition. Thanks to the Indo-Pak foreign ministers decision to expand cross-LoC travel on both sides of the LoC including visits for tourism and religious pilgrimage, Kashmir pandits are now expecting the reopening of the shrine which has been closed after partition in Muzaffarabad.

“It is a significant step which would go a long way in restoring confidence among the people particularly Kashmiri Hindus who have been fighting for permission to visit PoK for pilgrimage,” stated Vinod Pandit, president All Parties Kashmiri Migrants Coordination Committee.

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_kashmiri-pandits-hope-to-visit-closed-shrine-in-pok_1573646

Shabbir Mir, Land dispute: G-B govt cancels over 970 illegal allotments

The Express Tribune, August 5, 2011

GILGIT: As chances of a head-on collision between two groups threatened to spark violence in the otherwise peaceful city, the Gilgit administration cancelled more than 970 fake land allotments. “The deputy commissioner issued a notification to this effect,” a district government spokesman noted. He stated that it was likely that the cases would be assigned to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for investigation, adding that deputy commissioner Asad Zamin had been investigating the cases for eight months before issuing the notification.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/224621/land-dispute-g-b-govt-cancels-over-970-illegal-allotments/>

Ershad Mahmud, Empower Azad Kashmir

The News, August 5, 2011

Like every government in Azad Kashmir, the new administration in Muzaffarabad led by Chaudhry Abdul Majeed of the Pakistan People's Party, will have to deal with demands in the territory that the federal government redefine the relationship

between Islamabad and Muzaffarabad. The demands have become more vocal after the 18 and 19th Amendments which have devolved more powers to the provinces and reduced the central government's role in provinces.

In 1970, an interim constitution had made Azad Kashmir an autonomous entity. But when the Pakistan People's Party came to power it drastically reduced the authority of the Azad Kashmir government. All important powers were taken back through the establishment of a new body, the Azad Kashmir Council. The elected government of Azad Kashmir has no jurisdiction over the council, which was given 52 subjects. The minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan affairs runs the entire show and all major policy decisions are routed through the Prime Minister's Secretariat in Islamabad.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=61242&Cat=9>

Shabbir Mir, Clash between police, Attabad victims: Fresh protests erupt across G-B

The Express Tribune, August 13, 2011

GILGIT: Fresh protests erupted across Gilgit-Baltistan on August 12 against the killing of a father and son during a clash between the police and victims of Attabad lake landslide a day before. The protesters have demanded immediate resignation from Chief Minister Mehdi Shah and Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Wazir Baig and have called for a judicial inquiry into the matter.

Over 2,000 people gathered in Gilgit's Ittehad Chowk where leaders from various political parties including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz regional chief Hafizur Rehman and nationalist leader Nawaz Khan Naji addressed a rally.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/230262/clash-between-police-attabad-victims-fresh-protests-erupt-across-g-b/>

Minerals, tourism to be made corporations soon

Pakistan Observer

HUNZA: The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) was set to legislate on tourism and mineral deposits as the GB Council had finalized its recommendations for awarding both the sectors the status of corporations, official

sources stated. Source noted that an electricity board would also be constituted for the power sector.

“The managing committee of the GB Council has discussed and prepared its recommendations and the laws will be incorporated soon,” the sources further added. “Various laws dealing with minerals and tourism in other provinces are being studied by the authorities with an aim to replicate successful models in the region,” they stated, adding, the bills were expected to be passed from the assembly easily.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=108277>

Shabbir Mir, Alliance with PPP: PML-Q's fate in G-B hangs in the balance

The Express Tribune, August 10, 2011

GILGIT: The opposition leader in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Bashir Ahmed, who belongs to PML-Q, is regretting his choice to join the cabinet of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah, saying that he had made the choice for the sake of party discipline.

