

POK News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

During the early part of July, the US aid officials in Pakistan paid a visit to a library in Gilgit Baltistan. They provided funds to upgrade the library out of the Ambassador's Fund Programme. The frequent visits by US officials to the PoK starting with the US embassy officials' delegation visit in May- June 2012 has been discussed widely in the media. This was closely followed by the visit of the US Ambassador Cameron Munter to the so called AJK in mid June 2012. Simultaneously, there were reports that China might set up a Consulate in Gilgit Baltistan. This possibility was later denied by Chinese officials. Nonetheless, some kind of geopolitical manoeuvring can be perceived in such developments.

There are indications that the US interest in PoK has not got down very well with Pakistan. For instance, a report in the current issue notes how a local official in Gilgit Baltistan was suspended for hosting dinner to the visiting US officials. The report states that Pakistani authorities were keen to know what had transpired between them during the dinner. This incident reflects the extent and nature of Pakistan's scepticism regarding US intentions particularly in PoK. Conversely, Pakistan is totally comfortable with the Chinese forays in the PoK and in fact supporting every measure to ensure Chinese presence in the region.

The overall situation in Gilgit Baltistan region is relatively calm after the sectarian clashes which began earlier this year. Efforts have been undertaken by the local people to bring about harmony and peace between the rival sects. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has acknowledged that maintaining law and order in Gilgit Baltistan is on priority.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

US team's visit to Gilgit-Baltistan unnerves Pak

July 4, 2012

NEW DELHI: The recent visit of a three-member delegation of the US Embassy officials based in Pakistan to Gilgit-Baltistan has unnerved the Pakistan establishment. Pakistan's intelligence agencies have described it as a "secret movement" of foreign missions in the country. But the people of the region consider this visit as an opportunity to present a factual picture on Gilgit-Baltistan to the outside world. The American delegation that visited Gilgit-Baltistan included Lisa Buzenos, political/economic Officer, Kimberly Phelan, political officer, and Khalid Javed, security advisor.

http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/us-team-s-visit-to-gilgit-baltistan-unerves-pak_785425.html

G-B tour: USTATED team visits library, irrigation project

The Express Tribune, July 10, 2012

GILGIT: A delegation of senior The United States Agency for International Development (USTATED) officials on July 9 paid a visit to the municipal library of Gilgit, which received a grant of \$30,000 under the agency's Ambassadors' Fund Programme recently. "The grant was awarded to the library on the request of Gilgit administration to provide the library with modern technology, equipment and facilities," stated a spokesperson for USTATED. As part of the grant, the library received four computers, two scanners, two printers, internet connection, one generator, library software, two-card catalogue cabinets and construction of a wooden picture gallery furnished with precious historical photos, he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/406005/g-b-tour-ustated-team-visits-library-irrigation-project/>

Mumtaz Alvi, Wattoo fanning sectarian tension

in GB: Dr Shah

The News, July 15, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Deputy Information Secretary Dr Israr Shah alleged that federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo, was destroying peace in the region. Talking to media persons on July 15, Dr Shah, once an activist of PPP, stated that under a well-conceived conspiracy, Wattoo was fanning sectarian tension in Gilgit-Baltistan, which had been a peace model for the rest of Pakistan for decades. "The region on which Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto showered many favours is today being destroyed by Minister Wattoo. The region today rests on a heap of arms and ammunition," he further noted. Shah also charged that Wattoo was running Gilgit-Baltistan as a colony.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-120519-Wattoo-fanning-sectarian-tension-in-GB-Dr-Shah>

Shabbir Mir, Forgive and forget: New era of harmony dawns in G-B

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2012

GILGIT: After decades of sectarian violence, July 14 marked the day Gilgit readied itself for a hopeful new reality. A local jirga in Gilgit achieved a landmark breakthrough after dozens of bereaved Sunni and Shia families of Napura locality embraced each other forgiving the blood spilled over their decades-long sectarian rivalry. "We are forgiving each other to herald a new era of peace, happiness and tranquility," Maulana Motabar Shah and Sheikh Bashir noted at the regional chief minister's office, where they formally announced their unison. Shah and Bashir are top clerics of the Sunni and Shia communities in Napura, respectively.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/408533/forgive-and-forget-new-era-of-harmony-dawns-in-g-b/>

PM to visit AJK on July 19

July 15, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf will visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on July 19 while Pakistan People Party (PPP) AJK chapter has reviewed all the arrangements pertaining to the PM first visit to the AJK. During his one-day visit of the AJK, the PM will address the public gathering at MLA hostel's ground in Muzaffarabad while Federal Minister for Transportation, Arbab Alamgir and Prime Minister AJK, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed will lay stone of Kohala Muzaffarabad Express way on the same day. A meeting of PPP's leader and workers of AJK was held in constituency no 6 of AJK, headed by Advocate, Imtiaz Khan. The meeting chalked out the plan of upcoming visit of PM Raja Pervaiz Ashraf.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=197078>

Transfer of AJK former AG: Court seeking comments on petition pleading annulment

Dawn, July 16, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK High Court Chief Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal directed the Auditor General of Pakistan, Federal Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and three others to file their comments on a petition seeking annulment of the transfer of AJK's former Accountant General (AG) Tahir Mahmud as well as probe into the alleged misappropriation of funds in the AJK Council. The petition has been filed by Raja Akhtar Hussain and Raja Mumtaz Khan, president and secretary general, respectively, of the AJK Pensioners Association under section 44 of the AJK's Interim Constitution Act 1974 and it will come up for comments and preliminary arguments on July 24.

Apart from the AGP, who also happens to be Auditor General of Azad Kashmir under the region's interim constitution and the federal ministry of Kashmir affairs, the AJK government, the AJK Council and the AJK Ehtesab Bureau have also been made respondents in the petition, wherein the petitioners, through their counsel Mohammad

Yaqoob Mughal, have prayed for declaration of the June 20, 2012 order of the AGP regarding transfer of AG Tahir Mahmud as " violative of relevant law, rules, procedure and practice, based on malafide and outcome of misuse of power".

