

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

In what could be considered a watershed moment in India's policy towards Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15, 2016, made a specific mention of the territory in his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi. Though PoK was mentioned in the speech in another context, the pronouncement proffered a fresh impetus to India's extant claim on PoK as an integral part of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Before the August 15 speech, the Prime Minister had during an all-party meet reiterated that PoK belongs to India. Over several decades, India's relative silence on PoK has encouraged a sense of complacency that India has foregone its claim on the territory. Nevertheless, re-energising its policy on PoK is a welcome move in the direction of securing India's territorial and strategic interests.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to be built through part of PoK, that is Gilgit Baltistan, has spurred considerable apprehensions amongst locals in the region. This is also to do with the increasing Chinese footprints in Gilgit Baltistan being strongly resisted by the people, as is noted in one of the reports included in the current issue. Similarly, people in Gilgit Baltistan are desperate to know whether the region will benefit from the upcoming CPEC in any form. As reports indicate, members from the Senate Committee on the CPEC made a visit to the region in order to interact with representatives of civil society, political groups, etc. People in the region want the government of Pakistan to explain them in clear terms their likely share of benefits that would accrue from the CPEC. Similarly, there is much uncertainty regarding the constitutional status of Gilgit Baltistan. The committee under Sartaj Aziz that was constituted to look into the prospects of giving Gilgit Baltistan a provincial status is yet to come out with any concrete plan or output in this regard even as several months have passed.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Locals protest growing Chinese presence in Gilgit-Baltistan, PoK”

The Indian Express, August 1, 2016

Locals in Gilgit took to streets protesting against growing Chinese presence in Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. People got together and took out a march raising slogans portraying an elevation in resentment over the situation. Recently, protests were witnessed in Pakistan occupied Kashmir as locals in Neelum valley came out against rigged elections that took place on July 21. The protesters burnt Pakistani flag and clashed with the police. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's party PML-N won 31 out of 41 seats in the elections. In July 2015, India took strong objection to Pakistan's plan of holding elections in the Gilgit-Baltistan region alleging that it was an attempt to “camouflage its illegal occupation of the area.”

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/locals-protest-against-growing-chinese-presence-in-gilgit-baltistan-pok-2947421/>

“Access to education should not be compromised: Baligh”

Dispatch News Desk, August 2, 2016

The Minister of State Education and Professional Training Engineer Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman presided over the 8th Inter Provincial Education Ministers' Conference at Gilgit on August 2. In his address in the opening session as the Chief Guest, the minister stated that education is the most important thing according to our religion. The minister also stated that although education is a devolved subject now and we respect our constitutional decisions but a platform of facilitation was needed and therefore the Conference was started to learn from each other, help and share good practices of each other. Baligh Ur Rehman noted that whatever was decided in the

Conference is decided through the consensus. If any of the provinces do not agree to any point then the house does not approve that particular agenda. The state minister further noted that if we want to be a one nation in true spirits then we need to have a minimum curriculum for all. Therefore, we established the National curriculum council to work on national curriculum framework, he stated.

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/access-to-education-should-not-be-compromised-baligh/114693>

“Bilawal Bhutto summons PPP's Azad Kashmir leadership in Karachi”

Dunya News, August 2, 2016

Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on August 2 summoned party's Kashmir leadership in Karachi to discuss defeat in AJK elections. Sources noted that the leaders would present report over the reasons behind PPP's defeat in Azad Kashmir polls. The participants would also talk on the interference of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the elections. Bilawal Bhutto will also take the party into confidence over the name of opposition leader nominated for Azad Kashmir's legislative assembly. Moreover, exchange of views would also be held on new organizational headship. Earlier, Pakistan Muslims League Nawaz bagged 32 seats, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference won three seats while Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan Peoples Party won two seats each.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/347443-Bilawal-Bhutto-summons-PPPs-Azad-Kashmir-leadersh>

“210 More Night Vision CCTV Cameras to be installed in Gilgit”

Radio Pakistan, August 2, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Administration will install 210 more night vision CCTV cameras in Gilgit city to

ensure security during the sacred month of Muharram-ul-Haram. It was decided in a meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur Rehman. The meeting reviewed law and order situation in Gilgit-Baltistan and expressed satisfaction over present security arrangements. Chief Minister also directed fitting of signals in main chowks to control traffic in the city.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/02-Aug-2016/210-more-night-vision-cctv-cameras-to-install-in-gilgit>

“PoK Administration says China backed CPEC projects only to favour Chinese firms”

Business Standard, August 3, 2016

The administration in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) told the federal government that Islamabad has been flouting all rules and procedures with respect to projects forming part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by waiving aside the condition of international competitive bidding for CPEC projects, thus ensuring that Chinese companies were able to clinch all the deals and ensure that not a single POK entity wins any business from the \$ 43 billion venture. In early 2016, the former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, in whose province some of the projects are to be located, had objected to the free run allowed by the federal government to foreign and private companies in the province. He had complained then that these companies, without the permission of the AJK/POK administration, were openly intruding in the region and carrying out their activities. He had also made specific reference to hydroelectric projects being built by Chinese companies, where even relevant MoUs had not been signed.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/pok-administration-says-china-backed-cpec-projects-only-to-favour-chinese-firms-116080300134_1.html

Meraj Alam, “Work on CPEC optical fiber starts in Khunjerab”

The Nation, August 3, 2016

Work on the Optical Fiber Project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) started in Khunjerab area which will pass to Rawalpindi,

Gwadar and other regions of Pakistan. The \$44 million Pak-China Optical Fiber Project will be completed in two years. Once completed, the project will be connected with Trans-Asia-Europe (TAE) cable in China, enabling both countries to have alternative routes for international communication. The agreement in this regard was signed between both countries in 2007 and has now become part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The project was inaugurated by Prime Minister of Pakistan during his last visit May 2016. Special Communication Organisation will be responsible for laying the optical fiber. According to Special Communication Organisation (SCO), the Pakistan-China Optical Fiber Cable project will bring economic benefits and create job opportunities for youth. Pakistan-China Optical Fiber Cable Project will bring 3-G and 4-G services to Gilgit-Baltistan. A delegation of China visited Gilgit-Baltistan and Diamer to explore different investment opportunities. The delegation expressed keen interest to invest in different fields of health, education, technology, and manufacturing industries across the region.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/03-Aug-2016/work-on-cpec-optical-fiber-starts-in-khunjerab>

“Federal Govt. to Ensure All Possible Assistance to AJK Govt.”

Radio Pakistan, August 3, 2016

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated that the Federal Government would ensure all possible assistance to the elected government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in its pursuit to improve the state of affairs. He was talking to Prime Minister of Azad Raja Farooq Haider who called on him in Islamabad on August 3. Congratulating Raja Farooq Haider, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that the newly elected government will tirelessly work for the progress and prosperity of the people of area. He stated the people of the state have overwhelmingly shown their trust in PML-N manifesto and now it was their collective responsibility to serve them. He directed that developmental and infrastructure projects must be proactively pursued and completed so that the people of AJK get the benefits. The Prime

Minister urged that merit and transparency must be maintained in the award and fulfilment of all public sector projects. Nawaz Sharif also stated that all developmental projects must aim at improving the life standard of the people. He further stated that better communication and roads networks will certainly open up the area to the world and will enhance the economic activities in that region.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/03-Aug-2016/federal-govt-to-ensure-all-possible-assistance-to-ajk-govt>

“Kashmir Issue to be highlighted at every Level: Ebad”

Business Recorder, August 4, 2016

All possible efforts would continue to highlight the Jammu & Kashmir issue at every level. This was resolved when the president of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Muhammad Yaqub, met with the Sindh Governor, Dr. Ishrat ul Ebad Khan, at the Governor House on August 4. The prevailing situation as well as other matters came up for discussion at the meeting, a statement of the Governor House noted. It also stated that it was resolved at the meeting that every efforts would be made to highlight the J&K issue at every forum. Sardar Muhammad Yaqub thanked the Government of Pakistan for its constant support towards the cause of the Kashmiris. He also appreciated the sentiments of the Governor Sindh, Dr. Ishrat ul Ebad Khan, who always played a positive role for the resolution of the problems of the Kashmiris settled in Sindh, he added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/312368-kashmir-issue-to-be-highlight-at-every-level-ebad.html>

“Bilawal dissolves AJK's PPP set up”

Pakistan Today, August 3, 2016

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari dissolved the organisational set up of the party's Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) chapter. The move comes in the wake of the crushing defeat to the party in the recently held AJK Legislative Assembly polls. AJK PPP President Chaudhry Abdul Majid, Secretary General Latif Akbar and other office bearers have been removed, sources in the PPP noted. Sources further stated that Bilawal will form the new AJK-PPP organisational

committee. Meanwhile, the PPP nominated Chaudhry Yasin as opposition leader in the AJK Legislative Assembly.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/08/03/city/islamabad/bilawal-dissolves-ajks-ppp-set-up/>

