

POK

News Digest

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

The proposed Diamer Bhasha dam project to be built in Gilgit Baltistan has been in the pipeline for a long period. The delay in the project has spiralled up the estimated cost which now stands at about \$ 14 billion. Pakistan is frantically looking for funders as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have either declined or postponed funding the project. Pakistan has also tried its level best to pursue the United States to provide a section of the funding. However, so far the US has refrained from committing anything substantial towards the project. On the contrary, the US offered to help Pakistan in rallying funders for the dam project. In this context, an investors' conference was held in Washington on October 8, 2014, where Pakistani representatives showcased the project before prospective donor agencies/financial institutions. During this meeting, the US came in support of Pakistan and called the Diamer Bhasha dam as the “smartest choice” for Pakistan.

Similarly, China which till now has not made a contribution towards the Diamer Bhasha project, showed willingness to sponsor an awareness conference on the project. The decision to hold another investors' meet was taken during a meeting between Pakistan's Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar and Zhao Xiaoyu, Executive Vice President of China Development Bank (CDB) in Beijing on October 24.

The cross LoC bus service was suspended due to the severe floods which hit the entire Jammu and Kashmir. As a result, people from either sides were left stranded. As the floods receded, the bus service was restored. On resumption, at least 101 passengers were noted to have travelled through the Chakan Da Bagh crossing on the Poonch Rawalakote cross LoC route.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Reassessing costs: Government eyes \$5 billion loan for Diamer-Bhasha dam”

The Express Tribune, October 1, 2014

ISLAMABAD: As the government reassesses the construction cost of Diamer Bhasha dam at \$14 billion, it has decided to seek \$5 billion from international lenders for the construction of dam over a period of next eight years. The contours of the possible financing plan of the project were discussed during a meeting held on September 30 in the finance ministry. Finance Ishaq Dar chaired the session on the proposed Diamer Bhasha hydropower project, which was also attended by Wapda Chairman Zafar Mehmood. Mehmood stated the Diamer-Bhasha dam will approximately cost \$13.96 billion. The revised cost is \$2 billion higher than the earlier estimates. The Wapda chairman stated that according to the proposed plan, the government is to spend \$2 billion on civil works and relocation of Karakoram Highway from its own resources.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/769541/reassessing-costs-government-eyes-5-billion-loan-for-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

“‘Sit-ins’ fail to attract attention of people: Ishaq Dar”

The Nation, October 8, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar stated “sit-ins” had miserably failed to attract attention of the people who did not heed the tall claims and slogans. On his arrival in Washington to attend the annual meetings of World Bank and IMF, he stated during the last quarter important economic indicators were positive and refuted the aspersions cast on government's performance by those leading the sit-ins. He will meet Ministers/dignitaries from other countries on the side-lines of the two important events and also attend the Donors Conference on

Diamer Bhasha Dam. He stated economic growth had picked up owing to reforms agenda introduced by the present government. The reform process had led to a 4.14 percent GDP growth in FY14 compared to growth at 3.7 percent in FY13. Inflation had been contained at 8.6 percent during FY14 and further contained at 7.5 percent during July-Sept, FY14-15 against 8.1 percent of the corresponding period, last year. Finance Minister stated remittances have shown remarkable growth of 17.45% over last year and during July-Sept. FY15 posted a growth of 13% compared to last year. The foreign exchange reserves have increased to \$13.5 billion on 1st October 2014, the Minister added. The minister lamented that the dharna politics had harmed image of the country abroad. It has also left a negative impact on foreign investment.

[http://nation.com.pk/national/08-Oct-2014/sit-ins-fail-to-attract-attention-of-people-ishaq-dar?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online%2F24hours-news+\(The+Nation+%3A+Latest+News\)](http://nation.com.pk/national/08-Oct-2014/sit-ins-fail-to-attract-attention-of-people-ishaq-dar?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online%2F24hours-news+(The+Nation+%3A+Latest+News))

“Diamer-Bhasha dam”

Business Recorder, October 12, 2014

The Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, currently in the United States to attend the World Bank/International Monetary Fund annual meeting, took the opportunity to address a day-long seminar with a view to garnering support for the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam. The panelists included the Pakistani Finance and Water and Power ministers as well as USTATED administrator, US Special Representative and the US Ambassador to Pakistan as well as his Pakistani counterpart in Washington. It would be an extremely useful dam on several counts acknowledged by all political parties which is reflected in support for it by three successive

governments. And yet project construction remains preliminary and delays are attributed to a profound lack of financing. Be that as it may, there is some conflicting information that has been released by the government during the past 14 months which requires to be taken into account if the reports emanating from government sources in Washington with respect to the success of the seminar are accepted as credible.

<http://www.brecorder.com/editorials/0:/1231979:diamer-bhasha-dam/>

“One year on: Suspension of funds hampers AJK uplift”

The Express Tribune, October 1, 2014

Suspension of funds by the federal government for new developmental schemes in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has irked the state government. Talking to the media, Rehabilitation Minister Abdul Majid Khan stated that the government has not introduced any new project in AJK during the past one year. Apart from development schemes from the Planning Commission of Pakistan (PCP), the Development Working Party (DWP) is also not approving any projects. “Billions were allocated in the budget under [PSDP] for development projects however, the Planning Commission has spent most of it on projects in Punjab but have nothing so far in AJK,” the minister stated. Khan further stated they had raised the issue with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the top PPP leadership but to no avail.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/769349/one-year-on-suspension-of-funds-hampers-ajk-uplift/>

Tariq Naqash, “Neelum Jhelum project to be ready by 2016”

Dawn, October 2, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Federal minister for state for water and power, Abid Sher Ali has been told that around 65-70 per cent work on Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project (NJHEP) had been completed and that the project would formally be commissioned in 2016. “This project is our priority and the government has released required funds for it, financial constraints notwithstanding,” the minister stated while visiting the project site on

October 1. He pointed out that Kashmir offered tremendous potential for cheap electricity generation, exploitation of which could not only help overcome energy crisis in the country but also achieve the goal of self-reliance. The AJK people have more rights on the projects in their region, rather they should be given three times more than their normal share, an AJK information department handout quoted him saying on the occasion. The federal minister maintained that whenever the PML-N government started to deliver, conspirators swung into action against it. However, he paid tributes to the armed forces and the judiciary for thwarting conspiracies against the government.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1135681/neelum-jhelum-project-to-be-ready-by-2016>

“Ali Raza Syed meets AJK PM in Islamabad”

Kashmir Media Service, October 3, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of Kashmir Council European Union (KCEU), Ali Raza Syed, met the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, at Kashmir House in Islamabad. Ali Raza Syed briefed the AJK Prime Minister about the activities being carried out by the KCEU to highlight the Kashmir dispute in Europe particularly the recent event of Kashmir European Union Week at the EU Parliament in Brussels. Chaudhry Abdul Majeed appreciated the efforts of KCEU for raising the Kashmir dispute at the EU level and other international forums. He also called for unity among the overseas Kashmiris for projecting the Kashmir cause in a more effective manner. Ali Raza Syed stated that the Council had so far raised the Kashmir issue at various fora through meetings, seminars and conferences at different places including the EU Parliament and assemblies of different countries. He stated that the Council would continue its efforts with devotion to highlight the plight of the people of Kashmir.

