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A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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

In this Edition

There is great deal of discontent amongst the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) workers in the so called AJK against Prime Minister Chaudhury Abdul Majeed. The local PPP workers allege that under Majeed, there has been rampant corruption and bad governance in AJK. They blamed Majeed of giving priority to his position and power and hence compromising the larger interests of the party. They also accused the AJK prime minister of colluding with the PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) and the Muslim Conference. Barrister Sultan Mahmood, former prime minister of the AJK (who at the last minute missed the opportunity to once again become the PM post 2011 AJK elections) also participated in the meeting which was called by PPP workers in Muzaffarabad in the beginning of February 2013. In addition to this, there were protests against the federal minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan (KAGB), Mian Manzoor Wattoo in Muzaffarabad against purported irregularities in inductions made to the AJK Council. Such developments signals some kind of political churning which AJK may witness in the coming few months.

Meanwhile, in Gilgit Baltistan, there was widespread anger over the killings of the people belonging to the Shia Hazara community in Quetta. At least 85 were reported dead in the bombings which took place at a market place in Quetta on February 16, 2013. Demonstrations were held across the Gilgit Baltistan region in Skardu, Ghanche and Hunza Nagar to protest the attacks on Shia community in Balochistan. The protesters blamed the government of Pakistan and the security agencies of having failed to prevent recurring attacks on the Shia community.

Several hydropower development projects have been launched by the AJK government to tap the available water resources there. As reports included in the current issue indicate, out of total 54 projects planned, actual construction has started on at least 13 projects in the AJK.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Peer Muhammad, “Short-handed: G-B chief court gets dysfunctional”

The Express Tribune, February 25, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Want of judges has rendered the Chief Court of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) dysfunctional. Four out of five of the judiciary posts have remained unoccupied for the last two months. The provincial government failed to appoint new judges after two of the court's members were promoted to the Supreme Appellate Court (Supreme Court) of G-B.

According to sources, the cause of the crisis is the struggle between various power brokers to get their hands over the lucrative positions. “Unlike other parts of the country, the judicial commission doesn't have any role in the appointment of the judges for the superior judiciary in Gilgit-Baltistan,” stated Advocate Ahsan Ali, former president and a senior member of Gilgit-Baltistan Bar Council. “This is the basic reason why every judge in the superior judiciary in G-B has been appointed on political grounds so far by ignoring merit and competence.” Under the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Order Rule 2009, the governor recommends names for the office to the Prime Minister for the final selection via the ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/512135/short-handed-g-b-chief-court-gets-dysfunctional/>

“Govt launches 23 development projects worth Rs.32,186 mn in AJK: NA told”

Business Recorder, February 26, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo on February 25 apprised the National Assembly that the federal government had initiated 23 development projects worth Rs.32, 186.95 million in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) since March 2008 till date.

In response to a question during Question Hour, he stated that the federal government is committed for the welfare of people of AJK and had allocated funds for the projects. To another question, the minister stated that by virtue of Article 1(2) (d) of the constitution of Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan is a part of Pakistan which enjoys special status in accordance with international commitments. He stated that maximum internal autonomy including legislative, executive, judicial reforms and self governance for the people of Gilgit Baltistan has been ensured by promulgation of Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self Governance) Order, 2009.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/politics-a-policy/107916-govt-launches-23-development-projects-worth-rs32186mn-in-ajk-na-told-.html>

“Diامر-Bhasha Dam Project: WAPDA inks agreement to formulate cultural heritage management plan”

Business Recorder, February 16, 2013

The Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on February 15 inked an agreement with Heidelberg Academy's Institute for Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakoram Highway to formulate a cultural heritage management plan for Diامر-Bhasha Dam Project at WAPDA House.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman stated that the Diامر-Bhasha Dam Multi-purpose Project was vital for economy of the country. In addition to taking all possible measures for initiating construction work on the main project in the shortest possible time, WAPDA is equally focused on implementing the Resettlement Action Plan including conservation of the cultural heritage of the project area in line with international safeguard policies, he stated.

Underlining the significance of the project region in

terms of its unique cradling of the pre-historic rock carvings and diverse cultures which exist there, the Chairman stated that WAPDA, in collaboration with the firm of international repute such as Heidelberg Academy's Institute for Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakoram Highway, has decided to devise a deeply thought out action plan to conserve this unique heritage and enable the local populace to gain economic benefits from its conservation. The formulation of the cultural heritage management plan in a period of six months would provide an appropriate line of action for conservation of the area to be affected by Diamer-Bhasha Dam Project, he added. It is pertinent to mention that the Federal Government through WAPDA is implementing the Diamer-Bhasha Dam as a priority project.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1154625/>

Amir Mir, "AJK govt's mourning for Guru upsets Western envoys"

The News, February 11, 2013

LAHORE: The PPP-led Azad Kashmir government's decision to announce three days of mourning over the hanging of Afzal Guru has upset many in the diplomatic circles of Islamabad who are asking why the AJK government had to officially condemn the execution of an Indian national who was convicted by the Indian Supreme Court on terrorism charges.