“Barjees Felicitates AJK Premier for Historical Mandate”

Business Recorder, August 3, 2016

The Federal Minister for Kashmir affairs Barjees Tahir held a meeting with Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir at Kashmir House Islamabad on August 3 and felicitated him on success in elections. Both the leaders exchanged views on the recent situation of Jammu & Kashmir and starting the development work for the prosperity of the masses in the area. The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan on the occasion thanked the minister for Kashmiri affairs for running successful election campaign in AJK. Raja Farooq Haider Khan also stated that practical shape would be given to the vision of Nawaz Sharif and the agenda of good governance given by PM Pakistan during the parliamentary meeting would be ensured in Azad Kashmir. The federal Minister on the occasion stated that Prime Minister of Pakistan has deep interest for the development and prosperity of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and whatever promises have been made during election campaign with people would be fulfilled in letter and spirit. He also stated that federal government would stand by with AJK Prime minister for taking administrative decisions for the betterment of the people and every possible support would be given to him, he added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/312179-barjees-felicitates-ajk-premier-for-historical-mandate.html>

“Kashmiri leaders protest Pakistan's move to establish military courts”

Business Standard, August 5, 2016

The independent leadership in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Gilgit, led by the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP), have strongly rejected moves by Pakistan to establish military courts in the region in order to further suppress the local population. In a conference titled

"National Action Plan & Freedom of Expression in PoK and Gilgit Baltistan" held recently in Mirpur city of PoK, Kashmiri leaders vehemently rejected the draconian law. Pakistani security forces have arrested many Kashmiri nationalist leaders under the National Action Plan that was established by Pakistan government in January 2015 to crack down on terrorism. In a resolution passed unanimously, the participants demounces establishment of military courts and implementation of National Action Plan in PoK and Gilgit Baltistan. They stated Pakistan has no jurisdiction in these areas.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/kashmiri-leaders-protest-pakistan-s-move-to-establish-military-courts-116080501080_1.html

“9 member cabinet of AJK takes oath but President forgot one sentence”

Dunya News, August 6, 2016

President Azad Kashmir (AK) Sardar Yaqub Khan took oath from the cabinet members of AJK assembly on August 6. Among the cabinet members were Tariq Farooq, Dr Najib Naqi, Farooq Sikandar, Barrister Iftikhar Gillani, Mushtaq Minhas, Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz, Raja Nisar, Noreen Arif and Sardar Mir Akbar. Newly elected ministers stated that progress and merit would be their priorities. Senior minister Tariq Farooq also stated that Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan will announce the second stage of cabinet after consulting senior leaders of party. President AJK Sardar Yaqub Khan forgot an important sentence because of which ministers had to take oath once again. Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan, Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir and other officials were also present. Some senior members did not attend the ceremony as they were not given ministries.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/348078-9-member-cabinet-of-AJK-takes-oath-but-President-f>

Shabbir Mir, “The ruling Mir of G-B's Nagar district”

The Express Tribune, August 7, 2016

It may have only been ceremonial, but the people of Gilgit-Baltistan's Nagar district still took the

crowning of their new king, a tradition dating back 1,200 years, very seriously indeed. Dancing to the beat of a drum, his subjects were in full attendance at the ceremony in 2011. Along with Hunza, Nagar was also an independent princely state until former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto revoked their status in the early 1970s. However, the ceremonial king called a Mir continues on the throne. Mir Qasim Ali Khan was crowned at the age of 27 some five years ago. The coronation was 40 days after the death of his father Mir Barkat Ali in a car accident. Qasim believes every citizen of G-B is special because of the region's status. “Every citizen must have a diplomatic status given that our forefathers liberated the region and decided to join Pakistan voluntarily,” noted Mir, whose grandfather Mir Shokat Ali was among the rulers who opted to become part of Pakistan. It was also during his time that Bhutto decided to abolish the 'state' status of the region in the early 1970s and later introduce a political system managed by the bureaucracy. “My mission is to serve my people and that's why Nagar and its people is the centre of my attention.”

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1157154/ruling-mir-1200-year-old-tradition-continues-live/>

Shabbir Mir, “Delivery of justice: Asma opposes posting of high court judges in home provinces”

The Express Tribune, August 7, 2016

High court judges should not be posted in their home provinces and must instead be posted to other provinces to ensure the delivery of justice. This was stated by former president of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and rights activist Asma Jahangir. She expressed these views while addressing lawyers in Gilgit on August 6. Asma emphasised on the need to resolve long-standing constitutional issue that plague G-B. “This is in the best interest of Pakistan as it will strengthen the country,” Asma stated. According to the right activists, lawyers should strive to amend the Constitution to allow the people of G-B to enjoy constitutional, economic and political rights. “We will force government to do this,” she further added. She also urged the government to compensate people who have given up their property for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

Asma criticised Supreme Court of Pakistan, saying judges lack the courage to hear cases tried by military courts. “The continuity of the system is important even though we do not like the rulers,” the rights activist added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1157153/delivery-justice-asma-opposes-posting-high-court-judges-home-provinces/>

“AJK Cabinet Vows to Make Azad Kashmir a Modern Welfare State”

Radio Pakistan, August 7, 2016

The Azad Kashmir Cabinet at its meeting in Muzaffarabad August 7 reiterated that all efforts will be made for making Azad Kashmir a modern welfare state according to the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Presiding over the first cabinet meeting, AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan stated that establishment of good governance, merit, rule of law, and provision of education and health facilities to masses indiscriminately are among the top priorities of his government. He also stated special focus would be given to the communication sector for development of tourism and socio economic prosperity of the liberated territory. Azad Kashmir Prime Minister lauded the efforts of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for adopting a bold and courageous stance on Kashmir. He noted Kashmiris have linked their destiny with Pakistan and a strong and stable Pakistan is a great guarantee for the success of Kashmir liberation struggle.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/07-Aug-2016/ajk-cabinet-vows-to-make-azad-kashmir-a-modern-welfare-state>

“Work on 1,124MW Kohala project soon”

The Nation, August 8, 2016

A 1,124 MW Kohala Hydropower Project worth \$2.4 billion will be launched in Muzaffarabad in the current year and it will complete in six years for which the process of acquiring land is underway, official sources stated. In this connection, officials of AJK Electricity Department and Kohala Hydropower Company met in Muzaffarabad on August 4 to discuss land acquisition and settlement plan of 1,124 MW Kohala Hydropower Project. Electricity and Power Development Organization Secretary Fayyaz Abbasi noted that from the AJK

government side, the commissioner of Muzaffarabad, DCs of Muzaffarabad and Hattian, and the officials of AJK Private Power Cell attended the meeting. He also noted that it was decided that both the company and the district administration will jointly evolve a comprehensive resettlement plan as a base for land acquisition. “Kohala is a CPEC priority project. It's ground-breaking is expected by the end of this year (December, 2016) and will be completed in a period of 6 years. Cost of the project is \$2.4 billion. It will be handed over to AJK after 30 years of operation free of cost.”

<http://nation.com.pk/national/08-Aug-2016/work-on-1-124mw-kohala-project-soon>

Shabbir Mir, “Disconnected: Babusar Top police lack all communication facilities”

The Express Tribune, August 9, 2016

The police stationed at Babusar Top, a popular picnic spot, lack all communication facilities. This was stated on August 8 by tourists who had reached Gilgit from the area. The personnel deployed in the area are even bereft of walkie-talkies, resulting in them being disconnected from policemen on K-P side of the top. They also lack proper lodging facilities, though there are some police vehicles at their disposal. Likewise, there are no facilities to meet the medical emergency needs of the personnel. “The area is mountainous and passenger cars have been robbed in the recent past,” stated Mushtaq Khan, another visitor. He pointed out that only nominal investment was needed by both the K-P and G-B governments to improve facilities for the police at the top.” On the other hand, the G-B police department noted a police unit for tourists will be established in the region to help all visitors. “The unit will be similar to the high altitude police or CPEC patrolling police,” stated Mubarak Jan, a regional police department spokesperson.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1158279/disconnected-babusar-top-police-lack-communication-facilities/>

Shabbir Mir, “Widening differences: 'G-B's identity crisis is resulting in dejected youth'”

The Express Tribune, August 10, 2016

Lawyer and human rights activist Asma Jahangir stated the unsettled constitutional status of Gilgit-

