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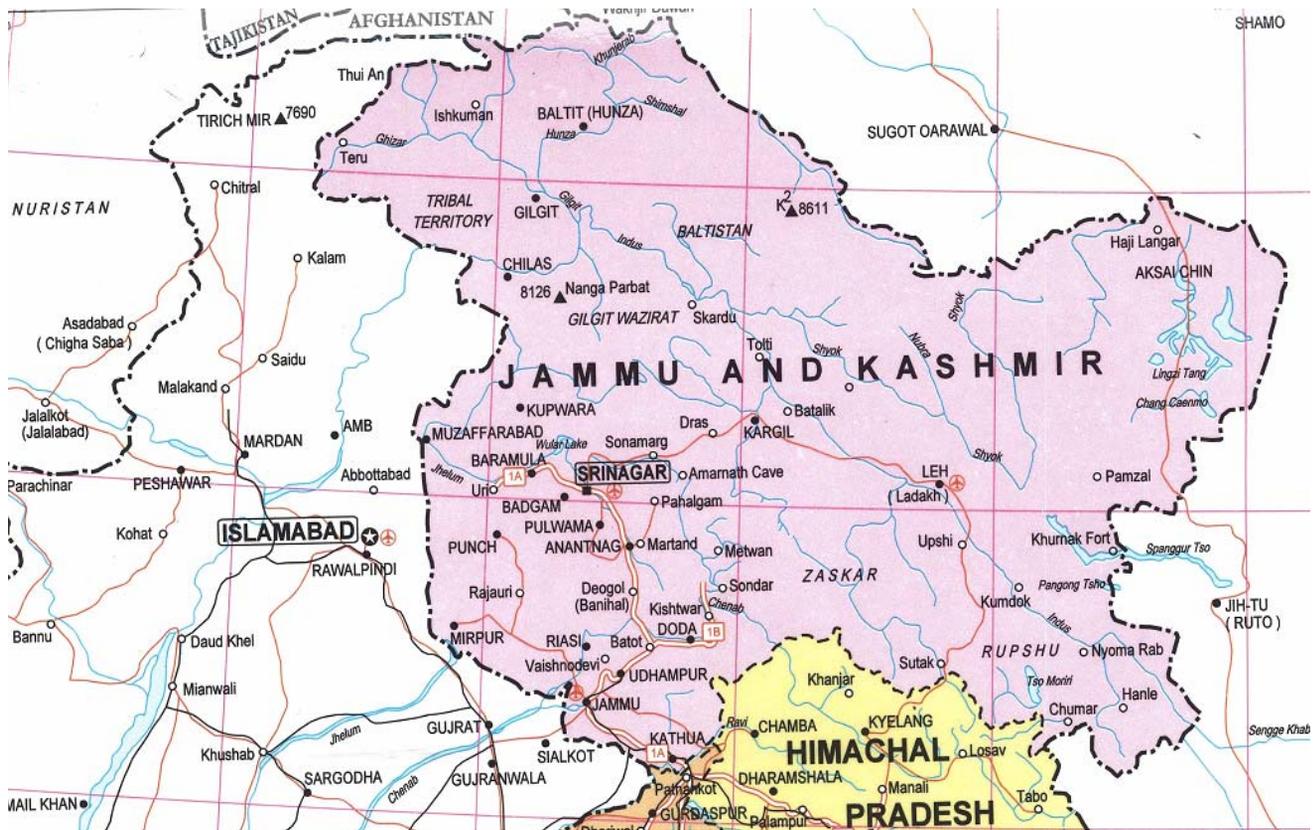
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

There was a change in government in the so called 'AJK' which reiterates the precarious form of politics there. The outgoing Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob was in office only for ten months since January 2009, when he assumed office after toppling Atiq Ahmed Khan. Atiq Khan was allegedly involved in the overthrow of Yaqoob's government this time around as is indicated in one of the reports included in this issue. This development reveals the wretched situation of political structures in PoK which are subject to the whims and fancies of the establishment in Pakistan. Not only this, some reports in the issue also point to the fact that the party in power in Pakistan makes use of its position to ensure its interests are best secured in PoK, keeping in view its strategic significance.

The educational institutions in the PoK were closed after militants attacked a premier institution in Islamabad. Violence in the heartland of Pakistan is disrupting lives of the common people in the PoK already facing blatant neglect since decades.

There is dearth of electricity in PoK despite the fact that the government of Pakistan has launched several hydropower projects with Chinese help. A report in this issue notes that Gilgit Baltistan has a huge potential for hydropower generation. Ironically, important towns like Skardu have been facing power shortage for long. This speaks volumes about the underutilization of resources for the betterment of the people.

Priyanka Singh

Gilgit Ordinance 2009 Undermines Baroness Emma Nicholson's Endeavors

Senge Hasnan Sering

In the twenty-first century, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Baroness Emma Nicholson has emerged as the most vocal advocate of Gilgit-Baltistan - which is part of Jammu & Kashmir State under Pakistani occupation. In May 2007, her report called 'suppression of human rights in the Northern Areas of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK)' was approved as a resolution in the European Parliament with a thumping majority of 522 MEPs. The resolution is recognition of sacrifices of activists of Gilgit-Baltistan who pay a heavy price including physical, psychological and financial, to pursue self determination. With the help of organizations like International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, International Kashmir Alliance and United Kashmir Peoples National Party, Baroness Nicholson has successfully put Gilgit-Baltistan on the international political map. Succumbing to pressure from different political quarters, Pakistan, which spent millions of dollars in a failed attempt to woo MEPs to annul Baroness Nicholson' Report, recently announced Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-governance Presidential Ordinance of 2009.

As part of the ordinance, Gilgit-Baltistan will get a Legislative Assembly (GBLA), a Council (dominated by Pakistani federal ministers) and a Pakistani governor. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan may expect GBLA to safeguard their socio-economic interests; however, the fine-print put it out as an eyewash. Foremost, the ordinance grants veto power and executive authority to Pakistani Prime Minister, the governor and Kashmir Affairs & Northern Areas (KANA) Division, which makes GBLA a toothless tiger and not very different from the previous Northern Areas Council, which completely failed to stop uninterrupted exploitation of resources by Islamabad and siphoning of revenues to federal coffers. The recent political development will be worrisome for Baroness Nicholson too as GBLA will fall short of authority to legislate on issues which form the core of her report. Ideally, she would expect GBLA to expedite legislation to protect rights of the locals to benefit from the

revenues of their natural resources. Baroness condemns Pakistan of water theft, as she is building dams in Diamer, Bunji and Kishanganga, which will flood the major valleys of the region and uproot natives and their civilization for the benefit of Punjab. The mighty Indus runs for more than 700 kilometers through Gilgit-Baltistan before entering Pakistan. Although Pakistan uses Indus to irrigate fields and produce energy, no royalty or usage compensation is ever paid to Gilgit-Baltistan. Further, as part of the ordinance, the newly formed border reorganization committee will most likely grant some parts Gilgit-Baltistan; and as a result, royalty of Diamer dam to NWFP. The Gilgit-Baltistan economic package will grant China mining rights, converting this region into another Chinese town, thus denying the locals revenue from their own resource. These issues of water and land theft, and Sinofication of Gilgit-Baltistan will unfortunately remain outside the purview of GBLA.

