

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Priyanka Singh
Dr Yaqoob-ul Hassan

• Political Developments

PoK Activists Demand Abolition of 1949 Karachi Agreement
New GB Order Will Empower Pakistani PM, Not the Region
GB Opposition Parties Reject Draft Reforms Package
Empower G-B Assembly, Not Premier: PPP Leader
GB Opposition to Stage Sit-in Outside Parliament Against Draft Reforms
Pakistan Treats Gilgit-Baltistan Like Colony, Alleges Activist
GB Reforms Leave People Lesser Citizens: HRCP

• Economic Developments

Rs 486.726m Allocated for IT, Telecom Services for CPEC
AJK Unveils Rs108.2 Billion Annual Budget

• International Developments

Turkey Reiterates Full Support to Kashmir Cause
Pakistan Denies Minorities Their Individual Rights: US Congressman

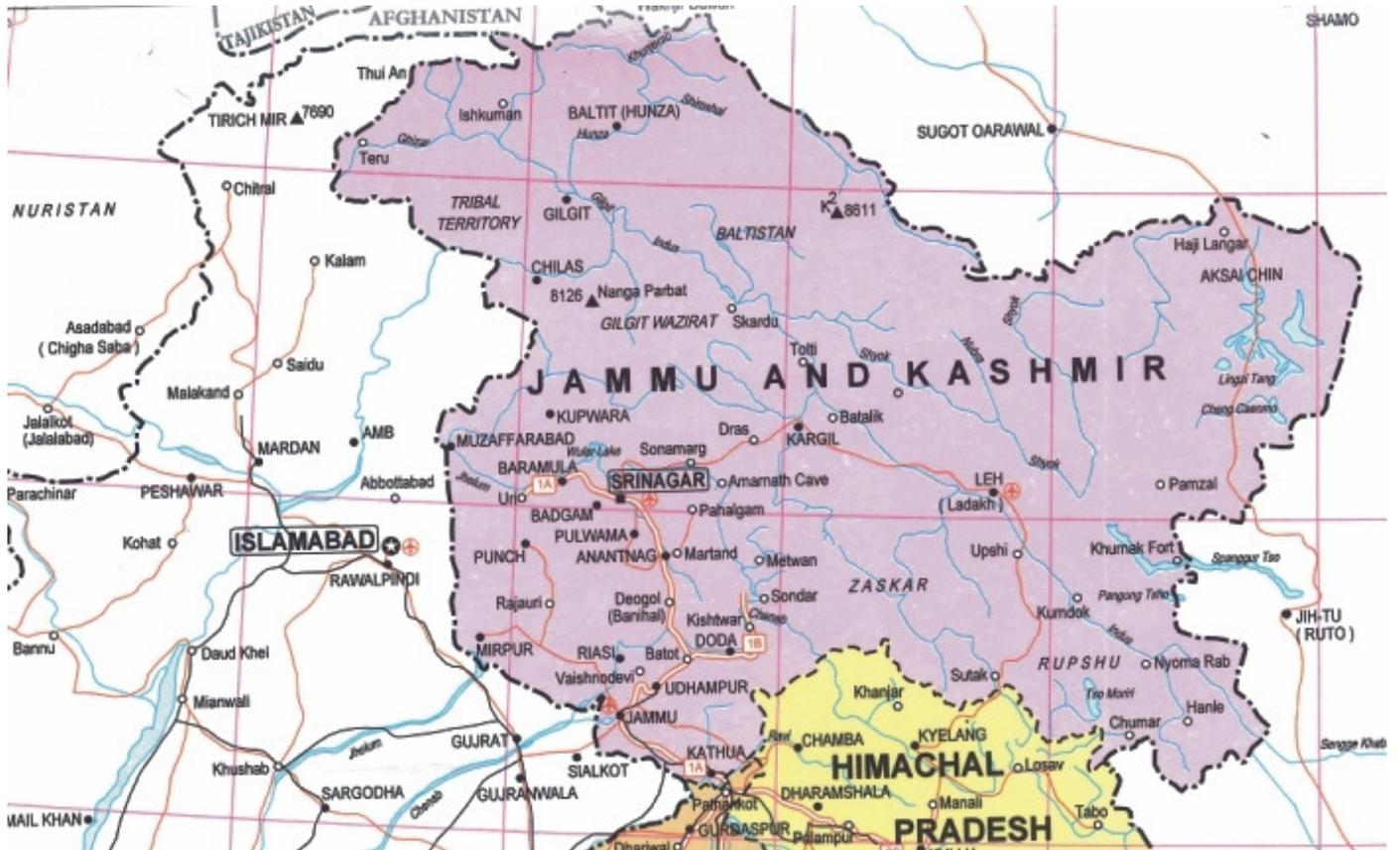
• Other Developments

May Day Marked in AJK

• Urdu Media

Protests and Rallies are Meant to Sabotage CPEC
A Constitutional Joke for Gilgit-Baltistan





Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

After intense deliberations that lasted over the last few years, the government of Pakistan finally announced a new political order for Gilgit Baltistan under the name Gilgit-Baltistan Order-2018. Even after 70 years of being under Pakistan's control, Gilgit Baltistan is not a part of Pakistan's constitution and its people have been deprived of basic constitutional rights. There has been a long standing demand in the region that it must be accorded a definite political status and people of the region must be given rights that empower them politically. In 2009, under the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government, the Gilgit Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order was introduced which was later rejected as mere 'eyewash'. Similarly, the 2018 Order has been meted out with apprehension and rejection as it falls short of making Gilgit Baltistan a province of Pakistan.

