

POK

News Digest

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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

• **Political Developments**

AJK May Finally Seek Independent Status

Gemstone Extraction: Controversial Gilgit-Baltistan Mining Firm Shutting Down

Bhasha Dam Risky

2500 Militants Being Trained in AJK

Justice for Murder Victim: Protesters Refuse to Clear Karakoram Highway Till Demands are Met

• **Economic Developments**

Items Worth Rs 70.85m Traded on LoC

Snowfall: Cross-LoC Trade, Weekly Bus Suspended in Kashmir

Corporate Tax, Sust Income Sharing: FBR to Help Gilgit-Baltistan BoR Draft New Bill

• **International Developments**

Seminar on Community, Islam and Youth Engagement in Britain

British and European Kashmiri Diaspora Link up to Grow The Independent Alliance

• **Other Developments**

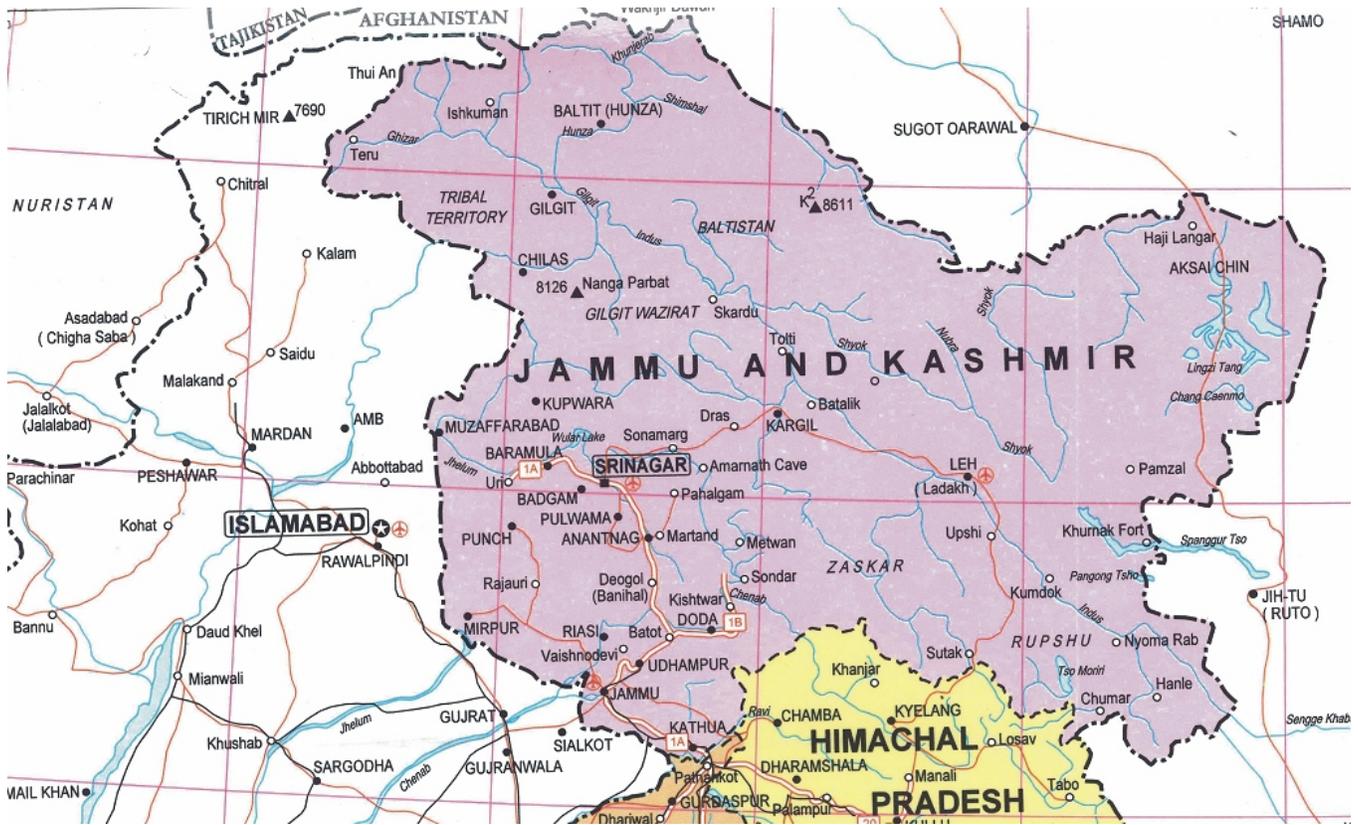
Deepening of Attabad Lake to Be Completed Next Year

Quota System in Medical Colleges: AJK High Court Takes up Plea



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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The controversies surrounding the Diamer Bhasha dam are refusing to die down. Very recently, Bashir Malik, formerly Chief Technical Advisor with the World Bank and the UN, in an appeal to the Chief Justice of Pakistan stated that the construction of a huge 922 feet roller compact concrete dam is risky. Citing that the construction of the dam involves several field risk factors, Malik noted it was a 'political' and 'fake' dam. Meanwhile, the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) prioritized a sum of \$ 28.2 billion for the Diamer Bhasha dam as noted in one of the reports in the current issue.

Facing continuous public ire, the Mohsin industries, a company involved in gem stones mining in Gilgit Baltistan is finally planning to shut down operations. This company is noted to be owned by Hong Kong based Wang Zunyu. There were allegations that the Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan granted license to this firm secretly violating the regulations which do not allow foreign companies to acquire mining rights in the region.

The Attabad tragedy which struck the region resulted in displacing thousands of people. It resulted in creation of an artificial lake which submerged section of the Karakoram Highway. Two year since the incident took place, the government is yet to offer viable solutions for addressing peoples' problems. The lackadaisical attitude of the administration has caused considerable resentment amongst the residents.

In an incident of sectarian violence in PoK, a resident of Chilas was killed. There were widespread protests all across demanding arrest of the killers. Angry villagers blocked the Karakoram highway which affected supplies of essential items in the region.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Political prisoners in Pakistani jails - Gilgit Baltistan in chains

January 1, 2012

GILGIT: As the 2011 sun set on Hunza and Gilgit-Baltistan, we thank all the youth, political activists and leaders and the people for sending us New Year messages in Gilgit district Jail and on the internet. Since August 11, 2011, when police and the puppet government killed two innocent IDPs of Attaabad Landslide lake; a son and a father, who were protesting peacefully for their legitimate rights in Aliabad Hunza, the police and security agencies entered houses without any legal warrants and authority at night, besieged elders, women and children and tortured young people for alleged involvement in the mob reaction and for supporting the rights of the IDPs and the people. We were arrested, tortured and jailed for voicing against police brutality and siding with the rights of the IDPs and the people and for demanding justice and taking action against the killers. The killers are still not charged, nor arrested and they reportedly roam around.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/Political_prisoners_in_Pakistani_jails_Gilgit_Baltistan_in_chains,201238877.aspx

Syed Nazir Gilani, Reply to AJK PM

January 2, 2012

Rancour of all manners between locals and refugees from the Valley and Jammu has dominated all disciplines of life in AJK from mid-1947 to early 1990s. The ultimate weapon used in politics to nail a refugee opponent was to brand him as a suspect or an Indian agent. The list of victims has included refugees in politics, judiciary, civil service and almost all walks of life. Life in Muzaffarabad remained distastefully polarised.

