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POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

Compiled & Edited by Dr Yaqoob-ul Hassan

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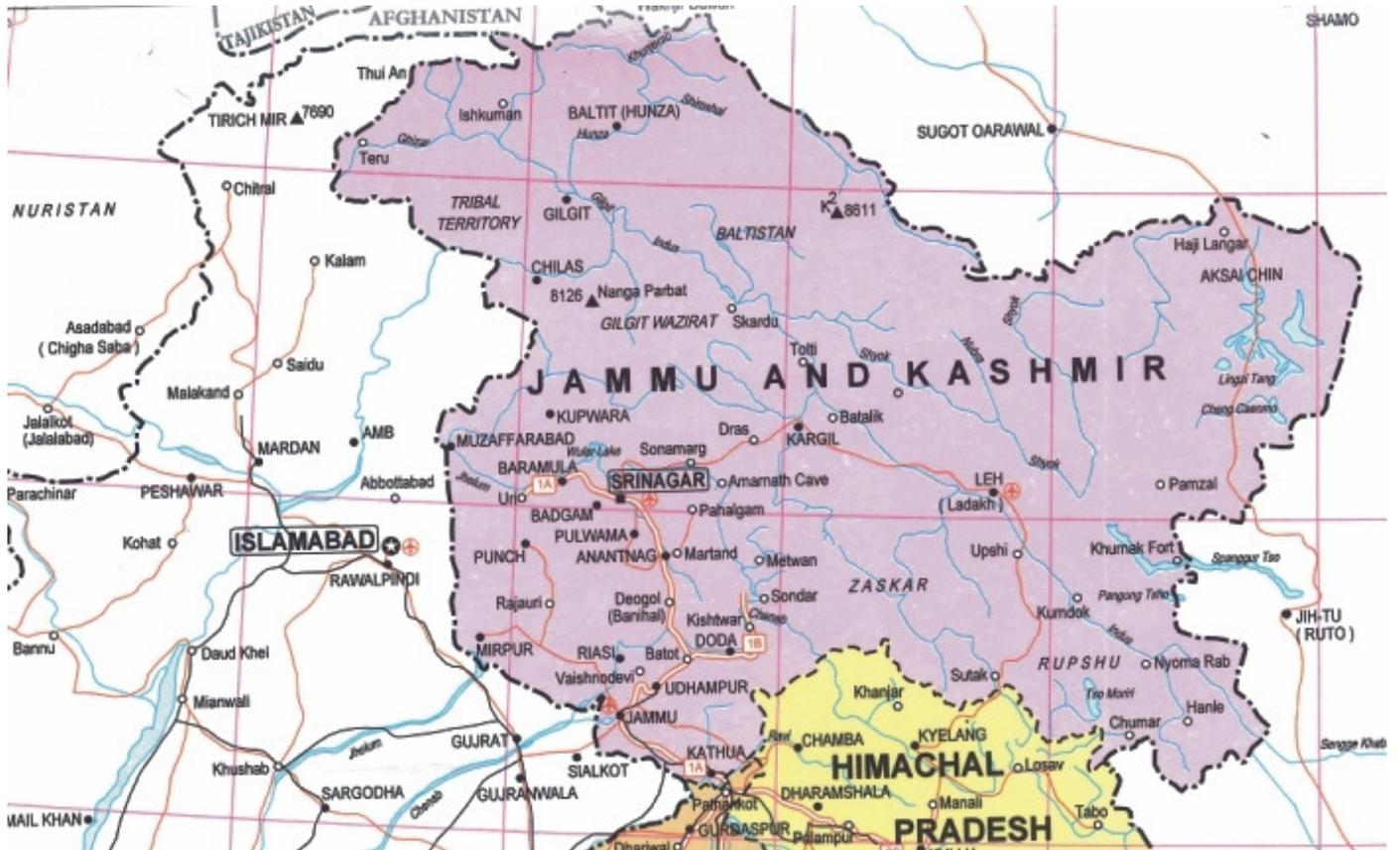
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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

People of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) had their glimmers of hope when the Sartaj Aziz Committee which was established by the former prime minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, to recommend a solution to the constitutional issues of the region. The committee's recommendations have so far not been implemented. Among the two regions of PoK, G-B has always been at the receiving end. People of Gilgit-Baltistan are saying that although Pakistan is exercising its de facto sovereignty over G-B but without giving any fundamental rights under the Constitution.

