

POK NEWS DIGEST

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• Political Developments

India Tells China to Stop Development Work in AJK

AJK PM Strongly Reacts Over India's Statements

Xinjiang's PoK Links Cloud China's Stance on Kashmir

Women in Neelum Valley Protest Against Presence of Terror Groups

Baba Jaan's Detention: From Judicial Remand to Physical Remand

• Economic Developments

Tax System to be Introduced in GB

AJK's Mega Industrial Zone

Cross LoC Traders Demand Banking, Other Facilities

• International Developments

US Wants Approval by Congress for Bhasha Dam Funding

Raising Standards: G-B to Ask UNICEF to Help Train Teachers, Management

• Other Developments

Satpara Dam to be Completed by Next Month

Cultural Heritage: UNESCO Award for Hunza Fort



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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

Taking note of the rapidly growing Chinese activities in PoK, India's Defence Minister, A K Antony recently stated that India is aware of the Chinese forays in PoK and has conveyed its concerns to China that these activities be stopped immediately. India's objections were later rejected not only by the Pakistan Foreign Office but also turned down by the AJK Prime Minister Chaudhury Abdul Majeed. Nonetheless, with Army Chief General V K Singh stating that at least 3000-4000 Chinese troops are present in PoK, the debate on Chinese involvement in PoK seems to be expounding at a fast pace.

This issue contains several reports which reveal the high rate of detentions and forced disappearances in PoK. After the leader of the Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Manzoor Hussain Parwana was detained and subsequently released, leader of the Labour Party of Pakistan (LPP) was arrested and put under interrogation. There were widespread protests all across including Karachi demanding the release of Babajan Hunzai. The matter was raised at the UNHCR (United Nations Human Rights Commission) Geneva in the last week September 2011. It was noted quite clearly that there is absence of freedom of expression in PoK and nationalists and media persons are shunned completely by the Pakistani authorities. These leaders have reportedly been targeted for having taken up the cause of the Ladhaki refugees in Gilgit Baltistan.

A very interesting report in the current issue captures how women residents of the Neelum Valley in the so called AJK protested against the militant activities in the region. They opposed the presence and activities of certain banned terror outfits in PoK and urged the authorities to take steps to deter infiltration across the LoC in India. This is quite significant from the point of view of India- Pakistan has all along denied India allegations the PoK is a hotbed of militancy, targeting India. The concerns of local people in PoK on militancy has authenticated and reiterated India's claim that Pakistan abets terrorism against India.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

India tells China to stop development work in AJK

Pakistan Observer

NEW DELHI: India has asked China to stop its infrastructure development activities in Azad Kashmir, even as it keeps a close watch on Beijing's "rapid" development of strategic roads, railway lines and airfields in Tibet as well as along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Defence minister A K Antony, in a written reply to Lok Sabha to a question posed by 18 MPs, stated, "Government is aware that China is undertaking infrastructure projects in Azad Kashmir.

We have conveyed our concerns to China about its activities in Kashmir and asked them to cease such activities." This comes after senior Indian Army commanders recently warned that India not only faced the threat from Chinese troops along the LAC with China but it could well extend to the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan due to the expansive Beijing-Islamabad military nexus. Antony, stated, "China has also been carrying out rapid infrastructure development in TAR and in areas along the India-China border.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=112743>

Pak rejects Indian concerns over development activities by China in AJK

September 9, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Tehmina Janjua rejected Indian concerns over developmental activities by China in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and stated development of any region is sovereign right of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. She appreciated China for providing assistance for development of parts of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/09/pak-rejects-indian-concerns-over-development-activities-by-china-in-ajk/>

Ananth Krishnan, Xinjiang's PoK links cloud China's stance on Kashmir

The Hindu, September 3, 2011

At sunset, the Pakistan Café on Seman Road here bursts into life. Here, Pakistani traders from across this dusty trading town gather for tea, sharing stories of their day's work, all united by a common ambition of grabbing a slice of this region's growth. "We have great belief in what China is doing here," says one trader who has driven to Kashgar from Gilgit, in disputed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The ongoing transformation of this old Silk Road town has left their spirits high. China is planning to build its first Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the west in Kashgar, hoping to boost development in southern Xinjiang which has lagged behind the rest of the region and has been the source of recent ethnic unrest.

Kashgar, a town largely inhabited by Uighurs, the ethnic Turkic group native to Xinjiang, is far removed from cities like Urumqi, the centre of Chinese development in the far west. There are no skyscrapers here - a livestock market on the city's outskirts is where most business gets done.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2420950.ece?homepage=true>

AJK PM strongly reacts over India's statements

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 10, 2011

MIRPUR: AJK Prime Minister Ch. Abdul Majeed on September 9 strongly reacted over the recent statements of the Indian government including the Union Home Minister seeking the closure of the ongoing China-sponsored infrastructural development projects in various parts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Addressing a meeting in his constituency Chakswari, he stated such negative statements aired by New Delhi over the role of China in speedy infrastructural development in

Hydel power and other sectors in AJK are totally uncalled and unwarranted.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=152251&Itemid=2

Intervention at UNHRC for release of Babajan Hunzai, September 28, 2011 at the Eighteenth Session of the Human Rights Council (September 12 - September 30, 2011)

I thank you Mr. President for this opportunity to speak about the state of freedom of expression, political activity and peaceful assembly in Pakistani occupied Gilgit-Baltistan, where the natives live under complete censorship as their homeland has been converted into a military garrison. The media representatives and political workers face continuous harassment and torture for exposing the inhumane treatment of the locals by their occupiers.

