

# POK

## *News Digest*

Volume 6 | Number 2 | February 2013

**A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR**

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh

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## Jammu & Kashmir

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

## **In this Edition**

*The United States has finally agreed to initially provide \$ 3.5 billion for the controversial Diamer Bhasha Dam. The given amount is noted to be used for carrying out preliminary work on the project site. As reports in the current issue indicate, the US is likely to provide the major chunk of financing for this ambitious project being built in the disputed region of Gilgit Baltistan. Despite persistent efforts, Pakistan was unable to get a nod from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which earlier was reported to be leading the consortium of funding agencies. The ADB recently expressed its displeasure on Pakistani government's indifference towards the people affected by development projects. The ADB urged the lawmakers in Pakistan to take up the matter seriously and introduce appropriate legislation which could safeguard the interests of such sections of people. The bank stated that in the absence of a sound policy on resettlement both at the provincial and national level, it will not be able to provide funds to Pakistan.*

*A report brought out by an organization based in Gilgit painted a dismal picture of the situation of human rights in the region in 2012. The report in its findings noted that there were large number of cases relating to mob violence, targeted killings, sectarian violence and other cases of suicide and murder. The report poses serious questions on the law and order situation in Gilgit Baltistan. Notably, the year 2012 was marred by recurring incidents of sectarian clashes in Gilgit Baltistan. Incidents of violence costed lives of hundreds and crippled normal life in the region for extended periods .*

*Absence of a well defined political and constitutional status for Gilgit Baltistan has been cause of concern among people at large. The lack of constitutional identity has also been linked with the financial woes of the region. The Gilgit Baltistan government is facing financial crunch and it is therefore seeking help from the Pakistan government.*

**Priyanka Singh**

# Political Developments

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## **“Gilgit Baltistan: 2012- An Abysmal Year for Human Rights”**

*UNPO, January 29, 2013*

According to the International Human Rights Observer, 2012 has been a catastrophic year for human rights in the region, with a sharp increase in lawlessness. A Gilgit based organization working on Human Rights related issues in Gilgit-Baltistan have painted an abysmal picture of the year 2012.

23 people, including 10 females and 13 males, committed suicide in different parts of Gilgit-Baltistan during the year 2012, according to statistics shared by Mohammed Farooq, Chief Coordinator of International Human Rights Observer (IHRO), GB Chapter. Most of the cases of suicide were related to familial disputes, while some were caused by distress due to financial constraints or other pressures.

Some people argue that in many cases murders are disguised as suicide and the criminals walk free due to lack of evidence, or by threatening and bribing the police officials. Gender based violence also surged during the year, as at least six women were killed in cases related to honour and pride. One man was also killed in an “honour” related case. Two cases of gang-rape were also reported during the year. The culprits in one case were arrested and sentenced to life-imprisonment.

Mob violence and targeted attacks took around 96 lives, while 23 people received major and minor injuries in cases attributed to sectarian violence. Most of these deaths occurred during the massacres and targeted attacks in Kohistan, Chilas, Lulusar (Babusar) and Gilgit city. The IHRO has stated that increased lawlessness in Gilgit-Baltistan has put a question mark on the efficiency and ability of the novice government, the law enforcement agencies

and all organizations working for maintenance of peace in the region.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/15428>

## **“No end to plight of Shias in Gilgit”**

*January 28, 2013*

They call Shias 'Kafirs' or those who don't believe in God and kill them mercilessly. Shias, a minority community in Pakistan, continue to face atrocities perpetrated by Pakistan-backed Sunni militant outfits. Their troubles started in early 1980s when Zia-ul-Haq sponsored anti-Shia forces brought about a socio-political polarization among the communities. But, a permanent trust deficit was created in May 1988 when tribal Lashkars, after receiving a nod of approval from General Zia, abducted local women and killed thousands of Shias in Gilgit. The killings have been repeated endlessly in Chilas, Kohistan and Mustang. Shia leaders are angry with the Pakistan establishment for targeting the community in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.niticentral.com/2013/01/no-end-to-plight-of-shias-in-gilgit.html>

## **“AJK PM lauds completion of Mangla Dam Raising Project”**

*The Frontier Post, January 19, 2013*

LAHORE: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed appreciated Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) administration for a tremendous job in completing Mangla Dam Raising Project and for disbursing compensation package among the affectees. AJK premier on January 18 applauded WAPDA team while addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of the schemes-which included four development plans worth Rs. 645 million in the vicinity of Mangla Dam Raising

Project. Besides this, a hefty amount of Rs. 70 billion is also disbursed as compensation of land and resettlement works among affectees of the project. These new schemes included dualisation of Mangla-Mirpur Road and three public parks.

Speaking on the occasion WAPDA Chairman, Syed Raghieb Shah stated that WAPDA started additional development schemes in view of its corporate social responsibility, adding that all the four schemes would be completed in six months. He vowed to actively execute resettlement and rehabilitation agreements in case of all other water and hydropower projects being constructed in the country including AJK.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/203271/>

### **“Progress on Bhasha Dam reviewed”**

*The Nation, January 18, 2013*

LAHORE: Gilgit Baltistan Chief Secretary Sajjad Saleem Hotiana on January 17 had a meeting with Wapda Chairman Syed Raghieb Shah to review the progress on Diamer Bhasha Dam Project. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman stated that Diamer Bhasha Dam is a project of national as well as international importance, and the Government is implementing it as a priority project. The project will not only store 8.1 million acre feet of water for agriculture but also provide about 20 billion units of low-cost hydel electricity to the National Grid besides mitigating floods, he added. The Chairman stated that Wapda is committed to resolve all issues relating to construction of the project.