Although Pakistan shows some sensitivities when it comes matters related to the 'AJK' for G-B Islamabad takes it for granted. Take the example of the electricity crisis in the region. Pakistan exploits natural resources of Gilgit-Baltistan particularly its rivers and other minerals. In return, it didn't get its dues. In this harsh winter, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have to suffer without electricity. The sheer exploitation of resources without a payback in terms of revenues and basic facilities for the public, the resentment would be only growing against Pakistan.

Yaqoob ul Hassan

Political Developments

Shabbir Mir, “Future of G-B government”

The Express Tribune, January 2, 2019

The change of the G-B governor and the chief secretary has already set the alarm bells ringing for the G-B government as the PTI’s central leadership will go all out against rival parties to secure its vote bank in G-B ahead of the polls. For that purpose, the PTI will use the bureaucracy, just as the PML-N did in 2003 after winning the general elections. The chief secretaries of that time toed the line of Barjees Tahir, then federal minister for G-B and Kashmir affairs, making things difficult for the government. The situation turned so volatile for PPP’s Mehdi Shah and his party that the PPP ultimately faced a whitewash in the elections 2015. With the nature of tensions between the PTI and the PML-N, one can easily guess what fate is in store for the G-B government in the weeks and months to come. His own heavily-mandated government in G-B, Rehman had gotten unconditional support from the PML-N’s federal and Punjab governments, and therefore was placed in a position to speed up the development projects. But the ‘go soft’ attitude of the chief minister squandered the opportunity. Similarly the chief minister’s lack of grip over administrative matters is evident from the fact that hundreds of employees working on projects, including the Rescue 1122, have not been paid for the past six to seven months.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1879289/6-future-g-b-government/>

Umer Jamshaid, “Power Crises In Skardu To Be Addressed Soon: Senior Minister For Water And Power Gilgit Baltistan”

Akbar Taaban, Urdu Point, January 4, 2019

Senior Minister for Water and Power Gilgit Baltistan, Akbar Taaban said on January 4 that solid measures were afoot to overcome power crisis in Kardu district

and hoped that the issue would be addressed soon. Talking to media persons, the GB senior minister said as part of such measures, rented generators would be utilized to provide uninterrupted power supply to the localities of the Skardu district which usually experienced frequent power outages.

He was of the view that unnecessary consumption of power and decrease of water level in Sidpara Dam has caused power shortage issue for the areas and the government had worked out strategy involving short and long term measures to tide over the crisis, he added.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/power-crises-in-skardu-to-be-addressed-soon-522140.html>

“Activists call for integration of struggles of Gilgit-Baltistan”

PoK, ANI, January 6, 2019

Gilgit leadership led by Awami Action Committee has been vigorous in its endeavours to get freedom from the clutches of Pakistan, which has been misruling the region for more than seven decades. An already grim situation has further deteriorated with security forces unleashing barbarity of highest degree by implicating the youth under charges of Anti-Terrorism Act. Indigenous people in Gilgit Baltistan have for years been asking Pakistan to set the region free. However, their demands for a region free of Pakistan rule has fallen on deaf ears of successive regimes of Islamabad.