<http://www.kmsnews.org/news/2014/10/03/ali-raza-syed-meets-ajk-pm-in-islamabad.html>

“AJK bodies seek steps to save sick units”

The Nation, October 2, 2014

MIRPUR: The AJK businessmen have expressed grave concern over the impasse in the process of

industrialisation in Azad Jammu & Kashmir since long following the massive mismanagement on the part of the state-run regulatory authorities and flawed policies of the government. The business fraternity of AJK has demanded immediate measures to make the functionaries vibrant to ensure the survival of the industrial sector in the region. Through the AJK Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they demanded immediate grant of attractive incentives to ensure the true industrial progress in the state particularly through the revival of hundreds of the sick Industrial units in the Industrial areas of Mirpur and Bhimbher districts in AJK. Alarming indication to the fast deteriorating and ugly situation of industrial sector in AJK was given by the speakers in the annual general meeting of the AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry held in Mirpur on October 1 wherein the newly elected office bearers of the AJKCCI took the charge of their offices.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/02-Oct-2014/ajk-bodies-seek-steps-to-save-sick-units>

“To dam or not to dam?”

Daily Times, October 3, 2014

As the current floods to have hit Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir for a fourth consecutive year leave behind harrowing tales of lives lost and massive destruction of infrastructure, livestock, properties and cash crops, the debate among academics has now veered towards a narrative that increasingly questions the utility and usefulness of dams and barrages. As Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) gets underway in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) to ascertain the exact damage caused by floods, the loss to the national economy is likely to be between \$ 10 billion and \$ 15 billion, more than what was caused by the 2010 flooding.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/03-Oct-2014/to-dam-or-not-to-dam>

“Neelum Jhelum project: State minister gives 2016 deadline”

The Express Tribune, October 4, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: State Minister for Water and

Power Abid Sher Ali stated on October 2 that 70% work on Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project (NJHEP) has been completed and the project would start generating electricity by 2016. Winding up his two-day visit of NJHEP the state minister stated the government has released funds for the swift completion of this project of national priority. To a question Abid Sher Ali stated that Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) will get the royalty of the project and the local communities will also enjoy share in the royalty and cheap electricity. “If we generate one unit of electricity in AJK at the cost of three rupees then we should not sell it to the people of the area for more than five rupees,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/770685/neelum-jhelum-project-state-minister-gives-2016-deadline/>

“MA Mir, 2005 Earthquake: Nine years on, one-third projects still pending”

The Express Tribune, October 6, 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: Despite promises made by successive governments, nine years after the devastating 2005 earthquake hit the northern areas of the country, only 5,200 projects out of 8,000 have been completed in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Speaking in connection with the ninth anniversary of October 8, 2005 earthquake, State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (SERRA) Secretary, Sardar Rahim Khan stated around Rs170 billion have been spent on reconstruction from the approved Rs210 billion funds while Rs40 billion have not been released so far. “The donors' projects have almost been completed in the earthquake-hit areas while the UK, USTATED and Canadian government funded projects worth Rs18 billion have been completed and the remaining eight per cent will be completed by the end of 2014. “The three countries have fulfilled their commitments with the government of Pakistan by constructing state-of-the-art educational institutions in the area,” Rahim added. He further stated that authorities immediately needed Rs17 billion to complete the pending and ongoing projects.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/771864/2005-earthquake-nine-years-on-one-third-projects-still-pending/>

“India refuses aid from Hafiz Saeed's charity outfit”

Pakistan Today, October 5, 2014

Authorities in Jammu & Kashmir, which was ravaged by the recent rain-induced floods, have refused to receive relief goods sent by a charity based in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The consignment comprising 12 truckloads of relief items was returned from the Line of Control (LoC) that divides the disputed Himalayan state near Chakothi. The relief goods were sent by the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), a sister organisation of Jamaat ud Dawa (JuD) the charity India blames for the 2008 deadly siege at Mumbai's landmarks. Before flagging off the trucks, JuD's Azad Kashmir chapter chief Maulana Abdul Aziz Alvi stated that they were peaceful people and wanted to help the flood-affected people in Srinagar whether they were Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2014/10/05/national/india-refuses-aid-from-hafiz-saeeds-charity-outfit/>

Ershad Mahmud, “AJK then and now”

The News, October 9, 2014

Nine years on, tragic memories of the October 8, 2005 earthquake still haunt affectees. Three major cities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot are struggling to cope with the jingoistic task of rehabilitation and dealing with post-traumatic stress. The post-earthquake phase can be better described as an era of broken promises, betrayal of public trust and a classic tale of administrative inefficiency. International donor funding was diverted to other projects. The governments of AJK and Pakistan did not live up to their commitments. Initially, it was estimated that within five years the reconstruction phase would be over but that has not happened. A number of projects are underway and incomplete.

Lamentably, the federal government has either stopped or slowed down funding for ongoing projects: in Muzaffarabad only over fifty percent of the total projects have been deferred. This has led to an outcry in AJK, and the common perception is that the donor money was diverted to meet other expenses in Islamabad. It was decided to rebuild the

three worst hit cities Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot through credit of the \$300 million loan by EXIM Bank of China and counterpart funding of \$53 million by the government of Pakistan. Chinese companies initiated work but did not continue due to the non-availability of the counterpart funding pledged by our government. Chinese contractors have almost stopped working on these projects. The Chinese loan is only available till December 31, 2015 and the counterpart share is obligatory as per loan agreement.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-277212-AJK-%E2%80%93-then-and-now>

“More personnel of Punjab, AJK police return”

Dawn, October 12, 2014

ISLAMABAD: More personnel of Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir police have left for their home stations where they would be deployed on Muharram duty, the capital police stated. They stated 2,500 men of Punjab police and 700 of AJK returned on October 11. Earlier, 1,015 personnel from AJK and 11,827 personnel from Punjab were requisitioned by the capital police in early August in the wake of the protests and sit-ins by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and Pakistan Awami Tehreek. Besides, 942 policemen from Railways, 3,000 personnel from Frontier Constabulary and 225 Rangers were also part of the security arrangement. After the departure of 3,200 personnel from the capital, only 3,000 of FC, 2,000 of Punjab police personnel will assist the capital police in security duties.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1137477/more-personnel-of-punjab-ajk-police-return>

