

POK NEWS DIGEST

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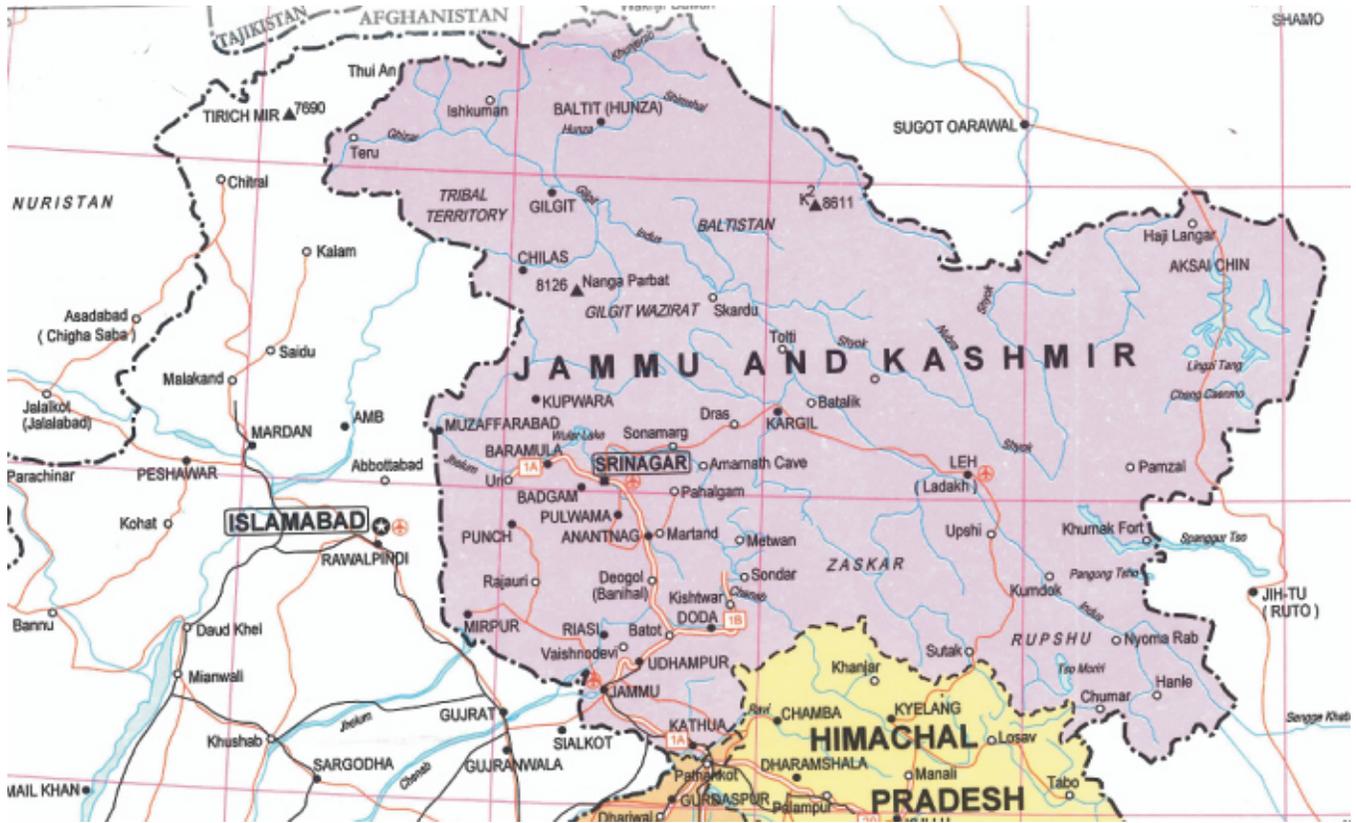
People Suffer as KKH Blockade Continues

Call to Boost Tourism in AJK



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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

A very significant development captured in one of the reports in this issue, especially from the point of India, is US having committed to fund the controversial Diamer Bhasha dam. The construction of the said dam has ever since been embroiled in problems owing several pertinent concerns concerning the local population- problems of inundation of agricultural land, submergence of archaeological sites and the construction site being situated in a high risk seismic zone. In July 2010, the World Bank refused to fund the dam citing the territory is claimed by India. A little later, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) declined to provide the finances in 2011.

In a desperate pitch to make inroads in Pakistan's infrastructure development which could overturn the anti American trends in Pakistan, US has committed \$ 500 million to the project. Part of this will be funded by the Kerry Lugar Package and the rest by way of investment. The development calls upon India to take a very serious note and urge US to stay out of PoK. Otherwise, the newly evolved strategic partnership will take an adverse hit and impact the overall India-US relations. For China to tinker with India on Kashmir is quite natural in view of its relationship with Pakistan. However, for US to engage in any kind of activity in PoK without India's consent is to the detriment of the otherwise improving bilateral ties.

The success of nationalist groups in the Gilgti Baltistan by-elections held recently is a welcome sign as far the fulfillment of local aspirations is concerned. In addition, this development also ushers the beginning of an opportunity for the nationalists groups to vent their ideas through a political platform.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Country losing money as resettlement gets delayed

The News, April 4, 2011

Delay in release of funds to shift people affected by the Mangla Raising Project has deprived the country of water storage capacity of 2.9 million acre feet for the last two years, causing a loss of much more money than the amount required. Officials in the ministry of water and power stated that since development expenditures were curtailed during each of the last three years, no strategy had been adopted to give priority to the projects that were nearly completed and could earn income after commissioning.