Recently on 25th of August, offices of Daily K-2 and Karakoram Publishing Network were vandalized by secret service agents while two journalists were arrested and tortured for exposing incidents of gang rape involving government employees as well as accounts of extra judicial murders, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions in the valley of Hunza. Hunza which was hit hard by the flashfloods and landslides in 2010 has this time come under heavy police and para-military attack leading to two deaths and detention and disappearance of dozens of flood victims and political workers. Prominent among them are Manzoor Parwana and Babajan Hunzai, who were punished for supporting the Ladakhi refugees living in Gilgit-Baltistan; and for opposing illegal involvement of Chinese mining companies in the region. Babajan Hunzai is currently placed in an interrogation cell and the international community is requested to pressure the fascist regime of Pakistan for his earliest release

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Intervention_at_UNHRC_for_release_of_Babajan_Hunzai,201137869.aspx

GBLA Speaker for fair investigation into Hunza killing

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative

Assembly (GBLA), Wazir Baig directed the administration and police officials to refrain from creating panic among the public with regard to Hunza killing investigation. The Speaker issued the instructions during a meeting with Inspector General of Police Hussain Asghar and Home Secretary Asif Bilal Lodhi, noted a statement issued. The Speaker asked them to heed the public demand for arresting the police officers responsible for killing of people.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=117003>

Offbeat Justice in Gilgit-Baltistan, Arrests and Night Raids

Dardistan Times, September 28, 2011

GILGIT: Several people staged a protest rally in Gilgit against the random arrests, night raids and detentions in Hunza that the law-enforcement agencies have been carrying out in the past several weeks. After the dreadful police shooting at protesters in Aliabad in which 2 residents a retired military soldier and his young son died, a new ripple of harassment has started in the region where law-enforcement agencies arrest and detain residents under the umbrella of a flexible Anti Terrorism Act, a parallel legal invention championed by Nawaz Sharif's government in 1997. Since the clauses of the act define terror or terrorism so vague, ambiguous and limitless, any genuine, democratic or popular protest rally can fall prey to the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATC) in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Attempt to repress protests of the despondent Attabad lake affectees has further escalated the desolation in public and the outraged youth has organized protests and awareness gatherings locally and in major cities in Pakistan a discomfort that the local administration is attempting to heal through arrests and random raids. It is alleged that protesters in Aliabad had vandalized public property, an act that falls under the purview of Anti Terrorism Act, a speedy mechanism to convict someone.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/offbeat-justice89-gilgit-baltistan-arrests-and-night-raids23>

Majeed vows to follow reconciliation

The Nation, September 25, 2011

MIRPUR: AJK Prime Minister Ch Abdul Majeed

on September 24 reiterated to continue reconciliation policy of the Pakistan People's Party in AJK irrespective of the result of bye-election in LA-29 Muzaffarabad-III, saying the policy was not meant for any single constituency but will be practiced across the state.

Majeed, also President of the ruling People's Party AJK, was addressing a meeting of the PPP's lawmakers and party workers in Muzaffarabad on September 22. The premier expressed satisfaction over peaceful, free and fair bye-election in state's capital, reaffirming to propagate reconciliation policy of Co-Chairman PPP and Pakistani President Zardari in the best interest of the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/25-Sep-2011/Majeed-vows-to-follow-reconciliation>

PM declares Gilgit as big city

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 10, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on September 9 declared Gilgit as Big City for the purpose of House Rent Allowance and Conveyance Allowance for government employees. This declaration was part of the Special Package for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, announced by the Prime Minister during his visit to Gilgit on September 29, 2009.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=152273&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, Seminar: 'Religious tolerance inevitable for peace and stability'

The Express Tribune, September 24, 2011

GILGIT: Tolerance and open-mindedness in society, especially in matters pertaining to religion, are inevitable for durable peace and stability. This was the consensus among speakers at a seminar titled "Peace for tolerance" held by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Special Task Force in Gilgit on September 22. The seminar was attended by politicians, intelligentsia, poets, educationists and students from schools in Gilgit. The speakers made a vivid assessment of the

situation of Gilgit in the previous decade with respect to division on sectarian basis.

"Without tolerance, we cannot expect peace to prevail," stated Karakoram International University Dean of Social Sciences Department, Shafiq Jullandhry. He further stated that the developed countries adopted the norms of civility and progressed in all fields of life. PML-N Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) President Hafizur Rehman accused politicians for the turmoil in G-B, saying that politicians created rifts between sects to win their seats.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/259000/seminar-religious-tolerance-inevitable-for-peace-and-stability/>

Mehdi presents Rs 5m cheque to Gilani for flood affectees

The Frontier Post, September 22, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah presented a cheque for Rs. five million to Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani for Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund on September 21 at Prime Minister House. The Chief Minister during the meeting expressed his deep sense of gratitude to the Prime Minister for according Gilgit and Skardu big cities status which will bring these cities at par with other big cities of the country. The Chief Minister informed the Prime Minister that Satpara Dam with 17 MW capacity will be ready in October this year as 97% civil work and installation of machinery has been completed.

The Chief Minister requested the Prime Minister to inaugurate the project, address the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and also preside over a special Cabinet meeting of Gilgit-Baltistan during the visit. The Prime Minister conveyed his willingness to inaugurate the Satpara Dam, address the Legislative Assembly and also preside over a meeting of the Gilgit-Baltistan Cabinet as proposed by the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister called for the completion of the raising of the Mangla Dam reservoir capacity and undertaking of the Diamir Bhasha Dam as these mega projects hold key to quench the country's energy and agriculture thirst and also at the same time save billions of dollars of

foreign exchange being spent now over the imports of oil and petroleum products.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/?p=58589>

PML-N wins AJKLA Muzaffarabad seat

The Nation, September 23, 2011

MIRPUR: In a keenly-contested electoral fight, PML-N nominee Barrister Iftikhar Hussain Gillani September 22 won the bye-election to LA-26 (Muzaffarabad-III) seat of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly with a thumping majority.

Barrister Iftikhar defeated his closets rival and joint candidate of Muslim Conference and PPAJK Sardar Usman Attique Khan with a huge margin of 8,848 votes. When contacted, the AJK election commission sources noted from Muzaffarabad on September 22 that according to unofficial results the number of votes landed at the AJK EC, PML-N candidate Barrister Iftikhar Hussain Gillani emerged victorious with 22,691 votes against Usman Attique, who bagged 13,843 votes. Usman is a son of outgoing AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/23-Sep-2011/PMLN-wins-AJKLA-Muzaffarabad-seat>

Muzaffarabad, Jammu and Kashmir

September 22, 2011

Human rights organization Press for Peace (PFP) on urged local government of Gilgit Balistan (GB) to release political workers and lift ban on political activities. "In Pakistan controlled Gilgit Baltistan (GB) police and other law enforcement authorities are torturing political workers for voicing the rights of local people." In a press statement issued on September 22 Press for Peace (PFP) called upon local authorities to stop crackdown against people and political workers.