A Jaish-e-Mohammad activist, Guru belonged to Doabgah village of Jammu and Kashmir, 52 km from Srinagar. He was sent to the gallows on February 9, 2013 for his role in the December 12, 2001 Fidayeen attack on the Indian parliament in New Delhi which killed 12 people. However, to the surprise of many Western diplomats in Islamabad, AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has condemned Guru's hanging, saying, "The Indian government action proves that India was not sincere in maintaining peace in the region. I express my sympathies and solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in general and Guru's family members in particular. We stand by them".

The PM's condemnation was followed by an official

announcement by the AJK government spokesman, Shaukat Javed Mir: "The AJK government declares three-day mourning over the unjust hanging of Afzal Guru. The AJK flag would fly half mast for three days and all official functions have been suspended".

A Western envoy in Islamabad said while requesting anonymity that many diplomats of the Western nations believe that the AJK government has overreacted needlessly on the hanging of an Indian national by condemning an execution which was carried out on the orders of Indian Supreme Court. He reminded that in a sharp contrast to Guru's hanging, the Pakistani foreign office had reacted differently after the hanging of Ajmal Kasab, who was a Pakistani national, by stating that Islamabad's position on terrorism was very clear and consistent and it always condemned terrorism in all its forms and expressions. He reminded that Pakistani foreign office had even expressed willingness following Kasab's hanging to cooperate and work closely with all countries of region to eliminate the scourge of terrorism.

In fact, Pakistan had refused to accept Kasab's body from India following his execution, saying he was a non-state actor involved in terrorism. No mourning was observed by the AJK government after Kasab was sent to the gallows, although he was a Pakistani national unlike Guru. Justifying Guru's hanging, another Western diplomat in the federal capital reminded that phone calls made by the Fidayeen attackers belonging to the Jaish on Guru's mobile phone minutes before attacking the parliament building, coupled with the laptop recovered from his custody which was used by the attackers, had proved beyond any iota of doubt that he had played an active part in the ambush.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-20883-AJK-govt%20s-mourning-for-Guru-upsets-Western-envoys>

"Gilgit-Baltistan is integral part of Pakistan: analysts"

The News, February 17, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is an integral part of Pakistan and its native population is totally

loyal and patriotic to the country, authoritative sources in the federal capital have stated while reacting to a propaganda campaign launched to prove otherwise. The propaganda launched in foreign countries not only distorts the historical truth about the GB and Pakistan but also instigates separatist notions for the target audience.

The elements sponsoring the campaign, while advocating resumption of traffic and trade across LoC (from GB to Ladakh), oppose building of dams, expressways, railways and gas pipelines by government of Pakistan, propagating that it will damage the ecosystem. "We are closely monitoring the psychological operations being carried out from abroad," stated the sources while adding that the chief aim of the exercise was to make Gilgit-Baltistan controversial and its people disconcerted.

The sources pointed out that the exercise, whose chief patrons were foreign elements and expatriate Pakistanis, was an indirect approach to exploit the petty issues and local rivalries with a view to damage the national interests of Pakistan. "We have found that the element of sectarianism in the region is not an isolated phenomenon; it is being spread to create chaos." Sources stated following the decision of handing over the Gwadar Port to China, they expected a new campaign to target the sensitive region that borders China.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-160496-Gilgit-Baltistan-is-integral-part-of-Pakistan:-analysts>

"Gilgit Baltistan: Impact of Climate Change on Biodiversity"

UNPO, February 11, 2013

Gilgit Baltistan benefits from a unique, rich and diverse nature. Yet, its biodiversity is seriously threatened by climate change. The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) formerly known as Northern Areas (NA) Pakistan has a unique and vital role in sustainable development of Pakistan. GB has geographic range of an area of 72,971 km² (28,174 mi²), lying in the extreme north of Pakistan (75 08 48.12 E & 37 00 47.33 N to 77 41 11.82 E & 35 27 26.06 N) (Khan 2012). Nature has gifted this area with high mountainous ranges, massive glaciers, glorious

rivers and splendid valleys and full of precious and industrial mines. Gilgit-Baltistan serves as a major water catchment for the Indus River Basin (IRB) upon which majority part of Pakistan depends for hydroelectricity and for irrigation proposes. Gilgit-Baltistan is in a politically sensitive location because of its special territorial status. It is administered directly by the Government of Pakistan (GoP) (IUCN 2003). It borders with Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor to the north, China to east, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KPK) province to the west and India to the south east.