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/activists-call-for-integration-of-struggles-of-gilgit-baltistan-pok201901061041020002/>

Haseeb Bhatti, “SC reserves verdict in case concerning constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan”

Dawn, January 7, 2019

The Gilgit-Baltistan Order, 2018 was earlier opposed by protesters hailing from the Northern Areas who demanded that GB should be declared a part of Pakistan instead of being administered through presidential orders. However, the draft states, the move would require an amendment in the Constitution, which needs a two-thirds majority in the parliament and “would take time”. Therefore, as an interim measure, the government plans to give such fundamental rights to GB residents as enjoyed by the people of any other province.

The AG informed the bench that objections have been raised on the proposed draft in the cabinet and therefore as of now, “it remains only a draft”. At a hearing of the case in December, the apex court had hinted at announcing a meaningful judgement to grant fundamental rights to the citizens of GB.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456060/sc-reserves-verdict-in-case-concerning-constitutional-status-of-gilgit-baltistan>

“S Korea envoy assures continued investment in AJK’s power sector”

Daily Times, January 12, 2019

South Korean Ambassador Kwak Sung-Kyu on January 11 assured the Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) president that he would continue Korean investment in AJK, especially in the power sector. He specifically mentioned the hydropower projects of Patrind and New Bong which have already been completed, and Gulpur hydropower project which was being constructed. In addition, one was being planned at Athmuqam, the Ambassador expressed these views during a meeting with President S Korea to Pakistan. The President also thanked the South

Korean Ambassador for his country’s contribution to the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which monitors ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC).

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/343220/s-korea-envoy-assures-continued-investment-in-ajks-power-sector/>

“Pakistan proposes study of Jhelum river cascade”

The Express Tribune, January 13, 2019

Pakistan has proposed China to conduct a study of Jhelum River cascade for determining power generation potential of one of the cheapest electricity generation sources, as Islamabad seeks to move away from expensive imported fuel-based power plants. It is the second time that the issues of studying water cascades in Pakistan have come up for a decision at the JCC level. Earlier during the 6th JCC meeting, held two years ago, both sides had also discussed financing and developing the North Indus River Cascade, which has the potential to generate 40,000-megawatt (MW) hydroelectricity. However, subsequently, no major progress was made due to differences over financing of the Diامر-Bhasha dam project. Pakistan has an identified potential of producing 50,000-60,000MW of hydroelectric power. There are 12 under construction projects, while seven projects have already been commissioned with an installed capacity of 3,340MW. The results of joint study on Pakistan’s power market will be fundamental for deciding the next step of CPEC energy cooperation, according to the JCC’s decision. Both the sides have already constituted a joint study team that has finalised the terms of reference and future roadmap. The Chinese side pressed with its demand for approving tariffs for some of the energy projects. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) is currently in process of reviewing all the tariffs and not giving new approvals.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1887094/2-determining-energy-potential-pakistan-proposes-study-jhelum-river-cascade/>

Sumaira FH, “Sharp Focus on Speedy Development in AJK a top Priorities: AJK President Sardar Masood Khan”

Urdu Point, January 18, 2019

AJK President Sardar Masood Khan said on January 18 that promotion of tourism, education, health facilities and providing clean water to people is the priority of the present government of the State. President Masood Khan said that he has given instructions to include Torar, Lagriyat, Khirian and Datote for inclusion in the Tourism Corridor which will holistically help promote the tourism sector in Azad Kashmir. Similarly, he said, Murshidabad, Nairiya, Torar Khal have also been included in the Tourism Corridor.

President Masood Khan assured the delegation that the Rawalakot Water Scheme has been approved and construction will initiate on this mega project in the coming days. The delegation informed that work on the projects including link roads and water projects, approved by the President was well underway and will soon be completed.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/sharp-focus-on-speedy-development-in-ajk-atop-533257.html>

“India summons Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan to protest SC order on ‘Gilgit-Baltistan”

Wion, January 18, 2019

Calling the order “interference in India’s internal affairs”, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) in a release said, “Pakistan Government or judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it. Any action to alter the status of these occupied territories by Pakistan has no legal basis whatsoever.” Reiterating that the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, New Delhi rejected “continued attempts by Pakistan to bring material change in these occupied territories and to camouflage grave human rights violations, exploitation and sufferings of the people living there.”

