

# POK

## News Digest

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

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Dr Yaqoob-ul Hassan**

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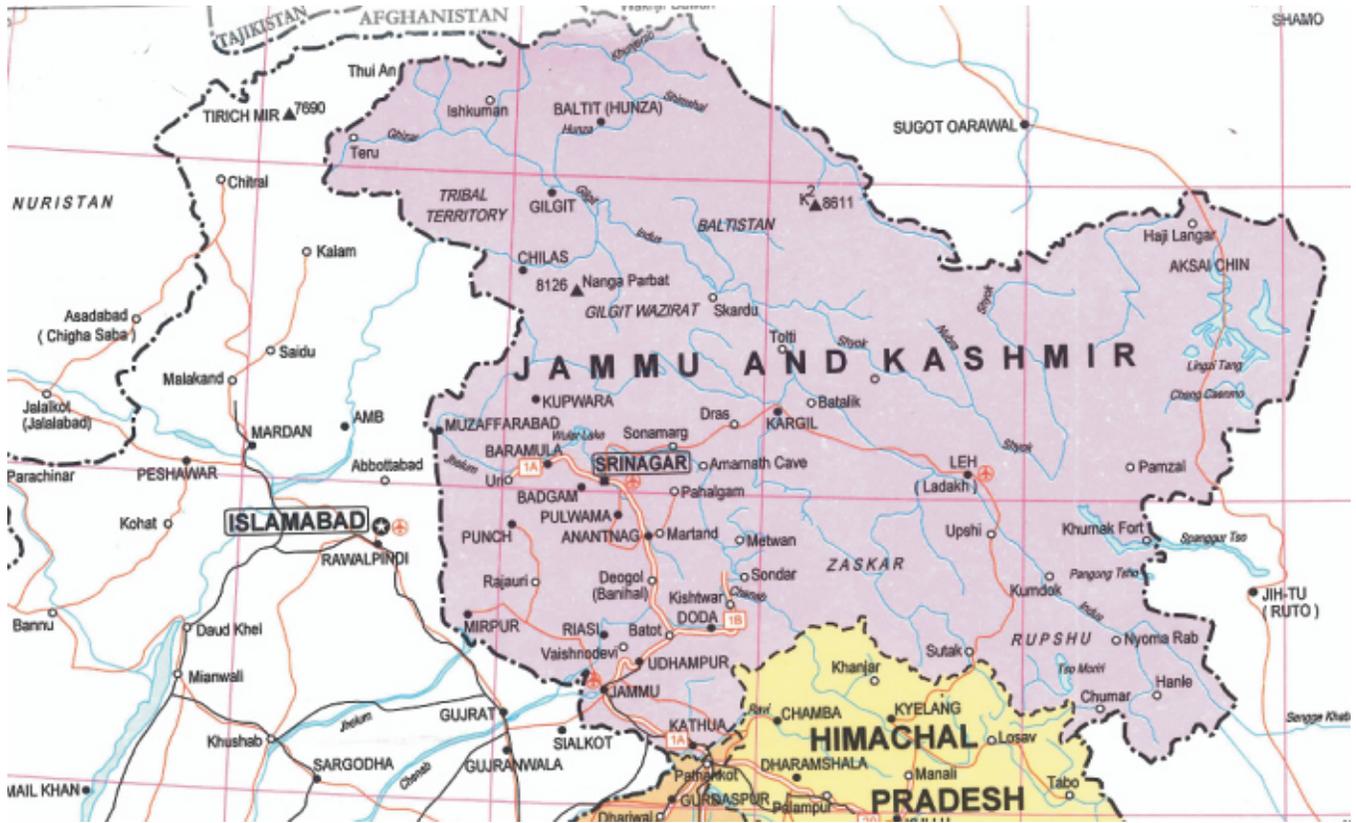
Homebound: A Life Less Ordinary



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## Jammu & Kashmir

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

## **In this Edition**

*The proposal on opening the Kargil-Skardu route as part of the cross Line of Control confidence building measures between India and Pakistan has been on the table for long. However, till date not much progress has been made on this front. Since the LoC was opened up for movement of goods and people across both sides, at one point each in the Jammu sector and the valley, there have been high hopes amongst people in the Ladakh sector that the link between Kargil and Skardu gets materialized. The sentiments are shared by people across the LoC in Gilgit Baltistan. On his visit to Kargil in 2005, former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh echoed the sentiments of the local people and acknowledged their wish to be able to travel and meet their relatives and friends living on the other side.*

*As noted in one of the reports in the current issue, the Kargil-Skardu route once formed an arterial stretch of the Silk Route through which artists and traders from Tibet travelled westwards to what is Pakistan today, and also Afghanistan. However, since partition of India, ties between India and Pakistan have been strained and far from cordial. Therefore, populations on both sides across LoC have remained cut off from each other for decades despite commonalities in culture and ethnicity. Pakistan has shown reluctance to allow movement of people across the Kargil-Skardu route. Similarly, India has not taken up the issue pro-actively even as it is cognizant of the aspirations of the people in the Kargil sector.*

*Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the China-Pakistan Friendship tunnels built over Attabad Lake in Gilgit Baltistan. At least 5 tunnels have been built to replace the stretch of the Karakoram Highway that was damaged during the Attabad landslide tragedy in the year 2010. The tunnels have been jointly built by the National Highway Authority (NHA) of Pakistan and the China Road and Bridge Corporation and it took more than 3 years to complete the construction work of the tunnels.*

**Priyanka Singh**

# Political Developments

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## **“ATC declares MQM Chief Altaf Hussain an absconder”**

*Daily Pakistan, September 1, 2015*

The Special Court of Anti-Terrorism of Gilgit, has declared MQM leader Altaf Hussain an absconder. However, by declaring MQM leader Altaf Hussain absconder, the Anti-Terrorism Court ordered MQM leader Altaf Hussain to come before the court and give arrest within 10 days and follow the prosecution. In case if he could not get arrested, the decision would be announced by doing a one side act. Earlier, the Anti-Terrorism Court issued a warrant of arrest against Altaf Hussain. The cases are under hearing in Court of Anti-Terrorism on provocative speech of Altaf Hussain. Besides this, in seven different Police Station of Gilgit-Baltistan, 9 prosecution cases are booked against the MQM Chief.

