

# POK NEWS DIGEST

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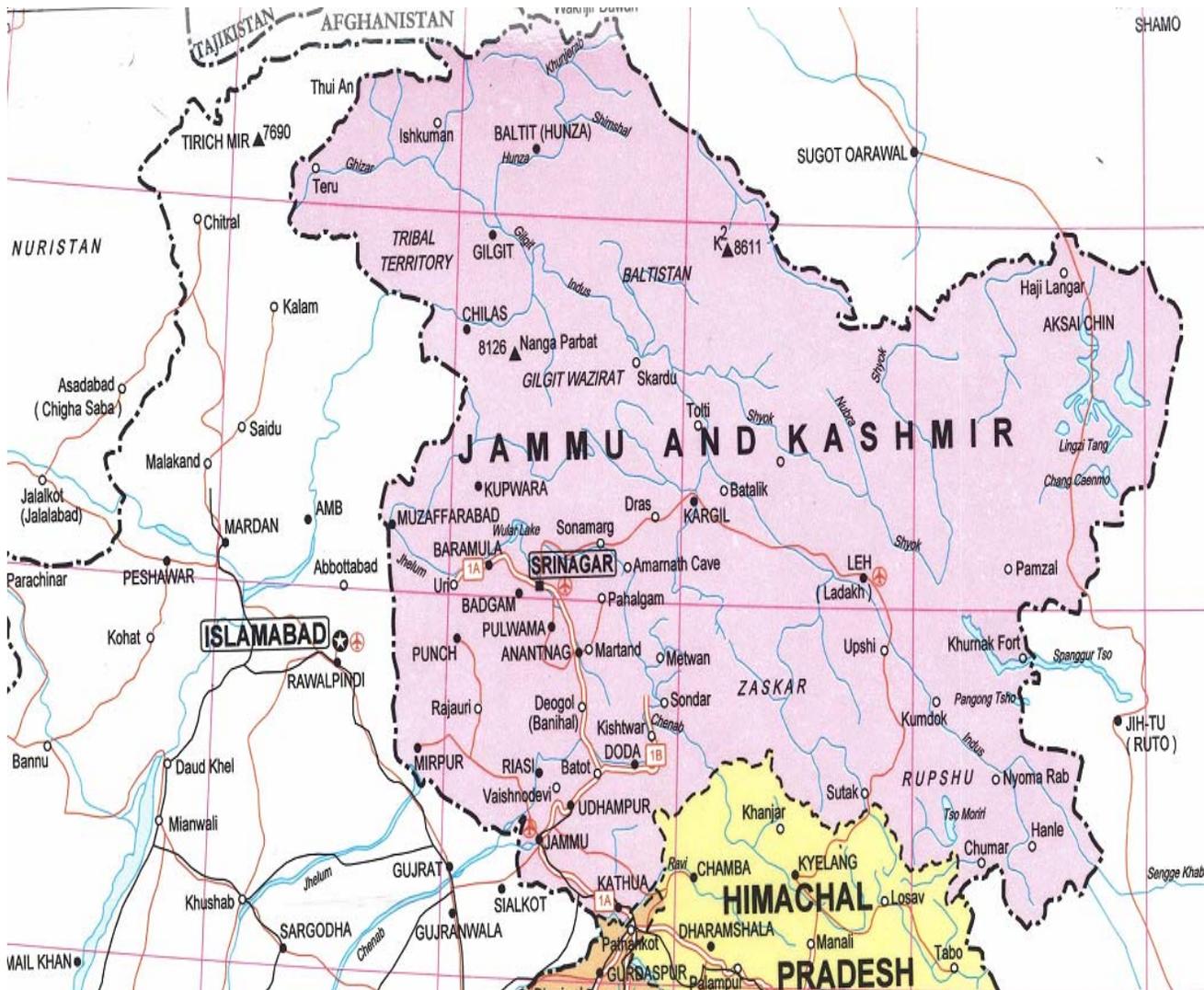
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Compiled by  
Dr Priyanka Singh

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**INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES**  
**No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg**  
**New Delhi-110 010**



## Jammu & Kashmir

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

## About this Issue

*A good number of reports compiled in this issue establish strong linkages of militants involved in recent Mumbai attacks with Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The rising number of militant training camps both in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir is alarming not only for India but also for the international community facing the wrath of terrorism today probably in its worst form. In the absence of socio-economic development, such camps and other clandestine activities have been brewing in PoK for some time. Dreadful terrorist outfit such as Lashkar-e-Toiba freely operates in the region even though the government of Pakistan supposedly banned it.*

*Other significant issue is the failure of the cross LoC trade which was inaugurated with much enthusiasm in October 2008. The suspension of the trade across the line of control makes it evident that unless the basic issues such as banking arrangements and establishment of proper communication are resolved, such activities would not be viable. Nonetheless, the breakdown is unfortunate and calls for positive intervention from both sides.*

*The \$ 12 billion Bhasha Dam project is absorbed in controversies over sharing of royalty and also the environmental impacts in the adjoining areas. The site of Dam is reportedly an extremely sensitive seismic zone and therefore construction of the dam might lead to another calamity like the earthquake of October 2005.*

