

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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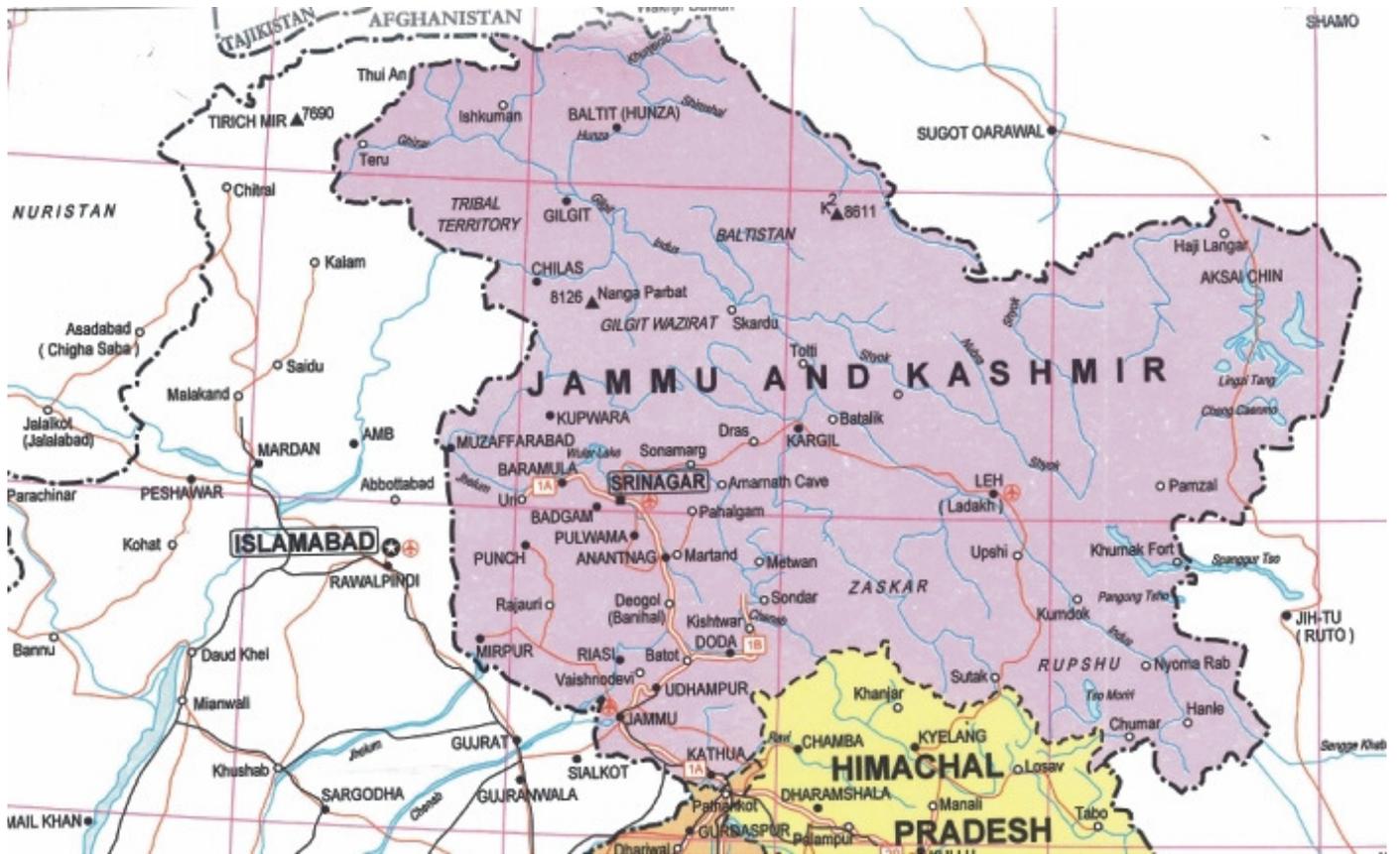
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The Diamer Bhasha dam project to be built in Gilgit Baltistan has been in the pipeline for several years. For a number of reasons, the project has been mired in controversy. The site of the dam project is located in a disputed region claimed by India and, therefore, has faced immense challenge while trying to rope in funds for construction. While many in Pakistani establishment had given up hope on the project considering the high cost of over USD 14 billion, the inclusion of the project in the North Indus Cascade, a cluster of dam projects to be built with Chinese funds, has brought a glimmer of hope amongst various stakeholders. Before this, there were widespread conjectures on whether the Diamer Bhasha dam will be subsumed in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Since the budget of CPEC was humungous, initially close to around USD 46 billion, it was hoped that the controversial Diamer Bhasha dam project may be revived if partial funds from the CPEC budget are allocated towards building it.

However, since China has announced a separate funding of over USD 50 billion for the North Indus Cascade, and that the Diamer Bhasha dam is a part of it, it seems funds for the much delayed project should not be a problem. China is well aware that the World Bank refused to give funds for the Diamer Bhasha project and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) cited anomalies before refusing to fund it. However, China in sync with a brazen pattern of hurting India's sovereignty related sensitivities, has yet again announced its support for the project as part of the North Indus Cascade. As one of the reports in the current issue indicates, the Chinese side is well aware of the Indian reservations on the said project and, therefore, has reportedly suggested that the reference to Diamer be dropped from the project's name. Instead what is being suggested is that the project be referred to only as Bhasha dam. Since Diamer district, where the reservoir of the dam is being made, is located in disputed Gilgit Baltistan, the Chinese side feels that dropping its mention in the project nomenclature will dilute India's objections on the dam construction. If such reports are true, it is at best another attempt by the Chinese side to trivialize a rather complex issue. India has a legitimate claim over the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir including PoK and to think that merely making changes in the nomenclature will diffuse India's claim, is further underestimating the seriousness of India's position on issues concerning PoK.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Govt lifts ban on foreign tourists’ visa for Gilgit Baltistan”