<http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/atc-declares-mqm-chief-altaf-hussain-an-absconder-214/>

## **“US must take note of negative Indian attitude: Sardar Attique”**

*The Nation, September 1, 2015*

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, ex-premier of AJK and President of Muslim Conference, has stated that US National Security Adviser Susan Elizabeth Rice has to put her efforts on behest of US to settle the Kashmir dispute. He further stated that India is violating the Line of Control day in and day out by firing with heavy weaponry. The National Security Adviser of the United States has to take note of the highly negative attitude of India, he added. He appealed to the world community to raise their voice in the coming UN General Assembly session for the implementation of UN Security Council's Kashmir resolutions before the world body; pending since January 1948. UN road map on Kashmir has already been accepted by both

Pakistan and India and there should not be any hitch to implement them for the sake of Asian and world peace, he added.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/01-Sep-2015/us-must-take-note-of-highly-negative-indian-attitude-sardar-attique-ahmed-khan>

## **Ravi Nitesh, “Opening the Kargil-Skardu road”**

*Daily Times, September 1, 2015*

It is also an unfortunate fact that despite being close neighbours, they are unable to meet each other easily and have to spend a lot of money to see each other. The lands of India and Pakistan will not give them the opportunity to meet. With the development of civilisation, this world witnessed the division of countries, of culture, of many other things. Sometimes, these divisions created a barrier in human relations. In the same way, the division of India and Pakistan from British India created a barrier in human relations in these north-most regions where Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh regions were divided between Pakistan and India respectively. This region was connected by an important route, the Kargil-Skardu road, which was used as a stretch on the Silk Route since centuries ago. This route was one of the most important routes through which many traders and artists travelled all the way from Tibet to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Being on the way at a junction point, this region served the important purpose of trade and stay. Even at a time when we could not imagine motorised vehicles, fleets of people crossed this region and spread the culture of one region to the other. It was a way of exchanging emotions and humanity. This region still has a variety of languages and traditions. With the divide of countries, this route was closed and travel disallowed. Both regions are now divided by a political Line of Control (LoC). Both sides across LoC have a similar kind of geography and culture. Being an area that has its own identity and

culture, local traditions and culture are completely different from other cultures in the rest of the country. This similarity unites them as one, despite being situated in two countries.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/01-Sep-2015/opening-the-kargil-skardu-road>

### **“For ‘Kashmir cause’: AJK lawmakers want blue passports”**

*The Express Tribune, September 8, 2015*

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government asked the federal government to issue blue and diplomatic passports to assembly members. In a letter to the federal government, the AJK government cited a unanimous resolution passed by the assembly on December 9, 2014 seeking blue and diplomatic passports for members. “The federal government should issue blue passports to MLAs and diplomatic ones to the speaker and deputy speaker as it has been issuing such travel documents to the National Assembly members,” noted the letter directed to the Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan federal minister. AJK Small Industries Minister Akbar Ibrahim stated the elected representatives frequently travel abroad in connection with the Kashmir cause and blue passports would facilitate their travel. “Keeping the Kashmir cause in view, the federal government should issue the blue and diplomatic passports to AJK lawmakers,” he stated. “The AJK government and members should do something for the welfare of the people rather than demanding better passports for undertaking trips overseas under the garb of the Kashmir cause,” commented senior lawyer Raja Sajjad.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/952520/for-kashmir-cause-ajk-lawmakers-want-blue-passports/>

### **“CJ stresses improving bench-bar ties for justice”**

*The Nation, September 8, 2015*

Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir M Azam Khan on September 7 stated that improved relations between the bench and the bar were imperative for the dispensation of speedy and inexpensive justice.

He was addressing a ceremony after laying the foundation stone of complex for AJK High Court and Shariat Court, Mirpur Circuit Bench at the district courts area. Chief Justice of AJK High Court Ghulam Mustafa Mughal presided over the ceremony which was also addressed among others by Minister for Works Ch Pervez Ashraf, AJK Supreme Court Bar Association President Raja Inam Ullah, AJK High Court Bar Association President Sardar Muhammad Raaziq Khan, Mirpur District Bar Association President Muzaffar Ali Zaffar and PWD Building Division Executive Engineer Ch. Inamul Haq. The ceremony was attended by serving and retired judges of the superior and subordinate judiciary, legal fraternity from Mirpur and various other parts of AJK. Highlighting the salient features of the Rs122.77 million project, Executive Eng. Inam stated that the project over a total covered area of 31,770 Sft will comprise six court rooms with chamber, a library, bar room, conference room, office for judicial staff and advocate general, waiting areas and the public toilets. The project will complete within the next two years, he announced.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/08-Sep-2015/cj-stresses-improving-bench-bar-ties-for-justice>

### **Ali Raza, “University in GB”**

*The News, September 10, 2015*

Gilgit-Baltistan has the highest literacy rate in the country. Every year almost 6,000 students pass the intermediate examinations from the region but only 88 students get admitted to government universities in the medical discipline while 55 in the engineering field due to a limited quota. The rest of the students either give up their studies or choose some other field because they cannot afford private universities. The government should increase the quota for students from GB or allow them to get admission on open merit. If this cannot be done then the government should construct at least one university each in the medical and engineering fields in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/61559-university-in-gb>

## **Shabir Choudhry, “Pakistan's Kashmir policy and options of Kashmiri nationalists”**

*Sri Lanka Guardian, September 14, 2015*

Kashmiri nationalists under Pakistan need to analyse the situation; and formulate a strategy to deal with oppression of Pakistan. People of the Valley have challenged the Indian might the other side of the divide. We have two options: either to give – in to the oppression of Pakistan; or to stand up and be counted. There is not third option available to them. For decades Pakistani governments have successfully fooled people of Jammu and Kashmir in believing that Pakistan is their big brother, well-wisher and an advocate. Although a lot of people now understand the game plan of Pakistani establishment, but still there are many who are infatuated by 'love of Pakistan'; and religious compassion. However, is it not fact that Pakistan violated the Standstill Agreement and attacked Jammu and Kashmir territory on 22 October 1947 with intention of occupying it? This Pakistani led unprovoked aggression resulted in deaths of tens of thousands of innocent Kashmiris, and rapes of Kashmiri women; and subsequently forced division of Jammu and Kashmir State? Is it not fact that Pakistan changed Kashmiri people's right of self-determination into right of accession to India or Pakistan? Is it not true that Pakistan refused to withdraw her troops as demanded by the UN Resolution of 13 August 1948; and ensured that the status quo continues, hence perpetuation of our suffering. They were clever to propagate that India has refused to implement the UN Resolutions, and fooled many people for very long time.