**Priyanka Singh**

# Political Developments

## **“UJC terms Mumbai slaughter reprehensible,” Dawn, November 30, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: A leader of militant groups in Azad Kashmir called the slaughter of civilians in Mumbai ‘reprehensible,’ and denied that any member of his alliance was involved. Sayed Salahuddin heads the United Jihad Council, an umbrella organisation banding together around a dozen Kashmiri groups. Suspicion has fallen on non-member Lashkar-i-Taiba which is fighting against India in Kashmir. However, it has denied involvement in the Mumbai attacks. “Let me be very clear once again that the United Jihad Council does not approve of civilian killings and under its code of conduct such an act is reprehensible,” he said. “I can say with utmost certainty that none of Kashmiri jihadi groups has any involvement with the events in Mumbai,” stated Salahuddin, whose own group is Harkatul-Mujahideen.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/11/30/top11.htm>)

## **Kate Foster, “The camps where militants learn to commit atrocities around the globe,” November 30, 2008**

The amount of training and the number of camps in the tribal areas of Pakistan is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate. The camps are small, often sited on remote mountaintops. They are easy to move, and they can be difficult to track by satellite because of the region’s rough terrain. One estimate recently put the number at about 52, in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, but there could be fewer or far more.

Lashkar-e-Taiba is said to have training camps spread across Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Its camps and recruitment centres are thought to be spread across the length and breadth of Pakistan and PoK including Muzaffarabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Karachi.

(<http://news.scotsman.com/latestnews/The-camps-where-militants-learn.4746279.jp>)

## **Praveen Swami, “Lashkar tested sea route to Mumbai in 2007 dry run,” The Hindu, November 28, 2008**

Jammu and Kashmir Police investigators said the eight terrorists travelled by road from Baitul-Mujahideen, the Lashkar’s operational headquarters in Muzaffarabad, to Rawalpindi before heading south to Karachi by train. Traveling in groups of two, they had strict instructions to board separate compartments on the Rawalpindi-Karachi journey, and to avoid conversations with each other and other passengers. In Karachi, they were made to wait in a room on the outskirts of the city for almost a week. They were finally told that the time had come for them to begin their journey to Mumbai.

(<http://www.hindu.com/2008/11/28/stories/2008112861921200.htm>)

## **“Mumbai terror attack planned 6 months ago,” NDTV, November 28, 2008**

MUMBAI: An arrested terrorist has revealed that the Mumbai terror attack operation was planned about six months ago. Investigators are examining satellite phone and GPS found on trawler seized in Arabian Sea. Sources state that data from GPS revealed terrorists sailed from Karachi harbour on November 12 or 13. Their phone was used to call Lashkar commander Yusuf Muzamil in Muzaffarabad.

(<http://www.ndtv.com/convergence/ndtv/mumbaierrorstrike/Story.aspx?ID=NEWEN20080074497&type=News>)

## **Steve Coll, “Lashkar-e-Taiba,” The New Yorker, December 01, 2008**

Late in 2005, I travelled for *The New Yorker* to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to report on the earthquake that devastated the region. To facilitate international aid, the Pakistani government opened the region to journalists,

creating a very rare opportunity to travel without escort and to poke around on the border. I was particularly interested in looking up Lashkar, which I had been following for many years. I made several visits to facilities run by its charity, called “Jamat-ud-Dawa,” which is today tolerated openly by the government of Pakistan but banned as a terrorist organization by the United States on the grounds that it is merely an alias for Lashkar.

In Muzuffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir, Jamat had brought in a mobile surgical unit staffed by long-bearded doctors from Karachi and Lahore—very impressive young men, fluent in English, who offered a reminder that unlike, say, the Taliban, Lashkar draws some very talented people from urban professions. (With its hospitals, universities, and social-service wings, Lashkar is akin to Hezbollah or Hamas; it is a three-dimensional political and social movement with an armed wing, not merely a terrorist or paramilitary outfit.) As part of its earthquake relief work, Lashkar ferried supplies to remote villages isolated on the far side of the churning Neelum River, one of the two snow-fed canyon rivers that traverse the area. I asked to take a ride with its volunteers, and their media officer (yes, they have media officers) agreed.

(<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/stevecoll/2008/12/lashkaretaiaba.html>)

**Shafqat Ali Inqilabi, “Is Azad Kashmir independent?” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, November 22, 2008**

An Azad Kashmir like set-up for Gilgit-Baltistan is under hot debate in the region nowadays and it seems the PPP leadership will finally fulfill its promise of a set-up like that. The local political and religious leadership too are of the opinion that such an arrangement is the solution to the political and constitutional deprivations of the region. On the other hand, the Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA) is strongly opposed to the idea and views it as yet another plot of the government to keep the region in its trap for another half a century or more.

(<http://balwaristan.blogspot.com/2008/11/is-azad-kashmir-independent.html>)

**Mumtaz Alvi, “PML-N set to launch its AJK chapter,” The News, November 18, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is set to launch its chapter in Azad Jammu and Kashmir shortly. Sources in the PML-N stated that spadework in this connection had already been completed and the PML-N chapter would be formally launched in Azad Jammu and Kashmir at an appropriate time. “PML-N no more considers the Muslim Conference its representative platform, as it has taken 180-degree turn from its principled stand which it had been holding for years,” sources said, quoting the PML-N central leadership. PML-N Quaid, Nawaz Sharif would have already formed the PML-N AJK, but it was delayed after the death of Mumtaz Rathore, who was to lead it. The exile of Nawaz Sharif also led to the delay in the formation of the PML-N AJK. After the PML-N leader’s homecoming, contacts were established vigorously again with Kashmiri leaders in Azad Kashmir, the sources noted. “There is nothing unusual about the PML-N introducing its chapter in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, as almost all other mainstream Pakistani parties such as the PPP, MQM, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan already have their chapters there,” the sources further added.