Business Recorder, June 2, 2017

Replying to a calling attention notice of Senator Karim Ahmed Khawaja in the upper house of the Parliament, the minister stated that the government has lifted this ban on May 22, 2017 to encourage tourism industry. He stated that this ban was imposed in the year 1954 due to sensitivity of the area and to ensure security of foreign tourists. He, however, stated that now foreign tourists can visit Gilgit Baltistan on tourist visa and there is no requirement of any no objection certificate (NOC) for them. He noted that the decision of lifting ban on tourists’ visa was made on the request of the Gilgit Baltistan government. He stated that instructions have been passed on to the government of Gilgit Baltistan for setting up new tourists centres and deploying police for security of foreign tourists. He also stated that the government of Gilgit Baltistan has assured to set-up tourists centers and ensuring security of foreign tourists, on which the government has lifted the ban. He supported Senator Khawaja for allowing foreign tourists to visit Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/2017/06/02/351993/govt-lifts-ban-on-foreign-tourists-visa-for-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Govt Accelerates Pace of Work on Development Projects Throughout State”

Radio Pakistan, June 2, 2017

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir government accelerated the pace of work on development projects throughout the state. Official Sources noted that seventy percent work on two hundred and seventeen development projects in district Neelum has been completed. AJK Local Government and Rural Development Department has speeded up its work on ongoing development projects that have been

started under Prime Minister Community Infrastructure Development Program. It is pertinent to mention here that with the completion of dozens of water supply schemes and water tanks in the area, safe drinking water will be available for public even in the remote and far-flung areas of the district.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/02-Jun-2017/govt-accelerates-pace-of-work-on-development-projects-throughout-state>

“Meeting Reviews Progress on Ongoing Development Projects in Muzaffarabad”

Radio Pakistan, June 3, 2017

A meeting of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Information Technology Board reviewed the progress on ongoing development projects of the organization in Muzaffarabad on June 1. Secretary Information Technology Board Masood Qadir Dar presided over the meeting. It was decided in the meeting to evolve an effective strategy to monitor the pace of work on these development projects. Secretary IT Board directed concerned authorities to ensure timely completion of the projects maintaining required quality.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/01-Jun-2017/meeting-reviews-progress-on-ongoing-development-projects-in-muzaffarabad>

“Reforms introduced for better health service: CM Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Express Tribune, June 3, 2017

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman stated on June 2 that reforms have been introduced in Rescue 1122 and other emergency services for better and effective health service delivery system in the region. He also stated the problem of shortage of staff in Rescue 1122 and other emergency services had been addressed and all the required financial resources were provided, resulting

in improvement in its overall performance. Speaking to a delegation of Pakistan Red Crescent Society the CM noted that the provision of clean drinking water to people was the topmost priority of his government and for this purpose several projects of clean drinking water have been started in the region. These projects had started in Jotian, Kondas and other areas. The chief minister directed the health secretary to conduct scientific survey of reports against spread of appendicitis cases at Chamoghar area and directed for thorough investigation and necessary precautionary measures.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1425979/reforms-introduced-better-health-service-cm-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Stable Pakistan imperative for success of Kashmir liberation struggle: Masood”

Radio Pakistan, June 3, 2017

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan underlined the need of forging complete unity to highlight the longstanding Kashmir issue more effectively at international level. He was addressing the trainee officers and cadets of 136th Long Course of Pakistan Military Academy Kakool in Abbottabad on June 2. Sardar Muhammad Masood stated a strong and stable Pakistan is imperative for the success of Kashmir liberation struggle. He further noted that Kashmiris are determined to achieve their right of self-determination despite worst ever state terrorism by Indian troops in the valley. AJK President lauded the professional and humanitarian services of Pak Army for protecting the geographical and ideological frontiers of the country.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/02-Jun-2017/stable-pakistan-imperative-for-success-of-kashmir-liberation-struggle-masood>

“9 Hydro-Power Projects Being Established to Overcome Energy Shortage: CM Gilgit Baltistan”

Such TV, June 3, 2107

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur Rehman noted nine hydro-power projects are being established in the region on priority to overcome electricity shortage. Chairing a meeting in Gilgit, he

noted on completion, these projects will add two hundred and fifty megawatt electricity to the system by 2020.

<http://www.suchtv.pk/pakistan/gilgit-baltistan/item/54848-9-hydro-power-projects-being-established-to-overcome-energy-shortage.html>

Fawad Maqsood, “AJK fully support unflinching Kashmir Policy of Pakistan: Raja Farooq Haider”

Business Recorder, June 5, 2017

AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider on June 5 stated that the government and the people of Azad Kashmir fully support Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s Kashmir policy. Talking to media along with members of AJK Cabinet and parliamentary party on June 5, he noted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has effectively highlighted the Kashmir issue at international forums. Raja Farooq Haider stated his government was grateful to PM Nawaz Sharif for doubling our development budget to Rs22 billion. He urged all political parties of Pakistan to unite on the issue of Kashmir. He also stated it is time that the long-standing issue of Kashmir should be raised at the UN Security Council. The Prime Minister noted he respects all institutions of Pakistan. He further stated that political parties should wait for the 2018 elections and refrain from creating chaos in the country. He noted there should be peaceful transition of power to strengthen democracy in the country. He also stated that the people of Kashmir will fully support PML-N in the next general elections. Raja Farooq Haider stated India wants to escalate situation on the Line of Control by targeting the civilian population there.

<http://www.brecorder.com/2017/06/05/352452/ajk-fully-support-unflinching-kashmir-policy-of-pakistan-raja-farooq-haider/>

“Pakistan to Sell Land in Gilgit-Baltistan to China for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, according to a Report”

India Times, June 6, 2017

Amid India’s growing concern over China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Pakistan declaring Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth province, a report says that Pakistan is selling parts of the strategic land to China for CPEC. Ever since the conflict of 1947 India has maintained a stand that entire Jammu and Kashmir which includes the area in Pakistan's control as an integral part of India. The land has been procured by force by Pakistan army and reports claim that those who objected to it have either been killed or incarcerated without trial. "Thousands had their land snatched and occupied by the military authorities and their agencies. Under this black draconian rule, nobody can raise their voices against the CPEC," Wajahat Hasan, Chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum (GBTF), noted. Abdul Hamid Khan, Chairman of the Balawaristan National Front (BNF) stated that both Pakistan and China will build many cantonments in Gilgit-Baltistan where their armies will get stationed. Earlier, Pakistan's envoy to India Abdul Basit stated that he was not aware whether Gilgit-Baltistan was being announced as the country's fifth province.