Baroness Nicholson demands revoking land allotment to illegal Pakistani settlers in PoK, which threatens demographic change. Pakistan abrogated State Subject Rule (SSR) - a law introduced by rulers of J&K to help preserve indigenous social fabric, and subsequently settled Punjabis and Pathans to turn native Shias into a minority. While Baroness Nicholson would like to see GBLA legislating on pressing issues like reinstatement of SSR, introduction of Shia and Nurbaxshi religious texts in school syllabi, and promotion of indigenous languages and scripts in government institutions, Islamabad will prevent GBLA from passing laws on such issues. In her report, she denounces Pakistan for refusing to allow cross-border people to people contact, establishment of joint educational institutions, and promotion of trade, culture and tourism between Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh. The per capita income of Baltistan is one-fourth that of Pakistan's national average. Opening border for trade and tourism can help alleviate poverty in the region. Compared to Ladakh, where more than 70,000 tourists visit annually, Gilgit-Baltistan receive fewer than ten thousands visitors. Tourist exchange programs can help Gilgit-Baltistan attract residual tourists from Ladakh and generate income for jobless youth. Further, thousands of divided families in Ladakh-Baltistan await Pakistani decision to open

LOC. Provision of border crossing points for divided families and refugees of Kashmir valley while denial of similar services for Ladakh-Baltistan shows Pakistan's double standards, which fears Gilgit-Baltistan's political contact with J&K. In such conditions, legislation on subjects like reinstatement of Ladakh Province (Wazarat), reunification of Ladakh and Baltistan, and opening Kargil-Skardo road will not materialize, even with the creation of GBLA.

While Baroness Nicholson' Report strengthens the rights of people to live in a militant-free environment, presence of militants and arms cache in places like Ghwari, Gultari, Ghizer, Wazirpur, Darel, Tangir and Chitral dampens any such hopes in PoK. The incidents like the armed conflict between people of Skardo and militants in 1999, and torturous death of nine villagers from Henzel, who refused to provide services to militants, prove that people of Gilgit-Baltistan have no sympathy for Pakistani terrorists. Despite no executive authority vested in GBLA, the locals as well Baroness Nicholson will still expect GBLA to debate how to secure Gilgit-Baltistan from militancy. Baroness Nicholson' Report denounces Pakistan's hand in the Kargil War, which was catastrophic to Gilgit-Baltistan. The families lost breadwinners as thousands of NLI soldiers became cannon fodder. Many more still live as refugees in makeshift tents and subsist on alms and panhandling. They all blame General Musharraf - the mastermind behind the 1988 Gilgit genocide - for their loss. Local activists demand a trial against Musharraf in the International Court of Justice. One has to see if GBLA will support the plea of locals by condemning Pakistan for imposing an unnecessary war upon Gilgit-Baltistan.

The appointment of a governor shows Pakistani intention of treating Gilgit-Baltistan like its province and eventually annexing it. Many believe that GBLA will become a tool to accelerate and sanction merger of Gilgit-Baltistan with Pakistan. By demanding genuine autonomy for Gilgit-Baltistan, Baroness Nicholson denounces Pakistani interference in internal affairs of the region. While sifting facts from fiction, she presented historical maps, treaties, clauses of Pakistani constitutions on PoK, and Karachi Agreement of 1949 as evidence to prove that Gilgit-Baltistan is an integral part of J&K. She points to the

fact that J&K is not just limited to Kashmir Valley but includes Jammu, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Poonch. She established that Baltistan is part of Ladakh and not Gilgit Agency, and both Gilgit-Baltistan received political representation in the Maharaja's Council. While unravelling historical myths generated over the years in Pakistani media and textbooks, she concluded that by 1842, Gilgit-Baltistan was completely integrated into J&K with common police, revenue, finance and district management departments. The Dogra rulers built roads and schools, introduced postal system, and inducted natives in the workforce. Dogras held mining rights in Gilgit Agency even during the years when Gilgit was leased to British. Their flag remained hoisted over the government buildings of Gilgit-Baltistan, and the locals used Dogra currency as legal tender and celebrated national holidays in line with J&K traditions during the same period. The Dogras documented landholding patterns to initiate land reforms for private property, common property regime (local pastures and water resources) and government property (Khalsa Sarkar). A population census took place in Gilgit-Baltistan for the first time under the Dogras. She condemns Pakistan for failing to withdraw her troops and civilians from Gilgit-Baltistan. Her report rightly states that Pakistani blame of India for failure to comply with the UN resolutions is misplaced. At this juncture, people of Gilgit-Baltistan will expect GBLA to pass a resolution demanding withdrawal of Pakistani troops and civil administration from their homeland.

The ordinance will give Pakistan greater leverage to interfere in Gilgit-Baltistan, deny administrative autonomy to locals and delegate absolute authority of budget making and sanctioning to bureaucrats in Islamabad. Greater interference by Pakistan also means curtailing freedom of political activity, expression and movement for local nationalists while unabated State-support to extra-judicial mass-scale oppression and rights violations. Pakistan will make every attempt to suppress GBLA and maneuver legislative outcome be-fitting her needs. The failure of GBLA to deliver will eventually cause a backlash. One hopes that Pakistan is prepared for that.

* *The Author is Visiting Fellow at IDSA. The views expressed are his personal and not that of IDSA.*

Political Developments

“Sardar Yaqoob resigns as prime minister of AJK,”

Dawn, October 15, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of AJK, Sardar Yaqoob Khan announced that he had resigned as prime minister in order to avoid a political controversy in the Legislative Assembly. Dispelling impression of pressure of a no-confidence motion, Sardar Yaqoob said, ‘I have tendered my resignation as the prime minister without any pressure.’ ‘I took this decision to discourage horse-trading in the assembly and set democratic tradition aimed at promoting democracy in AJK,’ Sardar Yaqoob stated on October 14 while addressing a press conference at Kashmir House.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/06-sardar-yaqoob-resigns-as-prime-minister-of-ajk-rs-01>

Tariq Naqash, “Political crisis in PaK,”

Rising Kashmir, October 19, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: In a new development, a ‘reference’ motion was filed on behalf of interim Prime Minister of Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan against Raja Farooq Haider, the nominee of the reunified Muslim Conference for the coveted office, in Muzaffarabad on October 19 in the Assembly Secretariat while the MC president ruled out formation of coalition government. The reference, which was prepared by three lawyers, one of them known for his allegiance to the Pakistan’s Supreme Court Chief Justice, Reaz Akhtar Chaudhry, charged Haider with committing contempt of the apex court, which has rendered him ineligible to continue as member Legislative Assembly for the remaining term of the house.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17730&Itemid=1

Hameed Shaheen, “Yaqub, Farooq file nominations for AJK premiership polls,”

Kashmir Watch

ISLAMABAD: The erstwhile coalition partners, Sardar M Yaqub Khan and Raja Farooq Haider Khan

on October 20 filed their nominations for election to the office of prime minister of Azad Kashmir scheduled to take place on October 22, 2009 in AJK assembly in Muzaffarabad. Sardar M Yaqub has been sponsored by a 4-party alliance and Raja Muhammad Farooq by Muslim Conference who will face each other in an embroiled electoral contest for premiership. MC president/ex-PM Sardar Attique Ahmed who had filed nomination as supporting candidate later withdrew.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1256079767&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news

“Gilani assures neutrality: Nisar Maqbool Malik,”

The News, October 21, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani assured the PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif that the federal government would remain neutral in the formation of the Azad Jammu Kashmir government. The Opposition Leader in the National Assembly and the PML-N central leader, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, told a press conference in Islamabad in the Punjab House on October 20.