The region is divided in to seven districts; Gilgit, Skardu, Hunza-Nagar, Ghanche, Ghizer, Diamer and Astore. Gilgit-Baltistan has an estimated population approaching 2000,000. The regions administrative headquarters are located in Gilgit city. Gilgit-Baltistan is rich for biological diversity. It contains most important forests, extensive mineral resources and host for many endangered species of the world. The Gilgit-Baltistan is dominated by one of the most important landscape on the world, joint by Hindu Kush to the west, Karakorum to east, and mighty Himalayans to the south and Pamir to the north. It contains 101 peaks which are found to be above than 7,000 meters (IUCN 2003) like Nanga Parbat, K-2 (Mt. Godwin Austin) the second highest mountain after Mt. Everest. The mountain valleys of GB are usually narrow, profound and steep in appearance. The high mountains are behaving like resistance to the monsoon rains to reach in GB. That's why most of the places in GB receive less rainfall and are fall cold desert. Natural beauty, largest mountains, unique biodiversity, topographic difference, and a larger variety of cultures and languages have been a good concern for scientist to conduct research in Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.unpo.org/article/15483>

"Guru's execution: AJK announces three-day mourning"

The News, February 9, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The news about the execution of Afzal Guru in Tihar jail in India spread like a wild fire in the capital city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

(AJK) Meanwhile, the AJK government has announced three-day mourning over the killing of Afzal Guru on framed up charges. AJK government spokesman Shaukat Javed Mir stated that the Kashmiris would observe three-day mourning, when AJK flag would fly half mast and all government functions have been suspended.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-87368-Gurus-execution:-AJK-announces-three-day-mourning>

S M Hali, “Gilgit-Baltistan: propaganda target”

The Nation, February 13, 2013

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), formerly known as the Northern Areas, is part of the unfinished partition plan of the subcontinent, when Pakistan and India gained independence from British Raj in 1947. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Indian Held Kashmir (IHK) and GB comprise the disputed Kashmir region. On August 29, 2009, GB was granted self-rule under the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009 by the Government of Pakistan. With this, the people of GB, commonly known as Baltis, are empowered to elect their own Legislative Assembly, thus achieving provincial status, without officially becoming a province of Pakistan.

GB's location is strategic, bordering Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to the west, Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor to the north, China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to the east and northeast, Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the southwest, and J&K to the southeast. Besides this, its strategic location, its picturesque valleys, serene lakes, verdant plateaus and lofty peaks attract tourists and mountaineering expeditions. Indeed, the development for Baltis has been slow, but the advent of the Karakoram Highway in the 1970s linking GB with China has opened up tremendous trade and commerce opportunities for the people of the region.

The planned railway with Chinese support will be a marvel of engineering, meandering through the treacherous mountains and valleys and promise enhanced economic activity as well as employment opportunities for the Baltis. In this milieu, it is not

surprising that vested interests want to exploit the simple, but hardworking Balti people. The forefathers of the current generation had fought bravely alongside Pakistani mujahideen for their independence from the Hindu Dogra rule.

The macabre plot of the detractors comprises a vicious propaganda campaign targeting the Balti people and polluting their minds by distorting historical truths through their malicious write-ups, articles and seminars organised on foreign soil. The aim is to accord more credibility to their propaganda and also muster foreign support for their selective Psychological Operations (Psy Ops) against Pakistan. The detractors have recruited willing villains to further their odious plot.

There is a serious dichotomy in the approach of the propagandists. On the one hand, they advocate the resumption of traffic and trade across the Line of Control (LoC) (from GB to Ladakh), while on the other, they oppose serious development plans of the Pakistani government that will increase access to regional prosperity. They falsely propagate that the construction of dams, expressways, railways and gas pipelines will damage the ecosystem, stressing environmental ramifications, which is the popular tune of conservationists.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/columns/13-Feb-2013/gilgit-baltistan-propaganda-target>

“WAPDA working on Bhasha Dam, Dasu project”

Pakistan Tribune, February 12, 2013

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) is simultaneously working on the prioritised 4,500 megawatts (MW) Diamer Bhasha Dam Project and 4,320 MW Dasu Hydropower Project in addition to a number of other under-construction projects.

