

# POK

## *News Digest*

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

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## Jammu & Kashmir

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

# In this Edition

*There has been growing discontent between Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan and between Gilgit-Baltistan and "Azad Kashmir" regarding Constitutional identity. The people from Gilgit-Baltistan feel that Pakistan leadership is giving unnecessarily too much importance to the sensitivities of the "AJK" leadership regarding the integration of G-B in Pakistan. This Pakistan-"AJK" bonhomie has created further distrust between Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. There is a staunch view inside Gilgit-Baltistan that Jammu and Kashmir which is enjoying a special status within the Indian constitution and "AJK" that is also having special setup are creating hurdles for G-B for not having the same.*

*Other voices are emerging within G-B after feeling disheartened for not getting a constitutional identity, are now demanding that GB should be considered a disputed territory and hence should enjoy an independent status or enjoy the local authority of some form similar to some form of suzerainty. These are the voices which hitherto were considered mainstream in Gilgit-Baltistan. Therefore, Pakistan is facing a tricky situation in the region. On the one hand, it didn't want to disappoint G-B leadership by not giving constitutional rights but on the other hand, it didn't want to antagonize "AJK" leadership who are vehemently opposing any constitutional rights to the region.*

*Yaqoob ul Hassan*

# Political Developments

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**“Nava Thakuria, Anti- Islamabad activities get ground in Pak-occupied Kashmir, “reflect” eco-concerns”**

*Counterview, December 1, 2018*

Most recent one on November 18, 2018 was at Bagh, where the activists bluntly asked Pakistan to end its illegal occupation over Kashmir. For reasons best known to nearly 4.5 million residents of Pakistan-occupied/ controlled/ administered Kashmir (PoK), they have started raising voices against Islamabad. The PoK media, mostly in Urdu language, highlights the people’s angers against the Islamabad regime; even the Pakistan’s mainstream media continues preferring to ignore those demonstrations.

Earlier on October 25, exiled political activists from PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan demonstrated in front of the European Parliament in Brussels protesting against the misuse of natural resources in their homelands and continued brutalities over locals by the Pakistani military personnel. It was predeceased by a series of protests in Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Kotli, Gilgit, Rawalpindi etc on October 22 as a black day. .

But refreshing news for India would be that aspiring youths of PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan now prefer to study in various educational institutions across the country. They even start pursuing reservations in IIMs, IITs, various medical, agriculture, law universities for the students of PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan. Taking the help of social media, those aspiring students recently appealed to New Delhi and Indian populace for not ignoring their future.

<https://www.counterview.net/2018/12/anti-islamabad-activities-get-ground-in.html>

**Hasnaat Malik, “Govt panel proposes amendments in G-B order, SC told”**

*The Express Tribune, December 4, 2018*

The committee has also proposed that if it is decided that such amendments in the Constitution would take time or that it is not possible for the time being to go ahead with the amendments, appropriate amendments be made in ‘The Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order, 2018’ in the manner that all fundamental rights as are provided by the Constitution be given to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. The committee says there was also concern that the word ‘order’ may be reconsidered because of the sensitivities of the people of the G-B. It is therefore proposed that the name be changed to ‘The Gilgit Baltistan Governance Reforms, 2018’. It is also recommended that the constitutional, legislative and executive status of the G-B Council as provided by the G-B Empowerment and Governance Order 2009 be restored subject to the recommendations of the committee, led by Sartaj Aziz.’ The committee proposes that the consolidated fund of the G-B Council be restored. The status terms and condition of the appointment of the judges be modified and brought to the original provision as contained in the G-B Order, 2009, to ensure the independence of judiciary.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1859547/1-govt-panel-proposes-amendments-g-b-order-sc-told/>

**“Protests Break Out in Gilgit Baltistan’s Hunza District Against Pakistan; Protesters Demand Fundamental Rights”**

*Latest LY, December 5, 2018*

A massive protest broke out in Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan on December 4 against Pakistan. The protesters gathered in large numbers to express their anger

against the Pakistani government. They were demanding fundamental and constitutional rights. Recently, reports surfaced that people in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) continue to face troubles due to the incompetence of the local authorities.

