

POK News Digest

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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

Gilgit Baltistan is yet to recover from the ghastly attack on foreign tourists at the base camp near Nanga Parbat in June this year. There are reports that the incident has adversely impacted the tourism industry, which had just started to flourish. There is a sense of fear and uncertainty and this has rather intensified with the series of attacks taking place in the PoK region at regular intervals. This gravity of the situation is indicated by growing influence of groups like the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which claimed responsibility of the attack. In due course, the group of officers investigating the case were also murdered in cold blood. The audacious act of killing of investigating officers shows complete failure of the security apparatus in the entire PoK region.

Meanwhile, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of Pakistan refused to share the repaying and relending liability of two externally funded hydropower project inside Gilgit Baltistan. According to reports, the government body stated that Gilgit Baltistan region has an autonomous status under the Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009. Hence, the federal government in Islamabad cannot share the responsibility of loan repayment. Notably, the strings of finance of Gilgit Baltistan are attached totally to Islamabad. The region does not have revenue generation system of its own. The EEC, however, insisted that since the benefits of the hydropower projects would be accrued by the region, it should bear the liability alone. This development is significant and it is bound to affect the future of several hydropower projects which are coming up in the Gilgit Baltistan region.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Quwat. K. Sunny, “Drone Attack in Gilgit-Baltistan”

Dardistan Times, August 2, 2013

Recently 10 international tourists, including a local man, were attacked and killed in the West flunk of Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in the world. The foreigners were reportedly forced to kneel down, moments later to be sprayed with bullets. The slain visitors were in the mountainous, tough terrain, to climb Nanga Parbat. Several arches of Himalayas serve as worldly renowned arenas for adventure tourists. The craze for mountaineering is the only justification why one would opt to go to Pakistan where shedding blood has become an organized sport, lately. Pakistani Taliban immediately stated that one of its local franchises, Junood Ul Hifsa's operatives orchestrated the killing. Their justification was: to shake off some anger against American drones and possibly to stop them. A tourist destination in a relatively peaceful region was turned into a horrific crime scene that immediately captured global attention. UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Mon had to issue a statement, condemning the act of violence and expressing his concerns about violence in Pakistan.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/Opinion/992627154/drone-attack-gilgit-baltistan>

“G. M Sikandar would likely be the Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan”

Dardistan Times, July 31, 2013

Reliable sources in Islamabad and Lahore disclosed that the presidency has decided on the candidature of the governorship in Gilgit-Baltistan and G.M Sikandar, the former bureaucrat would probably be the governor of the region. G.M Skandar is a seasoned bureaucrat hailing from Gilgit-Baltistan. The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltisan, nevertheless, has stated that he is unable to propose anyone on his own for the candidature of the governorship. “There

are dozens of people for the post and I am unable to spotlight anyone. It is however, determined that the selection would be meritocratic”. Mehdhi Shah noted. The analysts are sceptic about G.M Sikandar's nomination as he is unlikely to win PPP's favour for the slot's race due to his close ties with the government of Punjab especially Mian brothers.

http://www.dardistantimes.com/comment/reply/160?page=50&qt-quick_tabs_new=1

“Already wounded! Rawalpindi Police tortures Gilgit-Baltistan Students”

Dardistan Times, August 1, 2013

RAWALPINDI: Some mysterious unknown motorcyclist captured three junior college students of Gilgit-Baltistan and attempted to kill them. Kumail, Ruhulallah and Zahir were passing through the busy commercial market of Satellite Town, when two motorcyclists provoked them to initiate a clash. Later they called up a contingent of violent men who arrived on the spot in two vehicles equipped with iron rods, clips and knifes. They attacked the GB students. Two of the students were soaked in blood with injuries on head. Kumail was taken into the vehicle and was transferred to unknown torture cell where he was physically tortured for two hours and was left with broken arm. The mysterious miscreants first tortured the students and then took the students to new town Police Station for further anguish in the hands of Rawalpindi Police.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/comment/reply/275?page=50>

“Barjees orders relief activities in flood hit GB areas”

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 15, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Chaudhry Barjees Tahir directed Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) to initiate relief activities in the the flood-

affected areas of GB. The minister also directed the chief secretary to contact the authorities concerned to restore the communication system of different areas of GB including Hunza Nagar and Astore, which have been disconnected due to heavy rains. He stated that all the problems of area should be resolved on priority basis and to make all necessary arrangements for the affected people.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=245360&Itemid=1

“AJK Govt launches uplift plan”

Pakistan Observer, August 5, 2013

MIRPUR: The AJK government launched an integrated socio-economic uplift plan for the financial year 2013-14 under the spirit to develop the region. In order to materialize the plan, the AJK government is going to fix the priorities set to be achieved during the new fiscal year 2013-14, sources noted on August 4. Elaborating the proposed priorities, the sources stated that the plan involve the promotion of the State's natural resources of income, minerals, tourism, cultural heritage, water and snow sports and generation of hydel power.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=214711>

“AJK PM thanks PML-N govt for not dislodging government”

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 6, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated on August 5 that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has shown a great vision by not dislodging Pakistan People's Party-led government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). He stated this in a meeting with the federal minister for Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Barjees Tahir in Islamabad. He appreciated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's decision for not backing the no-confidence move in the AJK assembly. He further stated that the Federal government has played an unprecedented role by not supporting any un-constitutional move for dislodging his elected government.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=245531&Itemid=2

Zulfiqar Ahmad, “Gilgit-Baltistan Governor contemplating resigning”

Business Recorder, August 6, 2013

The Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pir Syed Karam Ali Shah, is seriously contemplating resigning after Eid, as he is believed to be under immense pressure from the centre to quit after the election of a Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) nominee, Mamnoon Hussain, as president of Pakistan. Sources close to Pir Karam stated that he was facing plethora of problems by the local leadership of PML-N after the party came into power following May 11 general elections. Pir, who is thought to be a thorough gentleman, did not feel comfortable in the prevailing situation as he is a senior PPP leader and has decided to step down. They stated that he would quit the top slot of governorship after consulting President Asif Zardari soon after Eid, as he also wants to leave the office before the term of his own party's president [Zardari] will end in September 2013.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1218348/>

“Reuters / Shabbir Mir, Terror in Gilgit-Baltistan: Nanga Parbat investigators shot dead in Chilas”

The Express Tribune, August 7, 2013

GILGIT: Taliban militants shot dead three security officials investigating the recent massacre of foreign mountaineers in the Gilgit-Baltistan region on August 6. The new Jandul Hafsa faction of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack. The same group had claimed credit for the killing of 10 foreign trekkers and their Pakistani guide in a base camp of Nanga Parbat, the 9th tallest peak of the world on June 23. Militants ambushed a vehicle in Chilas district, killing Superintendent Police Hilal Ahmed, Colonel Ghulam Mustafa and Captain Ashfaq Aziz. Col Mustafa was stated to be responsible for internal security in Chilas, the town that shares border with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Kohistan district.