<http://www.slguardian.org/2015/09/pakistans-kashmir-policy-and-options-of-kashmiri-nationalists/>

## **“PM approves ex-Justice Munir as CEC of AJK”**

*Pakistan Today, September 14, 2015*

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is also the chairman of Kashmir Council, finally approved Justice Chaudhry Munir as permanent Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir after four years on permanent basis. The position of the CEC was vacant since the general

polls in AJK and no name was unanimously approved by the AJK government, opposition and Ministry of Kashmir Affairs for the last four years. The AJK government sent three names for CEC to PM through Ministry of Kashmir Affairs. The prime minister then approved the name of Justice Chaudhry Munir as CEC and dispatched the summary to AJK government through Ministry of Kashmir Affairs. The AJK government and opposition returned this file to Ministry of Kashmir Affairs while showing no-confidence in Justice Chaudhry Munir and categorically refused to depute Justice Chaudhry Munir as CEC. The news agency quoted sources as stating that government of AJK and opposition had agreed on Justice Abdul Rashid Sulheria as CEC, however, Minister of Kashmir Affairs got approval of Justice Munir from the PM ignoring the opinions of government of AJK and opposition. According to the news agency, when they contacted spokesperson of AJK government and Minister of Information Sardar Abid Hussain Abid, he denied knowledge of the approval of summary of CEC of AJK and stated that no summary in this regard was received by AJK government or by Ministry of Kashmir Affairs.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/09/12/news/pm-approves-ex-justice-munir-as-cec-of-ajk/>

## **Irfan Haider, “PM Nawaz inaugurates Pak-China Friendship Tunnels over Attabad Lake”**

*Dawn, September 14, 2015*

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on September 13 inaugurated the Pakistan-China Friendship Tunnels, which have been constructed by China over the Attabad Lake in Gilgit-Baltistan's Hunza valley. Nawaz stated Gilgit-Baltistan is a vital link in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and would benefit most from this mega project which would particularly increase the tourist influx. The seven kilometre long five tunnels are part of the 24km long portion of the Karakorum Highway (KKH) which was damaged in 2010 due to landslide at Attabad. Two bridges and 78 small bridges have also been constructed on the rebuilt section of the highway, as Radio Pakistan reported. The tunnels have been constructed by the National

Highway Authority (NHA) in collaboration with the China Road and Bridge Corporation to restore part of the road which had submerged under the Attabad Lake. The project has been completed in a span of three years and two months. NHA officials briefed the prime minister on the details of the project and status of upgradation of other parts of KKH. Nawaz urged the Gilgit Baltistan government to maintain high level of transparency and integrity in the expenditure of public money. The premier also stressed to rectify the mistakes of the past and make corrections where necessary. The GB chief minister informed the prime minister that this summer more than 600,000 tourists visited Gilgit-Baltistan which shows upward economic activity in the region. Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Governor GB Barjees Tahir, Chief Minister GB Hafeezur Rehman and China's Ambassador to Pakistan Sun Weidong were also present on the occasion.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1206911>

### **Jamil Nagri, “MPC calls for AJK-like governance system for GB”**

*Dawn, September 14, 2015*

A multi-party conference held on September 14 stated that Gilgit-Baltistan, being a disputed region under resolutions of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, should be given rights and protections under the Constitution of Pakistan, on the pattern of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The conference also declared that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agreements, in the absence of determination of the status of GB, were a violation of its people's rights. The conference titled “The unresolved Status of Gilgit-Baltistan” was organised by PPP at a hotel.

The conference was attended, among others, by PPP leader Amjad Hussain, JUI-F leader Rahmat Khaliq, BNF leader Nawaz Naji, APMML leader Karim Khan, Awami Action Committee leader Ehsan advocate, PTI leader Javed Ali Manwa and leaders and representatives of the MQM, Jamaat-i-Islami, Islami Tehreek and Lawyers Movement for Constitutional Rights. The conference issued a joint declaration saying that local people, with the help of

the GB Scouts, had revolted against the Maharaja of Kashmir and formed an independent government on November 1, 1947. After November 16, 1947, the Pakistani government took over the administrative control of the GB on the basis of accession by the Mirs of the princely states in the region. Despite the accession, the GB has been kept as a disputed territory since then by the Pakistani government in order to win any future UN plebiscite. The GB has been incorporated into the UNCIP Resolution which resolved that till the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, the governments of India and Pakistan will administer the areas with local authority.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1206884/mpc-calls-for-ajk-like-governance-system-for-gb>

### **“We will bring prosperity in Gilgit Baltistan: PM Nawaz”**

*Pakistan Today, September 14, 2015*

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has stated that his government will do everything to bring prosperity to the province of Gilgit Baltistan. He was talking to the media after a meeting with ministers of the province. According to media sources, prime minister talked about marinating security from Mansehra to Gilgit Baltistan to promote tourism in the area. He noted that Gawadar will be transformed into a masterpiece seaport.

<http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/headline/we-will-bring-prosperity-in-gilgit-baltistan-pm-nawaz-294/>

### **“AJK protests against India's ban on beef”**

*The Nation, September 17, 2015*

Azad Jammu & Kashmir echoed with anti-India slogans in the streets during the protest demonstrations across the AJK against the imposition of ban on slaughtering of cow and the sale of beef in Kashmir. Call for the AJK-wide protest demonstrations were given by AJK government against the recent decision of the Kashmir High Court. It has slapped an 83-year-old colonial law imposing ban on the beef in across the Jammu & Kashmir. The rallies in all major AJK cities including district and tehsil headquarters were the hallmark of the day. Besides, businesses, shops

and government offices remained closed and public transport stayed off the roads for some time to mark the protest over the held Kashmir court's decision. In Mirpur, a major protest rally was taken out by hundreds of people belonging to all walks of life. The protest rally was held under the auspices of National Events Organising Committee in coordination with various social, political, students, government, semi government and private employees organisations. City Administrator Khawaja Sajid Mahmood, Deputy Administration Baber Shehzad Chaudhry, National Events Organising Committee Chairman and Deputy Commissioner Amjad Iqbal, Vice Chairman and ADC (G) Haq Nawaz, Secretary General Altaf Hamid Rao, KPC's Secretary General Shujah Jiraal, Sohrab Ahmed Khan and others led the rally which passed through various streets.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/17-Sep-2015/ajk-protests-against-india-s-ban-on-beef>

### **“NSF Holds Protest against Plundering of Natural Resources in Gilgit and PoK”**

*Bihar Praba, September 22, 2015*

Pakistan has been plundering resources of the twin regions of Gilgit Baltistan in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, and transferring it to other provinces. To expose Pakistan's illegal activities, national students' federation recently held a protest demonstration. Pakistan's oppressive policies in Gilgit Baltistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir have affected people of these regions for many years. It has been looting the natural resources for its own use which has led to poverty and unemployment in both regions. Recently, a protest was organised by the National Students Federation in Pakistan occupied Kashmir against Pakistan China Economic Corridor. The federation members alleged that Pakistan was giving a free hand to China in Gilgit Baltistan by allowing it to use resources without paying any royalty to the people of the mountainous region. The protesters also alleged that Pakistan was diverting natural as well as other resources of the twin regions of Gilgit Baltistan and PoK to other major cities of the country. They also demanded that the rights of the Neelam Jhelum hydropower project and Mangla

Dam should be given back to the local residents. Pakistan has entered into an economic corridor agreement with China, which passes through Gilgit Baltistan.