“Cross-LoC bus service resumes; 56 AJK nationals reach J-K”

The Nation, October, 14, 2014

POONCH: Cross-LoC bus service resumed with 56 AJK nationals arriving in Poonch for the first time since it was disrupted on September 15 due to floods and deteriorating situation at the LoC. The AJK nationals arrived via the Chakan-Da-Bagh Crossing Point in Poonch, district officials stated. A total of 101 people from the two sides travelled on the Rawalakote-Poonch LoC Road, they stated. 38

Pakistan nationals, who had come in September on permit, returned to their country. The bus to AJK did not have any fresh Indian national on board, they stated. Apart from the 56 AJK nationals who came, seven Indians also returned to their homes in Jammu and Kashmir after staying there with their relatives for some time, they stated. Cross-LoC travel and trade has been disrupted since September 15 due to floods, followed by firing by both sides at the Line of Control.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/roadside-bomb-attack-kills-three-in-northern-pakistan-674223>

“CPLCs being reactivated in AJK districts”

The Nation, October 15, 2014

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir police have decided to reactivate Citizen-Police Liaison Committees in all the AJK districts in order to affectively overcome crime in the region by maintaining mutual cooperation between the citizens and the police. The decision to this effect has been taken on the directions of AJK Inspector General Police Malik Khuda Buksh who, during his recent visit to Mirpur, fully agreed to the idea, moved by the senior journalists during a formal chat at the office of DIG Mirpur Range Dr Khalid Chauhan, for immediate revival of the CPLCs in AJK districts. The police chief on this occasion directed Senior Mirpur SP Raja Irfan Salim to immediately move for the revival of the committees in the district comprising highly credible and good reputed seasoned personalities belonging to all segments of the society.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/15-Oct-2014/cplcs-being-reactivated-in-ajk-districts>

Shabbir Mir, “G-B receives warning of a militant attack”

The Express Tribune, October 2, 2014

GILGIT: Some militants have planned attacks on passengers and government officials on Karakoram Highway (KKH) and in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) before Eidul Azha, the interior ministry has warned the G-B government. The threat has come days before Eid when people from different parts of the country and the world might head to G-B to

celebrate the festival with their families. This is the time when there is an increase in traffic on Karakoram Highway, the major highway connecting G-B with rest of the country. “A plan has been prepared by a banned militant outfit belonging to Kohistan, a district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa,” stated the letter written by the National Counter Terrorism Authority. It is addressed to the home department of G-B, asking it to take appropriate measures to foil the attacks. The ministry has further warned that the militants have arranged uniforms and weapons, and have entered Gilgit in order to execute the plan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/770068/g-b-receives-warning-of-militant-attack/>

“Roadside Bomb Attack Kills Three in Northern Pakistan”

NDTV, October 2, 2014

ISLAMABAD: At least three people were killed and nine others injured when a roadside bomb hit a passenger van near Gilgit town in northern Pakistan on October 2, officials stated. "The incident occurred near Haramosh village on Gilgit-Skardu road (around 30 miles south of Gilgit) when a passenger van was hit by a roadside bomb blast," Zain Muhammad, a police official in Gilgit, told AFP. He stated the injured included five women, two men and three children, adding that all the passengers were Shiites. A senior official of the Gilgit-Baltistan home department stated the federal interior ministry had issued an alert to the Gilgit-Baltistan government warning of a possible sectarian attack. "The interior ministry letter stated Shia community might be targeted on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in reaction to the killing of a Sunni cleric in the garrison city of Rawalpindi recently," he told AFP, requesting not to be named.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/roadside-bomb-attack-kills-three-in-northern-pakistan-674223>

Shabbir Mir, “The last straw: Teachers in G-B protest delay in promotions”

The Express Tribune, October 3, 2014

GILGIT: College professors and lecturers

boycotted classes and went on strike across Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) on October 2 in protest against delays in promotions. The strike was announced after the government failed to implement the demands of the G-B Professors and Lecturers Association (G-BPLA) to promote faculty members who have been working in colleges for decades. However, according to a student leader at Government Degree College Gilgit, the teaching staff left classrooms unattended. "In G-B, there are over 350 professors and lecturers who have been working for decades but have not been promoted. Unfortunately, no steps have been taken to this end," Muhammad Zaman, president of G-BPLA noted. The G-BPLA announced the strike as a last resort after the government was reluctant to accept its genuine demands, he added. According to Zaman, the teaching faculty has borne the brunt of the government's indifference for a long time now and insisted the only way to compensate them is to implement a timescale. In 2012, G-B Chief Minister Mehdi Shah had announced promotions for the teaching staff at colleges under the same timescale formula. The scheme did not materialize as planned.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/770650/the-last-straw-teachers-in-g-b-protest-delay-in-promotions/>

“Crying discrimination: G-B higher courts urged to do justice with ATC verdict on Baba Jan, others”

The Express Tribune, October 6, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Top leaders of the Awami Workers Party (AWP) have condemned the sentencing of Baba Jan and 11 others to life imprisonment by an anti-terrorism court in Gilgit and have demanded the withdrawal of cases against them. In a joint statement on October 5, AWP President Abid Hassan Minto, Chairman Fanoos Gujjar and Secretary-general Farooq Tariq stated the court had ignored the fact that there was widespread unrest among the people of Hunza that boiled into a violent protest in 2011. They stated the public protest was in reaction to brutal action by the police in which a man and his son were shot dead in front of hundreds of protesters in Aliabad Hunza that triggered violent protests by residents which was a natural reaction.

The victims were among the Attabad Lake disaster-affected persons who were protesting for compensation. The AWP leaders stated Jan and his activists participated in one such protest and persuaded people towards a peaceful struggle. Jan and Iftikhar Hussain, among others, are political leaders and harbingers of peaceful struggling against exploitation and denial of basic national and democratic rights of the people in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/771852/crying-discrimination-g-b-higher-courts-urged-to-do-justice-with-atc-verdict-on-baba-jan-others/>

Shabbir Mir, “Unearthing facts: G-B chief secretary orders probe into NATCO bus burning”

The Express Tribune, October 11, 2014

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Secretary Sikandar Sultan Raja ordered a thorough investigation to determine whether the burning of Northern Areas Transport Corporation (Natco) buses in Islamabad was an act of militancy. On October 5, a fire erupted at a bus stand in Islamabad's I-10/1, burning four Natco buses. The incident has resulted in losses worth millions of rupees to the G-B government. "The chief secretary has taken note of it and ordered a swift enquiry," Farooq Ahmed, Deputy Director Information in Gilgit noted. Whoever is responsible for the incident will be taken to task, he added. According to Ahmed, excise and taxation department's secretary Syed Akhtar Rizvi has been appointed to head the enquiry with a view to promptly complete investigations and fix responsibility. After last week's incident, Raja visited Natco's management units. He urged the staff to put the house in order without further delay. "The chief secretary has ordered Natco officials to sell buses which are no longer in use and make the bus terminals safer and functional for passengers," Ahmed stated. Natco is a government transport company. It operates from G-B to Karachi, Gwadar and China. Islamabad and was displeased by the level of inefficiency and mismanagement.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/774035/unearthing-facts-g-b-chief-secretary-orders-probe-into-natco-bus-burning/>