Pakistan's dilemma/reluctance on formally absorbing Gilgit Baltistan is linked to its broader Kashmir policy. Even though Pakistan directly controls and has enforced major changes in both parts of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) i.e. Gilgit Baltistan and the so-called Azad Jammu and Kashmir, it has maintained a façade of both entities being separate from Pakistan. In Gilgit Baltistan, due to a sustained process of state perpetrated demographic tampering, the original Shia majority of the region has been reduced to a minority. This was made possible by Pakistan revoking the State Subject Rule from Gilgit Baltistan region which was enforced in the entire region of what constituted the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The reason behind Pakistan wanting to keep both parts of PoK under a suspended political status is mainly to buttress its unfounded claim on the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan believes that subsuming these regions, especially Gilgit Baltistan as a province would compromise its stated position on the Kashmir issue and hamper its long held strategy against India.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“PoK activists demand abolition of 1949 Karachi Agreement”

Business Standard, May 1, 2018

Political activists from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) carried out a protest rally in Rawalpindi city against the Karachi Agreement. Executed on April 28, 1949, between the Government of Pakistan and the then Government of Azad Kashmir, the Karachi Agreement was very much in Pakistan’s favour and deprived the people of PoK of significant powers and responsibilities. The people of PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan have suffered decades of discrimination and persecution, owing to skewed policies and agreements framed by Islamabad. There have been massive social and economic depredations in the region at the hands of state-sponsored machinery. It is high time that Pakistan takes cognizance of the growing resentment amongst the people of the region before it transmutes into something unmanageable.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/pok-activists-demand-abolition-of-1949-karachi-agreement-118050100209_1.html

MA Mir, “Morale of people living along LoC higher than Himalayas: AJK PM”

The Express Tribune, May 1, 2018

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister, Raja Farooq Haider Khan, stated that no honourable Kashmiri would tolerate any kind of misadventure by Indian Army against the territorial boundaries of AJK or Pakistan. While visiting the Line of Control (LoC) on May 1 at Peer Jamal and Watala sectors, the premier was briefed by civil administration on the situation along LoC. The premier also assured the affected families that his government will spare no effort in taking steps for their welfare and well-being.

June 2018

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1699891/1-morale-people-living-along-loc-higher-himalayas-ajk-pm/>

Umer Jamshaid, “President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Masood Khan Hails Efforts of AJK Social Reforms Council”

Urdu Point, May 2, 2018

President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Masood Khan the development projects within all districts of Azad Kashmir would be completed with utmost priority in order to benefit the people at large. The President made these remarks while addressing the annual event of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Social Reforms Council organized at Dar-ul-Jihad in Rawalakot on May 2. On the occasion, the President commended the organizing committee of the AJK Social Reforms Council for their determined and consistent efforts in mobilizing the population in addressing key issues of the society. Addressing the students present at the event, the President advised them to acquire the latest education and display confidence through academic and professional competence. He also stated that students must have faith in themselves and the Almighty and adopt a sense of responsibility to serve their society and people.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/president-of-azad-jammu-and-kashmir-ajk-sa-333429.html>

“Govt makes record development work in GB: CM”

Pakistan Observer, May 4, 2018

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman stated May 2 that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government was taking tangible measures for socio-economic development of Gilgit Baltistan, making record development works during its tenure. Addressing a press conference, the GB

chief minister stated that unlike opposition political parties, the PML (N) fulfilled all its promises it made with people of Gilgit Baltistan during election campaign in 2013 and its budget was raised upto Rs 24 billion in three years.

<https://pakobserver.net/govt-makes-record-development-work-in-gb-cm/>

Aziz Ali Dad, “Economic geology of CPEC”

The News, May 5, 2018

Like other parts of High Asia, the region of Gilgit-Baltistan has also served as a pivotal link between Central and South Asia for centuries. Refuting the common perception, about the region being historically isolated owing to its geographical inaccessibility, modern scholarship has proved that the region remained a major conduit for movement across the great massifs of the Himalaya, Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Pamir. Following the independence of the Subcontinent, all old and new routes including the Gilgit-Kashmir road got disrupted. As a result, Gilgit-Baltistan literally became isolated from all the neighbouring regions of Central and South Asia. Within the overall China Western Development Strategy, OBOR will play a crucial role. China considers Pakistan an important bridge for the realisation of this strategy through CPEC. The central position of CPEC in OBOR is evident from the fact that Gwadar is the point where the economic belt and road meet.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/312740-economic-geology-of->

Ghulam Abbas, “New GB order will empower Pakistani PM, not the region”

Pakistan Today, May 5, 2018

The drive to further empower Gilgit Baltistan through constitutional reforms has finally turned to be disempowerment of the region as all powers under the new the order, “Gilgit Baltistan Order-2018” have been conferred on the prime minister of Pakistan, instead of giving more autonomy to the area. The new order, as the findings show, is likely to spark

severe criticism and objection from various political, religious parties and the general public of GB as the center has largely turned down the demands of constitutional rights, making GB fifth province or giving it representation in National Assembly and Senate. None of the resolutions passed unanimously by the regional legislative assembly regarding the issue has been honoured in the new order.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/05/05/new-gb-order-empowers-pakistani-pm-not-the-region/>

“The world order must be based on upholding human rights: AJK president”

The Nation, May 6, 2018

Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan stated that today the world is in a state of flux dominated by a number of emerging issues, strife’s and non-traditional threats which are a risk for global peace and security. Projects like the Belt & Road Initiative is aimed at promoting economic connectivity between Asia, Europe and Africa, yet it is criticised by many. He also stated that the world should understand that China Pakistan Economic Corridor is designed for connecting countries, building transnational communities for prosperity and creating conditions for peaceful neighbourhoods. AJK, he noted is one of the most beautiful places on Earth and efforts are being made to make it a top destination for eco-tourism. He further stated that plans are underway to construct a 200-kilometre Tourism Corridor which will pass through all these scenic areas.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/236581/the-world-order-must-be-based-on-upholding-human-rights-ajk-president/>

“Bodies discuss ways to promote religious harmony”

The Nation, May 6, 2018

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and Milli Coordination Council (MCC) of Azad Jammu Kashmir discussed ways for maintaining religious harmony, tolerance and peace in AJK. The meeting held at Prime Minister House was chaired by Chief

Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Ibrahim Zia, who is also chairman of the council while president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan was the chief guest. Council of Islamic Ideology Pakistan Chairman Qibla Ayaz and Chairman of AJK Ulema and Mushaikh Council Maulana Ubaidullah Farooqi were also among participants.