([http://www.thenews.com.pk/aaily\\_detail.asp?id=147501](http://www.thenews.com.pk/aaily_detail.asp?id=147501))

**“Pakistan asked to withdraw its civil and military colonial rulers from Gilgit Baltistan,” Press conference, November 16, 2008**

SKARDU: Gilgit Baltistan United Movement observed 16th November as black day and called a press conference to draw attention of the international community towards a wrath of colonization of 61 years under the usurped controlled of Pakistan. Addressing a press conference at Skardu, Manzoor Hussain Parwana, Chairman, Gilgit Baltistan United Movement urged the Government of Pakistan to withdraw its civil and military colonial rulers from Gilgit Baltistan to ensure the restoration of basic human rights of the enslaved people of the unstable region.. Parwana said that “we will reject any package granted by government of Pakistan because we are a nation and the nation needs independence, not package.”

The government of Pakistan should end the usurpation of the rivers, mountains and jungles of Gilgit-Baltistan. "The right of using local resources should be given to local people, and illegitimate and unconstitutional construction of Skardu and Diamer Dam should be halted," he added.

(<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2008/11/pakistan-asked-to-withdraw-its-civil.html>)

**Zulfiqar Halepoto, "Bhasha Dam: Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts," Indus Asia Online Journal, November 17, 2008**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) has approved construction of the 272-metre-high Diamer-Bhasha Dam with a capacity to generate 4,500MW of electricity per day. Work on the \$12.6 billion dam would begin in September next year and is scheduled to be completed in 2016. The Ecneec has also approved the upgradation of the Karakoram Highway to facilitate the dam's construction. A sum of Rs60 billion has been sanctioned for land acquisition and aid. Pre-qualification of bids was expected to start in November itself which would be followed by civil work on the main dam, diversion of tunnels and an underground power house.

Pakistan is expecting an investment of \$1.5 billion per year from leading European, Arab and Chinese companies willing to form a consortium on build-operate-transfer on 'supplier's credit' basis. The project is expected to pay off its cost within seven years of commissioning, as it would generate electricity worth \$1.5 billion and supply irrigation water worth \$600 million per year. An investment of \$30 billion is needed by 2015 to raise electricity generation capacity from 18,000 MW to 33,000 MW.

(<http://iaoj.wordpress.com/2008/11/17/bhasha-dam-socio-economic-and-environmental-impacts/>)

**"Rising popularity of BNSO in Hazara division hailed ," Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, November 15-November 21, 2008**

ABBTOABAD: Chief Organizer of Balawaristan National Students Organization, Hazara division, Ali Ghulam said the very reason behind the establishment of the party was to assist its mother party on the national front. He said BNSO had played a pivotal role in uniting students of Gilgit-Baltistan on one platform since the day of its establishment. Talking to Bang-e-Sahar, he said the party had arranged a number of seminars and other programs to boost the collective national understanding of students of Gilgit-Baltistan. He strongly criticized the government's policies in the educational sector and said it was meant just to close the doors of education on the students of Gilgit-Baltistan even in the twenty-first century. He further said that due to lack of academic facilities in Gilgit-Baltistan, thousands of students were forced to migrate towards various cities resulting in transfer of millions of rupees from the region.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/11/rising-popularity-of-bnso-in-hazara.html>)

**Tariq Naqash, "Muslim Conference heading towards split," November 15, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: The ongoing crisis in Muslim Conference seems to be leading the ruling party in Azad Jammu & Kashmir towards another split as three senior MC leaders have summoned a "consultative meeting" of senior cadres to discuss future course of action in the wake of Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan's "dictatorial policies." The "consultative meeting" will be held at the Rawalpindi residence of former AJK premier Sardar Sikandar Hayat on November 20. Hayat and ruling party's senior vice presidents Raja Farooq Haider, MLA were the remaining two signatories of the invitation.

([http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1226829788&archive=&start\\_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news](http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1226829788&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news))

**Tariq Naqash, "AJK Prez asks MC factions to sort out differences," November 25, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK president Raja Zulqarnain Khan on November 24 asked the rival camps in ruling

Muslim Conference to sort out their differences through dialogue so that the government could pay attention to its basic service to the masses. He also dispelled the notion that the 'forward block' enjoyed his backing and instead claimed that he was playing a reconciliatory role to bring the opposite sides closer to each other.

([http://www.greaterkashmir.net/full\\_story.asp?Date=25\\_11\\_2008&ItemID=17&cat=8](http://www.greaterkashmir.net/full_story.asp?Date=25_11_2008&ItemID=17&cat=8))

### **“Opportunists warned,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, November 15-November 21, 2008**

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA) warned the so-called politicians who are out to secure government employments for themselves not to play with the sentiments of the masses by hoodwinking them on different slogans. In a statement issued, the GBDA stated these elements hoodwinked the people on the slogan of making the region a separate province and now they have started crying for an Azad Kashmir-type of setup for Gilgit-Baltistan. The Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance said it had forewarned the people about twenty years back that Gilgit-Baltistan was a disputed region and Pakistan could not make it its part. It said the new generation of university and college graduates had rejected the self-made political leaders of the region who kept the people deprived of their basic rights for their own vested interests for the last over six decades. It said those who accused the nationalist parties of taking economic assistance from outsiders were out to sell the region in return for a few lowly employments. It said the new generation would not succumb to the tricks of the elements and would join hands with the GBDA in its struggle for attaining all the basic rights of the people of this strategic region.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/11/opportunists-warned.html>)

### **Md. Sadiq, “Diamer-Bhasha Dam Controversy: The rights of the people of Northern Areas must be respected...” November 12, 2008**

#### **Bhasha: The Damned Dam**

Pakistan's plan of constructing the Bhasha dam has led to widespread protests in Gilgit. The Bhasha

project has led to a major controversy as the dam is currently being debated in Pakistan as a second choice or an alternative to the proposed Kalabagh dam in Sindh province. The Bhasha dam is being opposed by people in Gilgit as they fear that it would affect the social, economic and ecological balance in the region and would inundate 32 villages of Diamer district in Northern Areas, rendering thousands of people homeless.