<http://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/pakistan-to-sell-land-in-gilgit-baltistan-to-china-for-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-according-to-a-report-323303.html>

“GOVT Taking Steps to Strengthen All State Institutions: AJK PM”

Radio Pakistan, June 6, 2017

A high level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider accorded approval to State Disaster Risk Management and Districts Disaster Risk Management Plans. It was also decided in the meeting that services of Rescue 1122 staff will be regularized on the pattern of Punjab. The Prime Minister directed to prepare a comprehensive plan to start 1122 services in the 15 tehsils of Line of Control adjacent areas. Addressing on this occasion, Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan noted that government is taking tangible steps to strengthen all state institutions.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/06-Jun-2017/govt-taking-steps-to-strengthen-all-state-institutions-ajk-pm>

“Centre asks provinces to give NFC share to AJK, GB, FATA”

Pakistan Today, June 9, 2017

Minister for Finance Senator Ishaq Dar on June 8 assured Senate for fully accommodating the doable and practical recommendations suggested by the senators on the Finance Bill, 2017-18. Winding up discussion on the budget in Senate, he appreciated the commitment and dedication of Senate's Standing Committee on Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Privatisation for presenting a valuable report on recommendations on the Finance Bill 2017. He also appreciated the senators for presenting valuable suggestions on the Finance Bill and assured them that he would try his level best to add all positive things in the budget, which will be winding up. He reminded the House that 40 percent of their recommendations were incorporated in the budget of 2015-16 and 80 percent in 2016-17. Senator Dar noted that the government was making utmost efforts to finalise the next NFC Award at the earliest. However, he dispelled the impression that presenting the budget without the new NFC was unconstitutional. He also stated that the provincial governments would have to demonstrate magnanimity and open heartedness for giving share to Azad Jammu Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and FATA from the NFC.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/06/09/centre-asks-provinces-to-give-nfc-share-to-ajk-gb-fata/>

Arhama Siddiqa, “Gilgit-Baltistan Region: An indispensable part of CPEC”

Pakistan Observer, June 10, 2017

The Gilgit-Baltistan region is a part of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, which was divided between India and Pakistan, and is directly ruled from Islamabad. It does not enjoy the constitutional status similar to, for example, the Punjab province, which has representatives in the Parliament of Pakistan. Pakistan has been deliberating on whether to elevate the constitutional status of northern Gilgit-Baltistan region in a bid to provide legal cover to the multi-

billion-dollar Chinese investment plan – the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This move could signal a historic shift in the country's position on the future of Kashmir region. The multi-billion dollar Chinese investment merits legal cover on an urgent basis for the greater long-term interests of the entire region. CPEC may very well provide the impetus for the whole nation to be on the same page for once. Although there are legal hurdles that block the process of development of reforms in this disputed region, the issue has also been projected negatively by the Indian media. For example, the videos posted by the Indian media that depicted protestors on the streets of Gilgit-Baltistan were not genuine rather they were clips of protests that were carried out after the Hazara killings in the year 2013. This is one of the many reports that the Indian media outlets have released whose only aim seems to be undercutting the progress of CPEC in Pakistan. Such negativity can be perceived as interference and, more worryingly, as an attempt to sabotage the process of development in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://pakobserver.net/gilgit-baltistan-region-indispensable-part-cpec/>

Fawad Maqsood, “AJK PM appoints Fida Hussain as Director General Kashmir Liberation Cell”

Business Recorder, June 10, 2017

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider who is also the Chairman Kashmir Council appointed Fida Hussain Kiyani as Director General Kashmir Liberation Cell. He gave approval in this regard, stated a notification formally issued by Secretariat Jammu and Kashmir Liberation on June 10. Fida Hussain Kiyani who is also the chairman of PML-N Tanzeemi Board AJK, has been given the charge of DG KL Cell. The PML-N workers and supporters appreciated the decision of PM Farooq Haider on appointing him as a Chairman Kashmir liberation Cell and expressed the hope that Fida Hussain Kiyani will succeed in proving his worth for this slot and utilize his capabilities for the improvisation of Kashmir Liberation Cell while coming up to the expectations of the Prime Minister.

<http://www.brecorder.com/2017/06/10/353732/ajk-pm-appoints-fida-hussain-as-director-general-kashmir-liberation-cell/>

“Raja Saeed Akram Khan Takes Oath as Acting CJ of AJK”

Radio Pakistan, June 11, 2017

The senior most Judge of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Supreme Court Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan took oath as Acting Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. President Azad Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan administered oath to him at Kashmir House in Islamabad on June 11. Judges of Supreme and High Courts, representatives of Bar Councils attended the oath taking ceremony.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/11-Jun-2017/raja-saeed-akram-khan-takes-oath-as-acting-cj-of-ajk>

“Govt adopts zero tolerance policy against corruption: GB CM”

Pakistan Today, June 16, 2017

Gilgit Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman on June 16 stated that his government adopted zero tolerance policy against corruption as the opponents had completely failed to prove a single penny financial irregularity during his tenure. In a statement issued, the chief minister stated criticising an elected government was very simple but proofs were necessary to prove allegations of corruption against any government. He also stated his government has made top focus on good governance and adopted zero policy against corruption. The CM noted anyone, who had any proof of corruption against his government should come forward and be assured that strict action would be taken. The provincial government was striving hard to provide relief to people of Gilgit Baltistan besides uninterrupted power supply to domestic and industrial consumers. Work on Diamer Dam had been started by PML-N government and would be completed in its due time frame, he added. The developmental works in all the 10 districts of Gilgit Baltistan was in progress and would be completed within stipulated time without compromising on quality and standards,

he noted. ‘I have issued instructions to all the departments’ heads in districts to ensure timely completion of different developmental schemes for people’s benefits’.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/06/16/govt-adopts-zero-tolerance-policy-against-corruption-gb-cm/>

“OPF to establish housing schemes for AJK expatriates”

Pakistan Observer, June 16, 2017

Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) decided to establish various housing schemes in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) for expatriates. An official source noted on June 16 that Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Pir Syed Saddruddin Rashdi has directed all relevant offices to resolve the problems of overseas on priority. He also stated that the plan has been finalized about acquiring of land and other linked requirements for setting up the housing schemes in Chitarpari, Mirpur. He noted on the direction of federal minister, grievances of Kashmiri expatriates would be addressed and provided more services. The OPF was about to establish its state-of-the-art regional office at OPF Housing Scheme Chitarpari, Mirpur. The OPF is striving hard to provide maximum facilities to expatriates from all over the country including AJK.