It called on Pakistan to immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation.

<http://www.wionews.com/india-news/india-summons-pakistans-deputy-high-commissioner-to-protest-pak-scs-order-on-gilgit-baltistan-191292>

“Gilgit-Baltistan Youth Alliance demands ‘complete internal autonomy”

Pamir Times, January 20, 2019

Karachi based students and professional from Gilgit-Baltistan condemned and rejected the Supreme Court of Pakistan’s recent verdict on the future of GB. Members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Youth Alliance gathered in front of the Karachi Press Club to present their demands, and to express disdain for the court decision which, they said, protected oppressive governance and would keep the region’s populace unrepresented and disempowered. The Gilgit-Baltistan Youth Alliance demanded complete internal autonomy for Gilgit-Baltistan through a resolution presented during the protest demonstration. They said that under UNCIP resolution Pakistan can legally only take responsibility for defense, currency and foreign affairs, while all the authorities and legislative powers should be transferred to an elected body capable of developing a constitution for the Gilgit-Baltistan region. The Alliance further demanded an end to efforts aimed at ‘demographic change’ in the region in order to protect the locals’ resources and rights. They also demanded annulment of punishments given to political activists. The Gilgit-Baltistan Youth Alliance also demanded an end to activities of federal (Pakistani) political parties in the region. The Supreme Court’s verdict on Gilgit-Baltistan, which maintained that being a disputed territory the region’s status cannot be changed, has created widespread unrest among the people of Gilgit-Baltsitan, who are, in increasingly larger numbers, demanding an end to Pakistani rule in the region.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2019/01/20/gilgit-baltistan-youth-alliance-demands-complete-internal-autonomy/>

“Separatists hail Pak SC’s Gilgit-Baltistan verdict”

The Tribune, January 21, 2019

Three key separatist leaders on January 20 welcomed the Pakistan Supreme Court’s verdict in which it extended its jurisdiction to the disputed territory of Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Supreme Court had also ordered the changes to the constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan, which Pakistan plans to make its fifth province, to be determined through a referendum that will be held within 14 days.

The three separatist leaders — Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik — under the banner of the joint resistance leadership, said they were satisfied with the verdict. The statement was issued by the three leaders following a meeting at Geelani’s residence.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/separatists-hail-pak-sc-s-gilgit-baltistan-verdict/716894.html>

“Kashmiri writer exposes Pakistan’s game plan in Gilgit Baltistan”

Business Standard, January 21, 2019

Pakistani rulers are unable to effectively control and govern their own territory and are so obsessed with occupying the territory of Jammu and Kashmir which does not belong to Pakistan, says Dr Shabir Choudhry, a London-based writer and author who originally hails from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). In order to strengthen their hold, Pakistan promulgated the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order, 2009, which was challenged by Dr Ghulam Abbas, a local citizen of Gilgit Baltistan. “Pakistan must end unfair and cruel laws like Schedule 4 and Anti-Terrorism Act to silence voices of the local people,” said the Gilgit Baltistan All Parties Conference. “Article 1 of the Constitution of Pakistan clearly defines Pakistan’s territory, and areas of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir are not constitutional part of Pakistan. Article 257 further clarifies the position of these areas which are part of

Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir; and are not a legal part of Pakistan,” he said. Amjad Yousaf, president of Europe Zone of the United Kashmir People’s National Party, said, “No institution of Pakistan has any right to change the constitutional and legal status of Jammu and Kashmir. Gilgit Baltistan is a constitutional part of the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, and any move to change that will be resisted.”