Nisar said that PML-N Chief talked to Prime Minister Gilani the other day and apprised him of allegations by MLAs from the opposition that some functionaries of the federal government were trying to help install a PPP-led government through horse-trading.

“Prime Minister Gilani responded positively and assured that he would look into these allegations”, Nisar Ali Khan said, adding political interference in AJK would have adverse implications for Pakistan.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/21-Oct-2009/Gilani-assures—neutrality-Nisar>

“Farooq elected new AJK Premier,”

Daily Mail, October 23, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Raja Farooq Haider of the Muslim Conference has been elected as the new “prime minister” of Azad Kashmir on October 22.

Farooq secured 29 votes, while his party rival and acting “prime minister” Yaqoob Khan got 19 votes. The AJK legislative assembly was presided by the speaker Ghulam Kadir. New leader of the house was elected through secret balloting. Twenty-nine members of the House gave votes to Raja Farooq out of total forty-eight House members. The opposing candidate Sardar Yaqoob Khan got nineteen votes. Raja Farooq Haider would be the 9th prime minister of AJK.

<http://dailymailnews.com/1001/23/FrontPage/FrontPage9.php>

Twenty-three members of AJK cabinet take oath,

Dawn, October 29, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Twenty-three members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir cabinet took oath on October 29, officials stated. President Azad Kashmir, Raja Zulqarnanin Khan administered the oath. The oath-taking ceremony was held in the district headquarter of Muzaffarabad. According to a notification issued by the Services Department of Azad Kashmir, 25 members were sworn in the cabinet. Two members did not take oath as they were reportedly not satisfied with the portfolios offered to them.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-ajk-cabinet-oath-qs-06>

“Gilani assures AJK PM of full cooperation”

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has assured the newly elected Prime Minister of Azad Jammu Kashmir, Raja Farooq Haider to cooperate fully with his government. The assurance was given in a meeting between the two leaders held in Islamabad on October 23 on the sidelines of high-level meeting regarding law and order situation in the country. Raja Farooq during the meeting thanked Gilani and the federal government for remaining impartial in the election of the prime minister.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=154228>

“Yaqoob says resigned for state welfare,”

The News, October 17, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Caretaker Prime Minister, Sardar Yaqoob Khan on October 17 said he was not under pressure from President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani; nor did he tender resignation on their bidding. Addressing the workers here first time after the resignation, the caretaker premier said he resigned for the stability of the democracy and welfare of the people here. He said Raja Farooq Hyder Khan should not submit his nomination papers contesting against him, as he would ascend the premiership again.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=89334>

“PPP wants to manipulate AJK politics, says Mushahid,”

Daily Times, October 19, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), Secretary, General Mushahid Hussain Syed has criticised the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) regime for its ‘political manipulation’ in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and said the government is trying to control AJK politics. In a statement issued on October 18, Mushahid alleged that the PPP regime had been instrumental in removing two prime ministers in Azad Kashmir, belying its tall claims of being a proponent of democratic values. In its quest for total power, the PPP regime in Islamabad was seeking to control AJK, he noted.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C19%5Cstory_19-10-2009_pg7_14

“Gilani and Erdogan visit Muzaffarabad,”

Daily Times, October 27, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani visited Muzaffarabad along with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on October 26. Gilani agreed to the proposal of the Turkish PM to visit Muzaffarabad during a meeting on October 25 after all the scheduled engagements had ended. Against the advice of security and protocol staff that the two

premiers should not travel in one helicopter, Gilani said he had agreed with his Turkish counterpart to accompany him, so he would fulfill his promise.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C27%5Cstory_27-10-2009_pg7_23

“Students protest Gilgit-Baltistan package”

ABBOTTABAD: The Karakoram Students Organisation (KSO) staged a protest demonstration against the government’s so-called Gilgit-Baltistan package, outside the press club. The protesters were led by Kashif Ali Bonji, Mujahid Ali, Mehr Baz, Manzoor Ahmad, Asmatullah, Akramullah and Tassarwar Mehdi. They said prior to introducing the Gilgit-Baltistan package, the political parties and the Kashmiri leadership was not taken on board. They further added that 1.5 million residents of the region were ignored in the announced package.

<http://hunzahappenings.blogspot.com/2009/10/students-protest-gilgit-baltistan.html>

“Gilgit-Baltistan first EC takes oath,”

The News, October 20, 2009

GILGIT: Rahim Nawaz Khan Durrani took oath as first chief election commissioner of Gilgit-Baltistan administered by Chief Justice of Gilgit-Baltistan, Mohammad Nawaz Abassi on October 20. There are at least 280 candidates left in field for the GB Legislature. According to the final list issued by the first CEC of Gilgit-Baltistan, the most candidates are participating from LA-14, Ustur-2; only two candidates are taking part from LA-12, Skardu6, which is the least number of participants from a constituency.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=89559>

“Delegates visit Erra-constructed facilities in quake-hit areas,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 20, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Two delegations comprising of leading personalities from all walks of society

conducted a visit to the reconstructed facilities by ERRA in the affected areas of Abbottabad and Muzaffarabad. Two delegations comprising of ambassadors, heads of International Organizations, representatives of donors agencies and prominent personalities from Academia, media and business community were also accompanied by Minister for Science and Technology, Azam Swati, Chairman ERRA, Altaf Muhammad Saleem and Deputy Chairman, Lt. Gen. Sajjad Akram.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=88141&Itemid=2

Tariq Naqash, “Legislators file nominations for AJK polls,”

Rising Kashmir, October 20, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Legislators belonging to the reunified Muslim Conference and an informal alliance of its rivals submitted the nomination papers of their respective candidates for the prime minister’s office in Muzaffarabad on October 20 amid claims and counter-claims of their victory in the crucial election. Legislative Assembly Secretary, Syed Ashiq Hussain, who received the documents in his office, told reporters that 11 nominations, proposing and seconding the candidature of Raja Farooq Haider, were submitted by MC lawmakers whereas three nominations, proposing and seconding the name of interim Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, were submitted by the legislators of Peoples Party, MQM and ‘Friends Groups.’

http://www.risingkashmir.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=17757

Irfan Bukhari “Government hindering transparent AJK elections: Nisar,”

Daily Times, October 21, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is hampering transparent elections for the leader of the House in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly, Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said on October 20. “The former AJK prime minister resigned as he did not have support from the majority in the legislative

assembly. Now we ask the federal government to let a person, who enjoys the majority's support, become the leader of the House and not interfere in the AJK politics," Nisar stated.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C21%5Cstory_21-10-2009_pg7_34

“7, 14,966 votes registered in GB elections,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 17, 2009