As negotiations between PPP-PML-Q progressed, PML-Q leadership demanded the inclusion of two ministers and one adviser in the G-B government. However, PPP pressure prevented Mehdi Shah from accepting the demand, leaving PML-Q 'hanging in the balance'. “Mehdi Shah used delaying tactics to keep Q at bay ... feeling the heat from PPP insiders,” stated a PPP source.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/227922/alliance-with-ppp-pml-qs-fate-in-g-b-hangs-in-the-balance/>

AJK PM announces housing colonies for Kashmiri settlers

Pakistan Tribune, August 10, 2011

LAHORE: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed announced establishing housing colonies as well as creating job opportunities for Kashmiri immigrants living in Pakistan. During his maiden public appearance in Lahore on August 9 at a reception hosted by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and candidate for AJK Legislative Assembly seat in Lahore Ghulam Mohiyuddin Deewan, he stated that he would establish special residential colonies for the refugees of Jammu and Kashmir who have settled

throughout the country. He claimed that the energy crisis could be overcome in the next four years if Pakistani entrepreneurs invested in AJK and took up new hydropower projects. The AJK prime minister, who is also a senior PPP leader, while inviting the Pakistani industrialists for investing in various sectors in AJK, stated that he would give special incentives to investors.

<http://paktribune.com/news/AJK-PM-announces-housing-colonies-for-Kashimiri-settlers-242604.html>

Murder Attempt at Political Prisoner in Pakistan controlled Gilgit

August 15, 2011

Fires were shot at the barrack in Gilgit Central Jail where Manzoor Parwana was attending the Ramadhan fast ritual. He and his six other companions remained safe during the incident. Manzoor accuses the jail authorities of using the jail inmates to orchestrate the attack. Manzoor has been implicated for sedition against the Pakistani state in the disputed region where he while addressing a rally demanded opening of the line of control between Ladakh and Baltistan and resumption of trade and transit to benefit ten thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) who live in different parts of the twin regions.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Murder_Attempt_at_Political_Prisoner_in_Pakistan_controlled_Gilgit,201137347.aspx

Shabbir Mir, Hunza violence: Rioters cause damages worth Rs 200m to G-B government

The Express Tribune, August 17, 2011

GILGIT: The recent violence in Hunza following the killing of two men by police has cost the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government Rs 200 million. "The estimate losses stands around Rs 200 million," official sources in Hunza stated, while officials in the district administration declined to comment on the matter. The Aliabad Police Station was torched by a mob; the damage is estimated to be Rs6.5 million. Other buildings damaged in the riots are Deputy Commissioner House (Rs7 million) Rest House (Rs1.3 million), DC Office (Rs0.6 million) and a police check post (Rs1.3 million). "The building and roads department had conducted the

assessment and submitted to it to the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government for the release of the money," he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/233222/hunza-violence-rioters-cause-damages-worth-rs200m-to-g-b-government/>

Shabbir Mir, Nomination: Two G-B councillors made PM's advisers

The Express Tribune, August 17, 2011

GILGIT: Two members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council have been nominated as advisers to Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani, officials stated on August 16. "Ghulam Hussain Saleem and Wazir Ibadat have been nominated as advisers to the prime minister," stated officials, adding that both will soon be administered oath to their offices. Saleem belongs to Skardu, also the hometown of Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah, while Ibadat hails from Astore Valley. Gilgit-Baltistan's self governance order 2009 states that two out of six members of the Gilgit-Baltistan council will be picked as advisers to the prime minister, who also chairs the council.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/233305/nomination-two-g-b-councillors-made-pms-advisers/>

Prioritising construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam

Pakistan Observer

For the last many years we have been hearing that the government is planning the construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam and actual work on the project would start soon. Even the previous government stated work will begin soon after the ground breaking ceremony was performed in April, 2006 by the former President but one feels depressed that progress has not been made to start the actual work.