<https://nation.com.pk/06-May-2018/bodies-discuss-ways-to-promote-religious-harmony>

MA Mir, “AJK PM says reforms have reshaped education in region”

The Express Tribune, May 7, 2018

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan stated that reforms in the education sector have brought tangible improvement in the educational governance in the area. Addressing various public gatherings during his visit to Jhelum Valley on May 6, he noted the introduction of National Testing Service (NTS) System in education has significantly reduced political intervention in postings, promotions and recruitment of teachers.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1703914/1-ajk-pm-says-reforms-reshaped-education-region/>

Jamil Nagri, “GB opposition parties reject draft reforms package”

Dawn, May 8, 2018

The combined opposition in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) on May 7 rejected the proposed draft of political and administrative reforms package named ‘the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018, which is going to replace the existing ‘GB Empowerment and Self Governance Order, 2009. Though the reforms package has yet to be approved by the federal government, it has been circulated among the stakeholders. On the occasion, PTI’s Raja Jahanzeb stated the proposed reforms package was being imposed on GB without consulting its people, which would not be accepted at any cost. PPP’s Javed Hussain noted the proposed

reforms draft was a conspiracy against CPEC project. He also stated the GB people had been denied their constitutional rights for last seven decades.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1406365>

“APC for inclusion of Kashmir issue in all parties manifestos”

Pakistan Observer, May 9, 2018

An All Parties Conference (APC) on Kashmir held on May 8 has called upon all political parties in the country to include the liberation of Kashmir among their priorities in election manifesto and give a clear road map in this direction. The demand was made by the Ameer, Jamaat e Islami, Pakistan, Senator Sirajul Haq, at a joint press conference along with the prominent leaders of the ruling party and the opposition. He also stated that Kashmiris were embracing martyrdom every day for the cause of Pakistan but the rulers in Islamabad were ignoring them. He also deplored the silence of the UN and the OIC in this regard. The JI chief noted that Kashmir was not an economic issue but the water of the Neelum Jhelum and Sulej was flowing into this country from only because of the Kashmir jihad.

<https://pakobserver.net/apc-for-inclusion-of-kashmir-issue-in-all-parties-manifestos/>

Sadia Abbas, “Development Projects Continue Apace In GB: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman”

Urdu Point, May 9, 2018

Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman noted on May 8 the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government was successfully going ahead with its plans to ensure socio-economic development of the area. Talking in meetings with different delegations in Dareel, the CM GB noted the PML (N)’s government launched a good number of mega development projects in the area which would uplift living standard of masses.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/development-projects-continue-apace-in-gb-ch-339207.html>

Fakhir Rizvi, “Opposition Parties Fail to Honour Promises with Masses: Gilgit Baltistan Minister for Building and Roads: Dr. Iqbal”

Urdu Point, May 10, 2018

Gilgit Baltistan Minister for Building and Roads, Dr. Iqbal stated on May 9 that opposition parties would suffer defeat in upcoming general elections. He stated that Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was misleading people by hollow slogans as it did not take measures in light of those slogans when it was in power in past and people were leading miserable life.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/opposition-parties-fail-to-honour-promises-wi-339224.html>

“AJK premier wants only positive use of social media”

The Nation, May 10, 2018

AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan noted that the government did not want to impose restrictions on the positive use of social media but there were some red lines to separate right use of social media from wrong. Addressing a meeting of the officials of administration and police at Kashmir House on May 8, he noted that social media would not be left unbridled. He directed the officials to take action against those found committing cybercrimes with impunity. He ordered the administration to keep their focus on protection and safety of the people living along the Line of Control and maintaining the law and order in their areas.

<https://nation.com.pk/11-May-2018/594383>

“Masood lands Pak-Kashmir Diaspora projection of Kashmir issue”

Pakistan Observer, May 13, 2018

Sardar Masood Khan, President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, stated that the diaspora community in the US is playing an important role in projecting Kashmiris’ voices for the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He also expressed the hope that the

community would continue to work for improving Pakistan-US relations in all spheres of life because these relations were in the interest of both the countries and were vital for regional peace and stability. The President noted how in this difficult and dark hour, the people of Jammu and Kashmir were expressing their solidarity with Pakistan. It was the responsibility of all freedom loving people, especially the people of Pakistan, to demonstrate their political and diplomatic solidarity with the people of Kashmir and make efforts to save them from their plight.

<https://pakobserver.net/masood-lands-pak-kashmir-diaspora-projection-of-kashmir-issue/>

Rakesh Datta, “A view from Islamabad”

The Tribune, May 14, 2018

There could be no resolution unless Kashmir is resolved was their constant refrain. References were made to 1947, United Nations Resolution on Self-determination, Kashmir and the Samjhauta Express. Buhran Wani was considered as a freedom fighter and frequent display of Pakistan flags in Kashmir is only a depiction of local public sentiments towards azadi, they noted. Strangely, what was evident between the two countries is that while Pakistan speaks with conviction on Kashmir, Balochistan and Afghanistan, we are confused on Kashmir. For instance, we shall not talk on Kashmir, but are prepared to discuss it as a part of composite dialogue. No one speaks on their side of Kashmir kept as Azad Kashmir with a separate Premier and the President besides Northern Areas (Gilgit Baltistan).

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/a-view-from-islamabad/588672.html>

“Zardari grieved over loss of lives, in AJK, Fata”

The Nation, May 14, 2018

Former President Asif Ali Zardari on May 13 expressed grief over two disastrous incidents in Neelum Valley, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and a destruction caused by heavy rain in several agencies of the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas. In a statement, Zardari noted he was saddened by the news

of collapsing of a bridge in Neelum Valley. He stated his thoughts were with the victims and their families. He instructed party leaders of AJK and FATA to reach out to the affected people of both incidents and provide them help. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls and strengthened fortitude for the bereaved families of the victims to bear this loss.

<https://nation.com.pk/14-May-2018/zardari-grieved-over-loss-of-lives-in-ajk-fata>

Sehrish Wasif, “Empower G-B assembly, not premier: PPP leader”

The Express Tribune, May 15, 2018

Veteran politician and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) former Senator Farhatullah Babar on May 14 strongly rejected amending Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Rule Order 2009 which he says empowers the Prime Minister of Pakistan, instead of giving greater autonomy to the area. Speaking at a consultation on human rights violations against women, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in K-P, FATA and G-B, Babar stated that this is the right time to oppose this as the order is set to be passed this month by the federal cabinet. He also demanded the federal government to initiate administrative and financial audit of funding announced by both national and international organisations for the rehabilitation of the IDPs. The consultation was organised by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), and was attended by human rights activists, parliamentarians and people from different walks of life to highlight issues being faced by IDPs and to suggest solutions.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1710303/1-empower-g-b-assembly-not-premier-ppp-leader/>

“GB opposition to stage sit-in outside parliament against draft reforms”

Dawn, May 16, 2018

The combined opposition in Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on May 15 announced to stage a sit-in outside the Parliament House in Islamabad on May 19 and 20 against the draft political and

administrative reforms package approved by the federal government for the region. They also decided to table a no-trust motion against Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman in the GBLA for his ‘failure’ to protect rights of GB people. Addressing a press conference at Gilgit Press Club, opposition leader in GBLA Mohammad Shafi Khan, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf’s Raja Jahanzeb Khan, Pakistan Peoples Party’s Javed Hussain, Balawaristan National Front’s Nawaz Khan Naji and independent Kacho Imtiaz Haider noted the opposition parties had started joint struggle against PML-N government’s ‘anti-people’ policies.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1408023/gb-opposition-to-stage-sit-in-outside-parliament-against-draft-reforms>