Prime Minister AJK has revisited this practice and

has conducted himself in an unimpressive manner in his 1347 words article “Srinagar Vs Muzaffarabad A true perspective” published in The Frontier Post on 18 December 2011. He has acted as a surrogate for the hidden hands who enjoy the indulgence of installing Prime Ministers in AJK and has tried to malign me without a due cause.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2012/01/reply-to-ajk-pm/>

Images versus reality

The Nation, January 4, 2012

BISP has distributed Rs Two billion among people in AJK through Farzana Raja, as noted by an English daily. It has been given to beneficiary families of Benazir Income Support Program as Waseelae-Haq cheques to 26 families by Farzana. This is a big amount to be dished out by one person irrespective of his or her status in the ruling hierarchy in a country where corruption pervades at every step and poverty roosts every house. Somebody has to go into bonafides of the recipients of huge amount. Six months back, on 25 June, 2011, PTI chairman alleged that Rs 70 billion funds for BISP were being misused by PPP for preparation of next Elections. At that moment, Imran Khan lamented that only Rs one billion have been located for the teachers and administrative staff of the Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) for the entire country.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/letters/04-Jan-2012/images-versus-reality>

Shabbir Mir, Gemstone extraction: Controversial Gilgit-Baltistan mining firm shutting down

The Express Tribune, January 5, 2012

GILGIT: Following a tremendous uproar in the Gilgit-Baltistan legislature about its licensing, the gemstone mining firm Mohsin Industries may

finally be shutting down, with several employees, including some of its senior most management being laid off in recent days, according to sources. “There is a high chance that the company may pack up in the near future,” stated one source on anonymity.

Mohsin Industries is owned by Wang Zunyu, a Hong Kong national who moved to Gilgit-Baltistan three years ago to start a gemstone mining company. Wang had converted to Islam and married a Gilgiti woman. Wang owns a company known as Bao-Billion Mining Group, of which Mohsin Industries is a Pakistani affiliate.

Wang had hired hundreds of locals for the company and recruited a man named Abid Baig, an influential local resident, as the president. Baig was reported to have been vehement in allowing a company owned by a foreign national to mine gemstones in Gilgit-Baltistan since he stated it would provide job opportunities to local people.

In June 2011, Mohsin Industries was granted a gemstone mining licence by the Gilgit-Baltistan government, an action that cause an uproar in the province's Legislative Assembly since the legislature had already banned the provincial government from issuing new licences. In a resolution passed by the assembly, Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Mehdi Shah was accused of “secretly” and illegally granting the licence to Mohsin Industries.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/316645/gemstone-extraction-controversial-gilgit-baltistan-mining-firm-shutting-down/>

Police Official Killed in Gilgit Terrorist waylay

Dardistan Times, January 5, 2012

GILGIT: Terrorism in Gilgit continues and this time a senior Police officer has been killed near his house. Police stated that Muhammad Ibrahim, Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) of Investigation wing was shot dead outside his home in Gilgit on January 4.

He was returning home after finishing his work for the day. Around 6:30 in the evening, Muhammad Ibrahim entered his neighbourhood in Nagaral.

Soon after he stepped out of his vehicle near his house, unknown assailants opened gunfire. Three people DSP Muhammad Ibrahim, his driver and gunman fell prey to the shooting spree. They were rushed to hospital in Gilgit, where Ibrahim succumbed to injuries. The terrorist were able to get away in the darkness of the evening. An FIR has been lodged and police has initiated investigation.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/police-official56-killed-gilgit89-terrorist-waylay-0>

AJK may finally seek independent status

Dawn, January 28, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: The President of Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir noted while talking to a foreign journalist on January 27 that if all efforts by Pakistan to raise the Kashmir issue before the United Nations Security Council failed, “we will ask officially to be recognised as an independent State”. Bernard Ullman of AFP, who interviewed the President in the Azad Kashmir capital, found Mr Khurshid “convinced that the present situation cannot be prolonged without a serious danger”.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/28/ajk-may-finally-seek-independent-status.html>

Shabbir Mir, Fraudulent deals: Gilgit-Baltistan's biggest corruption scandal unearthed

The Express Tribune, January 29, 2012

GILGIT: An assistant commissioner in the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) region and his staff have allegedly received commissions and kickbacks worth millions of rupees for preparing fake award lists for the lands in Thore Valley likely to be submerged due to the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam. “The officials, including the assistant commissioner of Diamer, a magistrate (Tehsildar) and two Naib Tehsildars prepared a forged award list of over Rs3 billion for barren lands in Thore Valley and received over Rs100 million in kickbacks,” credible sources noted on January 28.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/328776/fraudulent-deals-gilgit-baltistans-biggest-corruption-scandal-unearthed/>

Ramzam Chandio, Gilgit-based outfit behind killings

January 29, 2012

KARACHI: Federal Interior Minister Senator Rehman Malik stated that a Gilgit-based terrorist group has been involved in recent incidents of target-killings in the city. Maulvi Fazlullah, a leader of Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat has been aiding and abetting the outlaws for attack in the city to spread terrorism. The Federal minister was talking to media in Karachi on January 29. Rehman Malik ruled out the involvement of any sectarian group in the recent killings of Shias in the city, claiming confidently that it was a death squad of a terrorist wing and the LEAs were closed to bust the group. He pinpointed that a group of terrorists from Gilgit had also joined the death squads operating in different parts of the country.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/karachi/29-Jan-2012/gilgit-based-outfit-behind-killings>

Noor Aftab, Affected people demand solution to problems

The News, January 5, 2012

Two years have passed but affected people of landslide driven 35-km long Attabad Lake are still moving from one door to another for solution of their problems and release of their near and dear ones who were arrested during protests against insensitivity of the Gilgit-Baltistan government. As part of their protest campaign scores of affected people of Attabad Lake appeared in front of National Press Club and raised slogans against apathy of both federal and Gilgit-Baltistan governments that have miserably failed to resolve this lingering crisis. The protesters stated freezing winter temperatures have transformed the lake into an ice block thus blocking their only viable route to get in touch with the rest of the country.

“Attabad Lake still poses immense problems for locals of the Hunza Valley as it has not only affected trade between the valleys but also affected international trade between Pakistan and China.