Baltistan has pushed the region into an identity crisis. “The identity crisis has paved way for despondency among locals, especially the youth,” stated Jahangir. She shared findings of the preliminary report on human rights in G-B at Gilgit Press Club on August 9. Jahangir, who was on a visit to G-B, stated the government must come up with a solution to settle the chronic issue that has haunted people over the past seven decades. “Another thing that I have noted here is the excessive use of the anti-terrorism act against the people,” she stated. She regretted the fact that the law was being used against those who were political activists and not terrorists to silence their dissenting voice. Jahangir met people from different walks of life, including lawyers, civil society members, political activists and journalists.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1159002/widening-differences-g-bs-identity-crisis-resulting-dejected-youth/>

Shabbir Mir, “Gilgit-Baltistan fears it will not benefit from CPEC”

The Express Tribune, August 10, 2016

Fears that Gilgit-Baltistan will gain nothing out of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project loomed large at a session chaired by Senator Taj Haider in Gilgit on August 9. Haider, who is heading a special committee of senators on CPEC, is in Gilgit along with other senators. The committee held meetings with various stakeholders in various parts of Gilgit-Baltistan to understand the concerns of people about the project that passes through this region. The meeting was attended by activists, journalists, lawyers and members of G-B Assembly. “There is officially no word about the share of G-B in CPEC,” stated Israruddin, a rights activist while speaking to the participants of the meeting. He stated G-B should be given its due share and constitutional status to win the confidence of the people. Similarly, while sharing views, Assistant Professor Iftikhar Hussain stated CPEC is like a “seal pack” for G-B's residents as they have been kept in the dark about the details of the project for which the region serves as a gateway.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1159747/session-gilgit-baltistan-fears-will-not-benefit-cpec/>

“US pest management programme expanded in GB”

The Nation, August 11, 2016

The US Department of Agriculture and Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International formally kicked off the expansion of their joint pest management project in Gilgit-Baltistan alongside provincial government representatives. USDA Plant Health Advisor Lottie Erikson stated, “Gilgit-Baltistan produces high-value produce such as apricots and apples, but pest populations jeopardize the quality and volume of harvests. “Strengthening the pest management systems will help farmers in Gilgit Baltistan control harmful insects, increase their incomes, and create a safer food supply,” he added. This pest management project is part of the ongoing USDA/CABI Phytosanitary Risk Management Program, which engages provincial and federal government officials, universities, farmers, and industry stakeholders in Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh, and now Gilgit-Baltistan to improve pest management. These efforts aim to increase farmers' incomes and agricultural trade opportunities.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/11-Aug-2016/us-pest-management-programme-expanded-in-gb>

“JI chief calls for GB development”

The News, August 11, 2016

Jamaat-e -Islami Ameer Senator Sirajul Haq stressed that people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) had right to the resources of their areas and which must not be denied to them by anyone. He demanded immediate construction of Diamar and Bunji dams to pave the way for the development of the region, and stressed that the area should also be included in the CPEC. He stated this while addressing Azadi-e-Kashmir Conference at Gilgit on August 9, according to a press release issued at Mansoor. Sirajul Haq stated people of Gilgit-Baltistan stood behind their Kashmiri brethren and assured the Hurriyat Conference's leader Syed Ali Gilani that Pakistani nation would stand shoulder to shoulder with Kashmiris. He also stated that Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan would be coordinated and made base camps for the liberation of Kashmir state.

Sirajul Haq stated JI had united all the parties on one-point agenda at the Islamabad APC and it would pursue the Kashmir cause at the world level in the light of this agenda.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/141464-JI-chief-calls-for-GB-development>

“Asian Human Rights Commission accuses Pakistan of police torture in Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Indian Express, August 11, 2016

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) accused Pakistan of encouraging police excesses and torture in the Gilgit-Baltistan region and called on the state to immediately ensure accountability and put in place a mechanism of checks and balances to prevent such incidents and prosecute those involved in crimes of this nature under the rule of law. In its report, the AHRC stated that police excesses and torture are not a new phenomenon in urban and remote regions of Pakistan and added that with the police in charge of the department of prosecution, there is blatant and free license to indulge in acts of torture to get incarcerated people to accept guilt even when they may not have committed a particular crime. To substantiate this view, the AHRC cited the police torture case of one Shabbir Hussain, a resident of Chalat Bala district in Gilgit-Baltistan, where he was severely thrashed and bruised for refusing to heed a Jirga verdict. Hussain, the AHRC stated, had a dispute with his cousin Fida Ali on the use of common space between their houses.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/asian-human-rights-commission-accuses-pakistan-of-police-torture-in-gilgit-baltistan-2968158/>

“Three file papers for AJK presidential election”

The News, August 12, 2016

Three candidates submitted their nomination papers for the slot of President ship of Azad Kashmir before the Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mustafa Mughal on August 11. Ch. Latif Akbar of PPP, Mujahid Naqvi, Independent, and PML-N candidate Masood Abdullah Khan submitted their nomination papers. The nomination papers of Mujahid Hussain Naqvi were rejected on the grounds of incomplete papers because having no

initials of any prescriber or to second his nomination papers. The CEC approved the nomination papers of Masood Khan and Ch. Latif Akbar for the presidential election contest. The electoral college for the presidential election comprising 49 members of AJ&K Legislative Assembly and 6 AJ&K Council members who will exercise their right of vote for the presidential candidates. The polling for presidential election will be held on August 16 in the AJ&K Legislative Assembly lodging hall.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/141951-Three-file-papers-for-AJK-presidential-election>

“GOVT Committed to Complete CPEC: Haider”

Pakistan Radio, August 12, 2016

Chairman Special Committee of Senate for CPEC Senator Taj Haider noted that the government is committed to complete China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This he stated while talking to media men in Gilgit on August 12. During a meeting with political leaders and civil society of Gilgit-Baltistan matters pertaining to CPEC and other issues were discussed in detail. He also stated that Special Committee of Senate will submit detail report about China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Senator Taj Haider stated Gilgit-Baltistan will get more benefit from CPEC.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/12-Aug-2016/govt-committed-to-complete-cpec-haider>

“Pakistan to continue supporting just Kashmir cause: President”

Samaa TV, August 12, 2016

President Mamnoon Hussain on August 12 stated that Pakistan would continue to support the just struggle of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, striving to attain their right of self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. He was talking to President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, a statement noted. The President expressed satisfaction at the successful holding of recent election in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and smooth transition of power to the next elected government.

The President hoped that the newly elected public representatives would strive to serve the people by resolving their problems. President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan apprised President Mamnoon Hussain about the overall prevalent situation and thanked him for taking keen interest in the affairs of Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

<http://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/2016/08/pakistan-to-continue-supporting-just-kashmir-cause-president/>

Shabbir Mir, “Voice of dissent: Senators to move resolution against G-B chief secretary”

The Express Tribune, August 13, 2016

A group of senators decided to move a resolution against Gilgit-Baltistan chief secretary. The senators, who were in Gilgit-Baltistan to review projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, criticised the regional government for giving them a cold shoulder during their visit. The senators expressed their discontent on August 12 at Gilgit airport where they addressed the media before flying to Islamabad. “None of the top government officials, including the chief minister, governor and chief secretary, contacted us during [our] visit,” Muttahida Qaumi Movement Senator Mian Ateeq noted. He was part of the special Senate committee. The remarks by Mian Ateeq were also echoed by Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party of Balochistan leader Usman Kakar and PPP Karim Khawaja.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1161134/voice-dissent-senators-move-resolution-g-b-chief-secretary/>

“In Gilgit, people take to streets against crackdown by Pakistani security forces”

Business Standard, August 13, 2016

Protesters have taken to the streets in the Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan region, a separate administrative unit in the northernmost administrative territory of Pakistan, against a crackdown by Pakistani security forces that saw incarceration of over 500 young Gilgit residents. Angry protesters stated that these young men were imprisoned for demanding political rights and asking the Pakistani Army to leave Gilgit's soil. Raising 'anti-Pakistan' slogans, angry protesters

took to the streets in Gilgit town, Astore, Diamer and Hunza of the the Gilgit- Baltistan region, which is only Shia-dominated area in Sunni-dominated Pakistan. The political crackdown and arrests in Gilgit were made against people protesting against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which they stated would only benefit China and Pakistan's Punjabi traders. The youth of Gilgit are not being involved in any manner with the CPEC and those who are protesting are being harshly dealt with, stated the protesters. Over 500 young Gilgitis have been jailed, including Gilgit's top political activist Baba Jan, which saw increasing mass street-based movement for his release. Protesters alleged that Pakistan is perpetrating massive human rights abuses to crush the political aspirations of the people of Gilgit.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/in-gilgit-people-take-to-streets-against-crackdown-by-pakistani-security-forces-116081300154_1.html

“PM visits hydropower project in Azad Jammu Kashmir”

