

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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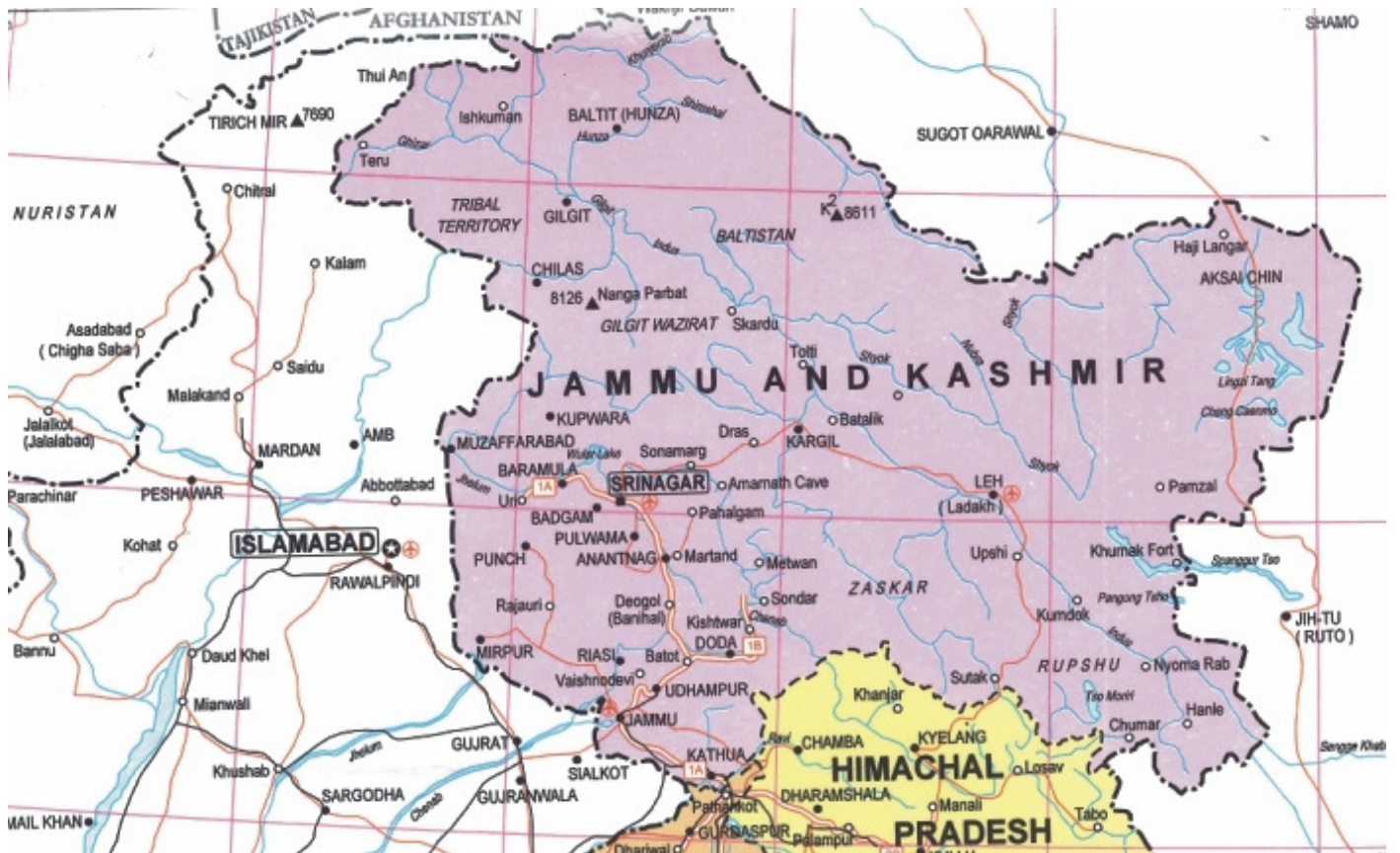
• Urdu Media

We Need Rights Not Constitution

After Crackdown Nationalists Went Underground



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Jammu & Kashmir

In this Edition

While the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) remains shrouded in widespread conjectures concerning its future prospects, several trucks carrying goods from China transited to the Sost dry port located in Gilgit Baltistan. The arrival of approximately 150-300 Chinese trucks was advertised as the actual operationalisation of the multi-billion corridor slated to be built across parts of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan before culminating at the warm water port situated at Gwadar in Balochistan. A Chinese ship had already reached Gwadar a little before the arrival of trucks at Sost, as one of the news report in the current issue suggests. The chief minister of Gilgit Baltistan, Hafeezur Rehman and the Commander of the FCNA (Force Command Northern Areas) were present on the occasion. The crossing of goods trucks is considered to be a significant development as far as the progress on the CPEC is concerned.