GILGIT: Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan stated on October 16 that 712966 voters would the use right of vote on November 12, to elect representatives in a transparent manner. According to a list provided by Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan, Gilgit district comprises of six constituencies. As per detail in LA-1, number of voters are 47835, 62048 in LA-2, 39665 in LA-3, 21259 in LA-4, 13688 in LA-5 and 34060 in LA-6 are registered. The total registered number of voters in Gilgit district is 218555. While in Skardu district number of total voters are registered 168729 as 28010 voter are in LA-7, 39325 in LA-8, 23524 in LA-9, 22304 in LA-10, 23266 in LA-11 while in LA-12, the number of voters was registered as 32,300.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=87988&Itemid=2

Public opinion raps PPP posture in AJK Observer Report,”

Pakistan Observer, October 18, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Public opinion on the posture of the Azad Kashmir Peoples' Party (AJKPP) regarding forthcoming election to the office of the Prime Minister is quite skeptical saying that circumstances indicate that PPP would stage some 'drama' to deprive the legislators of their right to vote. A cross-section of the people is of the view that the track record of the Peoples' Party has never been enviable. Horse trading, coercion and influence-vending have been their 'trade mark' in the name of politics. This record of theirs speaks contrary to the healthy philosophy and manifesto of Shaheed Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto who always hated back-door bargains to achieve political ends, they added.

<http://pakobserver.net/200910/18/news/topstories02.asp>

“PML-N names candidates for GBLA polls,”

The News, October 17, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on October 16 announced the names of the party candidates for the 15 constituencies of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) elections. Member of party Gilgit-Balistan Parliamentary Board, Siddiqui Farooque, while addressing a news conference in islamabad, noted the party had reached electoral adjustment in four constituencies. The parliamentary board is headed by PML-N central leader, Raja Muhammad Zafarul Haque.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=203680

“AJK: unstable again,”

Editorial, Daily Times, October 16, 2009

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Sardar Yaqoob Khan, has stepped down after losing support, but says he has resigned “to avoid a political controversy in the Legislative Assembly”. But he has hinted at horse-trading which he thinks will be discouraged by his resignation. He mercifully did not dissolve the assembly, thus sparing a new election during a time where everyone is scared of holding elections.

Sardar Sahib had put together his patchwork government after ousting Sardar Attique Ahmed's Muslim Conference government in January 2009. The Muslim Conference had been in power since July 2001 when the government of the AJK People's Party was toppled. Sardar Yaqoob had done the same sort of thing to Sardar Attique in January, accusing the Muslim Conference of graft.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C16%5Cstory_16-10-2009_pg3_1

“AJK turmoil,”

The News, October 17, 2009

The Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly is to vote in its third prime minister, after Sardar Yaqoob ended

his nine-month stint in power by resigning hours ahead of a vote of no confidence. The architect behind the vote is said to be former AJK Prime Minister Atiq Ahmed Khan, who was toppled in an almost identical fashion in January this year. Even the charges mentioned in the no-confidence motion – corruption, mismanagement, misuse of power – are virtually unchanged. The coalition headed by Sardar Yaqoob, himself an independent candidate, consisting of a disgruntled faction of the Muslim Conference, the PPP in AJK, the MQM and other miniscule groups had always lacked stability. This indeed has been the story of legislative politics in AJK since the 1970s, when elections were introduced in the territory. But what is disturbing is that since that time, events in Muzaffarabad have consistently been manipulated from outside. This time too, Atiq Ahmed Khan is said to have held various meetings in Murree before going ahead with his no confidence plan. There is conjecture too that Sardar Yaqoob was advised to step down, after discovering he had lost assembly support.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=203625

Shabbir A Mir, “Gilgit-Baltistan: Police chief banks on security plan to check violence,”

Rising Kashmir, October 16, 2009

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan’s new Inspector General Police (IGP), Tahsin Anwar Ali has unveiled his strategy to tackle the restive situation in the region. Tahsin Anwar Ali replaced Khurshid Alam Khan as IGP. Though Khan’s contract was to expire in January 2010 but he was relieved following a fresh wave of killings that left more than 11 dead and several others injured last month in Gilgit. Pakistan premier Yousaf Raza Gilani was also in the town inaugurating the self-rule package for the region when terrorists ambushed a van, killing five passengers besides injuring ten others onboard. The new IGP was addressing journalists for the first time after assuming office in Gilgit. He said he had met a number of delegations and listened to their suggestions with respect to the prevailing situation of Gilgit.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=17662

“India urges China to stop projects in Azad Kashmir,”

Daily Times, October 15, 2009

NEW DELHI: India urged China on Wednesday to stop development projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the latest salvo prompted by a decades-long border dispute between the Asian giants. “We hope that the Chinese side will take a long-term view of the India-China relations, and cease such activities in areas illegally occupied by Pakistan,” an Indian Foreign Ministry statement said. India was reacting to a comment by Chinese President Hu Jintao reported by the official news agency Xinhua that China was “glad” to carry on the Pakistani projects.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C15%5Cstory_15-10-2009_pg1_5

“POK leaders justify India’s objection to Chinese projects”

ANI, October 14, 2009

NEW DELHI: Nationalist leaders of Gilgit Baltistan have asked India to stop lip service and take stronger action to halt Chinese projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Chief of Gilgit Baltistan National Movement, Manzoor Parwana noted: “If India is really serious then it should react more strongly and it should not just resort to lip service or statements.” Parwana further said “India should try and halt the Chinese projects in our region. Earlier, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesman said in a statement that China should cease all its activities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The MEA spokesperson was reacting to Xinhua report which quoted Chinese President as stating that China will continue to engage in projects with Pakistan inside Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. The MEA in a strongly worded statement further said: “India believes that Pakistan has been in illegal occupation of parts of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947. The Chinese side is fully aware of India’s position and our concerns about Chinese activities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir”.

<http://www.littleabout.com/news/39551.pok-leaders-justify-india-objection-chinese-projects.html>

“Govt focusing special attention for poverty alleviation of Gilgit-Baltistan: President Zardari”

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has elaborated that the Government is seeking different measures to remove poverty from Gilgit-Baltistan. President Asif Ali Zardari held a meeting with Prince Agha Khan in Islamabad and discussed views regarding development and progress in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=153641>

“AJK Prime Minister seeks support from federal govt to survive no confidence move”

ISLAMABAD: AJK Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob Khan has sought help from federal government formally to survive no trust move. AJK Prime Minister, Sardar Yaqoob Khan met minister for labour and manpower, Syed Khurshid Shah after the no confidence motion was tabled against him in AJK legislative assembly and exchanged views on the latest movement forward in the assembly. Sources stated AJK Prime Minister asked the federal minister that federal government should play its role in this regard.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=153658>

“Letter to the European Parliament Regarding Gilgit-Baltistan Package,” UNPO, October 12, 2009

Abdul Hamid Khan, chairman of the Balawiristan National Front, has written a letter to Mr Jerry Buzak, the President of the European Parliament, regarding the Pakistani government’s Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance package. The letter expresses a firm rejection of the principles of the government’s package as well as the methods with which it was formulated.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/10190/83/>

“Police arrest 200 Afghan nationals from Bagh,”