According to details compiled by Press for Peace (PFP), police opened fire at the people affected by Ataabad Lake when they were rallying for compensation during Chief Minister Mehdi Shah's arrival on 11 August, 2011. Last year's massive

floods created Attabad Lake, in the Hunza Valley of northern Pakistan where 242 houses, 135 shops, some schools and several hundred acres of agricultural land destroyed and damaged and victims of the lake have been protesting for compensation.

<http://www.groundreport.com/Business/HR-group-condemns-human-rights-violations-in-Pakis/2941491>

GBLA Speaker for early completion of projects

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: All the government departments should adopt the policy of transparency and that the uplift projects should be completed within stipulated span of time, stated Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA), Wazir Baig in an official handout issued. Speaking to the heads of various departments in his office, the speaker remarked that delay by the contractors in completion of projects was in fact negligence of the officials which would not be tolerated any more. The department heads including Public Works department, Forest department, Disaster Management Authority and National Education Foundation called on the speaker in his office, the handout stated. The speaker was briefed about the pace of uplift projects in the meeting. He directed the Works department officials to accelerate the pace of work on various schemes.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=115635>

AJK plans review of existing legislation

The Nation, September 19, 2011

MIRPUR: The AJK government has constituted an accountability committee to review the existing legislation primarily aimed at introducing reforms to ensure accountability across the board in letter and spirit, it was announced officially.

"AJK Finance Minister Ch Latif Akbar will head the aforesaid committee and will submit a report with recommendations," Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi, Minister for Information AJK noted this in a post-cabinet meeting held in Muzaffarabad with AJK Prime Minister Ch Abdul Majeed in the chair. Unveiling the decision taken in the cabinet meeting,

the AJK Information minister noted, “The cabinet decided to implement the decision of the Apex court in its true spirit regarding the qualification of the members and candidates. He told that very significant decision was taken regarding the medical colleges at Muzaffarabad and Mirpur and principals in the stated colleges will be appointed soon so that classes could be started at the earliest. It has been decided that to cope with the devastation in Sindh, caused by the recent floods the government and masses of AJK, on appeal of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan, will contribute and would put all their efforts to reduce the troubles of their Pakistan brethren, he stated.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/19-Sep-2011/AJK-plans-review-of-existing-legislation>

Pierre Rousset, Violent repression in the north of Pakistan

A solidarity campaign is underway in defence of Baba Jan, a leader of the LPP - the Labour Party Pakistan - and other people imprisoned in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, in the north of Pakistan. Baba Jan, according to information from the LPP, was tortured for two days by the secret service. For more than a month, progressive activists have suffered violent repression in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Himalayan “Territories of the North”. In August 2011, the police fired live bullets against people demanding payment of compensation allowances following a devastating landslide which had happened a year before in the valley of Hunza, on July 4, 2010. This landslide caused very big floods and the formation of a vast lake; this destroyed many dwellings and a transport route that is essential for local trade with China. The villagers accuse the administration of having abandoned them and of having pocketed the allowances due to 25 of the 457 affected families.

<http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2304>

Shabbir Mir, Chinese engineers ' guards seeks pay hike

The Express Tribune, September 18, 2011

GILGIT: Hundreds of policemen, deployed for the

security of Chinese engineers on the Karakoram Highway [KKH] in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), staged a demonstration in front of the chief minister's office on September 17, demanding a pay increase as well as regularisation of their service. As part of upgrading KKH, the government had initiated a Karakoram Security Force (KSF) to provide security to the Chinese engineers supervising work on the highway. The KSF men were inducted on a contract basis, about three years back for a period of four years. “We are demanding a clearance of arrears, regularisation of our services and raise in our salaries,” stated one of the 100 security officials who took part in the demonstration.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/254758/chinese-engineers-guards-seeks-pay-hike/>

Gender-based violence

Dawn, September 19, 2011

Gender-Based violence is deeply rooted in regions like South Asia even today. Stereotyping women and discrimination against them get even more dangerous and terrifying in tribal or semi-tribal societies, like that of Gilgit Baltistan. Today women in Gilgit Baltistan are faced with a plethora of problems in their day-to-day life, leading to the drastic and growing trend of suicide. Gilgit Baltistan could be a paradise on earth for its pure scenic beauty, cultural diversity and natural resources. However, the region has shown a tendency of being a dangerous place for women.

A majority of women are trapped in their traditional roles, like domestic work, agricultural activities and caring for children, spouses and parents or in-laws. Their daily workload is heavier than that carried out by men.

Ghizer is one of the districts of Gilgit Baltistan where almost 369 women have committed suicide since 2005 due to family conflicts and other domestic problems. These incidents have mostly taken place among literate women in the Yasin valley, Ishkoman, Gupis and Ponial. The increasing incidents of suicide by women in Ghizer district is a big cause for concern, and all the more so when all

political, administrative and social organisations, including NGOs, remain silent spectators to the issue.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/19/gender-based-violence.html>

Anita Joshua, Women in Neelum Valley protest against presence of terror groups

The Hindu, September 16, 2011

Residents of Neelum Valley in 'Azad Jammu & Kashmir' are reportedly up in arms over renewed terrorist activity in their area which used to be the staging post for terrorists entering Jammu & Kashmir through the 1990s. A local civil society organisation 'Press for Peace' claimed that a large number of women protested last weekend against recent activities of some banned jihadi groups in the Neelum Valley. According to the PFP, the women also approached the Pakistan Army in Athmuqam the district headquarters of Neelum Valley and urged the officers to stop the "militants" from crossing into the Indian side of Kashmir. Their main fear is that terrorist activity in their area would once again adversely affect the relative peace that has held on both sides of the Line of Control since 2003 ceasefire. With memories of regular crossfire along the LoC still fresh, their fear is that the presence of jihadi organisations in the area would adversely affect their lives.