Meanwhile, an interim report from the Senate Special Committee on the CPEC proposed that simultaneous with the road connectivity with Tajikistan, a gas line be established- one that could facilitate the transfer of natural gas from Tajikistan to Gilgit Baltistan. In this regard, there are suggestions to introduce adjustments in the TAPI (The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline) plan so that the pipeline could also be used to ferry gas supply to Gilgit Baltistan region, as reports indicate. Besides, the political leadership in both the so called 'AJK' and Gilgit Baltistan have been issuing statements on a regular basis to convince the people that both regions will get their due share in the mega CPEC project. Such political statements seem to have become frequent in view of the widespread apprehensions amongst locals that they do not stand much of a chance vis a vis accruing benefits of the CPEC.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Illegal Afghans among 52 arrested”

The Nation, November 1, 2016

The police arrested 52 persons including 45 illegal Afghan national during a combing operation in the outskirts of Mirpur. According to police, personnel of the law enforcement agencies headed by Islamgarh Police head conducted a combing operation against illegally-settled persons and their facilitators in the adjoining town of Islamgarh. The LEAs personnel arrested 52 persons including 45 Afghan nationals. The police noted that the combing operation has been launched across the district under the National Action Plan to apprehend illegally settled foreign nationals and locals involved in facilitating or providing such elements shelter. In the wake of the combing operation, 12,000 illegal Afghan nationals have been expelled from Mirpur district so far, the police added.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/01-Nov-2016/illegal-afghans-among-52-arrested>

Shabbir Mir, “First Chinese shipment rolls into Sost dry port in Gilgit-Baltistan”

The Express Tribune, November 1, 2016

Hundreds of Chinese trucks loaded with goods rolled into the Sost dry port in Gilgit-Baltistan on October 31st as a multibillion-dollar project between Pakistan and China formally became operational. The shipment arrived more than two weeks after the first Chinese ship docked at Gwadar port that is the centre of the \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The corridor is about 3,000-kilometre long consisting of highways, railways and pipelines that will connect China’s Xinjiang province to the rest of the world through Gwadar port. The first consignment, loaded on 150 to 300 trucks, was received by G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman and the commander of the Force Command Northern Areas Maj Gen Saqib Mehmood, who had especially

flown in to be at the historic occasion. “This is going to be the fate changer for our country,” noted Rehman after the ceremony at the Sost dry port, which has recently been handed over to the National Logistics Cell (NLC) for a period of 20 years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1216912/first-chinese-shipment-rolls-sost-dry-port-g-b/>

“Kashmiris Determined to Defend Homeland, Repulse any Aggression: Masood”

Radio Pakistan, November 1, 2016

President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan urged the international community to ask India to abandon its reckless behaviour fraught with grave risks for the peace and security of the region. In a statement on November 1, he noted that India has tried to deliberately mischaracterize its aggression. The President AJK further stated that the people of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan are determined and ready to defend their homeland and repulse any aggression.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/01-Nov-2016/kashmiris-determined-to-defend-homeland-repulse-any-aggression-masood>

“PPP organises rally in Gilgit Baltistan against centre’s ‘apathy’”

Business Standard, November 2, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan chapter of the Pakistan People’s Party threatened not to allow the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project through the region until constitutional status of Gilgit Baltistan is determined. This demand was made during a protest procession on 68th Independence Day of Gilgit-Baltistan organised by the PPP at Danyor on November 1. The Party claimed that about seven to 10,000 activists of various political parties had participated in the protest. Tributes were paid by participants through a

resolution in the memory of the martyrs of the war of independence in 1948. The resolution noted that the gathering rejected the Northern Areas Nautor Rules, 1978, under which the ownership of GB lands was given to the federal ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan. Terming the rules as a black law, it demanded its repeal to protect the ownership of land. The resolution urged all opposition parties in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly to table a bill seeking repeal of the rules. Compensation for the affected people of KKH, CPEC and other projects was also demanded.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/ppp-organises-rally-in-gilgit-baltistan-against-centre-s-apaty-116110201216_1.html