“AJK boosts emergency plans as climate risks grow”

The Express Tribune, May 16, 2018

Kashmir – like some other areas of the country – is also working on the ground to cut risks from natural disasters. Last year, the World Bank lent Pakistan \$125 million to restore flood protection infrastructure and strengthen government institutions to manage disasters and climate vulnerability across the country. In Kashmir, the government has now carried out studies to determine the types of disasters each area faces, so that officials can better prepare, stated Atiqur-Rehman Abbasi, project director of the Disaster and Climate Resilience Improvement Project in AJK. “Now we have exact data about each district, what kind of risk there is and how to cope with it,” he stated to the Thomson Reuters Foundation. A logistics plan on how to prepare for an emergency and deliver aid during floods, landslides or man-made disasters has been drawn up for every district and state, Abbasi stated.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1711394/1-ajk-boosts-emergency-plans-climate-risks-grow/>

“Kashmiris fully support Pakistan, armed forces”

The Nation, May 17, 2018

Amidst full-throated slogans in support of Pakistan and the valiant armed forces, hundreds of Kashmiri

people staged a ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ rally and renewed the pledge not to hesitate to make any sacrifice for the integrity of motherland. They pledged to give sacrifices of even their lives and properties for the sovereignty and security of every inch of the motherland shoulder to shoulder with the brave armed forces of the country as and whenever is required.

They noted that the armed forces of Pakistan were the only solid rock for the defence of Pakistan which is always atop and dearer to every child of the state of Jammu & Kashmir living at both sides of the Line of Control. They also stated that the people of Jammu & Kashmir were always prepared to give sacrifice for the defence of Pakistan in case of any foreign aggression to the frontiers of the country. They concluded that Kashmiris would not hesitate from giving any sacrifice for the sake of the security and solidarity of Pakistan.

<https://nation.com.pk/17-May-2018/kashmiris-fully-support-pakistan-armed-forces>

Faizan Hashmi, “Standing Committee on Gilgit Baltistan Home Dept Meets”

Urdu Point, May 18, 2018

Member Provincial Assembly Imtiaz Haider chaired a meeting of the Standing Committee on Home Department Gilgit Baltistan Assembly on May 18 and expressed satisfaction over the performance of the department and assured provision of all possible resources to it. The meeting was attended besides others by members GB Assembly, Javed Hussain, Sherin Akhtar and Secretary Home, Jawad Akram and senior officials of Police Department. The security plan for Sehr and Aftar during Ramadan was discussed at length during the meeting and the committee expressed satisfaction over the security arrangements.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/standing-committee-on-gilgit-baltistan-home-d-347507.html>

“Pakistan treats Gilgit-Baltistan like colony, alleges activist”

The Times of India, May 19, 2018

Pakistan treats Gilgit-Baltistan “like a colony”, a US based activist from the strategic region bordering PoK has alleged, as he demanded that a UN established fact-finding mission be sent to determine the conditions of imprisoned dissidents. Gilgit-Baltistan has a regional Assembly and an elected chief minister. Pakistan considers it a separate geographical entity. Like Vietnam, Gilgit-Baltistan cannot end rights abuses without the help of the international community, Senge Sering, chairman of the Movement for Democracy in Gilgit-Baltistan, noted at a recent event held at the US Capitol. “Pakistan has been treating Gilgit-Baltistan like a colony”, he alleged. “We request President (Donald) Trump and the State Department to help the UN establish a fact-finding mission to determine the conditions of imprisoned political dissidents in Pakistan and to impress upon the Pakistani leadership to uphold democratic ideals including free speech and movement. “As we speak, Pakistan’s military and intelligence agencies are busy seizing thousands of acres of private land in Gilgit-Baltistan and those who oppose such illegal policies are declared terrorist and face torture and incarceration,” Sering told a gathering of US lawmakers, Congressional staffers, government officials and human rights experts at the 24th Commemoration of Vietnam Human Rights Day. The Asian Human Rights Commission’s report on Gilgit-Baltistan notes that such practices of land grabbing have resulted in the displacement of locals and a state sanctioned demographic change, he further stated. The report claims that the non-local proportion of the population in Gilgit-Baltistan has increased significantly in recent years since government is violating a local law called State Subject Rule, which has opened floodgates for immigration from Pakistan, he added.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-treats-gilgit-baltistan-like-colony-alleges-activist/articleshow/64234733.cms>

“Opposition boycotts GBLA in-camera session on draft reforms”

Dawn, May 19, 2018

GB Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman briefed the lawmakers on the draft reforms titled ‘Gilgit-Baltistan Government Orders, 2018’. However, as he started his speech, the opposition members led by opposition leader Mohammad Shafi Khan staged a walkout. Talking to media persons, the opposition lawmakers noted that the opposition had already rejected the draft reforms. They pointed out that if the federal government was constrained to declare GB as part of Pakistan then the region should be given status like Azad Kashmir. They insisted that the GB people had been bypassed while deciding their future. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman noted some opposition members were misleading GB people on draft reforms package. He also stated the opposition members should hold a debate and point out flaws in the reforms rather than boycott the assembly session.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1408550/opposition-boycotts-gbla-in-camera-session-on-draft-reforms>

“AJK to be turned into a model state: President”

The Nation, May 19, 2018

President Sardar Masood Khan stated on May 18 that the political leadership was determined to transform Azad Kashmir into a modern and developed state. For the purpose, he highlighted the importance of the key economic sectors including an all-weather modern road network, macro and micro hydropower projects, promotion of tourism in all parts of Azad Kashmir, development of mines and minerals sectors, floriculture, horticulture and telecommunications. The AJK President expressed these views while talking to newly appointed Chief Secretary to Azad Kashmir, Mian Waheeduddin, who called on him at the Jammu and Kashmir House on May 18. The president congratulated the chief secretary on his appointment. “Azad Kashmir has pristine beauty, no doubt. But in promoting tourism, the focus would be on sound

infrastructure as well as fool proof safety and security of tourists,” President Masood noted.