<http://dawn.com/2012/07/16/transfer-of-ajk-former-ag-court-seeking-comments-on-petition-pleading-annulment/>

Tariq Naqash, Concern voiced against hydropower projects in AJK

Dawn, July 16, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The federal government and its Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) should sincerely and seriously address the concerns of the Kashmiris in the wake of construction of two mega hydropower projects in the area, before launching any further undertaking. This was demanded by the participants of a seminar held under the aegis of a local NGO, Muzaffarabad City Development Foundation (MCDF).

The seminar, which was addressed by the representatives of different political parties and organisations of traders and lawyers, focused on the environmental and other losses, they alleged would be caused by the Neelum-Jhelum and Patrind hydropower projects being constructed on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad in public and private sectors, respectively.

<http://dawn.com/2012/07/16/concern-voiced-against-hydropower-projects-in-ajk/>

Shabbir Mir / Umer Nangiana, Protest rallies: Release of youth, trade union leaders sought

The Express Tribune, July 30, 2012

ISLAMABAD / GILGIT: Activists of progressive political parties, trade unions, youth and student organisations staged protest rallies in Islamabad and the picturesque Hunza valley of Gilgit-Baltistan against the incarceration of a youth leader and his comrades in Gilgit jail and trade union leaders in Punjab jails. They demanded their release and withdrawal of false cases against them. They also expressed their concern over the retrenchment of thousands of workers from various organisations.

In Hunza, over 1,000 people including 300 women gathered at Nasirabad, Hunza to vent their anger at the highhandedness and brutalities of the security agencies against Baba Jan, chief organiser of Progressive Youth Front (PYF), activists Iftikhar Hussain and others in Gilgit Jail who have been detained for about a year.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/414754/protest-rallies-release-of-youth-trade-union-leaders-sought/>

Police Official in Gilgit Suspended for hosting US diplomats

Dardistan Times, July 30, 2012

GILGIT: Ms. Tahira, a female Police Officer of Gilgit City, has been suspended for erring to invite US Embassy Diplomats to her house over a meal while they were on visit to Gilgit-Baltistan. According to reports, the DIG Crimes, Mr. Mehmood Ul Hassan issued a notification of suspension for the female Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP). Reports also claimed that a committee has been set up to investigate into the matter and to find out what exactly was whispered during the meetup.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/police-official345gilgit8-suspended-hosting-us-diplomates>

Demanding regularisation: Court stays induction of 700 policemen

The Express Tribune, July 30, 2012

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court has issued a stay order to the police against the induction of 700 new constables into the force and has sought response from police authorities. The court also directed that physical tests scheduled for July 28 of the new inductees be suspended. The order was issued in response to a petition filed by police constables who were discharged from service after expiration of their contracts. The petitioners had maintained that they were sacked even after AJK Prime Minister (PM) Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Chief Secretary Shehzad Arbab and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tariq Khokhar assured that their services will be regularised.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/414706/demanding->

[regularisation-court-stays-induction-of-700-policemen/](#)

Departmental tug-of-war: Revenue dept officials arrested for corruption

The Express Tribune, July 29, 2012

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Accountability Bureau arrested a number of senior officials of the Income Tax, Excise and Taxation (IT/E&T) department and the AJK Council on charges of corruption and financial embezzlement. The officials were arrested in a raid conducted at the IT/E&T office complex after the accountability bureau issued arrest warrants for Commissioner Income Tax, Excise and Sales Tax Qaiser Iqbal; acting Commissioner Income Tax, Excise and Sales Tax Mirza Zulfiqar; and AJK Council Joint Secretary Qaiser Majeed on July 27.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/414375/departmental-tug-of-war-revenue-dept-officials-arrested-for-corruption/>

Infiltration attempt?: Underground tunnel discovered between AJK, Indian Kashmir

The Express Tribune, July 29, 2012

A 400-metre long tunnel running between India and Pakistan was discovered by authorities on July 29 along the de facto border in Jammu & Kashmir's Samba district. "We have discovered a tunnel running between Pakistan and India in Samba district," Israr Khan, the Senior Superintendent of Police in Samba noted. The mysterious tunnel, the construction of which has not been attributed to anyone yet, was detected after the soil in an area near the Indian Border Security Force's Chillayari outpost caved in at three separate points after rains.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/414512/infiltration-attempt-underground-tunnel-discovered-between-ajk-indian-kashmir/>

Tariq Naqash, 'Pak PM to withdraw advice regarding PaK Council accountability'

MUZAFFARABAD: The federal minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan affairs Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattou has agreed, in principle, to withdraw a controversial 'advice' by Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, in his capacity as chairman PoK Council, seeking repeal of the application of

accountability law in the PoK Council with retrospective effect, sources stated. The decision was conveyed by Wattoo to PoK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan during a meeting on the highly critical issue in Islamabad the other day. PoK's senior minister Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin was also present in the meeting, sources stated.

The PoK President, who had a very categorical stand on the issue from the day one, told the federal minister that the PoK government and the Peoples Party could not afford the proposed amendment for a number of reasons, the outrage of PoK's civil society at alleged "dictatorial role of the PoK Council and acts of corruption being on top of them," sources stated.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/29/-pak-pm-to-withdraw-advice-regarding-pak-council-accountability--23.asp>

'Tell them we are beautiful'

Pakistan Today, July 27, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan has asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to utilise all its resources and manpower to improve the country's image in the eyes of the world and solve problems of the Pakistanis living abroad. This directive was issued in a meeting chaired by Haji Adeel Ahmed at the parliament house. The meeting was attended by Leader of the House Jehangir Badr, Farhatullah Babar, Sehar Kamran, Syed Mustafa Kamal, Sughra Imam and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Hyderi.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/07/27/city/islamabad/tell-them-we-are-beautiful/>

Forty eight Pakistani Shia govt officials suspended in Skardu by biased admin

The biased government of Gilgit-Baltistan province has suspended 48 Shia government officials to punish them for a successful visit of MWM Chief Allama Nasir Abbas Jafri. Orders to suspend these officers from Kachura and surrounding areas have been issued. Some days ago, the biased government had issued orders to expel Allama Nasir Abbas Jafri, secretary general of Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen and ban on his entry into the province for 90 days.