<http://pakobserver.net/opf-establish-housing-schemes-ajk-expatriates/>

“PoK leaders slam Pakistan for human rights violations”

Outlook, June 17, 2017

The leaders of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have slammed Pakistan for human rights violations in the region during the ongoing 35th session of Human Rights Council in Geneva. Speaking during the ongoing 35th session of the Human Rights Council, United Kashmir People’s National Party Foreign Affairs Secretary Jamil Maqsood expressed concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in the so-called Azad Kashmir and Gilgit- Baltistan. “We are sadly concerned about deteriorating human

rights situation in so-called Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. People of both regions living in regrettable situation since long,” he noted. Maqsood alleged that the people of these regions do not have freedom to exercise their fundamental rights. He also stated that exploitation of natural resources in both peripheries of Pakistan is at its highest level. Maqsood added that both regions have been systematically deprived from their natural resources including right to development by the exploration of these resources. He held the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) responsible for exploitation of region’s natural resources and stated that it has created drastic environmental effects in the region. Maqsood further stated that simultaneously this exploitation has jeopardized natural habitat of wild life and huge population. He stated that the CPEC project is clear violation of the international laws as well as United Nations resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir.

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/pok-leaders-slam-pakistan-for-human-rights-violations/1078142>

“Haider wants AJK included in NFC Award”

The Express Tribune, June 18, 2017

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider expressed hope that the territory will be included in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award as promised by the federal government. Speaking on the floor of AJK Legislative Assembly on June 17, Haider noted that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had assured that AJK would be included in the NFC Award along with the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Gilgit-Baltistan, during a meeting of the Council of Common Interests in May 2017. The AJK PM stated that former Sindh chief minister Qaim Ali Shah had deferred AJK’s demand for provision of drinking water of 614 cusecs from the Mangla Lake for the people of Mirpur, arguing that the status of AJK was different from the four provinces of the country. “Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has promised to increase water usage charges to Rs1.10, and the matter is lying with the Water and Power Development Authority and the Finance Division of Pakistan,” he noted, adding that Federal Minister

Khawaja Asif promised to resolve the matter very soon and a meeting was all set to take it up.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1438463/haider-wants-ajk-included-nfc-award/>

Ghulam Abbas, “Pakistan may change name of Bhasha Dam”

Pakistan Today, June 19, 2017

China reportedly asked Pakistan to change name of the much-delayed Diامر Bhasha Dam to avoid rising Indian objections on the mega projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), being initiated in the Gilgit Baltistan region. According to sources, Chinese side negotiating for the investment of \$15 billion on the mega projects wants the name of the dam as Bhasha Dam excluding the name of Diامر, a district of Gilgit Baltistan to avoid ‘reservations’ related to the Kashmir issue. The condition of the change of the dam’s name is being taken an ‘easy’ task by Pakistan despite the fact that entire dam is designed to be constructed in Diامر while power houses of the project in Bhasha, a part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. A source familiar with the development noted that China has agreed to fund the project but asked Pakistan to ensure that no local or international dispute should be attached with the mega project. “In official meetings, the Chinese side usually refers the dam as the Bhasha Dam instead of its full name,” he noted. However, official sources at the Ministry of Planning and Development could not be contacted for comments. The change of the name in papers may be strongly objected by Gilgit Baltistan especially residents of Diامر who are already demanding royalty of the project. According a retired bureaucrat of the area, this will be highly unjustified move if identity of the area is hidden despite their sacrifices by vacating their homes and native land/properties for the dam in the larger interest of the country. “The national interest was not given due importance by others in Kalabagh Dam’s case,” he noted.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/06/19/pakistan-may-change-name-of-bhash-dam/>

“Legislators in AJK want development funds monitored”

The Express Tribune, June 19, 2017

A general debate on the budget for the fiscal year 2017-2018 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (AJKLA) continued on June 18 despite being a holiday as the House put the rule in abeyance to conclude it before the Eid ul Fitr holidays. The legislative Assembly met at lodging hall on second consecutive day with speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir in the chair to debate the budget. Treasury member Pir Ali Shah Bukhari while participating in the debate stated that the budget announced by the government for next fiscal year was balanced and people-friendly which would boost development in the region. Opposition member and PTI leader Dewan Ghulam Mohiuddin also appreciated the raise in development budget but stressed upon the government to utilise funds for real development projects so as to benefit the general public without any discrimination. He stressed the need for placing an effective monitoring system on the spending of development budget and development projects for better result to attain the requisite objectives.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1439017/legislators-ajk-want-development-funds-monitored/>

Haider Ali Sindhu, “China offers inclusion of Diامر-Bhasha project in CPEC”

Pakistan Mail, June 20, 2017

The government of China offered Islamabad to include the 4,500MW Diامر-Basha dam project under the umbrella of multi-billion dollars China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The offer was confirmed by Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Muzammil Hussain on June 19 who told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reform that the project was pending due to Asian Development Bank’s refusal to provide funds in 2016 saying the project was located in a disputed territory. He stated currently no mega-hydel project was

included in CPEC, therefore, governments of Pakistan and China were seriously mulling over including the Diamer-Bhasha project in CPEC. The official expressed that PC-1 of the project had already been completed and 85% land acquisition had also been made by the government. However, fund allocation for the project, which needed around \$14.49 billion, was a serious issue. The Wapda chairman told the committee that other hydel power projects including Neelum-Jhelum and Tarbela extension would be completed by May 2018, which would provide an additional 2,500MW of electricity. “This is a multi-purpose project, which will not only provide electricity and water for irrigation but will also supply drinking water to Peshawar in addition to mitigating the danger of floods in Nowshera,” he noted.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/china-offers-inclusion-of-diamer-bhasha-project-in-cpec/>

Fawad Yousfzai, “Slow progress on Bhasha dam worries MPs”