“Tough Decisions: To participate or not to participate”

The Express Tribune, October 13, 2014

The Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is pushing its workers to attend Co-Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's rally scheduled for this week in Karachi. However, lack of resources is putting a spanner in its works. “There are expectations from the central leadership in terms of bringing in supporters, but we are struggling to fulfil these expectations,” a senior PPP leader noted requesting anonymity. “Politicians in this region are not as well off as those in the rest of the country so they cannot arrange finances to make such trips,” he added. However, he stated regional PPP leaders were hopeful that they would find a way to manage. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's rally is scheduled to be held on October 18 in the port city and the local leadership believes the presence of a large number of workers from G-B would portray a good image to the co-chairperson.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/774820/tough-decisions-to-participate-or-not-to-participate/>

Shabbir Mir, “Release Baba Jan': Protestors take to streets outside UN Office”

The Express Tribune, October 14, 2014

GILGIT: Political activists from different parties held a protest rally outside the United Nations (UN) office in Gilgit on October 14, demanding the release of 12 detained progressive leaders, including Baba Jan. Awami Workers Party (AWP) vice president Jan and 11 others were handed down life imprisonment terms by judge Raja Shehbaz of Anti-Terrorist Court-1 (ATC) on charges of torching government property and ransacking a police station during the Hunza riots in 2011. The rally was attended by prominent personalities including senior lawyer Ehsan Ali, Colonel Nadir Ali, Safdar Ali, Javed and Rizwan. It started from Gilgit Bazaar and culminated at the UN office where leaders spoke against the discriminatory treatment of progressive leaders. More than 150 activists holding placards chanted slogans against the sentence and called for its withdrawal. A petition was also submitted at the office, asking UN

secretary general to take stock of human rights violations in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B).

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/775277/release-baba-jan-protesters-take-to-streets-outside-un-office/>

Shabbir Mir, “Transitional phase. Amendments in G-B governance order to make way for interim set-up”

The Express Tribune, October 14, 2014

To pave the way for a caretaker set-up which will supervise elections in Gilgit-Baltistan, the government has suggested amendments to the G-B Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009. Although the governance order, introduced by Pakistan Peoples Party, enhanced the constitutional status of G-B, it does not mention anything about an interim setup to replace the existing government which completes its five-year term on December 12, 2014. “The recommendations have been forwarded to the federal government so that changes can be made to the governance order,” Attaullah Shahab, a senior member of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), noted on October 14. JUI-F is a coalition partner of the PPP government in G-B headed by Chief Minister Mehdi Shah. “Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is expected to approve the amendments in the upcoming meeting of the G-B Council scheduled for next month,” stated Shahab, who has served as adviser to the PM on G-B in Yousaf Raza Gilani's tenure. The G-B Council is chaired by the prime minister and comprises six members each from G-B and the federal government. According to Shahab, once the term of the present government comes to an end, a caretaker chief minister would be appointed in consultation with the existing chief minister and the opposition leader.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/774798/transitional-phase-amendments-in-g-b-governance-order-to-make-way-for-interim-set-up/>

Shabbir Mir, “Uncertain future: Local Government Bill 2014 yet to reach G-B's governor office”

The Express Tribune, October 15, 2014

GILGIT: As the tenure of the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) government draws to a close, the fate of the Local

Government Bill 2014 hangs in the balance. The bill was passed unanimously by the G-B legislative assembly on August 18, but has yet to reach the governor's office where it will be signed by the governor and made into a law. "The bill hasn't yet reached us," an official at the governor's office confirmed on October 15. "However, the governor will immediately approve the bill whenever it is brought to him," he added. Excessive delays in the bill reaching the governor's office serve a cause for concern. On December 13, an interim government will seize the reins until elections bring in new rule. Since the countdown has already started, the bill is likely to be forgotten or ignored. "This is a critical phase for the government and it shouldn't let the progress it has made on the bill go to waste," stated Sajid Iqbal, a civil society activist. The bill was prepared after consultations with stakeholders in Gilgit, Skardu and Islamabad by Gilgit-Baltistan Police Institute (GBPI), a not-for-profit organisation. According to legal experts, if the bill is not endorsed by the governor during his tenure, the interim government and its successor may put the bill on the backburner. "There is no guarantee of the future of the bill if it doesn't get through this time," stated Advocate Jamal.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/775933/uncertain-future-local-government-bill-2014-yet-to-reach-g-bs-governor-office/>

"Senate body asks govt to provide funds, arms to FC"

The News, October 15, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Narcotics Control on October 14 recommended to the government to provide required equipment and funds to the Frontier Constabulary (FC) to improve its capabilities. The committee expressed displeasure over the absence of Chief Secretary of GB in the meeting. The committee recommended recruitment in FC through a transparent procedure. Some of the members raised questions about the FC's decision to recruit personnel through the National Testing Service (NTS), observing tribal people would face difficulty in taking the test. Senator Talha stated the law-enforcement agencies should be extended all

possible facilities for maintaining law and order situation in the country. He stated Gilgit-Baltistan was an important area, and it would be given priority. The committee decided to hold its next meeting in GB.

<http://www.mactrast.com/2011/12/mac-tip-delete-vs-backspace/>

"Helping martyrs' families: Govt raises compensation amount to Rs3 million"

The Express Tribune, October 15, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The government has raised compensation packages for the families of those civil and military personnel, who are martyred or injured in terror attacks. The compensation amount now ranges from Rs1million to Rs3million for family of a martyred civil and military personnel, Interior Ministry informed a senate panel on October 14. Interior Ministry will also ensure that all cheques for financial compensation will be provided to family members within seven days. According to details collected from the concerned officials, the estimated cost of the provincial component of this policy is Rs22billion and while the estimated cost of the policy's federal components is Rs10billion. During the course of proceedings, the senate panel headed by Senator Talha Mahmood took also briefing from Gilgit-Baltistan officials on security related matters. The GB government did not endorse the viewpoint of the interior committee that there should be an additional check post near the border area of the Pakistan and China. The officials informed the lawmakers that the area has been declared as the Khunjerab National Park that is being protected by the Khunjerab Security Force raised 27 years ago.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/775575/helping-martyrs-families-govt-raises-compensation-amount-up-to-rs3-million/>