<http://news.biharprabha.com/2015/09/nsf-holds-protest-against-plundering-of-natural-resources-in-gilgit-and-pok/>

### **“PML-N, PPP severely damaged Kashmir cause”**

*The Nation, September 23, 2015*

PTI Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mehmood stated on September 22 that the PML-N and the PPP had severely damaged the Kashmir cause and preferred their vested interest to the national ones. He was of the view the Kashmiri people wanted freshness and visible change in the AJK politics. Addressing a press conference at Jinnah House Sialkot, he stated that the winds of political change are blowing in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and hoped that his party would win the upcoming general and local body's elections. He urged the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure early opening of the ballot boxes in constituency NA 110 (Sialkot-I) to unearth the “massive rigging” made by the PML-N in 2013 general elections. As a result, Khawaja Muhammad Asif had won the election from the constituency. He also accused the PML-N and the PPP for pushing back the Kashmir issue. He added that the main parties had also exploited the basic rights of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). He claimed that the PTI had now become a ray of hope for the people of AJK and the depressed Kashmiri people in held valley. He added that the PTI would win the coming local bodies polls in Punjab and elections of the AJK Legislative Assembly besides giving tough time to both PML-N and PPP. On the occasion, Hafiz Muhammad Raza, a PML-Q leader, Hafiz Hamid Raza, a leader of Muslim Conference and former AJK minister, joined the PTI. Its leaders Umer Dar, Ch Maqbool Ahmed, Tahir Mehmood Hundali, Rana Ejaz Ahmed, Barrister Jamshaid Ghiyas, Mian Shakeel Ahmed, Nusrat Jamshaid Malik and Bushra Razzaq Alvi were also present. In the wake of the strict implementation of the National Action Plan in AJK, the managements of all the private-

sector schools and colleges, located at the Defence Road and F-2 Residential Sector in Mirpur city, have been directed to shift their educational institutions from the existing locations within next 15 days.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Sep-2015/pml-n-ppp-severely-damaged-kashmir-cause>

### **Shujaat Bukhari, “Divided Kashmir and the festering wound”**

*Rising Kashmir, September 27, 2015*

When a delegation of journalists from this side of Kashmir visited Muzaffarabad recently, it reinforced the strong desire of people of both sides of Line of Control (LoC) to unite. The conference organised by Islamabad based think tank Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) in collaboration with Kashmir Institute of International Relations and Kashmir Initiative Group was possible due to tireless efforts of Ershad Mehmud, a distinguished Kashmiri journalist who also happens to be the executive director of CPDR. The young journalists, who had been to the other side for the first time, broke down in a jam-packed hall of Central Press Club Muzaffarabad, and it was not the song by a young singer Bano Rehmat that moved them but the long festering wound that has made people restless on both sides for many decades. Bano's melodious voice to famous lines “Aey Watan Teri Janat Mein Aayengey Ek Din” (O my nation will come to your paradise one day) stirred emotions and many among the audience wept inconsolably. These were not ordinary emotions but manifestation of the pain of separation that tens of thousands of families have been living with.

It was not just about the families who are divided. Many of them could see each other after five decades only in 2005 when the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot bus services were launched as part of Confidence Building Measures. These emotions are political too. When the group of 12 journalists touched Kohala, the first entry point of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir on Pakistani side, they went hysteric.

Clicking pictures and posting them instantly on social media was the first thing, as they related themselves with their own state which once had sovereignty and was on its own. The division of 1947, which also halved the united India, severed Jammu and Kashmir into three pieces – one each in India, Pakistan and China. The outburst of emotions soon after they left the Pakistan boundary was something significant. As a state that stands divided today, Kashmiris on either side cherish the dream of reunion.

<http://risingkashmir.in/article/divided-kashmir-and-the-festering-wound/>

### **“27 Afghan-owned shopping centers sealed”**

*The News, September 20, 2015*

Law-enforcing agencies sealed on 18 September, 27 mega shopping centers in various parts of Mirpur city belonging to the Afghan nationals, living unlawfully, it was officially declared. Mirpur's district administration including police stormed the business centers and hideouts of dozens of unregistered Afghan nationals during a grand operation in different parts of the city, Mirpur Deputy Commissioner Ch. Amjad Iqbal noted. Most of the arrested Afghan nationals were found possessing fake CNICs (Computerized National Identity Cards) showing Pakistani nationality, allegedly issued by NADRA. A special team headed by Assistant Commissioner Raja Qaiser Aurangzeb, DSP Raja Azher Iqbal and the city Inspector Ishtiaq Gillani launched the operation on September 19 morning. The team rounded up over two dozen unregistered Afghan nationals.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-341442-27-Afghan-owned-shopping-centers-sealed>

### **Gowhar Geelani, “What led to Kashmir's division in 1947 – Tribal Raid or Poonch Uprising?”**

*Rising Kashmir, September 27, 2015*

For almost previous seven decades, 68 years to be precise, India's argument while laying its full claim on erstwhile princely state of Jammu & Kashmir has been that the Pakistani raiders (Tribals) were the

first “aggressors” at the time of India-Pakistan Partition in 1947, which subsequently led to war, rioting, massacre of Jammu Muslims, destruction on a large scale, and division of the Himalayan region. But the recent revisionist history seriously challenges India's argument and official claim on Kashmir. Christopher Snedden — renowned Australian historian, author, politico-strategic analyst and academic specialising in South Asia— in his book 'Kashmir: The Unwritten History' “offers a new perspective about who started the dispute over the international status of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).” Most historical accounts claim that the Pakistani tribesmen, aka Pukhtoon or Qabali raiders, instigated the Kashmir dispute by trying to 'liberate' Jammu and Kashmir, but Christopher Snedden claims that “people from the Jammu Province of J&K— Jammuites — actually started it.” “After Partition in 1947, Jammuites engaged in three significant actions. The first was a Muslim uprising in the Poonch area of western Jammu Province against the unpopular Hindu ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh.