Sources further added said Raised Mangla Reservoir would earn Rs18 billion a year from irrigation and power generation. Moreover, they noted, the gains in agriculture productivity would be much higher. They stated the actual dam was raised in 2009 and was ready for filling in 2010, but WAPDA needed funds to give to Azad Jammu and Kashmir government for resettlement of the people affected by the dam.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=39525&Cat=3&dt=4/3/2011>

Seema Sengupta, Kashmir Imbrolio: A Lost Hope?

April 27, 2011

Kashmir is in the news once again for several reasons. Exiled Kashmiri leaders will participate in a demonstration outside the Pakistani High Commission in London on April 28 to protest against the Pakistani usurpation of Gilgit-Baltistan tribal areas which remained an inalienable portion of undivided Kashmir till the time New Delhi and Islamabad surreptitiously agreed to retain control over respective territories at the end of an

unresolved and bitter conflict. This demonstration organized by the Kashmir National Independence Alliance seeks to nail Islamabad's misrepresentation of facts on the issue of integrating the tribal areas of north-western Kashmir.

Pakistani authorities have all along maintained that they assumed administrative control of these areas only after finalizing an agreement with Azad Kashmir President Sardar Ibrahim Khan. However, Sardar Khan has on several occasions refuted this claim by confirming that he had never entered into any deal with Islamabad consciously with regard to the future of Gilgit-Baltistan area.

Kashmir National Party leader Shabir Choudhry and others who support the movement against Pakistani occupation of tribal areas and rest of Pakistan administered Kashmir, makes it a point to underscore the importance of seeking the moral support of Kashmiri citizens residing in the Indian side too.

Choudhry while denouncing Pakistan's tendency to offer mere lip service for the Kashmiri right to self determination, noted, the harassment has taken a toll on the psyche of the young generation of Kashmiris who remain confused about their true identity.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/kashmir-imbroglio-a-lost-hope-analysis-27042011/>

U K legacy party to Kashmir dispute: Attique

Pakistan Observer, April 9, 2011

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Prime Minister of AJK, stated the United Kingdom is a legacy party to Jammu and Kashmir. "It is the moral, political and diplomatic onus on London to help push forward a way to the just, amicable, peaceful solution to this issue sooner the better. A solution that fulfills the

aspirations of the Kashmir is quite reachable”.

In the official reception the Premier held on April 8 evening here to welcome the visiting Lord Mayor, Lord Qurban Hussain from Luton, Sardar Attique Ahmed hailed the recent announcement of aid to Pakistan by the British Prime Minister David Cameron stating this timely step would help deepen further the existing range of friendship between Pakistan and United Kingdom. He also recalled the post earthquake aid extended to AJK and said that the British people and NGOs had done great humanitarian services for the rehabilitation of affectees not only in AJK but in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=85421>

Zardari reiterates support to Kashmiri people

Daily Times, April 10, 2011

President Asif Ali Zardari on April 9 reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for the restoration of their fundamental rights. He also asked the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) workers to reach out to the people in far-flung areas and to complement the government's efforts in addressing their problems and grievances. President Zardari noted this in a meeting with a four-member delegation led by Lord Qurban Hussain, at the Presidency. Members of the PPP Kashmir Committee, including Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin and Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob, Federal Minister Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo, Raja Parvez Ashraf, Farhatullah Babar, Rukhsana Bangash and Fauzia Habib, also attended the meeting. Matters pertaining to party organisation and developmental works in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) were discussed during the meeting.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\04\10\story_10-4-2011_pg7_12

Kohala project given to Chinese firm without bidding

The News, April 13, 2011

The government has given the contract for 1,100

MW Kohala Hydropower Project to a Chinese firm, setting aside the Pakistan Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules and without holding International Competitive Bidding (ICB), well-placed official sources noted. The decision to award the contract to the Chinese company came soon after the recent visit of Cao Guangting, the chairman of the state-owned China Three Gorges Project Corporation (CTGPC), during which he took up the issue of awarding the contract of the said project to its subsidiary company, CWE, in his meetings with President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=5267&Cat=13&dt=4/13/2011>

Attique for imposing national educational martial law

Associated Press of Pakistan, April 14, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan April 13 called for imposing national educational martial law, under which parents should be held accountable for failing to enroll their children in schools. Addressing a conference “CEPEX 2011: Bridging the gaps” here at COMSATS, the AJK PM noted the voluntary educational organizations of the world can be associated with the campaign. He further stated that only a drastic and non traditional initiative can help bridge the yawning academic gap. Sardar Attique asked the stakeholders to hold brainstorming session on National Educational Martial Law. No less than such a daring innovative initiative can ensure 100% literacy, education to the society, he added.