WAPDA Chairman Syed Raghieb Shah stated this while presiding over a meeting, on February 11 attended by the senior representatives of the World Bank, the project consultants, WAPDA Members and other senior officers. The International Panel of Experts for Dasu Hydropower Project visited

WAPDA House and held a meeting to discuss their recommendations about the work done on the project so far. Addressing the meeting, WAPDA chairman stated that addition of a sizeable quantum of low-cost hydel electricity to the national grid was vital not only for mitigating power shortages in the country, but also decreasing dependence on costly imported fuel for electricity generation.

<http://paktribune.com/business/news/WAPDA-working-on-Bhasha-Dam-Dasu-project-10881.html>

Parvez Jabri, “Gilgit-Baltistan govt takes steps to empower women: Sadia Danish”

Business Recorder, February 11, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Tourism Advisor Gilgit-Baltistan, Sadia Danish has stated that the government of Gilgit-Baltistan has taken a number of steps to empower the women and necessary legislation would be made in the assembly to protect them. Talking to a private news channel, she stated that the provincial government had established an institute named 'Women Development' which was providing vocational training to them. The advisor stated a separate office of NADRA would be established soon to facilitate women. She stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party government had empowered the women through the passage of Women's Protection Bill.

She stated that women were playing a pivotal role in the economic growth of the country. The government had started various development programmes, including training centres and women skill development centres and hundreds of women of Gilgit-Baltistan were getting benefits from them, she added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/105635.html>

“Bhasha Dam tops govt's priority list”

The Nation, February 1, 2013

LAHORE: The federal government, through the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), is implementing multi-purpose Diامر Bhasha Dam as a priority project because of its numerous benefits for economy of the country. In

addition to gigantic Diامر Bhasha Dam Project, the work on 4,320 mega watt (MW) Dasu Hydropower Project will also be commenced soon, as all pre-requisites including detailed engineering design of this project are almost completed. This was stated by Wapda Chairman Syed Raghieb Shah during his meeting with Tom Newton, Chief Operating Officer of a US-based firm Hydromine at Wapda House on January 31. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman stated that two projects offer excellent windows of opportunities to the financial institutions and construction firms for their high economic rate of return.

Dilating upon the benefits, the Chairman stated that Diامر Bhasha Dam, with gross water storage capacity of 8.1 million acre feet, will generate 4,500 MW electricity and contribute about 20 billion units of low-cost hydel electricity to the National Grid. He stated that Dasu Hydropower Project will also provide more than 21 billion units electricity to the system.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/01-Feb-2013/bhasha-dam-tops-govt-s-priority-list>

“Hydropower: Untapped potential could help resolve power crisis”

The Express Tribune, February 5, 2013

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) could become self-sufficient and meet its total demand of 400 megawatts (MW) of electricity through the execution of hydropower generation projects, several locations for which have been identified in different parts of the state. At the same time, the authorities have asserted that hydropower to the tune of a total of 8,134.82MW could be produced in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Construction work has been launched on 13 of 54 hydel projects in the private and public sectors in various parts of AJK. There are already eight hydropower facilities, including the country's second-largest dam, Mangla, already functioning in AJK.

The state's Hydro Power Board Managing Director Mushtaq Gorsie noted that Wapda launched the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum power project in

Muzaffarabad, the Hydro Electric Board launched 10 power projects with a total capacity of 17.72MW, and two projects producing a total of 231MW launched by the Private Power Cell (PPC) and the Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) have been initiated to help address local and national supply shortfalls.

Elaborating on the status of other identified hydropower projects, the upcoming projects in the public sector include four projects totalling 137.4MW. “The feasibility studies of six projects totalling 140 MW have also been completed”, he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/502668/hydropower-untapped-potential-could-help-resolve-power-crisis/>

“Women NADRA, Passport offices in Gilgit soon”

Pakistan Observer, February 9, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior, Rehman Malik on February 7 stated a separate NADRA and passport offices for women would be opened in Gilgit to facilitate the population. He was co-chairing a cabinet meeting of Gilgit-Baltistan with Chief Minister of GB, Syed Mehdi Shah in Islamabad. The GB Cabinet Members presented their public issues which were reviewed.

The meeting approved new NADRA/Passport offices which will be opened in Hunza Nagar and be implemented in next two weeks. NADRA office has also been approved in Sub-Division Tangi District Diamer. Passport office will be inaugurated in Chilas within next twenty four hours. The areas where criminals are creating havoc, arms licences to the general public depending on their reputation would be given to them completing all legal formalities, the meeting further decided.