Those orders evoked instant reaction from all parts of Pakistan. Thousands of people thronged Gilgit and Baltistan's streets to protest against those orders. Finally, the government had to withdraw those orders.

<http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=332047>

AJK PM asks Ashraf for Rs20 bn bailout package

The News, July 27, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, requested PM Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to announce a Rs20 billion bailout package for AJK to complete various development projects there. The request was extended during a meeting with Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf at the PM House on July 26. AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo and Senior AJK Minister Chaudhry Yaseen were present in the meeting.

AJK prime minister stated that the package would help complete the ongoing development projects which could not be completed in the past due to the shortage of funds. He stated that cost escalation had further necessitated the provision of funds on an urgent basis to complete these projects. He also sought the intervention of PM Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to provide drinking water to the people of AJK, adding that the situation was worsening with every passing year and warranted immediate intervention of the federal government.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-123025-AJK-PM-asks-Ashraf-for-Rs20-bn-bailout-package>

Chinese to get foolproof security: IG

The Nation, July 27, 2012

KARACHI: Following the terrorist attack on Chinese consulate in Karachi, Sindh Inspector General Faiz Ahmed Leghari directed the law-enforcement agencies to ensure provision of foolproof security to Chinese working on different developmental projects in the province. Presiding a high level meeting at the Central Police Office on

July 26, the IG Sindh stated that effective measures should be taken for the provision of security to the Chinese residing in Karachi and other parts of the province and adequate security must be provided at their residences and offices.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/karachi/27-Jul-2012/chinese-to-get-foolproof-security-ig>

Assignments: Old PM advisers retained, new appointed

The Express Tribune, July 27, 2012

GILGIT: The federal government on July 26 appointed a new adviser to the prime minister for Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) and retained the two previous advisers for the area. The two previous advisers are Attaullah Shahab and Mohammad Saleem, while the newly appointed adviser is Syed Afzal, official sources of the G-B Council noted. The decision was made in a meeting of senior government officials held on July 25, sources stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/413530/assignments-old-pm-advisers-retained-new-appointed/>

Majeed directs authorities to complete developments projects

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 26, 2012

MIRPUR: Prime Minister Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Chaudhry Abdul Majeed on July 25 directed the concerned authorities to take all possible measures to achieve the set targets for next fiscal year 2012-13 by providing the required funds under the one window operation. The premier issued these directives while presiding over a post budget meeting in Muzaffarabad. He stated the PPP government would get maximum bailout package for AJK so that all projects could be completed in stipulated time frame and relief could be provided to the masses.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=203155&Itemid=2

President, PMAJK call on President Zardari

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 26, 2012

ISLAMABAD: President of Azad Jammu and

Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan and Prime Minister AJK Ch. Abdul Majid called on President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr on July 25. Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin was also present during the meeting. Developmental matters relating to AJK were discussed during the meeting, a press release stated.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=203165&Itemid=2

Abdul Qayyum Chaudhry, Sultan comes down hard on AJK govt over rampant corruption

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 26, 2012

MIRPUR: Former Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir and prominent leader of Pakistan People's Party Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry lashed out at AJK government over corruption in various government departments. Addressing gatherings at various places in Mirpur, former AJK premier Barrister Sultan stated that the present AJK government miserably failed on all fronts to deliver to the masses of Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/26-Jul-2012/sultan-comes-down-hard-on-ajk-govt-over-rampant-corruption>

Outstanding dues: Wasa employees threaten to suspend supply to Gilgit

The Express Tribune, July 25, 2012

GILGIT: Employees of Water and Sanitation Authority (Wasa) Gilgit have once again threatened to suspend water supply to consumers if they were not paid their four months of outstanding salaries. "We cannot wait for our dues any longer," Ejaz Khan, a representative of Wasa's employees union told journalists on July 24.

He stated that over 1,200 employees of Wasa have not been paid salaries for the past four months, adding that the authority is "forcing them to take extreme steps". If the employees cut off water supply to Gilgit, over 30,000 residents of the valley and adjacent areas are expected to face water shortage.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/412581/outstanding-dues-wasa-employees-threaten-to-suspend-supply-to-gilgit/>

'Dreams of opportunist politicians shattered'

Pakistan Observer, July 2, 2012

DEEPALPUR: Federal minister for Kashmir affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo stated that National Assembly, by electing Raja Pervez Ashraf as prime minister shattered the dreams of opportunist politicians. At a ceremony organized by Waseela-e-Haq, Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), for donating an amount of Rs 4 million among 24 deserving women, federal minister Manzoor Wattoo stated some politicians were dreaming for the end of the tenure of the present government after Supreme Court's ruling against former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani. National Assembly has ruined all such dreams by electing Raja Pervez Ashraf as prime minister of Pakistan by two-thirds majority, Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo noted.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=163015>

Khalid Hasnain, Gilgit rights activist being given the 'third degree'

Dawn, July 23, 2012

LAHORE: Baba Jan, a rights activist in Gilgit is allegedly being subjected to severe physical and mental torture by a joint investigation team for the last couple of days after he was implicated in a 'criminal case' registered against him under Anti Terrorism Act (ATA) on July 20 at the time when he was in jail. Rights activists and legal experts say the case was registered against Baba Jan after the court accepted his bail petition and ordered his release in another case registered against him in August last year while he was leading a protest procession taken out by those affected by Attabad lake against the government for not compensating them.