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/kashmiri-writer-exposes-pakistan-s-game-plan-in-gilgit-baltistan-119012101268_1.html

“Fundamental rights in Gilgit-Baltistan lower priority compared to resolution of Kashmir dispute suggests Pakistan SC judgment”

First Post, January 21, 2019

There’s a very strange judgment put out by the Pakistan Supreme Court. This does nothing less than recite a highly selected history of the Kashmir conflict, pauses to praise the moral stance of the Pakistan government, dodges key legal issues in the creation of Gilgit-Baltistan, and finally decides against granting more freedoms to a people who are probably the only people in the world who don’t officially exist. Local people like medical students, social activists and even a Prince, feel that its powers are insufficient, and discriminatory, and ultra vires of the Pakistani constitution. On the other hand, are Pakistani companies and entities like the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, the Federal Board of Tourism, and Board of Revenue among others, who feel that it has too much power and want its decisions reversed. It’s a task daunting enough for any court, even for a Chief Justice as erudite as Saqib Nasir. The logic of the court is that granting of full rights to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan would have eroded Pakistan’s “principled stand” on the Kashmir issue as an unresolved dispute. In simple words the court downgrades the granting of fundamental rights to the unfortunate people of Gilgit Baltistan, in favour of a resolution of the Kashmir dispute — at some time in the very distant future.

This is also shot down as beyond the purview of the court. There are other matters such as by election results, ecological directions and the quashing of the 2018 order itself, all of which now falls by the wayside, as the result of a travesty of a judgment that is so politically directed as to be almost indistinguishable from a formal order of the government of Pakistan.

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/fundamental-rights-in-gilgit-baltistan-lower-priority-compared-to-resolution-of-kashmir-dispute-suggests-pakistan-sc-judgment-5933891.html>

“43 names withdrawn from Schedule – IV of Anti-Terrorism Act in Gilgit-Baltistan”

Pamir Times, January 24, 2019

The Department of Homes and Prisons, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, has withdrawn 43 names from the Schedule IV of Anti-Terrorism Act. The individuals, whose names have been withdrawn through a letter signed on January 15, were suspected of involvement in terrorism. However, the names have been withdrawn based on ‘recommendations’ of Divisional Review and Intelligence Committee. The individuals have however been warned that ‘if even a single complaint is received against them’, then their names will be put on the list meant for monitoring of terror suspects, and terrorism abettors. Of the 43 names withdrawn, 39 belong to Gilgit District, 1 to Ghizer and Kharmang each, and 2 to Shigar.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2019/01/24/43-names-withdrawn-from-schedule-iv-of-anti-terrorism-act-in-gilgit-baltistan/>

“Pakistan’s new Visa Policy makes traveling to Gilgit-Baltistan easier”

Pamir Times, January 26, 2019

Pakistan’s federal government is introducing a new visa regime to attract tourism and investment. Under the new visa policy citizens of 175 countries will be able to get visa electronically. Citizens of 50 countries will be able to get visa on arrival. Traveling to Gilgit-

Baltistan will become easier for international tourists, after lifting of ‘restrictions’.

The British and US citizens of Indian origin would also get visa on arrival facility, he said adding that business visa facility would be extended to 96 countries from the present 68 countries. Fawad said the diplomatic visa term had been extended to three years while student visa term would be for two years under the new policy.

He said those coming to Pakistan on tourist visa would be allowed to visit all parts of the country including Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan without no objection certificate.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2019/01/26/pakistans-new-proposed-visa-policy-makes-traveling-to-gilgit-baltistan-easier/>

“Justice (r) Muzaffar Ali, Merits and Demerits of Supreme Court Judgment”

Pamir Times, January 26, 2019

Indeed, the judgment was enthusiastically awaited by the people of GB, federal government and people of AJK. Obviously, Gbians were considering the Supreme Court of Pakistan as their last hope to determine their constitutional status which was pending for more than seven decades on pretext of Kashmir issue. Lastly, the judgment was announced by the Supreme Court on 17/01/2019 and became public property.