During the Eid-break last month, Pakistan stated three of its soldiers had been killed in an unprovoked firing from the Indian side while India claimed that it was foiling an infiltration bid in which one jawan lost his life.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2456959.ece>

Shabbir Mir, GBLA session: Opposition lawmakers want resolutions implemented

The Express Tribune, September 15, 2011

GILGIT: The third day of the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly saw the opposition benches voice their concern over the non-implementation of resolutions adopted by the house

unanimously. "It is really a matter of concern for all of us as the resolutions are not being implemented," stated PML-N lawmaker Janbaz Khan. He was supported by other opposition benches in the session chaired by Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed in the absence of Speaker Wazir Baig.

Opposition leader Bashir Ahmed stated that the resolution on dividing G-B into three divisions for better administration has not been implemented despite the lapse of several months, adding that the government should respect the resolutions as they represent the public opinion.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/252764/gbla-session-opposition-lawmakers-want-resolutions-implemented/>

Baba Jaan's detention: 'From judicial remand to physical remand'

The Express Tribune, September 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: In a vocal demonstration, in front of the National Press Club, the alleged detention of Labour Party Leader Baba Jaan was vehemently protested. The leader from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) was allegedly picked up by the security agencies. Similarly, arrest of other political workers was also denounced. The protestors, comprising of activists and political workers, demanded the Gilgit-Baltistan government to release Baba Jaan and other detained party workers of Labour Party Pakistan, Workers Party Pakistan, Progressive Youth Front and National Student Federation who were staging a peaceful protest against police torture and firing on the Attabad Lake affected people in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Aasim Sajjad from Workers Party Pakistan also criticised the arrests of political workers and leaders. "The government would not be able to suppress peoples' voice for their rights with torture and highhandedness," added Sajjad. The protestors warned they would stage a bigger demonstration if the leaders and workers of their parties were not released by the government before dispersing peacefully.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/252747/baba-jaans-detention-from-judicial-remand-to-physical-remand/>

GBLA hails PM for according status of big cities to Gilgit, Skardu

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) has unanimously passed a resolution, expressing its deep sense of gratitude and tribute to Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani for according Gilgit and Skardu the status of "big cities". The Legislative Assembly also thanked President Asif Ali Zardari and the Pakistan People's Party leadership in this regard.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=153443&Itemid=2

Mangla Dam Raising Project: Wattoo praises AJK govt, Wapda for progress

The Express Tribune, September 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo appreciated the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government and the Wapda chairman for rapid progress on the Mangla Dam Raising Project. Chairing a meeting on September 13, he stated that compensation had been paid to the people who were displaced because of the project, adding that the entire process took place in a satisfactory manner due to effective coordination.

Wattoo further stated that the proprietary right of land should be granted to displaced people. Factors hindering the implementation of the compensation package and other resettlement issues were also discussed during the meeting. The minister noted that with a new government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, he hoped that coordination would be better.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/251815/mangla-dam-raising-project-wattoo-praises-ajk-govt-wapda-for-progress-business/>

More mega projects in AJK to be started soon: AJK president

September 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Work on development projects is

going on and more mega uplift projects would be launched soon in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This was stated by AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob and Interior Minister Rehman Malik while talking to newsmen after their meeting in Islamabad in Islamabad on September 13. Sardar Yaqoob stated there is a great potential to generate hydel power in AJK and the government would exploit this potential.

Rehman Malik stated Pakistan government would extend every kind of help to AJK for its development. He noted further the demand of computerization of driving licences in AJK would be fulfilled. He expressed the hope that during the tenure of the present government in AJK, the Kashmir freedom struggle would get boost. The AJK President stated he appealed the overseas Kashmiris for help to the flood affected people in Sindh and hoped that it would yield good result.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/09/more-mega-projects-in-ajk-to-be-started-soon-ajk-president/>

'Review Chitral-Tajikistan Road Plan' GBLA demands

Dardistan Times, September 16, 2011

GILGIT: The legislative Assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan has passed a resolution that demands that the Tajikistan-Pakistan connecting road must be constructed through Ghizar District of Gilgit-Baltistan. The resolution submitted by Nawaz Khan Naji a GBLA member from Ghizar was passed by the house unanimously. Members of the GBLA maintained that the two countries should revisit their decision of surface connectivity through Chitral and stick with their initial plan which was to route the road from Ishkoman (Ishhqamen) of Ghizar to Ishkashim of Tajikistan.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/%E2%80%98review-chitral-tajikistan34-road%E2%80%99-gbla-demands34>

Turabi demands joint presidency, SC for GB, Kashmir

September 17, 2011

RAWALPINDI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Azad Jammu

and Kashmir Amir Abdul Rashid Turabi stated that JI has played its role for the restoration of peace in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) in current deteriorating situation of GB by arranging National Peace Conference, where all parties participated including government, opposition, local leaders, lawyers and media.

Briefing to central leadership after his recent visit to GB on Friday, Turabi stated now it is the responsibility of government to uphold the peace in region, adding that concerns over GB package have come before the government, the basic rights of masses are being denied and a targeted segment of region is being awarded.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/09/turabi-demands-joint-presidency-sc-for-gb-kashmir/>

LB bill tabled in GBLA

Pakistan Observer

DIAMER: The government of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) tabled the local bodies bill-2011 in the GB legislative assembly. The session was chaired by Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed. After tabling the bill, Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs, Wazir Shakil briefed the House about the bill. He stated the mountainous region needed legislation on local bodies system. The chair later referred the bill to the House's standing committee on Law for consideration and opinion. Lawmaker Didar Ali complained that his repeated calls to the government for provision of Urdu transcript of the bill. He stated that most of members were unable to comprehend English, therefore, Urdu version of the proposed laws should also be provided to them along with original bill. Deputy Speaker directed the law minister to ensure early provision of Urdu translation of the bill and give it to the members of the house.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=114680>

Vacancies to be filled in GB

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah stated that the vacancies of all the

government departments advertised before August 16, 2011 will be filled. Addressing the legislative assembly, the chief minister stated the ban imposed by the federal government on the appointments did not apply on the jobs advertised before August 16. Mehdi Shah stated he will raise the issue of Tajikistan road in his meeting with the prime minister. He noted if the government decides to give this project to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government then the GB government will demand the government to also link the GB province with the project.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=114158>

Shabbir Mir, After floods: A year on, development projects in G-B still in planning phase