A security official confirmed that the slain officials were investigating the June 23 killing of foreign climbers. DIG Ali Sher also confirmed the

casualties. “The officials were returning to the rest house from the house of the deputy commissioner when they were ambushed by armed men,” he noted. Police cordoned off the area immediately and launched a manhunt for the killers.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/587534/terror-in-gilgit-baltistan-nanga-parbat-investigators-shot-dead-in-chilas/>

Shabbir Mir, “Investigators’ murder: 14 suspects in Chilas incident rounded up”

The Express Tribune, August 8, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) police arrested 14 suspects on a day after militants shot dead three security officials in Chilas. “Investigations are underway and 14 suspects have been detained for interrogation,” stated Deputy Inspector General (DIG) police, Ali Sher, who is leading investigations in Chilas. Those arrested are residents of Diamer valley. The police believe certain locals must have played in the hands of banned militant outfits carrying out similar activities elsewhere. The DIG stated security on the Karakoram Highway had been stepped up as a precautionary measure.

Militants ambushed a vehicle in Chilas district on August 6, killing Superintendent Police (SP) Hilal Ahmed, Colonel Ghulam Mustafa and Captain Ashfaq Aziz- security officials investigating the high profile murder of 10 foreign tourists at base camp of the Nanga Parbat. Investigators stated the administration had initiated an extensive search operation in Chilas in which hundreds of police and paramilitary forces had taken part.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/588161/investigators-murder-14-suspects-in-chilas-incident-rounded-up/>

“Loan defaulters: Arrest warrants issued for G-B lawmakers, businessmen”

The Express Tribune, August 8, 2013

GILGIT: A court has issued arrest warrants for two Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) lawmakers, senior politicians and businessmen for defaulting on loans worth millions of rupees. G-B High Court’s Justice Muhammad Alam also ordered the seizure of property of the defaulters, which include G-B

Minister of Finance, Muhammad Ali Akhtar from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Mir Ghazanfar, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) legislator from Nagar valley, Mirza Hussain, and G-B Chamber of Commerce President, Javed Hussain.

Renowned businessmen Haroon Khalid and Shabbir Wali were also on the list of defaulters that was released on August 7. “The deputy commissioners of the respective areas have been asked to implement court orders and sell out the defaulters’ properties,” stated Advocate Imran Hussain.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/588312/loan-defaulters-arrest-warrants-issued-for-g-b-lawmakers-businessmen/>

“Pak Army conducts targeted operation in Chilas”

The News, August 12, 2013

GILGIT: Pakistan Army, for the first time, entered the remote northern town of Chilas, headquarters of Diamer District, 128 km off Gilgit, to conduct an operation to arrest miscreants behind the killing of security officials and other terrorist activities. “Troops of the Pakistan Army have entered the city and it is totally cordoned off and some four localities were searched out for particular people,” an official of administration stated requesting anonymity. He disclosed that only the top military officials were leading the operation so details about what had been achieved so far was neither known by the administration nor police had any idea in this regard. An army colonel, a captain and a Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), investigating the June 23 killing of nine foreign tourists and one of their Pakistani guides in the area, were killed on August 6.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-24734-Pak-Army-conducts-targeted-operation-in-Chilas>

“Amn Jirga condemns killing of officials in Chilas”

The News, August 8, 2013

MARDAN: Condemning the killing of two military

officials and a senior cop by terrorists in Chilas in Gilgit-Baltistan, the Amn Jirga Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on August 7 asked the government to ensure security to people. In a press release, Amn Jirga chief, Syed Kamal Shah expressed grave concern over the rising acts of terrorism in the country. He stated the terrorists had been breaking jails, attacking officials and killing innocent civilians without any impediment. "Our security forces and intelligence setups have failed to curb militancy in the region," he noted, adding, every Pakistani was concerned about the killings of innocent people in various parts of the country.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-195012-Amn-Jirga-condemns-killing-of-officials-in-Chilas>

Shabbir Mir, "Owning matters: G-B Assembly rejects ban on recruitment in govt"

The Express Tribune, August 22, 2013

GILGIT: Lawmakers in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Assembly unanimously rejected a ban on recruitment imposed by the federal government terming it 'against the interest of the region'. "G-B is a new province and thus has to make its own decision in running government affairs," stated Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl lawmaker, Rahmat Khaliq. Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) legislator, Mirza Hussain and Pakistan Peoples Party lawmaker, Syed Raziuddin also endorsed the idea, requesting the speaker to declare the federal government's order null and void.

Lawmakers stated since the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh assemblies have already passed judgment against the ban, G-B should follow suit. Deputy Speaker Jamil Ahmed, who conducted the third day's proceedings in the absence of Speaker Wazir Baig, asked all lawmakers to raise their hands for a vote. The majority, including Opposition Leader Janbaz Khan of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), were in support of rejecting the ban. The deputy speaker then declared the federal government's decision invalid and asked the cabinet to continue their business as per routine.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/593321/owning-matters-g-b-assembly-rejects-ban-on-recruitment-in-govt/>

"Power house: AJK positions itself as hub of electricity generation"

The Express Tribune, August 22, 2013

KARACHI: Deputy Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen invited private investors from different cities of Pakistan, especially Karachi, to invest in small and medium size hydropower projects in Azad Kashmir. Speaking to media persons at the Karachi Press Club, Yaseen stated that Azad Kashmir has the potential to produce over 10,000 Mega Watts (MW) of electricity from hydro projects but due to financial constraints, the government cannot start these projects.

Yaseen stated that his government desires that more private investors come to Azad Kashmir to join hands with the government. He especially urged Karachi based investors to take interest in the hydropower projects for which the government of Azad Kashmir is ready to assist with one-window operations.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/593415/power-house-ajk-positions-itself-as-hub-of-electricity-generation/>

"Ullama of GB form Mili Yekjehti Council (MYC)"

Dardistan Times, August 21, 2013

GILGIT: Four religious parties have decided to form a joint conciliatory body, Milli Yekjehti Council (MYC), in Gilgit Baltistan to marginalize sectarian indifference .According to details, a meeting of Shia Ulema Council, Majlis Wahdat Ul Mulameen, Jamat Islami and JUI was held in Gilgit. Addressing on the occasion, Sheikh Mirza Ali, Mulana Abul Sami, Sheikh Nayar Abbas, Mulana Maqsood and Mushtaq Ahmad stated that religious harmony was necessary for the development and prosperity of the region.