<https://nation.com.pk/19-May-2018/ajk-to-be-turned-into-a-model-state-president>

“NSC endorses FATA’s merger with KPK”

The News, May 20, 2018

The National Security Committee on May 19 while weighing all the pros and cons in detail endorsed that the merger of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the administrative and judicial institutional structures and laws of the province would be introduced. It also evolved consensus for the grant of a five-year tax holiday to Gilgit-Baltistan so as to create adequate incentives for the development of the region and bring it at par with other areas of Pakistan.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/318878-nsc-endorses-fatas-merger-with-kpk>

Jamil Nagri, “New law promises more political, judicial powers to Gilgit-Baltistan”

Dawn, May 22, 2018

The Gilgit-Baltistan government promulgated the Gilgit-Baltistan Order-2018, replacing the GB Empowerment and Self-Governance Order of 2009. The new order has been approved by the federal cabinet and President Mamnoon Hussain will issue a notification regarding its enforcement on the advice of the prime minister. Addressing a press conference on May 21, GB Law Minister Aurangzeb Khan and Adviser on Information Shams Mir stated the new order was protected by the Constitution of Pakistan, which provides political, administrative, financial and judicial powers to GB. They stated that after the approval of the GB Order-2018 by the federal cabinet and endorsement by the National Security Council, the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly also approved it. Under the new order, all powers exercised by the GB Council, including passing of legislation regarding mineral, hydropower and

tourism sectors, have been shifted to the GB Assembly. Mr Mir stated that under the reforms, all federal taxes had been suspended. Now the GB people had all rights enjoyed by the people of four provinces of Pakistan, he added. Aurangzeb Khan further noted the name of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly had been replaced with the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1409226/new-law-promises-more-political-judicial-powers-to-gb>

“AJK seeks WB’s role as India violates Water Treaty”

The Nation, May 23, 2018

President Sardar Masood Khan stated that by inaugurating the 330MW Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant, India has violated the Indus Water Treaty and deprived Azad Jammu Kashmir and Pakistan of their share of water. President Masood made these remarks while talking to the presidents of the bar associations and the press clubs of Azad Jammu Kashmir on May 22. He noted that it was an act of breach of faith because the process for the mediatory decision on the Kishanganga project was “paused”, as Pakistan had demanded a constitution of a Court of Arbitration while India was insistent on a neutral expert. India has abused the “pause” to accelerate the completion and inauguration of the Kishanganga hydroelectric project to give a fait-accompli to the World Bank and Pakistan. It has thus scuttled and made a mockery of the arbitration process. The president stated that India uses such arbitration processes as well as its strained relation with Pakistan as a smokescreen to build dams in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty. He added that earlier India resorted to the same tactics for the Baglihar Dam.

<https://nation.com.pk/23-May-2018/ajk-seeks-wbs-role-as-india-violates-water-treaty>

Shabbir Mir, “Opposition rejects G-B reforms package”

The Express Tribune, May 25, 2018

The government appears to be in trouble following the introduction of reforms package for Gilgit-

Baltistan which has been ‘rejected’ by the joint opposition. “The government and the chief minister are traitors because they have sold out the region’s interest for the sake of a dummy package,” G-B Opposition Leader Muhammad Shafi Khan noted while speaking to in Gilgit this week referring to the reforms package known as “Order 2018”. The package was prepared by a committee headed by Sartaj Aziz over the past two years, suggesting bringing G-B on a par with the rest of the provinces. However, sources privy to the matter stated that the proposal failed to see the light of day as certain quarters reportedly raised concerns citing the Kashmir issue. The latter has also asked the chief minister to step down. Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman noted that the package was tabled and approved in National Security Committee meeting attended by prime minister and army chief among others so there is no point in criticizing the government. He added that the region has got more financial powers as a result of the package. It is widely believed that the fate of G-B government will be decided once the PML-N government at the centre completes its term and a caretaker setup assumes charge.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1718552/1-opposition-rejects-g-b-reforms-package/>

Zaigham Abbas, “Gilgit-Baltistan’s political prisoners — I”

Dawn, May 24, 2018

In Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Pakistan’s northern periphery, dissent has historically been dealt with using an iron fist. Arbitrary detentions, imprisonment and charges of terrorism are leveled for raising even basic concerns about politics or the areas constitutional status. The region remains deprived of access to Pakistan’s judicial system and remains a black hole in terms of justice, liberty and human rights. The sorry state of political liberties and the stories of injustice are not permitted to escape GB’s mighty mountains, thus they remain unheard. The plight of GB is made worse by the negligence of both the print and electronic media, which continues to report only on the natural beauty of the region, thus

common people and their issues have effectively become irrelevant to the rest of the country. The popular narrative about Gilgit-Baltistan is a mixture of landscape beauty, majestic lakes, mountains, highest literacy and CPEC. One wonders if people and their real issues are ever taken into account in this exotic façade. Nosheen Ali, a renowned researcher on GB terms this phenomenon the “Depeopling” of the region.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/244794/gilgit-baltistans-political-prisoners-i/>

“GB reforms leave people lesser citizens: HRCP”

Dawn, May 24, 2018

In a statement on May 24, the HRCP stated: “In claiming to grant the people of GB their fundamental freedoms, the GB Order has clipped their right to freedom of association and expression. It has denied any Gilgit-Baltistani the right to become a chief judge of the Supreme Appellate Court or to have any say in internal security. Above all, it has disregarded people’s needs despite continual public pressure in GB to address their problems fairly and in accordance with local aspirations. The continuing imprisonment of Baba Jan and his comrades for having stood up for their fundamental rights is a sore case in point. There is nothing in the GB Order to protect others like Baba Jan in the future”. The HRCP added the people of Gilgit-Baltistan deserved nothing less than enjoying the same rights as other citizens of Pakistan. Under the country’s constitution, the GB people’s ‘loyalty’ was to the state, not to the GB Order itself or, by extension, to the head of government, it noted. The commission stated the order giving the prime minister extraordinary powers with respect to the governance of GB would not help in its being recognised as a province. The HRCP demands that the people of GB must be treated on a par with the citizens of other provinces for any such reforms to be meaningful.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1409777/gb-reforms-leave-people-lesser-citizens-hrcp>

Atif Khan, “Fate of 1,800 employees hangs in balance”

The Nation, May 26, 2018

The fate of over 1,800 employees is hanging in the balance after the government decided to abolish Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Councils, retaining them as ‘advisory bodies’. According to documents submitted to the National Assembly by Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Barjees Tahir, the prime minister in mid-February 2018 decided in principle to abolish AJK Council and the GB Council respectively. The minister stated that minutes received and the draft amendment order for the abolition of GB Council has been submitted for approval of the prime minister and to be placed before the federal cabinet but the decision was pending till date. He also stated that the future of the employees had not yet been decided. There are a total of 1,463 employees working in the AJK Council and its attached departments, while a total of 355 employees are working in the CB Council and its attached departments.