AJK PM stated information technology has had to play crucial role for a massive awareness. Techno information will bring about industrial revolution by equipping the investors with the latest tools of fast development and return. “We should not be oblivious of the fact that economic engagement of the youth is a must for unhindered growth of a society”.

http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=136304&Itemid=2

Gilani for early provision of funds for development schemes in AJK

Daily Times, April 4, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Yousaf Raza Gilani directed the concerned department for the early provision of requisite funds for the ongoing development schemes in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). During a meeting with AJK Prime Minister, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, who called on Gilani at the Prime Minister's House on April 13, he said that the Pakistani government accords special priority to the welfare of the people of AJK. Gilani also agreed to visit AJK in the near future in connection with the inauguration of two universities established in Muzaffarabad and Rawalkot. The prime minister informed the AJK PM that as a special grant, an amount of Rs 350 million had been approved for the MLAs and an equal amount will be released in the coming budget.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\04\14\story_14-4-2011_pg7_15

Govt firm on support to Kashmiris: P

Associated Press of Pakistan, April 15, 2011

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on April 14 reiterated his government's commitment to continue moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri brethren. The government, he added, was providing development funds to all the political representatives irrespective of their political affiliations. Gilani stated that the announcement of Gilgit-Baltistan package was a clear manifestation of the government's resolve to give rights to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Prime Minister expressed these views while talking to Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, in a meeting at the PM House.

Appreciating the role of Mian Manzoor as the Chairman of the Committee formed to review the pace of work on construction of Bhasha Dam and Mangla Dam raising project, the Prime Minister noted that the completion of these projects would add considerable megawatts to the National Grid to meet the energy requirements of the country in

future. Referring to the upcoming general elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister asked the Minister for Kashmir Affairs to ensure free, fair and transparent elections according to the schedule to be announced by the Election Commission.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=136448&Itemid=1

Empowerment of Gilgit Baltistan to ensure public well-being: Gilani

Associated Press of Pakistan, April 16, 2011

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on April 15 stated the empowerment of Gilgit-Baltistan was in line with the government's series of initiatives for the overall wellbeing and development of underdeveloped areas. Speaking to Governor Gilgit-Baltistan, Pir Syed Karam Ali Shah, the Prime Minister noted the people living in the country's northern part would soon see the results of the government's efforts to significantly improve their living standard. The Prime Minister further noted the office of the Governor being the representative of federal government was important as it oversaw the smooth running of the affairs of the governance. He asked the Governor Gilgit-Baltistan to develop a system of regular feedback regarding the Federal Government's initiatives in the area so that these can be made more viable for the people.

The Prime Minister on the request of Governor Gilgit-Baltistan directed the concerned authorities to assess the progress made on the rehabilitation of the people affected by the floods and other calamities in these areas. He also directed to assess the strength of embankments of the nulla in Ghizer for necessary steps to save the local population in case of any future natural disaster. The Governor Gilgit-Baltistan thanked the Prime Minister for his keen interest in the development of the area. He also lauded his readiness to resolve any outstanding issue pertaining to Gilgit-Baltistan. He invited the Prime Minister to pay a visit to the area in the near future which he accepted.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=136558&Itemid=1

Ghizer By-Election: 51 polling stations set up

The Express Tribune, April 17, 2011

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan's Election Commission has set up 51 polling stations for the by-elections to be held in Ghizer District this month, officials stated on April 15. This is an increase of 11 polling stations compared to the 2009 election. The seat fell vacant after Pir Karam Ali Shah was appointed Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan. "There will be 51 polling stations for the by-elections," read the notification. The details of the polling station have been dispatched to the concerned officials for arrangements. Earlier this week, the government announced the election schedule for Constituency 19 Ghizer 1, a constituency from where the PPP has never lost any election in the past. The announcement of a Rs100 million aid package for the constituency, made by Chief Minister Mehdi Shah earlier this month, was assailed by opposition party candidates as pre-poll rigging, though the election commission remained silent over the issue.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/150419/ghizer-by-election-51-polling-stations-set-up/>

AJK elections to be free, fair: Firdous

Pakistan Times, April 18, 2011

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan stated on April 15 that the next elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) would be held in a fair and free manner. Addressing a press conference, she noted that all political parties were united for the Kashmir cause and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had always raised voice for Kashmiris rights, without giving any consideration to political interests. Kashmir is a jugular vein of Pakistan and time has come to resolve the dispute peacefully (with India) by giving rights to the Kashmiris, she added. She further noted that elections on Kashmiri seats in Sialkot would be fair and transparent and no one would be allowed to rig them to ensure mandate of Kashmiris.

<http://www.pakistantimes.net/pt/detail.php?newsId=20820>

Sardar Attique to quit as Muslim Conference head

Pakistan Observer, April 21, 2011

Some dramatic developments, which were brewing up for the last many months, may compel Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, Prime Minister of the AJK to say goodbye to the chairmanship of the ruling Muslim Conference once for all. A senior Muslim Conference leader, on condition of anonymity, confided that the recent launching of the AJK Chapter of the PML-N by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has further aggravated the multi-dimension crisis which the mercurial Attique was facing after the day one of his second stint. "Sardar Attique has become a liability for MC and things have gone so bad for him that his own success in the coming elections has become almost impossible", he noted.