### **Ignoring Local Sentiments**

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf had announced in a televised speech in January 2006 that his administration would construct the Bhasha dam. Once completed, the Bhasha dam will inundate 110 kms of the Karokaram Highway (popularly known as KKH) and every low-lying village in Daimer from Railkot Bridge next to the fairy meadows right below Nanga Parbat. In its report, WAPRA also observed that there is local resistance to the project as the people feel that the Bhasha dam would affect the economic and ecological balance in the Northern Areas. Those opposing the Bhasha dam give several reasons for their opposition to the project. First, the local population resents the fact that the Pakistani government has taken the decision to construction the dam without taking them into confidence. Second, even the nomenclature of the dam is indicative of the Pakistani establishment's outlook as the dam has deliberately been named Bhasha after a village in Kohistan in the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) even though the location of the dam is in Gilgit-Baltistan. Third, the local population is demanding a share in the royalty as they fear that Islamabad would pass off all the benefits to the NWFP. Fourth, the dam is to be located in an extremely sensitive seismic zone. Locals fear that the dam may cause widespread destruction if another earthquake like that of October 08, 2005 takes place in that region.

(<http://letusbuildpakistan.blogspot.com/2008/11/diamer-bhasha-dam-controversy-rights-of.html>)

### **Usman Manzoor, “AJK PM in trouble as tussle reaches presidency,” The News, November 11, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The tussle between the prime minister of Azad Kashmir (AJK) and Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira has reached the presidency and an in-house change in the AJK Assembly is imminent, as reports noted. Sources stated that AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan sought the removal of the federal minister from President Zardari in a meeting while the federal minister had gathered evidence of corruption against the AJK PM and presented it to the president. The opposition parties are also planning to make an in-house change in the AJK Assembly by moving a no-confidence motion against Sardar Attique. Former prime minister, Sardar Sikinder Hayat also confirmed that 17 dissenters of the ruling Muslim Conference along with the opposition parties would make 33 in a house of 49.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=146071>)

**“AJK Govt. orders for speedy rehabilitation of Mangla dam affectees,” Associated Press of Pakistan, November 07, 2008**

MIRPUR: The Government of Azad Jammu Kashmir directed Mangla Dam Resettlement Organization to accelerate the pace of work for timely resettlement of Mangla dam affectees displaced due to ongoing upraising project. The Official sources noted on November 07 that a high level meeting in this regard was held here. The meeting reviewed the pace of resettlement and rehabilitation process of the displaced families.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=58439&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58439&Itemid=2))

**Sharafat Kazmi, “Govt committed to reconstruct quake affected areas: Gilani,” Pakistan Observer, November 06, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani stated that the government is committed to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of earthquake affected areas on priority in Azad Kashmir and NWFP. Addressing the third annual review conference of ERRA on November 05. He further said that the present government has provided all out

support to ERRA to expedite the rehabilitation work in the affected areas. He assured the affectees that the government is determined for their complete rehabilitation as quickly as possible.

(<http://pakobserver.net/200811/06/news/topstories09.asp>)

**Usman Manzoor, “AJK judge asked to move UN,” The News, November 06, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: After not getting any positive signal from the PPP government in Islamabad, the senior-most judge of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Supreme Court has been advised to move the Human Rights Council of the UN General Assembly to get his right to be the chief justice of the AJK SC. This judge was denied his right by former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who appointed a judge six-year junior to him as chief justice of Azad Kashmir’s highest court.

([http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=145117](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=145117))

**“Colonial system root of all problems,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, November 1- November 7, 2008**

GILGIT: The representatives of non-governmental organizations working in the fields of human and women rights in Gilgit-Baltistan have expressed concerns over violations of basic human, economic and political and democratic rights in the region. They have demanded that the government should empower the local people to run their affairs themselves and stop human rights violations especially that of women as soon as possible. They were speaking at a consultative workshop organized by ASR Resource Centre, a Lahore-based organization, with the collaboration of United Northern Areas NGOs (UNAN). The workshop was part of the consultative meetings aimed at developing a comprehensive report about the status of women in Gilgit-Baltistan to be presented to the United Nations as part of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/10/colonial-system-root-of-all-problems.html>)

**Noor Muhammad, “Azadi Mubarak to Gilgit-Baltistan,” Weekly Bang-e-Sahar, November 1-November 7, 2008**

The house of Governor Ghansara Singh of Gilgit Agency, a name the British colonizers gave to our region, was under a siege. Jawans of Gilgit Scout with guns in hand, had delimited the house, to make sure that the governor did not escape. Ghansara was alone but armed. He wasn't a coward and kept resisting the scouts who were asking him to come out in the night and surrender. Suddenly a bullet pierced through the body of Sepoy Amir Hayat, a member of Hunza Platoon, making him the first martyr of Gilgit - Baltistan's war of independence. The exchange of fire increased as the scouts learnt of their comrade's martyrdom and, soon, Ghansara Singh was without any ammunition. He came out, hands up, and was arrested. It was the first morning of November. The year was 1947. The independent Islamic republic of Gilgit, “Islami Jamhuriya Gilgit”, was found. Shah Raees was nominated president of the republic.