<https://nation.com.pk/26-May-2018/fate-of-1-800-employees-hangs-in-balance>

Mamir, “PPP opposes disbanding of AJK council”

The Express Tribune, May 25, 2018

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter of Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) opposed constitutional reforms and abolition of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council and called for broad-scale consensus on the matter. The demand was made by Azad Kashmir Pakistan People’s Party President Chaudhry Latif Akbar and Leader of Opposition in AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen at a joint press conference. “The new draft of the amendment in AJK Interim Constitution (Thirteenth Amendment) Act 2018 will render AJK government more powerless than empowering it,” Latif Akbar noted. Prime Minister of Pakistan should take entire political leadership of Azad Jammu and Kashmir into

confidence to create a broad consensus on the matter, he demanded.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1718555/1-ppp-opposes-disbanding-ajk-council/>

“President AJK applauds AJK Council reforms, urges unity”

Pakistan Observer, May 26, 2018

Sardar Masood Khan, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir stated that the reform of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council is a historic step that is being taken to promote vital interests of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan. In a statement issued by his office, the President stated that political parties and forces should forge unity and evolve a just formula which would give administrative and financial powers to the Azad Kashmir Government, devolve greater administrative authority to the Government of the Azad State of Jammu and Kashmir, and further strengthen relations between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Sardar Masood Khan stated that the reform of the AJK Council has been a popular demand of the people and now it is moving towards fruition. Recently, he noted, momentous developments have taken place with regard to FATA and Gilgit Baltistan; and AJK would not be left behind. These are historic transformations, which would have far-reaching, positive impact all around, he noted. The President also stated that two concerns regarding the Council reforms, namely, linkage with Pakistan and likely impact on the status of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute have been addressed.

<https://pakobserver.net/president-ajk-applauds-ajk-council-reforms-urges-unity/>

“PPP terms GB package as insulting to the people”

The News, May 27, 2018

Giving powers of legislation to the bureaucracy in Islamabad and brazenly denying the people their rights is an affront to the people of Gilgit Baltistan that will have far reaching consequences for political stability. The PPP cannot and will not allow the bureaucracy or any one individual to legislate for GB,

be that individual the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Furthermore, the provision that only retired judges of the High Courts and Supreme Court of Pakistan are eligible to become Chief Judge of the Supreme Appellate Court of GB means that no citizen of GB can ever become the Chief Judge, he noted. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also demanded release of rights activists like Baba Jan Hunzai and others and a halt to the taking over of shamilat lands by the state.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/322156-ppp-terms-gb-package-as-insulting-to-the-people>

“Gilgit-Baltistan is base of CPEC: PM”

The Nation, May 27, 2018

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi says Gilgit-Baltistan order has empowered Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly and people, reported Radio Pakistan. Addressing the Joint session of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and Gilgit-Baltistan Council in Gilgit on May 26, the Prime Minister stated that all subjects under 18th amendment have been shifted to Gilgit-Baltistan Government. He thanked Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Muhammad Barjees Tahir for extending his support in preparation of the new order. He stated Governor and the judges of High Court and Chief Justice of high court will be appointed from Gilgit-Baltistan. He also stated Gilgit-Baltistan Council will now function as the advisory body. Referring to CPEC, he noted Gilgit-Baltistan is base of CPEC and people of GB will get more benefits from it. Earlier, Chief Minister Hafeez-ur-Rehman in his address thanked Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and termed his visit a milestone in the history of GB. Minister Kashmir Affairs Gilgit-Baltistan, Muhammad Barjees Tahir and Governor Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan attended the session.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-May-2018/gilgit-baltistan-is-base-of-cpec-pm>

Jamil Nagri, “Many injured during protest against new Gilgit-Baltistan law”

Dawn, May 27, 2018

Dozen of protesters, including a Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf’s (PTI) member in the Gilgit-Baltistan

Legislative Assembly, Raja Jahanzeb Khan and Awami Action Committee chairman Maulana Sultan Raees, were injured during a clash with police on May 26. Opposition parties in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly, including Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), PTI, Islami Tehreek Pakistan and Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen (MWM), lawyers, civil society organisations, Anjuman Tajran and Awami Action committee had given call for a sit-in outside the assembly's building where Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is scheduled to address a joint session of GB Legislative Assembly and GB Council to announce formal enforcement of the GB Order 2018 on May 27. The police blocked all roads leading to the building by parking containers on it.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1410203>

Jawaid Bokhari, “Welfare surfacing on voters’ agenda”

Dawn, May 28, 2018

On May 19, the NSC reached a consensus to devolve administrative authority and financial powers to Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan governments in response to the demand of the local leaders for a provincial status. The NSC also reiterated its stand for the merger of Fata with KP. Sindh and Punjab have redoubled their efforts to modernise a sagging backward agricultural economy. In the midst of one of the worst socio-economic and political crisis, Imran Khan has vowed to build a “new Pakistan.” PTI wants a return to the abandoned concept of a welfare state (ceded to the market economy) with the difference that it embodies Islamic principles. PTI’s performance record in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is marked by improved education and health facilities/standards and reform of the police system.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1410373/welfare-surfacing-on-voters-agenda>

“Bilawal rejects Gilgit-Baltistan reforms package”

Dawn, May 28, 2018

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on May 27 stated that giving powers of

legislation to bureaucracy in Islamabad and “brazenly denying the people their rights” was an affront to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan “that will have far-reaching consequences for political stability.” Mr Bhutto-Zardari noted this after Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi announced enforcement of a ‘reforms package’ for GB, which, he termed ‘insulting’ for the region’s people. “The nation’s parliament has just passed a constitutional amendment bill taking away powers of the President in respect of the tribal areas to empower its people,” he stated referring to the 31st Amendment to the Constitution. “Just the same time the federal government has ambushed the people of GB by taking away their powers and vesting it in the prime minister.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1410393>

“Protest in Peshawar over order on Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Tribune, May 28, 2018

Several people have been injured in Pakistan in clashes between police and protesters during a demonstration against the so-called Gilgit-Baltistan order, media reports noted. Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has seized more authority from the local council to deal with the affairs of the disputed region through the Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 which was passed on May 21. The order is seen as Islamabad’s efforts towards incorporating the disputed region as its fifth province. Police fired tear gas shells and resorted to aerial firing in Gilgit to stop protesters approaching towards Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly for a scheduled sit-in against the newly introduced order, as reported. Politicians, cutting across party lines, held protest rallies across Gilgit-Baltistan demanding constitutional rights for the region. The Gilgit-Baltistan government has promulgated the Gilgit-Baltistan Order-2018, which replaced the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order of 2009. However, the new order failed to impress local politicians who announced region-wide protests.