MUZAFFARABAD: Police arrested at least 200 suspected Afghan National in a search operation in

different areas of Bagh and Muzaffarabad. According to details, law enforcement agencies with the assistance of police carried a search operation against Afghan Nationals in different areas of Bagh and Muzaffarabad and apprehended 200 Afghans. Later Police sources informed that preliminary investigations were going on with the detained Afghan Nationals and the Afghans residing illegally in Bagh with out any identity documents have been ordered to leave the district immediately.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=154204>

“Gilgit-Baltistan package against UN resolutions, says AJK PM”

RAWALPINDI: The newly elected Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister, Raja Farooq Haidar termed the Gilgit-Baltistan Package as against the resolutions of United Nations, saying it is affecting unity of Kashmir. Addressing a press conference, he alleged that Pakistan did not consult AJK president and prime minister before announcing the package. Replying to a question, he said the government formed in AJK is not anti-Pakistan but our priority is that the line of control would be abolished soon and identity of Kashmiris would be restored.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=154203>

Tauseef-ur-Rahman, “ANP fields candidates for Gilgit-Baltistan polls,” *The News, October 23, 2009*

PESHAWAR: After securing representation in three provincial assemblies of the country, the Awami National Party (ANP) fielded candidates for the upcoming elections in Gilgit-Baltistan. The party is vying for four Legislative Assembly seats in the Gilgit-Baltistan legislature.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=204650

“Kaira says no horse trading, intervention in AJK polls,” *Associated Press of Pakistan, October 21, 2009*

ISLAMABAD: Brushing aside allegations over the forthcoming AJK polls, Information and Broadcasting Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira on October 21 assured that the federal government would maintain its neutral

posture. The Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is to elect its new Leader of the House following the recent resignation of Sardar Yayub.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=88198&Itemid=1

“Kashmir issue not to be affected by GB reforms package: Kaira,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 4, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Qamar Zaman Kaira on October 4 stated Kashmir issue would not be affected by reforms package of Gilgit Baltistan rather it would go a long way in empowering people of the area. Pakistan’s stand on Kashmir issue is very clear and no party in the country can afford to change its stance. This is our national issue, he noted while addressing a round table conference in Islamabad.

The conference entitled “Self governance of Gilgit Balistitan (GB): Issue of Kashmir” was attended by renowned Kashmiri and Gilgit Baltistan leadership who expressed their views and concerns on Gilgit Baltistan Self governance and Empowerment Order 2009.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=87069&Itemid=1

“Gilgit-Baltistan autonomy dossier not divine: Kaira,”

The News, October 5, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Qamar Zaman Kaira said the dossier on the internal autonomy of Gilgit-Baltistan is not a divine scripture and that proper amendments can be introduced to it. Addressing a roundtable conference on Gilgit-Baltistan in Islamabad on October 4, Kaira said regarding the internal autonomy of Gilgit-Baltistan, all the political parties of the region were taken into confidence.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=88216>

“Govt involved in rigging to get choice results in Gilgit-Baltistan elections, alleges Farooq”

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N spokesman and Gilgit-Baltistan Parliamentary Board

member, Siddiq-ul-Farooq alleged that the PPP government has been involved in pre-elections rigging of Gilgit-Baltistan to get desired results. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad, he said the government has planned rigging plan on elections day and it would make the elections of this sensitive area controversial and thus its results would be negative.

According to him, the federal government and its ministers are using resources and administration of Gilgit-Baltistan and the sensitive status of the region demands that the elections should be made free, impartial and transparent.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=152909>

“GBUM to take active part in elections,” *October 10, 2009*

SKARDU: Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement, Manzoor Hussain Parwana stated his party would take active part in the forthcoming elections for the Legislative Assembly by bringing candidates from all the constituencies in the area. In a press release, he said his party had already invited applications from all nationalist candidates to take part in the elections. He said candidates can file their forms personally at the central secretariat of the party and their nomination would be done on merit. He said the GBUM was not a party of landlords but was a platform working for the poor and deprived sections of the region. He said GBUM was the party of the downtrodden and had decided to take part in the elections on the active and forceful demand and wishes of the people of the region.

<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2009/10/gbum-to-take-active-part-in-elections.html>

“Earthquake relief awaited,” *Dawn Editorial, October 10, 2009*

It is now four years since a major earthquake hit AJK and parts of the NWFP. Since then, government institutions including the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority and the National Disaster Management Authority have been trying to rehabilitate victims and reconstruct the devastated areas. After millions of rupees in aid, the fact remains that many families in AJK still live in tents.

Master plans for most towns, including Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot, have yet to be implemented. Meanwhile, data available with Erra confirms that of the 13,000 projects planned in the last four years, only 3,394 have been completed. It is no wonder that a National Assembly standing committee recently expressed grave concern over the delay in the reconstruction of infrastructure, particularly school buildings. Erra has accomplished little more than completing a survey of 610,246 houses damaged or destroyed by the quake and giving some monetary compensation to the affected. The AJK government, meanwhile, has also reportedly played a far from effective role, particularly with regard to the acquisition of land for reconstruction projects.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/14-earthquake-relief-awaited-zj-03>

“Kashmir Council to give special package for tourism in AJK, says PM”

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani underlined that in view to promote Tourism in Azad Kashmir, special package will be given from Kashmir Council. While talking to AJK minister for Tourism MQM's Tahir Khokhar, Prime Minister said that special steps and measures will be taken to develop the tourism industry in AJK. Special steps, he said is being taken in Neelum Valley, Chakar, Rawalakot, and other tourist attraction places in the area.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=153187>

“Gilgit-Baltistan Occupation,”

October 4, 2009

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, on September 4 last, threw a bombshell in the name of ‘empowerment’ and ‘self rule’ governance order for ‘Gilgit-Baltistan’ region which Pakistan identified since its occupation as ‘Northern Areas’. With the aid and abetment of the Pakistani army, the Gilgit Muslim Scouts abducted Kashmir Governor, Brig. Ghansara Singh on November 16, 1947 from Astore. Indian army could not rescue the Governor and Pakistan Army took over Gilgit. Since then this

region has been under the illegal occupation of Pakistan’s military. Pakistan’s interest in the region is obvious as the geo-strategic importance of the territory has never been in doubt. To the north-east lies China, further north is Kazakhstan and to the north-west is Afghanistan. The controversial Karakoram Highway runs through the region and the Siachen Glacier commands a strategic portion of it. There lies Anglo-American interest too.

Benazir Bhutto as Pakistan’s Prime Minister granted in 1994 a ‘Reform Package’ for the Gilgit region by introducing a so-called ‘24 Member Council’ for the occupied areas without granting any civil, political or economic rights. The Council worked directly under the command of the Pakistani army. The ‘Reform Package’ was described by the then Prime Minister of POK, Sardar Qayyum Khan as a ‘joke.’

<http://www.centralchronicle.com/viewnews.asp?articleID=16030>

Aroosa Masroor, “Earthquake rehab,”

Dawn, October 8, 2009

KARACHI: Four years have passed since the 7.6-magnitude earthquake devastated much of northeastern Pakistan, killing more than 73,000 people and leaving over 500,000 families homeless. With each passing year, survivors are given the hope of better shelters and livelihood by the government, but volunteers who have been actively engaged in the rehabilitation process to date say the government has paid little attention to the area since 2005. Part of the problem, they say, lies in the absence of a proper mechanism with the government to monitor the relief and reconstruction work. Despite having received funds worth billions of rupees from local and foreign channels, the government largely failed to distribute the money evenly. As a result, some areas were developed quickly, while others were ignored completely.