They stated, "It is not the Ulama (Religious Clergy) who stimulate sectarian hatred. It is those selfish elements who, for their own heinous interests, divide people on sectarian lines."

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/comment/reply/877?page=51>

Shabbir Mir, “G-B Assembly: Resolution passed to condemn massacre of tourists, investigation officers”

The Express Tribune, August 20, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Assembly on August 20 unanimously adopted a resolution jointly condemning the murders of foreign tourists at the foot of Nanga Parbat in June 2013 and of investigation officials probing the incident in Chilas town on August 6. The resolution was tabled by a lawmaker of the treasury bench, Syed Raziuddin, on the second day of the current assembly session chaired by Speaker Wazir Baig. It demanded strict punishment for the perpetrators who “brought a bad name not only to G-B but the entire country by killing foreign tourists and then the security officials who were investigating the incident.”

Raziuddin also appreciated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for mentioning the incident during his maiden address to the nation on August 19. A lawmaker from Diamer valley, Sarwar Shah, urged the speaker to ensure innocent people in the valley are not harassed during the course of the investigation. “We condemn the barbaric acts and that is why we have extended full support to law enforcement agencies so they can arrest the killers,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/592821/g-b-assembly-resolution-passed-to-condemn-massacre-of-tourists-investigation-officers/>

Shabbir Mir, “In stasis: Stay order stalls G-B govt's decision to abolish wheat dealership”

The Express Tribune, August 19, 2013

GILGIT: A court in Gilgit has stayed the government's decision to replace the existing system of wheat distribution through dealers in the region. The stay orders came on August 17 after some politicians and wheat dealers filed a petition in the Gilgit civil court challenging the government's decision to abolish 'dealerships' for wheat distribution in the market and replace it by 'sale points'. “It's our victory, a victory of the aggrieved families,” petitioner Hasan Khan stated on August 18. Khan is a senior leader of former president

Pervez Musharraf's party - the All Pakistan Muslim League in - G-B.

On the directives of Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and G-B Barjees Tahir, the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) administration had announced 'sale points' will replace dealerships. In a meeting, Chief Secretary Mohammad Younus Dagha decided 70 sale points will be set up in Gilgit to replace dealers. These would be supervised by the food department and village committees to ensure a smooth supply of wheat to the public.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/591944/in-stasis-stay-order-stalls-g-b-govts-decision-to-abolish-wheat-dealership/>

Humaima Malik, “Nawaz Sharif's Close Friend Frontrunner for Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Slot”

Pakistan Tribune, August 20, 2013

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's close friend Dr. Sher Bahadur Anjum has emerged as the frontrunner for the slot of Gilgit-Baltistan governor. Sources noted that Sher Bahadur had recently contacted with the Nawaz Sharif and expressed desire to assume the governorship of Gilgit-Baltistan province. He is continuously in touch with Prime Minister. Sher Bahadur is one of the closest mates of Nawaz Sharif in UK, and is seen with him whenever the prime minister visits London, sources stated. Sher Bahadur, who belongs to Astore valley in Gilgit-Baltistan, is a prominent business figure of UK and holds dual nationality.

<http://pakistantribune.com.pk/4139/nawaz-sharifs-close-friend-frontrunner-for-gilgit-baltistan-governor-slot.html>

“Tourists' Murder: Conspiracy to malign Pakistan: minister”

The Express Tribune, August 17, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Inter-Provincial Coordination Riaz Hussain Pirzada informed the lower house that elements who want to malign Pakistan are involved in the killing of tourists in Gilgit Baltistan. The minister informed the National Assembly that fool proof security arrangements were made by the Interior Ministry for the tourists. He stated around 1,161,245 tourists from inside and outside the country visited Pakistan's various areas

during 2011. Pirzada stated according to 18th amendment, Ministry of Tourism has been devolved to provincial governments. Assets of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation would be handed over to the provincial governments soon, he added. He stated tourism in the country had been badly affected due to terrorist activities.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/591362/tourists-murder-conspiracy-to-malign-pakistan-minister/>

“Jammu & Kashmir property not for land mafia: Barjees”

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 16, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Chaudhry Barjees Tahir on August 15 expressed dissatisfaction over the briefing by Jammu and Kashmir State Administration and stated that J&K government property would not be left on the mercy of land mafia. The minister who was briefed on matters of property in Azad Kashmir stated that irregularities and corrupt elements would not be tolerated in the J&K Estate administration department. Barjees Tahir stated that less rent against billion of rupees property is not acceptable. The people who constructed illegal structures on the state land should know that land of Kashmir was not for land mafia. The minister also expressed annoyance over the lease agreements signed by the J&K state property administration and directed them to increase the rent of government property.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=246497&Itemid=2

“Are Ismailis of Gilgit-Baltistan contriving for their own State in Pakistan?”

Dardistan Times, August 15, 2013

A Karachi based Islamist tabloid 'Daily Ummat'-through one of its most dishonest reports-has squarely levelled the residents of Gilgit-Baltistan with some serious blows of allegations that, if unattended, would bump the genuine efforts to relinquish the terror factor in the region. The news report was widely relayed by the youth on social media-some seeking support for it and others just inquisitively. Generally such reports have impact

the society, especially if the society is largely uneducated. Many thinkers and writers consider such reports promptly disposable and; we partially agree with it. Something that transmits infectious social agents to the subsequent users should be immediately disposed off.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/556769/ajk-cabinet-meeting-workers-wages-raised-to-rs9000/>

Ali Ahmad Jan / Jamal Khurshid / Waqas Naeem, “Timber movement: Illegal transportation from G-B continues unabated”

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The threat to forests in Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) Diamer district may not have disappeared after all. Locals have alleged that the transportation of illegally-cut timber from Diamer to the rest of the country is still being carried out, in violation of a July 5 order by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to withdraw the Diamer timber movement policy.