Daily Times, August 13, 2016

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on August 12 stated that his government was committed to completing all power projects on schedule, so as to rid Pakistan of frequent power outages and boosting industrial growth. The prime minister is personally overseeing the mega Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP), designed to produce 969 MW of hydel electricity and reduce reliance on thermal power generation. Following a detailed briefing on the project, the prime minister directed further speeding up the work so as to hasten the pace of national progress and development. We will do our best to fulfil the promises made to the nation, to end load shedding from Pakistan," he stated. "Who would be more worried about it than me? We will not let any obstacle come in the way in this regard." The prime minister also stated that the locals be given preference in jobs in the Neelum Jhelum project. The chief executive officer of the project informed the prime minister that 78 per cent jobs had been given to the locals.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-Aug-16/pm-visits-hydropower-project-in-azad-jammu-kashmir>

Shabbir Mir, “Food insecurity feared in G-B under CPEC projects”

The Express Tribune, August 14, 2016

Environmentalists believe food insecurity could be a major concern for Gilgit-Baltistan once the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project becomes operational. G-B should focus on the production of apples in order to avert the emerging food shortage in the region. This was stated by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Director Dr Babar Khan at the final evaluation of research and development pilot project titled 'Enhancing the Value of Hydrological Resources for Livelihoods, Youth Employability and Climate Resilience in Gilgit-Baltistan' on August 13. Speaking to participants, including UNDP and agriculture department representatives, at the project evaluation, Babar highlighted effects of climate change on agriculture and availability of agricultural land which is less than 2% in G-B that is surrounded by towering mountains. He stated it is believed CPEC will lead to a major boost in economic activity and rush of vehicles in the area and people will raise questions regarding food and accommodation. “This is something we all need to think about,” he noted. Babar added the challenge can be overcome if the region focuses on producing apples.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1161673/food-insecurity-feared-g-b-cpec-projects/>

“Committee Reviews Problems, Preparation for CPEC in GB: Jaffarullah”

Radio Pakistan, August 14, 2016

Deputy Speaker Legislative Assembly Jafarullah Khan says special committee of Senate for CPEC has thoroughly reviewed the problems and preparation for economic corridor in Gilgit-Baltistan. This he stated while giving an interview to Radio Pakistan Gilgit on August 14. Deputy Speaker noted that the committee members will again come to Gilgit in the last week of September and pay visit to Diamer, Astore and Skardu. He also stated that the committee will submit recommendation in senate after detail visit of Gilgit-Baltistan. Deputy speaker stated Economic

corridor is the life line of Gilgit-Baltistan and the people will have to come forward for the success of this project. He stated that Gilgit-Baltistan has tremendous geographical location and the people of this area will get more benefits out of CPEC as compared to the other provinces.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/14-Aug-2016/committee-reviews-problems-preparation-for-cpec-in-gb-jaffarullah>

“Nawaz reiterates support to Kashmir's self-rule cause”

Daily Times, August 15, 2016

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed on August 15 that Pakistan would continue to support the just cause of the people of J&K politically, diplomatically and ethically at every forum. He noted Kashmir was an unfinished agenda of the United Nations as well as partition of the sub-continent. “Pakistan remains committed to settle the Kashmir issue through negotiations and dialogue,” he added. He was talking to Masood Khan PML-N's presidential candidate for Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) who called on him, a press release noted. Nawaz appreciated the role of Masood Khan in highlighting the Kashmir cause during his various diplomatic assignments particularly during his tenure as Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/15-Aug-16/nawaz-reiterates-support-to-kashmirs-self-rule-cause>

Shabbir Mir, “Shuttersdown: Awami Action Committee in G-B observes strike”

The Express Tribune, August 16, 2016

The political and religious groups in Gilgit-Baltistan observed a shutters down strike on August 15 under the banner of Awami Action Committee (AAC) against the lack of share for G-B in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). “We have been cheated on in the name of two economic zones,” a leader of AAC, Farooq Khan, stated referring to G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman's statements. Rehman had stated G-B will have two economic zones and the activities will usher the region into prosperity. “But the reality is that no activity will take place in G-B as senators told us during the sessions.” He noted this while addressing

people who had gathered for a rally in Gilgit over the issue. The strike came days after a powerful senate committee, headed by Senator Taj Haider, visited the region to review the CPEC projects. The committee members, who met several delegations during their three-day stay in G-B, confirmed the region had no share in the CPEC plan something that prompted AAC to protest.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1163197/shuttersdown-awami-action-committee-g-b-observes-strike/>

“Modi questions Pak. on rights abuses in Balochistan, PoK”

The Hindu, August 16, 2016

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15 launched a sharp attack on Pakistan for its support to terrorism and thanked the people of Balochistan, Gilgit and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) for their recent messages of support. He stated: “There is no meaning in economic prosperity if it is not accompanied by social justice.” “When you look at things from the scale of human values and humanity... when innocent schoolchildren were massacred in Peshawar, the Indian Parliament wept, every school in India shed tears at this tragedy. On the other hand, we have a situation where some people glorify terrorists in our country,” the Prime Minister stated, without naming Pakistan that described the slain Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani as a martyr.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/modi-questions-pak-on-rights-abuses-in-balochistan-pok/article8992229.ece>

“Asif Chairs Meeting of Hydro Power Projects in GB”

Business Recorder, August 17, 2016

Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif on August 16 chaired a meeting of the committee on Formulation of Roadmap for implementation of Hydro Power Projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The delegation briefed the minister about various mega and micro-hydel power projects in GB, the progress so far made on them and the impediments in completion of the projects, noted a press release. The delegation while appreciating the support of the federal government in facilitating the GB government in completion of

these energy projects urged for additional financing to start a number of micro hydel power projects and tap into this resource for fulfilling the energy needs of the region. They informed the minister that there is huge potential for micro hydel projects in GB, and that the GB government is planning and financing the micro hydel projects up to 35 MW from its annual development fund. Khawaja Asif stated that GB is being the water bank of Pakistan offers excellent investment opportunities in hydel power projects for both local and foreign investors.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/front-top/314275-asif-chairs-meeting-of-hydro-power-projects-in-gb.html>

“AWP rejects Indian media's false propaganda”

Daily Times, August 16, 2016

Awami Workers Party (AWP) rejects Indian press reports which portray a video of an AWP-Gilgit Baltistan election rally for Baba Jan as a separatist uprising against Pakistan. The video, originally shared by India-based Asian News International agency on August 13, 2016 has now been shared by multiple Indian outlets as evidence of an ongoing separatist uprising in which hundreds of arrests have been made. The AWP rejects these reports as completely baseless. The video being shared was from an election rally held on May 25, 2016, in Altit, Hunza as part of Baba Jan's campaign for the Hunza-6 by-election for the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly. No separatist slogans were raised at any point in the campaign, which focused on calling for Baba Jan's release, opposition to the corrupt ruling elite and a pro-people socialist alternative.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/16-Aug-16/awp-rejects-indian-medias-false-propaganda>

Dr Inayatullah Faizi, “Indian PM Modi's confession of interference in Gilgit/Baltistan”

Chitral Times, August 18, 2016

The latest statement of Modi is a confessional statement of the enemy. In the statement, the Indian prime Minister has clearly indicated that he has his well-wisher in Baluchistan and Gilgit Baltistan. The people of Laspur Chitral have been constantly demanding that some elements in GB are working

for Indian lobby and they are creating disturbance and disharmony in the name of Shandur boundary dispute. The recent disclosure of PM Modi has proved that dispute on Shandur boundary is an Indian agenda. Minister for Kashmir and GB Choudhry Barjees Tahir may kindly take notice of the Indian Prime Ministers confession on GB affairs.