‘It was here that the role of NGOs and volunteers came in,’ says Lala Aurangzeb, member of Al Falah Development Foundation, an NGO based in Rawalpindi. Aurangzeb is one of the few volunteers who did not just engage in the ‘emergency phase’ of the relief work, but continues to visit parts of Azad

Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), where the major destruction occurred, to engage with the locals and help them ensure a sustainable livelihood.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/03-earthquake-rehab-ss-01>

“AJK deputy speaker calls on Omar,”

Kashmir Watch

SRINAGAR: Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Deputy Speaker Mohammad Saleem Bhat called on Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah here today. This is perhaps for the first time that any AJK leader met Chief Minister of the state.

Mr Bhat remained with the Chief Minister for about 30 minutes. Mr Abdullah apprised the AJK Deputy Speaker of developmental projects under execution in the Jammu & Kashmir.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1254866463&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

Salik Malik, “Pervez Musharraf was ready to withdraw forces from AJK,”

Pakistan Daily, October 7, 2009

Chairman All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), Mirwaiz Umer Farooq has claimed that former President Pervez Musharraf was ready for withdrawal of forces from Azad Kashmir, Chairman APHC said in an interview to a TV channel. Responding to a question, the Chairman APHC said that former President Pervez Musharraf in last meeting as the president informed that he was going to take an initiative within 6 months for the solution of Kashmir issue. He said that it cannot be denied that Pervez Musharraf tried to engage India on Kashmir issue and proposed a four point formula for Kashmir's solution. The APHC, however not accept it as a solution but considered it as step towards the solution of the issue, he further added.

<http://www.daily.pk/pervez-musharraf-was-ready-to-withdraw-forces-from-ajk-11785/>

Zafar Iqbal “Self-rule for Gilgit-Baltistan”

Pakistan Observer, October 29, 2009

The people of Pakistan controlled Gilgit Baltistan are going to exercise their right of vote to elect 24 members of Legislative Assembly on November 12, This significant move is component of a contested Constitutional package-” Gilgit- Baltistan Empowerment and Self governance Order-2009 “ enforced by Government of Pakistan, which, amid strong criticism and resentment of Kashmiri political parties.

Historically, the Northern areas have been part of former State of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan assumed the administrative control of the region on 28 April, 1949 when first president of AJ&K Sardar Ibrahim, Ghulam Abbas, President All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and M Ali Gurmani, Minister without portfolio Government of Pakistan signed an agreement in Karachi. This agreement was not participated and endorsed by the people and leadership of the region whose future was involved in it. At that time Government of AJ&K had no representation from Gilgit and Baltistan and then ruling party - Muslim Conference had no presence in Gilgit and Baltistan. Plainly, the decision was made without the consultation or involvement of local leadership and people.

<http://pakobserver.net/200910/29/Articles01.asp>

“The deprived rights of Gilgit-Baltistan must be restored - Quaid e Tehreek,”

October 28, 2009

Quaid e Tehreek, Altaf Hussain Bhai demanded Gilgit-Baltistan be awarded representation in the National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan and the basic rights that the people of this region have been deprived of must be restored. He said this during a press conference while addressing the ‘meet the press’ at the Gilgit-Baltistan Press Club over telephone from London.

He said that the feudal system in the country only allowed the rich and powerful class belonging to the

feudal lords, jagirdars, waderas and industrialists to get elected in the National Assembly, the Senate and the Provincial Assemblies of the country, whereas, the common people belonging to the poor and middle class irrespective of being educated or competent were always prevented from reaching the Parliament.

<http://mqm4pakistan.blogspot.com/2009/10/deprived-rights-of-gilgit-baltistan.html>

“Corruption not to be tolerated’ says AJK PM”

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister AJK, Raja Farooq Haider said that rule of law and merit will prevail during his era and nepotism and corruption will not be tolerated. He, in his first address to the newly constituted cabinet, said his government would improve ties with Islamabad government. He also announced to hold the cabinet meeting on first date of every month and the agenda of the meeting will be set in consultation with the ministers.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/10/30/corruption-not-to-be-tolerated%E2%80%99-says-ajk-pm/>

“Ch.Manzoor designated in-charge of GB election,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, October 30, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Co-chairman of Pakistan People’s Party Asif Ali Zardari on October 30 appointed the labour leader Ch. Manzoor Ahmad as an In-charge of the election of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) to be held on November 12, 2009. Ch. Manzoor, the former MNA and an active member of PPP’s Central Executive Committee left for Gilgit Baltistan. He will particularly pay attention to the party’s activities, to resolve the problems of PPP’s candidates busy in election campaign. He will also visit different constituencies of the province to contact masses following the launching of smooth campaign.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=88806&Itemid=2

Economic Developments

“Punjab dispatches sugar to AJK,”

Pakistan Observer, October 23, 2009

MIRPUR: On the request of AJK government, the Punjab government has dispatched 168 tons of sugar to Azad Jammu Kashmir for onward disbursement through open market at the stipulated official rate of Rs. 40 per Kg to the consumers in the area, official sources stated. Mirpur Deputy Commissioner Ch. Muhammad Tayyeb noted on October 22 that AJK government had moved to the Punjab government for the supply of the required 168 tons of sugar to meet the existing shortage of the commodity in the liberated territory. He said that first consignment of the commodity in required quantity has reached Mirpur and Bhimbher districts for onward supply to rest of AJK besides the two districts through AJK food Department, he further added.

<http://pakobserver.net/200910/23/news/business04.asp>

Syed Rafiuddin Bukhari, “Why the trade did not pick up? Making the LoC trade a success certainly depends upon the will of the governments,”

Rising Kashmir

The trade across Line of Control (LoC) has completed one year but there is little to cheer about except that it has only symbolic value and hasn't gone that well. Trade between two parts of Kashmir has been a long pending demand from traders as well as people from both sides. It was also hailed as the major Confidence Building Measure (CMB) between New Delhi and Islamabad.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=17846

Shabir Dar, “Tale of a frozen trade and four states,”

Rising Kashmir, October 20, 2009

SRINAGAR: Traders from both sides of LoC maintain that had the four governments – government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), government of

Jammu and Kashmir, and governments of India and Pakistan – implemented the recommendations put forth by Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industries (JCCI), the trade would have flourished to the expected levels.

“We are not satisfied with the present status of the cross-LoC trade. It is not going up to the expected levels,” noted Zulfikar Abbasi, President of JCCI, in an interview. “There is no infrastructure in place for the smooth functioning of the trade. As governments seem non-serious in their approach in facilitating the trade,” Abbasi further stated.