The policy, which was notified by Sharif's predecessor, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf a day before he left office, had allowed four million cubic feet (cft) of legally and illegally cut timber, worth an estimated Rs8 billion, lying in Diamer's forests to be transported down country. But it just provided an excuse for the influential timber traders to chop more trees illegally and move them away from Diamer, according to environment activists.

http://www.dardistantimes.com/comment/reply/668?page=1&qt-quick_tabs_new=1

“Federal Govt approves immediate release of Rs 1.7 bln for AJK”

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 14, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar stated on August 13 that the Federal Government approved immediate release of Rs 1.7 billion as advance to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Government. Talking to AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, the Finance Minister stated that the Federal Government was aware of the problems being faced by the AJK people and approved the grant from its share to tide over the

same. Chaudhry Majeed conveyed his thanks to Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for distancing the Federal Government from efforts to destabilize his government. He stated that he was fully aware of the financial constraints being faced by the Government of Pakistan and supported the initiatives taken by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government to stabilize the economy.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=246278

“Calling on NAB: JUI-F to support inquiry into Gilgit-Baltistan corruption scams”

The Express Tribune, August 16, 2013

GILGIT: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) stated it will support the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) if it conducts an inquiry into corruption scams in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). “There should be an inquiry and we welcome it, especially if it is done through NAB,” Attaullah Shah, a senior JUI-F leader and former advisor to the prime minister noted on August 15. “Unfortunately, our society is plagued by corruption and it's our responsibility to purge it from this menace.” JUI-F is a coalition partner in the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) led government in G-B. The coalition's three-year rule so far has been marred by allegations of corruption and bad governance. The JUI-F, however, has frequently denied the charges, claiming the party had nothing to do with the accusations.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/590666/calling-on-nab-jui-f-to-support-inquiry-into-gilgit-baltistan-corruption-scams/>

“Gun attack: Passengers escape ambush unhurt”

The Express Tribune, August 14, 2013

GILGIT: Unidentified gunmen opened fire at a passenger vehicle on the outskirts of the city on August 12. Fortunately, the passengers on board escaped unhurt in the ambush which took place in Danyor area, about 20 kilometres from Gilgit. “No one was injured in the attack,” confirmed Danyor police official Iqbal. Seven people were in the vehicle which was heading towards Sultanabad

from Gilgit. The bullets reportedly pierced through the vehicle, but passengers remained safe. The police stated a case has been registered but no arrests have yet been made

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/589871/gun-attack-passengers-escape-ambush-unhurt/>

“Tushar Ranjan Mohanty, Pakistan: Terror Thrives In Gilgit Baltistan, SATP”

August 12, 2013

On August 6, 2013, terrorists killed Diamer District Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Muhammad Hilal Khan, and two Army officers, Colonel Ghulam Mustafa and Captain Ashfaq Aziz, in an ambush at Rohni in the Chilas District of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). The officials were involved in the investigation of the June 23, 2013, massacre of foreign climbers at Nanga Parbat and were returning after a meeting in Diamer.

Significantly, 10 foreign mountaineers were among 11 persons killed, when terrorists wearing uniforms of the GB Scouts (a Paramilitary Force) attacked the Nanga Parbat base camp in the Bonar area of Diamer District and shot the climbers and a Pakistani guide at point-blank range. The victims included an American with dual Chinese citizenship, three Ukrainians, two Slovaks, two others from China, a Lithuanian and a climber from Nepal. One Chinese climber reportedly survived by fleeing the scene.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/12082013-pakistan-terror-thrives-in-gilgit-baltistan-analysis/>

“Gilgit Baltistan Nationalist Assassinated in Karachi”

Dardistan Times, August 30, 2013

A nationalist youth leader from Gilgit Baltistan was mercilessly assassinated by unknown masked assailants in Karachi. Late Ashiq Hussain Mir, the central chairman Baloristan National Youth Front (BNYF) was attacked by two masked people near Zai Hospital in Kemari, Karachi, sources claimed. The incident happened around 4 pm and the young man died on the spot. The slain young leader was also chairperson of Free Baba Jan Committee, a

committee that struggled to free Baba Jan who was jailed for voicing against the killing of two persons in the hands of the law enforcement agencies in Hunza. The body of Mir Ashiq Hussain will be air transported to Islamabad and then onward to Skardu, a press release, issued by Progressive Youth Front of Gilgit Baltistan, noted. Political and Students circles as well as general public of Gilgit Baltistan have strongly condemned the tragic killing of the nationalist leader. 'Immediate Arrest' of the killers was demanded by people from Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/comment/reply/1079?page=51>

“Taking into confidence: Public consultation on Bunji power project underway”

The Express Tribune, August 30, 2013

GILGIT: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held a public consultation in Gilgit to assess the environmental impact of the proposed Bunji hydropower project. A report prepared by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) on the environmental impact of the project was discussed in the meeting held on August 28. It was attended by people from Bunji, Rundu, representatives of Wapda and current and former regional policymakers, including Aftab Haider, Muhammad Naseer and Captain Sikandar. “It was a fruitful discussion and the communities shared their views and concerns,” stated EPA Director Shehzad Hasan Shigri. “The project is one of the most viable projects for a country facing a power crisis,” he claimed.

The proposed 7,100 megawatt power project is located on the Indus River near Gilgit. Communities raised reservations over the name of the project and suggested renaming it as Rundu-Bunji hydropower project. “The project is affecting more people from the Rundu area and therefore it should be renamed according to the peoples' wishes,” stated former lawmaker Captain Sikandar, a senior member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q). The Bunji power project, also known as Bunji Dam, is expected to be completed in six years at an estimated cost of Rs12 billion. According to the survey, the lower part of the

Shangus area is likely to submerge but the displacements will be far less compared to that feared for Diamer-Bhasha.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/597074/taking-into-confidence-public-consultation-on-bunji-power-project-underway/>

“Taking stock: G-B chief secretary takes notice of incomplete projects”

The Express Tribune, August 29, 2013

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government on August 28 took notice of the delay in two major projects in Gilgit. “Action was taken by G-B Chief Secretary Younas Dhaga after he was flooded with complaints,” an official noted. The chief secretary has directed authorities to identify those responsible for the delay. The latest complaints were lodged by the regional leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), who pinpointed projects worth millions, including the construction of the RCC Bridge connecting Gilgit to the Karakoram International University via Zulfiqarabad and repairing the road heading from Public Chowk to Sakwar area were still pending. “We want a fair investigation on these projects,” stated a spokesperson for the PML-N in Gilgit. He also confirmed the party had filed the complaints because it did not trust the regional government.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/596558/taking-stock-g-b-chief-secretary-takes-notice-of-incomplete-projects/>

“Power theft: FIA team reaches ministers' offices”

The Express Tribune, August 29, 2013

GILGIT: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) launched a crackdown against power theft in Gilgit on August 29, disconnecting illegal connections to some ministers' offices on the first day. The crackdown was a part of the federal government's countrywide drive against power theft. The FIA task force, led by Deputy Director Babar Khan, first raided Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Education Directorate and cut off illegal connections going to the offices of Education Minister Ali Madad Sher, director colleges and director education. Sher left his office soon after as the operation was conducted in the presence of the public and media. According

to an official on duty, the illegal connections supported at least 11 air conditioners in the offices.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/597063/power-theft-fia-team-reaches-ministers-offices/>