<http://dawn.com/2012/07/23/gilgit-rights-activist-being-given-the-third-degree/>

IGG-B suspended for defying court order

Pakistan Observer, July 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Gilgit-Baltistan Police, Hussain Asghar was suspended

from service for not appearing before the court in the hajj corruption case.

A three-member bench comprising Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Justice Jawwad S. Khwaja and Justice Khilji Arif Hussain resumed hearing of the case relating to allegations of corruption and mismanagement in the 2010 Hajj arrangements. During the hearing, Attorney General Irfan Qadir produced the notification pertaining to the suspension of Inspector General of Gilgit-Baltistan Hussain Asghar.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=165805>

Training workshop on 'peace building'

The News, July 22, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Political and social activists from Gilgit-Baltistan, AJK, and Haripur on July 20 vowed to shun violence and promote peace at a five-day training workshop held with the theme "Peace Building". The moot was jointly organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG), which was funded by Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The training workshop held from July 16-20 was part of activities for promotion of dialogue for peace building through media and youth mobilisation.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-122077-Training-workshop-on-peace-building>

AJK President announces double quota for Balochistan students

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 21, 2012

ISLAMABAD: President of Azad Jammu Kashmir Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan on July 20 announced to give double quota for the students of Balochistan in all academic institutions of the AJK.

He stated this during a meeting with Federal Minister for Postal Services Sardar Gorgaij and discussed present political situation in the country. The AJK President commended the efforts of Sardar Gorgaij regarding his initiatives for the Baloch community. The government of AJK has

special place for the people of Balochistan, he stated.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=202777&Itemid=2

Ibrahim Zia takes oath as acting CJ AJK

July 21, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Justice Chaudhary Ibrahim Zia took oath as the new Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme Court. President of AJK Sardar Yaqoob Khan took oath from the senior most Judge Mohammad Ibrahim Zia as the acting CJ of the Supreme Court at Kashmir House in Islamabad.

Secretary Law Idrees Tabassum read the notification of the appointment of the acting chief justice. The oath taking ceremony was attended among others by Chief Justice High Court Justice Ghulam Mustfa, Justice Raja Saeed Akram of the Supreme Court and Justice Abdul Rasheed of the Senior Court.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/ibrahim-zia-takes-oath-as-acting-cj-ajk/>

Shabbir Mir, Cabinet meeting: G-B lifts ban on 4 million feet timber's transportation

The Express Tribune, July 21, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government on July 20 lifted a decade-old ban on transportation of thousands of feet of timber rotting in Diamer district. "The decision was taken in a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mehdi Shah at his office," the G-B Forests and Wildlife Adviser Aftab Haider noted. He stated that the cabinet also approved the creation of the post of G-B Chief Conservator Forests.

"The total timber lying in the valley is four million cubic feet of which two million cubic feet has been felled legally," he stated, adding that with the lifting of the ban, the legal timber would be allowed to be transported out of the G-B while transportation of illegal timber would be confined to G-B.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/411158/cabinet-meeting-g-b-lifts-ban-on-4-million-feet-timbers-transportation/>

We accept masses' mandate: PM

July 19, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on July 18 again made it clear government will seek fresh mandate from the masses in 2013 elections on the basis of its performance. Addressing a public meeting at Athmuqam in Azad Kashmir he stated that we are moving towards general elections and no one should have any doubt or fear about the holding of fair and impartial polls, because we believe in the public verdict and we will recognize their decision.

He stated PPP believes in service of the people and those talking of revolution have no program or manifesto. PM stated successive dictators made attempts to eliminate PPP but failed as the party enjoyed support of masses. The Prime Minister stated that some people were talking about the appointment of Election Commissioner and were expressing opinion that there will be rigging to change the results of the elections.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?newsid=197387>

Govt working for welfare of masses: Sadia Pakistan Observer

ASTORE: The government of Gilgit-Baltistan is persistently working for the welfare of masses and has started many programme in this regard including Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Waseela-e-Haq and many others. This was stated by Special Advisor to Chief Minister Sadia Danish. She stated a new survey for Benazir Income Support programme was to continue in all districts of the region in collaboration with AKRSP. She stated the government was utilizing all available resources for the rehabilitation of flood affectees.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=163166>

PM inaugurates CVCT at Neelum Valley

Daily Times, July 19, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf inaugurated the Cellular Village Connection Trial (CVCT) project at Attmuqam, Neelum Valley

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) on July 18. Chairman PTA Dr Mohammed Yaseen and DG SCO General Khalid Rao informed Prime Minister about the efforts made for development of telecommunication facilities at AJ&K in general and at Neelum Valley in particular. The deregulation of the telecom sector brought about a revolutionary change, which saw huge increase in subscriber base, tele-density and coverage area.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C07%5C19%5Cstory_19-7-2012_pg10_4

Nisar Ahmed Thokar, Revamping of 1974 Act must for socio-economic development in PaK'

July 1, 2012

RAWALAKOT: Civil society representatives at a discourse held under the aegis by Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) resolved that revamping of interim act of 1974 was essentially important for the socio-economic development, peace and prosperity in the region. The discourse on CPDR report titled "An appraisal of constitutional, financial and administrative arrangements between government of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir" was held at the picturesque town of Rawalakot, which was attended by the civil society representatives, leaders of various political parties, lawyers, academicians and the representatives of print and electronic media.

Renowned jurist Justice (retired) Basharat Ahmed Shiekh while highlighting the salient features of the report stated that the interim act of 1974 has unfortunately undermined the status of government of the region and rendered it as an ineffective and impotent body with no executive power. He stated that one of the darkest aspects of the Interim Act was that all the executive powers were dedicated to Kashmir Council.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul1/1-revamping-of-1974-act-must-for-socio-economic-development-in-pak--16.asp>

Tariq Naqash, PM reverses Kashmir AG's transfer orders

Dawn, July 2, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz

Ashraf reportedly took stock of the allegedly controversial transfer order of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Accountant General by the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) office and directed for its reversal. The prime minister's direction came after the issue was brought in his notice by AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan who had already strongly resisted premature transfer of the AG, making it clear to all concerned that it would not be acted upon because the consent of the borrowing government (AJK) was not sought for it, AJK president spokesman Basharat Mehbob noted on June 30. He stated not only the (AJK) president but the entire official machinery in AJK believed that the step was uncalled for and that the AG had been rendering his duties in the best interest of Azad Kashmir.