The Nation, June 20, 2017

While pointing towards the slow progress of work on Diamer-Bhasha dam, a member of the parliamentary committee stated on June 19 that so far only one mosque has been constructed at the site of the reservoir. The National Assembly Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reforms also asked the Ministry of Planning to provide the complete list of the PSDP funded projects as majority of them, including CPEC support project, are working without the permanent project directors. The committee, met under the chairmanship of Abdul Majeed Khan, discussed the issue of hiring full time project directors for the PSDP funded project and issues related to Bhasha Dam, etc. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms Secretary informed the committee that the independent project directors would be appointed for those projects which are approved by Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec). The Ecneec only approves the projects that are worth more than Rs3 billion which means it is unlikely that the planning ministry is going to hire fulltime project directors for majority of its PSDP funded projects. The committee

recommended that the ministry may provide a complete list of the project directors to the committee for its perusal. It is pertinent to mention here that out of more than 33 PSDP funded projects of the planning ministry, 80 percent are without fulltime project directors.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/20-Jun-2017/slow-progress-on-bhasha-dam-worries-mps>

“GB Govt Launching Comprehensive Programme”

Radio Pakistan, June 21, 2017

Gilgit-Baltistan Government is launching a comprehensive programme with financial assistance of International Fund for Agriculture Development to bring a positive change in life and standard of people of rural areas. The project would be completed at a cost of twelve billion rupees in seven years. Official sources noted in the first phase fifty thousand acre barren land will be converted into cultivable land.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/21-Jun-2017/gb-govt-launching-comprehensive-programme>

“G-B development: Work on power projects to start soon: CM”

The Express Tribune, June 25, 2017

Work on 100MW power project of Karakoram University and 80MW project at Phandar will be started soon, noted Gilgit Baltistan Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman in a statement. He stated a technical team of Chinese engineers arrived in Gilgit to complete feasibility reports of projects. Rehman stated land has also been acquired for the special economic zone being set up under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, as reported. According to official sources, federal government approved 12 projects for Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) in various areas, including energy, communication and health. Official sources noted that Rs98 billion will be spent on these projects. The power projects include 34.5MW Harpo-Skardu, 26MW Sagar Thang Skardu, 20MW Hanzal,

16MW Naltar, 5MW Hasan Abad, and 4 W Thack Chilas. Besides, the funds will be used to build a 50-bed cardiac hospital in Gilgit.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1444271/g-b-development-work-power-projects-start-soon-cm/>

“GBTD issues special instructions for tourists”

Pakistan Observer, June 25, 2017

Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Development (GBTD) issued special instructions for tourists, who intending to visit tourist places of Gilgit-Baltistan. An official of Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Development noted, “Tourists should confirm the road situation and about weather conditions before the start of their journey and they should also check the hotel reservation before the arrival”. He further noted tourists should confirm the air tickets on time if they are traveling by air and they should respect the culture and tradition of the particular area. Every tourist should have their identity card and passport and tourists should make sure about their garments as per the weather conditions, he stated. He also stated tourists could get the training about camping and tracking with the professional trainers and to use gas and oil for cooking instead of using wood for fire. He stated tourists should be aware to drive slow from coming to Khunjerab, Babusar and also apply less gearing. Every tourists should dispose off the left overs in the allocated areas instead of spreading garbage everywhere. Due to monsoon rains the traveling could affect whether it may be road travel or by air tourists to adopt precautionary measures before traveling. More than fifteen thousand domestic tourists are visiting hilly areas especially Murree, Galiyat and other northern parts of the country on daily basis to enjoy the pleasant weather these days.

<http://pakobserver.net/gbtd-issues-special-instructions-tourists/>

“India not sincere in talks: AJK president”

The Express Tribune, June 25, 2017

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Masood Khan noted on June 24 that the United Nations and international community have realised the need of

early settlement of Kashmir dispute due to effective diplomatic efforts of Pakistan. Talking to newsmen, Masood noted that the UN Secretary General and some American officials expressed their concern on Kashmir. He also stated that India was not sincere in settlement of Kashmir dispute through bilateral talks.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1444289/india-not-sincere-talks-ajk-president/>

John Haider, “GB governor’s son joins ‘hooligan club”

Daily Times, June 25, 2017

Panic gripped Passu Valley in Upper Hunza as Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan’s son Salman Khan fired in the air for “almost 20 minutes”. People protested against the incident in strongest terms and pressed the GB government to take action against the ‘culprit’. Hunza is considered one of the most peaceful areas in Pakistan. The valley, home to most educated people in the country, is visited by thousands of tourists, both local and foreign, every year. Such incidents are very rare in Hunza. Seeking anonymity, a GB Information Department official noted that no action has been taken against Salman so far. He added that several tourists were also present on the scene when the Governor’s son opened fire in the air. When contacted, a police official stated the Governor’s son was testing his guns. He added that the people have filed a complaint with the police, but no first information report was lodged until the filing of this report. Salim Khan, the Governor’s elder son, a member of legislative assembly, wrote on his Facebook page, “I would like to officially clarify that 20 mins of indiscriminate aerial firing took place in Passu, Gojal by Prince Salman Khan; youngest son of the Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan. He was accompanied by police official escort along with female companions (some of foreign origin)... I have asked the administration to take full legal action against this unlawful incident. Due process of law should prevail.”

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/26-Jun-17/gb-governors-son-joins-hooligan-club>

“AJK police evolve security plan”

The Nation, June 26, 2017

Security has been beefed up across Azad Jammu & Kashmir with the deployment of additional police force at various busy and sensitive places to protect the Eid celebrators, official sources noted. SSP Mirpur Raja Irfan Salim further noted that on the special directives of the AJK government in connection with fool proof security to maintain peace and order across AJK, additional security staff including police force headed by magistrates have been deputed at all the busy places including bazaars and shopping malls in order to maintain law and order situation and to discourage and deal with any eventuality. The district police chief stated that the police force had been put on alert and vigilance to ensure fool proof security arrangements at the shopping centres and shopping malls and the places of worships preferably during Taraveeh prayers in the mosques so that the Muslims could celebrate Eid festival with full sense of security. Raja Irfan Salim stated that round-the-clock police patrol had also been intensified for maintaining full security across the district and the tehsil headquarters besides all other small and major towns and villages across the area. The administration has also deputed security personnel in plainclothes to keep a vigilant eye on unscrupulous and suspicious elements, they added. It may be added that with the blessings of Allah Almighty, religious harmony and brotherhood prevail among the people across Azad Jammu & Kashmir including Mirpur division.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/26-Jun-2017/ajk-police-evolve-security-plan>

“AJK PM wants removal of President Trump’s remark on Salahuddin”

Pakistan Observer, June 28, 2017

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan on June 28 expressed grave concern over the United States decision designating Chairman Muthidah Jihad Council Syed Salahuddin a global terrorist and urged for cancellation of President

Donald Trump’s executive order. Addressing news conference in the State’s capital town late on June 28, the AJK Prime Minister maintained that State of Jammu and Kashmir was not a part of India.