The worried senior leaders of the Muslim Conference have accordingly started giving a serious thought for the successor of Sardar Attique. According to some leaders, Sardar Attique was thinking in terms of formally launching his son, Usman Attique, as President of the MC but he fears that such an initiative will lead to further fragmentation of the Party. An aide to the PM was of the view that in case Sardar Attique was still adamant to keep the leadership of the Party in the Mujahid Manzil, Rawalpindi, then his wife, Rizwana, who belongs to an influential and a genuine spiritual family of Rawalpindi, could be a better choice. At least she could keep the Party intact, may be temporarily, as Kalsoom Nawaz did when Mian Nawaz Sharif was in exile.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=87703>

Hina hails OIC's consistent support for legitimate struggle of Kashmiri people

Associated Press of Pakistan, April 21, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar received Special Representative of the OIC Secretary General on Jammu and Kashmir, Ambassador Abdullah Abdulrahman Alim in Islamabad at the Foreign Office on April 21. The Minister of State, while

welcoming the Special Representative's visit to Pakistan appreciated OIC's consistent support for the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people. She briefed him on the recently resumed full spectrum dialogue process with India and expressed the hope that the process will move forward in a constructive way towards the resolution of all outstanding issues.

The Secretary General's Special Representative thanked the Pakistan Government for providing him with an opportunity to interact with the leadership of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted the OIC's support to the just cause of Kashmir and the positive contribution of OIC Contact Group on Kashmir in this regard.

http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=137213&Itemid=1

Gilani administers oath to four members of AJK Council

Associated Press of Pakistan, April 22, 2011

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani April 21 administered oath to four members of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council here at the PM House. The oath was administered to Sardar Muhammad Naeem Khan of PML-N, Sardar Sagheer Chughtai and Chaudhry Mohammad Khan of Muslim Conference, and Chaudhry Mahboob of PPP. The AJK Council is a constitutional body established under section 21 of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act, 1974 and serves as the highest linking forum between Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir with following composition.

Prime Minister Gilani is chairman of the council while the AJK President is its vice-chairman. Ministers for KA&NA, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Education, Information and Media Development and the AJK Prime Minister or a person nominated by him are its members, while six other members are elected by the AJK Legislative Assembly.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=137152&Itemid=1

Sardar Attique's son enters election fray

Dawn, April 26, 2011

AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

formally launched his son, Usman Attique, as a candidate for the general elections likely to be held in June-July from an urban constituency of Muzaffarabad, an area from where his father and the then premier Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan had suffered a humiliating defeat exactly 15 years ago.

A formal declaration about his candidature came at a public meeting in the suburban Lohar Galli village the other day which was addressed by the prime minister along with some cabinet members and local Muslim Conference (MC) leaders. Mr Usman, who heads MC's so-called coordination board, is venturing on the electoral politics for the first time but has chosen Muzaffarabad to try his luck instead of his native Bagh district, home to three constituencies, represented by Prime Minister Sardar Attique (LA-13 Bagh-I), PML-N leader Col (retired) Raja Mohammad Nasim (LA-14, Bagh-II), and People's Party AJK leader Sardar Qamaruz Zaman (LA-15, Bagh-III).

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/26/sardar-attiques-son-enters-election-fray.html>

Kashmir dispute not included in govt preferences: Ghalib

April 26, 2011

President of Kashmir Movement United Kingdom Muhammad Ghalib has said that Kashmir issue is not part of the government preferences, adding that he is afraid of insincerity from its own people. He noted that resolution should be passed in parliament about the Amnesty International's report about occupied Kashmir. Talking to "SANA", he noted that only Kashmir issue should be the agenda in the meeting between Pakistan and India otherwise people of Kashmir are not interested in the dialogue process.

He demanded that resources should be allocated for the freedom movement in AJK budget. He said that Kashmir dispute should be central point of Pakistan foreign policy but government is doing nothing politically, morally and diplomatically for the issue on international level. He further noted that this issue is not included in the preferences of the Pakistani government, adding that due to the inactiveness of the Pakistani government and all

embassies present in the world are not doing anything for highlighting the Kashmir issue.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2011/04/26/kashmir-dispute-not-included-in-govt-preferences-ghalib/>

We will protest against Pakistan for illegally usurping Gilgit Baltistan: Dr Shabir Choudhry

April 27, 2011

Kashmir National Party leader Dr Shabir Choudhry said 28 April is an important date in modern history of Kashmir, as it was on this date Pakistani government illegally usurped areas of Gilgit Baltistan. KNP leaders said Pakistani authorities have hitherto fooled people of Jammu and Kashmir, including people of Gilgit Baltistan that they took charge of these areas after an agreement with Azad Kashmiri President Sardar Ibrahim Khan.

However, Sardar Ibrahim Khan more than once exposed this lie that he did not sign any contract or deal with the Pakistani authorities with regard to future of Gilgit Baltistan, hence Pakistani occupation of these areas is illegal and against the expressed wishes of the local people. Dr Shabir Choudhry noted Kashmir National Party will take part in the demonstration outside Pakistani High Commission in London to protest against injustice and exploitation of Pakistan, this demonstration being organised by Kashmir National Independence Alliance.