(<http://gilgitbaltistantimes.blogspot.com/2008/10/azadi-mubarak-to-gilgit-baltistan.html>)

**Shabbir Ahmed Mir, “Gilgit-Baltistan Independence Day celebrated,” November 02, 2008**

GILGIT: Hundreds of people, most of students of various schools, gathered November 01 at a park in Gilgit to mark the Independence Day of Gilgit-Baltistan, the historical name of the Northern Areas. Unlike the previous years, the government this year in Gilgit opted to celebrate the day with various colourful programmes to instil a sense of patriotism amongst the people who have been bitter after being left out of mainstream politics for the past more than 60 years. The Musharraf government had introduced a constitutional package for the Northern Areas but people, especially lawyers said the package did not adequately address the needs of one million people of the area.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=144435>)

**Govt to introduce reform package for NAs: Kaira,” Associated Press of Pakistan, November 08, 2008**

SKARDU: Pakistan Peoples Party government is actively working to introduce reform package for the people of Northern Areas in consultation with the people belonging to all walks of life. This was said by the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (KANA) and Chairman Northern Areas, Qamarul Zaman Kaira while talking to the Secretary General of PPP Northern Areas Syed Mehdi Shah.

([http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=58498&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58498&Itemid=2))

**“Split in Azad Kashmir ruling Party widens,” Pakistan Times, November 27, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Split in the ruling party of Azad Kashmir – Muslim Conference – took a new turn when rival factions stepped in an atypical political wrestle on November 26. The new state of affairs surfaced when the AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed said ‘No’ to the insist of his opponents – phrased as ‘Forward Bloc’ – to put-off the party assemblage which was to take place in Mirpur on November 27.

(<http://www.pakistantimes.net/2008/11/27/kashmir.htm>)

**Northern Areas to Be Renamed as Gilgit Baltistan, November 25, 2008**

GILGIT: Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) on November 24 approved recommendations of its select committee, which had proposed that the Northern Areas should be renamed as Gilgit-Baltistan. The legislative assembly speaker, Malik Mohammad Miskeen, presided over the proceedings of the house. Member of the legislative assembly (MLA) Fida Mohammad Nashad took the floor to present the recommendations of the committee that had been mandated by the house to come up with a suitable name. The committee proposed Gilgit-Baltistan and said this was the name which covered all segments of the society and all stakeholders.

(<http://blog.travel-culture.com/2008/11/northern-areas-to-be-renamed-as-gilgit-baltistan/>)

**Amir Wasim, “AJK’s PM asked to take trust vote or resign,” Dawn, November 26, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan People’s Party has intensified behind-the-scenes efforts to dislodge the Muslim Conference-led government in Azad Kashmir. Sources stated on November 25 that the PPP had started contacting disgruntled elements in the ruling party to strike a deal. Although, PPP leaders have been denying that the party intends to dislodge the AJK government, sources said its central leadership had established contacts with some members of the forward bloc within the ruling party.

(<http://www.dawn.com/2008/11/26/top15.htm>)

# Economic Developments

## **Dilshad Azeem, “NWFP, NAs at odds over royalty,” *The News*, November 24, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The NWFP government and the Northern Areas (NAs) administration have locked horns over royalty from generation of 4,500 megawatts (MW) of hydel power by the Diamer-Basha Dam. Both the Frontier and the NAs appear to be sticking to their guns over sharing the royalty and naming of the \$12.6 billion project even before the launch of practical work, scheduled to begin towards the end of 2009. Under the relevant constitutional article, royalty will be the right of the federating unit where powerhouses are located. However, there is a clear mismatch of perceptions between the NAs — where the Constitution of Pakistan does not apply — and the NWFP. “The reservoir is being built in Diamer and not Basha,” argued a top NA official while referring to the latest round of discussions with Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani. On the other hand, the Awami National Party-led NWFP government vehemently rejected the NAs claim over royalty and its call for changing the name of the project to merely Diamer Dam.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=148532>)

## **Nirupama Subramanian, “Cross-LoC trade runs into problems,” *The Hindu*, November 19, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Less than a month after it was inaugurated with much fanfare, trade between the two sides of the divided Jammu and Kashmir State across the Line of Control has run into a wall of problems, with traders even threatening last week to suspend supplies if these were not sorted out. The cross-LoC trade began on October 21 after India rushed it through as one way of handling the crisis in the Kashmir Valley that erupted around the land-for-Amarnath controversy, and the subsequent blockade of the Srinagar road by Jammu residents.

Pakistan, not wanting to be seen as dragging its feet on what was termed a historic development for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, cooperated with India to get the trading off the ground as early as possible. But Kashmiri traders are now complaining that in the

hurry, neither side paid attention to essential details. Top on the list is the basic issue of money. Traders are grappling with how to obtain the money for the goods they send across the LoC.

(<http://www.thehindu.com/2008/11/19/stories/2008111961261200.htm>)

## **Ijaz Kakakhel, “Rs 130 billion Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Power Project,” *Daily Times*, November 14, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The bilateral donor countries and institutions are likely to offer Pakistan the much needed funding in foreign exchange for the construction of the Rs 130 billion Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Power Project. The donors’ meeting is likely to be held on November 17. The Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric project was launched by former president Pervez Musharraf in February this year.