Though it is encouraging that the Federal government has provided Rs 3.9 billion to Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa governments to acquire land but the process is taking too much time. No major water reservoir has been undertaken since the completion of Tarbela dam in 1976.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=108841>

Economic Developments

Ordinance promulgated to exempt LoC trade from VAT

The Nation, August 29, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Governor N N Vohra promulgated an ordinance to introduce certain amendments in the Jammu and Kashmir Value Added Tax Act 2005 and another Ordinance to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2006. As the legislature is not in session, the Governor, on the recommendations of the Chief Minister, in exercise of the powers conferred upon him under Section 91 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, promulgated the aforesaid two Ordinances, which come into force with immediate effect.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/29-Aug-2011/Ordinance-promulgated-to-exempt-LoC-trade-from-VAT>

1.5 MW power project approved

Business Recorder, August 23, 2011

ASTORE: A power project of 1.5 Mega Watt has been approved for upper region of Pareshing Mushke village, Gilgit Baltistan (GB) to meet the increasing energy requirements of the area. Executive Engineer Water & Power Fayyaz Alam on August 23 stated that the location of Mushke village has been approved by the Planning and Development department and the project will be started by an open tender soon. He further noted the estimated cost of this project is Rs. 20 million and it will take three to four years to complete.

Fayyaz Alam stated that Assistant Chief Planning & Development department Israr Ahmed has approved the location and asked the competent authorities to further proceed. He further stated another power project of two Mega Watt in Shogora will be launched next month.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/industries-a->

<sectors/25035-15-mw-power-project-approved-.html>

New 150-MW hydropower station to be opened in September

August 20, 2011

A 150-megawatt hydropower station near Muzaffarabad will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in the first week of September 2011. The official is also likely to lay foundation stone of Muzaffarabad Medical College.

The new Patrind hydropower station was developed over the Kunhar river flow near Muzaffarabad. The facility will be added to the national system. In the near future, Azad Jammu & Kashmir government was allowed by the Gilani government in Pakistan to produce hydropower up to 100-megawatts, previous limit 50-megawatt. The outgoing government could take no such initiative to help the nation from the hardships of loadshedding that goes for 12 to 16 hours. The visit by the Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani will be the first one to AJK since the coming into function of the present PPP-AJK government under Premier Abdul Majeed Chaudhry.

http://www.hydroworld.com/index/display/news_display.1483252571.html

Rs. 3.9 bln provided to acquire land for Diامر Basha Dam

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 12, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has provided Rs. 3.9 billion to Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa authorities to acquire land for construction of country's most vital project- Diامر Basha dam. The process of acquisition of land is continuing and after its completion, work would start which is expected most probably by end of this year. A senior official on August 12 stated land for construction of WAPDA project offices has already been taken over and for the purpose 13 local construction contracts were awarded.

The official stated Diامر Basha Dam project is the largest development project in the history of the country which will leave positive impact on the national economy. About the benefits of the project, he stated the water storage will be 8.1 MAF and estimated annual benefits would be Rs.50.8 billion. He noted electricity generation capacity of the project will be 4500 MW while annual estimated energy contribution will be 19 billion units with benefits annual advantage of Rs. 106.6 billion.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&Itemid=50

Huge investment potential in GB

The Nation, August 24, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan has great potential for investment in different sectors: mining, minerals, gems, tourism, water & power, hoteling and hospitality. Huge investment opportunities also exist in agriculture and medicinal herbs sectors. Climate and abundant water resources make it ideally suitable for marvellous growth of both these sectors. Private sector has the ability to write new success stories in Gilgit Baltistan, where immense potential is yet to be exploited.