<https://www.latestly.com/world/protests-break-out-in-gilgit-baltistans-hunza-district-against-pakistan-protesters-demand-fundamental-rights-522441.html>

### **“GB legislators concerned over delay in constitutional rights”**

*Dawn, December 5, 2018*

The PPP leader said construction of a concrete wall at the Pak-Afghan border topped the agenda of the recent federal cabinet meeting while the issue of Gilgit-Baltistan constitutional status was put on the backburner. He urged the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government to provide rights to the GB people in lights of the parliamentary committee’s recommendations and ruling of the Supreme Court. Another opposition member, Imran Nadeem Shigri, said GBLA resolutions had always been ignored. He said instead of constructing a new building for the assembly issues of the region should be resolved. Mr Shigri said GB people needed to start a struggle for their rights regardless of sectarian and linguistic differences.

Ruling PML-N member Shareen Akhtar said Kargil-Ladakh road should be opened for trade and travel. Opening of the road would facilitate the divided families between Ghanche district of GB and Kargil. Minister for social welfare Sobia Jabeen Muqadam announced to table a resolution seeking rights of the special persons in the next assembly session.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1449566/gb-legislators-concerned-over-delay-in-constitutional-rights>

### **Syed Sabeehul Hussnain, “Gilgit-Baltistan not to be full-fledged province, SC told”**

*The Nation, December 8, 2018*

The AGP informed the court that Gilgit-Baltistan

could not be made a full-fledged province but would be accorded all powers like others. He apprised that the GB government had been empowered in lawmaking and administration and moreover, the legal draft for granting it province-like powers was being prepared which was in final stages. The seven-judge larger bench of the top court headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar also observed that the committee shall submit its report and this court will examine the input of representatives of G-B before the final order. The larger bench was hearing the case of determining constitutional status of G-B. Accepting the plea of G-B’s law officer, the chief justice also observed that this court will be the guarantor of fundamental rights and no changes could be made in it without the prior approval of this court. Subsequently, the bench directed authorities to call meeting in this regard at the attorney general’s office on December 13, and it would be headed by the attorney general to finalise the draft bill. The top court on request of the DAG for sharing the contents of the proposal and G-B’s view on it constituted a committee and adjourned the hearing till December 24.

<https://nation.com.pk/08-Dec-2018/gilgit-baltistan-not-to-be-full-fledged-province-sc-told>

### **Faizan Hshmi, “GB Assembly Expresses Concerns Over Raise In PIA Fares”**

*Urdu Point, December 6, 2018*

Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly has expressed concerns over recent raise in PIA fares from Islamabad to Gilgit Baltistan.

The assembly asked the GB government to raise this issue with the Federal government. Members of the Assembly also complained about inappropriate behaviour of PIA staff towards passengers of GB.

The assembly also adopted three separate resolutions including the one seeking regularization of contractual employees of women development and social welfare. The second resolution demand continuation of passport office in all districts of GB including restoration of Passport office in Kharmang.

The third resolution called for opening of allergy centers in three divisions of GB.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/gb-assembly-expresses-concerns-over-raise-in-499279.html>

### **Syed Sabeehul Hussnain, “Court seeks details of measures for Bhasha Dam construction”**

*The Nation, December 7, 2018*

The top court also appointed Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) as focal person to coordinate between the organisations and the implementation bench of the Supreme Court, which is supervising the matters relating to Diamer-Bhasha Dam. A 4-judge larger bench headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar took up the matter of dams for hearing. “Not a single penny shall be spent except on Diamer-Bhasha Dam and this court is accountable for this money,” the bench observed. The bench also directed the implementation committee to make a website for informing the general public regarding award of contracts, procurement and other financial matters relating to dam. The chief justice said that it had been learnt that the project of Mohmand Dam was being initiated in January 2019.

<https://nation.com.pk/07-Dec-2018/court-seeks-details-of-measures-for-bhasha-dam-construction>

### **Rukhshan Mir, “AJK PM For Kashmiri’s Representation At International Forum”**

*Urdu point, December 11, 2018*

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Raja Farooq Haider Khan on December 10 demanded that Kashmiri people should be allowed to represent their case at the international forums. Speaking at the seminar, the AJK Premier Raja Farooq while appreciating the Pakistan government initiative for taking steps on opening Kartar Pur corridor demanded to open the ways for Sikhs, Budhist and Hindus to visit their shrines and other worship places across the LOC.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/ajk-pm-for-kashmiris-representation-at-inter-502675.html>