Interior Minister was appraised about the difficulties being experienced by the local public in travelling far from the areas to get their passports and CNICs from Gilgit which needs to be looked into sympathetically and the inconvenience of the public should be kept in view while giving the facilities to the people. He stated in view of the people living far from the remote areas to process

their Passports and CNICs, the above decisions have been taken in the public interest.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=195062>

Tariq Naqash, “People's Party workers angry with AJK PM”

Dawn, February 18, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Workers of the governing Peoples Party called a private meeting on February 17, at which they accused their leader, AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, of damaging the party in the interests of preserving his own power. The meeting, held at the home of Syed Karamat Shah Kazmi, gave party workers a chance to air their complaints against Chaudhry Abdul Majeed. He was accused of “bad governance and rampant corruption”.

Many PPP-AJK workers felt that, to preserve his own position, he was weakening the party by giving preferential treatment to workers of the PML-N and the Muslim Conference. “The longer Chaudhry Majeed stays in power,” a worker stated, “the more damage our party will suffer.” Several local leaders were invited to the meeting, including Sultan Mahmood, a barrister and former premier of AJK. Recalling his own period as the region's leader, Mahmood stated that it was support from his party that enabled him to hold on through four changes of government in Islamabad.

“The incumbent prime minister seems unbothered by your concerns,” he told workers, who asked him to step in on their behalf in light of their complaints about Chaudhry Majeed. Mahmood stated that he had been consistently voicing concerns about “large-scale corruption” in the AJK government. He added that he had been keeping President Asif Ali Zardari abreast of the situation in Kashmir, “and will not stop doing so”. Party workers decided to hold another private meeting on February 26, at the home of PPAJK vice president Khawaja Farooq Ahmed, before organising a public meeting, on March 6, at which Sultan Mahmood will be their chief guest.

<http://dawn.com/2013/02/18/peoples-party-workers-angry-with-ajk-pm-2/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan: KKH will be completed in 2014”

February 18, 2013

GILGIT: The portion of Karakoram Highway destroyed due to the damming of Hunza River will be completed in the year 2014. Seven tunnels, five bridges and a 17 kilometer stretch of the KKH will be constructed in Gojal Valley as part of the project. This was stated by Mr. Lee, an official of the China Roads and Bridges Corporation. He further stated that three of the tunnels will be constructed this year while work on the remaining two will be completed in 2014.

It is pertinent to note that the same company has been working on the KKH repair and expansion project since 2007. The expansion and repair project from Khunjerav to Thakot had to be completed in 2013, according to initial plans. However, the project was delayed due to floods and the Attabad landslide disaster that struck in January 2010.

<http://gilgitbaltistanbulletin.wordpress.com/2013/02/18/gilgit-baltistan-kkh-will-be-completed-in-2014/>

“Thousands in Gilgit-Baltistan register protest against the Quetta killings”

Pamir Times, February 18, 2013

GILGIT: Protest demonstration were held across Gilgit-Baltistan against the bombing in Quetta that led to the death of at least 85 people most of whom belonging to the Shia Hazara community. Around 200 people were injured in the heinous act of terrorism. Speaking at a rally in Gilgit city, MLA Deedar Ali stated that the sectarian violence is part of a conspiracy aimed at weakening of the state of Pakistan. He stated that the security agencies and the governments have failed to protect lives and properties of the citizens. Speakers demanded action against terrorist groups across the country. They also demanded severe punishment for the culprits.

Protest demonstrations were also held in Skardu, Ghanche and Hunza-Nagar. The protest demos in Gilgit-Baltistan were jointly organized by Shia

Ulema Council, MWM, Jafria Students and Imamia Students Organization, among others.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2013/02/18/thousands-in-gilgit-baltistan-register-protest-against-the-quetta-killings/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan government's website restored after 9 months”

Pamir Times, February 15, 2013

GILGIT: The web portal of Gilgit-Baltistan government has been restored after a lapse of nine (9) months. The website (www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk) had been suspended in May 2012 by the service provider due to non-payment of annual charges. Pamir Times had published several reports to highlight the suspension of the website but nobody took notice, depriving the citizens of the opportunity to get timely information about different issues. The Careers section in the restored websites has been “under construction”, since the inception of the website three years back. The budget 2013-14 has also not been uploaded on the website, making it difficult for the public to get information about the government's plan and progress.