<http://www.chitralnews.com/news/modis-confession-of-interference-in-gilgitbaltistan/>

“GOVT Took Several Development Initiatives for GB: PM”

Business Recorder, August 18, 2016

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on August 18 stated the government has taken various developmental initiatives for socio-economic development of Gilgit-Baltistan and stated he would soon visit the area to review progress on different projects. He was talking to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez Ur Rehman who called on him at the PM House. The Chief Minister apprised the Prime Minister on various ongoing development projects related to Gilgit-Baltistan. He also apprised the Prime Minister of PML-N matters, pertaining to Gilgit-Baltistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif noted people of Gilgit-Baltistan have rendered great sacrifices for Pakistan, which reflect their passionate attachment with the country. He also stated contributions of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in national development and prosperity was most praiseworthy.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/politics-a-policy/314626-govt-took-several-development-initiatives-for-gb-pm.html>

“Gilgit-Baltistan: A story of ambiguity and oblivion”

The Indian Express, August 18, 2016

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reference to Gilgit-Baltistan may have had the strategic objective of countering Pakistan's claim on Jammu and Kashmir. In doing so, he has also focussed attention on the almost forgotten history of a strategically-located region whose political fate is cloaked in ambiguity. There are two independence days for the over one million people in the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan: August 14 when Pakistan

celebrates its independence, and November 1, when the region remembers its freedom that, ironically, lasted for only 21 days in 1947. Since then, sovereignty and any constitutional status in Pakistan have remained vague and elusive for this Shia-dominated region, through which runs the river Indus and is home to many spectacular mountain peaks, nearly equal in height to Mount Everest. Previously known as the Northern Areas, it borders China and Afghanistan to the north, Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province to the west and India to the east, leading to the frozen battlefield of the Siachen glacier. The location makes it strategically as important for China and India, as it is for Pakistan. As far as India is concerned, Gilgit-Baltistan was part of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state that existed in 1947 and, therefore, included in the territorial dispute with Pakistan.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/the-story-of-gilgit-baltistan-pm-modi-balochistan-india-pakistan-2981634/>

Syed Sammer Abbas, “UN offers to send fact-finding missions to Kashmir”

Dawn, August 18, 2016

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has offered to send fact-finding missions to both Jammu & Kashmir and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the Foreign Office (FO) spokesman noted on August 18. FO Spokesperson Nafees Zakaria stated Pakistan was open to the idea of UN high commissioner visiting AJK. “AJK is an area open to everyone and is frequented by foreign tourists and members of the diplomatic community in Pakistan, including representatives of the United Nations,” Zakaria stated. “The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has been denied access by India to Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, whereas Pakistan has never prevented UN officials from travelling to Azad Jammu and Kashmir,” he added. On July 15, Pakistan requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to send a fact-finding mission to J&K to report on the gross violations of human rights.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1278384>

“GB assembly adopts resolution against Modi's remarks”

The News, August 19, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan legislative Assembly on August 19 unanimously passed a resolution against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks. The resolution termed Modi's statements 'madness' and an attempt to divert attention from the atrocities taking place in Indian occupied Kashmir. Every child in Gilgit-Baltistan is ready to fight for the defence and security of Pakistan, the resolution added. Meanwhile, after the people of Balochistan, protests erupted in different cities of Gilgit-Baltistan on August 19 against Modi's statement. Students as well as the general public expressed their anger and raised slogans against the Indian prime minister. The Deputy Speaker Jafferullah Khan and Iqbal Hassan a member of the legislative assembly were also present in the protest.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/143707-GB-assembly-adopts-resolution-against-Modis-remarks>

“GB people, soldiers of Pakistan: CM Hafeez”

The Nation, August 19, 2016

The Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Hafeezur-Rehman stated that every single person of Gilgit-Baltistan is a defender of Pakistan. In a statement, he strongly rejected and condemned the statement of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding Gilgit-Baltistan. “People of Gilgit and Baltistan are soldiers of Pakistan and they will defend Pakistan by sacrificing their lives”, he added. “The Indian PM's statement that people of GB and Kashmir have expressed their thanks to him is misleading”, he stated.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/19-Aug-2016/gb-people-soldiers-of-pakistan-cm-hafeez>

“AJK PM gives protest call against Modi's statement”

Pakistan Today, August 20, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan has given a protest call on August 22 to denounce Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement. The premier gave the call while addressing an oath-taking ceremony of

Mirpur Press Club at the Kashmir Council Islamabad on August 19. The AJK prime minister noted protest rallies and demonstrations would be organised across the LoC and Kashmiris living around the globe would lodge a protest against Modi's statement, besides seeking international attention towards the ongoing continued brutalities and curfew imposed in occupied Kashmir by Indian army and its aide puppet administration. Raja Farooq also stated Kashmir was the unfinished agenda of the division of Indian subcontinent and Kashmiri people were engaged in its completion. He also thanked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for adopting bold stance and realistic approach on the Kashmir issue which helped highlight the issue at the international level.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/08/20/national/ajk-pm-gives-protest-call-against-modis-statement/>

“President Mamnoon says CPEC project to prove beneficial for Gilgit-Baltistan”

Daily Times, August 21, 2016

President Mamnoon Hussain in his recent statement noted that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will prove beneficial for people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Addressing at a laptop distribution ceremony at Karakoram International University on August 20, the president stated the CPEC would bring prosperity in the province. CPEC, which is being executed smoothly promises to open up new trajectories of progress in the region, he added. He further emphasized on eliminating obstructions created by people who are unsure of the benefits CPEC would bring to the country. He also stated that Pakistan's enemies were jealous of the CPEC and would do their utmost to fail the project. It is a responsibility of the people, particularly the youth, to thwart the enemies' nefarious designs, he maintained. He stated that the government is aggressively pursuing to improve educational sector and taking effective steps to bring prosperity to this area. Referring to upsurge in violence in Jammu & Kashmir, the president stated Pakistan would continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris in their struggle for the right to self-determination.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/21-Aug-16/president->

mamnoon-says-cpec-project-to-prove-beneficial-for-gilgit-baltistan

“Two terrorists arrested from Gilgit-Baltistan: ISPR”

Geo TV, August 21, 2016

Security forces arrested two terrorists in an operation on August 21 in Gilgit-Baltistan's Juglot area, the Inter-Services Public Relations stated. According to the ISPR, security forces recovered a suicide jacket, and a huge cache of arms and ammunition from the terrorists' possession. The forces conducted the operation on a tip-off. The terrorists were shifting a huge quantity of arms and ammunition to a car, the ISPR stated. The ISPR stated that five rifles, two Kalashnikovs, two pistols and 270 detonators were recovered in the operation. 12 magazines and 1800 different types of bullets were also recovered from the terrorists, the ISPR stated. Earlier this month, an operation was launched along the Pak-Afghan border to stop infiltration of terrorists from across the border, the ISPR had stated.

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/112105-Two-terrorists-arrested-from-Gilgit-Baltistan-ISPR>

“President for linking Gilgit-Baltistan with national power grid”

Business Recorder, August 22, 2016

President Mamnoon Hussain stated that it is necessary to link Gilgit-Baltistan with national grid to derive maximum benefit from water resources of the region. The President noted this while being briefed on water and power projects in Skardu. On the occasion, Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Mir Ghazanfar Ali, Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman, provincial minister for water and power Haji Akbar Taban and senior officials were also present.

The President stated that the pace of development will pick up in Gilgit-Baltistan by linking it with the national grid. The President underlined the need to increase electricity generation and its linking with national transmission line to pass on the benefits of economic progress to the people. The President emphasised on becoming self-sufficient in electricity production to reap maximum benefits

from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193/78175/>

“US Expresses Concern over Human Rights Situation in Gilgit-Baltistan”

NDTV, August 23, 2016

The US on August 22 expressed concern about the human rights situation in Gilgit-Baltistan and asked all parties in Pakistan to resolve the issues through a valid political process. "We do have concerns about the human rights situation there, and have reported that for several years in our Human Rights Report," a State Department Spokesperson noted when asked about the allegations of large scale human rights violation in Gilgit-Baltistan, which has been illegally occupied by Pakistan. "However, we have consistently urged all parties in Pakistan to work out their differences peaceably and through a valid political process," the spokesperson noted.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/us-expresses-concern-over-human-rights-situation-in-gilgit-baltistan-1448873>

“All Possible Steps to be taken to Empower Women in AJK: Noreen”

Radio Pakistan, August 23, 2016

The AJK Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Noreen Arif stated that all possible measures would be taken to empower women in Azad Kashmir. Presiding over a departmental meeting in Muzaffarabad on August 23, she stated equal rights will be given to women in the state. Noreen Arif also stated that women would be provided equal job opportunities in proportion to their population. She further stated that skill development centers would be established in the remote areas of the state to utilize their capabilities and to empower them economically. AJK Minister stated that major reforms would be introduced to facilitate women to contribute towards national development.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/23-Aug-2016/all-possible-steps-to-be-taken-to-empower-women-in-ajk-noreen>

Mohsin Raza Malik, “Question of GB and AJK”

The Nation, August 24, 2016

Apart from their mutual rivalry and egotism, a

number of domestic compulsions have prevented both India and Pakistan from seeking a just remedy for the underlying woes of the Kashmiri people. This is the reason they have been tackling the Kashmir issue in accordance with their self-devised strategies, best-suited to their national interests, ignoring the aspirations of the Kashmiris altogether. Demanding an 'accession referendum' in state of J&K in accordance with past UNSC resolutions, Pakistan has never thought of reviewing its current Kashmir policy and posture. There are many reasons why Pakistan has yet not called for holding a typical independence referendum in the disputed valley. First of all, having declared Kashmir an 'unfished agenda of partition', now Pakistan somehow deems Kashmir its substantial missing part.