For financing the Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric power project, as sources state, four Islamic institutions had expressed willingness and confirmed that they would attend the joint meeting of donors likely to be held on the 17th. The Islamic Development Bank, Saudi Fund for Development, Kuwait Fund for Development and Abu Dhabi Fund for Development are the four institutions. These institutions were expected to financially help the government in the construction of the much-needed hydroelectric power project.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C11%5C14%5Cstory\\_14-11-2008\\_pg7\\_18](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C11%5C14%5Cstory_14-11-2008_pg7_18))

## **Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “FJ&KCCI tables proposals to make cross-LoC trade viable,” *The News*, November 09, 2008**

MIRPUR: The Federation of Jammu & Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FJ&KCCI) has asked the Governments of India and Pakistan and the State Governments of AJK and J&K to make cross-LoC trade substantive, meaningful and viable beyond symbolic gestures. FJ&KCCI recommend that cross LoC trade should not be restricted to only 21 items and the list should be expanded at the earliest including all items gesture.

FJ&KCCI recommend that cross LoC trade should not be restricted to only 21 items and the list should be expanded at the earliest including all items produced and manufactured in the state of Jammu & Kashmir in order to make it a viable and meaningful trade and to take it beyond symbolic gesture.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=145613>)

**“Fruit traders to suspend cross-LoC trade,”  
Daily Times, November 11, 2008**

LAHORE: Fruit growers and traders in the Kashmir Valley decided not to send their consignments to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on November 11 due to lack of communication, banking arrangements and contact with traders across the Line of Control (LoC), as report stated. “We have no knowledge about what happened to the 7,000 boxes of fruit we have already sent to Muzaffarabad since the trade began October 21,” said Farooq Ahmad Malik, president of the valley’s fruit buyers’ association. He was also quoted as stating. “The fruit consignments amount to Rs 3.5 million and we don’t even know whether these have been sold at all or not.”

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C11%5C11%5Cstory\\_11-11-2008\\_pg7\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C11%5C11%5Cstory_11-11-2008_pg7_2))

**A.H.Rao, “Plan for speedy development of agriculture in AJK kicks off,” Pakistan Observer, November 05, 2008**

MIRPUR: AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan on November 04 declared that an integrated phased plan has been kicked off to bring about green revolution through the speedy development of agriculture sector in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. He was speaking at a ceremony held to sign a memorandum of understanding for the development project of promotion of mechanised farming for agricultural productivity enhancement in AJK. The AJK government and the state-run Zarai Traqiati Bank Ltd (ZTBL) entered into strategic partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the promotion of development of mechanized agriculture sector in Azad Jammu & Kashmir harmonious to the need of the modern age.

(<http://pakobserver.net/200811/05/news/topstories12.asp>)

**Abdul Qayyum Malik, “Projects in AJK to rid Pakistan of power shortage:Measures afoot to turn Valley into welfare state,” Pakistan Observer, November 03, 2008**

GUJRANWALA: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan noted that several projects have been undertaken in AJK to store water and generate Hydel power. With the completion of these projects, thousands of megawatt electricity will be produced. He further said, currently 23 projects are being completed at a cost of 25 billion rupees. The Neelum – Jhelum Hydro- Power Project is of great importance. It would cost Rs 130 billion. He affirmed, with the completion of all planned projects, Azad Kashmir would be able to produce 17,000 mega watt electricity. “Most of the power will be transferred to Pakistan’s national grid”, he said.

(<http://pakobserver.net/200811/03/news/topstories13.asp>)

**“ECNEC okays various development and educational projects,” Daily Times, November 09, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: The ECNEC approved the establishment of Karakoram International University, Gilgit with cost of Rs 449.792 million. The main objectives of the project are: to provide campus of the university at Gilgit to enhance the access of the people of the Northern Areas to higher education and research and to serve as examining body at intermediate, graduate and post graduate level candidates of Federally Administered Northern Areas. The project will be funded through Federal PSDP

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C11%5C09%5Cstory\\_9-11-2008\\_pg5\\_10](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C11%5C09%5Cstory_9-11-2008_pg5_10))

**Haq Nawaz and Usman Cheema, “Bhasha Dam to cost \$12b,” The Nation, November 11, 2008**

ISLAMABAD- The federal government in a meeting on November 11 accorded approval to

the Diamer Bhasha Dam worth \$ 12.6 billion, and bids for the pre-qualification of the contractors would open by November 30. The Dam on completion would add 4,500 megawatt electricity in the system, as stated by Federal Minister for Water and Power, Raja Pervez Ashraf during press briefing on the Diamer Bhasha Dam project.

(<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/12-Nov-2008/Bhasha-Dam-to-cost-12b>)

**“No Compromise on Basha Dam Royalty: NALA,” Hunza Times, November 27, 2007**

Northern Areas Chief Executive Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan told the legislative assembly on November 27 that he had made it clear to the federal government that there would be no compromise on the rights of Diamer-Bhasha dam’s royalty, adding the centre had agreed in principal to give the people of Gilgit-Baltistan the right. He also demanded that the rights of the region should be ensured during a meeting with the prime minister. The house witnessed a heated debate on a resolution tabled by Fida Mohammad Nahshad regarding creation of new districts in Skardu comprising Kharmang and Shigar subdivisions.