<http://pamirtimes.net/2013/02/15/gilgit-baltistan-governments-website-restored-after-9-months/>

“AJK Govt starts hydel power projects”

Business Recorder, February 4, 2013

MIRPUR: Construction work has been started on 13 out of 54 hydel power projects in private and public sectors and eight hydro power projects including the country second largest Mangla dam are already commissioned and functioning in AJK. Managing Director of AJK Hydro Power Board Mushtaq Gorski noted on February 4. He further stated WAPDA launched 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydel Power Project in Muzaffarabad, the Hydro Electric Board launched 10 hydro power projects with a total capacity of 17.72 MW.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/industries-a-sectors/104500-ajk-govt-starts-hydel-power-projects-.html>

“8,100MW power projects afoot in AJK”

February 7, 2013

After the identification of the huge natural potential

for the generation of hydro power to the tune of a total of 8134. 82 megawatts in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, construction has been initiated on 13 out of 54 hydropower projects under public-private partnership in different parts of the State, officials revealed. Eight hydropower projects including the country's second largest Mangla dam have already been commissioned and functioning in AJK.

AJK Hydro Power Board Managing Director Engr Mushtaq Gorski told this scribe that to overcome the prevailing energy crises, the Wapda had launched 969MW mega Neelum-Jhelum Hydel Power Project in Muzaffarabad district, adding that the Hydro Electric Board had launched 10 power projects of the total capacity of 17. 72 megawatt besides two projects of 231 MW launched by the Private Power Cell (PPC) and the Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB). He elaborated that the upcoming projects in the public sector included four projects of the capacity of 137.4 MW. "The feasibility study for six projects having a capacity of 140 MW has been completed", he pointed out.

The AJK Hydro Power Board chief disclosed that 27 projects of the capacity of 3218. 4 MW power were under process in the private sector. He revealed that the authorities had also identified three raw sites of the estimated capacity of 2,370 MW of hydro power at different locations in the AJK territory. "Besides three self-generating projects of the capacity of 10. 5 MW of power are also in progress", he added.

<http://www.hydroworld.com/news/2013/02/07/8-100mw-power-projects-afoot-in-ajk.html>

Tariq Naqash, "Protest in Muzaffarabad against Federal Minister"

February 5, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: Dozens of civil society activists staged a protest demonstration along a bustling thoroughfare in Muzaffarabad on February 4, calling upon the Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan to take stock of "unlawful inductions in the Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) Council at the hands of its in-charge federal minister Manzoor Wattoo for electoral purposes." Holding banners

and placards, the demonstrators, who included traders, lawyers and community leaders, assembled outside the press club and chanted slogans against Wattoo for "abusing his position" and called upon PaK's leadership to rise to the occasion to secure the rights of deserving persons.

The demonstration was triggered by reports that the PaK Council Secretariat had omitted the condition of 'state subject certificate' for the applicants for vacant posts in its secretariat in Islamabad and in some of the departments under its administrative control. It may be mentioned here that the PaK residents and Kashmiri refugees settled in Pakistan are recognised by a 'state subject certificate,' issued by the PaK authorities under the laws enforced in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in April 1927 and June 1932. The protestors alleged that Wattoo was not only bent upon making these recruitments from his constituency in the Punjab but he was also spending resources of PaK Council to woo voters, ahead of Pakistan's general elections.

It may be noted here the main source of PaK Council's income is the 20 per cent of the income tax generated from the PaK territory. Besides, the Council generates revenues from other levies as well, such as license fees on cellular networks operating in the PaK territory. "This is our blood (taxes) which is being dished out for electoral purposes in Pakistan. The CEC of Pakistan should take an immediate stock of it," said Zahid Amin, one of the organisers of the demonstration.

Employees of the PaK Council run departments provided documents which revealed that the PaK Council secretariat had shown blatant disregard to the stay orders granted by the PaK High Court (HC) in the recruitment matter. According to the documents, on October 19, 2012, the PaK Council secretariat had advertised 9 junior grade posts without mentioning the condition of 'state subject' for the applicants.

On being challenged by advocate Fazal Mehmood Baig, the PaK HC directed, on December 28, 2012, for maintenance of status quo in the matter. The status quo was renewed by the HC on January 18, 2013, besides serving notices on the PaK Council to

file objections and arguments by or before the next date of hearing on February 7. On November 14, 2012, the PaK Council secretariat advertised 10 more posts in B-17 and B-16 for contractual appointments, once again making no mention of state-subject in the eligibility column. The second move was also challenged by one Sajjad Hussain Shah in the PaK HC. The court admitted the petition for regular hearing on December 13 and ordered maintenance of status quo. The second petition came up for hearing on February 12. However, in a blatant disregard to both orders, the PaK Council secretariat had issued call letters to some candidates for interviews.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Feb/5/protest-in-muzaffarabad-against-federal-minister-44.asp>

Terence J Sigamony, “Neelum project may need to be redesigned”