Dr Shabir Choudhry stated we will support this action of KNIA even though we are not part of this Alliance. He noted we support our brothers who are fighting for their rights on the Indian side of the divide, but our struggle is on the Pakistani side of the LOC; and we expect our brothers on that side to understand that we are also occupied and they should express their solidarity with us.

http://twocircles.net/2011apr27/we_will_protest_against_pakistan_illegally_usurping_gilgit_baltistan_dr_shabir_choudhry.ht

Middle East Like Situation in Pakistan-controlled Gilgit Baltistan Beggings Immediate International Attention

April 28, 2011

While talking to the media on April 27, Chairperson

of Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement, Engineer Manzoor Parwana, drew attention to the fact that Pakistan controlled Gilgit-Baltistan is moving towards financial bankruptcy and authorities lack funds to pay salaries to the employees belonging to energy, water, sanitation, civil supply, road and buildings, education and health departments. He noted that the situation contradicts Pakistan's claims regarding usefulness of the empowerment and self-governance ordinance of 2009. It is true that the ordinance may have created few hundred positions and designations for cabinet members and high ranking Pakistani bureaucrats. But these bureaucrats have largely worked to safeguard interests of Islamabad rather than serving native poverty-stricken masses. Parwana further said that the civilian developmental budget is being redirected to the office of Chief Minister to pay for allowances and protocol expenditures of the entourage of ministers. He quoted the auditor general of Gilgit-Baltistan, who has warned that if non-developmental expenditure is not reduced, then the entire province-like set up will cease to function in the next few months.

Parwana stated that the governmental departments like Local Bodies and Rural Development (LB&RD), which have no funds to undertake projects, are now falsely claiming credit for the development projects initiated and completed by Aga Khan Developmental Network (AKDN). It is precisely because developmental budget of LB&RD has been transferred to the accounts of CM office, and is being spent on election rallies and bribing politicians for 'successful' election campaigns. The government should stop relying on non-profit organizations to run the affairs of the region and fulfill their responsibilities. He lamented the fact that after completion of two years of the current regime, no annual development plan (ADP) has been presented, which hinders socio-economic growth in the region. Today, thousands of employees are protesting on the road demanding release of their salaries and government has no money to sustain the system. A situation similar to Syria, Lybia and Yemen exist in Gilgit-Baltistan and international community needs to pay immediate attention.

In the context, thousands of affected people of Ataabad Lake disaster continue awaiting funds for rehabilitation and compensation for the land and revenue losses. These people are victim of embezzlement, nepotism and in-efficiencies within government departments. Eliminating interference from Islamabad in running affairs of Gilgit-Baltistan will help address these issues.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Middle_East_Like_Situation_in_Pakistancontrolled_Gilgit_Baltistan_Be_gs_Immediate_International_Attention,201136170.aspx

Islamabad talks urge efforts for greater cooperation

Daily Times, April 30, 2011

High level policy makers from India and Pakistan welcomed the resumption of a dialogue between India and Pakistan at all levels and urged both governments to follow up the spirit of cooperation and friendship demonstrated at Mohali with innovative, bold and actionable confidence building measures (CBMs) between the two countries. A delegation comprising of senior Indian diplomats, legislators, journalists, reporters and academics discussed a range of issues with prominent Pakistani opinion leaders, ranging from bilateral dialogue, Kashmir issue, terrorism and the role of the media in Indo-Pak relations at The Islamabad Dialogue, organised by the Jinnah Institute from April 28 to April 29, 2011. The conference was part of Jinnah Institute's leading initiative on peace building through Track II diplomacy between India and Pakistan. Jinnah Institute partnered with Delhi based think tank Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) for the Islamabad Dialogue. Jinnah Institute President, Sherry Rehman, highlighted the gains made through the track II dialogue process between India and Pakistan and urged more frequent interactions between members of civil society at the track II level so that they can continue to feed into and inform the official bilateral dialogue. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, observed that the unresolved Kashmir issue is a constant hurdle in the establishment and continuation of good relations

between India and Pakistan. He urged participants to keep channels of communication open at all levels since dialogue was the only tested means of conflict resolution. Kashmiri delegates called for an end to human rights violations in AJK.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\04\30\story_30-4-2011_pg7_16

Pak soldier killed in explosion at camp in AJK

Daily Times, April 30, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: One soldier was killed and five were wounded in an explosion at an army camp in Azad Kashmir early on April 29, officials stated. The blast took place around midnight and triggered fire in Gulpar camp in Kotli district near the Line of Control, local police chief Malik Khalid told journalists by telephone. "One body has been recovered and five soldiers injured in the incident have been admitted to hospital," he noted. Local administration chief Fareed Ahmed confirmed the incident. "We are investigating if the explosion was accidentally caused by an electrical short circuit or if it was an act of terrorism," he further noted.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\04\30\story_30-4-2011_pg7_7

Target killing: Two perpetrators awarded death penalty

The Express Tribune, April 29, 2011

GILGIT: An Anti-Terrorist Court on April 28 handed down death penalty to two men accused of killing a government official last year when target killings had escalated in the town. The court acquitted another man, Ikram Ullah, still at large, for lack of evidence against him. The judgement was given by the administrative judge Raja Shahbaz Khan, court sources stated. Qari Ikramullah and Arif-ud-din have been awarded the death penalty for killing Mohammad Akbar, a government employee, in Gilgit in 2010, the official noted. He said that Qari Ikramullah is currently on the run and the decision has been taken in his absence.