"Governor, CM Gilgit Baltistan call on President"

Business Recorder, October 21, 2014

GILGIT: Governor Gilgit Baltistan, Pir Syed Karam Ali Shah and Chief Minister Syed Mehdi Shah separately called on President Mamnoon

Hussain in Gilgit on October 21. Governor Gilgit Baltistan in his meeting discussed with the President the overall current situation in Gilgit Baltistan. Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah in his meeting with the President discussed matters pertaining to development activities being carried out in Gilgit Baltistan and issues of the region. Earlier, when President Mamnoon Hussain arrived here on a two-day visit, he was received by Governor and Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan and high officials at the airport.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/politics-a-policy/200976-governor-cm-gilgit-baltistan-call-on-president.html>

“PM asked to frame new timber policy for GB”

The Nation, October 22, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Council recommended to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is also chairperson of the council, to promulgate a new timber policy for the region. Sources stated the proposed policy was almost similar to controversial timber policy 2013 promulgated by previous government of Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in GB which promoted illegal timber cutting and trade in the region. Ex-PM Raja Pervaiz Ashraf introduced the policy just a day before his term expired in March 2013. Under the policy, he allowed the transportation of four million cubic feet (cft) of timber from Diamer district of GB to other parts of the country. In addition to the legally-cut 2.0 million cft of timber, which locals claimed had begun to decay. The policy also stated that around 1.9 million cft of illegally-cut timber could be traded after contractors pay a fine that varies depending on the type of trees. The policy, according to the locals, was meant to dispose of the illegal timber which was cut at least two years before the policy was promulgated. But it resulted in falling of thousands of fresh trees in the district. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after a month in taking charge of the government on July 5, 2013 withdrew the policy.

<http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/22-Oct-2014/pm-asked-to-frame-new-timber-policy-for-gb>

“Call to immediately withdraw the sedition

charges against the nine human rights defenders for holding a peaceful protest”

Asian Human Rights Commission

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) received updated information that nine human rights defenders from Gilgit-Baltistan, including the President of the Supreme Appellate Court, Bar Association were charged for sedition for holding a protest in front of the office of United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) at Gilgit. They were staging a protest for the release of Baba Jan and 11 other human rights defenders who were sentenced to life imprisonment by an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC). The protesters were demanding the abolition of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) from remaining in effect only in some parts in Northern Pakistan including in the Gilgit and Baltistan regions.

<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAU-029-2014>

“HRCP report on G-B: People must know reasons for decades of alienation earlier this month”

The Express Tribune, October 26, 2014

A fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) recommended that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) must be taken into confidence regarding reasons why their region has not been integrated into Pakistan for the last 66 years. The HRCP report, titled “Caught in a new great game”, was launched on October 25. HRCP executive council members Ghazi Salahuddin, Roland D'Souza, Hussain Naqi and Najimuddin and other were also in attendance. The report encompasses the views of members of the administration, representatives of religious, political parties, civil society members and HRCP volunteers and district coordinators who shared information regarding human rights issues and other concerns in all seven districts. The HRCP mission visited G-B during October 2013. The report says that after consultation with locals, all options including an Azad Jammu and Kashmir-like setup or granting of provisional or permanent

provincial status should be considered. It stated that the people of G-B people should not be denied basic human, constitutional and political rights while linking their fate to the lingering Kashmir dispute.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/781092/hrcp-report-on-g-b-people-must-know-reasons-for-decades-of-alienation/>

Senge Sering, “Gilgit-Baltistan: Local Push back against Military Encroachment”

Sharnoff's Global News, October 27, 2014

After a brief lull, Indo-Pak forces have resumed shelling along the Line of Control (LOC) which divides the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region. Already, tens of thousands of Pakistani soldiers and paramilitary are stationed in Gilgit-Baltistan. Despite the UN Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) Resolutions calling for Pakistan to withdraw from the region, the number of soldiers and settlers in the region has increased exponentially over the previous four decades. In fact, the military is already the largest landholder in the region, controlling expansive tracks of land in Jutial, Gamba, Shagari, Kharmang, Bunji, Astore, Gultari, Gilgit and Gangche. The military is operating enterprises as diverse as shopping malls, banks and bakeries. Frontier Works Organization (FWO) and Special Communication Organization (SCO), the two institutions controlling local communication and road networks, are administered by the military. Such ventures allow it paramount control over local infrastructure and institutions.

The local tourism economy, already struggling due to religious terrorism and continued territorial conflict, is also damaged by military encroachment. Locals denounce the military's use of barbed wire to restrict access to popular tourist attractions. They further protest the military's land seizure without compensation to affected communities. As protests enter the third week, elected officials from Awami Action Committee, a conglomerate of 22 regional political parties, visited Naltar to affirm their support for local rights and call for the military to vacate the area. Safdar Ali, a local leader from Balawaristan National Front, believes that encroachment of common property casts a shadow

on the military's claim to develop tourism in the region.

<http://www.sharnoffsglobalviews.com/gilgit-baltistan-military-404/>

“Gilgit Baltistan: Pakistani Military Build-Up Raises Tensions with Locals”

Sharnoff's Global News, October 29, 2014

The recent escalation in tensions between India and Pakistan has led to a military build-up of the Pakistani army in Gilgit Baltistan, as locals fear the conflict in Kashmir will spread north. The encroachment of the Pakistani military on Gilgit Baltistan has brought the military into conflict with local people, and the region's militarization has led to the confiscation of land and degradation of the environment. In response, local people and political parties have organized a third straight week of protests.

<http://unpo.org/article/17652>

Shabbir Mir, “Taken for granted: Masajid Board members resign after safety suggestions ignored”

Business Recorder, September 13, 2014

As Muharram progresses, Shia representatives have resigned from the Masajid Board in Gilgit, complaining their suggestions to maintain sectarian harmony were overlooked. The resignations mean Shias have no representation in a body that played a crucial role in restoring peace after more than 50 people were killed in the region in sectarian violence during 2011-12. The board, with 10 members each from the Shia and Sunni sects, was responsible for implementing a code of conduct which allowed for the reopening of two mosques sealed in the aftermath of the violence. The code barred prayer leaders of both central mosques in Gilgit from maligning each other's beliefs and using harsh language against the other sect's revered personalities. “The government was supposed to implement our suggestions, but that didn't happen and we all resigned,” Baig noted. He stated the government didn't pay heed to their demands of establishing check posts and deploying police at certain entry points to keep a close eye on those

entering or leaving the region. Baig claimed Chief Minister Mehdi Shah, the chief secretary and home secretary avoided meetings with the board.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/783707/taken-for-granted-masajid-board-members-resign-after-safety-suggestions-ignored/>

Shabbir Mir, “At the grass-roots level: G-B Local Government Bill Signed into Law”

The Express Tribune, October 31, 2014

GILGIT: Nearly two and a half months after being passed by the Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly, the G-B Local Government Bill 2014 was finally signed into law by Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah on October 30. The assembly had unanimously passed the bill on August 18, 2014 after a select committee of lawmakers debated its pros and cons. However, the delay in its enactment had raised concerns over its fate since the G-B government is nearing the completion of its term. According to government officials, the delay was caused by the law department because it was vetting the LG Bill. “The governor signed it the day it reached him,” stated an official at the governor’s office. Under the new law, urban areas of G-B i.e. Gilgit and Skardu have been named city metropolitan corporations to be headed by a mayor and deputy mayor, while district councils will be formed in all districts headed by a chairman and vice-chairman.