The Nation, February 20, 2013

ISLAMABAD: With the award announced in the Kishanganga dispute by The Hague-based Court of Arbitration to divert only a minimum flow of water from the Neelum/Kishanganga River for power generation, the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project would be badly affected and would have to be redesigned. Background interviews and discussion with energy experts show that with the verdict of International Court of Arbitration, Pakistan would have to face around 150 billion annual loss as the designed capacity of 969MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project will be reduced by 150MW. The verdict has an ultimate impact on Pakistan as it will reduce water flow in the River Neelum, leaving very little water for Pakistan. They were of the view that the International Court of Arbitration ruled in favour of India on the diversion of Neelum (Kishanganga) water, setting aside objections by Pakistan that halted work on the 330MW Kishanganga Hydropower Project in Jammu & Kashmir. A detailed order in the shape of the fine print will be made public soon.

They were of the view that the verdict is a clear green signal for the Kishanganga project because Indian spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin, announcing

the decision on February 18 late night, asked Indians to celebrate the day.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/20-Feb-2013/neelum-project-may-need-to-be-redesigned>

“Mufti hails resumption of cross-LoC trade”

February 2, 2013

JAMMU: Hailing resumption of cross-LoC trade between India and Pakistan from Chakan-Da-Bagh area of Poonch, PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed on February 1 stated the political leadership of India and Pakistan have shown maturity by re-starting the cross LoC trade.

Addressing a meeting of the district committees of PDP Poonch and Rajouri, Mufti stated that PDP has pioneered a political and economic agenda to establish sustainable peace in the subcontinent and for the development of backward and neglected areas. “Establishing lasting peace and to consolidate the reconciliation process is on the top of the agenda of PDP”, Mufti stated, adding; “Our party, through its pro-peace policies, has consolidated reconciliation process and facilitated the efforts of establishing peace in this region.”

While reminding party workers about the historic rally of former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at Srinagar on April 18, 2003 where he (Vajpayee) had extended hand of friendship to Pakistan despite tension on border, Mufti stated that historic event was the beginning of the era of peace in this region and “credit for this goes to the PDP.” “Beginning of cross-LoC trade, opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakote roads are noticeable achievements of PDP”, he stated and added that present UPA regime headed by Dr Manmohan Singh has also supported the pro-peace policies of PDP. He further mentioned that prevailing peace all along the borders from Kathua to Kargil was result of the reconciliatory policy pioneered and propagated by the PDP.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Feb/2/mufti-hails-resumption-of-cross-loc-trade-82.asp>

Economic Developments

AH Nizami, “Goods worth over Rs10m traded across LoC”

The Express Tribune, February 20, 2013

MIRPUR: A remarkable output of bilateral cross-LoC trade between Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Jammu & Kashmir emerged on February 19 after the goods, containing permitted items worth over Rs10 million were traded across the line of control (LoC) at the Taitrinote Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point on Rawlakot-Poonch route, official sources stated. As many as 15 trucks rolled out from the Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) Poonch city of Jammu & Kashmir to Rawalakot AJK carrying bags of banana, chillies and herbs worth Rs4.4 million, according to the sources. From AJK, seven trucks laden with almonds, dry dates and apples worth Rs5.6 million entered the Indian side of

the LoC, they stated. Officials from both sides monitored the exchange of these goods which took place in two phases on February 19.

The cross-LoC barter trade through historic Rawalakot-Poonch and Muzaffarabad-Srinagar routes through Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh and Chakothe-Uri crossing points was started in October 2008 to facilitate the Kashmiri entrepreneurs at both sides to the LoC to exchange the trade of a total of 21 permitted locally-produced items under the barter system. The cross-LoC trade through Taitrinote-Chakan-Da-Bagh was reportedly affected for few days recently following tension on the LoC due to the reported skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani troops on the LoC.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/509661/goods-worth-over-rs10m-traded-across-loc/>

International Developments

“USTATED training 150 AJK teachers”

Pakistan Today, February 19, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USTATED) Mission Director Jock Conly and Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, awarded scholarships to 150 students of AJK University in Muzaffarabad. USTATED's Jock Conly stated that “the United States government is committed to supporting Pakistan in its efforts to improve the quality of basic education through better prepared teachers. This scholarship program is yet another expression of the U.S. government's long-term commitment to help build a stronger, more prosperous and Roshan Pakistan.”