The official further stated that another man, Mahfoozullah, was awarded life imprisonment in

the same case. He was accused in one of the incidents of target killings on sectarian lines in Gilgit last year. More than 11 people had fallen victim to the killings, forcing the Chief Minister Mehdi Shah to transfer over 50 policemen from Gilgit to other districts in punishment.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/158710/target-killing-two-perpetrators-awarded-death-penalty/>

British delegation meets AJK president Pakistan Today

April 26, 2011

LAHORE: A British delegation met Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Raja Zulquernain and discussed various issues. The delegation comprised Al Mustafa Welfare Trust Chairman Abdul Razaq Sajid and UK based journalists including Tahir Choudhry, Wajahat Ali Khan, Mian Tahir Jamil Noorani and Adnan Ahmad Khan. Abdul Razaq told AJK president that his organisation was working in 20 countries of the world and had played a role in relief and rescue activities.

He stated his organisation will continue to work in flood-hit areas and under a project, 20 houses, 10 each in Muzaffargarh and Charsada, have been completed with the support of Slough Islamic Trust London, while 100 houses would be constructed for affected families under this project. AJK president praised the trust's activities and noted that it needed to further enhance its working in Azad Kashmir and the government would fully cooperate with donor organizations for this purposes.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/04/british-delegation-meets-ajk-president/>

Attabad Lake aftermath: 'No greeting like a postal greeting' Shabbir Mir

The Express Tribune, April 29, 2011

GILGIT: The Attabad landslide and the ongoing expansion work on Karakoram Highway have greatly affected postal services between Pakistan and China, locals complained on April 27. "We have been unable to send and receive letters and other greetings from our relatives across the border since the incident at Attabad," stated Abdur Rehman

Bukhari, general secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan Overseas Chinese Association (G-BOCA).

G-BOCA is the regional body of the ex-Chinese nationals known as Uigur. This Muslim community had migrated from Sinkiang province of China before partition and is now settled in Gilgit-Baltistan and Rawalpindi. Now totalling around 5,000 families, the community continues to maintain ties with their relatives in Kashgar and other parts of Sinkiang in China. Bukhair stated that they are connected with their relatives in Sinkiang province through telephone but noted "it is no replacement for postal service". Postal service is like a cultural knot between people of the two countries and should not be abandoned following arrival of the new communication techniques like SMS via mobiles, he explained.

An official in the Pakistan Postal Service at Gilgit informed that postal services have been affected owing to the Attabad Lake and the deteriorating condition of Karakoram Highway (KKH). In early 2010, a massive landslide swept away a small hamlet called Attabad at Hunza, killing nearly 20 people and injuring many others. The landslide also blocked Hunza River, forming an over 20 kilometres long lake that submerged a large portion of the strategic KKH. The expansion work on KKH is underway from Raycot Bridge to Hunza, but is causing inconvenience to commuters. According to official sources, the work will be completed by 2012.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/158700/attabad-lake-aftermath-no-greeting-like-a-postal-greeting/>

Shabbir Mir, By-election turns into battle for power

The Express Tribune, April 28, 2011

GILGIT: The by-election for a Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly seat, vacated by Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah, has turned into a battle between two major political parties the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The significance of the G-BLA 19 (Ghizer 1) by-election, to be held on April 28, can be gauged from the fact that the top

leadership of both these parties is physically present in Gahkuch, the headquarters of Ghizer, in an attempt to attract as many votes as possible by using all means.

The PPP has virtually knocked out all its opponents. Chief Minister Mehdi Shah and Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah made dozens of visits to the constituency soon after the announcement of the date for polls, announcing development packages worth Rs100 million.

According to some sources, the money to be spent on the rehabilitation of flood victims is being spent on the purchase of votes. “More than Rs30 million have been showered on 'village committees' this week alone, not to mention job promises in case PPP candidate Jawahir Ali wins,” stated the source.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/158312/by-election-turns-into-battle-for-power/>

Nusrat Javeed, Marvi disappoints admirers

The Express Tribune, April 27, 2011

Most commentators do not take women parliamentarians seriously, especially those nominated to seats reserved for them in various legislative houses. It is widely believed that, spared the heat and dust of a directly contested election, these 'token representatives' remain clueless of 'ground realities.'

However, since the year 2002 we have witnessed many of our women parliamentarians demolishing this dismissive perception with sweating homework and courageous association with human rights related issues. Marvi Memon is an iconic example of this category. True, she came into politics under the patriarchal wings of military dictator Pervez Musharraf, but his fall has not aborted her growth. During the elections for a newly formed Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly in early 2010, she savoured an intensive exposure to the rough and tumble of electoral battles. She also took lead in owning and promoting the cause of flood victims,

and is always found amongst the front ranks of activists struggling for the marginalised in the feudal-dominated pockets of Sindh.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/157488/marvi-disappoints-admirers/>

Manzoor Ali & Shabbir Mir, Gilgit-Baltistan shocker: Nationalist candidate wins Ghizer by-poll,

The Express Tribune, April 30, 2011

GILGIT/GAKHUCH: The founder of the Balwaristan National Front (BNF), Nawaz Khan Naji, won the by-election in Gilgit-Baltistan's Ghizer constituency, hometown of Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah, on April 29. “This is the highest turnout 66 per cent in Pakistan's history,” stated Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rahim Nawaz Durrani. According to the CEC, BNF founder Nawaz Khan Naji outvoted his rival candidates of the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), obtaining over 8,299 votes. PML-N candidate Col (retd) Karim Khan bagged 5,043 votes while PPP candidate Engineer Jawahir Ali Khan got 4,526 votes. “We have contested elections in the past but it is our first win in the legislative assembly,” Naji stated, adding that he had formed the BNF in 1989.