The cross-LoC trade between two divided Kashmir was started by India and Pakistan on October 21, 2008, as part of the Confidence Building Measures (CBM). Trader's delegation from AJK headed by Abbasi visited Jammu & Kashmir. During their 15-day visit to the state, the AJK trader's delegation had deliberations with their counterparts in Jammu and Kashmir, which resulted in the formation of the joint chamber.

http://www.risingkashmir.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=17761

“LCCI to hold int'l investment conference for Gilgit-Baltistan,”

Daily Times, October 23, 2009

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry will hold International Investment conference on Gilgit-Baltistan in December this year. In this regard, an MoU was signed between the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Gilgit-Baltistan government at Governor's House in Gilgit on October 22. The LCCI President, Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry inked the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry while the Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan, Baber Yaqoob represented the government.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C23%5Cstory_23-10-2009_pg5_12

“Rs500m value gemstones extracted annually from GB,”

Pakistan Observer, October 3, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Around Rs. 500 million worth of gemstones are extracted annually from Gilgit-Baltistan and more measures are being adopted to explore other precious minerals.

It has been confirmed that nearly all valleys in Gilgit-Baltistan are rich with gold and base metals but the need is investment to explore them in order to change fate of the region.

As per surveys conducted for gold and base metals carried by Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) and on the basis of Geo-chemical and hard rock samples, around 11 prospect areas confirmed gold value ranging from 0.10 to 24 Parts Per Million (PPM) in hard rock while 5 PPM gold is economical in the world, Secretary Tourism and Mineral Department, Naib Khan told APP stated on October 2.

<http://pakobserver.net/200910/03/news/business02.asp>

“Rs 2.76 cr worth goods exchanged at LoC”

JAMMU: Trade worth Rs 2.76 crore was conducted from cross-LoC point of Chakan-Da-Bagh through Poonch-Rawlakote route on the first day of two days a week business. A total of 25 trucks reached Poonch from Rawlakote in Azad Kashmir (AJK) and all of them carried dal moong, a favourable item of traders in J&K due to huge variation in prices. Official sources said this was for the first time that only dal moong was supplied from AJK. Rs 1.23 crore worth dal moong was ordered by the traders of twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri and Jammu.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/10/08/rs-276-cr-worth-goods-exchanged-at-loc/>

International Developments

“Kashmiri parties hold Pak Govt responsible for terrorism in valley,”

ANI, October 19, 2009

LONDON: Ahead of ‘Black Day’, Kashmir leaders have slammed Pakistan for using their land for proxy wars and terrorism. “They (Kashmiris in Pakistan occupied Kashmir) are being used from last 15-16 years to fight the proxy war. “They use not only Kashmiris but all from the Pakistani jails in the name of Jihad,” Kashmir National Party Chairman, Abbas Butt stated in a conference in London. ‘Black Day’ is observed on October 22, the day Pakistani tribals raided Kashmir. The leaders of the parties who attended the conference expressed concern over the presence of Chinese troops in the region.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/kashmiri-parties-hold-pak-govt-responsible-for-terrorism-in-valley_100262684.html

“Kashmiri demonstrators urge Pakistan to leave Kashmir,”

ANI, October 12, 2009

LONDON: Kashmiri nationalist parties who demand unification and independence of Jammu and Kashmir held a picketing outside Pakistani High Commission in London. Despite the wet weather a large number of Kashmiris gathered outside the High Commission and shouted pro Kashmir slogans; and demanded that Pakistan must not annex Gilgit Baltistan as it will lead to serious problems for Pakistan.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/world-news/kashmiri-demonstrators-urge-pakistan-to-leave-kashmir_100259338.html#ixzz0VOIXF6Ny

Resolutions passed by the Black Day Conference arranged by Kashmir National Party in Watford (England) on 18 October 2009

Participants of this conference unanimously:

- Declare that the Tribal Invasion supported and directed by Pakistani authorities was aggression against the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It desecrated sovereignty of the State which was

independent at that time of this unprovoked aggression;

- Agree that the tribal attack was a clear violation of the Standstill Agreement signed by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and the Government of Pakistan;
- Recognise that this aggression carried out in name of jihad was designed to force the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir to accede to Pakistan. It resulted in death and suffering of innocent Kashmiris; and changed the course of our history as the Maharaja was forced to seek help from India and accede to India against his will;
- Note that the accession was provisional in nature and had to be ratified by the people of the State, however they never had chance to express their opinion on this matter;
- Welcome the resumption of dialogue as that is the only way forward to resolve the Kashmir dispute; but emphasise that people of the State must have a final say on the future of the State;
- Express their determination to promote the cause of peace, democracy and equality for all citizens of the State; and oppose forces of extremism and hatred;
- Acknowledge that terrorism has added to problems of the people of the State and it should be opposed in all its manifestations;
- Affirm their determination to oppose all those forces who want to divide the State of Jammu and Kashmir, as the State is one political entity and must remain so;
- Resolve to continue their struggle for unification and independence of the State;
- Strongly believe that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is multi religious and multi cultural; and this aspect of our society and culture must be recognised and promoted.
- Urge the British government and governments of other countries to recognise people of Jammu and

Kashmir as Kashmiris and not reclassify and redefine them as Pakistanis or Indians.

- Demand that people of Jammu and Kashmir who were uprooted because of the troubles in the State must be settled back in their homes with dignity, honour and safety.
- Emphasis that right of movement within the State is our fundamental right; and CBMs are designed to prevent free movement of the Kashmiri people. We demand that restrictions in the CBMs must be lifted that people of the State could easily interact with their fellow citizens.
- Support democratic, economic, educational, cultural and linguistic rights of the Sindhi people.

“Unesco award for 400-year-old house,”

Gulf Times

An ancient house in Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan region has received the Unesco’s Heritage Award for 2009. The Ali Gohar House, a 400-year-old architectural masterpiece, formerly used by the envoy of Mir of Hunza to Kashgar, Sinkiang, was selected by a panel of international conservation experts in architecture, urban planning, heritage conservation and landscape design, officials noted. The entry was chosen as the winner from among the 52 entries from 14 Asia-Pacific countries, including Australia, China, India, Korea, Vietnam, New Zealand and Thailand. The historic house has been restored by the Aga Khan Cultural Service.

http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=317933&version=1&template_id=41&parent_id=23

Other Developments

“Power supply discontinued in Skardu for 7th day,”

The News, October 25, 2009

GILGIT: Power supply was suspended in Skardu and its suburbs continuously for 7th straight day, after a technical glitch appeared in Wapda hydel power station I and II situated at Sadpara Dam. Skardu is facing a shortfall of 12 MW as WAPDA power houses remained entirely shut.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=90004>

“Gilgit-Baltistan has potential to produce 40,000 MW electricity,”

Daily Times, October 22, 2009

LAHORE: Gilgit-Baltistan has a potential to produce 40,000 megawatt hydro-electricity and thus offers a huge opportunity to the local investors. The briefing was given by Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan, Baber Yaqoob to 16-member LCCI delegation headed by its President, Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry. The LCCI delegation was informed that Gilgit-Baltistan also has rich potential for tourism, minerals and mines, communication and food industry that needs to be tapped.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C22%5Cstory_22-10-2009_pg5_4

“Educational institutes in AJK to remain close till Oct 25”

MANGLA: After suicide attacks in International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) educational institutes in Azad Kashmir were closed till October 25 creating problems for those students living in hostels. According to details, after the suicide attacks in IIUI, panic spread in the Azad Kashmir. Initially, Secretary Education of Azad Kashmir, Muhammad Akram Sohail stated that law and order situation is peaceful and educational institutes would continue their activities.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=154069>
<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=154069>