<http://pakobserver.net/ajk-pm-wants-removal-president-trumps-remark-salahuddin/>

“Govt Chalked Out Plan to Establish Tourism Corridor in AJK”

Radio Pakistan, June 28, 2017

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government chalked out a plan to establish tourism corridor in the state to facilitate tourists coming to visit scenic spots in the region. Official sources noted that that feasibility report of the 190-kilometer long corridor has also been completed. The project falls under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and will be completed at an estimated cost of twenty-two billion rupees. Under this project, government would lay down 1450 kilometers of new roads in the state to attract maximum number of local and foreigner tourists coming to visit scenic areas of Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/28-Jun-2017/govt-chalked-out-plan-to-establish-tourism-corridor-in-ajk>

Mohammad Irfan, “The Gilgit-Skardu Road an inevitable need for Gilgit-Baltistan”

ARY News, June 29, 2017

Baltistan region comprises four districts, which is home to half the population of the de-facto province of Gilgit-Baltistan. The region connects with Pakistan and the rest of Gilgit-Baltistan through the Skardu-Gilgit highway. The 167 KM road was built for the first time in the early 1970 and completed in 1982. Since then, the road has not been renovated and it is now in a poor condition, fatal accidents and landsliding are a routine phenomenon. Number of cars and other public transports had fallen in the mighty Indus River flowing just parallel to the road but deep in the mountain along this dangerous road causing loss of many important human lives every year. In the rainy season the road is often damaged

due to land sliding from the mountains. The road is also of great importance from the security point of view, as the most sensitive borders of the country; Kargil, Siachen, Batalik and Chourbat borders are located in this region, where thousands of security forces are deployed for the protection of the homeland.

<https://arynews.tv/en/gilgit-skardu-road-inevitable-need-gilgit-baltistan/>

Ghulam Abbas, “PM constitutes another committee regarding GB constitutional package”

Pakistan Today, June 30, 2017

After receiving the recommendation of a committee headed by Sartaj Aziz, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has constituted another high-powered committee to finalise the proposals for constitutional reforms in Gilgit Baltistan within next 20 days. A spokesperson

to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafeezur Rehman noted that the new committee was formed after a detailed meeting between the prime minister and the chief minister in Islamabad on June 30. The new committee, of which notification has also been issued on June 30, includes Adviser to PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Law Minister Zahid Hamid, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Barjees Tahir, special adviser to PM, GB chief minister and secretaries. The committee has been tasked to finalise the recommendation within next 20 days ahead of prime minister’s scheduled visit on July 20. The PM will announce constitutional reforms package for the region, which his party had promised before the elections. According to the source, during the meeting, the prime minister informed the chief minister that recommendation of the previous committee, under Sartaj Aziz, were received and analysed by the PM secretariat.

Economic Developments

“Federal Govt to spend Rs 98bln on GB development: Hafeez-ur-Rehman”

Radio Pakistan, June 6, 2017

Federal government will spend Rs 98 billion on 43 mega development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan under Public Sector Development Program (PSDP). This was stated by Gilgit Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman while talking to newsmen in Gilgit. He noted that that these projects are related to power and other sectors. Referring to upcoming budget of Gilgit-Baltistan he noted it will be increased by Rs 9 billion to Rs 17 billion including Rs 2 billion grant by the Prime Minister.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/06-Jun-2017/federal-govt-to-spend-power-sector-in-gb-hafeez-ur-rehman>

“Over Rs 23b allocated for annual development programme of next fiscal year: Naqi”

Radio Pakistan, June 16, 2017

AJK Minister for Finance Dr. Najeeb Naqi noted that over twenty-three billion rupees have been allocated for Annual Development Programme of the next fiscal year. Addressing a post-budget news conference in Muzaffarabad on June 16, he noted that communication, tourism and hydro-power sectors have been given special attention to make the state economically stable and overcome unemployment. The Minister also stated that under the first phase of CPEC, Mansehra-Muzaffarabad-Mirpur-Mangla Expressway will be constructed at a cost of 142 billion rupees. He noted that Lower Toppa Kohala Expressway is part of Federal Development Program costing over 20 billion rupees. The Minister also stated that Special Economic Zone status has been given to Mirpur under CPEC.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/16-Jun-2017/over-rs23b-allocated-for-annual-development-programme-of-next-fiscal-year-naqi>

July 2017

“Federal govt approves 12 mega projects for Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Nation, June 23, 2017

The federal government approved twelve mega projects for Gilgit-Baltistan in various areas, including energy, communication and health projects, as reported on June 23. According to the official sources, ninety-eight billion rupees will be spent on these projects which include 34.5 megawatt Harpo Skardu, 26 MW Sagar Thang Skardu, 20 MW Hanzal, 16 MW Naltar, 5 MW Hasan Abad, and 4 MW Thak Chilas. The official also informed that fifty-bed cardiac hospital will be constructed in Gilgit, Attabad Tourist Resort will be developed. Along with that, Gilgit to Naltar Expressway and Gilgit-Skardu road will also be constructed. Medical College in Gilgit and technical College in Skardu are also included in these projects, added the official.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Jun-2017/federal-govt-approves-12-mega-projects-for-gilgit-baltistan>

“GB Govt Allocates Over Rs3b for Development of Transport”

Radio Pakistan, June 29, 2017

Gilgit Baltistan Government allocated over three billion rupees for the development of transport, building and communication sectors in the next financial year. A spokesman of the Gilgit Baltistan, Government stated that allocated amount is 80 percent high as compared to current fiscal year. The spokesman stated that works on 144 new development projects in various fields will be initiated soon.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/29-Jun-2017/gb-govt-allocates-over-rs3b-for-development-of-transport>

“GB Govt Unveils Over Rs54b Outlay Budget”