The advantageous aspect of the instant verdict is that, the Supreme Court categorically rejected the propaganda raised by the AJK political leadership holding that, quoted; “that is why we hold that the committee’s recommendations relating to the provision and enforcement of fundamental rights provided by the constitution must be implemented immediately and with full force and effect. As a matter of law as well as morality”. Unquoted, the supreme court is in full agreement with the recommendations made by the Sartaj Aziz committee and it transpires from the judgment, while reading paras 21, 22 and 23 that, a status of provisional province of GB

pending disposal of the Kashmir issue is not fatal and injurious to the Kashmir issue, even after introducing amendments into the constitution. Last but not the least, the Supreme Court verdict has thrown the ball into the court of leadership in Gilgit Baltistan who belong to national parties i.e. Tehreek-e-Insaaf, Peoples Party and Muslim League. It is of their task, how they play their influence before their central leadership to motivate them to table a bill before the parliament and to seek amendments in the constitution to award a provisional provincial status to Gilgit Baltistan.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2019/01/26/merits-and-demerits-of-supreme-court-judgment/>

“AJK govt striving to provide basic facilities: official”

The Express Tribune, January 31, 2019

The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is working hard to provide basic civic facilities to people through the Prime Minister’s Community Infrastructure Development Programme (PMCIDP). These views were expressed by Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) Secretary Ijaz Ahmad Khan while talking to the media. Khan said work under the PMCIDP has started in all districts of AJK. He said the programme was launched by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government two years ago for providing basic facilities to people in rural and urban areas at the same level. Besides the education sector, water, sanitation, link roads, walkways, hospitals and renovation of public places are the main areas that have been put on high priority of the PMCIDP. Khan said all the programmes were started on the recommendations of notables of the 29 electoral constituencies of AJK and both opposition and ruling party lawmakers were getting equal funds for the purpose. He said that AJK government started the programme with Rs997 million in 2016-17. In view of its success, the government earmarked Rs1.3billion for 2017-18 and Rs1.16billion for 2018-19.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1899758/1-ajk-govt-striving-provide-basic-facilities-official/>

Israr Ahmad, “Diamer Bhasha Dam affectees protest for rights”

The Nation, January 30, 2019

More than 200 people gathered outside Rawalpindi Press Club (RPC) led by Asadullah Qureshi and other office bearers of Diamir-Bhasha Dam Affectees Action Committee. The participants of the protest were carrying placards inscribed with demands. They were chanting slogans against the governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan for failing to solve the dispute between them over the land on the borders of two. Speaking on the occasion, the speakers said that the government had to provide compensation money to the affected people which had been pending for last 15 years. They said that the compensation money worth Rs15 billion was pending against the payment of land acquisition of 15,000 kanal and the government should pay this to the affectees.

Asadullah Qureshi said that the land disputed between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan should be solved. “The timber mafia is cutting trees in the disputed land and move without any hurdle while the government turned a blind eye on this. He said that there were many issues of the affectees of the Diamir-Bhasha Dam including disputed land, payment of land procured by government and road construction affectees payment.

<https://nation.com.pk/30-Jan-2019/diamer-bhasha-dam-affectees-protest-for-rights>

Rukhshan Mir, “Bidding Of Chilmishdas-Sultan Abad Bridge On Feb 2”

Urdu Point, January 31, 2019

Special Assistant to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan(GB), Imran Mir has said that the bidding of Chilmishdas to Sultan Abad Gilgit Bridge will be held on February 2. Talking to APP, he said that total length of the bridge was 62 meters. The total cost of the bridge was Rs 520 million and it would connect CPEC route with Gilgit city and could be

used as alternate bridge to boost the economic activities from China to GB, Imran added. He said the provincial government was committed to raise the life standard of poor masses in the region through construction of roads and bridges. “We had planned to construct further RCC bridges in Gilgit in which Minawer to Mominabad, Chamogadh to KKH and Sakarkoi to Nadeem were included” he said adding

that the tender process of these bridges would be completed soon. He said after completion of these bridges a revolution would come in the field of communication and prosperity would take place in GB.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/bidding-of-chilmishdas-sultan-abad-bridge-on-543964.html>