People on both sides of the lake started using boats to travel and carry out trade but now they have been cut off from other parts of the country,” they stated.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=85964&Cat=6>

Sikander Shaheen, Kayani off to China to buttress defence ties

The Nation, January 5, 2012

It is noted that the Pak-China border security cooperation entails bilateral agreements on joint border patrolling, surveillance and intelligence information exchange to stop the infiltration of illegal immigrants from both sides of the Gilgit-Baltistan-Xinjiang border and bilateral understandings on defence production. Military cooperation in this regard was reportedly finalised between China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Northern Light Infantry (NLI), an operational regiment of Pakistan Army deputed in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The proposed enhanced cooperation between PLA and NLI is widely perceived as part of Pakistani security establishment's counter narrative strategy against its hostile relationship with the allies amid the US reported reservations over NLI's close collaboration with the Chinese Army.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/05-Jan-2012/kayani-off-to-china-to-buttress-defence-ties>

ZAB praised for Kashmir cause: Yaqoob

The Nation, January 5, 2012

LAHORE: AJK President Sardar Yaqoob Khan stated that no one can challenge the vision of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for Kashmir cause. He stated there is no room for bargaining on Kashmir cause. Sardar Yaqoob stated this during a meeting with Managing Director Nawa-i-Waqt Group and Editor-in-chief of The Nation, Majid Nizami at his residence on January 4. He stated, “We will fight at every forum for Kashmir cause and no stone will be left unturned in this regard.” He praised the role of Nawa-i-Waqt and Majid Nizami for Kashmir cause. He stated Kashmiris were playing on front foot for

Pakistan. He further noted, “We are proud of Pak Army”.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/lahore/05-Jan-2012/zab-praised-for-kashmir-cause-yaqoob>

Chairman ERRA briefs PM about rehabilitation work in quake-hit areas of AJK, KPK

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 5, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA), Hamid Yar Hiraj called on Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani at his Parliament House Chamber on January 4 and apprised him about the pace of rehabilitation in the earthquake hit areas of Azad Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Prime Minister directed the ERRA Chairman to prioritize the projects and complete only those projects which have already been completed to the extent of 30 percent. He also directed that ERRA must avoid undertaking new projects and instead focus on the completion of ongoing projects.

http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=173589&Itemid=1

Shakeup in top GB bureaucracy

The News, January 5, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government reshuffled the top bureaucracy of Administration and Police with immediate effect to bring improvement in governance. According to a notification issued on January 5 by Services Department, Secretary Forest Abdul Hamid has been posted as Secretary Mineral, Abdul Qayyum as Secretary Science and Technology, Khadim Hussain Secretary Forest, Naib Khan Secretary Agriculture and Fisheries, Muhammad Ali Yougvi Secretary Food and Dr Faisal Zahoor as Secretary Health.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=30074&title=Shakeup-in-top-GB-bureaucracy>

Shabbir Mir, Judicial issues: Bar seeks withdrawal of reference against judge

The Express Tribune, January 6, 2012

GILGIT: Lawyers of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B)

described the judicial reference against G-B's Supreme Appellate Court (SAC) as a conspiracy and sought a thorough inquiry into the issue. “We demand withdrawal of the reference against Justice Jafar Shah, who is a well-reputed and respectable judge of the SAC,” stated Gilgit Bar Association President Javed Akhtar. Chief Justice Muhammad Nawaz Abbasi of the SAC had earlier moved a reference against Justice Shah on December 22, following a complaint by G-B Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah, who alleged that Justice Shah had threatened him.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/317234/judicial-issues-bar-seeks-withdrawal-of-reference-against-judge/>

Peer Muhammad, Exploitation: Transporters helpless to take on 'police extortion'

The Express Tribune, January 7, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Deployment of police officials on the Karakoram Highway seems to be a lucrative job for minting money from transporters. Officials in Hazara division, who are deployed to ensure passengers' security, have been observed extorting money from transporters, particularly those who travel to and from Gilgit-Baltistan. “We have to pay at least Rs1,000 on this route every day at various points without any reason. Police officials extort money from us on various pretexts”, stated, a bus driver taking passengers from Rawalpindi to Gilgit.

“I have a valid route permit, travel licence and every necessary document. But despite all of that, they forcefully took money from me,” stated Naveed, another bus driver in Haripur who had just paid Rs500 to the police. He claimed 'bhatta' is extorted from Attock Bridge to Besham and they could not avoid paying bribes. “We have to pay both the traffic police as well as security officials at various check posts,” Naveed added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/317817/exploitation-transporters-helpless-to-take-on-police-extortion/>

Text: Letter to AJK PM

January 5, 2012

At a time when as Prime Minister of AJK you ought to have been concerned to examine the reasons

which have resulted in US Government criminalising the diplomatic work done on Kashmir, by bringing a criminal complaint against the diplomatic work assigned to Syed Ghulam Nabi Fai Executive Director of Kashmir Centre Washington and inscribing in para 7 of its Criminal Complaint dated 18 July 2011 that “Justice Foundation/Kashmir Centre located in London, England, run by Nazir Ahmad Shawl and the Kashmir Centre- European Union, located in Brussels, Belgium, and run by Abdul Majeed Trambo” are run by “elements of the Government of Pakistan”, you have taken upon the role of Mohammad Amir Khan Sub Inspector, in New Town Police Station, Rawalpindi, who was instructed by Deputy Inspector General Police, Rawalpindi Range to register FIR against me on 28 July 1979.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/opinions.php/2012/01/06/text-letter-to-ajk-pm.html>

Yasmeen Ali, Ethnicity: Basis for new provinces?

Pakistan Observer

Looking into the very concept of decentralization, history proves, this has been a popular concept, well applied by earlier civilizations. That Pakistan should be divided into smaller administrative units is an attractive proposition. It should help in being in touch with the issues on ground, bringing together the governed and the governing, addressing the needs to the common man.

The question that arises is: what should be the basis of this division? Ethnicity? I would say, a resounding NO to that one. It can only lead to greater division, not unification and will therefore, be self defeating. Renaming provinces has its own bitter repercussions. Take the case of Old NWFP, now KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), but now Hazara, wants to have its own identity

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=134371>

Shabbir Mir, Judicial reference controversy: Call to regularise SAC judges' services

The Express Tribune, January 9, 2012

GILGIT: As the judicial reference controversy

against a senior Supreme Appellate Court (SAC) judge draws public attention, the opposition leader of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) has demanded implementation of a resolution that sought regularisation of judges' service.

“The government does not honour the wishes of public representatives,” Janbaz Khan stated on January 9, referring to a resolution unanimously passed by the GBLA in September 2011. He stated that had the resolution been implemented, the judicial reference controversy would never have occurred.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/318669/judicial-reference-controversy-call-to-regularise-sac-judges-services/>

Shabbir Mir, Target killing: G-B govt issues shoot-to-kill orders

The Express Tribune, January 8, 2012

GILGIT: Despite shoot-to-kill orders issued by the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government to restore peace, the capital city was swept by a fresh wave of violence after armed men killed one person and injured three others in broad daylight on January 7. This week, four persons were killed, including a deputy superintendent police (DSP) and four others were injured. Rizwan, a resident of Kashrote who was injured in an ambush some days ago, died in the hospital, provoking the already charged people who took to the streets in protest. An hour after the first death, Hamid Karim, a resident of Nagral, was ambushed by unidentified men on Ahsan Ali Road near Kashrote. He was immediately taken to the hospital where his condition is stated to be serious.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/318253/target-killing-g-b-govt-issues-shoot-to-kill-orders/>

'Request for chief judge's extension revoked' G-B CM's statement refuted by Supreme Appellate Court

The Express Tribune, January 8, 2012

GILGIT: Amid a controversy which erupted in the wake of a judicial reference against a senior Supreme Appellate Court (SAC), judge, Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister (CM) Mehdi Shah

stated Chief Judge Justice Nawaz Abbasi has been barred from working in Islamabad and that a request for an extension in service has been revoked. However, the CM's statement was partly refuted by the court.