(<http://hunzetimes.wordpress.com/2008/11/27/no-compromise-on-basha-dam-royalty-nala/>)

# International Developments

## **“J&K better than PoK, say Euro MPs,” November 02, 2008**

Prominent Members of European Parliament (MEP) have come down heavily on the Pakistan government for ‘lack of democracy and development’ in Gilgit and Baltistan areas of Pak-occupied Kashmir. While Pakistan was seeking self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir, “it was not even prepared to allow democracy on its side of the border,” Baroness Emma Nicholson MEP said at a two-day international conference on ‘Constitutional, Political and Socio-economic conditions of Gilgit Baltistan’ at the European Parliament in Brussels on November 02. Nicholson, who represents the Liberal Democratic Party, had authored a report on the “suppression of human rights” in the Northern Areas of PoK which was adopted by the European Parliament in 2007.

(<http://sreejithbk.blogspot.com/2008/11/j-better-than-pok-say-euro-mps.html>)

## **EC gives grant for AJK schools,” The News, November 21, 2008**

The European Commission released a grant of 11.95 million Euros to Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the reconstruction of government middle schools in the earthquake-affected districts of (AJK). The amount will be used in the education component of the Earthquake Emergency Assistance Project (EEAP) as stated in a press release. Together with its implementing partner, ADB and two other donors, Finland and Australia, the European Commission focuses through this project in particular on the construction of around 300 schools, provision of school furniture, water supply and sanitation facilities, and training of teachers and school management committees. Jan De KOK, Ambassador of European Commission to Pakistan, said the education sector is pivotal to development and was amongst the most affected by this natural catastrophe in AJK, as around 3,800 schools and colleges were either damaged or destroyed.

(<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=148034>)

## **“UNICEF from Kashmir to Kenya,” Kashmir Watch, November 14, 2008**

UN agency has failed to complete the reconstruction of a single school or a health facility even after three years of the October 2005 devastating earthquake. “It is three years since the earthquake struck parts of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir but UNICEF could not complete a single school or health facility in the quake hit areas of Kashmir”, said an official. “It has not handed over us a single school or a health facility”, he asserted.

([http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1226653171&archive=&start\\_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news](http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1226653171&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news))

## **“SPAPEV provides winterized tents to CDA Muzaffarabad for distribution among quake- affectees,” November 20, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims provided some 150 winterized tents worth more than 2 million rupees to Chairman Development Authority Muzaffarabad for onward distribution among quake-affectees. It is pertinent to mention here that SPAPEV was working here in Pakistan on the directives of King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, the custodian of two holy mosques, and under the supervision of Prince Naif Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud to mitigate the sufferings of the October 08, 2005 devastating earthquake.

(<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MCOT-7LKHX8?OpenDocument>)

# Other Developments

**“SPAPEV provides winterized tents to CDA Muzaffarabad for distribution among quake-affectees,” November 20, 2008**

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(<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MCOT-7LKHX8?OpenDocument>)

**Zulfiqar Halepoto, “Bhasha Dam: Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts,” Indus Asia Online Journal, November 17, 2008**

Bhasha dam is being opposed by downstream Sindh and simultaneously people in Gilgit as they fear it would affect the social, economic and ecological balance in the region and would inundate 32 villages of the Diamer district in Northern Areas, rendering thousands of people homeless. Minister for Water and Power Raja Pervez Ashraf conceded that about 28,000 people, or 4,250 families, would be affected by the project in the NWFP and Northern Areas. The displaced people of Tarbela, Mangla, LBOD, RBOD and other projects are still not resettled properly and they have become poorer.

The Diamer-Bhasha dam is being built in the Hindu Kush and the Himalayan ranges. On April 4, 2008, it was reported that over a thousand rare stone carvings, sculptures and statues of Buddha have been found at the construction site of the dam. The protection of heritage and culture is another area of great concern as Pakistan is signatory to some of international bindings of protection of culture, history and archeology.

(<http://iaoj.wordpress.com/2008/11/17/bhasha-dam-socio-economic-and-environmental-impacts/>)

(Contd after abbreviations)

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AJKHEB</b>	Azad Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Electric Board
<b>AJK</b>	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
<b>APHC</b>	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
<b>BNF</b>	Balawaristan National Front
<b>CBM</b>	Confidence Building Measures
<b>CDP</b>	Community Development Programme
<b>FATA</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
<b>FBR</b>	Federal Board of Revenue
<b>GBDA</b>	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
<b>GBUM</b>	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
<b>ISI</b>	Inter Services Intelligence
<b>JIAJK</b>	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
<b>KAC</b>	Kashmiri American Council
<b>KKH</b>	Karakoram Highway
<b>KNM</b>	Karakoram National Movement
<b>LoC</b>	Line of Control
<b>NLI</b>	Northern Light Infantry
<b>NALA</b>	Northern Areas Legislative Assembly
<b>NAEDC</b>	Northern Areas Executive Development Committee
<b>NWFP</b>	North West Frontier Province
<b>PoK</b>	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
<b>POGB</b>	Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan
<b>PPP</b>	Pakistan Peoples' Party
<b>UJC</b>	United Jihad Council
<b>WAPDA</b>	Water and Power Development Authority

**James Palmer, “Thousands in tents after ’05 Pakistan quake,” Chronicle Foreign Service, November 15, 2008**

MUZAFFARABAD: Despite its scenic alpine river valley, this Kashmiri city is littered with eyesores born of a 7.6 magnitude earthquake in 2005. Three years later, thousands of survivors in the Pakistani-administered Azad Kashmir capital of Muzaffarabad, still live in tents and temporary structures while 25,000 of the city’s 75,000 residents have fled the area. According to the city’s development authority, only 450 of the estimated 1,500 damaged homes have been rebuilt. The situation is similar in other northern cities, where residents and local government officials complain reconstruction has been slow.