Moreover, the G-B Finance Council will be formed to supervise financial matters of local bodies. The council’s representatives will be nominated by the leader of the opposition in the assembly, finance minister and local government minister. The bill was drafted by the G-B Policy Institute (GBPI), a non-profit organisation, after holding a series of consultations with stakeholders in G-B and Islamabad. “It is a great moment for us all. I hope it

is a turning point in G-B’s history.” GBPI Director Programmes Altaf Hussain noted. “We were compelled to take this decision,” stated Abid Baig, a member of the Masajid Board, on October 30.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/783718/at-the-grass-roots-level-g-b-local-government-bill-signed-into-law-peshawar-city/>

“Governor approves Gilgit-Baltistan LG Act”

Daily Times, October, 31, 2014

Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Pir Karam Ali Shah assented to the Gilgit-Baltistan Local Government Act 2014, passed by the legislative assembly unanimously on August 18, 2014. The select committee notified by the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly drafted the Local Government Act 2014. The select committee was provided technical support in this process by Strengthening Participatory Federalism and Decentralization Project of UNDP-Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan Policy Institute. A participatory and consultative process had been adopted for drafting the local government bill 2014 similar to the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional Reforms that drafted the 18th Constitutional Amendment. The thirteen-member committee was represented by all political parties having presence in the assembly and conducted consultations with all stakeholders in both Gilgit and Skardu to incorporate their feedback on the draft law. A conscious effort was made by the committee to engage with political parties, representatives of civil society organisations, youth and women, and constitutional experts. It is pertinent to mention that the new local government law is in line with the Charter of Democracy that called for local government elections on party basis.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/31-Oct-2014/governor-approves-gilgit-baltistan-lg-act>

Economic Developments

Shahbaz Rana, “ECNEC rejects Rs 101b for land acquisition”

The Express Tribune, October 3, 2014

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) the country's highest project approval authority on October 2 refused to approve Rs 101 billion for land acquisition for Diamer-Bhasha dam's construction. The decision comes days before Pakistan is scheduled to market the 4,500 megawatts project to international investors in Washington where it is seeking \$5 billion for the construction of the dam. The water and power ministry moved the summary for the consideration of the ECNEC, which is headed by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. In its summary, the minister sought an additional Rs101 billion for the acquisition of land. Earlier in 2009, the body had approved the land acquisition project at an estimated cost of Rs60 billion. Turning the request down, ECNEC chairman stated the cost was too high, observing that the water and power ministry has deliberately kept the component of interest during construction (IDC) outside the PC-I aimed at showing the cost at a lower end.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/770658/diamer-bhasha-dam-ecnec-rejects-rs101b-for-land-acquisition/>

“IFC to consider financing Diamer-Bhasha dam project”

Daily Times, October 10, 2014

Federal Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs Ishaq Dar, met International Finance Corporation (IFC) Executive Vice President Jin Yong Cai to discuss IFC's program portfolio in Pakistan. Cai appreciated the policies of the government and informed that IFC's presence in Pakistan was second biggest in the region. He elaborated that IFC is most actively involved in financial sector and was looking for investment in the power sector. He

stated that IFC was investing \$125 million in 3 Gorges Company for investment in South Asia which will finance quality projects in the region and Pakistan will especially benefit from it. He informed that IFC was closely examining the privatisation of distribution companies and was interested to participate in the process. Talking about trade the IFC chief executive officer assured Senator Dar of his continued support towards initiation of nine million dollars programme aimed at improving the labour standards in Pakistan, to bring them in line with the international requirements and standards.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/business/10-Oct-2014/ifc-to-consider-financing-diamer-bhasha-dam>

“Azad Kashmir Council presents budget of Rs15.9bn”

The Express Tribune, October 16, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council on October 16 presented a budget of Rs15.95 billion for the 2014-15 fiscal year, Radio Pakistan reported. Minister for Kashmir Affairs Chaudhry Barjees Tahir presented the budget at a session of the AJK council in Islamabad on October 16. There is 77% increase in the budget as compared to 2013 after a deficit budget worth Rs14.483 billion was approved for 2013-14. Of the budget, Rs2, 310 million have been earmarked for development, a 30% increase has been projected for the revenues.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/776493/azad-kashmir-council-presents-budget-of-rs15-9bn/>

International Developments

“US seeks financial adviser for Pakistan's 4,500-MW Diامر Bhasha hydro project”

Hydro Review, October 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USTATED) seeks bids to provide financial advisory services to the government of Pakistan for Pakistan's proposed 4,500-MW Diامر Bhasha hydroelectric project on the Indus River. Bids are due October 27. USTATED awarded a contract in September to MWH Global to perform an environmental and social impact assessment of Diامر Bhasha. It was reported last year that the World Bank and Asian Development Bank agreed to help finance construction of Diامر Bhasha. Pakistan recruited firms in 2009 for design, construction supervision, and contract administration of Diامر Bhasha. USTATED/Pakistan now seeks bids for financial advisory services in regard to financing Diامر Bhasha. Work is to include development of a financing strategy for the project, assistance in financing decision making and financial closure, and development of a computer-based financial model for the project. The work is expected to require one year at a cost of US\$2.5 million to US\$2.9 million.