<http://dawn.com/2012/07/02/pm-reverses-kashmir-ag-transfer-orders/>

PM inaugurates various uplift schemes in AJK

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 19, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on July 18 inaugurated 76 KM Muzaffarabad-Authmuqam road, which has been completed at a cost of Rs 300 million, with financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank. The Prime Minister stated that the highway would open the beautiful Neelam Valley to the tourists. While briefing the representatives of ERRA/SERRA, he stated that the completion of the road was 'Highway of Development' as about three hundred thousands tourists came to Neelam Valley in summer season and about six hundred vehicles entered in the valley since the road was opened for traffic.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=202479&Itemid=2

Parvez Jabri, Prime Minister approves pensions of the Municipal Corporation Employees in AJK

July 12, 2012

MIRPUR: By acceding to the genuine demands of the striking civic institutions, the Prime Minister Azad Jammu & Kashmir Chaudry Abdul Majeed has accorded approval of pension for Municipal Corporation employees in AJK on July 12. The long

awaited demand of Municipal Corporation workers had been accomplished when a delegation of sanitary workers called on Prime Minister Secretariat. We have established pension funds for Municipal Corporations employees and allocated 13 crore rupee grant in this connection whereas 2 crore rupee are already with Local Government Board he added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/108-pakistan-top-news/67275-prime-minister-approves-pensions-of-the-municipal-corporation-employees-in-ajk.html>

Shabbir Mir, GBLA proceedings: Lawmakers for creation of more districts

The Express Tribune, July 13, 2012

GILGIT: Members of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) on July 12 called for creation of more districts, filling of vacant seats of judges in the apex court. The house unanimously adopted a resolution seeking creation of more districts in Gilgit-Baltistan to facilitate people and empower them. Hunza and Nagar should be made separate districts as both were independent states till 1972 when they were abolished and made administrative part of Gilgit, stated the resolution.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/407649/gbla-proceedings-lawmakers-for-creation-of-more-districts/>

Pak helicopter crashes in Gilgit-Baltistan, five killed

July 11, 2012

ISLAMABAD: A Mi-17 helicopter of Pakistan Army crashed in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region on July 11, killing all five persons on board who were returning from a sortie to Gyari sector of Siachen, the army stated. The helicopter of the army's aviation wing was on its way back from the Gyari sector when it caught fire and crashed at the airport in Skardu town, police officials were quoted as stating. The army confirmed the incident in a brief statement and stated five persons on board, including two pilots, were killed. The statement noted the helicopter was on a routine test flight. It could not immediately be ascertained if the accident had resulted in any damage on the ground. The

army's aviation wing has a base at Skardu, one of the main towns of Gilgit-Baltistan region.

http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_pak-helicopter-crashes-in-gilgit-baltistan-five-killed_1713750

Shabbir Mir, Defying apex court: Shah refuses to relieve G-B police chief

The Express Tribune, July 12, 2012

GILGIT: In clear defiance of an apex court order, Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah refused to relieve the regional police chief, Hussain Asghar, from his duties until a replacement of his choice is sent in by the federal government. "I am the chief minister and I will relieve him (Asghar) only after I get a replacement of my choice," Shah noted on July 11. Shah recently received choices from the federal government for new inspector general of police, but all of them were due to retire in three months.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/407114/defying-apex-court-shah-refuses-to-relieve-g-b-police-chief/>

PPP leadership blasted for ignoring Chitral uplift

The News, July 11, 2012

CHITRAL: The local leaders of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on July 10 blasted the party leadership for not announcing any project for the uplift of the district. "We were expecting a special development package for Chitral but neither the president nor the prime minister bothered to visit Chitral during the Shandur festival. We feel that the PPP has become the party of opportunists and there is no value of committed party workers," Gulzar Shah from Mastuj noted.

"Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto had a special love for Chitral. Now the people are disappointed due to the apathy of the present leadership and the party is fast losing popularity in the district," he further stated. Anisur Rehman also came down hard on the PPP leadership for not announcing district status for the Mastuj subdivision.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-119789-PPP-leadership-blasted-for-ignoring-Chitral-uplift>

Rule of law can save crumbling society: Ejaz

The Nation, July 10, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Judge Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan, has opined that Allah Almighty is the chief exponent of rule of law and there are numerous verses in the Holy Quran in this regard saying, "We can save this crumbling society through the rule of law." The judge expressed these views in the inaugural ceremony of one week course on "Appreciation of Evidence and Management of Criminal Trial Before Magistrates" for 20 civil judges from all over Pakistan including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan at the Federal Judicial Academy (FJA) on July 9.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/islamabad/10-Jul-2012/rule-of-law-can-save-crumbling-society-ejaz>

Maintenance of law, order in GB top priority: PM

Daily Times, July 7, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf on July 6 stated that maintenance of the law and order in Gilgit-Baltistan and improvement of its economy was the top priority of the government. Addressing a meeting at the Prime Minister's House, he stated that the government gave identity to Gilgit-Baltistan and today it enjoyed complete autonomy with its own governor, elected chief

minister, legislative assembly and other administrative institutions.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C07%5Cstory_7-7-2012_pg7_18

Social uplift

Pakistan Observer, July 5, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah has stated the government was taking measures to improve health, education, tourism and energy sectors. He stated the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government was making efforts to provide all facilities to the people of far flung areas. He stated the government's main focus was on education, health, road network, tourism and energy sector. Speaking on television, Syed Mehdi Shah stated the Gilgit-Baltistan had rich potential for cheap power generation and it could meet the demand of the whole country. Replying to a question he stated the founder of Pakistan Peoples Party and former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto struggled for the rights of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and introduced many reforms, besides job opportunities for the GB people during his tenure. He stated the people of G-B were getting daily use items at affordable rates due to the policies of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=163483>

Economic Developments

Cross-LoC traders want J&K, AJK declared free economic zone

July 13, 2012

SRINAGAR: In Jammu & Kashmir, the first ever three-day cross-LoC traders Conference in Srinagar unanimously decided to prepare a negative list and submit it to the governments of India and Pakistan for permission of trade on all other items at Poonch-Rawalakot and Uri-Muzaffarabad routes. Conference, which was attended by 13 businessmen from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), ended on a positive note with unanimity on various issues among the traders.