### **Jamil Nagri, “GB legislators criticise govt stance over region’s status”**

*Dawn, December 10, 2018*

The issue was taken up during a session of the GB Assembly on December 8 by opposition leader retired Captain Mohammad Shafi Khan who said that if GB was a disputed territory then its disputed status should be accepted. He said all constitutional institutions working in the region, including the National Accountability Bureau, should be abolished. Independent member Kacho Imtiaz Haider claimed that the feeling of alienation among the youth of GB was increasing. GB Law Minister Aurangzeb Khan claimed that a committee formed by the federal government under federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Amin Gandapur to recommend political status of GB was trying to roll back powers granted to GB people by the previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government.

Aurangzeb Khan, who is a member of the committee, claimed that in its last meeting held in Islamabad, it was informed that the Kashmiri leadership had been opposing granting of the status of a province to GB. The committee proposed amendments in the GB Order 2018, such as restoration of GB council powers, he said, adding that GB council powers had been shifted to GB Assembly by the PML-N government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1450482>

### **“GB police arrest ‘militant’ involved in Diamer school attacks, Pakistan Today”**

*Pakistan Today, December 12, 2018*

Police in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) on December 12 claimed that it had arrested a suspected militant commander reportedly involved in attacking schools in Diamer earlier this year. According to police, the suspect militant named Qari Hidayatullah was arrested during an operation in Darel area on December 11 night. It added that three other individuals were arrested along with Hidayatullah. Later on, the police said that the suspected militant involved in burning of 14 girl schools was killed in

an exchange of fire with security officials. While authorities are searching for 15 suspects in the attacks, approximately 40 people have been arrested over the incident till date.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/12/12/gb-police-arrest-reported-commander-involved-in-diamer-school-attacks/>

### **“Pakistani men wait for news of Uygur wives amid sweeping Chinese crackdown in Xinjiang”**

*South China Morning Post, December 17, 2018*

Pakistanis often rally loudly in defence of Islam and Muslims whenever they are perceived offended around the world – most recently over cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. In 1989, protests spread from Pakistan elsewhere, leading to the fatwa by Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini against author Salman Rushdie for his depiction of Islam in his book *Satanic Verses*. But political and economic factors, including concerns about losing out on vast Chinese investments, have kept Pakistan and other Muslim countries silent about the plight in China of fellow Muslims, the Uygurs. “The Muslim world’s deafening silence about China’s treatment of Muslims can be attributed to its strong interest in maintaining close relations with the world’s next superpower.”

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/2178385/pakistani-men-wait-news-uygur-wives-amid-sweeping-chinese>

### **“NESPAK wins Diamer Basha Dam assignment”**

*Daily Times, December 22, 2018*

In a landmark development, NESPAK has secured a short-term assignment of the Diamer Basha Dam project through competitive bidding. An agreement has been signed between client WAPDA and NESPAK for providing engineering consultancy services. NESPAK’s scope of services includes review of evaluation of prequalification of applications submitted by contractors, review of bidding documents and evaluation of bids for contract MW1 (civil works). Under the agreement, the

Consultants shall commence the services within one week after the date of signing of contract agreement and the period of completion of services is six months from the commencement date of services.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/336005/nespak-wins-diamer-basha-dam-assignment/>

### **“People demonstrate in PoK over non-payment of salaries”**

*Business Standard, December 25, 2018*

These people who spent their entire career in a state of subservience to Islamabad directed government of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, are compelled to demonstrate against the same authority in order to demand the rightful share of their pension. Expressing their resentment, a large number of protestors gathered in Muzaffarabad and raised slogans against the officers of Azad Kashmir Logging and Sawmills Corporation also known as AKLASC demanding their salaries and pensions.

<https://www.business-standard.com/multimedia/video-gallery/world/people-demonstrate-in-pok-over-non-payment-of-salaries-76472.htm>

### **“AJK terms MMMM Expressway project of exceptional significance”**

*The Nation, December 30, 2018*

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has said that AJK government has attached great significance to Mansehra-Muzaffarabad-Mirpur and Mangla (MMMM) Expressway project as it will not only interconnect different districts of the state but will also play a significant role in socioeconomic uplift of people. Earlier, during the briefing the officials said that National Highway Authority (NHA) assigned the task of feasibility study and preliminary design for Mansehra-Muzaffarabad-Mirpur and Mangla (MMMM, N-5) expressway to M/s Zeeruk International (Pvt) Ltd in Joint Venture with M/s Yooshin Korea. The purpose of the proposed project is to link it with China Pakistan Economic Corridor

that lies within the vicinity of AJK and KPK, they said and added that the purpose underlying the proposed project is to provide a 4-lane divided controlled access expressway connecting Muzaffarabad with Manshera passing through Dhani Dhoondha, Masahan, Thurman and Jab villages.