Radio Pakistan, June 14, 2017

Gilgit Baltistan budget for the next fiscal year with a total outlay of over 54 billion rupees has been presented in the Legislative Assembly. Presenting the budget on June 13 afternoon, Minister Finance Muhammad Akbar Taban noted in the budget that 28.2 billion rupees for non-development and 18.3 billion rupees proposed for development expenditures. He stated a record increase in the development budget from nine billion to fifteen billion rupees has been made and 3.4 billion rupees of public sector development program is also included in the budget. The Minister noted that top priority has been given to the power sector by allocating 3.5 billion rupees which is 26.5 percent of the overall development budget. He stated an amount of 1.53 billion rupees allocated for promotion of education which is 63 percent high as compared to last year allocation. The government will set up endowment fund for poor students, ten model schools will be established one each in all districts and text books to the students will be provided in 143 schools free of cost. He further stated that a handsome amount of 1.8 billion rupees has been earmarked to health sector.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/14-Jun-2017/gilgit-baltistan-budget-for-2017-18-to-be-presented-today>

Shabbir Mir, “Budget 2017-18: Focus on power in Rs54b G-B budget”

The Express Tribune, June 15, 2017

The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government on June 14 presented an annual budget of over Rs54 billion for the fiscal year 2017-18. The budget was read out by senior minister Akbar Taban in the G-B Legislative Assembly during the budgetary session chaired by Speaker Fida Nashad. This was the third consecutive budget presented by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government which had been elected in June 2015. G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman and opposition lawmakers also attended the session. The overall budget has increased by 23.34 per cent from the Rs43.78 billion which had been set last year.

With an eye on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the government has earmarked Rs18.3 billion for the development sector, up from the Rs12.98 billion which had been allocated for the outgoing fiscal year. Taban, who also holds the portfolio of the finance minister, stated that the Public Sector Development Programme has an outlay of Rs3.3 billion.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1435794/budget-2017-18-focus-power-rs54b-g-b-budget/>

MA Mir, “Budget AJK 2017-18: Development expenditure doubles in Rs94.41b budget”

The Express Tribune, June 16, 2017

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government on June 15 unveiled a Rs94.41 billion tax-free budget for the fiscal year 2017-18. The budget was presented by AJK Finance Minister Dr Najeem Naqi during the budget session in the AJK Legislative Assembly. A major chunk of the budget, over 75 per cent or Rs71.13 billion, would be spent to meet non-development expenditures of the ministers, secretaries and other government employees in an area smaller than the Chitral district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. This is up by 15.66 per cent from the Rs61.5 billion non-development budget last year. Curiously, this year’s non-development budget is almost equal to the region’s total budget for the fiscal year 2016-17. The large allocation has been made in light of proposals to give a 10 per cent raise to serving and retired employees of the region. The minimum wage in the region has also been increased to Rs15,000 per month. The government has also set aside Rs741.71 million for relief and rehabilitation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1436686/budget-ajk-2017-18-development-expenditure-doubles-rs94-41b-budget/>

International Developments

“Canada funds disaster response facility in Gilgit-Baltistan”

Dawn, June 2, 2017

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is constructing a ‘Humanitarian Response Facility’ (HRF) in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) with \$1.7 million provided by the Canadian government. This will be the seventh HRF built in Pakistan as part of a strategic network of storage facilities to help the government and humanitarian community prepare for and respond to disasters, the WFP announced on June 1. The WFP has been working with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMA) to build the HRFs in strategic locations in most vulnerable parts of the country. The HRFs provide a central storage facility for government relief stocks to be rapidly deployed in emergencies. While the HRFs are designed and built by the WFP, the government provides land for construction and takes over its operation and maintenance. The WFP provides training to the government staff in technical areas such as warehouse management, facilities management and fire-fighting. Assistance from Canada comes in addition to over 4.4m Canadian dollars in contributions for the construction of six other HRFs located in Muzaffargarh, Quetta, Lahore, Hyderabad, Peshawar and Sukkur, jointly with five other donor countries.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336878/canada-funds-disaster-response-facility-in-gilgit-baltistan>

“AJK Govt, People Both Support Nawaz Sharif’s Kashmir Policy: Haider”

Kashmir Life, June 8, 2017

Responding to the allegations made by the United Nations Human Rights Council chief that it was not giving access to a UN rights team to visit Pakistan

administered Kashmir (PaK), Pakistan on June 8 stated that it was always ready to allow access to UNHRC team to the region.

“...we would clarify that Pakistan has expressed its readiness to allow the UN team sent by the High Commissioner to visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir together with the other part of Jammu and Kashmir under India.” Pakistan was responding to Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein’s (UN high commissioner for human rights) address to the 35th session of UNHRC in Geneva on June 6 this year. Pakistan asserted that it is in sharp contrast to India’s outright denial of the request for access”. The representative of Pakistan in UNHRC informed the session that the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) had recently sent a fact finding mission to “Azad” Jammu and Kashmir. The Commission’s request for access of a fact finding mission to the Indian part of Kashmir was rejected, it noted.

<http://kashmirilife.net/pakistan-clarifies-says-always-ready-allow-unhrc-teams-access-azad-kashmir-142674/>

MA Mir, “Kashmiris pin their hopes on Pakistani-origin MPs in UK”

The Express Tribune, June 10, 2017

A dozen Britons of Pakistani origin were elected to the House of Commons during the recently held elections in the UK. Thousands of kilometres away, the elections have raised hopes among people living on both sides of the Line of Control that these new members of British Parliament would raise their cause. Intriguingly, of the 12 Pakistanis elected, five Members of Parliament (MPs) including Raja Yasin, Barrister Imran, Khalid Mehmood, Rahman Chishti and Naz Shah hail from different parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), one half of the disputed Himalayan territory of Jammu and Kashmir. “It is great to see our brothers and sister Shah back on the benches in UK’s House of Commons,” beamed

Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen, the Leader of the Opposition in the AJK Legislative Assembly. The opposition leader disclosed plans of launching a charm offensive for these MPs, stating that his party hopes to hold a briefing for these 12 new MPs.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1431730/kashmiris-pin-hopes-pakistani-origin-mps-uk/>

“UN expert concerned over delay in Kashmir solution”