Ansar Abbasi, “Has Pakistan abandoned Bhasha Dam? Ishaq Dar hints at preference to Dasu Dam”

The News, August 29, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Much to the delight of India, the Government of Pakistan has succumbed to the World Bank's pressure by preferring the US\$6 billion Dasu Hydropower Project over US\$14 billion Diamer-Bhasha Dam as was recently warned by the government's top adviser on Bhasha. Such has been the biased role of the PML-N government to subtly put the Bhasha Dam construction on the back burner that it did not bother to consult even once the government's key adviser on Bhasha Shakil Durrani, who is a former Wapda chairman, on the issue. After getting disappointed with the government's response, the reputed Durrani left his job a few weeks before the completion of his contract. The man, who has served as chief secretary of Sindh, KPK, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan and carries a clean image, had sought half-a-dozen times a meeting with the incumbent minister for water and power but he was not allowed to present his case on the Bhasha Dam.

Shakil Durrani had warned earlier this year that after Kalabagh, the smooth and early construction of the promised Diamer-Bhasha Dam (DBD) was being endangered both by the World Bank and some Wapda officials. In an official note circulated by this former chairman Wapda to all concerned, it was stated that the World Bank did not want the construction of the Bhasha Dam though the ADB and Friends of Democratic Pakistan were willing to finance the project. On August 26, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar surprised many by announcing that the government had decided to immediately take up the \$6 billion Dasu Hydropower Project because its construction could start without any delay, while the Diamer-Bhasha project would take 10-12 years to complete.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-25076-Has-Pakistan-abandoned-Bhasha-Dam>

Shahid Umar, “Impact of Gilgit incident on economy”

The Frontier Post, August 28, 2013

Pakistan has facing loss of 100 billion dollar against war on terror. This damage has a lot of aspects, first is the tourism industry that has irreparably been damaged. According to a statistical report by Pakistan Association of Tourism before 2000, more than 1 million tourist visited Pakistan. But after 9/11 this number remains 10, 000 which is quite lesser. Just only in Gilgit-Baltistan before 9/11, 20 to 25 thousand tourists visited Gilgit Baltistan. But after the incident of 9/11, it remains only 5 thousand per year.

During effluent year this number was again reaching 10 to 12 thousand, Says Mirza Riaz, secretary general of Pakistan Economy Watch, a think tank. In 2007, revenue from tourism was \$151 million. By 2012, it had declined to \$101 million, according to data from the group. After 2007, when the situation was bit appropriate tourists from China, Russia, east Europe, east Asian countries used to visit as well. “Our economy is already going down due to terrorism and security,” says Mr. Riaz, “But this latest incident will have a grave impact. The government is doing its best to invite foreign businesses to Pakistan but the embassies in Islamabad are now giving advice not to come.”

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/36593/>

Shabbir Mir, “Taming troublemakers: Lawmakers say G-B on the brink of a sectarian onslaught”

The Express Tribune, August 28, 2013

GILGIT: Lawmakers say the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government needs to tame troublemakers before they set off another bloody spate of sectarian violence akin to the one witnessed across the region last year. Over 70 people lost their lives in sectarian clashes across G-B in 2012, particularly paralysing life in Gilgit, the capital city. “The government must take measures to nip the evil in the bud,” a member of the G-B Council, Attaullah Shahab stated on August 27 while referring to latest incidents which claimed the lives of a policeman and a civilian in Gilgit.

Police constables Sher Bahadur and Muhammad Bilal were ambushed in Sakwar on August 24 as they were heading to a police training institute. Bahadur died in the hospital while Bilal was critically injured. Half an hour later, a civilian was shot and injured in the same area, as a result of which he later died. Senior police official Ali Zia stated both incidents appeared to be incidents of sectarian killing. Although Gilgit has remained peaceful this year due to the collaborative efforts of the masjid board, peace committees, politicians and law enforcement agencies, the recent incidents have once again triggered panic.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/596083/taming-troublemakers-lawmakers-say-g-b-on-the-brink-of-a-sectarian-onslaught/>

“Showing laxity: Gilgit-Baltistan’s authority sacks 20 employees”

The Express Tribune, August 27, 2013

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan’s (G-B) Water and Sanitation Authority (Wasa) sacked at least 20 employees over prolonged absence and issued show-cause notices to 40 others for showing laxity in their duties. “The decision was taken because they (the employees) did not respond to notices served to them,” Gayoor Ahmed, Executive Engineer of Wasa, noted before reporters on August 26. According to officials, a team of Wasa engineers led by the executive engineer paid surprise visits to Wasa offices in Gilgit town and found many employees absent. As part of disciplinary action, show-cause notices were issued to those not present in their offices. However, 20 employees did not respond, as a result of which they were relieved of their duties. “According to our information, those terminated are either working in other departments or are out of the country,” stated Ahmed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/595560/showing-laxity-gilgit-baltistans-authority-sacks-20-employees/>

Shakeel Anjum, “Sikandar an activist of banned outfit, trained in AJK”

The News, August 27, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Islamabad Police (IGP) Sikandar Hayat stated on August 26 that the Blue Area standoff gunman was affiliated

with a banned outfit and was engaged in fund raising for this group in Dubai. Addressing a press conference on August 26, the IGP stated that Sikander was arrested by Dubai police for fund raising in 1998 and was sent to jail for three months, adding that he was held again in 2001 on the same charges and was deported to Pakistan.

The IGP stated that the accused later succeeded in getting a new passport changing his appearance and name from Sikandar Hayat to Mohammad Sikandar and proceeded to return to the UAE. He came back to Pakistan in 2010, the IGP noted further. He stated that Sikander also got militant training in 1996 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-25037-Sikandar-an-activist-of-banned-outfit-trained-in-AJK>

Hameed Shaheen, “Kashmiri youth want peaceful solution to Kashmir issue: survey”

August 26, 2013

RAWALAKOT: Centre for Peace Development and Reforms (CPDR) AJK launched first ever exclusive needs assessment survey of youth of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Survey has targeted large group of young people across the AJK on socio-political and economic issues confronting them in the backdrop of Kashmir conflict. Survey revealed that the unresolved Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India is widely considered the main issue of concern; almost 95 per cent of AJK’s youth considered it paramount in their lives and believe their socio-economic deprivation derives from it, stated a media note of CPDR August 26.