This priority project requires mutual cooperation of all stakeholders including Wapda and Government of Gilgit Baltistan. The collective sense of responsibility will be instrumental in accelerating the pace of development on the project. Coordination between the project authorities and the local administration will be enhanced for smooth implementation of the project, he further stated.

The Chairman assured the Chief Secretary that Wapda will strengthen the local administration vis-à-vis execution of this vital task. Sajjad Saleem

proposed that meeting of the steering committee be held every month to review progress on the project equally beneficial for socio-economic uplift of Gilgit Baltistan. It was also agreed in the meeting that satellite imageries will be used for geographical mapping of the project area. The meeting was briefed that more than 14,000 kanals of private land have already been acquired for the project.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/18-Jan-2013/progress-on-bhasha-dam-reviewed>

### **“Bhasha Dam: a vital project being given importance”**

*Daily Times, January 18, 2013*

LAHORE: Diamer Bhasha Dam is a project of national as well as international importance and the government is implementing it as a priority project. Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Syed Raghieb Shah talking to Gilgit Baltistan Chief Secretary Sajjad Saleem Hotiana stated the project would not only store 8.1 million acre feet of water for agriculture but also provide about 20 billion units of low-cost hydel electricity to the national grid besides mitigating floods. WAPDA is committed to resolving all issues relating to construction of the project. This priority project requires mutual cooperation of all stakeholders including WAPDA and government of Gilgit Baltistan.

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013%5C01%5C18%5Cstory\\_18-1-2013\\_pg10\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013%5C01%5C18%5Cstory_18-1-2013_pg10_2)

### **“Wapda implementing projects in Gilgit-Baltistan”**

*The News, January 12, 2013*

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman, Raghieb Shah has stated that water sector projects are vital for sustained economic development, poverty reduction and social uplift in Pakistan, particularly the remote areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. He expressed these views in a meeting on January 11 with Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah at the Wapda house.

While speaking on the occasion, the chairman stated that Wapda is implementing a number of mega and medium-sized projects in Gilgit-Baltistan, including the Satpara multipurpose dam (generation capacity of 17 MW, water storage capacity 0.093 million acre feet) and Diamer-Bhasha (generation capacity of 4,500 MW, water storage capacity of 8.1 million acre feet), 7,100 MW Bunji, 34 MW Harpo, 80 MW Phandar and 40 MW Basha hydropower projects, etc.

Apprising the chief minister of the progress on the projects, he stated that the Satpara dam has been completed. The construction work on 13 contracts for Wapda offices, colonies, contractors' camps, model village for affectees, roads and infrastructure in the project area of Diamer-Bhasha dam - a priority project - is progressing at a good pace.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-153809-Wapda-implementing-projects-in-Gilgit-Baltistan>

### **Ahmad Ahmadani, “Wapda gives USTATED finance plan on Bhasha Dam”**

*The Nation, January 11, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: High-ups of Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) in an important meeting with representatives of United States Agency for International Development (USTATED) on January 10, handed over draft copy of financing plan on the much needed Diamer Bhasha Dam, sources noted.

The US is already assisting Pakistan in various power sector projects such as modernisation of Tarbela and Mangla dams, upgrading the Jamshoro, Guddu, Muzaffargarh thermal plants, providing funding for completion of Gomal Zam Dam and Satpata Dam projects. These energy projects are expected to add 900 megawatts to the national grid by 2013.

Sources informed that Wapda officials have handed over the draft copy of proposed financing plan to the USTATED in a meeting held here to discuss and review various issues on Diamer Bhasha Dam project including financing, resettlement, land acquisition, social reforms, Interest Dealing

Concessions (IDC) and paying off the debt. Initially, representatives of USTATED have expressed satisfaction on the plan.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/11-Jan-2013/wapda-gives-ustated-finance-plan-on-bhasha-dam>

### **“No funding for you: ADB admonishes Pakistan for not treating its own people fairly”**

*The Express Tribune, January 20, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank urged Pakistani lawmakers to introduce legislation to provide legal cover to resettlement activities, as it believes the country pays little respect to those uprooted from their localities due to the construction of mega development projects.

The ADB report categorically states that there is a lot of confusion on sharing benefits and giving special attention to those who actually pay the price in terms of giving up their lands and resettlement in alien territories. “The absence of a national or provincial policy on resettlement in Pakistan is resulting in displacement and compensation issues being addressed in an ad hoc manner with a high risk of impoverishment to those affected,” the Manila-based lending agency stated in its report on enhanced safeguard management. The report underscores a critical issue that often triggers violent protests, ending up at clashes between security personnel and affected populations. Officials working in the National Highway Authority and the Water and Power Development Authority, however, say that a mafia is working under official patronage and appropriating billions of rupees through the government's land acquisition activities. They claim that those with inside information first buy property in project areas and then sell it at higher rates to mint money, while the affected populations complain of remaining deprived of due compensation. They also claimed that one piece of land was sold twice and billions of rupees were made in various development projects for Multan by individuals with political clout.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/496405/no-funding-for-you-adb-admonishes-pakistan-for-not-treating-its-own-people-fairly/>

## “Development and displacement”

*The Express Tribune, January 21, 2013*

There is always tension between the need for development and the rights of people. Any large-scale development project, like highways and dams, will cause the displacement of large numbers of people. The trick is to do a cost-benefit analysis and decide just how vital a project is before going through with it and to always ensure that displaced people are adequately compensated. Pakistan has usually fallen short of this bare minimum. Funds for development projects are rarely used to provide compensation to those affected, who have to wait years for their promised payout. Now, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has finally spoken out about this issue and stated that funding for the Diamer-Bhasha Dam has been put on hold because of this reason. This is a long overdue development and it is one that may prove successful. There is likely nothing that would spur the government into action than the possibility of the aid spigot being turned off. International donor agencies have usually been complicit in the mistreatment of displaced people. Although promises of relocation and compensation are always made, organisations like the World Bank and the USAID have rarely followed through once funding for the project has been distributed. However, now that the weight of the ADB is behind this, perhaps, the government will be more considerate to the needs of people whose lives have been uprooted. But to ensure that its words are followed by action, the ADB will have to continue to deny funding until Pakistan meets its obligations.