Prospects for foreign investment are equally high and the investors could launch ventures in different alluring sectors. Meanwhile, Indonesia has expressed desire to extend maximum cooperation to Gilgit-Baltistan government in its efforts aimed at bringing progress and prosperity in the area. The Indonesian government is keen to help Gilgit-Baltistan government in exploration of coal and mining. Indonesia has the expertise in these areas and the sharing of technical skills could create a win-win situation. Agriculture is one of the potential areas for investment in the shape of production, preservation.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/24-Aug-2011/Huge-investment-potential-in-GB>

Mistrust prevails in cross-LoC trading

Business Recorder, August 17, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: In Salamabad, located on the Line of Control (LoC), Shabir Ahmad bartered

Kashmiri chillies for dates with a trader across the de facto border while Asif Lone traded South Indian coconuts for almonds. The cross-LoC trade was supposed to be one of the baby steps in solving the vexed Kashmir issue but the deal is fast turning sour. "Every week you will see a newcomer in the trade. After facing serious problems they retreat," explains Lone, a cross-LoC trader from Baramulla in north Kashmir. "There is no guarantee of recovery of money if you don't know your trading partner across the LoC," he remarked.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/business-a-economy/24091-mistrust-prevails-in-cross-loc-trading.html>

25 new power projects approved

Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: The Gilgit-Baltistan government has approved 25 new thermal power projects in different districts which will boost the power generation capacity thus reducing load-shedding in the region. This was stated by Gilgit-Baltistan Minister for Law, Wazir Shakeel. He stated masses of the region would soon hear a good news regarding Bunji tunnel as Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani would give approval for the project in a day or two.

He stated GB had a capacity to generate 30,000 to 40,000 mega watt electricity. The Diامر Basha Dam after completion would generate power. The minister noted the government was utilizing all available resources for the development of area and maximum relief would be provided to the masses.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=109941>

Industrial uplift plan being inked in Azad Jammu & Kashmir

Dawn, August 17, 2011

MIRPUR: A comprehensive phased plan was being inked by the AJK government to encourage and promote foreign investment in trade and industrial sectors of the state, official sources stated. Sources further noted on August 17 that AJK government had already chalked out a strategy for early revival of over 80 sick Industrial units located in Mirpur and Bhimbher districts besides promoting

industrialisation process in both the districts as well as in other parts of the liberated territory.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/17/industrial-uplift-plan-being-inked-in-azad-jammu-kashmir.html>

Swift remittances transfer facility for AJK

The Nation, August 1, 2011

MIRPUR: The National Bank of Pakistan launched broad-based free of any charges 'Home Remittances' scheme in Azad Jammu & Kashmir to facilitate the overseas Pakistanis including Kashmiris for the swift transfer of remittances to their families dwelling across Azad Jammu Kashmir.

Announcing the launching of the scheme, Senior Executive Vice President / Group Chief, Global Home Remittance Group, NBP and Project Chief of the scheme, Khalid Bin Shaheen, noted in a news conference at Kashmir Press Club that the scheme would provide the opportunities to overseas Pakistanis including Kashmiri expatriates to rapidly transfer the remittances up to Rs0.5 million as swift cash from any part of the world through the designated branches of the National Bank of Pakistan besides their assigned foreign partner financial institutions.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/01-Aug-2011/Swift-remittances-transfer-facility-for-AJK>

Muzaffarabad trade organizations to protest for ignoring AJK capital in appointments on key positions

August 2, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: All trade organizations of Muzaffarabad would be record their token protest on August 2 against ignoring the Muzaffarabad Division about the appointments of government positions by the new government of Pakistan People's Party. The trade organizations announced

that if the government would not appoint any one from Muzaffarabad Division we would siege the Legislative Assembly and we would ban the entry of Ministers belonging to Muzaffarabad in the city who would took oath of Ministry.

The leadership of all trade organizations Mubarik Awan, Nisar-ur-Rehman Abbasi, Mustafa LaLah, Shouqar Nawaz Mir, Mir Imtiaz Ahmad, Basharat Mughar, Farukh Prince, Tariq Dani, Tanveer Qurashi, Syed Chan Shah, Farooq Danistated in a press conference at the press club in Muzaffarabad.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/08/muzaffarabad-trade-organizations-to-protest-for-ignoring-ajk-capital-in-appointments-on-key-positions/>

Cross LoC Bus Losing Sheen

August 4, 2011

SRINAGAR: For the third consecutive week, no Kashmiri crossed over to the other side of the Line of Control while three guests arrived from Pakistan-administered Kashmir here this afternoon through Srinagar-Muzaffarabad peace bus. As many as 68 returnees also crossed sides at the Aman Setu point in Uri sector, official sources noted. They stated again no Kashmiri crossed over to PaK for the third consecutive week.