The Express Tribune, September 14, 2011

GILGIT: Leader of the opposition in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly, Bashir Ahmed on September 13 urged Gilgit-Baltistan's chief minister to seek an explanation from the Public Works Department (PWD) for not completing the various projects initiated after last year's floods. "The chief minister should issue notices to the PWD officials for not completing projects even a year after the floods," he noted in Gilgit. The opposition leader who is a senior member of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) in the region stated that the PWD did not call for tenders for the projects.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/251957/after-floods-a-year-on-development-projects-in-g-b-still-in-planning-phase/>

Shakeel Anjum, GB govt admits presence of thousands of stolen vehicles

The News, September 15, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Top officials of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) province, including the inspector general of police, do not deny the claims of the jailed car don that 45,000 stolen vehicles are plying on GB streets and some officials say even government servants are using a 'rent-a-stolen car' service launched by private entrepreneurs. Hussain Asghar, IGP of GB, in a telephonic interview, confirmed that thousands

of stolen vehicles could be recovered by applying an effective strategy. Every district should work separately for the recovery of their stolen vehicles.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=67721&Cat=2>

Progress on Mangla dam project

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo appreciated the AJK Government and Chairman WAPDA for rapid progress on the Mangla Dam raising project. He stated compensation had been paid to the affectees in a short span of time, adding all this was performed in a satisfactory manner as a result of effective coordination. Chairing a meeting, he also emphasized that the propriety right of land be granted to the affected of Mangla Dam Project. The minister was briefed on the progress of work on the Mangla Dam Raising and implementation of compensation package to the affectees of the project. The meeting also highlighted the factors confronting the implementation of compensation package and other resettlement. The Minister stated that after elections new government in AJK was established and hoped that the coordination with the present president and prime minister will be better and thing will move forward for better.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=114157>

GBLA pass three resolutions

Pakistan Observer

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) here passed three resolutions on three different issues with overwhelming majority. The session inaugurated with recitation from Holy Quran. First resolution was tabled by Advisor to Chief Minister Saadia Zia and denounced PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif, who had sought dissolution of all assemblies as her resolution termed this as anti-democracy. The resolution did not earn favor of PML-Q and some independent members yet it was approved by overwhelming majority.

The second resolution was presented by Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed, who thanked Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani for declaring Gilgit as capital of the region, as the resolution was endorsed by majority of the house. The third resolution was tabled by member Mirza Hussain to condemn the killing of two people in Hunza by police.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=113962>

PcK Leader to Meet Elected CM on Srinagar Visit

September 11, 2011

SRINAGAR: The former prime minister of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK), Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, who is due to arrive in Srinagar next week, on September 10 stated that he would like to meet the elected representative of the people here during his visit besides separatist leaders.

The son of the first president of PaK, Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan, Attique would be the first member of his family to visit this side of Kashmir in the past 64 years, and plans to meet the chief minister, Omar Abdullah, his predecessor, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, and the leader of the opposition in the assembly, Mahbooba Mufti. This would be the first time that a leading politician from across the Line of Control would be meeting pro-India leaders in Jammu & Kashmir.

http://www.kashmiroobserver.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8833:pck-leader-to-meet-elected-cm-on-srinagar-visit&catid=3:regional-news&Itemid=4

Faheem Aslam, Dardistan: Kashmir's link to Central Asia, Afghanistan Gurez Connected Valley with Historic Silk Route

September 11, 2011

GUREZ: A ride along the Gurez-Tulail road, over 150 kms from Srinagar, is not only reflective of the beautiful valleys and meadows but also the rich cultural and archaeological diversity, most of which is yet to be explored.

There are no two opinions that Gurez, also known as Dardistan (the land of Dard community) was once a major link connecting Kashmir with Central Asia

and Afghanistan. There are hardly any doubts that this link houses some of the important historical places, monasteries and other archaeological treasures. But what has marred the exploration of this rich cultural and archaeological diversity is little effort by archaeologists on this front, primarily in the wake of restricted movement in the area, which would connect Kashmir to Gilgit, the central point from where sub-links to Central Asian countries would emerge.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Sep/11/dardistan-kashmir-s-link-to-central-asia-afghanistan-32.asp>

Armed clash between two rival groups claim four lives in Gilgit

September 13, 2011

GILGIT: At least four persons have been reported killed and several others hurt in two rival groups' armed clash in Gilgit here on September 12. According to initial reports, two rival groups argument, over irrigation water, turned into full scale armed clash in Darial area of Gilgit, leaving four dead and several hurt. The injured were still waiting for shifting to hospital while both groups' exchange of fire was ongoing as the police could not reach on the scene till arrival of last report.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/09/armed-clash-between-two-rival-groups-claim-four-lives-in-gilgit/>

Hameed Shaheen, Kh Farooq advisor to AJK President

September 9, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader PPP-AJK and ex-Minister Kh Farooq Ahmed who has been appointed as Advisor to the AJK President Sardar M Yaqub Khan will take office oath on September 10 in Kashmir House in Islamabad. Kh Farooq was a contestant from the capital city Assembly seat but as a 'result' of PPP-MC mutual political understanding he had had to withdraw from the electoral ring. Sardar Usman (MC) the joint candidate of both parties is to face in the field Barrister Iftikhar Gilani of PML-N.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/09/09/kh-farooq-advisor-to-ajk-president.html>

Chitral-Tajikistan Road: Change in plan draws severe criticism in G-B

The Express Tribune, September 11, 2011

GILGIT: The federal government's decision to route the Chitral-Tajikistan Road through Chitral instead of Gilgit has drawn strong criticism from politicians in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). Some of them have termed the project a "ploy to keep G-B a backward area", while others have called on the government to review its decision.

"For all reasons, the road to Tajikistan should go through Gilgit and not Chitral," Finance Minister Mohammad Ali Akhtar G-B noted before media on September 10 in Gilgit. Akhtar stated that the cabinet would immediately contact the federal government in this regard and put up resistance to the decision of constructing the Chitral-Tajikistan Road to further trade ties between two countries. He stated that the route should go through Gilgit instead of Chitral, to boost the region's economy.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/249775/chitral-tajikistan-road-change-in-plan-draws-severe-criticism-in-g-b/>

Enforced Disappearances Continue in Gilgit-Baltistan Washington DC

September 10, 2011

On September 8, 2011, Baba Jan member federal committee Labour Party Pakistan and organiser of Progressive Youth Front Gilgit Baltistan surrendered himself before the judge anti terrorism court Gilgit. And after hearing the arguments defence council and state council, the court declined the request of state for giving him to police for physical remand and by accepting arguments of defence council, Baba Jan was sent to jail on judicial remand.