The government, for its part, has blamed the land mafia for this turn of events. That is not a valid excuse. If land grabbers are indeed taking over this land prior to development projects, then it is the job of the government to prevent that. Either way, the buck stops at a government that is taking billions of dollars in development aid but is then unable or unwilling to give it to those people who have the greatest claim to it.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/496985/development-and-displacement/>

## “Miseries of Gilgit Baltistan people”

*Dawn, January 6, 2013*

This refers to Rehan Khan Gilgiti's article in 'Dawn' regarding the miseries of the people of Gilgit-Batistan. The government of Gilgit-Batistan has crossed all previous records of favouritism, especially in the appointment of teachers. They did not even spare the judiciary wherein positions of judges are vacant in the Chief Court, as well as in the Supreme Appellate Court of Gilgit Baltistan.

There are many candidates who are keen to serve in the apex court and have high qualifications and decades of standing at the Bar but they are not being considered by their superiors in the apex court. It is interesting to point out that the law minister has himself shown an interest in these positions even though there are many candidates who deserve the position more than he does!

Owing to the apathy of the government, Gilgit Baltistan has been converted into a lawless jungle. Sectarian violence has gripped Gilgit into its folds and has put a dent on its social, educational and economic fabric. Fear and gloom prevail in the entire region. There is a desperate need for a strong judiciary in order to eradicate the miseries of the people by taking suo motu action.

Maybe Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry would like to do something about it. He should also take notice of the irregularity in the appointment of judges. He should take suo motu action and assign the task to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan for the appointment of judges on merit.

TAQDIR ALI KHAN

Karachi

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/06/miseries-of-gilgit-baltistan-people/>

**Syed Ansar Hussain, “View from Pakistan: Gilgit-Baltistan in limbo”**

*Kashmir Times, January 8, 2013*

Even after six decades, the people of Gilgit-

Baltistan continue to suffer in constitutional limbo despite their unconditional accession to Pakistan. In spite of efforts to integrate with Pakistan, the people of the region have been repeatedly ignored and deprived of their fundamental rights such as the right to vote, representation in the National Assembly and Senate etc.

Until the pronouncement of the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, Dogra Raj prevailed in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. When the princely states were given the autonomy to accede to either Pakistan or India, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, after liberation from Dogra oppression, acceded to the nascent Pakistani state. In recognition of this, constitutional recognition by the Pakistani state was promised, which remains a pipedream.

The Foreign Office decisively linked the then Northern Areas with Kashmir to win the support of the people in case of a plebiscite on Kashmir. The people of the region have since been bearing the brunt of this flawed policy and resultantly, the constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan has been in limbo. In 1949, the Karachi Agreement was signed between the Government of Pakistan and representatives of Azad Kashmir and the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to ratify administrative control of Pakistan over Gilgit-Baltistan without the consent of any representative body from the area. Such forces, in connivance with the establishment, have been actively touting Gilgit-Baltistan as a part of Kashmir, which is wrong.

The rajgeeri system remained in vogue in Gilgit-Baltistan until 1974, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto completely abolished the old order and brought the region under Pakistani administration; the local government system was also thus introduced in the region. Soon development projects, such as the Karakoram Highway, were initiated to facilitate the people of Gilgit-Baltistan's travel and trade links with the rest of Pakistan. President Asif Ali Zardari announced the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order, 2009.

<http://www.kashmirtimes.com/newsdet.aspx?q=10677>

## **“Chairman Public Accounts Committee GB joins PPP”**

*January 22, 2013*

GILGIT: Chairman of Gilgit Baltistan Public Accounts Committee Syed Raziuddin has joined Pakistan Peoples Party. He announced his decision at a meeting with Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf in Islamabad on January 21. The Prime Minister stated PPP always give preference to the development of Gilgit Baltistan. He stated the government has taken a number of positive steps for the development of Gilgit Baltistan. He stated that restoration of peace in Gilgit-Baltistan is great achievement of the GB government. He stated credit of historic decision of forming Gilgit-Baltistan autonomous government goes to the PPP. He stated political figures joining PPP indicates its popularity.

<http://mountainpost.net/featured/chairman-public-accounts-committee-gb-joins-ppp/>

## **“Unrest in Gilgit-Baltistan is a result of international conspiracies”: Naji**

*Pamir Times, January 29, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: MLA Nawaz Khan Naji has stated that the lawlessness and murders in Gilgit-Baltistan are not a result of sectarian hatred. He stated that international forces are taking advantage of the “simplicity” of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and using them as fodders for an international game.