However, 55 PaK residents, including 15 women and 26 children, who had come here earlier to visit their relatives returned to their homes. Three residents of PaK, including a woman, arrived at Kaman post, the last Indian military post near the LoC after crossing the peace bridge on foot. They stated 13 Kashmiris, who had gone to PaK, also returned to their homes after completing stay with their relatives across the LoC.

http://www.kashmirobsrver.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8378:cross-loc-bus-losing-sheen&catid=3:regional-news&Itemid=4

International Developments

US gives aid for hydroelectric dams in Pakistan

August 20, 2011

WASHINGTON: The US has provided funds to Pakistan to complete construction of two hydroelectric dam projects in the country, a media report stated on August 20. The US assistance is being provided to Satpara hydroelectric dam project in Gilgit-Baltistan region and Gomal Zam hydroelectric dam in South Waziristan, as noted by the US State Department. 'We are considering doing more in the sector,' stated the department's spokesperson Victoria Nuland.

There were also reports that the US would support the \$12 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam project on the Indus river in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Nuland stated Pakistan had requested the international community's support for the project. 'We recognise that such a hydroelectric project would help meet many of Pakistan's long-term energy and water needs, as well as advance social and economic development,' she noted.

<http://news.in.msn.com/international/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5379791>

Ananth Krishnan, Chinese firm signals interest in PoK dam project

The Hindu, August 2, 2011

Islamabad urges Beijing to step up support to Pakistan's hydropower and civil nuclear energy projects. Officials from China's biggest State-run hydropower firm on August 1 signalled interest in supporting the construction of a major \$12 billion dam project in the Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), even as Pakistan called on China to step up support to hydropower and civilian nuclear energy projects in the country. Officials from Sinohydro, a State-owned hydropower firm, discussed proposals for the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam in PoK with the visiting Pakistan Federal Minister for Water and Power, Syed Naveed Qamar, on August 1, according to a statement from the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing. Mr. Qamar also invited Sinohydro's support for the construction of two other dams, the Gomal Zam and Darawat projects, in talks with the company's chairman Huang Baodong.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2314247.ece>

Other Developments

Muhammad Farooq & Nisar Ahmad Khan, At least 63 die in Kohistan village hit by flash floods

Dawn, August 26, 2011

GILGIT/MANSEHRA: Flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains swept through an entire village in the Kandia valley of the Kohistan district on August 25 morning. According to local police officials and villagers, at least 63 people, 28 children, 17 women and 18 men, were killed. Some TV channel reported up to 80 fatalities. But District Coordination Officer Syed Imtiaz Ali Shah confirmed only 33 deaths, and stated relief and rescue efforts were under way in the affected area.

He stated the village of Richow was located at high altitude. Bodies of 33 people were found by people living in lower areas and a number of villagers were missing. Hundreds of cattle head were also swept away, Mr Shah stated. The hill torrents washed away the main road linking the valley with the district headquarters of Dasu which has hindered rescue and relief work. Mr Shah stated that two helicopters were being sent with 300 food packets, tents, quilts and blankets to the affected village.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/26/at-least-63-die-in-kohistan-village-hit-by-flash-floods.html>

Up-gradation of education in GB

Pakistan Observer

DIAMER: Executive Supervisor schools National Education Foundation (NEF) Rashid Mehmood Mughal stated that steps were being taken in order to up-grade standard of education in far-flung areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. He noted we need assistance of our teachers because better education policies can only be implemented with their cooperation. "We have to focus on education for progress and development in the area", he stated. Replying to a question, he noted that administration of SAP schools has been handed over to NEF in GB and we have completed all the necessary surveys regarding

students enrolment and teachers information.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=110531>

AJK to have grand highways network soon

The News, August 23, 2011

MIRPUR: With the allocation of colossal funds in the new financial year 2011/12, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) will have a grand highways network with prime focus to provide most safe and comfortable traveling facilities to the commuters, sources stated on August 22.