Naji said the federal government should declare Gilgit-Baltistan a province of Pakistan, give its people representation in the National Assembly and Senate, and extend the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to the region. He further stated nationalism is not a curse, and that his party supports a secular worldview where there is no space for sectarianism. The defeat of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the election has stunned party leaders because they had pumped all resources to secure the seat which they never lost before. The seat was vacated by Pir Karam Ali Shah after he was elevated to the post of governor.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/159772/gilgit-baltistan-shocker-nationalist-candidate-wins-ghizer-by-poll/>

Economic Developments

Govt releases Rs53m for AJK

The News, April 5, 2011

MIRPUR: The government of Pakistan released the funds of Rs53 million against the waived off debts of October, 2005 devastating earthquake-hit business community of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). Sources stated on April 4 that the government had provided funds to the AJK on the request of the AJK Prime Minister Sardar Ateeq Ahmad Khan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=40005&Cat=2&dt=4/5/2011>

Plan to boost agri sector of AJK

Pakistan Observer, April 4, 2011

MIRPUR: To give an impetus to the agriculture sector of AJK, the state government was contemplating to ink an integrated phased plan to establish fair price shops for the supply of seed and other agricultural related items across the state, official sources stated. The sources stated on April 3 that mega vegetable markets, at district and tehsil level, were also being established to facilitate the farmers. The sources continued that an agriculture policy was being formulated to promote and encourage the cultivation of agricultural products besides uplifting the Livestock and Dairy Development sectors.

They further noted that opinions and suggestions of the farmers would also be invited for the formation of an effective agriculture policy. "The government has invited the suggestions of the growers while formulating the proposed horticulture policy," the sources added.

They stated the government was extending maximum facilities to the growers under the spirit to encourage and boost the per acre yield of the agricultural produces across AJK. The government

was of the view that the cultivators might raise their income by improving the standard of packing of the said agricultural produces for business purposes, they added.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=84686>

Rs. 4.5 bln for Mangla dam raising project and compensation to be released soon

Associated Press of Pakistan, April 8, 2011

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan, Mian Manzoor Ahmad Wattoo stated that Finance Division would release Rs 4.5 billion for the Mangla Dam Raising Project and compensation soon. He stated this while chairing a meeting to review progress on various issues regarding Mangla Dam Raising Project on April 7. The meeting was attended by President AJK, Zulqurian Khan, PM AJK, Attique Ahmad Khan, Barrister Sultan Mahmood, Opposition leader AJK, Ch. Majeed, Secretary Kashmir Affairs Muhammad Javed Malik, Secretary Water & Power, Chairman WAPDA, Commissioner Mangla Dam and others.

The Minister said that the Finance Minister Dr. Hafeez Sheikh has been requested for releasing Rs 4.5 billion for the Project and it would be obligation of Federal Minister, AJK Government and WAPDA to ensure Finance Division that impounding would be started by July or August. The federal minister noted that Finance Division would release the Rs 4.5 billion for the Mangla Dam Raising Project and compensation soon.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135942&Itemid=2

Rs10m grant announced for local govt bodies in G-B

The Express Tribune, April 17, 2011

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister Mehdi Shah linked the development of G-B with

peace, saying that expenditure on law and order will not be curtailed until peace is fully restored in the sectarianism-plagued capital city. "How can we spend the entire budget on development? After all we have to spend money on maintaining law and order of the city," he noted, while addressing an inauguration ceremony organised by the Gilgit Fire Brigade Department.

The chief minister announced a grant of Rs10 million for local government bodies, besides promising to approve the service structure for local government employees. The chief minister also handed over two new tractors to the Gilgit Municipal Committee, to help them keep the town clean.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/150883/rs10m-grant-announced-for-local-govt-bodies-in-g-b/>

Azad Kashmir: Work on mega road project suspended

The Express Tribune, April 24, 2011

MUZAFFARABAD: The construction on the largest road project in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was halted as the technical staff launched a protest. Some 55 members of the Earthquake Emergency Assistance Programme (EEAP), which is working on the 76-kilometre-long Muzaffarabad-Athmuqam Road, have gone on an indefinite strike demanding an increase in salary. Donor Asian Development Bank, which has provided Rs2.5 billion to the project, has agreed to increase the staff's salaries but a forum of the Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority's (ERRA) has not approved it yet. However, salaries of some other workers have been raised. The EEAP staff had moved the AJK High Court, which ordered the formulation of a uniform pay package.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/155581/azad-kashmir-work-on-mega-road-project-suspended/>

Punjab traders seek check on duty free trade at LoC

Press Trust of India, April 26, 2011

CHANDIGARH: Punjab-based traders today sought a check on Line of Control (LoC) trade at Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot routes, alleging misuse of the duty free status of these routes and hampering trade at the Attari-Wagah route. Besides, they also sought creation of additional infrastructure at Attari border to handle more cargo and extension in timing for carrying out trade at Attari-Wagah land route too give fillip to bilateral trade.

A group of exporters, led by Amritsar Exporters Chamber of Commerce today raised these demands during a brief meeting with Commerce Secretary Rahul Khullar in Amritsar. Khullar would meet his counterpart Zafar Mehmood in Islamabad on April 27 and 28 in a bid to give a push to bilateral trade ties between the two sides.