The supreme leader of nationalist party Balawaristan National Front, Naji, advised the youth to stay united and knit in different organizations to defend the future of the region. He stated that unity is the only way the future of Gilgit-Baltistan can be saved. According to a press statement, he stated this while addressing a gathering held in memory of Mir Ashiq Hussain, who was shot dead late last year in Karachi. Speaking at the occasion the leaders of BNF and different other organizations paid rich tributes to late Ashiq Hussain for his services to the region. The gathering was also addressed by Khalid Nadeem Hunzai, Javed Naji, Safdar Shirazi and Jahangir

Hussain, who is also the general secretary of the BNSO.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2013/01/29/unrest-in-gilgit-baltistan-is-a-result-of-international-conspiracies-naji/>

### **“PM appoints two judges to GB court”**

*Dawn, January 22, 2013*

GILGIT: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf approved the Gilgit-Baltistan governor's summary for appointment of two judges to the region's Supreme Appellate Court. Local sources noted on January 19 that the summary was sent to the prime minister via the Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ministry seven months ago as the two posts fell vacant after the retirement of the incumbents.

They stated Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court Chief Judge Raja Jalal Khan and member Muzaffar Hussain had been elevated to the Supreme Appellate Court judges after the approval of the summary. Sources stated that Chief Court member Sahib Khan had been promoted as the chief judge of Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court. They stated the appointments would be notified shortly and once that happened, the judges would take oath of their offices.

NFC-LIKE BODY FOR GB: Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf has asked the federal finance ministry to form a new body on the pattern of National Finance Commission for Gilgit-Baltistan to resolve the region's financial issues with the centre. The federal and Gilgit-Baltistan governments are likely to sign an agreement in this respect soon. This was disclosed by a Gilgit-Baltistan Council member during a meeting.

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/22/pm-appoints-two-judges-to-gb-court-2/>

### **“Financial crisis Gilgit-Baltistan's SOS call to Islamabad”**

*January 21, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: The financial crisis in Gilgit-Baltistan has reached such an alarming level that the chief minister and some of the members of the GB

Council have sought an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf to bail the provincial government out of the mess.

Media reports stated that Chief Minister Mehdi Shah in a communication to the prime Minister house requested that they wanted to meet the prime minister to apprise him of the situation and seek help to overcome the problems arising out of the financial crisis. Mr Ibrahim, one of the members of the GB Council, noted that most of the members of the GB Council and the legislative assembly were already in Islamabad and they wanted to meet the prime minister under the head of Mehdi Shah to request Islamabad to come to the rescue of the provincial government facing the worst financial crisis. It may be noted that the GB government has been unable even to pay salaries to most of its employees as its coffers are empty mainly due to mismanagement and king-like lifestyles of its governor, chief minister and all the cabinet members. Now when there is even no penny to pay for the fuel and other expenses of the rulers, they have gone berserk and want to meet the prime minister to get some funds.

<http://mountainpost.net/featured/financial-crisis-gilgit-baltistans-sos-call-to-islamabad/>

### **“Gilgit-Baltistan: GB Government Plans to Develop Industries”**

*January 21, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan government has allocated more than five crore rupees in current fiscal year for implementing a comprehensive plan to develop Industries and mineral resources of the region. According to radio Pakistan quoting official sources, under the plan precious stone of the Gilgit Baltistan will be brought in the market after their proper cutting for which marketing center and labs will be established while building of mineral development and direct oration will be constructed. The sources further stated check post will be set up on Karakorum highway to prevent smuggling of precious stones.

<http://gilgitbaltistanbulletin.wordpress.com/2013/01/21/gilgit-baltistan-gb-government-plans-to-develop-industries/>

## **Peer Muhammad, “Budgetary allocations: Gilgit-Balistan govt facing delays in release of funds”**

*The Express Tribune, January 7, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit-Balistan (G-B) government is facing difficulties due to delays in release of its budgetary allocations from the federal government. The G-B government wants development and non-development funds given in two equal installments for the whole financial year whereas the centre is releasing these on a quarterly basis, stated G-B Finance Minister Mohammad Ali Akhter on January 6. He stated that the recent financial crisis in G-B has been overcome for the time being after receiving the second and third quarterly releases of the development and non-development funds, respectively.

The federal government has released Rs1.35 billion for development and Rs2.75 billion for non-development funds. However, G-B has not received the grant of Rs2 billion announced by Prime Minister Pervaiz Ashraf during his visit to Gilgit, he stated. Any delay in provision of funds means that the local government has no cash to pay its employees, meet day to day expenses, pay bills, and the development projects come to a halt. “If the funds are not released in two installments as we demand, the problem will persist in future too,” Akhter stated. He stated that after giving provincial status to G-B, the centre now transfers funds to G-B accounts through the State Bank after approval from the federal finance ministry.

Previously, funds were given to the ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Balistan and it directly transferred the sum to G-B administration without any delay, he elaborated. Akhter stated that the G-B government was aware of issues faced by the contractors due to non-release of their bills. “The contractors have performed rehabilitation works after the natural disasters in 2010 and 2011 and their bills are pending and will be released after receiving the amount from prime minister's special grant.”

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/490251/budgetary-allocations-gilgit-balistan-govt-facing-delays-in-release-of-funds/>

## **“Development projects: ERRA completes 645 projects in AJK, K-P”**

*The Express Tribune, January 4, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: The Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has successfully completed 645 projects in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P). The authority has also started stock-verification process of its assets for their redistribution among the implementing agencies.

According to an ERRA official, 309 projects have been completed in AJK and 124 in K-P in the education sector, while 65 projects have been in AJK and 57 in K-P in the transport and communication sector. Moreover, 32 projects in the health sector and 58 in the power sector have been completed in AJK. Following the completion of the projects, ERRA has started stock-checking of Earthquake Emergency Assistance Programme (EEAP) assets. The verification of the public assets is being done as part of its role as the executing agency on behalf of the government and the Asian Development Bank, its donor agency.