<https://nation.com.pk/30-Dec-2018/ajk-terms-mmmm-expressway-project-of-exceptional-significance>

# Economic Developments

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## **Shabbir Mir, “G-B govt’s claims of withdrawing taxes fail to sway traders”**

*The Express Tribune, December 1, 2018*

The government of Gilgit-Baltistan on December 1 claimed to have withdrawn newly imposed withholding taxes which had triggered a region-wide shutter down strike. But the notice seemed to leave many traders unconvinced. “We kept to our word, the taxes have been withdrawn,” said Parliamentary Secretary on Interior and Law Aurangzeb Khan while waving a copy of the notification before journalists at a news conference in Gilgit. All stores and markets in the region remained closed throughout the day on a call from traders associations who had declared the imposition of new taxes as illegal and tantamount to ‘murder of traders’. The protest was triggered by the newly imposed withholding tax (advance tax on banking transactions over Rs50,000) which had been imposed by the federal government last week. The news conference was also attended by Law Minister Dr Muhammad Iqbal, Special Coordinator to Chief Minister Rizwan Rathor among others. “There is no justification for the strike now,” said the minister while referring to the notification.

The parchment read that “advance tax on banking transactions otherwise than through cash of G-B council Income Tax (Adaptation) Act 2012 is held in abeyance till further orders.” “There are some elements, who are misleading the people, are not sincere with the people,” he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1557514/1-g-b-govts-claims-withdrawing-taxes-fail-sway-traders/>

## **Abrar Hamza, “Construction work on Diamer-Bhasha site not likely to begin in 2019”**

*Daily Times, December 13, 2018*

Industry analysts do not foresee any major

construction activity on the Diamer Bhasha project site over the next 12 months citing lack of existing funds, land issues, unavailability of international financing and current project status. Recently, Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has claimed to commence construction work on Mohmand and Diamer Bhasha dams from February-2019 and May-2019, respectively. Due to recent devaluation in Pakistani Rupee, the revised cost for dam estimated at Rs 530 billion (local/foreign: Rs 320bn/210bn). Donations raised so far sum to a paltry Rs 8.5 billion (3% of the local cost component) while even after FY19 PSDP allocation, the funds set aside make up to just 10% of the local cost. With government already facing unprecedented strains on its fiscal accounts, it appears unlikely that we will see any meaningful increase in allocations from development expenditure towards the dam over FY19-20, Ms Farheen opined.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/332930/construction-work-on-diamer-bhasha-site-not-likely-to-begin-in-2019/>

## **“G-B CM reverses decision to buy Android devices”**

*The Express Tribune, December 21, 2018*

Using discretionary powers, the chief minister Gilgit-Baltistan reversed the bureaucracy’s earlier decision to purchase new Android cell phones for its 40 senior bureaucrats. CM Hafeezur Rehman took the decision on December 20, a day after media reports suggested that the local bureaucracy had decided to buy Samsung Note 8 mobile phones for 40 senior officials including the chief secretary and secretaries. According to an official letter, officials were entitled to purchase Samsung Note 8 or equivalent mobile phone worth Rs92,000. “The decision has been reversed by the chief minister and no purchase of mobile phones will take place now,” a senior official at the chief minister secretariat told scribe. CM

Rehman reportedly expressed displeasure over the bureaucracy's decision that he came to know about through media reports. "We can't just spend money like this," Rehman said. "The decision to buy new mobiles was approved during the previous government," said the chief minister. "This decision is not therefore valid now."