<http://nation.com.pk/columns/24-Aug-2016/question-of-gb-and-ajk>

Senge Hasnan Sering, “A message for Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Indian Express, August 24, 2016

At the all-party conference in New Delhi, and later in his August 15 Independence Day address to the nation, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, referred to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). On both occasions, Modi also talked about human rights violations in Pakistan-occupied Balochistan. His statement came a day after Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, dedicated his country's Independence Day celebrations to the freedom of Kashmir from Indian rule. PM Modi's statement was well-received by Indian political parties including the Indian National Congress. The current Bangladesh government and former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai supported the statement, causing concern in Pakistan's leadership circles. On August 19, India announced a five-point agenda to resume talks with Pakistan, one of which proposes a discussion on the vacation of Pakistan's illegal occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan and PoK. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan must realise that Modi is ending Gilgit-Baltistan's long international isolation. The statement by itself does not show a policy change but Modi's message is clear: Gilgit-

Baltistan, Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir are all equal stakeholders and the issue cannot be solved by focusing on Kashmir alone.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/pm-modi-balochistan-comment-india-pakistan-gilgit-baltistan-2992814/>

Shabbir Mir, “Hunza by-polls postponed over PM, army chief's visit”

The Express Tribune, August 25, 2016

By-elections for GBLA-6, Hunza have been postponed yet again. The polls had been scheduled for August 29 and series of preparations had been made for the elections by various political parties. The decision to postpone the polls has been taken in view of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif's visit to Gilgit-Baltistan. The prime minister and the army chief will participate in a conference regarding China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. “The elections [have been] postponed due to these visits and the next date will be announced soon,” Election Commissioner Abid Raza stated “[This has been done] because the home department was unable to provide security for the polls.” A notification to this effect was also issued by election commission on August 24. The constituency fell vacant after Mir Ghazanfar Ali was appointed as G-B governor. The decision to postpone the elections has drawn the ire of various political parties that had launched an effective electioneering campaign over the months. AWP workers voiced their disappointment over the decision.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1169302/lack-security-hunza-polls-postponed-pm-army-chiefs-visit/>

Manoj Joshi, “Chinese chequers: Why India needs to think through its policy on Gilgit-Baltistan and POK”

Scroll, August 25, 2016

“Uska hal bhi hoga [That problem too would be solved],” stated the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Chief Mohan Bhagwat on August 21, referring to the so-called Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Aksai Chin, parts of Jammu and Kashmir that are not with India. Whether occupied by Pakistan or China, they had to be brought back, he added.

Parliament had twice passed a unanimous resolution proclaiming that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, or POK, was an integral part of India and even though it was somewhat complicated, the government would find a way out, Bhagwat stated, while speaking at a meeting in Agra. Bhagwat was following up on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks on August 12 at an all-party meeting on the situation in Kashmir. There was a need for the government to highlight the plight of the people of POK to the world community, Modi stated. Revisiting the theme in his Independence Day address, Modi expressed his appreciation for the positive response he had got for his August 12 remarks from "the people of Balochistan, the people of Gilgit and the people of POK".

<http://scroll.in/article/814747/chinese-chequers-why-india-needs-to-think-through-its-policy-on-gilgit-baltistan-and-pok>

“Masood Khan takes oath as AJK President”

Pakistan Today, August 25, 2016

Muhammad Masood Khan took oath as the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in Muzaffarabad on August 25. Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Muhammad Azam Khan administered the oath at a ceremony at the AJK Legislative Assembly. AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan, former AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan Chaudhry Barjees Tahir, Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir, AJK Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, high-ranking civil and military officials and a large of notables attended the ceremony.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/08/25/national/masood-khan-takes-oath-as-ajk-president/>

“Bilawal condemns victimization of PPP workers in AJK”

The News, August 25, 2016

Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condemned victimization of the PPP workers in Azad Jammu and Kashmir by the newly-inducted PML-N government where cases under Anti-Terrorism Act have been initiated against 47 innocent PPP workers including former Adviser to

AJK PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore and throwing 11 of them into jails. “This is kind of intolerable victimization of the PPP workers and the Party will resist such draconian actions with full force,” PPP Chairman noted in a statement issued on August 25. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari noted that former PPP government in AJK had established a Judicial Commission to look into an incident in which the shops and properties were attacked, vandalized and burnt in Haveli in July 2016. He pointed out that the Judicial Commission had completed 80pc of its work but the PML-N government wound up it and launched fierce victimization of the PPP workers in the valley. PPP Chairman asked PML-N government to desist from carrying out political revenge and victimization against his party workers.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/145217-Bilawal-condemns-victimization-of-PPP-workers-in-AJK>

“AJK President invites India for talks on Kashmir”

The News, August 25, 2016

Newly elected President of Azad Kashmir, Masood Abdullah Khan, invited India for negotiations pertaining to the ongoing issue of Kashmir on August 25. After being sworn in as the 26th President of Azad Kashmir, Masood Abdullah Khan talked to media. He added to his statement that the on-going movement in Kashmir has the backing and approval of the people of Kashmir. India should contact Pakistan for any negotiations relating Kashmir issue, he further stated.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/145185-AJK-President-invites-India-for-talks-on-Kashmir>

“AJK PM Orders for Identifying More Hydro Power projects”

Business Recorder, August 25, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan directed the AJK Power Development Organization (PDO) to identify and start more power generation projects in AJK to meet the needs of energy in the country. He was addressing a high level meeting of the State Electricity Department in Muzaffarabad on August 24. Secretary Electricity and Power Development Organization, Fayyaz Ali Abbasi briefed the Prime

Minister of the ongoing and the upcoming hydro power generation projects located in various parts of AJK. The meeting also discussed, in length, the prevailing issues of electricity including load shedding, rehabilitation and resettlement of reset of the Mangla Dam Raising affectees and the pace of progress in ongoing hydro power projects. The PM further advised the Secretary Electricity and PDO Fayyaz Ali Abbasi to sort out pending issues with WAPDA related to Mangla Dam Raising Project, rehabilitation of Mangla dam affectees and the power load shedding in AJK. The Prime Minister praised the AJK Secretary Electricity for achieving stipulated revenue targets during this fiscal year in Azad Jammu Kashmir. Senior officials of the Power Development Organization were also present on this occasion.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/315609-ajk-pm-orders-for-identifying-more-hydro-power-projects.html>

“Women protection Bill to be passed from GBLA soon: Sobia”

Radio Pakistan, August 26, 2016

Minister for Women Development, Tourism and Youth Affairs Gilgit-Baltistan Sobia Muqaddam says Women Protection Bill will be passed from the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly soon as to protect the women's rights. Talking to the journalist in Skardu, she also stated first time in the history, forty girls schools were opened in the district Diamer. She also visited the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital in Gamba Skardu and assured to provide the all necessary facilities in the hospital.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/26-Aug-2016/women-protection-bill-to-be-passed-from-gb-assembly-soon-sobia>

“N flays PPP for sad state of AJK affairs”

The Nation, August 29, 2016

MLA Ch Saeed noted that the PML-N government will initiate revolutionary reforms to strengthen the AJK economy that got weakened because of the poor policies and bad governance of the outgoing PPP rulers. Talking to journalists at Kashmir Press Club, Ch Saeed stated that the newly-elected AJK government headed by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan will implement the pre-election

commitments and mass public-welfare policies enshrined in the manifesto of the party without any discrimination. Ch Saeed also stated that in order to ensure the supply of gas to Mirpur city including adjoining Mian Muhammad Town, a full fledged office of the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd is being established in Mirpur. He pointed out that the gas supply to the remaining residential parts of the city would be executed. The MLA stated that through the execution of the public-welfare projects, people of Mirpur would soon see a rapid progress including the execution and completion of water supply and sewerage schemes, resettlement and rehabilitation of Mangla dam affectees and Jammu Kashmir refugees, Benazir Income Support Programme, completion of Mirpur-Islamgarh bridge and revolutionary reforms in Mirpur Development Authority, Mangla Dam Housing Authority and the civic bodies.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/29-Aug-2016/n-flays-ppp-for-sad-state-of-ajk-affairs>

“Parliamentary panel on CPEC to meet in Gilgit on Tuesday”

Daily Times, August 29, 2016

Parliamentary Committee on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be held at Chief Minister Secretariat, Gilgit on August 30. The meeting would be chaired by Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed. The Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister will brief the committee on the role of GB in CPEC. The committee will also visit the Khunjerab Pass at Karakoram Highway.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/29-Aug-16/parliamentary-panel-on-cpec-to-meet-in-gilgit-on-tuesday>