Justice Abbasi had moved a reference against Justice Jafar Shah last December, after a complaint by Governor Karam Ali Shah. The governor had forwarded a summary for Justice Abbasi's extension who was due to retire on January 14, 2012. However, a press release issued by the SAC registrar stated that Mehdi Shah's statement is based on misinformation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/318249/request-for-chief-judges-extension-revoked/>

Syed Nazir Gilani, Pakistan's Kashmir Policy

January 23, 2012

It is reported that Chairman of Hurriyat Conference (G) Syed Ali Shah Geelani has stated that Pakistan's contemporary Kashmir policy was not in sync with the aspirations and sentiments of Kashmiris. He stated this during an interaction with Pakistan High Commissioner Shahid Malik in New Delhi. Geelani Sahib has complained that Pakistan didn't defend Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai properly. He has asked Pakistan to raise the human rights violations in Kashmir at international level to draw the attention of the world towards the issue. Hurriyat (M) chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who is in New Delhi for the past few days, is also scheduled to meet the Pakistan High Commissioner. It is reported that Mirwaiz will also discuss the present political situation of Pakistan and get an account of the situation there during the meet.

It is very unfortunate that our leadership should have such a concern on Pakistan's contemporary Kashmir policy after 22 years of present struggle. Our leaders have failed to graduate in wisdom on the issue of self-determination. Kashmir policy in Pakistan is an exclusive subject of the military and civil establishment. Military bureaucracy has the final say and they have been using Hurriyat appointees in Islamabad no more than a failed proxy. Government of Pakistan has an obligation to pursue

Kashmir policy under UNCIP Resolutions to sync it with the aspirations and sentiments of Kashmiris and watch its national interests as embedded in article 257 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/opinions.php/2012/01/23/pakistan-8217-s-kashmir-policy.html>

Diamer-Bhasha Dam to be completed in seven years, Senate told

The News, January 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water and Power Syed Naveed Qamar on January 27 informed the Senate that physical work on Diamer Bhasha Dam has already been started and it would be completed in seven years. Responding to different supplementary questions raised by Senators during Question Hour, he stated that land for construction of colonies and other infrastructure has also been acquired and payment was also made to some victims in the current fiscal year. Remaining payment would be made during the next fiscal year, he added.

He stated that Wapda has prepared a master plan to construct a number of storages including Diamer Bhasha, Munda and Kurram Tangi dams in near future besides early completion of Mangla Raising Project and Gomal Zam dams. Wapda was also undertaking construction of small and medium dams in all the four provinces. The minister stated that some funds were released last week for Kurram Tangi dam and would be completed in next three years. The UStated has also shown interest to provide assistance for the project, he added.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=12075&Cat=13>

Senator Zafar Ali Shah opposes AK related legislation

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: An interesting constitutional debate on the status of Azad Kashmir took place in the Senate during which prominent lawyer and PML-N Senator Syed Zafar Ali Shah termed the state as a separate country. Speaking on a point of order, Syed Zfar Ali Shah stated according to constitution of Pakistan and UN Resolutions, Azad

Kashmir is not a province of Pakistan but a separate country. Therefore he stated it would be unconstitutional to make AJK Chief Secretary of Pakistan Energy Infrastructure Board. He contended that legislation cannot be done in the Parliament about Azad Kashmir saying it would affect Pakistan's principled position on Kashmir dispute.

Zafar Ali Shah stated AJK has its own President, Prime Minister, Supreme Court and Legislative assembly though Pakistan has not accepted its separate State identity. Leader of the House Syed Nayyar Hussain Bokhari opposed the view point of the PML-N Senator stressing that AJK was not a separate country.

He stated a Federal Ministry is responsible for relations between Pakistan and the Azad territory. PML-Q Senator Wasim Sajjad remarked that Syed Zafar Ali Shah has gone too far which is not a reality. He stated AJK is not a separate country and Kashmiris travel abroad on Pakistani passport.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=137784>

Ehtesab court judge appointed

Dawn, January 24, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan on January 23 appointed Ghulam Bashir Mughal, district and sessions judge Neelum, as Ehtesab Court Judge, Muzaffarabad. He did it after consultation with the AJK High Court Chief Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal. According to the law department notification issued in Muzaffarabad, Tariq Iqbal Lone, district and sessions judge Muzaffarabad, will additionally perform the duty of district and sessions judge Neelum till further orders.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/24/ehtesab-court-judge-appointed.html>

Running afoul: AJK govt served contempt notice

The Express Tribune, January 23, 2012

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court served a contempt notice on the state government for replacing the incumbent deputy

chairman of the state's accountability bureau by disregarding its stay order. The court has set January 30 for the AJK government to respond to the notice.

The AJK government had appointed Chaudhry Aurangzeb as Deputy Chairman of the AJK Ehtesab Bureau in place of the incumbent Haji Muhammad Ashraf, who had been appointed to the office for a three-year period on December 22, 2010. Sensing the move, Haji Ashraf had filed a writ petition in the AJK HC on January 3 against the anticipated appointment of Chaudhry Aurangzeb in his place allegedly on political grounds.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/325804/running-afoul-ajk-govt-served-contempt-notice/>

FoDP task force gives top priority to Bhasha dam

Dawn, January 23, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) has prioritised \$28.2 billion water and hydropower projects to be completed by 2020 and decided to follow the guidelines and safeguards set by the Asian Development Bank for providing funds and technical assistance. This is the crux of the final report of FoDP's water sector task force after including suggestions of the stakeholders. The report completed in about a year is scheduled to be launched on February 2012 20.

“It is Pakistan's political and policy leaders who will have to decide the course of action”- whether to have a binding commitment from provinces and the lending agencies or follow the normal decision process of five-year plans, annual budgets and partnership strategies with lenders about a roadmap.

The report says Pakistan has one of the largest, complex and integrated water system but despite greater issues its policy leaders were 'flying almost blind' despite an ominous threat from snow and glacial melt on the Indus system arising out of climate change.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/23/fodp-task-force-gives-top-priority-to-bhasha-dam.html>

Shams Rehman, Azad Kashmir: Civil Society, Democracy and Empowerment

January 21, 2012

A very important conference organized by the 'Kashmir Peace, Development and Reforms Centre' (KPDRC) was held in Islamabad. The purpose was to look into one of the most crucial reform that could make the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) government more autonomous. The participants including leaders of the major 'election' parties of AJK consensually demanded for the abolition of Kashmir council and reforming the constitutional status of this part of the divided state of 'Jammu and Kashmir and Tibet Ha, Aqsai etc.'