The second was serious inter-religious violence throughout the province that killed or displaced large numbers of people from all religious communities. The third was the creation of Azad (Free) Jammu and Kashmir in the area of western Jammu Province that the 'rebels' had 'freed' or liberated. These significant actions all took place before the Maharaja acceded to India on 26 October 1947,” Snedden writes. The Kashmir conflict has long been considered a “nuclear flashpoint” between India and Pakistan. Kashmir's possible resolution or status quo very much defines and determines the future of peace and stability in volatile South Asia. It is seen as a complex issue which involves territory, borders, religion, nationalism, democracy, ethnicity, identity and various other multiple factors. Multiple identities, which include 'Kashmiri nationalism' and 'religious identity' of the majority community, have played a role in mobilising public opinion and shaping various political struggles in the conflict-ridden

Jammu & Kashmir since 1931.

<http://www.risingkashmir.com/article/what-led-to-kashmirs-division-in-1947--tribal-raid-or-poonch-uprising/>

### **“India Must Put Violations in PoK in Focus for Entire World to See, Says BJP”**

*The Indian Express, September 30, 2015*

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on September 29 stated Pakistan always accuses India of human rights violations in Kashmir and now it is time for India to put these violations in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) in focus for the entire world to see. “Pakistan always accuses India of human rights violations in our part of Kashmir. This is an opportunity for India to draw the attention not only of the Government of Pakistan, but of the international community, to the repression and the suppression of the people's aspirations in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and in Gilgit Baltistan,” senior BJP leader and former external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha noted. “This is a known fact that people in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan are very very unhappy. The videos demonstrate clearly that unhappiness. They have come into media attention recently but the unhappiness is very old,” he added. The Kashmir issue has bedevilled Indo-Pakistan ties for the past 68 years. People in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) are demanding a merger with India, thus weakening Islamabad's Kashmir rhetoric against India at various fora.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/India-Must-Put-Violations-in-PoK-in-Focus-for-Entire-World-to-See-Says-BJP/2015/09/30/article3055481.ece>

### **“Former terrorist Hashim Qureshi backs protests in PoK, says Pakistani forces are no better than British colonialists”**

*IBNLive, September 30, 2015*

Former terrorist Hashim Qureshi, who was the man who hijacked Indian Airlines plane Ganga in 1971 and took it to Pakistan for which he was jailed and severely tortured, has come out strongly against Pakistan after CNN-IBN showed videos of massive

brutality in PoK. Reacting to the video showcasing Pakistan government's brutality in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, Qureshi stated that what is seen in the video is not shocking for him as he has endured those hardships. It is not shocking for me because I've been through the atrocities and the people are still going through them. Pakistan only talks about issues which are prevalent in Indian part of Kashmir. Pakistani security forces are no better than the British colonialists," Qureshi noted. "When Maharaja Hari Singh was ruler of Kashmir, Ghansara Singh was the Governor, when the rebellion happened; there was a Pakistan Colonel in Gilgit who captured Ghansara Singh. When Pakistan got Gilgit in PoK, they enforced the same laws that existed during British times and used them to suppress people's voices there," he noted. He also stated that Pakistan is not doing anything for the development of the region. "The PoK region is very rich in resources. Pakistan has no role to play in the prosperity of people in Azad Kashmir. The prosperity is due to the Middle East, England where people from Azad Kashmir can go. Till today Pakistan has built no factory in Azad Kashmir, provided no employment opportunities,"

<http://www.ibnlive.com/news/india/pakistani-security-forces-no-better-than-british-colonialists-former-terrorist-hashim-qureshi-1124366.html>

### **“Ghulam Sawar to be awarded for saving lives during Gilgit sectarian clashes”**

*Daily Pakistan, September 30, 2015*

Ghulam Sarwar, a resident of Gilgit city, will be awarded with Tamgha-e-Shuja'at for his brave act of protecting a number of people during the 2005 sectarian clashes in Gilgit-Baltistan. Sectarian violence rocked Gilgit-Baltistan with the assassination of Syed Agha Ziauddin Rizvi, a prominent Shia and prayer leader of Gilgit's Imamia Mosque in January 2005. On January 13, he succumbed to injuries sustained during an attack in Gilgit on January 8, 2005. One of the assailants killed by his bodyguards was later identified as a cadre of a banned outfit. The assassination attempt was followed by a violent reaction by Shias. More than a dozen people were killed and an unspecified number injured, before troops were deployed to

restore law and order and impose curfew in the area. The area continued to simmer for weeks after the assassination and a curfew remained in place for one month in Gilgit and Skardu. Nevertheless, these harsh measures failed to restore normalcy in the region. Sheltering the people from the opposite sect at that point was a dangerous and brave act. But Ghulam Sarwar saved many innocent lives during the clashes. The government of Pakistan has acknowledged his bravery and he has been nominated to receive Tamgha-e-Shuja'at on 23rd March 2016, official sources noted.

<http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/ghulam-sawar-to-be-awarded-for-saving-lives-during-gilgit-sectarian-clashes/>

# Economic Developments

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## **Javid Iqbal, “Cross LOC Energy Potential”**

*Greater Kashmir, August 31, 2015*

Pakistan Administered Kashmir [PaK] called AJK across LoC has power potential estimated to be around 18,000 MW. Add to that 40,000 MW potential of Gilgit-Baltistan on Indus river, another 1,200 MW in its tributaries, that works up to more or less 60,000 MW. On this side of LoC—Indian administered Kashmir [IaK] the power potential, given the latest technology that generates much more, the dimensions of source being the same, is estimated to be 30,000 MW. Energy all added makes it 90,000 MW across the bloody line that divides JK, putting in limbo its immense economic potential. Erstwhile pre-1947 JK may not need all that energy for its own use, however the revenue generated from sale of what could be remain in excess of the need would be a windfall. There are ifs and buts in plenty, as the politico-economic choke continues, with the state divided across LoC.