The President of Jammu and Kashmir Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Mubeen Shah stated that both sides of the dividing line should be declared as free economic zone so that there were no trade barriers. This would give the much-needed fillip to cross LoC trade, he added.

“It is imperative that entire Jammu and Kashmir is declared as free economic zone so that cross-LoC trade is taken to new heights. Sectors like power generation and tourism can be harnessed and this would give a new dimension to the cross-LoC trade with people being the ultimate beneficiaries,” stated Dr. Mubeen

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/2012/07/13/cross-loc-traders-want-ihk-ajk-declared-free-economic-zone.html>

AJK transporters reduce rates, start overloading

The Express Tribune, July 23, 2012

MIRPUR: While a majority of transporters in Mirpur are unwilling to reduce fares following the reduction in fuel prices, the ones that have are overloading and inconveniencing travellers. Despite warnings from the Azad Jammu and

Kashmir (AJK) transport authority, a number of transporters plying vehicles from Mirpur to Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Mandi Bahaudin and Muzaffarabad and within the city have refused to reduce fares. The owners that have complied have lowered fares by Rs10.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/411800/ajk-transporters-reduce-rates-start-overloading/>

AH Nizami, Trans-LoC trade: Traders not happy with outcome of Indo-Pak meeting

The Express Tribune, July 22, 2012

MIRPUR: Independent observers and local traders across the Line of Control (LoC) have expressed dissatisfaction over the outcome of the recent meeting between Pakistan and India in Islamabad regarding trade and travel across the LoC. Trans-LoC trade was launched on October 21, 2008 as a confidence-building measure to improve bilateral relations and economic ties between the traders of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian-administered Kashmir. The meeting reviewed current practices, following which a joint statement was issued by the two sides.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/411582/trans-loc-trade-traders-not-happy-with-outcome-of-indo-pak-meeting/>

En route to revival

Pakistan Today, July 18, 2012

POONCH: The Fourth Traders meet of this year and first after suspension of trade due to volatile situation between armies of both sides at Krishna Ghati sector is scheduled to be organised on July 18 next at Chakkan-Da-Bagh. Traders from both sides of Jammu and Kashmir would meet on July 18. Both sides are demanding presence of defaulter traders during the meet on priority so that their accounts are cleared. Traders have decided to further strengthen Cross LoC Joint

Traders Federation and will discuss various issues of traders participating in Cross LoC trade.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/07/18/news/profit/en-route-to-revival/>

3-day cross-LoC meet on trade begins

Deccan Chronicle, July 11, 2012

3-day cross-LoC conference began on July 10 to deliberate on the issues confronting the stakeholders and is also likely to come up with suggestions towards enhancing the economic interactions through the trade between the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir. "We'll not miss the opportunity to identify the shortcomings of the trade being projected as the most significant confidence building measure in Kashmir by both India and Pakistan faces," stated a participant on July 10. The stakeholders, the organisers stated, will assess the socio-economic impact of the cross-LoC trade over the past four years and bring about greater synergy between the traders and the concerned government departments for the smooth conduct of the trade.

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/nation/north/3-day-cross-loc-meet-trade-begins-682>

1.5 MW power to electrify more Diamer areas

Pakistan Observer, July 5, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government is harnessing the huge water potential to generate energy and loads of projects are being initiated across the region and one of these, is 1.5 MW project at Muthat Gohar Bad, Diamer. Officials of water and power department noted in Gilgit on July 4 that this project would help electrify the villages of Diamer district in Gohar Abad area which are without power so far.

They stated an estimated cost Rs 300 million which will be spent on completion of the power station, supply lines, installation of machines and than other requirements to generate 1.5 MW. They further stated that this project has been reflected in Annual Development Plan 2012-13 and would be presented in a development forum

for fulfillment of formalities to initiate work within no time.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=163509>

Construction of 969MW Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project

Daily Times, July 6, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The assembling of Tunnel Boring Machines (TBM) to dig mega tunnels according to international standards for 969 megawatts (MW) Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project is in process and will likely be operative during the first week of August 2012. Following international bidding, two German made TBMs costing Rs 8 billion had been installed on the project site Nauseri, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), where assembling of two giant mechanical milestones are under process and likely to be completed during last week of July and operative in the first week of August.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C07%5C06%5Cstory_6-7-2012_pg5_12

Protest in AJK: As wheat price soars, people take to the streets

The Express Tribune, July 8, 2012

MIRPUR: Amid a shutter-down strike in Baloch against the rise in the price of wheat, residents took to the streets to raise voice against what they termed the government's failure to keep prices of basic commodities in check. Led by Anjuman-e-Tajran (local traders' body) President Sabbir Hussain and elders of the remote town of Rawalakot district, such as Sardar Muhammad Hussain and Mahboob Ahmed, dozens of local residents rallied the streets and raised slogans against the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/405182/protest-in-ajk-as-wheat-price-soars-people-take-to-the-streets/>

Industrialists invited to invest in power-generating units, tourism: AJK President