Muzzammil Mukhtar, “Baba Jan: an ideology can't be imprisoned”

Daily Times, August 30, 2016

Political activism is the way people voice their criticism to elected representatives and the powerful. However, state's oppression, persecution, prosecution and suppression serve today, to a considerable extent, for the rule and privileges of the state's bureaucracy. In contemporary political history of Pakistan, Baba Jan's prosecution and detention depict state's utmost oppression of a

political activist. Baba Jan is a progressive political activist of the Hunza valley in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. He is one of the popular contemporary leaders of the ordinary people and the working class, and he has had the courage to loudly speak against the human rights violations in the region. In fact, this area is under the taut control of the state establishment, primarily because of its geographical location and great economic value: it is part of the historic silk route. The so-called autonomy of the region is merely an imperialist cliché to suspend the process of real empowerment of the ordinary people and the working class. Baba Jan and 11 other activists were convicted of being involved in political riots linked with the 2010 Attabad landslide. Baba Jan and his fellow activists are currently serving a 40-year imprisonment. What is Baba Jan's crime? His only fault is daring to challenge the fundamentals of society and wishing for a real change in the lives of ordinary people.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/30-Aug-16/baba-jan-an-ideology-cant-be-imprisoned>

“Student Activists in Karachi Demand End to Colonial Rule in Gilgit Baltistan”

Bihar Praba, August 30, 2016

The voice against Pakistan's illegal occupation in Gilgit Baltistan is mounting. The Karachi division of the Gilgit-Baltistan national students organization and other activists held a protest rally against the illegal occupation of Gilgit Baltistan. The protesters demanded an end to colonial rule in Gilgit Baltistan and raised questions about Islamabad's occupation in the region.

<http://news.biharprabha.com/2016/08/student-activists-in-karachi-demand-end-to-colonial-rule-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Kashmir Issue Core Priority of Pakistan's Parliament: Ayaz”

Radio Pakistan, August 31, 2016

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated the Kashmir issue is the core priority of Pakistan's Parliament and all the political parties have one voice over the issue. He was talking to the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Masood Khan who called on him in Islamabad on August 31. He also stated that Pakistan has sent letters to the

Speakers of 196 Parliaments to highlight the rampant, unending and gross human rights abuses in Kashmir and to garner diplomatic and political support for the freedom struggle of Kashmiri people. He stated Pakistan will continue to extend its unwavering moral, political and diplomatic support to the just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their unalienable right of self-determination, as enshrined in the UN Charter and relevant UN resolutions. AJK President Masood Khan appreciated the endeavours of the Parliament of Pakistan in taking up the Kashmir issue at various bilateral and multilateral forums.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/31-Aug-2016/kashmir-issue-core-priority-of-pakistan-s-parliament-ayaz>

“Asma Khan says people of Gilgit-Baltistan want merger with Pakistan”

Kashmir Media Service, August 31, 2016

Kashmiri writer Asma Khan while strongly rejecting the Indian government's claim about people in Gilgit-Baltistan stated that the people of the region wanted a merger with Pakistan, not secession from it. Asma Khan, who is a native of Gilgit-Baltistan and married to a political family in Handwara, in her post on Facebook wrote that she had visited the region twice in the past four months and was in regular touch with relatives living in the region. She wrote that there were no such feelings of estrangement from Pakistan as were being projected by the Indian media. “I have never come across the kind of disenchantment and unrest depicted on the news channels in Delhi... but the last time I checked, they were agitated, sure, but not on wanting to secede but rather for being completely assimilated into Pakistan,” Asma Khan wrote. Another post that Asma Khan wrote on Facebook negated the BJP-led government's claim that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan were resisting the 3,000-km-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/2016/08/31/asma-khan-says-people-of-gilgit-baltistan-want-merger-with-pakistan.html>

Economic Developments

“Cross-LoC trade resumes in Kashmir”

Pakistan Today, August 11, 2016

Cross-LoC trade between two parts of Kashmir resumed on August 9 after remaining suspended over widespread unrest in the Jammu & Kashmir. The trade route between Poonch and Rawalakot was shut down on August 3 for the second time within a fortnight after massive protests erupted in J&K. “Trade finally resumed Tuesday,” stated Mohammad Tanvir, custodian at Chakan da Bagh trade facilitation centre in Poonch. Cross-LoC trade, which started in 2008, has often been suspended due to animosity between Pakistan and India.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/08/11/business/cross-loc-trade-resumes-in-kashmir/>

“GBDWP Approves Two Development Schemes”

Radio Pakistan, August 6, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan Development Working Party approved two development schemes amounting over 614 million rupees. The approved projects include setting up of Rescue 1122 centers in Diamer, Gilgit, Skardu and Ghanche districts and fourteen schemes in hydro power sector across Gilgit Baltistan. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister directed secretary planning and development to finalize PC-1 to speed the development process.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/06-Aug-2016/gbdwp-approves-two-development-schemes>

“Gilgit-Baltistan to get 3G, 4G services by end of year”

Daily Pakistan, August 30, 2016

The Special Communication Organisation (SCO), a public sector telecommunications services provider in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), is set to provide 3G and 4G mobile internet services in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) by the end

of 2016. “We will be able to provide 3G and 4G services to the people of GB within two months of getting approval from the federal government,” SCO spokesperson noted. “We have completed 80 per cent upgradation work on infrastructure [in the region] and the remaining work is being carried out rapidly,” he added.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/technology/gilgit-baltistan-to-get-3g-4g-services-by-end-of-year/>

“Repair Work of Roads in Gilgit City to be Completed Soon: Iqbal”

Radio Pakistan, August 30, 2016

Minister for Gilgit-Baltistan works Dr Muhammad Iqbal stated repair work of roads in Gilgit city would be completed soon. This was noted by him while presiding over a meeting held in Gilgit. The minister noted that all ongoing development projects in Gilgit Baltistan would be completed timely so the people can get benefits out of them. He also stated that government will not compromise on the quality of work on development projects.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/30-Aug-2016/repairing-work-of-roads-in-gilgit-city-to-be-completed-soon-iqbal>

“Govt committed to develop Azad Kashmir: Ishaq Dar”

Dispatch News Desk, August 31, 2016

Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on August 31 reiterated the government's resolve to develop Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He was talking to the Speaker Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Shah Ghulam Qadir, who called on Finance Minister in Islamabad. The minister stated there would be visible decrease in load shedding in 2017 and also assured the speaker of expediting work on health and communication sector projects. Earlier, Shah Ghulam Qadir

apprised the federal minister about work on developmental projects in Neelam Valley, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The Speaker also apprised about the work completed on projects in energy, communication and health sectors. He thanked the minister for government's attention and giving priority to AJK's developmental projects.

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/govt-committed-to-develop-azad-kashmir-ishaq-dar/116161>

International Developments

“Pak's withdrawal from Gilgit-Baltistan will help resolve Kashmir issue: Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress”

The Economic Times, August 13, 2016

Describing Pakistan as an "occupier" of Gilgit-Baltistan, a US-based organisation stated that Islamabad's withdrawal from this part of Jammu and Kashmir would help resolve the Kashmir issue. "Indian Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's policy to highlight human rights violations in Gilgit-Baltistan is a positive step," stated Senge Sering, director of the Washington DC-based Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress. In a statement, Sering stated the UN Security Council through resolutions has declared Pakistan an intruder in Gilgit-Baltistan. "The international community including India and other neighbours of Pakistan must remind Pakistan that it is an occupier in Gilgit-Baltistan and only Pakistan's withdrawal from Gilgit-Baltistan will help fast track the settlement of dispute over Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan," he stated.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/paks-withdrawal-from-gilgit-baltistan-will-help-resolve-kashmir-issue-gilgit-baltistan-national-congress/articleshow/53682525.cms>

Shailaja Neelakantan, “Is Beijing changing its stance towards Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir?”