Economic Developments

Rukhshan Mir, “AJK Cabinet Approves Rs. 1.320 Billion for Completion of Three of Under-construction Mass Public Welfare Projects of the Current Fiscal Year of 2018-19 in AJK”

Urdu Point, January 16, 2019

The meeting approved the three projects to be completed at a cost of Rs. 1,32, 54,00,000. The projects involve the communication and works including the up-gradation and reconditioning of 40 link roads in Muzaffarabad district and the construction of six buildings each of inter-colleges and degree colleges in the capital district. Addressing the meeting, the AJK Prime Minister said his government spent development budget according to people's needs and under a long comprehensive planning. Pointing out flaws of previous governments, he said that the projects were approved under proper strategy or priority. “On average Rs. 20 million were kept annually of Rs. 500' million project for which lots of time and resources were spent till completion of the project”, he stated.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/kashmir/ajk-cabinet-approves-rs-1320-billion-for-co-531516.html>

“ETI-GB to bring 140 acres barren land under cultivation in Baltistan through solar-powered lift irrigation system”

Pamir Times, January 27, 2019

Regional Coordination Unit Baltistan of Economic Transformation Initiative, Gilgit-Baltistan (ETI-GB) signed two MoUs with community of Gole village Skardu and Kunais Ganche to bring 140 acres barren land (70 acres each) under cultivation through solar powered lift irrigation system. The estimated cost of these pilot projects is over 6 million rupees. Due to high cost and long implementation duration for these projects conventional gravity-irrigation projects are

becoming least efficient. Therefore, ETI is piloting cost effective solutions for lift irrigation schemes on main rivers to irrigate barren lands along main rivers that have potential to add thousand of kanals of additional land to agriculture production system. These systems can additionally be supported with high efficiency irrigation systems such as drip and sprinkler. On these sites modern agriculture practices would also be demonstrated including orchards and structural farming to enhance agriculture production. ETI-GB which is a programme of Government of Gilgit-Baltistan co-funded by IFAD, working in the region since 2016 with an aim to enhance rural income and reduce poverty and malnutrition through building economic infrastructure such as water channels and farm to market roads, village producers' groups and associations and improving value chain particularly in apricot and sees potato sector. As of now, through RCU-Baltistan, a total of 14 irrigation and land development schemes worth 291 million are under implementation under community led implementation model in Ganche District. These projects benefit over 3500 households by more than 1 acres of land to their holding. Through these projects over 7000 acres (56000 kanal) barren land is brought under cultivation. Of these schemes 6 schemes have already been completed and 3 have been handed over to the communities.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2019/01/27/eti-gb-14-irrigation-land-development-schemes-worth-291-million-under-implementation-in-ganche/>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“Delay in Projects is impacting Tourism, Chief Minister”

Daily Salaam, January 1, 2019

Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman met Secretary economic affairs at Islamabad on January 1 2019. During his meeting, Chief Minister apprised secretary about delay in the ongoing projects in Gilgit-Baltistan. Chief Minister told Secretary that federal government’s approach is hurting both local people and the tourism industry. Hafeezur Rehman also told secretary that Federal government should remove all hindrances in the budgetary issues of Gilgit-Baltistan particularly in the energy sector. Many letters were also sent to the Federal government but no response was given. Delay in power projects is affecting tourism sector as there are no electricity in the region. Shaqterang 26 MW project is important and its work has been stopped due to financial crisis.

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

“Weapons being smuggled in Passenger Cars”

Daily K2, January 5, 2019

There have been reports that weapons and ammunitions are being smuggled in Gilgit-Baltistan through passenger cars and trucks. The intelligence first came from the federal agencies. The local administration and law enforcement agencies have been asked to be on alert. All the roads leading to and out Gilgit-Baltistan has been put under scrutiny.