Business Recorder, July 4, 2012

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar

Muhammad Yaqoob Khan invited business community to invest and establish industrial and power generating units in Azad Kashmir. Addressing members of Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industry (FBAATI) after laying foundation stone of FBAATI building complex, he stated that Kashmir is the most peaceful area in the region and offers lucrative investment opportunities in power generation and tourism in particular and other areas in general.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193/1208785/>

Protest: AJK varsity react over cuts in their budget

The Express Tribune, July 11, 2012

MIRPUR: Faculty members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) University on July 10 staged

a protest over what they dubbed the “anti-education policies” of the AJK government, in Muzaffarabad. They held placards and banners inscribed with slogans, accusing the government of creating hurdles for higher education in the state. While addressing the protesters, senior academician Dr Raja Muhammad criticised the government for cutting the development funds of the varsity, earmarked in the current fiscal year. The protestors observed that the cut in the allocated funds in the budget for the varsity would adversely affect the development projects, especially the already devised scheduled research programme.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/406377/protest-ajk-varsity-react-over-cuts-in-their-budget/>

International Developments

France to finance 48MW Jagran-II Hydropower Project

Daily Times, July 7, 2012

ISLAMABAD: France will finance 48 megawatts (MW) Jagran-II Hydropower Project located 90 kilometres from Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Economic Affairs Division (EAD) Additional Secretary Iftikhar Ahmed Rao, Ambassador of France Philippe Thiébaud and French Development Agency (AFD) Country Director Nicolas Fornage signed the funding agreement for the Jagran-II Hydropower Project at EAD. This project relates to the construction of a 48 MW hydropower plant located about 90 kms from Muzaffarabad city towards Northeast.

The project will be built in the upper extent of Jagran Nullah, a right bank tributary of the Neelum River. It will be located downstream of the existing 30.4 MW Jagran-I hydropower project, funded earlier with French support, and being operated since 2000 by the Hydro-Electric Board (HEB). Jagran-II Hydroelectric Power Project will operate as a run-of-the-river scheme and will not entail any major environmental or social constraints.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C07%5Cstory_7-7-2012_pg5_10

Zafar Iqbal, China to Open Consulate in Pak-Controlled Gilgit Baltistan for Strategic Grip

July 4, 2012

China will open a Consulate in Pakistan controlled Gilgit Baltistan which recently became as a focal point of diplomacy after a series of enigmatic visits of US envoy and other officials. The decision which poses far-reaching strategic and political implications for regional key players was made in China's Muslim-dominated Xinjiang Uyghur province last week when officials of China and

Pakistan met to talk about bilateral relations. Chinese government has officially informed Pakistan through Nur Bekri, Governor of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region during a fresh visit of his counterpart Syed Pir Karam Ali Shah, who is Governor of Gilgit -Baltistan (GB), a disputed territory bordering China and Indian administrated Kashmir. Nur Bekri, Governor of Xinjiang is planning to visit GB in October to mature the plan of extension of diplomatic mission.

<http://www.groundreport.com/World/China-To-Open-Consulate-In-Pak-Controlled-Gilgit-B/2946946>

Will work for cause of Kashmir from jail: Ghulam Nabi Fai

July 5, 2012

On the eve of his imprisonment last month defiant Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ghulam Nabi Fai stated that charges leveled against him for being a ISI agent have been withdrawn. On the eve of his imprisonment last month for conspiracy and violations of various tax laws pertaining to a non-profit organisation, Kashmiri separatist leader Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai was feisty and defiant at several meetings across the country, pledging to continue his work "for the cause of Kashmir."

<http://www.rediff.com/news/report/will-work-for-cause-of-kashmir-from-jail-ghulam-nabi-fai/20120705.htm>

Sectarian killings issue raised in UNHRC

The News, July 5, 2012

GENEVA: A Kashmiri leader alleged that the target killings of Shias in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) showed inability of the law enforcement agencies in the area as the state had failed to nab the killers. Nasir Aziz Khan, spokesperson for the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP), participated in the 20th session of UN Human Rights Council on behalf of CIRAC an ECOSOC (NGO) and

delivered a speech on Agenda Item 9. He stated that one's religious faith or lack of one had become a reason to warrant execution and murder. "The killers do their job fearlessly and frequently," he stated and added that almost all the events of target killings remained untraced and the perpetrators of such organised crimes remained untouched.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-118615-Sectarian-killings-issue-raised-in-UNHRC>

No consulate plan in Gilgit Baltistan: China

The Hindu, July 6, 2012

China on July 3 stated it has no plans to open a consulate in the Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected reports which stated Beijing was planning to expand its diplomatic mission in the region.

"Recent reports are not true", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin noted when asked to comment on a media report which stated that China had "officially informed" Pakistan through Nur Bekri, the chairman of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, about its plan to open a consulate. The report had stated a Chinese diplomatic presence in Gilgit Baltistan would assist China in identifying Islamist militants intending to infiltrate Xinjiang from Pakistan.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3610449.ece>

Zafar Iqbal, China's Diplomatic Expansion in South Asia

July 3, 2012

China has decided to open a Consulate in Pakistan controlled Gilgit Baltistan which recently became as a focal point of diplomacy after a series of visits of US envoy and other officials. The decision which poses far-reaching strategic and political implications for regional key players was made in China's Muslim-dominated Xinjiang Uyghur province last week when officials of two key regional players met to talk about bilateral relations. Chinese government has officially informed Pakistan through Nur Bekri, Governor of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region during a fresh visit of his counterpart Syed Pir Karam Ali Shah, who is Governor of Gilgit -Baltistan (GB), a disputed territory bordering China and Jammu & Kashmir.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/03072012-chinas-diplomatic-expansion-in-south-asia/>