Speaking at the occasion, Prime Minister of AJK Chaudhry Abdul Majeed thanked the people of

the United States for assisting AJK citizens with scholarships. The Azad Jammu & Kashmir scholarship program is part of a larger \$75 million USTATED Teacher Education Project. In addition, USTATED works closely with the Government of Pakistan to develop and implement innovative curricula for two recently-launched degree programs: a four-year Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education and a two-year Associate Degree in Education. A total of 1,900 students across Pakistan will be awarded scholarships under this project. More than 100 scholarships were awarded to students in Azad Jammu and Kashmir previously.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/02/19/news/national/ustated-training-150-ajk-teachers/>

Other Developments

“NYS 2013: Declare youth emergency in Pakistan say speakers”

The Express Tribune, February 18, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: The government should declare a youth emergency in Pakistan to ensure employment opportunities in both private and public sectors and better access to education. This was the crux of a discussion that ensued on the concluding ceremony of National Youth Summit (NYS) 2013 in Muzaffarabad on February 17. The resolution also urged federal and provincial governments to base their annual development plans on providing frequent opportunities of exchange to youth of all provinces, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to reduce the gaps, cultural integration and develop harmony.

The NYS 2013 aimed to enhance leadership capacity, build confidence, introduce youth to the social challenges, ensure intercultural and interfaith harmony and provide an opportunity to network with the youth from around the country. Hundreds of students aged 18 to 24 from across Pakistan participated in the event that was inaugurated by the AJK President Sardar Yaqoob Khan. The summit encompassed 12 multi-dimensional sessions, addressed by leaders from various segments and professions, including political figures, youth leaders, and journalists. President AJK Sardar Yaqoob Khan, President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique, Deputy Speaker of AJK Assembly Shaheen Kauser, Minister for Rehabilitation AJK Abdul Majid Khan, Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, and Shireen Fatima, Member Legislative Assembly Gilgit Baltistan also addressed the Summit.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/508835/nys-2013-declare-youth-emergency-in-pakistan-says-speakers/>

Shabbir Mir, “Unannounced and unwelcome:

power cuts compounding locals problems”

The Express Tribune, February 20, 2013

GILGIT: For the most part, Maryam, 40, a housewife leads a comfortable life. Unlike scores of other women in the area, she operates modern electrical appliances for carrying out daily domestic chores. However, unannounced power cuts make things difficult for her. “The power cuts often exceed 20 hours a day and it becomes extremely hard to do anything without electricity,” she stated. Pointing to a pile of dirty laundry and unwashed utensils, she stated that it is no use owning electric appliance when one cannot use them owing to power cuts. “We can never tell when the light will come and for how long. Winters are harder to bear than any other season. This is just an added problem for especially the housewives who have to manage multiple tasks,” she stated.

Little does she care about whether the water in lakes and glaciers recedes in winters due to freezing temperatures or the government is plagued by corruption. She does, however, realise that life becomes hard to deal with during winters in this mountainous, landlocked region of nearly 1.5 million people, majority of who are struggling below poverty line. “The situation goes from bad to worse as time passes by,” she stated, adding “there are more and more days without power.” Gilgit experiences extended power cuts from November to April every year. More than 50,000 users depend on the power generation units Naltar, Guroo, and Kargah for supply of electricity.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/509790/unannounced-and-unwelcome-power-cuts-compounding-locals-problems/>

“SEA workshop: Experts for adoption of environment-friendly steps”

The Express Tribune, February 3, 2013

MIRPUR: Participants of a workshop called for

adoption of environment-friendly measures and assessment before launching any development project including hydropower generation in Azad Kashmir. The three-day hydropower pilot Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) training and scoping workshop concluded at a local hotel on February 1. The workshop aimed at combating the challenges being faced by the environment, conservation, management of ecosystem and to ensure sustainable development. The workshop was organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Pakistan (IUCN), the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment, and AJK's Environment Protection Agency (EPA).

Participants including environmentalist, researchers, lawyers and media persons, stated that AJK has been endowed with a beautiful environment and vast natural resources. There is a need to harness these resources and use them for the development and wellbeing of the people of Azad Kashmir. AJK has the potential of generating over 8,000 megawatts of electricity, they stated. The participants felt that lack of solid waste management has become a major environmental concern in since it has been degrading the natural environment of the state besides creating health hazards.

Speaking at the concluding session, AJK's Environmental Protection Agency Director General Chaudhry Abdul Qayyum hoped that the newly-introduced Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Hydro Development Plan's implementation before and during the course of execution of any hydropower project would help preserve natural resources besides averting any threat to the environment. EPA Director Dr Raja Aurangzeb Khan stated the AJK government is planning to carry out a pilot SEA of power projects under the National Impact Assessment Programme.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/501876/sea-workshop-experts-for-adoption-of-environment-friendly-steps/>

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.

POK NEWS DIGEST



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