Reports maintained that on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir majority of Kashmiri youth in general oppose any sort of violence and wholeheartedly support the non-violent response to non-violent movement and continued State suppression may militarise young Kashmiris, which can give rise to future extremism. Report says that youth values and understand the significance of the increasing transnational and trans-border connectivity of a globalising world.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2013/08/26/kashmiri-youth-want-peaceful-solution-to-kashmir-issue-survey.html>

Zafar Bhutta, “Centre refuses to promise repayment of Gilgit-Baltistan loans”

The Express Tribune, August 28, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The federal government refused to take on the responsibility for repaying foreign loans being sought by Gilgit-Baltistan for energy projects, raising the spectre of a halt to international lending to the autonomous region. The issue was highlighted in a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) held in mid-August, according to sources. In an earlier meeting with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for financing two hydroelectric power projects, approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (EcneC), the matter of relending and repayment of loans by the Gilgit-Baltistan government also came up for discussion. One project is of 26 megawatts that will be developed in Shagharthang, Skardu and another is of 4MW to be constructed in Thack, Chilas. Gilgit-Baltistan is extremely rich in hydro resources, but electricity generation there is well below the potential. Hydropower projects with foreign financing are a necessity for the region. Meeting participants told the ECC that the Gilgit-Baltistan government was not in a position to repay foreign loans for the two projects and other foreign-funded projects in the future. Therefore, the government of Pakistan should take on such loans and pave the way for implementation of projects.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/596058/centre-refuses-to-promise-repayment-of-gilgit-baltistan-loans/>

“Reconciliation policy brought harm to PPP: Patel”

The Nation, August 25, 2013

KARACHI: The influential personality of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Nazakat Ali along with his supporters on August 24 announced joining of Pakistan Peoples Party. He made this announcement after meeting with Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Choudhry Abdul Majeed at party's Media Cell near Bilawal House in Karachi. AJK premier welcomed Nazakat and his supporters in the party, saying the party will get strength in Azad Kashmir with his joining. To a question, he

stated any no-confidence move against him would face defeat. On the occasion, PPP Karachi Division president Abdul Qadir Patel and Senator Saeed Ghani condemned the killing of the party workers in the city, demanding the party's government to investigate and arrest the killers immediately.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/karachi/25-Aug-2013/reconciliation-policy-brought-harm-to-ppp-patel>

“PFF voices against Bhasha Dam”

Daily Times, August 24, 2013

KARACHI: Pakistan Fisher folk Forum (PFF) expressed concern over the recent move by PML-N-led government to reinitiate the schemes like Diamer-Bhasha Dam, which were abandoned for decades after getting widely resistance by the masses in Sindh. PFF chairperson Mohammed Ali Shah, in a statement issued on August 23, stated the government is looking induced by the world's two biggest multilateral lenders to arrange funds for the 12-billion-dollar Diamer-Bhasha Dam project. He reiterated his resolve that the government and political parties should understand the impacts of dam project on ecology, natural resources and communities, which depend on the river water for their livelihoods. PFF chairperson stated the government and politicians are inclined to get funds from the world lenders to put the main economic sources at risk, because there are reports of mass suicide by the farmers, who are being deprived of their water share to continue cultivation.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\08\24\story_24-8-2013_pg12_6

“CM seeks WB assistance for Diamer Bhasha Dam”

The Nation, August 24, 2013

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has stated that government is working on a comprehensive plan to resolve energy crisis and other problems facing the country. He stated that measures are being taken for generation of electricity from hydel, thermal as well as alternative resources. He further noted that load shedding has been reduced substantially after

repayment of circular debts to the tune of Rs 480 billion. He stated that stern action is being taken against the elements involved in power and gas theft and a number of factory owners have also been arrested. He further stated that relief is being provided to the people in load shedding through load management system. The Chief Minister stressed upon the World Bank to provide help and assistance in education, health, infrastructure especially energy sector and cooperate with the government in the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam for generation of hydel power. He was talking to a delegation led by Vice President of World Bank Philippe Le Houerou which met him in Islamabad on August 23.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/24-Aug-2013/cm-seeks-wb-assistance-for-diamer-bhasha-dam>

Parvez Jabri, “By-election results reflect people's trust in the performance of PML-N”

Business Recorder, August 24, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Barjees Tahir noted the by-election results reflected the trust of the people in the performance of the incumbent PML-N government. Talking to Radio Pakistan, he stated the results are also the writing on the wall for those who were saying that the May 11 general elections were rigged.

<http://www.brecoorder.com/elections-2013/top-news/132607.html>

“G-B Assembly: Former PM criticised for delay in dam construction”

The Express Tribune, August 24, 2013

GILGIT: Former Prime Minister, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf was subjected to much criticism in the Gilgit- Baltistan (G-B) Assembly on August 23 as treasury benches held him responsible for the delay in the construction of the Diamer -Bhasha Dam. “It is the former premier who diverted funds for the dam in G-B to his constituency just to woo voters before the general elections,” stated Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawmaker Syed Raziuddin on a point of order in the house as the proceedings

entered their fifth day. “He did it as if it was his personal money and he had the authority to use it for whatever he wished,” added Raziuddin, who has recently joined PPP. Opposition leader Janbaz Khan also accused Ashraf of spending Rs15 billion- the cost of the dam- in his constituency during the election campaign. “Much of the work would have been completed if the government had the funds at its disposal,” stated Khan, a resident of Diamer valley, where the dam is under construction. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam - Fazal (JUI-F) legislator Rahmat Khaliq went a step further in criticising the former prime minister, whose last days in the office saw approval of the controversial 'forest policy' for G-B, and stated he must be answerable for all this. Speaker of the assembly Wazir Baig stated it is hoped that now the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) government in the centre would settle the issue.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/594280/g-b-assembly-former-pm-criticised-for-delay-in-dam-construction/>

“WB to extend \$1.5 bn loan in 2013-14, VP informs Dar”

The News, August 22, 2013

ISLAMABAD: World Bank is now poised to work out a \$1.5 billion loan programme for 2013-14 to support the economic policies and stabilisation measures of the government, says Mr. Philippe Le Houerou, vice president of the bank. Referring to Diamer-Bhasha Dam, he stated the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is carrying out due diligence of the project and once it is completed we will start working on it. He stated this in a meeting with finance minister, Senator Ishaq Dar on August 21, noted a Press release. He informed the Finance Minister that there foreign investors are keen to invest in Pakistan, especially in the energy sector. Mr. Philippe Le Houerou stated the World Bank appreciates and shares the diagnosis of Pakistan's economy as well as the direction set by the present government and would like to continue to be partner and take the relationship to the next level, after a successful conclusion of a programme with IMF.