It is an established fact that Kashmir Council which enjoys authority over some of the key issues related to Kashmir including tax collection and has a huge budget making it a parallel government. It is also a welcome recognition that constitutionally the AJK assembly needs to be given more powers to be taken seriously at any international forum. However, in my view the reform agenda has to be properly devised and has to include all what is necessary and sufficient for making AJK government autonomous, credible and dignified. This article highlights the layers of control over AJK government and tends to offers the most basic reform agenda for this part of the divided state.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/opinions.php/2012/01/21/azad-kashmir-civil-society-democracy-and-empowerment.html>

Government to utilize all possible resources for GB' uplift: Malik

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 22, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior A Rehman Malik on January 21 stated the government will utilize all possible resources for bringing progress and prosperity in Gilgit Baltistan (GB). In a meeting with Chief Minister for GB Syed Mehdi Shah, Malik stated "the government is initiating serious efforts for the uplift of the people belonging to Gilgit Baltistan". "No one will be allowed to disrupt the peaceful environment of GB and

negative elements will be treated strictly", he warned.

The minister announced to inaugurate Passport Office in Chilas in the mid of February and stated that he will visit GB and Skardu soon and resolve the grievances of people regarding National Database and Registration Authority and passport.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=175579&Itemid=1

Parliament passes record number of legislations: Kundi

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 21, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker, National Assembly, Faisal Karim Kundi on January 20 stated the present Parliament has done record legislation including the historic 18th and 19th constitutional amendments. During a meeting with Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan (GB), Syed Mehdi Shah, the Deputy Speaker also discussed matters pertaining to legislation and developmental projects in GB. He told the Chief Minister GB that the parliament had paid special heed to vulnerable segments of the society especially women, children and minorities and more than two dozen bills were passed to empower the women and protect rights of women and minorities.

http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=175517&Itemid=2

AH Nizami, Attempt on CJ's life: AJK lawyers boycott courts against police 'inefficiency'

The Express Tribune, January 20, 2012

MIRPUR: Lawyers boycotted courts on January 19 to protest against the delay in the arrest of attackers who fired at Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) High Court Chief Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal and injured him last year. The lawyers accused the AJK police of inefficiency for failing to arrest the accused even after a lapse of three months. They warned of widespread protests across AJK if the attackers were not arrested by January 23. The strike caused immense inconvenience to litigants who had come from afar, especially from remote areas of the hilly district.

While addressing a group of lawyers outside the courts, Mirpur District Bar Association (DBA) President Kamran Tariq stated the inordinate delay in nabbing the accused has spread “a wave of grave concern” among the legal fraternity across AJK.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/324221/attempt-on-cjs-life-ajk-lawyers-boycott-courts-against-police-inefficiency/>

Usman Manzoor, Ousted chief justice may get top AJKNAB post

The News, January 19, 2012

Governance is not the issue in Islamabad only, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir government, led by Pakistan People's Party, is also hit by the same disease as things are being finalized to appoint as Chairman Ehtasab Bureau, a former chief justice of AJK who was ousted by the Supreme Judicial Council on charges of misconduct, misuse of authority and blasphemy.

Well-placed sources in AJK stated that all is set for Justice (ret'd) Riaz Akhtar Chaudhry to become Chairman Ehtasab Bureau of AJK despite reservations expressed by the President AJK. Sources stated that Chairman Ehtasab Bureau draws perks and privileges equal to a judge of High Court. The spokesman of AJK Prime Minister, Abdul Rasheed, when approached for his comments, without denying stated that nothing has been finalized yet.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=88378&Cat=6>

Bhasha dam risky

The News, January 18, 2012

LAHORE: Former UN and World Bank Chief Technical Adviser Eng Bashir A Malik has expressed reservations about the recently started Diamer Bhasha dam. In an appeal to the chief justice of Pakistan, he stated that Bhasha was not a natural site for a storage dam like Tarbela and Kalabagh. “It was identified as a site for hydropower development by the World Bank in 1967. However, its first feasibility report was drawn for a storage dam on cue by Wapda in 1984. The RCC Bhasha dam height is 922 feet with a water storage capacity of 6.7 maf and hydropower generation of 4500 mw.

There is no other dam of this height in the world,” he stated.

“Diamir Bhasha appeared to be but a political or fake dam! Trickery did pay on 17 January 2006, when Musharraf suddenly announced building it first instead of KBD. The safety aspects of the 922-foot high RCC Bhasha Dam stemmed from its unprecedented height and field risk factors.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=88105&Cat=5&dt=1/18/2012>

Attabad

The News, January 30, 2012

It is now slightly over two years since the landslide at Attabad cut 27kms of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), created a lake 21kms long, displaced at least 6,000 people, submerged two vital bridges and is now devastating the economy of upper Hunza. After an initial flurry of media activity the event and its consequences have mostly dropped from the public view. Local protests have been held at the lack of progress in addressing the myriad problems this natural event has caused. Various solutions have been proposed, from completely draining the lake and dismantling the blockage to lowering it by 20 metres which will re-expose the KKH and the two flooded bridges and allow normal communications to resume. As yet, no solution seems to have found sufficient political support to see it through to a conclusion.

A recently-published study of the breadth and depth of the impact of the formation of the lake on the local collective consciousness and economy makes depressing reading. There are widespread feelings of depression not just at the loss of livelihood, but of homes and habitats. Students are fearful about their future and this in an area which despite its remoteness has a high premium on the value of education for girls and boys as well as men and women. There are concerns at the loss of cultural identity, and in one instance the loss of a language (Domaki) spoken in a single, now submerged, village, with its people having been displaced and dispersed.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=90156&Cat=8>

2500 militants being trained in AJK

January 16, 2012

JAMMU: About 2500 militants were being trained in the camps 'existing' in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir across the Line of Control, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command Lt Gen K T Parnaik noted. "As per intelligence sources, 2000 to 2500 militants are learning skills in training camps operating across the line of border in PAK," he added.

<http://www.sananews.net/english/2012/01/2500-militants-being-trained-in-ajk/>

GB Package a lollipop or liberation from KANA Raj?

Dardistan Times

GILGIT: A hardliner religious organization, Tanzeem Ahle Sunnat, in Gilgit-Baltistan has bemoaned the democratic arrangement given to the region under the Self-Governance Ordinance 2009. "The package is not a blessing and no way a constitutional alternate. When a child cries, daddy gives a lollipop, GB package is just a lollipop" lamented by Muhammad Nawaz, General Secretary of the organization. He stated that the package has bruised the original identity of local people and those sitting in the assembly are using the package for their own designs.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/content/gb-package9-lollipop-or-liberation11-kana-raj2>

Shabbir Mir, Diamer-Bhasha project: Islamabad moves to quell dam boundary dispute Summon-s

The Express Tribune, January 17, 2012

GILGIT: As Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) continue to clash over the Diamer-Bhasha dam boundary, the federal government has summoned the chief ministers of both regions to Islamabad in order to work out a solution to the dispute, sources revealed on January 16. "The chief ministers of both regions have been summoned to Islamabad for a meeting with the prime minister," an official in the G-B Assembly

stated. The K-P government had written a letter last year to the prime minister, asking him to help 'K-P get its right' over the 4,500-megawatt dam.