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/protest-in-peshawar-over-order-on-gilgit-baltistan/596202.html>

Jamil Nagri, “Govt ready to accommodate more Gilgit-Baltistan demands: Abbasi”

Dawn, May 28, 2018

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi stated that the newly promulgated Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 has transferred all the powers to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan who will enjoy similar rights which the people of other provinces have without any discrimination. “All subjects under the 18th Constitution Amendment have been shifted to the Gilgit-Baltistan government, yet if the GB representatives have some more demands, we can include [them] in the order, [as] our government is still left some days,” vowed PM Abbasi while addressing a joint session of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly and GB Council on May 27. “From today I as the prime minister and Barjees Tahir as federal minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan have become powerless as far as the affairs of Gilgit-Baltistan are concerned. All the powers have been shifted to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and no one can abolish the powers which we have transferred to them.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1410456>

“GBLA condemns Indian propaganda”

Dawn, May 31, 2018

The opposition and treasury members in Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on May 30 unanimously condemned the Indian propaganda against the Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018. A resolution to this effect was jointly tabled by law minister Aurangzeb Khan Advocate, opposition members Nawaz Khan Naji and Kacho Imtiaz Haider during a session of the GBLA. The resolution lambasted India for attempting to give misperception on the order that

the region’s opposition parties had protested its promulgation. The resolution clarified that protest of the opposition parties was clear evidence that GB political parties and residents enjoyed fundamental rights and freedom of speech. The resolution also criticised New Delhi for summoning Pakistan’s deputy high commissioner on the matter and Indian media’s fallacious and baseless propaganda against the order. Taking part in the debate on Gilgit-Baltistan order 2018, Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman elaborated the salient features of the order, and asked the opposition to share their reservations with the government in that regard.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1411052/gbla-condemns-indian-propaganda>

Umer Jamshaid, “AJK Legislative Assembly, AJK Council Meet in Joint Session”

Urdu Point, May 31, 2018

The joint session of Azad Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly and AJK Council May 30 unanimously approved the draft of the bill titled “Azad Jammu and Kashmir interim constitution (13th amendment) Act 2018” for deliberation and referred it to the committee of the house on bills. The joint session of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and AJK Council was held on May 30 in the state’s capital with Deputy Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly Sardar Farooq Tahir in the chair.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/ajk-legislative-assembly-ajk-council-meet-in-358462.html>

Economic Developments

“Corporate corner”

The Nation, May 3, 2018

FINCA Microfinance Bank has opened its latest branch in the scenic city of Gilgit, reinforcing its pledge to remain one of the fastest growing microfinance banks in the country. With this addition, FINCA Pakistan has broadened its outreach to 108 Pakistani cities through 120 branches. The branch was inaugurated by Ms Zar Wardak, VP & Regional Director - Middle East and South Asia region - of FINCA Impact Finance. FINCA invited prominent and venerated individuals from Gilgit’s community to the ceremony, delineating the mission of FINCA in Pakistan and the importance of Gilgit in achieving that goal. The occasion was also graced by 5 members of FINCA Pakistan’s board of directors, who flew in from all over the world reaffirming their commitment to improving financial inclusion in the county. FINCA Pakistan’s CEO, the COO and senior management greeted them upon their arrival at the ceremony.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-May-2018/corporate-corner>

“Rs 486.726m allocated for IT, telecom services for CPEC”

The Nation, May 7, 2018

The government allocated Rs486.726 million for Expansion and up gradation of NGMS (3G/4G) services and seamless coverage along KKH (In support of CPEC) in Gilgit Baltistan. The project is one of the important on-going projects of ministry, total Rs2658.713 million have earmarked for eight on-going schemes of Information Technology and Telecommunication Division for the fiscal year 2018-19 in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Pakistan’s domestic Information Technology

(IT) market is expected to multiply due to China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CPEC). The government is making all possible efforts to enhance exports of Pakistan’s IT sector and has extended major incentives to the IT Industry which include a variety of tax exemptions, permission to operate foreign exchange accounts, profit repatriation.

<https://nation.com.pk/07-May-2018/rs486-726m-allocated-for-it-telecom-services-for-cpec>

“AJK unveils Rs108.2 billion annual budget”

The Nation, May 22, 2018

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir government on May 21 presented 2018-19 budget with a historic outlay of Rs108.2 billion. Finance Minister Dr Najeeb Naqi presented the budget in the special budget session of Azad Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly which met in the state’s capital city with Speaker Shah Ghulam Qadir in the chair. With Rs25.2 billion allocation for development, the budget proposals show Rs2.3 billion increase in development budget against Rs23.28 billion in the fiscal year 2017-18. The government proposed Rs82.70 billion for non-development expenditures that include the increase in the salaries of government employees and raise in the pension of retired employees.

<https://nation.com.pk/22-May-2018/ajk-unveils-rs108-2-billion-annual-budget>

“AJK LA unanimously approves budget”

The Nation, May 28, 2018

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly on May 27 unanimously approved the budget for the fiscal year 2018-19. The house also approved revised budget for the fiscal year 2017-18

to the tune of over 96 billion rupees. Earlier, the members from government and opposition benches took part in the general debate on the budget proposals for the fiscal year 2018-19. He also expressed his gratitude to federal finance minister Miftha Ismail,

Minister for Kashmir Affairs Barjees Tahir, Chairman Planning Commission for supporting AJK in its budgetary requirements.

<https://nation.com.pk/28-May-2018/ajk-la-unanimously-approves-budget>

International Developments

“Turkey reiterates full support to Kashmir cause”

The Nation, May 4, 2018

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan stated that the Turkish people and their government have openly supported and recognised the people of Kashmir’s right to self-determination at all international forums. The president made these remarks while interacting with a Turkish delegation led by Mr Ali Kurt, Secretary General of the Union of NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW), on May 3. The meeting was also attended by UNIW Coordinator Abdul Hamit Erten, Member AJK Legislative Assembly Abdul Rasheed Turabi, Conveners of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Ghulam Muhammad Safi and Faiz Naqshbandi. The AJK president admired the sincere efforts of UNIW and affirmed his support to the noble cause. He stated that Turkey has always been at the forefront of uniting the Muslim Ummah. On behalf of the people and Government of Azad Kashmir, the president extended his gratitude to Turkey for the massive reconstruction and aid provided in Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot after the 2005 devastating earthquake.