[http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-24931-WB-to-extend-\\$15.bn-loan-in-2013-14-VP-informs-Dar](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-24931-WB-to-extend-$15.bn-loan-in-2013-14-VP-informs-Dar)

Economic Developments

“Credit crunch: AJK in need of immediate cash injection”

The Express Tribune, August 14, 2013

ISLAMABAD: As financial mismanagement of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council -the highest linking forum between Pakistan and AJK, brings the state government to its knees, the federal government has decided to release funds immediately to the cash-starved state government. The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), which is largely dependent on the federal government for running its financial affairs, is facing a deep financial crunch. The federal government was scheduled to pay the AJK government Rs20.4 billion for the current fiscal year 2013-14 in Rs1.7 billion equal monthly tranches. The state government was hoping to acquire the entire sum of Rs1.7 billion in advance for the current month. The Ministry of Finance has agreed to release Rs850 million in advance before August 15, according to a senior official at the ministry.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/589889/credit-crunch-ajk-in-need-of-immediate-cash-injection/>

“Kashgar-Gwadar corridor to open huge trade avenues”

Business Recorder, August 1, 2013

Trade activities between Gilgit-Baltistan and the Southern regions of China would boost up after the construction of Kashgar-Gwadar economic corridor. Pakistan and China have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding in this regard, as reported on July 31. Deputy Director, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Gilgit, Sabz Ali Khan when contacted stated that Kashgar-Gwadar economic corridor was going to change the fortune of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in near future. He stated that TDAP would make efforts towards motivating people

to earn money through exporting different items. An official at TDAP's Karachi office stated that China was focusing on boosting trade with its neighbouring countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Kyrgyzstan etc, for which it had planned to make Kashgar city an economical hub within seven years. Raheel Rao, Focal Person, 'China Focus Cell', stated that TDAP's Director General Rabia Javeeria was concentrating on China as the country had an enormous trade potential. He stated that the China Cell was established on the instructions of the Director General and it would monitor trade and economic activities between the two countries besides exploring new trade avenues in China.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-a-economy/189/1216978/>

Mushtaq Ghumman, “Electricity tariffs increased”

Business Recorder, August 6, 2013

Federal government on August 5 increased commercial, industrial and AJK's power tariffs massively with an estimated financial impact of Rs 136 billion per annum. Tariff for domestic and agriculture consumers will be raised in the last quarter of the current calendar year. Tariff for commercial consumers who are in the category of peak load requirement up to 5 KW has been raised to Rs 18 per unit from Rs 14.77 per unit. For peak load requirement exceeding 20 kW, regular tariff has been increased to Rs 16 per unit from Rs 9.72 per unit. Tariff for Time of the Day (peak) consumers will be Rs 18 per unit instead of Rs 13.20 per unit whereas ToD (off peak) will have to pay Rs 12.50 per unit instead of Rs 8.01 per unit. Tariff for temporary commercial consumers has been increased to Rs 17 from 15 per unit.

<http://www.brecorder.com/market-data/stocks-a-bonds/0/1218230/>

Tahir Amin, “2005-13: Erra receives \$2310.57 million for AJK, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from multilateral donors”

Business Recorder, August 31, 2013

Pakistan has received US 2310.57 million dollars against the total commitment of \$2844.34 million from bilateral and multilateral donors since 2005 for earthquake affectees of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as well as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sources revealed to Business Recorder that under the heads of loan and grant, the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) has received \$2310.57 million from 2005 to 2013. Asian Development Bank (ADB) remained on top with disbursement of \$816.42 million against the commitment of \$875.72 million. The International Development Association (IDA) emerged as the second largest donor from 2005 to 2013, which disbursed \$755.50 million to Erra against the commitment of \$771.73 million, followed by Islamic Development Bank (IDB) with \$212.99 million against \$289.14 million.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1226830/>

“ADB to support construction of Diamer Bhasha dam”

Associated Press of Pakistan, August 20, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is on board and supportive of the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, Vice President (Operations-1) of the Bank, Xiaoyu Zhao stated on August 20. “We have now moved ahead and work to find a way to structure it and we are already looking at various models in this regard”, Zhao stated during his meeting with Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Xiaoyu Zhao stated that ADB is appreciative of the bold steps taken by the present government for reviving the economy, especially for clearing

the circular debt which was crucial for bringing in new investors and financing in the energy sector. Xiaoyu stated he was gratified to learn that the new government has zero tolerance for corruption and it is committed to transparency and that this message would reap rich dividends for Pakistan. The Vice President ADB stated that time has come to begin a new relationship with Pakistan and reverse the present trend of negative inflows.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=246926&Itemid=2

Shabbir Mir, “Untapped resources: Project launched to buff up G-B's gemstone industry”

The Express Tribune, August 25, 2013

GILGIT: A new project for Gilgit-Baltistan's (G-B) gemstone industry was inaugurated in Hunza valley on August 24. 'Technology Transfer and Skill Development in Gems Sector' is a two-year project funded specifically by Small Grants and Ambassador's Fund of USTATED and will be executed by Rupani Foundation, a non-governmental organisation working for socio-economic development in the mountainous regions of South Asia. “It's a good initiative and we hope people will benefit from it,” G-B Assembly Speaker Wazir Baig stated while speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Aliabad, Hunza. The first gemstone mine in Gilgit was discovered in 1951. Since then, locals have been engaged in exploration, extraction and exploitation activities albeit informally. According to estimates, there are over 60 different types of precious and semi-precious stones, with more than 8,000 people involved in artisanal mining. This is why G-B is considered a 'treasure trove' of gemstones with ruby, emerald, topaz, aquamarine, sapphire, and tourmaline stated to be in abundance.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/594779/untapped-resources-project-launched-to-buff-up-g-bs-gemstone-industry/>

International Developments

“GB, UN partnership to speed up development programmes”

Pakistan Observer, August 27, 2013

ISLAMABAD: A comprehensive consultation took place on August 26, in collaboration with the Government of Gilgit Baltistan and the United Nations on the One UN Programme II, a five-year development initiative, developed in partnership with the Government of Pakistan, which was endorsed in December 2012. The consultation was co-convened by the Planning and Development Department and UN Women Pakistan. Participants included senior government officials from Gilgit Baltistan, legislative assembly representatives, experts from academia, civil society organization representatives, media and the United Nations.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=216430>

“Pak-China rail link to boost tourism”

The Nation, August 19, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The modern road and rail link between Pakistan and China will not only boost trade and industrial activity in the region but also

promote tourism in the country, especially in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and coastal areas of Makran. The two countries have recently agreed to establish an economic corridor between Kashgar, China, and Gwadar, Pakistan. The \$18 billion joint venture will include road and rail links passing through the mighty Karakorum and Himalayas in the northern Pakistan. Elaborating the importance of this link for boosting fragile tourism industry in the country, President Sustainable Tourism Foundation Aftab Rana noted that the road and rail route would pass through the most spectacular mountain ranges, which housed renowned high mountain peaks, glaciers and beautiful valleys.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/19-Aug-2013/pak-china-rail-link-to-boost-tourism>

Other Developments

Shabbir Mir, “Staying prudent: Gilgit Ramazan Bazaar closes in light of security concerns”

The Express Tribune, August 2, 2013

GILGIT: The Ramazan Bazaar, set up to facilitate the public during the holy month, was closed on August 2 after security agencies warned the government of possible terrorist activity in the market. Set up at the beginning of Ramazan in Garhi Bagh, the bazaar had a variety of commodities including fresh vegetables, fruit, and pulses available at cheap prices.