The Nation, June 11, 2017

United Nations independent expert Alfred de Zayas expressed his dismay over the non-implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir which, he observed, is clear violation of the international obligations. Speaking at a seminar on the side-lines of 35th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on June 10, he advised the activists to keep pressing for their rights and never lose heart, noted a message reaching from Geneva on June 10. Besides the UN independent expert on the promotion of equitable democratic international order, British historian Victoria Scofield, Kashmir Institute of international Relations (KIIR) Executive Director Sardar Amjad Yousaf, representative BADIL Madi UN also spoke on the occasion. Eminent Kashmiri human rights activist and representative of WMC Altaf Hussain Wani moderated session. The speakers called for immediate implementation of UN resolutions on Kashmir for its settlement without further loss of time for lasting peace in South Asia. Victoria Scofield British historian and author of ‘Kashmir Conflict, India and Pakistan an Unending War’, gave on the occasion historical background of dispute.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Jun-2017/un-expert-concerned-over-delay-in-kashmir-solution>

“China tight-lipped on funding Pak’s dam as part of CPEC in PoK”

Business Standard, June 21, 2017

China again evaded responding to reports of Beijing’s offer to help Islamabad build a mega dam project in

Gilgit-Baltistan, part of disputed Kashmir, and bring it under the umbrella of the controversial China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). “For this specific project and including the construction of dam you mentioned, I am not aware of the details,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang stated. The installed capacity of the proposed project over the Indus River will be over 4,000 Mw. India has been dead against any construction in the Indus Basin in the disputed region through which the CPEC passes. On June 19, Pakistan’s Water and Power Development Authority Chairman Muzammil Hussain noted China had offered Pakistan help in building the Diamer-Bhasha dam project and integrate it with the \$50 billion CPEC. The construction of the dam is pending for long as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank backed out of funding it, citing its location in disputed Gilgit-Baltistan, a part of Kashmir that is held by Pakistan and claimed by India. “What I can say is that the CPEC is a new cooperation framework for the two countries to achieve long-term development. This corridor will not only promote bilateral development of two countries but will also contribute to the development and prosperity in the region,” Geng stated. “We know that there is some concern about the corridor but we keep stressing that this economic corridor is just an economic initiative for cooperation,” he added.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/china-tight-lipped-on-funding-pak-s-dam-as-part-of-cpec-in-pok-117062200592_1.html

“Beijing to fund dam project in Gilgit-Baltistan: Increasing presence of Chinese troops should worry India”

First Post, June 22, 2017

China offered to fund a long-pending Indus River dam project in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, which both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank refused to touch. Islamabad did not want to seek a no-objection certificate from New Delhi for the project and two years ago, the World Bank refused to become a lender because of India’s objections. China and Pakistan are now mulling over making the

Diamer-Bhasha Dam project a part of Beijing's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Iqbal, the Islamabad lead on CPEC, was quoted saying that a Chinese company from a Beijing-picked shortlist and a local partner would build the dam over a 10-year period, and work should begin in the "next financial year", which begins in July. "The Diamer-Bhasha Dam was first announced in 2006 and the foundation stone for it was laid in 2011. The dam is expected to generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity. This is a multi-purpose project, which will not only provide electricity and water for irrigation, but will also supply drinking water to Peshawar in addition to mitigating the danger of floods in Nowshera," Hussain, chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority, was quoted as saying. The

Diamer-Basha reservoir will submerge some 104 km of the Karakoram Highway and displace about 30,000 people. "Thousands had their land snatched and occupied by the military authorities and their agencies. Under this black draconian rule, nobody can raise their voices against the CPEC," Wajahat Hasan, chairman of the Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum (GBTf) noted.

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/beijing-to-fund-dam-project-in-gilgit-baltistan-increasing-presence-of-chinese-troops-should-worry-india-3734075.html>

Other Developments

“3 more women commit suicide in Ghizer”

The Nation, June 2, 2017

The prevailing suicidal tendencies among the youth are alarmingly high in Gilgit-Baltistan as three more suicide cases have been reported in Ghizer district in the last 24 hours. The Gilgit-Baltistan government has shown concern about the emerging trend of suicide in Ghizer district. According to the local police, a 20-year-old girl, who has yet to be identified, committed suicide by jumping into Gilgit River on June 1. In another incident, an 18-year girl college student ended her life the same way. The third incident of suicide was reported in Hundur village

of Yaseen valley, where a woman committed suicide by taking poisonous pills in her house. According to the police, 10 more suicide cases have been registered from Ghizer district of Gilgit-Baltistan in May. Following the increasing suicide cases, GB Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman called a special committee to carry out work in order to trace of reasons behind suicide and its prevention. The committee was constituted by the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly during a session on May 17, 2017, which was chaired by GB Assembly Speaker Fida Muhammad Nashad.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/02-Jun-2017/3-more-women-commit-suicide-in-ghizer>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“JKPP meeting held in Saudi Arabia”

Daily Dharti, June 5, 2017

Jammu Kashmir People’s Party, Riyadh region’s meeting was held. It was presided over by Riyadh region’s President Waheed Geelani. This meeting sympathized with Kashmiris.

http://www.dailydharti.ajk.com/sabaka_newspaper.php

“Dardana Sheer, Test of nobility”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, June 6, 2017

Be it war of Kargil or 1965 and 1971, sons of Ghizer have always fought bravely and have written a history with their bravery. It is the only district not only in Gilgit Baltistan but whole of Pakistan from where so many peoples have been awarded with medals. Despite that, several government offices behave inappropriately with local people. It seems that some people consider nobility as cowardice. If this continues, then the nobility in this area will convert into evil. Every time people are being asked to implement government orders first.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=06-09-2017&img=06-09-2017page-4-4

“Objections to CPEC is hindrance to development and prosperity”

Daily Salaam, June 25, 2017

Federal Planning Minister Hasan Iqbal Ahmad noted that to create one lakh skilled professionals, they are going to train one lakh youth in the information technology sector. Those who are objecting to CPEC are a hindrance to development and prosperity. He noted that CPEC projects will have social and economic benefits as most projects are located in Sindh and Balochistan. It will give a boost to the road projects in Quetta, Turbat and Suhrab. The purpose of CPEC is development and prosperity of the whole country. Both civil and military leadership is working to complete this key project.

<https://www.dailysalam.com/index.php>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

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 Muhammad Masood Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

AJK Council: Total 17 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.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: Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan

Chief Minister G-B: Hafiz Hafiz-ur-Rehman

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 to 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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