<http://www.hydroworld.com/articles/2014/10/u-s-seeks-financial-adviser-for-pakistan-s-4-500-mw-diamer-bhasha-hydro-project.html>

“US pledges support for “transformational” Diامر Bhasha Dam”

Daily Times, October 9, 2014

WASHINGTON: United States on October 9 pledged support for Pakistan's massive \$14 billion 4,500-megawatts (MW) Diامر Bhasha Dam project, as top officials and private business leaders explored investment prospects amid exponential energy needs of America's 'critical partner' nation. Pakistan needs 10,000 MW of

power to meet its rapidly growing domestic, industrial and agrarian requirements. The materialisation of Diامر Bhasha Dam will be a giant step in that quest. The Obama Administration officials assured the investors of effective results, citing results from US-financed energy up gradation projects in Pakistan. Investment in the Diامر Bhasha Dam is the smartest choice for Pakistan, Feldman remarked reiterating the White House and Secretary John Kerry's commitment to back economic and energy security of Pakistan.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/business/09-Oct-2014/us-pledges-support-for-transformational-diamer-bhasha-dam>

“Dar seeks Chinese funding for Bhasha Dam”

Pakistan Today, October 23, 2014

Federal Minister of Finance Senator Ishaq Dar met with his Chinese counterpart Lou Jiwei in Beijing on October 23 and exchanged views on a wide-range of financial and economic matters of interest and areas of cooperation between the two countries of bilateral, regional and international importance. Dar voiced appreciation for China's all out support in various fields with particular reference to its role in establishing Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The bank intends to fund projects and thus address infrastructure deficit. The minister lauded China's role in enhancing regional connectivity and for the major initiative of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. He appreciated cooperation in the banking sector and for market access to each other's banks. He urged the Chinese ministry of finance to motivate Chinese banks to invest in Diامر Bhasha dam having 1.3 trillion cubic feet of water reservoir and 4,500 MW power capacity.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2014/10/23/business/dar-seeks-chinese-funding-for-bhasha-dam/>

“Chinese to sponsor dam awareness conference”

Daily Times, October 24, 2014

ISLAMABAD: The China Development Bank (CDB) has evinced interest and agreed to be the local sponsors of an awareness conference for prospective investors for the construction of the 4500 mw Diamer Bhasha dam for power generation in Pakistan. This was transpired during Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs Senator Ishaq Dar meeting with Zhao Xiaoyu, the Executive Vice President of CDB in Beijing on October 24. During the meeting held in a very cordial atmosphere, the minister expressed gratitude of the government of Pakistan for CDB's solid support in the past and hoped for continued support and cooperation, says a message received from China. Dar who is currently visiting China, stated that the present government was on the trail of major reforms program in the taxation, power, banking and corporate sector. Rupee stabilisation, marked improvement in stock exchanges indices, increase in the forex reserves were some of the immediate positive results, he remarked. The government, he stated that had set tough targets for itself in the Vision 2025 document and was determined to achieve them.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/24-Oct-2014/chinese-to-sponsor-dam-awareness-conference>

Elisabeth Gouel, “ACT Alliance Appeal: Assistance to the Rain and Flood-Affected Families in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab, Pakistan”

Thomson Reuters Foundation, October 2, 2014

GENEVA: The heavy spell of monsoon rains which started at the beginning of September 2014, resulted in flash floods with exceptionally high levels of water in rivers Indus, Chenab and Jhelum affecting many districts in Punjab, Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB), killing at least 357 people and leaving 620 others

injured. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) an estimated 47,799 houses have been reported damaged or destroyed while nearly 1.7 million acres of crop area has been affected. Physical access is a challenge as many roads are destroyed, and water inundates access routes. The heavy rains have resulted in massive landslides and flooding in a number of districts in the mountainous province of AJK. Hundreds of thousands of people have been reported to be affected indirectly as the link roads to markets and linking bridges have been damaged because of land sliding and flash floods. The disruption of transportation and communication infrastructure has made thousands of families' food insecure and vulnerable.

<http://www.trust.org/item/20141006162907-82wbv/?source=fiTheWire>

“Former Kashmir Prime Minister joins Burton MP for Millions March meeting”

Burton Mail, October 11, 2014

A former Prime Minister is helping to put Burton on the map as three coaches travel to a march in London. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhary, former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Burton MP Andrew Griffiths chairman of All Parties Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Kashmir attended a meeting in the town with a packed audience. Mohammed Jamil, president of the Midlands Community Association, held the meeting on October 9 for anyone who is interested in finding out more about the Kashmir issue or global peace as thousands are set to join the Kashmir Million March in London on October 26. This is to highlight the longstanding 'Kashmir Issue' and the need to find a peaceful and lasting resolution.

<http://www.burtonmail.co.uk/Kashmir-Prime-Minister-joins-Burton-MP-Millions/story-23096677-detail/story.html#ixzz3TUor8NIX>

Other Developments

Tahir Khalil, “Mansehra to have modern airport: Captain Safdar”

The News, October 4, 2014

ISLAMABAD: In the context of Pak-China Economic Corridor, the preparations for constructing a state-of-the-art airport in Mansehra have been completed. The government has selected the site for the airport. A seven-kilometre runway will be constructed in Mansehra for the airport. MNA from Mansehra and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Captain (R) Muhammad Safdar stated that land worth Rs450 million had been purchased for the new Mansehra airport and the construction work for related infrastructure had been started. He stated that the federal government had decided to construct a railway track from Islamabad to Muzaffarabad. For expediting the Pak-China Economic Corridor project and for development of the area, in addition to Bhasha and Dasu Dams, 10 big projects for producing 13,000MW electricity would be started this year. He stated that the Manshera airport would be the first one in Hazara Division and from defence point of view, Rs300 million had been allocated for the feasibility study of extending strategic railway line to the Chinese border. He stated that a project for constructing a railway track from Islamabad to Muzaffarabad via Murree was also being started and for feasibility study, Rs60 million had been allocated. He stated that for meeting the need for human resource, four new educational projects would also be started this year.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-33300-Mansehra-to-have-modern-airport-Captain-Safdar#sthash.0cPHNvO9.dpuf>

Eiichi Miyashiro, “New dam threatens 2,000-year-old Buddhist engravings”

October 17, 2014

As the region of Chilas in northern Pakistan shakes

under construction of a dam and renovation of a highway, centuries-old engravings from the early days of Buddhism carved on boulders may be lost forever, according to local archaeologists. Much of the precious petroglyphs in the area will likely sink beneath the waters of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, which is being constructed to ease local electricity shortages. The investigation was conducted by archaeologists of Hazara University, an institution in Dhodial, northern Pakistan. The announcement was made by the Japanese Center for South Asian Cultural Heritage, a nonprofit organization based in Tokyo, supporting the university's research efforts. The rock engravings are precious artifacts that trace the spread of Buddhism in the region, dating between the first century B.C. and the 10th century A.D.

http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/around_asia/AJ201410170012

Shabbir Mir, “Mountainside mayhem: 5,000 people at risk as another village begins to slide into Hunza River”

The Express Tribune, October 10, 2014

GILGIT: Nearly 5,000 people risk losing their homes and their lives as yet another village on the slopes of a Nagar Valley mountain has developed cracks and has started sliding into Hunza River below. Gulmat village is about 65 kilometres northeast of Gilgit. It is also not far from Fakar village also in Nagar and also facing a similar situation. Almost 50 families in Fakar remain in danger as cracks in mountain slopes widen at an alarming pace. In mid-September, a large portion of Fakar collapsed and landed in Hunza River, blocking its flow temporarily. The land mass was estimated to be 1,200 kanals. And about five kilometres ahead of Nagar Valley is Miacher Valley where cracks in slopes are also threatening settlements there.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/772870/mountainside-mayhem->