Anticipating a tough stance from G-B, the K-P government has done its homework before presenting its case at the meeting due next week, sources stated. K-P has a claim over about eight kilometres of land near the Diamer-Bhasha dam which is being built on Indus River, about 300 kilometres upstream of Tarbela dam and about 40 kilometres downstream of Chilas Town, the headquarters of G-B's Diamer district.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/322734/diamer-bhasha-project-islamabad-moves-to-quell-dam-boundary-dispute/>

Bhasha Dam to permanently address energy problem

Pakistan Observer

PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Kirmatullah Khan stated that practical work and accomplishments of various uplift projects was a proof of his commitments towards addressing people's problems. He expressed these views in a public gathering at Shahi Payan. He stated that work on various uplift projects was underway in PK-7 and government was working on an ambitious plan to provide basic amenities of life to people at their doorstep.

The Speaker stated that the contract for construction of Rs. 260 million Sufaidsang-Shagia Road was awarded to more than one contractor in order to complete the project before stipulated time. Kamaratullah Khan stated that government has started construction of Bhasha Dam and extension of Tarbala Dam to resolve the energy crisis on permanent basis. He stated people would soon enjoy the fruits of these endeavors. He also announced the construction of Khwar bridge at village Kandi Umarzai. Diamer-Bhasha Dam, the third largest water reservoir in the country having the capacity of producing 4500 mega watt electricity will irrigate thousands of acres agricultural land and help resolve energy crisis.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=135569>

Rs 8bn TBMs to reach Pakistan by end of Jan

Daily Times, January 14, 2012

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) is installing two tunnel boring machines (TBMs) at a cost of Rs 8 billion on 969 megawatts (MW) Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project to reduce construction period of the project by about 18 months aimed at estimated benefit of Rs 60 billion. The two German-manufactured TBMs, being imported by the contractor, are expected to reach Pakistan by the end of this month.

WAPDA Chairman Shakil Durrani stated this while briefing the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, and Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Dr Nadeem-ul-Haq during their visit to Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project components including underground powerhouse, weir site, diversion tunnel, de-sander and main tunnels etc. Federal Secretary Planning Asif Bajwa, AJK Chief Secretary Muhammad Shahzad Arbab, Planning Commission Member Energy Shahid Sattar, WAPDA Member (Water) Raghbir Abbas Shah, Member (Power) Muhammad Qasim Khan and senior officers concerned were also present during the visit.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C01%5C14%5Cstory_14-1-2012_pg5_16

AH Nizami, Refugees' woes: AJK govt implementing Rs1.1 billion resettlement plan in phases

The Express Tribune, January 14, 2012

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government is implementing a plan for the rehabilitation of refugees in phases that will cost Rs1.1 billion, claimed an official associated with the plan. He denied categorically any sort of discrimination against Kashmiri refugees who crossed over the Line of Control from India in 1947. When contacted, a senior official from the department of resettlement and rehabilitation, who declined to be identified, stated that the deputy commissioner rehabilitation is assigned to issue state subject certificates to refugees. He visits various cities every month for this purpose. The

state subject certificate is a basic requirement for refugees to apply for a job in government departments or for admission in higher educational institutes against their quota.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/321298/refugees-woes-ajk-govt-implementing-rs1-1-billion-resettlement-plan-in-phases/>

AJK assembly reposes trust in Pakistani leaders

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJ&K legislative assembly reposed full confidence on the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza illani for their efforts to strengthen democracy and democratic process in Pakistan. The assembly lauded their struggle to substantiate national institutions emphasizing any harm to democracy would cause irreparable loss to Kashmir issue besides leaving adverse impacts on solidarity of Pakistan.

It was stated in a unanimously passed resolution, presented by the PPP legislators Chaudry Latif Akbar, Chaudry Pervez Ashraf, Matlob Inqalabi, Afsar Shahid, Javid Iqbal Budhanvi, Azhar Gellani and Sadaf Sheikh. AJ&K Legislative Assembly's session, with speaker Ghulam Sadiq in chair, paid gratitude to the efforts made by PPP-led coalition government to highlighting Kashmir issue in consonance with aspirations of the people of Kashmir and vowed for the continuation of the democratic process in the country. It also made an appeal to all political and democratic forces in Pakistan to play positive.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=188106>

Peer Muhammad / Shabbir Mir, After four days of blockade, KKH opens for traffic

The Express Tribune, January 13, 2012

GILGIT/RAWALPINDI: After four days of blockade, the Karakoram Highway (KKH) finally reopened for traffic as the government ceded to protesters' demands on January 12. Regional Health Minister Gulbar Khan stated the primary demand of the protesters was "security for Diamer valley residents in Gilgit." Protesters had demanded the death penalty for killers of a local, Abdul Wakil, who fell victim to sectarian violence in Gilgit, along with compensation for his family.

Following negotiations between representatives of the government and the people of Diamer valley, Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Secretary Saifullah Chattha accepted the demands which included setting up a passport office in Chilas and declaring Astore-Diamer a division. It was also decided that a larger committee representing Sunni and Shia leaders would be formed to promote sectarian harmony.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/320567/after-four-days-of-blockade-kkh-opens-for-traffic/>

Counter-terrorism: Police to get bullet-proof cars

The Express Tribune, January 13, 2012

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government has decided to provide bullet-proof cars and other vehicles to the police to help quell the violence that has ruined the fragile peace in the capital city, stated the chief minister (CM) noted on January 12. "The decision has been taken to ensure public safety," CM Mehdi Shah stated. The G-B government plans to induct more personnel in the police force and train them to deal with the violence. Gilgit has witnessed an upsurge in violence which has claimed dozens of victims motivated by sectarian differences. The government has also installed close circuit cameras in some places.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/320560/counterterrorism-police-to-get-bullet-proof-cars/>

Pakistan's manipulation of Gilgit-Baltistan's status

January 11, 2012

Gilgit-Baltistan is the northern-most geographical area of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The region which used to be known as the Northern Areas in Pakistan shares borders with Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor in the north, China in the east and north-east, Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir to the south-east and Azad Kashmir to the southwest.

Gilgit Baltistan is highly mountainous and covers an area of 72,971 Km. It has a population of about a million people. Gilgit Baltistan came into being by the merger of Ladakh Wazarat, Baltistan District

Gilgit Agency and the states of Nagar and Hunza. Both Azad Kashmir and Gilgit -Baltistan make up the disputed region of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, as per International organizations and the United Nations.

<http://www.neurope.eu/blog/pakistans-manipulation-status-gilgit-baltistan>

Shabbir Mir, Blockade of KKH causes shortage of essential items in G-B

The Express Tribune, January 12, 2012

GILGIT: Chief Minister (CM) Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) stated the Karakoram Highway (KKH), blocked by protesters for five days, would be cleared as negotiations with a delegation of political representatives concluded successfully. The CM's statement claiming negotiations were successful and the blockade was expected to end came at a time when G-B has been hit by a shortage of food and other items.