Sources noted that the government has planned to establish a grand and latest roads network across AJK under a phased programme. The AJK Highway Department had already been assigned the duty for execution of the project, the sources added noting that the proposed highways network of international standard from Keil to Bhimbher will be laid down by the reputed construction companies, including the contractors involved in the construction of the reputed Silk route linking Pakistan with the neighboring friendly country China.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=64083&Cat=3>

Water level in Mangla Dam on the rise

The Nation, August 22, 2011

MIRPUR: Following the fast melting of snow in the top mountainous catchments, the water level in country's second biggest reservoir - Mangla Dam is rapidly rising since last 24 hours, it was officially declared.

Water level in Mangla Dam raised to 1202.10 feet against the dead level of 1140.00 feet, sources noted. The present live storage of water in the reservoir was recorded as 4.548 MAF, they added. The inflow of the Jhelum River into Mangla Sam was recorded as 25,500 cusecs and outflow of the river was recorded 13000 cusecs, sources stated. Since the

Mangla Dam has been raised by 30 feet, the authorities intend to raise the water level gradually under the phased programme. At the first leg of the programme, the authorities intend to raise the water level by 1210 by the mid of next month. And at the same time, the evacuation of the affectees of Mangla Dam raising project dwelling at the periphery of the dam up to the level of 1210 feet, has started swiftly through their shifting to their new residential resort namely New City adjacent to existing Mirpur city by the govt.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/22-Aug-2011/Water-level-in-Mangla-Dam-on-the-rise>

Erra completes 7,300 projects in quake-hit areas

The News, August 22, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) has so far completed 7,300 out of a total of 13,264 projects in the quake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the ERRA spokesman, the authority was working on various projects for improving education, health and water facilities in the affected areas soon after the October 2005 earthquake. Erra has so far constructed over 600,000 quakeproof houses in various areas. The spokesman stated the Erra has been conferred with the Sasakawa Award and is the first Pakistani department whose services have been recognized at the international level.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=64056&Cat=2>

Landslide hits village in Ghanche

Daily Times, August 1, 2011

RAWALPINDI: A landslide hit the Talis village in Ghanche district in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) on July 30. The village has around 500 houses and a population of 5,000. As a result of the landslide, 80 houses were completely damaged, whereas 50 houses were partially damaged, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) reported. No loss of life was reported, however, the landslide affected around 1,200 to 1,500 people. Livestock was unharmed as well, except for one poultry farm, which had 150 birds. One Coy (150 people) has been employed by

the army to help the victims.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C08%5C01%5Cstory_1-8-2011_pg7_15

Rescue operation started to evacuate landslide victims

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 1, 2011

SKARDU: District Administration of Ghangche launched a rescue operation to evacuate around 150 households displaced due to landslide and flood in a glacial stream at Talis village of Baltistan division. Official sources stated that the landslide, which started on August 1, at Talis had destroyed around 80 houses besides displacing the residents of more than 150 households. No casualty was so far reported in the incident, the sources added. It was pertinent to mention that last year, at least 13 people had lost their lives during a flash-flood incident in the same area.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=146515&Itemid=2

Mubarak Zeb Khan, Bid to smuggle 560kg of heroin from Gilgit into China foiled

Dawn, August 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: While Pakistan is exploring Chinese markets for its products after signing a free trade agreement in 2006, some unscrupulous people smuggled about 560kg of heroin to the country in rice containers via Sost Dry Port in Gilgit-Baltistan. Sources in the Customs Department noted that the Chinese authorities had recently seized heroin concealed in rice containers and reported the matter to Pakistan government. Sources did not disclose the quantity of rice. China is not a traditional market for Pakistani rice. Member Customs Mumtaz Haider Rizvi noted: "We have not received any official word from the Chinese customs authorities" about the incident, but sent a request to get an official confirmation from them.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/15/bid-to-smuggle-560kg-of-heroin-from-gilgit-into-china-foiled.html>