The government and the ADB will decide about the future deployment of these assets, in consultation with the governments of AJK and K-P. The assets will be transferred to the executing and the implementing agencies and departments concerned, after assessing the quantity and physical verification and serviceability of the EEAP assets including vehicles, computers and furniture items to the satisfaction of the donors.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/488796/development-projects-erra-completes-645-projects-in-ajk-k-p/>

## **“Gilgit-Baltistan: FBR urged to depute IROs for setting up of income tax department”**

*The Express Tribune, January 1, 2013*

Gilgit-Baltistan Council has requested the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to depute Inland Revenue Officers for establishment of a full-fledged Income Tax Department at Gilgit-Baltistan. Sources informed on December 31 that Azad Jammu & Kashmir Council has also asked the FBR

to depute IR officials at the AJK. The Gilgit-Baltistan government has, reportedly, decided to impose income tax in the region. The income tax is being imposed through the Gilgit-Baltistan Council, which is a non-elected body comprising of people from Gilgit-Baltistan and other parts of the country.

According to a letter of FBR to officers of IRS, Gilgit-Baltistan Council Secretariat requires the services of officers of Inland Revenue Service of BS-17 to BS-20 and officials on deputation basis for posting in Income Tax Department at Gilgit-Baltistan. Interested officers/ officials were required to their options through proper channel to this office by January 10, 2013.

<http://www.brecorder.com/taxation/181/1138713/>

### **“Pakistan: Terrorists Killed Shia Man 'Naber Ali Khan' in Gilgit”**

*Ahlul Bayt News Agency, January 24, 2013*

A Shiite, Naber Ali Khan s/o Mohammad, was martyred when terrorists of Sipah-e-Sahaba/Qazi Nisar Group opened fire at him in Gilgit's Shoti Aliabad Basin Board. The deceased was noted to be a resident of Gilgit. His body had been moved to DHQ Hospital. Terrorists have targeted hundreds of Shiites in the area of basin. The government seems unable to control the terrorists.

<http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=384339>

### **“AJK youth delegation to visit Sindh”**

*Business Recorder, January 27, 2013*

Sindh Minister for Youth Affairs, Syed Faisal Sabzwari on January 26 reviewed the arrangements for the visit of a 30-member delegation of the youth from Azad Kashmir to Sindh from January 27 to February 3, at a meeting in his office. Speaking at the meeting, the Sindh Minister stated the step aims to provide opportunity to the youth to develop harmony and brotherhood among them and to exchange knowledge and share experiences.

He stated it is an honour for the province of Sindh to host the visit of the youth of Azad Kashmir. Such visits will help to send a message of love and brotherhood to the whole country, he added. Sindh

Secretary Youth Affairs, Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqi informed the meeting that the Sindh Youth Affairs Department will bear all the expenses of the visit. He stated the visit will encourage the youth and it will also build their confidence into the government. He expressed hope that other province will also follow Sindh in this regard and the practice will continue.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1147546/>

### **Islamabad: January 30, 2013**

The AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has assured to provide shelters to the quake affectees in Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot districts. He was addressing a special meeting relating to development projects in Islamabad on January 30. He stated his government is working on a plan for complete rehabilitation of the quake affectees. He assured that these projects would be completed at all costs.

He also assured that all development projects would be completed in their concerned districts and no funds for this purpose would be reshuffled. The Deputy Chairman ERRA Maj. General Muhammad Asif Azim also assured the meeting for timely completion of all development projects being funded by ERRA.

[http://www.ajk.gov.pk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=515:he-ajk-prime-minister-chaudhry-abdul-majeed-has-assured-to-provide-shelters-to-the-quake-affectees-in-muzaffarabad-bagh-and-rawalakot-districts&catid=20:news-july-2011](http://www.ajk.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=515:he-ajk-prime-minister-chaudhry-abdul-majeed-has-assured-to-provide-shelters-to-the-quake-affectees-in-muzaffarabad-bagh-and-rawalakot-districts&catid=20:news-july-2011)

### **Tariq Naqash, “Three AJK PMs spent Rs32m on chopper flights”**

*Dawn, January 24, 2013*

MUZAFFARABAD: Helicopter jaunts by three former prime ministers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) cost more than Rs32 million to the region's taxpayers from July 2006 to July 2011, according to an official document. The information was revealed by the government in response to a question tabled by PML-N lawmaker Chaudhry Tariq Farooq in the Legislative Assembly secretariat.

The legislator had sought details of chopper rides by the three premiers, including year-wise allocated and additional budget for the purpose. It may be recalled that from July 2006 to July 2011, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan held the office of prime minister for three-and-a-half year with an interval of 18 months during which he was succeeded by Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan and Raja Farooq Haider, respectively. Each held the slot for nine months.

Interestingly, the initial allocation of budget for all five years was Rs9.75 million but due to excessive use of helicopters the taxpayers had to bear an additional expense of Rs22.73 million, taking the total to Rs32.489 million. According to reply, Sardar Attique spent Rs11.499 million on 51 rides during his first stint in office from July 2006 to January 2009. The total time duration of these trips was 87 hours.

After staging a comeback to the office in July 2010 and staying therein until the next 12 months, he used helicopters for a total 115 hours in 50 trips at a cost of Rs18.4 million. However, most of the columns about journey details were left blank in the document. Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob enjoyed seven chopper rides (15 hours) between February 26, 2009 and September 13, 2009, costing Rs1.747 million. In his nine-month rule beginning October 2009, Mr Haider made six rides of eight hours between February 13, 2010 and July 8, 2010, at a cost of Rs904, 761.