(<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/11/15/MNBS13RI53.DTL&type=printable>)

**Gagan Deep, “Historic Gurdwara in POK converted into Police lines – Sikhs want PM intervention,” November 07, 2008**

PATIALA: Kashmir Sikhs who lived here have sought the intervention of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to initiate diplomatic efforts with Pakistan government for the reconstruction of the historic Gurdwara of sixth Sikh Guru Shri Hargobind Ji at village ‘Naloochhi’ near Muzaffarabad which has been converted into the police lines in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Sarwan Singh, president, Central Committee All Jammu and Kashmir Refugee (1947) said here on November 07 that a six member delegation led by him visited Muzaffarabad (POK) from October 9 to October 23. He said that a formal request will be given to Indian Prime Minister in due course. He however appealed Punjab government and SGPC to use their good offices for the purpose.

(<http://www.punjabnewsline.com/content/view/13566/38/>)

**“AJK to have two more varsities: Zulqarnain,” The Frontier Post, November 07, 2008**

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu AND Kashmir Raja Zulqarnain Khan on November 06

disclosed that two more universities would be established in Azad Kashmir. Addressing the 6th convocation of AJK University here, he said that King Abdullah campuses would be set up in Muzaffarabad, Rawlakot and Kotli with a cost of \$50 million while an international standard science and technology university is being established in Mirpur. He informed that AJK government was spending 35% of its budget on education. He noted that students despite securing 80% marks fail to get admission in medical colleges due to limited quota system. In order to address the grievances of the students, there is a need to set up a medical college in Muzaffarabad, he said adding that the government was making all out efforts to bridge this gap.

(<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=hn&nid=2822&ad=07-11-2008>)

# Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), legitimately an integral part of the Indian Union is presently under Pakistan's control. Pakistan occupied the territory as a result of tribal invasion in 1947 engineered by the Pakistani army. It covers one-third of the total area of 86,023 square miles/ 222,236 square kilometers of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The area under occupation comprises two administrative units: Mirpur- Muzaffarabad and Gilgit Baltistan referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and the 'Northern Areas' respectively by the government of Pakistan. Pakistan ceded a segment (2,700 sq miles) of this occupied territory lying to the north-east border of the Northern Areas known as the Trans Karakoram Tract to China in 1963.

## “AZAD KASHMIR”

Pakistan envisaged the Azad Kashmir as a country with a President, a Prime Minister and a Legislature of its own according to the Karachi Agreement of April 28, 1949. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature as this invaded territory is neither a country nor even a province. Significant subjects such as defence, supposed 'foreign policy' of POK, rehabilitation of refugees and the overall control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan.

**Area:** 13,297 square km

**Mirpur** comprises 3 districts: *Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur*

**Muzaffarabad** is divided into five districts: *Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Poonch, Sudhnati*

**Population:** 3,271,000 (1.685 million Male, 1.665 million Female)

**Capital:** Muzaffarabad

**“President”:** Raja Zulfikar Khan

**“Prime Minister”:** Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

**“Azad Jammu and Kashmir” Council:** Total 11 members- 6 from the government of AJK and 5 from the government of Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the President AJK.

**Legislative Assembly:** 49 seats

**Tribal population:** Awan, Abbasi, Ansari, Gilani, Gujar, Jarral, Jat, Qureshi, Malik, Mughal, Pashtuns, Rajput, Rachyals, Sudhan, Tarkhan

## NORTHERN AREAS

The **Northern Areas** officially referred to by the government of Pakistan as the **Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA)**, is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied part of Kashmir and is a self governing unit under Pakistani control. The area is five times bigger to that of Azad Kashmir. The status of this region being unstated in the successive constitutions of Pakistan over the years, the people are denied basic socio-political and legal rights. The Northern Areas have no representation in the National Assembly and are governed by the Northern Areas Council headed by Minister of Kashmir and Northern Areas. A Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in the absence of a High Court. The population mainly comprises Shia, Sunni and Ismaili Muslims. Ethnic groups include Baltees, Shinas, Vashkuns, Mughals, Kashmiris, Pathans, Ladhakhis and Turks.

**Governor/ Commissioner:** Imran Ali

**“Chief Minister”:** Irfan Ali and Shahid Hussain

**Legislature:** Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (29 seats)

**Languages:** Balti, Shina, Brushaski, Khawer, Wakhi, Turki, Tibeti, Pushto and Urdu

**Area:** 72,496 km

**Capital:** Gilgit

**Districts:** seven

**Baltistan** is divided into *Ghanche and Skardu*

**Gilgit** divided into *Astore, Diamer, Ghizar, Gilgit and Hunza Nagar*

**Population:** 1.5 million

**Political groups:** United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, Balwaristan National Front (BNF) and Gilgit Baltistan United Action Forum for Self Rule, Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM).

**Literacy rate:** 14% male- 3.5% female

**State of Infrastructure:** No pipelines for water supply and no electricity supply for at least two thirds of the population in Northern Areas.

**Disclaimer**

PoK News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Northern Areas' 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

***Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses***

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg  
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191  
Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in); Email: [lbscidsa@gmail.com](mailto:lbscidsa@gmail.com)