"We pointed out in the meeting with (Rahul) Khullar that our trade is suffering because of misuse of the duty free status given to Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot trade routes," Amritsar Exporters Chamber of Commerce Vice-President Rajdeep Uppal noted. "We requested him to ensure bilateral trade of only Kashmiri items as it was mandated while opening of the trade," Uppal added.

<http://news.in.msn.com/business/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5140194>

International Developments

US pledges 500 million dollars for Pak's Diamer-Bhasha dam

April 5, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The United States has agreed to provide over 500 million dollars for the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam in Pakistan, which is expected to be completed by 2021. A senior Water and Power Development Authority official said that discussions between the US and Pakistani authorities had already begun to finalize the size of the financing and the mode of US participation in the project. He said that the US assistance for the project would be a combination of investment and grant financing it had committed to under the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act.

The Diamer-Bhasha dam project was part of the five mega dams proposed by former President Pervez Musharraf in 2006. The dam's cost was initially put at 6.4 billion dollars, but it has now been revised to 11.2 billion dollars. The dam will have a designed live water storage capacity of about 5.8 million acre feet (MAF) and power generation capacity of 4,500MW.

Earlier, the World Bank had declined to fund the project because of its location and some unresolved constitutional interpretations. The project is located on Indus River, about 315 km upstream of Tarbela

Dam, 165 km downstream of the Northern Area capital Gilgit and 40 km downstream of Chilas.

<http://www.dailyindia.com/show/433126.php>

China to build \$1.2 billion hydropower project of 720MW

The News, April 5, 2011

China International Water and Electric Corp (CWE), a subsidiary of Three Gorges Corporation, has entered into an agreement with ATL (Associated Technology Limited), a Pakistani company, for building Korrak hydropower project of 720 MW at a cost of \$ 1.2 billion. The project will be erected at the border area between Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir over a period of four years. This is the first project which will be executed by a Chinese public sector company in a joint venture with a private company of Pakistan.

The project will produce electricity at 7.2 cent per kilowatt, stated Federal Minister for Water and Power Naveed Qamar after a signing ceremony on April 5. He noted it would be the first mega hydropower project to be completed with the help of a private company, which would pave the way for more such projects in the country.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=40213&Cat=3&dt=4/7/2011>

Other Developments

National Highway Authority discusses construction schemes

Daily Times, April 5, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The executive board of National Highway Authority (NHA) met on April 4 under the chairmanship of Chairman Muhammad Junaid and discussed in detail issues relating to various construction schemes undertaken by the authority.

The meeting reviewed various options for realignment of Karakoram Highway at barrier Lake Attaabad, Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan. During the briefing it was apprised that as a first option, a new road 10 meter above the water level would be built. While in the second option, water level may be reduced in Lake to such an extent that the old road be discovered and made usable.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\04\05\story_5-4-2011_pg5_5

People suffer as KKH blockade continues

The Express Tribune, April 23, 2011

GILGIT: The prolonged blockade of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) has left a number of passengers stranded in Chilas and Kohistan while escalating prices of food items in parts of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). Heavy landslide triggered by rain blocked KKH near Dassu on March 17, cutting off G-B from the rest of the country. Passengers reaching Gilgit on April 22 said that hundreds of loaded trucks and passenger buses were parked on both sides of the blockade, waiting for the debris to clear. Most passengers travelling on public transport did cross the debris, while risking their lives. "Work is in progress as Frontier Works Organisation machinery is clearing the debris," stated Ahmed Ali, a resident of Gilgit who got back from Besham on April 22.

He noted that some debris on the KKH had been

removed, letting light vehicles pass. He added that women, children and the elderly faced immense difficulty crossing the debris on foot to change buses. Meanwhile, an acute shortage of food items has hit Chilas, escalating prices of food items manifold.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/154865/people-suffer-as-kkh-blockade-continues/>

Call to boost tourism in AJK

The News, April 28, 2011

AZAD Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), the paradise on earth for its spectacular natural marvels and mesmerising scenic beauty, should now considered tourism among its top priorities. Pearl Continental, Muzaffarabad, a Rs.1.5 billion hotel, a real jewel in the crown of the AJ&K, is the best starting point to take concrete steps towards the goal of promoting tourism in this most beautiful gift from God.

These views were expressed by the high-ups of the Pearl Continental Hotel at a specially organised press conference to boost the tourism industry in AJ&K on April 27. The joint press conference was conducted by Rolf R. Bauer, Director of Operations, Hashoo Group of Hotels, Irshad Anjum .B., AVP North, Pear Continental Hotels and Aamir H.Kazi, General Manager Pearl Continental, Muzaffarabad. Bauer revealed he was not new to Pakistan and has been in this country for the last 30 years with the Hashoo Group on the invitation of Mr. Hashwani, the owner of the group. He noted he had never seen such mesmerising scenic beauty anywhere in the world, as he had witnessed in the AJ&K and the PC Muzaffarabad was no less than any international standard beautiful recreational and tourism spot in the world.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=44004&Cat=5&dt=4/28/2011>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

(Source: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.jammukashmir.nic.in/>, accessed on November 14,, 010)

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Raja Zulqarnain Khan

Prime Minister: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

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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