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/24/three-ajk-pms-spent-rs32m-on-chopper-flights/>

### **“Replies submission issue in AJK: Speaker reprimands treasury benches”**

*Dawn, January 23, 2013*

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Sardar Ghulam Sadiq Khan on January 22 appeared to be in agreement with the opposition as he mildly reprimanded the treasury benches for alleged lack of responsibility regarding timely and correct submission of replies in the house. “I regret to point out that more often than not the ministers say that they are not satisfied either with the answer

(to the questions),” stated the speaker, during the question hour.

“Wherever the answer comes from, for us it's the word of the minister concerned. It's their responsibility to provide correct answers and take action if anyone (from among the bureaucracy) feeds them with wrong information,” added the speaker. It may be recalled that while the opposition MLAs have long been alleging that treasury benches do not show seriousness to timely provision of correct answers to their questions, on numerous occasions many ministers have tried to absolve themselves of their responsibility in this regard by claiming that they were themselves dissatisfied with the (printed) answers. The speaker was compelled to express annoyance on this issue, after Chaudhry Tariq Farooq of PML-N pointed out that one of his questions that had come up on December 12 was still awaiting a comprehensive reply, notwithstanding assurance to this effect by none other than the leader of the house. The chair expressed the hope that the ministers would ensure that all pending answers were also submitted in the house.

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/23/replies-submission-issue-in-ajk-speaker-reprimands-treasury-benches/>

### **“Gilgit-Baltistan is not a province: Chief Secretary”**

*January 29, 2013*

The Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Balistan, Saifullah Chatha, reaffirmed that the Gilgit-Balistan is not a province yet. But the region has been delegated some powers through a special package. There are constitutional intricacies in this regard which hinder giving the region a provincial status he explained to media at Gahkuch. He stated that the people here have their own government with powers to legislate local policies.

However, he interestingly revealed that without the permission of the Secretary Treasury, a minister of the region cannot use any public finance. This is a universal system and the local leaders have to understand it. It, nonetheless, could not be ascertained whether he is talking about personal use

or for developmental projects. “The bureaucratic official has no role in running the region and the elected people have the say in the affairs of the public policy in Gilgit-Baltistan. We are working under constitutional auspices” Chatha stated.

The statement of Chief Secretary has exposed the claims of elected representatives of Gilgit-Baltistan who have been sermonizing the public that they have attained a full status of province and are thus

entitled to exercise the required powers of province. The leaders of Gilgit-Baltistan never seemed clear about the status of the region. There has been always ambiguity in what they say in this matter. Their public statements contain wordings such as “like province” “near province”, “towards province”, “autonomous setup” etc.

<http://www.gilgitbaltistan.us/Bulletin/gilgit-baltistan-is-not-a-province-chief-secretary.html>

# Economic Developments

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## **“Financing Diamer-Bhasha dam”**

*Business Recorder, January 19, 2013*

Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) informed the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Water and Power that the US had agreed, in principle, to extend 3.5 billion dollars for the 4500 MW environmentally clean Diamer-Bhasha dam. An agreement in principle is not one where an irrevocable contract has been signed and one would hope that Chairman Wapda or any other related government ministry/department would sign on a binding agreement with the US in this regard.

The 3.5 billion dollars to be disbursed at the rate of 200 million dollars per month, as informally agreed amounts to 25 percent of the cost of the entire project and in this context Chairman Wapda did indicate to the committee that talks with other bilaterals and multilaterals were under way. He mentioned China, South Korea and Turkey as possible sources of bilateral and the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank as possible multilateral sources of finance. While bilateral donors do not extend assistance on considerations other than those related to the project's feasibility with an inbuilt element of meeting their foreign policy objectives yet multilaterals extend assistance under considerations which are dictated by clearly specified policies approved by their board of directors that no proposed project or programme can violate.

<http://www.brecorder.com/editorials/0:/1145445:financing-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

## **Ali Syed, “AJK power dues cause trouble for IESCO”**

*Pakistan Observer, January 19, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply

Company (Iesco) has landed into deep financial trouble of Rs 12.10 billion as the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has refused to pay the power tariff of Rs 5.63 per unit fixed by National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), senior officials noted. However, the power consumers in the whole Pakistan are paying almost over Rs 9 per unit where as the AJK consumers pay Rs 5.63 per unit which the AJK government is not fully paying.

It is pertinent to mention that the federal government has already inked an agreement with the AJK government under which the consumers of AJK are to be provided electricity at subsidized rates because of the Mangla dam. The Iesco has sought the intervention of finance ministry and asked the financial managers of the government to exert the pressure on AJK government payment of huge amount of Rs 12.10 billion.

The AJK government is paying Rs 1.50 per unit less in the tariff determined by the Nepra, which has inflicted the huge loss of Rs 12.10 billion to Iesco in the financial year of 2011-12. The administration of Iesco, which is to finalize the financial sheet of 2011-12 under law has landed into deep trouble as it is unable to do so because of the non-availability of Rs 12.10 billion. The Nepra has fixed the subsidized tariff of Rs 5.63 per unit for AJK consumers, which is also not being paid fully owing to which Iesco has braved the loss of Rs 12.10 billion in the year 2011-12.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=192255>

## **“Pakistan: Successful first shipment from Baltistan Farmers Association to Metro”**

*Business Recorder, January 19, 2013*

A successful apple shipment was delivered to Metro C&C Pakistan from a group of farmers living in the remote area of Gilgit-Baltistan, by

Baltistan Farmers Association with the consultation services of Star Farm Pakistan (Pvt.) Ltd.

Under the new Canadian International Development Authority (CIDA) funded program, Enhancing Employability and Leadership for Youth (EELY), Agha Khan Rural Support

Program (AKRSP) is focusing on the strengthening of youth within local resources, like capacity building of Farmers, Entrepreneurs, Suppliers, Sales team, Processors, etc. of Gilgit, Baltistan.