Across LoC, the total area of the state is 87,000 sq. Miles, more or less 52,000 sq. miles in IaK and 35,000 Sq. Miles of PaK and northern territories. Population wise also areas across LoC rank lower with lower energy needs. It would be interesting to look at how the power potential is being developed across LoC. Comparison is highly warranted as economic strangulation of Kashmir continues, while major subcontinental powers vie for sovereignty. The sovereignty claims stifle hapless people.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/opinion/story/195580.html>

## **“New Strategy: AJK govt to revive industries”**

*The Express Tribune, September 1, 2015*

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has kicked-off an integrated plan for the revival of

dozens of 'sick' industrial units in the industrial districts of Mirpur and Bhimber, official sources stated. At least a hundred industrial units of small and medium size remain non-functional there, following lack of required infrastructural facilities including natural gas, water and electricity. The plan was approved in a recent high-level meeting attended by senior officials of state industries department and representatives of local business fraternity, among others, sources noted. They further stated the government would extend all possible facilities to the existing and upcoming investors in the trade and industrial sectors in AJK. The authorities have also decided to initiate action against allottees of industrial and commercial plots, in the industrial estates of Mirpur, Bhimber and Kotli districts, who failed to construct industrial units within stipulated time as determined in the existing rules and regulations.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/949089/new-strategy-ajk-govt-to-revive-industries/>

## **“PM Nawaz Sharif inaugurates 42 development projects in AJK”**

*The News Tribe, September 2, 2015*

Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif paid visit to Azad Jammu and Kashmir on September 1. Nawaz Sharif visited Azad Jammu and Kashmir and inaugurated several development projects in Bagh. According to details, PM attended the ceremony held at Bagh. Prime Minister of AJK Chaudhry Abdul Majid welcomed Pakistani PM. President of AJK Sardar Yaqoob was also present in the ceremony. Nawaz inaugurated 2 development projects completed with cost of Rs 2.7 billion. Sources stated that PM will also chair AJK Council meeting during his visit.

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2015/09/02/pm-nawaz-sharif-inaugurates-42-development-projects-in-ajk/>

## **“AJK offers best suited environment for investors in business sector: AJK PM”**

*Associated Press of Pakistan, September 5, 2015*

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhary Abdul Majeed stated on September 4 that AJ&K offers best suited and conducive atmosphere for foreign investors - mostly on the part of the UK-based lakhs of Kashmiri expatriates, to launch investments in tourism, industrial and hydel power sectors.

[http://www.app.com.pk/en\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=356615&Itemid=2](http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=356615&Itemid=2)

## **“Ecneec approves integrated transit trade management system”**

*The News, September 5, 2015*

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec), in its meeting on September 4 chaired by finance minister Ishaq Dar accorded approval to Integrated Transit Trade Management System (ITTMS) for enhancing facilities at Chaman, Torkhum and Wagha borders at an estimated cost of Rs31.686 billion including ADB's loan of \$250 million. The committee discussed and approved the Economic Transformation Initiatives in Gilgit-Baltistan. The project entails a total cost of Rs12, 315.50 million including \$89.98 million soft loan from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project is aimed at transformation of the region through improvements in agriculture and land development and farm-to-market roads in Gilgit-Baltistan. The project also includes value chain development and social mobilization. Ecneec also approved “Prime Minister's Youth Training Scheme 2015-18 at the total cost of Rs23, 594.911 million, and land acquisition for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor-related KKH Improvement Project. Islamabad-Raikot section (Phase-I), Havelian-Thakot (120Km) road at the total rationalised cost of Rs6859million. The National Highway Authority will be the executing agency for the project.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/60606-ecneec-approves-integrated-transit-trade-management-system#>

## **“All set for the ground breaking of 100 MW Gulpur Power Project”**

*Pakistan Today, September 18, 2015*

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif would perform the ground breaking ceremony of the 100 MW hydropower project in Gulpur AJK on October 15, 2015. It was apprised during a meeting between Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Federal Minister for Water and Power and Dr.Song Jong Hwan, Ambassador of South Korea to Pakistan. Area of mutual interest and cooperation in power sector development came under discussion in the meeting. The Ambassador also informed about the progress on the 154MW Patrind hydropower project in AJK and hoped that it would be completed even before the scheduled time of December, 2016. Speaking on the occasion the Minister lauded the role of Korean Companies in the Power sector development and assured maximum support for the facilitation of the Korean companies in all respect. He hoped that these hydropower plants would be helpful in resolving the electricity shortage and would provide low –cost electricity to the people of Pakistan. Mr. Muhammad Younas Dagha, Secretary Ministry for Water and Power was also present on the occasion.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/09/18/national/all-set-for-the-ground-breaking-of-100-mw-gulpur-power-project/>

## **Hussain Siddiqui, “Project priority”**

*The News, September 19, 2015*

This refers to the news report, 'Country can't afford load shedding for long: Nawaz' (September 17). How true. Is the government serious about minimising load shedding through timely completion of various under-construction and ongoing power projects? It has not released funds allocated for a number of projects under the PSDP for the FY2015-16 despite the PM's repeated directions to Wapda to complete the project on a war footing. The 969MW Neelum-Jhelum project has been allocated Rs11 billion during the current fiscal year but not a single penny has been released yet. The Tarbela Fourth Extension Project (1,410MW)

has been allocated Rs984 billion during FY2015-16. Likewise, the Golen Gol project (106MW) (Rs7.585 billion) and the Keyal Khwar project (122MW) has been allocated Rs2.134 billion during the FY2015-16. New hydropower projects such as the Dasu Dam (2,160MW) has been allocated Rs52.360 billion whereas the Diamer-Bhasha Dam (4,500MW) has been allocated Rs10 billion for land acquisition and Rs6 billion for the project. None of these projects have reportedly received any funds so far. One wonders what the priorities of the government are.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/63402-project-priority>

### **Mehtab Haider, “Govt considering financing options for Bhasha Dam project”**

*The News, September 21, 2015*

After reluctance shown by World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) to finance Bhasha Dam, Pakistan is considering different options including seeking multi-billion dollar loan from China and launching bond to attract overseas Pakistanis for investing in it. “We are considering unbundling Bhasha Dam into construction of hydropower Dam then power turbines will be built into IPPs mode. We had already invested Rs100 billion on acquisition of land for Bhasha Dam,” official sources confirmed. Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal noted that the ground-breaking ceremony of Bhasha Dam would be held during the next calendar year 2016. He stated that one Chinese company showed its interest to invest \$40 to \$50 billion in hydropower projects and currently they were conducting their feasibility studies to select projects. On the main Dam, the type of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam will be Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC). The maximum height of the Dam will be 270 m (highest of its type in the world). On diversion system, there will be 2 number Diversion Tunnel (right side) and 1 number Diversion Tunnel (right side). Regarding main spillways, there will be 14 gates and the size of each gate will be 11.0 x 16.5 m. On the reservoir side, the maximum operating level of Diamer Bhasha Dam will be EI 1,160m and minimum operating level of EI is 1060m. The Gross Capacity of the Dam will be 9.0 BCM (7.3 Million