He was one of the most wanted political activist of Gilgit Baltistan after he organised successful strikes in several cities against the killing of two political activist by police when they were demanding compensation for lake effected families. He is now the 33 person arrested in the range of fake criminal cases against the Left and nationalist

activist. Baba Jan is facing 12 police cases registered last month. 13 LPP activists are among the 33 arrested.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Enforced_Diappearances_Continue_in_GilgitBaltistan,201137607.aspx

Rally against illegal detentions

The News, September 10, 2011

KARACHI: Youths belonging to Hunza, Gilgit, Baltistan and some organisations staged a rally in front of the Karachi Press Club (KPC) on September 9 and shouted slogans against alleged illegal detentions and fake cases against activists of the Labour Party Gilgit-Baltistan and the Progressive Youth Front. The demonstrators were holding placards and banners. Speakers demanded that cases against more than 10 activists of the Labour Party Gilgit-Baltistan should be withdrawn and the raids being conducted by the police and paramilitary force against political activists be stopped forthwith.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=66971&Cat=4&dt=9/10/2011>

PM enhances sanctioning powers of GBDWP to Rs 400 million

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 10, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on September 9 approved the proposal of Planning and Development Division for enhancement of the sanctioning powers to Gilgit-Baltistan Development Working Party (GBDWP) from Rs 200 million to Rs 400 million in order to cater for increase in the development portfolio. The Prime Minister approved the proposal in his capacity as Chairman National Economic Council (NEC).

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=152393&Itemid=1

Iftikhar Ahmad Mir, Abandoned in Dardstan

September 10, 2011

The region of Dardstan is most fabulous subdivision of district Bandipore and the soil of this

particular region is very fertile. Valley's Chak rulers were from Dardstan and first Chak king was Gazi Chak and the last was Yakoob Chak s/o Yousf Shah Chak ruled till 1886. Yousf Shah Chak and Haba Khatoon's romance is a poetic episode in the romantic literature of Sheena language. We also have Habakhaton Peak which shines like a marble rock in full moon nights.

The Gurez valley is shaped somewhat like alphabet "W" by the existence of Haba Khatoon peak. The region has its unique identity and historical background because the silk route that starts from Bandipore and extends up to Central Asian states bifurcates the Gurez valley which was mostly used by the caravans of the Mughal rulers. The route passes through Tragbal and Razdan peak of 11470 feet height above mean sea level. The route was upgraded by British engineers in 19th century through M/S Spadding & Company. If the Silk route is reopened on the pattern of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakote roads, the Silk route will connect Kashmir with Central Asian countries.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Sep/10/abandoned-in-dardstan-6.asp>

Hameed Shaheen, PML-N opposes Attique visit to Srinagar

September 10, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The first ever group visit planned to be led by ex-premier Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan to Srinagar, crossing Line of Control at Chakothei/Muzaffarabad, is being opposed tooth and nail by the Pakistan Muslim League-N.

Sardar Attique Ahmed has been invited to attend the marriage ceremony of son of his friend, businessperson Zahoor Ahmed Watali at Srinagar on September 17, 2011. Accompanied by a composite group of AJK legislators, business and presspersons he will proceed on September 16, 2011 via Muzaffarabad-Srinagar highway. But a stiff opposition to this visit has been mounted by the PML-N AJK chief/ex-premier Raja Farooq Haider Khan.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/09/10/pml-n-opposes-attique-visit-to-srinagar.html>

Police foils terror bid, seizes vehicle with explosives

Daily Times, September 9, 2011

PESHAWAR: Chamkani police seized 25 kilogrammes of explosives and other materials being smuggled from Muzaffarabad in Azad Kashmir on September 8. Two persons identified as Gul Muhammad, a resident of Nasir Bagh, Peshawar and Bacha Khan, a resident of Charsadda were also taken into custody, Chief Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Imtiaz Altaf stated. "Among the seized materials include 25 kilograms of explosives, 30 detonators and a bundle of safety-valves," Chamkani police station official noted. He stated the explosives and other materials were being transported to Darra Adamkhel in a car coming from Muzaffarabad.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C09%5C09%5Cstory_9-9-2011_pg7_8

Shabir Choudhry, Azad Kashmir or Pakistani occupied Kashmir

September 5, 2011

The former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan; and people suffer on both sides of the divide with varying degrees. Whereas every aspect of suffering is highlighted in the Indian side of the divide, very little is stated about what goes on in the Pakistani side. This article explains some of the situation in a territory known as Azad Kashmir. Pakistan has two territories of State of Jammu and Kashmir under its control, namely Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. Although Azad Kashmir has its own President, Prime Minister, its own flag, but the territory is not azad or independent by any stretch of imagination. Human Rights Watch (and some other international NGOs) described Azad Kashmir as anything but "Azad"; and it is because of this fact the territory is also known as Pakistani occupied Kashmir. Lal Hussain, a prominent writer and political analyst of Pakistan, in his article, 'Agony of Azad Kashmir' writes: 'So-called Azad Kashmir has a President and Prime Minister. However, the powers of these two offices are less than those of the Deputy Secretary at

the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in Islamabad, itself one of the weakest ministries in Pakistan's federal government.' Ruling elite and other people of Azad Kashmir have been mentally enslaved through Pakistani propaganda, in name of Islam, brotherhood and through educational system prevailing in this territory for past 63 years.