<http://www.epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?eid=1&nid=1&date=1546646400>

“Sectarian Bias is only bottleneck between Constitutional Identity and Gilgit-Baltistan”

Baad-e-Shimal, January 5, 2019

Former Gilgit-Baltistan’s chief minister Mehdi Shah has accused Hafeezur Rehman, the current chief minister for Constitutional crisis. According to Mehdi Shah, Hafeezur Rehman compromised and sided with the Kashmir leadership and implemented 2018 Order. He has imposed 2018 Order on 20 lakh G-B people. He also criticized the PTI local chapter. According to Shah PTI leaders are begging to the federal leadership for meeting. They don’t even give them damn.

All the political parties of G-B irrespective of political ideologies have to come out from the sectarian bias and G-B will get constitutional rights within one week. Since PMLN leadership at centre gave G-B 2018 Order, we are still dealing with the merits and demerits of the Order. The ruling party in G-B is hailing the Order as divine gift at while as the opposition parties are terming it an attempt to further push the region into abysmal position. There is a strong opinion inside G-B that the region no longer would be run by orders. The local leaders more often deliberately try to fool the public by talking about economic, political packages they are going to get from Islamabad. When Sartaj Aziz Committee proposed of giving G-B a provisional provincial status and providing representation in the National Assembly and Senate, the local leadership were unnecessary trying to bring other issues. Meanwhile, the Kashmir leadership were continuously putting centre government under pressure. They were opposing any attempt by the centre government to grant a provincial status to G-B. The local government is also responsible for delaying the Sartaj Aziz

Committee report. It unnecessarily put more demands that led to the delay in making of report. Finally when PMLN, during its last days in power, announced a political package in shape of 2018 Order, all political parties in G-B rejected it. The Pakistan Supreme Court has asked PTI government to give all political rights to the people of G-B. The PTI government has also constituted a new committee that would see amendments in the proposed Order. Till amendments are not carried out we should watch and wait. Political parties should not do politics on the 2018 Order. We should also come out from the sectarian and other biases in order to safeguard the G-B's political rights.

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

“Supreme Court’s Decision has United People: APC”

Daily Salaam, January 21, 2019

The recent decision of the Pakistan Supreme Court has united Gilgit-Baltistan. First time it has been decided to launch a united movement against the 2018 Order. We have to come out from the state of self-defeat and discontent. At the All Party Conference (APC) it was decided to implement again State Subject law in Gilgit-Baltistan. The Supreme Court's decision has cleared the air about the Constitutional status crisis G-B is facing. All we need to do is to bring unity and fight together for constitutional status. We should also not let anyone to trade constitutional rights for any economic package.

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

“Another Good News about Constitutional Rights”

Daily K2, January 31, 2019

Force Commander Gilgit-Baltistan Major Gen. Ahsan Mahmood Khan has said that G-B is and will always remain the part of Pakistan. He further said that the people of G-B have positive and beautiful mindset. People will soon get a good news regarding the constitutional rights. Every political party, leaders,

activists and common people view Gilgit-Baltistan positively because people of this region are patriotic, pro-Pakistani and peaceful, said Maj. General Ahsan.

Although there is no doubt that people of G-B are always willing to shun blood for Pakistan but when it comes political and identity rights only promises are being made. All political parties such as PMLN, Jamaat –e-Islami, PPP, PTI and Islami Tehreek, are always talking about political rights but when they come into power or in opposition they seldom do anything for rights. For years and decades people of G-B are living in seclusion. They have been denied their basic rights. Over these years they only got promises and assurances. Now need of hour is to end this drama of constituting committees by providing all legal and political rights to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan which they deserve.

<http://www.paper.dailyk2.com/index.php?pid=4&cid=1&nid=1&tnid=9311&date=1548892800>

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



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