Times of India, August 16, 2016

Is it significant that state-run Chinese media referred to Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) as just that, rather than as Pakistan-Administered-Kashmir, like it used to? Is Beijing changing its stance? An article in the state-run Global Times mentioned PoK twice. The article stated that China is unlikely to take sides with Pakistan or India on the Kashmir issue. It added that the rise in tensions between the two countries, though, is what's

keeping "PoK" behind developmentally. "It is precisely because of the region's worsening investment environment+ that POK's economy is still heavily reliant on agriculture," Global Times stated. Recently, another state-run news outlet, the People's Daily, which published photos of Chinese and Pakistani troops patrolling for the first time on the Xinjiang -PoK border last month referred to the area as the China-Pakistan border.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/Is-Beijing-changing-its-stance-towards-Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir/articleshow/53718313.cms>

“Gilgit leader seeks UN help to break free from Pakistan”

Business Standard, August 22, 2016

Taking a strong exception to "grave" human rights situation in Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan (PoGB), Balawaristan National Front (BNF) chairman Abdul Hamid Khan appealed to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the U.N., and the European Union (EU) to exert pressure on Pakistan to end the "illegal occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan" and withdraw its civilians and forces by fulfilling its obligations to the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolutions - which, he notes, is the first step to "establish local authority". In a letter to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon last month, the BNF chairman, who is living in political asylum, urged: "The U.N. should also ask Pakistan to end its illegal occupation of Chitral and Shenaki Kohistan (in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), allowing the local people to rule their motherland as their birth right." "If Pakistani atrocities against indigenous people continue uncontrolled, South Asia and rest of the civilised world, eventually, will have to face serious environmental and geopolitical consequences, besides human catastrophe, warned Khan, adding

that two-million people of this disputed land have no way out, but expect and request Your Excellency to intervene.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/gilgit-leader-seeks-un-help-to-break-free-from-pakistan-116082200095_1.html

“Pakistan briefs China on 'rights violations' in Kashmir”

The Economic Times, August 23, 2016

Continuing with its efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue, Pakistan briefed China about alleged human rights violations in Kashmir during their bilateral strategic dialogue. Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, who is on a two-day visit to China, attended the bilateral strategic dialogue meeting and also met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing during his trip, the Pakistan Foreign Office noted in a statement. The seventh round of Strategic Dialogue between Pakistan and

China was held on August 22 in Beijing where Chaudhry led the Pakistani delegation while the Chinese side was headed by Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asian and Consular Affairs Kong Xuanyou. Chaudhry apprised his counterpart of the "grave humanitarian situation" in Kashmir and the ongoing "human rights violations", the statement further noted. "He (Chaudhry) expressed the hope that the international community would play its role in calling on India to put an end to blatant human rights violations in the Valley," the Foreign Office stated.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/pakistan-briefs-china-on-rights-violations-in-kashmir/articleshow/53826407.cms>

Other Developments

“CUJ organises Workshop on 'Cross-LoC Trade CBMs”

Greater Kashmir, August 23, 2016

The Department of National Security Studies at the Central University of Jammu organised two days' workshop on “Cross LoC Trade CBMs in the Ladakh Region” in collaboration with the Ladakh International Centre at Leh which concluded on August 23. The workshop is supported by Conciliation Resources. Founder of Ladakh International Centre, Amb. P. Stobdan and the Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Jammu signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutes for joint research activities. Prof. Aima highlighted the potential of this partnership to explore more research possibilities in the field of Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and National Security Studies. Enlightening the forum about the kind of changes taking place internationally, Amb. P.Stobdan stated perspectives are changing in favour of change and militarised borders need to be re-looked at. “If Cross LoC trade took place it will be revival of exchange of goods between Ladakh and Baltistan (now PoK) which used to take place in the past. Baltistan supplied dried fruits while Ladakh supplied wool and Pashmina”, he noted.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/jammu/story/226486.html>

“Vocational training must for AJK uplift: Farid”

Pakistan Today, August 25, 2016

The skill development is the tested model for better job prospects to unemployed youth and technical education and vocational training also ensures socio economic development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. These remarks were made by the

chairman Skill Development Council, Islamabad M Akram Farid as chief guest on August 24. These views have been shared with a large number of participants at a Hunar Mela and seminar on Competency Based Training organized jointly by Skill Development Council, Islamabad, Azad Jammu Kashmir Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority and GIZ on August 22. The CBT is one of the innovative approaches to reduce un-employment ratio in the country, training initiatives supported by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) through TVET Reform Support Programme that is supported by the European Union, governments of Netherlands, Germany and Norway.

<http://pakobserver.net/vocational-training-must-for-ajk-uplift-farid/>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“Centre Should Reveal the share of GB in CPEC”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, August 12, 2016

The Senate Committee on CPEC visited Gilgit-Baltistan recently where they met various delegations, political leaders and civil society members from the region. Committee under the chairmanship of Taj Haider visited Hunza also. During interaction with people, Senate Committee delegation were surprised to learn about the duration of load shedding and other problems faced by the people of Hunza. Everybody reminded the Committee about the strategic significance of Hunza. Hunza is a gateway to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It is the first district which the CPEC passes through. Despite this, the people have been deprived of basic amenities. The Senate Committee was asked to convey the message to the federal government regarding people's concerns in the region who want to know the share of Gilgit-Baltistan in the CPEC. People urged that it is time for the federal government to reveal Gilgit-Baltistan's share in the CPEC.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=08-12-2016&img=08-12-2016page-1-1

“End Occupation of Kargil and Leh before Talking on Gilgit-Baltistan”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, August 22, 2016

Balwarsitan National Front leader Advocate Mehboob Ali Balwaristani, Quwat Khan Chairman of BNF-Yaseen, Organiser BNSO-Gizer Sheer Nadir Shahi, Ali Ghulam and other activists condemned Modi's reference of Gilgit-Baltistan in his speech. They noted that before talking on Gilgit-Baltistan, Modi should end illegal occupation of Leh and Kargil and hand it over to Gilgit-Baltistan. They further noted that they are not against the developmental work in GB and wherever

developmental work is going on they appreciate and support that. But when it comes to the matter of internal external policies regarding Gilgit-Baltistan, people of the region should be consulted. Underscoring the importance of Ghizer region, activists noted that the Ghizer is a land of martyrs but rulers have ignored them. Lamenting on the sorry state of education in Ghizer district, BNF leaders noted that there are no higher educational institutions in Ghizer district. Medical facilities are rare. While criticising the provincial government, activists stated that rulers are not giving importance to our demands. Therefore, they are appealing to the world community that our land that has been forcefully occupied by Pakistan, India and China. Leh and Kargil which is a part of Gilgit-Baltistan have been occupied by India, whereas Kohistan and Chitral has been illegally integrated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province by Pakistan.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=08-22-2016&img=08-22-2016page-1-1

“Constitutional Committee: Result Awaiting,”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, August 23, 2016

While Awami Action committee in Gilgit is on strike regarding the constitutional status of the region, people at the helm of affairs in Islamabad are saying that they have handed over the report prepared by Committee on GB's constitutional identity to the prime minister of Pakistan. About a year ago, Nawaz Sharif during his election rally announced a formation of a committee headed by Sartaj Aziz tasked with changing the existing political setup of Gilgit-Baltistan. After its formation, there has been no news regarding its progress, members or its findings. Now suddenly there is this news that report has been given to the prime minister. Reality is that the leaders and people have not pressed the federal government on that issue. Also, Islamabad was not interested in granting a new package. People of the region had

almost forgotten about it. Now suddenly Sartaj Aziz comes out saying that the report is ready. This time Gilgit-Baltistan people should not get too excited about the report. There would be nothing new for the people. What impression one gets from the various reports leaked to the media is that the federal government is not ready to give anything to Gilgit-Baltistan. They are not going to change the status. There is least chance that Nawaz Sharif is going to take it seriously.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup?r_date=08-23-2016&img=08-23-2016page-2-1

“Will shut down GB if Leaders are not released: Awami Action Committee”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, August 30, 2016

Awami Action Committee has given 18 hours to the administration for releasing its leaders who were taken into custody for protesting against the CPEC. In its address to media, Maulana Abdul Sami stated that government should accept and implement our Charter of Demand. He further stated that they are giving 18 hours to the government to releases their leaders. If these leaders are not released, the entire Gilgit-Baltistan region will come to a standstill. Maulana Sami further noted that our people have suffered enough now they cannot be more patient. Awami Action Committee under the leadership of Maulana Sami also took Imami Council into confidence. Other religious and political parties have also supported a strike call from Awami Action Committee.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=08-30-2016&img=08-30-2016page-1-3

“Take Advantage from Chinese Investment: Hafizur Rehman”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, August 30, 2016

Addressing a conference on CPEC in Gilgit, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar stated that over a couple of years economic conditions have improved tremendously. The country has got rid of terrorism during PML-N government. He further stated that

Pakistan has become a favourite destination for foreign direct investment. On the occasion, Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister Hafizur Rehman stated that all the political leaders have to work hard in order to control poverty and end energy crisis. He further stated that he wants to see Pakistan progressing. According to Rehman all the political leaders should get united and shun personal interests so that we can be united on national interests. According to Rehman, China is interested in investing in Pakistan and people would be benefited most.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=08-30-2016&img=08-30-2016page-1-2

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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 Muhammad Masood Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

AJK Council: Total 17 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

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

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

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

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

Languages: Shina, Balti, Wakhi, Khovar, 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: Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan

Chief Minister G-B: Hafiz Hafiz-ur-Rehman

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 to 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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