5000-people-at-risk-as-another-village-begins-to-slide-into-hunza-river/

“Sightseers Inject New Life into Pakistan Idyll”

NDTV, October 10, 2014

KARIMABAD: After a slump in foreign visitors triggered by a deadly attack last year, a new wave of local sightseers has saved tourism in Pakistan's idyllic northern Hunza Valley -- but not everyone is happy. Though there are no official figures, hotel owners say large numbers of domestic tourists are visiting in unprecedented numbers, heading north to escape the sizzling heat of summer that lasts well into October. In the Valley's main town of Karimabad, they snap pictures at the ancient Baltit Fort, a resplendent 1st century redoubt from where they can take in breathtaking views of lush forests and snow-capped peaks that have attracted the best climbers from around the world. International tourism once helped shape the Gilgit-Baltistan region but it has slowed to a trickle after the killing of 10 foreign climbers at the base camp of Nanga Parbat mountain last year ended a post 9/11 revival. In their place have come visitors from eastern Punjab, and the city of Karachi, thanks mainly to a well-publicised TV campaign. Though their business is both welcome and vital, cultural differences also highlight the growing gap between the religiously conservative south and traditionally secular north, according to observers. Some complain the local guests can be disrespectful toward the liberal traditions that have long set the area apart from the rest of the country, and are prone to spoiling the region's natural beauty by littering. Others say they don't spend as much as foreign tourists.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/local-sightseers-inject-new-life-into-pakistan-idyll-677367>

“PUAN GB Chapter organizes 4th Alumni Reunion in Skardu”

The Dardistan Times, October 17, 2014

Skardu: Pakistan-US Alumni Network, (PUAN) GB Chapter successfully organized its 4th Alumni Reunion in Skardu with the theme of "Promoting mutual learning, bridging gaps, fostering

partnerships/coalitions and exchanging Ideas.” More than 250 participants from seven districts of Gilgit Baltistan region, attended the reunion. The alumni belonged to different exchange program including Youth Exchange and Study (YES), Community College Initiative (CCI), International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), Legislative Fellows, English Access, Global U-Grad, International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), and Teacher Exchange. Government officials, notable civil society members and the people from media also attended the event.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/gilgit-baltistan/News/288546935/puan-gb-chapter-organizes-4th-alumni-reunion-skardu>

Choo Woon Lim, “Taking world's highest road into record book”

The Star Online, October 28, 2014

Four employees of Kajang Municipal Council (MPKj) did the country proud by becoming the first Malaysians to cycle across the Karakoram Highway, the highest paved international road in the world that connects Pakistan and China across the Karakoram mountain range. Their feat was recognised by the Malaysia Book of Records, which presented them with a certificate at a ceremony in the Kajang Stadium. The recipients were Mohd Shahrizaifuddy Shamsuddin, Ashraf Nasir, Shamsol Omar and Ismail Mat Rasidin. They traversed a total of 1,300km across the highway, located on altitudes over 4,000m and in some parts higher than Mount Kinabalu in Sabah. The XPDC Karakoram Highway, which ran from Aug 30 to Sept 12, was supported by the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

<http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Community/2014/10/28/Taking-worlds-highest-road-into-record-book-Four-Kajang-council-employees-become-first-Malaysians-t/>

“Three Pakistani activists honored with N-peace award”

Pakistan Today, October 30, 2014

Three activists from Pakistan have been awarded an N-peace award by N-Peace network, a multi-country network of peace advocates in Asia

working on the advancement of women and peace issues. The awardees were announced in July this year and were conferred with the honours in an ceremony held in Bangkok, Thailand from October 24 to 26. Shah Zaman, founder and chairman of Milky Way Movement was honoured in recognition of his work of promoting women's education in the northern regions of Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral in Pakistan. In 2010, Zaman initiated his movement with limited resources to promote child rights and education, working as a home tutor in order to pay the school fees of underprivileged children from

Thoi, Yasin, a village in Gilgit Baltistan. Today his movement, named 'Milky Way', campaigns for fundraising and is currently supporting over a 100 children with free education in Gilgit- Baltistan and Chitral. Zaman has also launched a Montessori school 'Milky Way Academy' in Thoi where currently 41 children are enrolled free-of-cost.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2014/10/30/entertainment/three-pakistani-activists-honoured-with-n-peace-award/>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Total area of Jammu and Kashmir	222,236 sq kms
Area of under illegal Pakistani occupation (PoK = AJK + Gilgit Baltistan)	78114 sq kilometres
Area of J&K under Chinese occupation <i>Area ceded to China by Pakistan</i>	42,685 sq kms 5,180 sq kms
Together Pak-China	120,799 sq kms
Area with India	101437 sq kms

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

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

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

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

Ethnic Groups: Gujjars, Jats, Mughal, Rajputs, Sudhan, Awan, Qureshi, Pashtuns, Shins, Ladakhi, Baltis etc.

Religious Groups: Sunni, Ahlehadith, Shia, Nurbakhshi, Christians, Qadianis, Hindus

Languages: Punjabi, Hindko, Pahari, Kashmiri, Balti, Puriki, Shina

Political Parties and Groups: United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, AJK Muslim Conference, International Kashmir Alliance, JK National Party, Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (Amanullah), Peoples United Action Committee, All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

(Source: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www. www.ajk.gov.pk/>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

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

Gilgit Region is divided into Astore, Diamer, Ghizer, Hunza-Nagar and Gilgit districts

Ethnic Groups: Shin, Balti, Puriki, Ladakhi, Wakhi, Yashkun, Tibetan, Mongol, Tatar, Mon, Pashtun, Khowar, Dom, Gujjar, Rajput and Kashmiri

Religious Groups: Shia (Twelvers), Nurbakhshi (Twelvers), Ismaili, Sunni, and Ahlehadith

Languages: Shina, Balti, Wakhi, Khowar, Gujjari, Burushaski, Puriki, Kashmiri, Pashto

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly: Total 33 members (24 members directly elected)

Governor of G-B: Pir Karam Ali Shah

Chief Minister G-B: Syed Mehdi Shah

Political Parties and Groups: Balwaristan National Front (BNF), Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum, Gilgit-Baltistan, United Movement (GBUM), Baltistan National Movement, Karakoram National Movement, Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA), Gilgit Baltistan National Alliance (GBNA), All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

(Sources: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk>, & website of the Balwaristan National Front, <http://www.balawaristan.net>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

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 as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.

POK NEWS DIGEST



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