For the past five days, the region has been practically cut off from the rest of the country, suspending supplies sent from Rawalpindi and other cities. Hoarders and black marketers were quick to profit from the situation and created an artificial crisis in the region by restricting availability of items of daily use, including food and driving up prices.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/320134/blockade-of-kkh-causes-shortage-of-essential-items-in-g-b/>

China must stop genocide in East Turkestan: IGBS

January 11, 2012

East Turkestan is a region inhabited by the Uighurs and remains in Chinese occupation against the will of its people. The region borders Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan in South, Central Asian Republics in the west, and Mongolia and Russian Federation in the north. The natives speak a dialect of Turkic language and follow moderate form of Islam or Sufism as a way of life.

Chinese authorities are using different tactics to oppress local people; by denying them political and socio-economic autonomy; by controlling and

exploiting natural resources and means of production; and by changing ethnic and religious demography of the region. Authorities encourage ethnic Hans to settle in the urban centers of East Turkestan and offer the settlers special socio-economic and political incentives to hasten the process.

http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire/China_must_stop_genocide_in_East_Turkestan_IGBS,201239003.aspx

Shabbir Mir, Justice for murder victim: Protesters refuse to clear Karakoram Highway till demands are met

The Express Tribune, January 11, 2012

GILGIT: As the blockade of the Karakoram Highway continued for the third consecutive day, the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government sent a delegation to Chilas on Tuesday to negotiate with protesters inflamed by sectarian killing. The delegation led by G-B Health Minister Gulbar Khan, who belongs to Chilas, held negotiations with the protesters to reopen the highway for traffic. Their demands include the death penalty for Abdul Wakil's murderer and compensation for the bereaved family, an official stated.

Wakil, a resident of Chilas, was killed in Gilgit this week after the city witnessed a re-ignition of sectarian violence. At least two people were killed while four others were injured. The KKH was blocked after Wakil's body reached his native town three days ago. Hundreds of vehicles have since been stranded in Chilas on either side of the highway.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/319458/justice-for-murder-victim-protesters-refuse-to-clear-karakoram-highway-till-demands-are-met/>

AH Nizami, Disillusioned: Unfulfilled promises, discrimination add to Kashmiri refugees' plight

The Express Tribune, January 10, 2012

MIRPUR: Another year has gone by, leaving behind a trail of broken promises and lost hope for

Kashmiris who opted to migrate from Jammu & Kashmir to the Pakistan-administered territory after partition in waves. Their expectations of starting a new life as full-fledged citizens of an independent Kashmir with all rights and privileges remain unfulfilled to this day. Even 65 years after independence, discrimination towards the refugees continues. Spread out across Azad Jammu and Kashmir AJK and Pakistan in Kashmir colonies created by the AJK government decades ago, they still lack basic facilities.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/318979/disillusioned-unfulfilled-promises-discrimination-add-to-kashmiri-refugees-plight/>

Villagers threatened by dam cracks in Pakistan-administered Kashmir

January 9, 2012

NEW DELHI: A reservoir dam of a mini hydel power project built with Chinese assistance in Pakistan-administered Kashmir has developed cracks threatening around 70 families living near the plant. An email from some residents of Naltar village in Gilgit-Baltistan region stated the dam has developed "four big cracks and the water (from the river Indus) was fast gushing towards the residential area". "There are four visible gaps in the walls which pose a serious threat to us," they stated in the email to IANS. Fearing that the reservoir could collapse at any time, the residents were readying themselves to flee the place and move to nearby villages.

http://www.ummid.com/news/2012/January/09.01.2012/villagers_threatened_by_kashmir_dam.htm

Economic Developments

ERRA releases Rs 300m for rural housing subsidy

Pakistan Observer

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) released Rs. 300 million as Rural Housing Subsidy for earthquake affected people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. ERRA council approved payment of Housing Subsidy on basis of providing affidavit ensuring compliance to earthquake resistant technology used in reconstruction of Houses, stated a news release. The authority has released the amount to State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (SEERA) and Provincial Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (PEERA) for onward payment to the affected people.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=134303>

Corporate tax, Sust income sharing: FBR to help Gilgit-Baltistan BoR draft new bill

Business Recorder, January 28, 2012

The Federal Board of Revenue will assist the Gilgit-Baltistan Council Board of Revenue in drafting of the new bill for imposition of income tax on certain categories of persons including corporate sector of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), 35 percent corporate tax on GB-based companies and sharing of customs duty between the FBR and the GB on the clearance of Chinese goods from the Sust Dry Port. Sources noted on January 27 that the decision has been taken in the last meeting of the Technical Group of the FBR and the Gilgit-Baltistan Council Board of Revenue to examine the draft Bill on the imposition of the income tax in Gilgit-Baltistan.

It has been decided that 100 percent imposition of income tax law of Pakistan in the Gilgit-

Baltistan would be considered by re-drafting a Bill for the tax authorities of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council Board of Revenue.

<http://www.brecorder.com/taxation/single/666/181/1147805/>

Items worth Rs 70.85m traded on LoC

Daily Times, January 22, 2012

MIRPUR: The weekly trans-Line of control (LoC) trade by the businessmen of AJK and Jammu and Kashmir conducted bilateral trade worth Rs 70.85 million at the Tairnote-Chakan Da Bagh entry point on Rawalakot-Poonch route during four days of this week. Sources noted that Rs 30.56 million worth items were supplied, under barter system, by traders of Jammu & Kashmir to their counterparts in Rawalakot, AJK, while the supplies of the permitted items from across the LoC included Rs 40.29 million.

Onion, Red Chilly, Dry Coriander, Tamarind etc were landed in AJK, while the goods generally included dry fruits, fresh fruits, Peshawari sandals and herbs were supplied by the traders from AJK to their counterparts in Jammu & Kashmir. Concerned staff of the Trade Felicitation Centres including Arshad Mirza, TFO Hajeera, Rawalakot and the Trade Felicitation Officer Poonch were present at Tairnote Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C01%5C22%5Cstory_22-1-2012_pg5_10

Goods worth Rs 20.08 million traded along LoC

Business Recorder, January 20, 2012

Businessmen of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and in Jammu & Kashmir, traded goods through weekly service containing permitted items worth over Rs 20.08 million along the LoC at Tairnote-Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point on Rawalakot-Poonch route till January 18. The official sources stated on

January 19, as many as 24 trucks rolled out from Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) at Ranger in Poonch district of Indian Jammu and Kashmir to AJK. These trucks carried bags of Chilli, Cardamom, Coriander and Onion. From AJK, 9 trucks carrying bags of almond, dry dates, herbs, keenu and peshawari sandal crossed to other side of the LoC, sources stated. The officials from both sides of the LoC monitored the transportation of these goods at Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point twice during the day, they added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-economy/single/672/189/1144489/>

Shabbir Mir, Funds made available: NBP told to resume payments from Gilgit-Baltistan account

The Express Tribune, January 19, 2012

GILGIT: Ending a 17-day freeze, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on January 18 directed the National Bank to resume payments from the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government account. The payments were stopped on the directives of the SBP owing to insufficient funds in the regional government's account.