Other Developments

Shabbir Mir, Declared unsafe: Danyore bridge closed to traffic

The Express Tribune, July 25, 2012

GILGIT: The suspension bridge connecting Danyore with Gilgit was shut down for an indefinite period on July 24 after being declared unsafe by the district administration. Usman Ahmed, a senior district administration official, stated that until a decision is made about the fate of the structure, traffic for Danyore will be diverted through the recently established alternate suspension bridge. Ahmed stated the order was issued on the recommendations of a team of engineers that was tasked to examine the bridge. The team had declared the bridge unsafe to travel, he informed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/412584/declared-unsafe-danyore-bridge-closed-to-traffic/>

Attabad Lake as a tourist spot

Dawn, July 23, 2012

It has been over two years since Attabad Lake, also known as Hunza Lake, was formed due to the damming up of the Hunza River by a massive landslide in Gilgit-Baltistan on Jan 4, 2010. Currently, the water level at the lake is 7,746 feet. From data available on the Internet, the discharge from the lake varies from 3,000 cubic ft/per second to 19,000 cubic ft/per second. The situation at Attabad is ideal for a run-of-the-river power plant which could generate around 325 to 350 megawatts assuming an average flow of 1100 cubic ft/sec or 300 cubic metres/sec and a drop of 666 feet or about 200 metres and an efficiency of 60 per cent.

<http://dawn.com/2012/07/23/attabad-lake-as-a-tourist-spot/>

16 including 3 foreigners injured in spillway blast

Pakistan Observer

HUNZA: At least 16 people including three foreign

tourists were injured in a blast which was carried out to widen the spillway of Attaabaud Lake. According to SSP Hunza Nagar, Ishaq Khan, the tourists and local people were heading towards Gilgit and while crossing the Attaabaud Lake when the explosives material planted to widen the spillway blasted. As a result of blast three Korean tourists and 13 others hailing from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhawa and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) sustained injuries. The injured were shifted to hospital for treatment. SSP Ishaq Khan stated that investigations were in progress that who allowed the tourists and locals to pass through.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=165551>

Shabbir Mir, Workshop: Call for environmental review of all developmental projects

The Express Tribune, July 18, 2012

GILGIT: All private and public projects to be implemented in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) should be reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Planning and Development Department (PDD). This was decided by experts at a workshop held in Gilgit on July 17. The speakers stated that in G-B, nearly all development projects are initiated without a prior Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) a systematic process that identifies, predicts and evaluates the environmental effects of development schemes. They stated that the review will ensure that the projects follow environmental protocols developed by the national EPA.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/409646/workshop-call-for-environmental-review-of-all-developmental-projects/>

G-B unprepared as monsoon approaches

The Express Tribune, July 12, 2012

GILGIT: The monsoon season is round the corner, but despite a warning the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government has not allocated any funds to deal with

floods this year. An official confirmed that the G-B Disaster Management Authority has no funds to deal with the emergency situation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/407071/g-b-unprepared-as-monsoon-approaches/>

Shabbir Mir, Melting glaciers: Low-lying areas in G-B at risk as river banks swell

The Express Tribune, July 11, 2012

GILGIT: Settlements in the low-lying areas of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) are at a threat of being inundated due to increased level of water in the Gilgit River because of melting glaciers. “The water level has almost reached our houses and [I fear] our house can be flooded anytime,” stated Itamanullah, a resident of Chamogarh colony, a community of 20 houses. The situation has also become dangerous in the low-lying areas of Ghizer valley, where an avalanche on July 8 swept away orchards and trees in Sost village, besides damaging the main highway connecting Gilgit with the Chitral valley of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/406371/melting-glaciers-low-lying-areas-in-g-b-at-risk-as-river-banks-swell/>

Green houses in GB soon

Pakistan Observer, July 5, 2012

DIAMER: The government is intending to build German-style Green Houses in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) where vegetables would be cultivated throughout the year. This was stated by Tourism Advisor to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan and president PPP women wing Sadia Danish while speaking to media on July 4. She stated as the weather of the region did not allow to cultivate vegetables round the year, the Green Houses would help overcoming the problem.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=163478>

Revolutionary steps in AJK: Homeless people to get 7-marla plots free of cost

The Express Tribune, July 3, 2012

MIRPUR: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on July 2 announced that all homeless families in the state will be provided seven-marla residential plots free-of-cost. Prime

Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed made the announcement while chairing a meeting of senior government officials at his camp office in Mirpur. The premier also unveiled various development projects to bring about a revolutionary change in the state, with a focus on ameliorating the lifestyle of the common man.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/402613/revolutionary-steps-in-ajk-homeless-people-to-get-7-marla-plots-free-of-cost/>

Cultural event of Yasin held in Gilgit

Dardistan Times, July 3, 2012

GILGIT: Yasen-e-Mahraka organized a premier cultural event to announce Hæishhing Åkhéshh (Offbeat Sentiments), a Burūshaski album from Yasin Valley. The event was organized by young cultural-pros of the region through Yasin Writers Forum and the Mahraka (Cultural Parlance). The event took place on July 2 at Gilgit Continental Hotel here in Gilgit city. Muhammad Ayoub Shah, Member GB Legislative Assembly and Ghulam Muhammad, former PPP General Secretary (GB), participated in the event to extend their support to their fellow residents of Yasin. They urged the community of Yasin to harness peace and brotherhood alongside the efforts to promote cultural education.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/cultural-event098-yasin3-held-gilgit>

Shabbir Mir, Monsoon floods: Contingency plan set for Gilgit

The Express Tribune, July 1, 2012

GILGIT: With the monsoon season around the corner, authorities in Gilgit have chalked out a flood contingency plan to avert possible infrastructure and human losses. The measures were taken after Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) warned the provincial governments to be “on their toes” in case of floods during the months of July and September, an official of the local administration stated on June 30. The food contingency plan was approved during a district administration meeting, which was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner Momin Jan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/401765/monsoon-floods-contingency-plan-set-for-gilgit/>

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: 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 Assembly: Total 33 members (24 members directly elected)

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

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

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

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

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Disclaimer

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