Educational syllabus of so called Azad Kashmir is prepared and approved by bureaucrats of Islamabad. The prime purpose of this is not to educate people; rather it is designed to make people good and obedient slaves of Pakistan. In the past demand was that Azad Kashmiri leaders and other employees and aspirant express their allegiance to Pakistan, as prescribed by Act 74 prepared and imposed by Islamabad, which stated: "No person or political party in Azad Jammu and Kashmir shall be permitted to propagate against or take part in activities prejudicial or detrimental to the ideology of the state's accession to Pakistan". (Part 2 of section 7 of the Act 74 - Interim constitution, which remains interim after 37 years). However, demands from Azad Kashmiri leaders have changed with time, and now the rulers of Pakistan and other key players demand personal allegiance; and even allegiance to their dead ones. One can measure depth of this mental slavery by a statement of recently appointed Prime of Minister of Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majid, who after becoming a Prime Minister went to graves of Bhutto family in Larkana, Sind, proudly stated: 'I am not a Prime Minister but Majawer of Gari Khuda Baksh'. Majawer is a man, who is a follower of a saint and like a slave or unpaid servant, looks after shrine after saint's death.

<http://dailykashmirimages.com/news-azad-kashmir-or-pakistani-occupied-kashmir-15184.aspx>

B Raman, Focus on Chinese role in Gilgit-Baltistan and Sino-Pak Maritime Cooperation

September 1, 2011

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari has been in Urumqi, the capital of the Chinese-controlled Xinjiang province, with a high-power ministerial and official delegation since August 30, 2011. He

has gone to Urumqi to attend the inauguration of the China-Eurasia Expo being held there from September 1 to 5. This is Zardari's seventh visit to China since taking over as the President in 2008 to study the economic development of different regions of China..

Among others accompanying him are Foreign Minister Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Commerce Minister Makhdoom Amin Fahim, Defence Minister Ch. Ahmed Mukhtar, Petroleum and Natural Resources Minister Dr. Asim Hussain, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah, Prime Minister of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) Chaudhary Abdul Majeed, Chairman Board of Investment Salim H. Manviwala, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Senator Haji Ghulam Ali and spokesperson to the President Farhatullah Babar.

This is the second time the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan has accompanied Zardari on one of his China visits. Syed Mehdi Shah had accompanied Zardari to Guangdong in China to attend the inaugural function of the 16th Asian Games at Guangzhou in November 2010. He was extended VIP treatment by the Chinese authorities on par with the other members of the Pakistani delegation.

<http://www.indiandefencereview.com/2007/04/Focus-on-Chinese-role-in-Gilgit--Baltistan-and-Sino-Pak-Maritime-Cooperation-.html>

Economic Developments

Peer Muhammad, Public issues: G-B finance minister opposes taxes

The Express Tribune, September 30, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) will resist the imposition of taxes in the region, stated G-B Finance Minister Muhammad Ali Akhter on September 29. He noted that the step would push local people, who have already been affected from natural calamities, towards more economic hardships. “The issue will be taken up in the assembly and we will oppose the move at all costs,” he stated, adding that the people would come out on the streets to protest against the decision.

He stated there is no opportunity for industrialisation in G-B due to extreme weather conditions and due to absence of proper facilities given by the federal government, while the imposition of taxes would severely affect the salaried class, which is the biggest source of earning in G-B.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/263460/public-issues-g-b-finance-minister-opposes-taxes/>

Tax system to be introduced in GB

Dawn, September 24, 2011

ISLAMABAD: A taxation system would be introduced in Gilgit-Baltistan on subjects falling under the jurisdiction of the GB Council. The decision was taken at a meeting between Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and the Gilgit-Baltistan Council on September 23. The meeting discussed introduction of the taxation system. However, tax rates would be discussed later in the month.

It was decided that the tax rate in the region would be half of that in the rest of the country. Further, the limit for minimum taxable income would be higher for Gilgit-Baltistan. Chairing the meeting, Federal Minister Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo stated that Gilgit-Baltistan Council and the government are working according to the mandate of Gilgit-

Baltistan Self Governance and Empowerment Order 2009.

He stated that hydel power, mineral resources, forests and tourism are subjects of GB council which is responsible for legislation on these subjects and for the development of these sectors. “We need to develop these resources locally through concrete measures,” the minister noted.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/24/tax-system-to-be-introduced-in-gb.html>

Gilgit-Baltistan: Traders oppose imposition of corporate tax

The Express Tribune, September 8, 2011

GILGIT: With the Gilgit-Baltistan government likely to impose corporate tax, traders have decided to resist the move, terming it 'unconstitutional.' “How is it possible to impose corporate tax in a disputed region which is not even a part of Pakistan as per the constitution?” stated Jumma Khan, president of the Gilgit Traders Union at a meeting held here on September 7.

The traders, who met to discuss their future course of action, stated they would go on an indefinite strike against the move which they termed 'unconstitutional,' as the country's constitution had not been extended to Gilgit-Baltistan. “We have decided to continue our strike unless the decision is taken back,” one trader noted.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/247414/gilgit-baltistan-traders-oppose-imposition-of-corporate-tax/>

Joint Chamber of Commerce of Jammu & Kashmir and Azad Kashmir to be set up: Sultan

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 25, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Former AJK Prime Minister, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry stated that a joint Chamber of Commerce of Azad and Jammu & Kashmir will be set up to enhance trade between traders of both sides of Kashmir. “This will not only help improve economic conditions of Kashmiris but also provide a platform to increase people to people

contact and intra Kashmiri dialogue,” he made these remarks while talking to a 45-member delegation led by President of Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Zahoor Ahmed Bhat and Chairman of Kashmir Economic Alliance Haji Muhammad Yasin in a meeting held in Srinagar.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155407&Itemid=38

GB poor exempted from tax: Wattoo

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo stated no taxes will be imposed on the poor of Gilgit-Baltistan. Only the well-off segment of society in GB would be taxed which are being decided to be consumed completely in GB. It was told during a meeting held to finalize Establishment of Gilgit Baltistan Power Development Bill 2011 and Gilgit Baltistan Income Tax (Adaptation) Bill 2011. Karam Ali Shah Governor GB, Syed Mehdi Shah Chief Minister GB, Aftab Shahban Mirani, Engineer Usman Khan Members Gilgit-Baltistan Council and other members of Council and representative of Gilgit-Baltistan Government were also present. Wattoo noted taxes, which are collected for the development purpose, would only be collected from well off people and companies doing business in GB.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=116046>

AJK's mega industrial zone

Pakistan Observer

It is indeed a breeze of fresh air that the Azad Jammu and Kashmir government has reportedly chalked out a phased plan to establish a new mega industrial zone, over an area of twenty-six thousand kanals of land in Mirpur in order to give impetus to the stagnant process of industrialization in the territory. The state government was considering same facilities and incentives for establishment of industrial units in the proposed zone as are being given by provinces.