An official of the G-B government's finance department stated the state bank's earlier decision to stop payments was taken because the federal government had not released funds to the G-B account for the second half of the year, ending June 2012. As a result, government suppliers, contractors and hundreds of pensioners who come to Gilgit, the region's administrative centre, to collect payments were turned away, he stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/323694/funds-made-available-nbp-told-to-resume-payments-from-gilgit-baltistan-account/>

Items of over Rs 14.319m exchanged at LoC

The Nation, January 12, 2012

MIRPUR: In the wake of weekly bilateral trans-LoC trade, Kashmiri businessmen from AJK and

J&K on January 11 exchanged goods, under barter system, containing permitted items of over Rs. 14.319m along LoC at Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh Crossing point in Rawalakot. At least 25 trucks rolled out from Trade Facilitation Centre at Ranger in Poonch district of J&K to Rawalakot till January 11.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/12-Jan-2012/items-of-over-rs-14-319m-exchanged-at-loc>

A H Nizami, Snowfall: Cross-LoC trade, weekly bus suspended in Kashmir

The Express Tribune, January 17, 2012

Heavy snowfall coupled with torrential rains forced authorities both at Muzaffarabad and Srinagar to suspend the cross-LoC trade, as well as halt the weekly bus service between the two cities as snow blocked the road connecting them, stated officials. The weekly bus service between Azad Jammu & Kashmir's (AJK) metropolis Muzaffarabad and Srinagar named as 'Karvan-e-Aman' (peace caravan) was scheduled to run on January 17 but avalanche warning along the 170km road forced authorities to suspend it. It was also decided that trade between either side of the LoC in Jammu & Kashmir will not take place this week due to the closure of the road.

Meanwhile, both sides of the state AJK and J&K also experienced moderate to heavy snowfall over the past two days, resulting in closure of many roads, including the arterial Srinagar-Jammu highway, the only road linking the Jammu & Kashmir with the rest of the world.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/322648/snowfall-cross-loc-trade-weekly-bus-suspended-in-kashmir/>

International Developments

Pak rulers hurt Kashmir more than India

The Nation, January 8, 2012

BIRMINGHAM: Speakers at a function has stated the rulers imposed on Pakistan have inflicted more damage on the Kashmir struggle than that of India. “These rulers have been installed to implement the agenda of certain powers by putting Kashmir issue on the back burner,” the speakers at a function held in connection with Right to Self-determination Day of Kashmiris at Kashmir House in Birmingham. AJK JI leader Dr Khalid Mehmood stated that declaring India as most favourite nation and terming Lord Nazir Ahmed persona non grata, the puppet government in Azad Kashmir has stabbed in the back of Kashmir freedom movement.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/international/08-Jan-2012/-e2-80-98pak-rulers-hurt-kashmir-more-than-india>

A H Nizami, Seminar on community, Islam and youth engagement in Britain

The Express Tribune, January 20, 2012

MIRPUR: Change in Education in collaboration with Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom and British High Commission, Islamabad as part of Projecting British Muslims programme, organised a seminar and dialogue on Community, Islam and Youth Engagement in mainstream Britain. The seminar discussed the experiences of Muslim youth in British and Pakistani societies, and the issues faced by them in today's world. The seminar was attended by notable stakeholders,

government officials, educationists, dignitaries, intellectuals and second secretary British High Commission. The ceremony was also graced by a delegation of youth from Britain along with huge population of local youth.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/324410/seminar-on-community-islam-and-youth-engagement-in-britain/>

Aslam Shams Rehman, British and European Kashmiri Diaspora link up to grow the independent Alliance

January 15, 2012

BRUSSELS: The Kashmir question is directly linked with the emancipation of the Indian and Pakistani masses and the development of democratic forces of the world. British and European Kashmiri Diaspora link up to grow the independent Alliance. A crucial meeting convened in Antwerpen by the European and British Kashmiri activists agreed to expand the 'Jammu Kashmir national Independence Alliance' to global level by linking up the activists and organisations in different countries of the world including USA, Canada, Europe, UK, Middle East and 'back home', in the state of Kashmir. The meeting was called by a group of European Kashmiri activists from 'Azad' (free) Kashmir, the Pakistani controlled part of the divided Kashmiri state settled in different countries of Europe for some years.

http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4445:british-and-european-kashmiri-diaspora-link-up-to-grow-the-independent-alliance&catid=80:politics&Itemid=120

Other Developments

Private educational institutions urged to get registered

Pakistan Observer

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) warned all the unregistered private educational institutions to get them registered with the board immediately or be ready to face action in accordance with the prevalent law. Official sources noted that the heads of all the unregistered private educational institutions had been directed to get their institutions registered immediately otherwise the students of such institutions would not be eligible to appear in the annual examinations to be conducted under the auspices of the BISE.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=134394>

Deepening of Attabad Lake to be completed next year

The Nation, January 9, 2012

ISLAMABAD: The work on deepening of Attabad spillway for receding water and clearing the path of Sushkat Bridge will be completed next year, reviving linkages of valley with other parts of the country. An official of NDMA noted that it was decided last year that the spillway would be deepened 30 metres so that the Sushkat Bridge could work properly which had inundated due to the heavy flow of water. He informed the spillway was deepened nine metres last year and they would expect to complete 10 metres more this year. The official expressing the hope opined that deepening of spillway would ensure uninterrupted traffic flow between Hunza and other parts on the country.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/islamabad/09-Jan-2012/deepening-of-attabad-lake-to-be-completed-next-year>

Shabbir Mir, Ingenuity: Gilgit blackout lights up

business imagination

The Express Tribune, January 25, 2012

GILGIT: While 90% of power crisis-hit Gilgit sat in the dark on January 19, Abdul Waheed was struck by an idea and a light bulb lit up. Gilgit has been hit by the worst power crisis this year after its main water reservoir developed cracks a week ago. Experts called in from Lahore but the Gilgit-Baltistan government had the reservoir drained in order to repair the fissures, resulting in a complete blackout since January 19. According to officials, power was to be restored by January 25. Being in the dark has certainly crippled routine life, with some even suffering a communication breakdown for not being able to charge their cellphones.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/326820/ingenuity-gilgit-blackout-lights-up-business-imagination/>

Tariq Naqash, Quota system in medical colleges: AJK High Court takes up plea

Dawn, January 24, 2012

MUZAFFARABAD: A division bench of the AJK High Court, hearing a petition by five girl students against the government's decision to enforce quota system for admissions to the region's nascent public sector medical colleges, was converted into full bench by Chief Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal which heard arguments from both sides on January 23.

Raja Mohammad Hanif, the counsel for the government, repeated his contention that the quota system in the services as well as nomination of reserved seats in the educational and professional colleges of Pakistan had to be observed so as to give equal opportunity to students from all (administrative) units till such time when every backward area of every unit got equal educational facilities.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/24/quota-system-in-medical-colleges-ajk-high-court-takes-up-plea.html>

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: Pir Karam Ali Shah

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.

POK NEWS DIGEST



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