[http://www.freshplaza.com/news\\_detail.asp?id=105582](http://www.freshplaza.com/news_detail.asp?id=105582)

# International Developments

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## **Khaleeq Kiani, “\$3.5bn expected from US for Diamer-Bhasha dam”**

*January 3, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: As electricity shortage increased to about 5,000MW on January 2 despite reduced winter demand, the United States has agreed to provide \$3.5 billion for the \$14.5bn Diamer-Bhasha dam project. The ministry of water and power informed the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Water and Power that the government had been requested to postpone the payment of \$4.5bn interest during construction and waive taxes and duties on import of machinery and equipment for the project.

The government is also persuading China, Korea and Turkey to participate as financiers and contractors in the project which will be offered for international competitive bidding on the basis of suppliers' credit. The Special Secretary for Water and Power, Himayatullah, informed the committee at a meeting presided over by MNA Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah that the total power generation on January 2 was 9,000MW and with a maximum demand of around 14,000MW, there was a shortfall of 4,600-5,000MW.

He stated that in summer the maximum generation went up to 15,000MW with the peak demand being at 17,500MW. The official stated the hydroelectric power generation had declined to 920MW from 6,500MW because of annual canal closure. This resulted in total dependence on expensive furnace oil. Members of the committee asked about the status of foreign funding for Diamer-Bhasha dam, its environmental impact assessment, if India was opposing the project and whether it could be taken up and completed despite reluctance of major international agencies like the World Bank to provide funds.

Wapda Chairman Syed Raghob Abbas stated: “The US government has principally agreed to provide \$3.5bn for the project” in annual instalments of \$250 million. He stated the estimated cost of the project had increased to \$14.5bn which was a difficult challenge to meet but it would be completed at all cost because of its benefits like flood control, energy generation and water storage.

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/03/3-5bn-expected-from-us-for-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

## **Shahram Haq, “Diamer Bhasha Dam: United States to provide major chunk for project”**

*January 29, 2013*

LAHORE: The United States has reminded Pakistan that it is committed to helping Islamabad, an important partner of the US, pull out of the crippling energy crisis with financing for electricity projects, in particular for the gigantic Diamer Bhasha Dam. The US would provide funds for new and existing hydropower projects, which would increase electricity production by 900 megawatts by the end of 2013, stated US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson, while talking to the media in Lahore on January 28.

He was speaking after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and American Business Forum (ABF). The memorandum is meant to explore new ways of enhancing bilateral trade between the two countries.

“We always consider Pakistan an important partner of the US,” he stated. “We have constituted an energy working group for Pakistan and the US, so far America has financed a major share for upgrading Mangla Dam and will be the biggest financier for Diamer Bhasha Dam.”

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/500001/diamer-bhasha-dam-united-states-to-provide-major-chunk-for-project/>

## **Tahir Amin, “Power projects in AJK: China refuses investment”**

*Business Recorder, January 31, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese government is reported to have refused to allow the Three Gorges Company to invest in power projects in Azad Kashmir, citing the area's “disputed status”, an official of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) briefed the Senate's standing committee on Water and Power on January 30.

The committee met in Islamabad under Zahid Khan. During the briefing, Nepra's Member tariff, Khwaja Mohammad Naeem stated that the Chinese government was not allowing the company to invest in power projects in Azad Kashmir. The Chinese company, he stated, was also putting pressure on Nepra to increase the tariff for Karoot power project. He stated that the Chinese company's demand for the tariff increase did not fall under the domain of Nepra and, therefore, it could not be addressed. The Authority was negotiating because it realized that once the project was lost, it would not be taken up again for at least 15 years, which was unaffordable, Khwaja Mohammad Naeem stated.

The committee expressed concern over the increase in power tariff for distribution companies by Nepra, saying that the Authority was mandated to safeguard consumers' interest. However, it stated the authority was increasing the tariff and adding to the miseries of the common man.

The committee also expressed annoyance over fluctuations in power tariff determined by Nepra and directed the authority to submit a report regarding tariff variability during the past year. The panel asked the Chairman Nepra to submit details regarding tariff increase for the past year and if any relief had been given to the people. The committee criticised the absence of Secretary Nargis Sethi and Special Secretary Himayatullah, noting that Secretary committed that the tariff evaluation period of power projects would be reduced to 45 days but this promise has not been fulfilled. The Committee asked Nargis Sethi to ensure her presence in the next meeting and personally respond why this period had not been reduced. The Standing Committee also directed the managing director of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) to give a complete report of power projects under construction containing details such as when these projects had been initiated and how much time was needed for their completion. The parliamentary panel constituted a committee under Special Secretary Himayatullah to review difficulties in a 1160-megawatt power project in Kohistan while the Chairmen of Nepra, WAPDA and SHYDO, MD of PPIB and the secretary Energy and power would be members of the committee.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/108-pakistan-top-news/103922-power-projects-in-ajk-china-refuses-investment-.html>

# Other Developments

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## **“PGJDC establishes training centre in Gilgit”**

*Pakistan Observer, January 22, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company (PGJDC) has established a Gems and Jewellery Training and Manufacturing Center (GJTMC) in Gilgit city which has vastly abundant resources of colored gemstone treasures. Most important of these are ruby, topaz, aquamarine, tourmaline and quartz. According to official sources, this centre is established to acquire the true economic potential of the region.