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1871861/1-g-b-cm-reverses-decision-buy-android-devices/>

### **"Plan to build five star hotels in Gilgit Baltistan"**

*The International News, December 23, 2018*

Vice Chairman, Board of Investment, Gilgit-Baltistan Raja Nazeem-ul-Ameen has said that the construction of five-star hotels would soon be started to attract

more foreign and domestic tourists particularly the Chinese visitors in the scenic areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. Raja Nazeem informed that the Chinese companies were being convinced to set up hydel power stations to produce up to 5,000 MW in the next three years.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/409863-plan-to-build-five-star-hotels-in-gilgit-baltistan>

# Extracts From The Urdu Media

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## **“Will not accept any package: Make Gilgit-Baltistan a Province”**

*Daily Baad-e-Shimal, December 1, 2018*

A meeting was held regarding the Provisional Constitutional Status of Gilgit-Baltistan. The representative of PMLN, PTI, PPP and Gilgit-Bar Council attended the proceedings of the meeting. In meeting all the representatives presented their opinion on G-B's constitutional status. In meeting it was discussed that the Azad Kashmir leadership is deliberately and unnecessary linking Gilgit-Baltistan with the Kashmir and UN resolutions. They are hell-bent that G-B should not get the constitutional rights. The AJK leaders are main hindrances in G-B's constitutional rights. The representatives were also of the opinion that the Prime Minister of Pakistan should grant G-B constitutional rights that were proposed by the Sartaj Aziz Committee report. They further said that they will not accept any other package except a political one that too a constitutional in status.

[http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r\\_date=12-01-2018&img=12-01-2018page-1-1](http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=12-01-2018&img=12-01-2018page-1-1)

## **“The 71 years of Chagrin and Conspiracies of AJK leadership will not be accepted now”**

*Daily Baad-e-Shimal, December 1, 2018*

The General Secretary of PTI- Gilgit-Baltistan Fathuallah said that people of Gilgit-Baltistan will no longer accept 70 years of humiliation, exploitation and conspiracies of the AJK leaders. His party and people will not accept any compromise on the Provisional Provincial status for Gilgit-Baltistan. He further said that whenever in past discussions were held on the constitutional status, Mehidi Shah and Hafeezur Rehman compromised that for their own interests. Their main focus was to provide

government jobs to their own people. Hafeezullah said that his party and people will not accept any compromise and now will face any conspiracy that is been hatched against the constitutional status.

[http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r\\_date=12-01-2018&img=12-01-2018page-1-1](http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=12-01-2018&img=12-01-2018page-1-1)

## **“The Slogan of Constitutional Rights is Travesty, Educational Minister”**

*Daily Salaam, December 10, 2018*

The G-B provincial minister for education, Ibrahim Shani has that it is wastage of time to go after the constitutional status. He was addressing the students and faculty members of Degree College Skardu. According to Ibrahim, the slogan for Conditional rights has become travesty. People should not fall in this trap by wasting time and resource on it. Instead we should work together for a political forum where we can stress on opening of the Kargil-Skardu road. We should also stress on making Skardu airport viable for flights. Energy should be spent on preservation of culture, tradition and tourism resources. By doing this we will create our own identity. The political leadership will beg us to accept the constitutional rights.

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

## **“Dr. Iqbal will Protest in front of Parliament for Constitutional Rights”**

*Daily K2, December 12, 2018*

The Minister for Construction and Development, Dr Mohammad Iqbal has said that they have no expectations from any political party and institution. He said now we have only one choice that is to get assembled in front of National Assembly and protest.

He further said that he respects the sensitivities of AJK leaders but we have to do rallies, demonstrations and protests for rights. Once we get them then we will fight for others also. Many religious parties will get offended on my comment that they used to do politics on Afghanistan and now they are doing it on Kashmir issue. In past it was conveyed to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan that constitutional rights will only help to a particular community.

<http://epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?eid=1&nid=1&date=1544572800>

### **“Centre has stopped Funding for Important Projects, Chief Minister”**

*Daily K2, December 20, 2018.*

Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman said that when PTI was ruling KP, its chief minister was always asking

money from the PMLN government which was at centre. Now PTI which is ruling at centre has stopped funding for the important projects in Gilgit-Baltistan. He further said that PTI has no any policy on CPEC. The center instead of comforts is creating problems for Gilgit-Baltistan, said Chief Mnister Hafeezur Rehman. According to rehman G-B saw progress after PMLN came into power. Stopping funds will not help the region. By constructing baltistan, skardu and other highways will bring prosperity to the region.

<http://epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?eid=1&nid=1&date=1545264000>

# Fact Sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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## 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



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