(Other Developments continued after Abbreviations)

ABBREVIATIONS

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

“WAQIPH water project launched for quake affectees,”

The News, October 11, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Raja Zulqurnain Saturday launched the WAQIPH project to address the water needs of October 2005 earthquake affectees. The WAQIPH project was launched with the financial and technical assistance provided by Erra and Unicef in collaboration with LG&RD to enhance sustainability of water supply system, adopt best practices for the attainment of water quality and hygiene promotion in targeted union councils of earthquake-hit areas. The aim of the project is to bring about behavioural changes in attitude and approach of the community. During the project, 22 union councils and 734 water supply schemes would be targeted.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=202648>

“Water conservation,”

Dawn Editorial, October 8, 2009

Raja Zulqarnain Khan’s call for water conservation needs to be echoed across the land. Speaking in Muzaffarabad on October 6, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir president urged people to store rainwater and protect existing sources of water in AJK. He lamented that roughly half the population of AJK still did not have access to potable water, adding that water sources have all but dried up in some areas.

In the bigger picture, the same concerns apply to the four provinces of Pakistan, where per capita water supply fell by nearly 80 per cent between 1951 and 2005. According to the World Bank, Pakistan ‘is currently experiencing water stress and will soon face outright water scarcity.’

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/14-water-conservation-zj-02>

Hameed Shaheen “Gilani to inaugurate UAE-built hospital in AJK today,”

Pakistan Observer, October 8, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani was a on 2-day official visit to Muzaffarabad on October 8, his first since

introduction of political and administrative empowerment reforms in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Besides inaugurating completion of two constructions projects: Garhi Dopatta Degree College in the Jhelum valley and a modern UAE-aided 300-bedded hospital in Muzaffarabad city, Gilani would receive a number of political and civic delegations comprising heads of all Kashmiri political groups, city elite, lawyers on October 8. He may also preside over a special AJK cabinet meeting to brief it on evolving Kashmir situation and the aspects of empowerment.

<http://pakobserver.net/200910/08/news/topstories06.asp>

“SPAPEV completes 4,000 houses for quake-hit people,”

The News, October 29, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV), an organisation working under the supervision of Saudi Interior Minister Prince Naif Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, has completed construction of 4,000 pre-fabricated houses, seven basic health units (BHUs) and many girls and boys schools in the NWFP and Azad Kashmir areas battered by October 8, 2005 earthquake.

This was stated by SPAPEV Regional Director Dr Khalid M Al-Othmani in a statement issued here on October 28. Al-Othmani said soon after the October 8, 2005 earthquake ravaged Azad Kashmir and parts of NWFP. King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud had announced an emergency aid package amounting millions of dollars for the relief and rehabilitation of the people of the calamity-hit region.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=205698

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) is constitutionally an integral part of the Indian Union and remains under Pakistani occupation since 1947, when Pakistan's Army engineered a tribal invasion and took control of more than 114,500 square kilometers of J&K. In 1949, the leaders of AJK Muslim Conference were forced to hand over Gilgit Baltistan Regions to the Pakistani federal government through the 'Karachi Agreement'. Since then Gilgit & Baltistan are ruled directly from Islamabad. Again in 1963, Pakistan ceded Trans-Karakoram Tract including a segment of Baltistan Region known as 'Shaksgam' and part of Gilgit Region known as 'Raskam' to China. Further, Chitral and parts of Chilas called Shinaki Kohistan, which constituted parts of Jammu & Kashmir before its partition in 1947, were also merged into the NWFP of Pakistan in 1970 and 1955 respectively.

Total Area of PoK (under the current form): 85,793 sq. km

Administrative Divisions: Two, namely Mirpur-Muzaffarabad and Gilgit & Baltistan; referred to as Azad Jammu & Kashmir or AJK, and the 'Northern Areas' respectively by the government of Pakistan

Area ceded to China by Pakistan: 5,800 sq kilometers

AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR (AJK)

After the partition of Jammu & Kashmir, the Muzaffarabad district of Kashmir province, and Mirpur and parts of Poonch districts of Jammu province went into Pakistani occupation. Pakistan amalgamated these districts together and created the so-called AJK. AJK is envisaged as an autonomous region by Pakistan. The government of AJK is considered as a parallel government, which was established to challenge the legitimacy of the J&K government in Srinagar. Despite the fact that AJK is neither a country nor a province of Pakistan, it has its own President, a Prime Minister, a Supreme Court, national anthem and a flag. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature and real authority lies with the federal government of Pakistan. Significant matters such as defence, supposed 'foreign policy',

rehabilitation of refugees and the financial control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan. As of today, the parts of Kashmir province under PoK is divided into three districts of Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Neelum, while the parts of Jammu province under PoK is divided into five districts namely Poonch/Rawalakot, Sudhnati/Pallandari, Bhimber, Kotli and Mirpur.

Area: 13,297 square km

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

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

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

President: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan

“Azad Jammu and Kashmir” Council: Total 12 members- 6 each representing governments of AJK and Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49, of which 29 are directly elected from the AJK, 11 are elected from Pakistan under the provision for the 'Kashmiri refugees', whereas rest of the 8 seats are reserved for females, overseas Kashmiris and the technocrats.

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

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

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

Political 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)

GILGIT BALTISTAN

Gilgit Baltistan was initially referred to by the government of Pakistan as the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA). It is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) and is under direct control of the Islamabad government. The area, after separation of Chitral and Shinaki Kohistan, is still five and half times bigger to that of AJK. The status of the *Gilgit Baltistan* is not defined in the successive constitutions of Pakistan. Pakistan accepts *Gilgit Baltistan* as part of the Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir, however, does not consider it as part of AJK. Due to a direct control imposed from Islamabad, the locals still await basic political and judicial rights. For instance, they do not have the right to cast vote and lack representation in the National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan. Further, they cannot access the provincial high courts as well as the Supreme Court of Pakistan for justice. The Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in *Gilgit Baltistan* who is a political figure nominated by the Minister for Kashmir and Northern Areas Affairs. The Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) is a political institution which lacks power to legislate and is headed by the Minister for Kashmir and Northern Areas Affairs, who is currently a Member of the National Assembly elected from the Gujrat district of Punjab province.

Area: 72,496 km

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: six

Baltistan Region is divided into Ganche and Skardu districts

Gilgit Region is divided into Astore, Diamer, Ghizar and Gilgit districts

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

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

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

Legislature: Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (NALA) Total 30 seats, of which 24 are directly elected and 6 female members are selected by NALA members.

Chairman NALA: Qamar Zaman Kaira

Chief Executive NALA: NALA was dissolved on July 25, 2009 before it could complete its 5-years term, and along with that, advisors to the Chairman including the Chief Executive were sacked. Elections for NALA will now be held in October 2009.

Political 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)

Literacy rate: 15% male- 3.5% female (World Bank estimates of 1997)

State of Infrastructure: More than two-thirds of the villages lack potable water, electricity, telephone, health units, girls' schools, paved roads, ration depot, and pony tracks.

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.

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