Acre Feet MAF). The live capacity of the Dam will be 7.9 BCM (6.4 MAF). Regarding the outlets of the Bhasha Dam, the technical feasibility illustrates that there will be 7 low level outlets and five sluicing. On sluicing tunnels, the Diamer-Bhasha Dam will have one right bank (through conversion of one diversion tunnel) and on the left bank there will be another tunnel.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/63812-govt-considering-financing-options-for-bhasha-dam-project>

### **“Federal Govt to implement 4-lane road project in GB”**

*Radio Pakistan, September 24, 2015*

Federal Government will implement four-lane road project to connect Gilgit-Baltistan with rest of the country. This was stated by Gilgit Baltistan's Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur- Rehman while talking to a delegation called on him in Gilgit. The CM noted Chitral expressway will also be constructed at a cost of eight hundred and twenty million rupees. He stated feasibility of Astore-Shonter tunnel road project has been completed while Naran Babusr road will be made all weather. He stated work on widening and metaling of Gilgit-Skardu road will be started soon.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/newsdetail/79598/1>

### **“5 years on: New tunnels over Attabad Lake threaten boatmen livelihood”**

*The Express Tribune, September 27, 2015*

Boatmen in Gilgit-Baltistan fear losing their livelihood after the completion of four large tunnels along the south shore of Attabad Lake. “We are going to lose 50 per cent of our business, probably more,” stated a 47-year-old boat operator, Malik Shah. “Maybe the tourists will still come for us, but we do not know that, so maybe not.” In January 2010, a massive landslide blocked the flow of River Hunza, creating a natural dam and burying 20 people beneath it. The rising water displaced thousands of residents and submerged countless villages, fields, orchards as well as a 19-kilometre stretch of the Karakoram Highway (KKH). During the last five years, boatmen have carried people and cargo, including dead bodies, rare gemstones and fugitives, between central Pakistan and China.

Although the crossing is a pleasure for tourists, for villagers, truckers and smugglers it was more of a bother since they had to take the hour-long ride in hand-made wooden boats several times a week. Earlier this month, after several years of construction, Chinese engineers completed four large tunnels along the south shore of the 13-mile-long Attabad lake. Traffic will now flow on the newly diverted Karakoram Highway which will cause hundreds of boat operators and day labourers to lose their livelihood.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/963178/5-years-on-new-tunnels-over-attabad-lake-threaten-boatmen-livelihood/>

# International Developments

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## **“US renews support for Bhasha Dam, renewable energy projects”**

*The News, September 8, 2015*

The United States on September 8 renewed its support for the Diamer Bhasha Dam and commitment for investment in renewable energy projects in Pakistan. The commitment was renewed when the Acting Assistant to USTATED Administrator of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Larry Sampler, met Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on September 8 along with senior USTATED and US Embassy officials. Larry Sampler referred to his participation in the recently held economic cooperation conference in Afghanistan and stated the participants acknowledged the substantial contribution made by Pakistan at the event.

The minister, while appreciating US\$250 million assistance for temporarily displaced persons (TDPs), reiterated that disbursement of funds/financing of projects would be carried out in consultation with the government. He noted an estimated 1.9 billion dollars were required for the ongoing Operation Zarb-e-Azb, beefing up security and meeting expenses on return/rehabilitation of TDPs. Larry Sampler further noted the US government and people looked forward to the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the United States. Both sides hoped that important matters relating to bilateral economic cooperation would be discussed during the visit, further strengthening the overall Pak-US relations. Larry Sampler also on this occasion renewed support for the Diamer Bhasha Dam project and highlighted the commitment for investment in renewable energy projects. He stated the US would continue to support Pakistan government's initiative for improving governance in the power sector and

would support small hydro and solar power projects. The USTATED, he noted, plans to hold a business opportunities conference to highlight the potential and opportunities in Pakistan in the renewable energy sector.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/14511-us-renews-support-for-bhasha-damrenewable-energy-projects>

## **Peerzada Ashiq, “China has established its presence across PoK”**

*The Hindu, September 3, 2015*

China has already invested in a big way in constructing the 1,300-km Karakoram Highway that runs through Gilgit-Baltistan. To a visitor to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) travelling from Islamabad to Muzaffarabad, the Chinese presence cannot go unnoticed. For instance, there are saffron tents of Chinese workers on the banks of the Jhelum and the Neelum rivers and signboards in the Mandarin asking drivers to slow down. Pakistan has opened up the PoK to foreign investment after the 2005 earthquake, which left 80,000 people dead. From offices to schools and from medical colleges to power projects, foreign countries are rebuilding the PoK capital, with China taking the lead in developing road infrastructure and building major power projects, along with the Water and Power Development Authority of Pakistan. The Rs. 274.88-billion Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project will generate 969 MW, enough to solve the severe power shortage in the PoK and the neighbouring Islamabad. The biggest is the Kohala project, which is set to generate 1,100 MW. By 2020, Pakistan aims to generate around 2,569 MW in the PoK. At least 15 smaller power projects are being implemented. “Around 3,000 Chinese workers are stationed in Azad Kashmir [the PoK]. The three power projects are set to generate huge revenues,” Raja Farooq Haider, 60, former Prime Minister and Leader of the

Opposition in the PoK, noted. “Chinese workers here take help from interpreters. They come to our markets but avoid mingling with the population.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/china-has-established-its-presence-across-pok/article7608736.ece>

### **“Saudis unhappy over delay in Saudi-funded construction projects”**

*Dispatch News Desk, September 19, 2015*

Saudi Arab has expressed concerns over delay in construction of Saudi-funded projects in Pakistan including King Abdullah Hospital Mansehra costing Rs 1.42 billion. However, Pakistan assured Saudi authorities that project of hospital will be completed in next six months. Saudi Mission Fund for Development (SFD) expressed concern over delay of mega Saudi-funded projects but Pakistan requested them for another six months for construction of such mega projects. These projects were offered by Saudi Arabia in 2005 after a massive earthquake devastated Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/saudis-unhappy-over-delay-in-saudi-funded-construction-projects/97960>

### **“Brunei gives Rs 87m to ERRA for reconstruction work in KP, AJK”**

*Daily Times, September 30, 2015*

The Bruneian High Commissioner on September 29 handed over a cheque of Rs 87 million to the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) for completion of three health and education projects in Kyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in a ceremony held at the ERRA headquarters. Brunei High Commissioner Dato Mahmud Siadin, ERRA Acting Chairman Brigadier Abu Bakr Amin Bajwa along with advisors and director generals of various development directorates were also present in the ceremony. At the outset of the ceremony, the ERRA acting chairman appreciated the Bruneian government's keen interest for the completion of three education and health projects in KP and AJK. He expressed hope that due to the disbursement of grant, the projects, including

Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Chakeaser Shangla in KP, Govt Degree College Forward Kahuta in Bagh, AJK, and Government Primary School Jawargarh Poonch in AJK, would be completed on priority basis. While highlighting the achievement of ERRA rehabilitation and reconstruction, the ERRA chief of staff stated that out of 14,512 projects, ERRA has completed 9,914, which is 68.32%, adding that the authority has rebuild 611,088 (99.4%) houses that were destroyed in the earthquake. He noted ERRA was not oblivious from the health sector and constructed better health facilities in these areas including hospitals, district health units, and dispensaries, adding that the health sector's overall progress is 63.07%.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/30-Sep-2015/brunei-gives-rs-87m-to-erra-for-reconstruction-work-in-kp-ajk>

### **“Gilgit Baltistan: Womens' Rights Violations Raised at UN Human Rights Council”**

*UNPO, September 21, 2015*

On the occasion of the 30th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Senge Sering, representative of the World Economic & Resource Council, highlighted to what extent Islamabad policies induces staggering challenges to women's rights in the UN-declared disputed Region of Gilgit-Baltistan. General debate - Agenda Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. WERC is deeply concerned at the worsening incidences of violence against women as ensuring equal rights, and recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of unequal gender relations and obstacle to development and peace, is essential to building a prosperous society. We believe that one cannot think of achieving poverty reduction – the first millennium development goal – if women face torture and discrimination on regular basis. It is found that women lacking freedom are less aware of their rights. For instance, almost 90% of the women surveyed in Pakistan in 2002 did not

know they deserved or had rights. Here, the case of the women of Gilgit Baltistan region can be used as example. Pakistan citing Gilgit Baltistan' status as disputed with India, denies the region a constitutional framework and legislative autonomy, which results in the lack of rule of law, accountability and judicial recourse governing women rights. The recent incident of men accused of raping 30 women and making videos in Gilgit; or the rape and murder cases of Shagufta Anam and Shabana Akhtar; or the case of women of Diamer being denied political rights, all indicate that the laws enshrined in the constitution should protect local women.

<http://unpo.org/article/18572>

### **“Strengthening economic ties: Chinese academics for better cultural connectivity”**

*The Express Tribune, September 8, 2015*

Chinese academics have called for improving cultural connectivity between China and Pakistan to strengthen trade and economic ties. They highlighted the significance of Gandhara civilization and the potential of Gilgit-Baltistan's cultural heritage that can be a source of attraction for the tourists from the neighbouring East Asian country. They also emphasized the significance of developing Hunza into a cultural resort. “Hunza valley serves as an important passage for travellers and traders moving across the region,” Professor Li Xiguang stated while speaking at a roundtable on “Preserving and promoting cultural heritage along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” on September 8. Prof Xiguang, who serves as director Pakistan Study Centre at Tsinghua University and also the Dean of School of Journalism at China South-Western University, stated that the valley was where Gandhara art began and flourished, and the area would be of immense interest to the Chinese tourists. The event was organised by the Pakistan-China Institute in collaboration with China's Tsinghua

University and the Bolin Cultural Group to discuss bilateral relations of the two countries in the light of the economic corridor and ways to improve cultural connectivity between the two neighbours.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/952621/strengthening-economic-ties-chinese-academics-for-better-cultural-connectivity/>

# Other Developments

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## **Dr Faisal Ali, “Water in AJK”**

*The News, September 6, 2015*

In 2008, a survey of 650 water sources by the LG&RD department of Azad Jammu and Kashmir revealed 100 percent contamination with Coliform bacteria. Due to the absence of a policy on drinking water, EPA recommendations to improve water quality have yet to be implemented. As a preventive measure, Section 144 should be enforced throughout AJK, besides establishing a network of waste treatment plants. The AJK EPA should be given the vehicular emission testing system (VETS), noise meters and air quality monitoring equipment. The agency also needs waste water, surface water and microbiological characterisation laboratories and regular staff to work on environmental issues. Moreover, public health and hygiene demand a vibrant Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS) programme which includes filtration, boiling and solar disinfection of water.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/60742-water-in-ajk>

## **Shabbir Mir, “Homebound: A life less ordinary”**

*The Express Tribune, September 7, 2015*

The tourism sector in Gilgit–Baltistan is at low ebb. Ever since the 2013 attack on a base camp in Nanga Parbat, the decline has been consistent. Thousands of people affiliated with the business in the region have been rendered unemployed. Many of them have been forced to shift gears and explore other avenues to earn a living. Abdul Qayum is among the courageous few who decided to stay put and persevere. Over the years, he has not allowed himself to be discouraged by failure and still hopes for a better future. Be it obstinacy or an unwillingness to give up, Qayum's journey has been his sole companion and – when the need arises – his only weapon of choice.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/951932/homebound-a-life-less-ordinary/>

## **Zehra Abid, “Gilgit-Baltistan: Pakistan's Hidden Paradise”**

*The Diplomat, August 31, 2015*

When the twin towers were hit on September 11, there was panic in Pakistan's Hunza Valley. Javed Ali was sitting in the lobby of his hotel, the Hilltop, when the news came in. There were shrieks and wails all around him as people watched the attacks unfold on TV. Tourists called their friends and family back home, wanting to rush out of Pakistan, and frantic calls were made to embassies. Everyone left as soon as they could. For years afterwards, Hunza saw few tourists. Restaurant signs in Japanese and Korean have faded, but they have not been removed; they offer fond memories of happier times. Now, more than 14 years later, Hunza is finally experiencing something of a tourism renaissance. In the valley's capital Karimabad, tourists have scrambled for space this summer. Visitors slept on pavements and tents were pitched on hotel roofs. Most of these tourists were Pakistani. “Earlier, there would only be foreign tourists but after 9/11, they stopped coming. Now Pakistanis have started coming in,” a local noted. It is almost as if the rest of Pakistan has finally discovered this semi-autonomous region, which borders the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan administered Kashmir to the southwest, Wakhan Corridor to Afghanistan to the northwest, China to the north, and Indian Kashmir to the southwest.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/gilgit-baltistan-pakistans-hidden-paradise/>

# 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,, 010)

## 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:** Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan

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

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

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

**Disclaimer**

*PoK News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred to as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilgit Baltistan' by the government of Pakistan. The news reports have been abridged to provide clarity. IDSA is not responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of the news items.*

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