“The decision has been taken in light of reports by security agencies, even though people were happy with the arrangement,” stated Chiraguddin, a district administration official. “As a precautionary measure, we have closed the bazaar in the best interest of the people.” Due to goods of superior quality available at competitive prices, the market was flooded with buyers, a majority of whom would come from adjacent areas. Following the bazaar’s success, people from the suburbs of Gilgit also demanded a market of a similar nature be established in their areas.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/585593/staying-prudent-gilgit-ramazan-bazaar-closes-in-light-of-security-concerns/>

“Teacher mapping, projection model launched in AJK”

Pakistan Observer, August 6, 2013

MUZAFFARABAD: A launching ceremony for teacher mapping and projection model was organized by USTATED in collaboration with AJK government on August 5 in Muzaffarabad. The initiative aims at mainstreaming the data collection methodologies and bringing them up to date with modern data collection software tools to generate better and crispy information for relevant institutions. “With the increasing number of schools, enrolment and teachers, such information can no

longer be maintained using only traditional techniques” stated Sadiq Dar secretary education for Kashmir.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=214796>

Shabbir Mir, “Unprepared for the expected: Landslides block Karakoram Highway”

The Express Tribune, August 4, 2013

GILGIT: Landslides triggered by monsoon showers blocked the Karakoram Highway (KKH) at three places on August 3, cutting off traffic between Rawalpindi and Gilgit-Baltistan. The disruption came after the first monsoon rains of this summer brought relief from heat to residents in areas including Gilgit, Ghizer, Juglote and Diamer valleys. However, the rain also brought inconvenience. The inclement weather resulted in the cancellation of flights between Islamabad and Gilgit. “Traffic between G-B and Rawalpindi is suspended due to blockage of the KKH,” noted a spokesman of the Northern Areas Transport Corporation (NATCO) a government-sponsored transport company. “We hope it (KKH) will be open by tomorrow morning.” The traffic-heavy KKH was hit by a landslide at Tato Pani, and Goharabad in Diamer Valley after a heavy downpour drenched the region on August 3. The highway was also blocked at Thalichi by a landslide.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/586129/unprepared-for-the-expected-landslides-block-karakoram-highway/>

“Mangla Dam affectees call off strike”

Pakistan Observer, August 19, 2013

MIRPUR: Mangla Dam affectees, including locals and refugees, called off their strike by ending 38-day long sit-in on August 18. They called off the strike after the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed announced to accept their demands, including the rehabilitation of the extended families of affectees.

Addressing a press conference, Divisional Commissioner-cum- Commissioner Mangla Dam Affairs, Raja Amjad Pervez Ali Khan, announced a package of incentives on behalf of the AJK Prime Minister, including reservation of place for construction of alternative site for the extended families of Mangla Dam affectees.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=215732>

“Pakistan to build international airport in Mirpur”

August 17, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan plans to build an international airport at Mirpur in Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK), the National Assembly was informed on August 16. Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Barjees Tahir, stated he planning work for the project has been completed and after availability of funds the Mirpur airport would be constructed in two years. He did not say how much money would be needed to build the first international airport in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The minister also noted efforts were being made for the early completion of a new Islamabad International Airport, which is being built in Fateh Jang region near the capital.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Aug/17/pakistan-to-build-international-airport-in-mirpur-37.asp>

Rao Atiqul Amin Khan, “Mangla Dam biggest water reservoir in Pakistan: WAPDA”

August 26, 2013

MIRPUR: In yet another historic development, the raised Mangla Dam, located in Mirpur district of AJK on August 25 emerged as the biggest water reservoir in Pakistan, as water storage in its lake increased to 6.65 million acre feet (MAF), surpassing 6.58 MAF bench mark, which is the maximum live storage capacity of Tarbela Dam that used to be the biggest water reservoir till August 24, 2013, WAPDA officially announced on August 25.

Consequent upon the successful completion of the Mangla Dam Raising Project, it has become the largest water storage facility in the country. With increase in dam's height by 30 feet, now water could

be stored in the reservoir upto 1242 feet against the previous conservation level of 1202 feet above mean sea level. Resultantly, the live storage capacity of the raised Mangla Dam has increased to 7.39 MAF from 4.51 MAF. Given the current weather forecast, the prospects for filling of Mangla reservoir to its maximum conservation level are bright.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=216304>

Zafar Bhutta, “Diamer-Bhasha project: Rock carvings at dam site to be preserved”

The Express Tribune, August 23, 2013

ISLAMABAD: The government plans to preserve around 33,000 ancient rock carvings at the site of the Diamer-Bhasha dam, officials noted on August 21. According to them, the government has already hired German archaeologist, Dr Harald Hauptmann as a consultant for the preservation project. They stated Dr Hauptmann has proposed forming replicas of all but the most important carvings due to the unfeasibility of physically removing them from the dam site. The government will soon launch a project under Dr Hauptmann's guidance to preserve the carvings, according to the officials. Providing details, they stated all carvings at the dam site will be documented in the first phase of the project. Once the documentation process is complete, replicas of the carvings will be commissioned and put up for display in two museums to be set up in Chilas and Gilgit. Rock carvings carrying immense historic importance will be relocated to either one of the museums physically, the officials noted. They added that the government will also open the rock carvings, unlikely to be damaged by the dam's construction for the public as tourist attractions.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/594107/diamer-bhasha-project-rock-carvings-at-dam-site-to-be-preserved/>

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 5,180 sq kms
Together Pak-China	120,799 sq kms
Area with India	101437 sq kms

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: 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: Nine

Baltistan Region (part of Ladakh) is divided into Ghanche, Skardu, Kharmang and Shigar 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

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)

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Disclaimer

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POK NEWS DIGEST



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