There are no job opportunities in AJK except in government departments despite huge industrial and touristic potential of the area. According to some estimates, the state is required to create about

three hundred thousand jobs for the next five to ten years but this seems to be a Herculean task because of lack of attention towards attraction of private investment or support from the Kashmiri diaspora. Nearly a million Kashmiris settled in the UK own assets worth billions of dollars and maintain bank deposits of around Rs 2,000 billion in Pakistani banks.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=115310>

Hameed Shaheen, Rs 25m AJK flood relief contribution

September 15, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: Rs. 25 million as urgent relief contribution for the Sindh flood sufferers has been announced by the Azad Jammu & Kashmir government besides one day's salary by the civil servants inclusive of the police force. Presiding over a cabinet meeting on September 15, the AJK Premier Chaudhury Abdul Majeed directed his cabinet colleagues to organize immediate relief camps in each constituency to collect much needed relief goods by the humanitarian volunteers in response to an open appeal from President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. All ministers and senior members of bureaucracy attended the meeting.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2011/09/15/rs-25m-ajk-flood-relief-contribution.html>

Cross LoC traders demand banking, other facilities

Dawn, August 17, 2011

SRINAGAR: The non-availability of banking facilities, infrastructure problems and barter system of trade continue to trouble the traders engaged in the trade across the Line of Control (LoC). The cross-LoC trade started between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in 2008 to benefit the traders but due to absence of banking, communication and other facilities, the trade has not achieved the desired results and has almost restricted to a symbolic trade. The traders noted that despite promises important facilities like banking and communication were still missing.

<http://www.pakistantimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=24867>

International Developments

Shabbir Mir, Raising standards: G-B to ask UNICEF to help train teachers, management

The Express Tribune, September 19, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) education department will seek help from UNICEF in training teachers and management staff, officials stated on September 18. “The outcome of this training will be made part of the G-B Education Policy,” Secretary Education Syed Hadi told members of the G-B Teachers Association. Rs800 million are being allocated for the trainings of teachers, lecturers and professors in national and foreign institutions, he noted.

The official further stated that work was in progress to constitute an independent text book board and examination board for G-B. The secretary stated that colleges in G-B are facing shortage of lecturers but noted the deficiency will be overcome in the next two years. “In this connection about 35 lecturer posts will soon be filled,” he further noted, adding that the issue of promotions for teachers and professors is being addressed on a priority basis.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/255211/raising-standards-g-b-to-ask-unicef-to-help-train-teachers-management/>

Khalid Mustafa, US wants approval by Congress for Bhasha Dam funding

The News, September 16, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The United States has linked the \$1 billion loan for Diamer-Bhasha Dam with the approval of the US Congress. The two-day Pakistan-United States Energy Dialogue held in Islamabad ended on September 15 with zero progress on funding for Bhasha Dam. Earlier, Washington had indicated that it would extend a \$1 billion loan for Pakistan's most strategic and vital project in a span of five years (\$200 million every year).

The US delegation at the energy meet was led by Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Ambassador Carlos Pascual. The Pakistani team was led by Minister for Water and Power Naveed Qamar. “Yes, we have failed to get the formal announcement by US authorities with regards the financial facility for Bhasha dam. We had high hopes of getting some concrete announcement from US side to this effect,” a senior official who was part of the two-day Pak-US talks on energy noted.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=8853&Cat=13>

Other Developments

World Peace Day observed in AJK

September 22, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: In order to express solidarity with the peace-keepers across the globe, World Peace Day was celebrated in Pakistan controlled Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday. In connection with the WPD, a symposium was organized by Press For Peace (PFP) and Save the Future(STF) -two sister organizations which work for the promotion of peace and awareness and protection about of human rights of in the region. Addressing the symposium titled 'Peace and Women political rights', speakers highlighted the need of role of women in conflict resolution and promotion of democracy.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/09/world-peace-day-observed-in-ajk/>

Satpara Dam to be completed by next month

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister, Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah informed Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani that Satpara Dam with 17 MW power generation capacity will be ready in October this year as 97% civil work and installation of machinery had been completed. He called on the Prime Minister Gilani at the PM House. During the meeting he expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for giving Gilgit and Skardu big cities status, which would bring new phase of development in these cities at par with other big cities of the country.

The Chief Minister requested Prime Minister Gilani to inaugurate Satpara Dam when it is completed. The Prime Minister accepted his invitation. In addition to this he would also address the Legislative Assembly and preside over a meeting of the Gilgit-Baltistan cabinet.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=183734>

Shabbir Mir, Survey: Documenting G-B's flora and fauna

The Express Tribune, September 17, 2011

GILGIT: An ongoing two-week long survey in

Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) aims to document key characteristics of the flora and fauna in the region's wetlands. The survey was started by the World Wide Fund (WWF) under the Saving Wetlands Sky High Programme (SWSH) on September 9 and will continue till September 22. Six wetlands will be covered in the survey.

The survey will cover mammals, birds, reptiles and terrestrial vegetation found on and around the lakes, officials noted on September 17. According to High altitude Wetlands Conservation Officer Farasat Ali, the survey team comprises a dozen experts, who will collect primary data on wetland biodiversity to explore their status, distribution, population, threats and alliance of the selected high altitude wetlands.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/254227/survey-documenting-g-bs-flora-and-fauna/>

Cultural Heritage: UNESCO Award for Hunza fort

The Express Tribune September 6, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The 900-year-old Altit Fort in Hunza received the 2011 Unesco Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation. According to a statement released by the Aga Khan Development Network, which undertook the conservation project, the old fort is an important tourist attraction in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Conservation works focused on mending structural defects, stabilising and repairing existing walls, replacing some roofs, treating wood decay and providing appropriate lighting. The UNESCO Awards for Conservation present the awards with hopes that recognising private efforts to restore historic properties would encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within the community, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/246088/cultural-heritage-unesco-award-for-hunza-fort/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Seven

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Council: 24 members directly elected

Governor of G-B: Wazir Baig (officiating)

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

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

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

Disclaimer

PoK News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

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