Peer Muhammad, G-B shooting: Protest against barbaric killings continues

The Express Tribune, August 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The youth of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-

B) on August 13 continued their protest against the brutal killings of a father and his son in Hunza by police. Activists of the Gilgit-Baltistan Student Federation gathered in front of the National Press Club and Karachi Company and held G-B Chief Minister responsible for the incident. The two deceased were victims of the Attabad landslide and were protesting, demanding compensation for the losses they had incurred.

“It seems that G-B has been converted into a police state as peaceful protesters are killed,” stated Inam Karim, a youth leading a group of protesters. Karim noted the police were issued directives to shoot on the CM's arrival. The protesters vowed that they would continue their protest as long as the government does not take serious action against those responsible for the incident.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/230996/g-b-shooting-protest-against-barbaric-killings-continues/>

G U Kyani, Volcano ticking in Leepa Valley, Kaiserkote: AJK experts

August 17, 2011

RAWALPINDI: Experts based in AJK on August 16 revealed that they have discovered a volcano and “fault line” in Leepa Valley and Kaisarkote areas adjacent to Karnah sector near Line of Control (LoC) in AJK. “A team of experts comprising professors and geologists of the AJK University conducted an extensive tour of the areas where the volcano was discovered. They found traces of lava in Leepa Valley and Kaisarkote located adjacent to Karnah sector. They also came to know that residents had seen smoke emanating from the soil in these areas,” sources stated. “After conducting the tour and thorough research they expressed apprehensions about the volcano erupting any time.”

Sources noted a team of experts comprising Professor Dr Muhammad Sabir, Dr Professor Muhammad Rustam Khan, scholar Saleem Mughal and Fahad Hameed has confirmed that volcano is present in these areas and it is ticking. “After conducting a test of a few sample rocks in the area it became clear that lava has seeped into these,” sources stated, adding that experts have also

discovered a “fault line” in the area and further investigations are on.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/17/volcano-ticking-in-leepa-valley-kaiserkote-ajk-experts-111.asp>

Lingual diversity: Balti, Shina news service launched

The Express Tribune, August 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani on August 13 stated that the Balti and Shina PTV service would provide an opportunity to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan to learn of developments taking place in the country and around the world in their local language. “Credit goes to the present democratic government that has taken the decision to connect people through National Transmission Networks,” the Prime Minister stated at the launch of PTV's Balti and Shina service. He noted that it was a matter of immense pleasure for him to launch PTV News Bulletins in Shina and Balti languages for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan province. The Prime Minister stated the region has immense potential for tourism because of its natural beauty and towering mountains.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/231486/lingual-diversity-balti-shina-news-service-launched/>

Robberies on KKH

The News, August 17, 2011

BISHAM: Transporters on August 16 asked the authorities to provide security to the vehicles plying the Karakoram Highway (KKH) or else they would go on strike for an indefinite period. Talking to reporters here, Truck Owners Association, Bisham and Gilgit-Baltistan chapter patron-in-chief Haji Asfandyar Khan, president Gul Mohammad Khan and vice-president Yusuf Khan stated that truck drivers were being harassed and looted in Jaglot, Chilas and some other areas in Gilgit-Baltistan. “We will stop the supply of goods to Gilgit-Baltistan if security was not provided to the vehicles,” he stated. They complained that robberies were frequently being carried out on the Karakoram Highway due to which the drivers were feeling insecure.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=63181&Cat=7&dt=8/17/2011>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Seven

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: 24 members directly elected

Governor of G-B: 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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