<https://nation.com.pk/04-May-2018/593141>

“Pakistan denies minorities their individual rights: US Congressman”

Business Standard, May 24, 2018

A United States-based advocacy group representing various ethnic minorities of Pakistan formed a joint platform ‘South Asian Minorities Alliance Foundation’ against what they alleged as the massive human rights violation by security forces and ruling establishment of the country. Two Republican Congressmen Thomas Garrett from Virginia and Scott Perry from Pennsylvania extended their support to the newly formed group and expressed concerns about Pakistan’s oppressed ethnic and religious communities. “You don’t take American money and oppress your people with our money. That’s not good,” Congressman Perry told the gathering of people representing various ethnic groups of Pakistan Mohajirs, Baloch, Gilgit and Hazara. Perry has voted in House of Representative against funding for Pakistan.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/pakistan-denies-minorities-their-individual-rights-us-congressman-118052401251_1.html

Other Developments

Altaf Hamid Rao, “May Day marked in AJK”

Pakistan Observer, May 2, 2018

In Azad Jammu & Kashmir, the World Labour Day was observed on May 1 to pay glorious tributes to those workers and labourers who laid down their lives for achieving their rights this day 132 years ago in Chicago city of the United States of America. The labourers across the world observe May 1st to commemorate the supreme sacrifices of the labourers.

<https://pakobserver.net/may-day-marked-in-ajk/>

“GB Cap Day marked”

Dawn, May 10, 2018

The regional government announced the celebrations at official level. Both government and non-governmental organisations held functions to mark the day, while the people wore the region’s traditional

white cap. A Cap Day ceremony was held in Ghakuch area of Ghizer district, which was attended by tourism minister Fida Khan, administration officials and local elders. Wearing white caps, the local residents danced as the traditional music was played. Later, a rally was taken out. Similar events were held in Hunza, Nagar, Astore and Baltistan areas.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1406671/gb-cap-day-marked>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister and Good Work”

Baad-e-Shimal, May 1, 2018

The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Hafeezur Rehman directed the secretary to increase the pace of 18 MW Naltar power project completion. He directed the official to complete the work before May 4. For Naltar Power project, Rs 3 crore have been allotted. The Chief Minister took stock of the ongoing work and also praised the Chinese engineers for the work they are doing. However, it is almost a month since then and the capital itself is suffering from load shedding. There is still hope that this government would work towards addressing the power deficit. Even though the Chief Minister ordered to restore electricity, in Skardu, there is complete apathy from authorities. No one is taking note of the issue and there has been no briefing from the government officials on load shedding. Keeping all these issues in perspective, one cannot, however, deny the fact that overall the things have improved in the province. Gilgit-Baltistan is no more called a grave of unfinished projects. On many projects, work is going on and more importantly, the Chief Minister is taking keen interest in completing the projects.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=05-01-2018&img=05-01-2018page-4-4

“Protests and rallies are meant to sabotage CPEC”

Daily K2, May 10, 2018

The Minister for Tourism Fida Khan noted that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is trying to create anarchy by spreading lies in the region. Their only motive is to create instability in the region. They do politics on dead bodies. They oppose everything the present government is doing. Their main aim is not to let this government work and more so sabotage CPEC. Khan further stated that his party almost

eliminated sectarian issues but the PPP wants to revive it in the region. The PPP in past deceived people from the Ghizer area and they are trying to fool them again. People should not heed to PPP's propagandists politics.

<http://epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?eid=1&nid=1&date=1525910400>

Ghulam Nabi Khurpatoo, “A Constitutional Joke for Gilgit-Baltistan”

Daily Salam, May 10, 2018

It is incomprehensible that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has been given more powers with regard to Gilgit-Baltistan. The writ of Supreme Court and Appellate Court has also been extended to Gilgit-Baltistan. Forget about the constitutional rights, they have further tightened the grip on Gilgit-Baltistan. God knows who were sitting in the constitutional committee and it seems that they have no love for the region. Are they not aware about the geo-strategic significance of Gilgit-Baltistan? We are bordering China and Afghanistan in one side and India on the other. It is the people of the region who are keeping enemies at bay. Instead of appeasing the people, the Pakistan government is adding salt to injuries. When did people ask for the prime ministership or president ship? What we asked for was constitutional rights by making Gilgit-Baltistan a fifth province.

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

“Public Reaction on Government 2018 Order”

Baad-e-Shimal, May 20, 2018

The opposition parties of Gilgit-Baltistan expressed reservation on the Gilgit-Baltistan Government Order 2018. They have rejected the order stating there is nothing substantial for the people in it. Since the last 70 years, people are asking for constitutional

rights. Terminating the Council or offering other options is not a substitute for the constitutional rights. People want representation in the National Assembly and other constitutional rights. When the Constitutional Committee was discussing the issue, many leaders from both opposition and the ruling party met Sartaj Aziz and informed him about the demands of the people. Both federal government and the provincial government from time to time gave false hopes to the people. The political leadership of the PML-N in Gilgit-Baltistan was always bragging about the constitutional rights being given to the region. But when in reality, the order was issued and it came into public, it was nothing but much ado but about nothing. One thing is very clear that the recommendations provided by Sartaj Aziz committee were different. The 2018 Order does not represent the views that the Sartaj Aziz Committee has formulated.

<http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/?page=cGFnZS00&dt=MDUtMjAtMjAxOA>

“Opposition want bloodshed, those giving names to the Order 2018 don’t deserve to be in Assembly”

Daily K2, May 31, 2018

The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Hafeezur Rehman stated that the opposition wants bloodshed and they have no intention of debating the Order. He further stated that it is because of these people, it is

not missing any opportunity to spread propaganda and every time the government has to issue a statement. If they do not accept the order, then they should have the courage to resign from the assembly. They should come up with the argument and we will listen to it. The issue should be resolved in the legislature. If there are any inconsistencies or loopholes in the order, the opposition should figure it out. Rehman while addressing the assembly stated that his government does not want bloodshed.

<http://epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?eid=1&nid=1&date=1527724800>

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 edited and abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

POK NEWS DIGEST



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191
Website: www.idsa.in; Email: lbscidsa@gmail.com