“Center is successfully providing training and common facility centre services to the masses”. In an advent of expansion of these facilities across the region of Azad Kashmir, PGJDC also intends to open a Gems and Jewellery Training and Manufacturing Center in Azad Kashmir in near future, official stated. He stated training courses offer an insight into the gemstones, their formation, their identification methods and how they can be excavated intact to their natural shape.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=192657>

## **“Cross-LoC Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service resumes after two weeks”**

*Economic Times, January 28, 2013*

SRINAGAR: As many as 45 people crossed the Line of Control (LoC) on January 28 with the resumption of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, which remained suspended for two weeks due to heavy snowfall. Official sources stated 27 people crossed LoC from this side to Pakistan occupied Kashmir this morning which included 22 Indian citizens and five residents of PoK. Meanwhile, 18 people arrived from PoK, including 15 Indian citizens returning home and three new guests from the other side.

The bus service was suspended two weeks ago due

to heavy snowfall which had rendered the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road slippery. The cross-LoC bus service was started in April, 2005 as part of confidence building measures (CBM) between India and Pakistan to allow the divided families living on either side of Line of Control to meet each other.

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-01-28/news/36596227\\_1\\_bus-service-srinagar-muzaffarabad-road-indian-citizens](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-01-28/news/36596227_1_bus-service-srinagar-muzaffarabad-road-indian-citizens)

## **“National Testing Service (NTS) Centre demanded for Gilgit-Baltistan”**

*Dardistan Times, January 9, 2013*

The people of Gilgit-Baltistan have profound zeal towards achieving professional excellence and attaining higher education. Despite being deprived of the constitutional rights and ample educational resources, they keep striving in achieving the targeted goal. This fact is as obvious as the daylight that they have been showing extraordinary performance in educational area and the professional excellence nationally as well as internationally. They are always enthusiastic in attempting the tests of high standards and through them, knocking the doors of high ranking universities of the world.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/node/1156>

## **“AJK bank robbery case Remaining accused arrested”**

*Dawn, January 7, 2013*

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) police have arrested all 10 accused involved in the bank robbery and killing of two persons in Bagh district January 2. The eleventh gang member was killed during exchange of fire with the police the same day. Superintendent of Police (SP) Bagh Riyaz Abbasi noted on January 6 that five robbers were arrested alive January 2

whereas the rest were apprehended on the evening of January 5 near Noon Bagla three days after the incident. "They crossed the snow-capped Nanga Peer Mountain on foot and were trying to sneak out of Bagh district but were caught at a police checkpoint set up to hunt them down," he stated.

Two of the accused belonged to Rawalakot in AJK whereas the rest were from different parts of Pakistan, he stated, adding that the accused had been planning for the past six months to rob the bank in Mallot. Of the Rs2.3 million looted money, police claimed to have recovered Rs1.3 million from the accused, apart from some weapons. "They will point out where they have buried or hidden the remaining amount and hopefully we will recover it soon," SP Abbasi stated.

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/07/ajk-bank-robbery-case-remaining-accused-arrested/>

### **"Gilgit-Baltistan lift Saadia Khan Ski Cup"**

*The Nation, January 30, 2013*

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan lifted the Saadia Khan Ski Cup concluded at the PAF Ski resort, Naltar. Begum Shehla Tahir was the chief guest. President Ski Federation, Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was also present on the occasion. In children boys' category PAF team won the trophy, in the children girls' category PAF skiers won the trophy. Skiers from Sindh, KPK, Balochistan, Islamabad, Northern Areas, Adventure Foundation, Alpine Club, Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force participated three-day ski event.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/sports/30-Jan-2013/gilgit-baltistan-lift-saadia-khan-ski-cup>

### **"Building guidelines for high mountain regions of Pakistan"**

*Pakistan Observer January 31, 2013*

KARACHI: Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan (AKPBS,P) - an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in collaboration with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) organized a workshop to share a set

of building guidelines for seismic resistance and thermal efficiency of buildings in the mountainous regions of Pakistan.

Provincial Ministers Raja Azam from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Saleem from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) represented their respective provincial governments in the workshop. Representatives from donor agencies including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Ministry of Climate Change, Government of Pakistan, Academia, AKDN sister agencies and various public sector institutions and development agencies also participated in the workshop.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=193905>

### **Tariq Naqash, "Early quake warning system installed"**

*Dawn, January 31, 2013*

MUZAFFARABAD: A German non-governmental organisation formally handed over the control of six earthquake early warning systems to AJK government's State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) in Muzaffarabad on January 30. Malteser International had installed these costly systems in Ali Akbar Awan Boys High School and Girls High School Madina Market in the municipal area of Muzaffarabad and Koomikot and Phagwan Dupatta villages in the suburbs of state capital.

In the neighbouring Bagh district, one system was installed in Boys High School in the city of Bagh and another in Kharal Abbasian village. Both Muzaffarabad and Bagh districts had suffered huge physical and material losses in the devastating October 2005 earthquake. The handing over ceremony was held in the ground of Ali Akbar Awan High School, Upper Chattar neighbourhood.

Around 50 volunteers conducted a mock drill to exhibit the requisite response in the event of an earthquake like calamity. The volunteers from both genders were trained by Sanam Ali Naqvi, a trainer of the AJK Civil Defence Department, whose commentary built more awareness within the audience and onlookers. Before that, warning sirens were sounded with a view to familiarising people

with its distinct tone, which organisers stated could be heard in a radius of 2.5 kilometres. The audience were told by Amy Louise Keith, project director of Malteser International, about the utility of the system but stressed that more steps were required to

be taken to mitigate the losses in the event of such calamities.

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/31/early-quake-warning-system-installed/>

# 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 Assembly:** Total 33 members (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.*

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