“17 illegal foreigners held in Mirpur, AJK”

The Nation, November 2, 2016

As many as 17 illegal foreigners were arrested during a crackdown on November 2. Police stated that operation was conducted in Chaksawari area of district Mirpur in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). During operation 17 foreigners illegally residing in AJK without the required legal documents were apprehended. The police have registered cases against the nabbed foreigners and they were being interrogated.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/02-Nov-2016/17-illegal-foreigners-held-in-mirpur-ajk>

“GOVT Taking Keen Interest in Development of GB: Barjees”

Radio Pakistan, November 2, 2016

Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Chaudhry Barjees Tahir noted that a new era of development and prosperity will usher in Gilgit-Baltistan after completion of projects carried out under the CPEC. He was talking to Governor Gilgit Baltistan Mir Ghazanfar Ali Kan in Islamabad on November 2. Chaudhry Barjees Tahir noted federal government is taking keen interest in the development of Gilgit-Baltistan and China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC) is a great gift of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the people of the area. Barjees Tahir assured the Governor for construction of Gilgit-Skardu Road, Baltistan University and other hydel projects. Governor Gilgit-Baltistan thanked the minister and noted that the people of GB appreciate the development projects by the federal government in the area.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/02-Nov-2016/govt-taking-keen-interest-in-development-of-gb-barjees>

Shabbir Mir, “Education revolution: Govt plans to set up new varsity in Baltistan”

The Express Tribune, November 3, 2016

The government of Gilgit-Baltistan is in consultation with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to establish a separate university in the Baltistan region of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), the state’s minister for education stated on November 2. “I recently had a detailed meeting with the HEC chairman and have sorted out many details about the university,” Ibrahim Sanai noted about his meeting in Islamabad. The establishment of Baltistan University was one of the promises made by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the Gilgit-Baltistan elections – which were swept by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in June 2015. “You can say there has been a breakthrough and now we will have work speeded up,” noted Sanai while talking to reporters. Earlier this week, G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman stated that the federal government released Rs2 billion for the establishment of Baltistan University.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1219020/education-revolution-govt-plans-set-new-varsity-baltistan/>

“Bilateralism fails to resolve Kashmir issue: Masood Khan”

Pakistan Observer, November 4, 2016

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan, November 3, ruled out option of bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, saying, the

bilateralism had not and would not produce due results in this regard. Addressing a news conference to brief media about his engagements and meetings with dignitaries of other countries to highlight Kashmir issue during his foreign visit, President AJK noted that he had held fruitful interactions with the British, Norwegian members of parliament and others. “At least world has started realizing the sensitivity of the Kashmir issue for the world peace” he stated adding British MPs had also pledged to highlight the Kashmir issue. To a question about resolution of Kashmir issue through bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India, he noted that option of bilateral talks had failed in producing due results because India used to place a huge agenda for bilateral dialogue and push the Kashmir issue in background. “Moreover, due course of dialogue Indian side often become annoyed on petty issues and much of the time went waste in convincing them back to negotiation table” Masood Khan noted adding therefore, option of bilateral talks had not and would not produce due results; therefore, Kashmir issue should be resolved through international involvement.

<http://pakobserver.net/bilateralism-fails-to-resolve-kashmir-issue-masood-khan/>

Shabbir Mir, “Sost dry port: Sino-Trans files appeal against chief court’s decision”

The Express Tribune, November 4, 2016

The apex court of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) on November 3 suspended a court decision which had ended Chinese participation in the operation of Sost Dry Port. The Supreme Appellate Court’s decision came after Chinese company Sino-Trans filed an appeal against an order of G-B’s Chief Court, which ultimately stopped it from working in the dry port, located near the border with China. “Our appeal has been admitted by the apex court,” stated Amjad Hussain, a counsel for Sino-Trans. “This means the decision of chief court is suspended and the issue is back to where it was before,” Hussain stated. Hussain, who is also president of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in G-B, stated the apex court will hear the appeal

soon. Earlier, the G-B Chief Court which is – equivalent to a high court – had allowed a local firm, Dry Port (Limited) Company, to manage Sost Dry Port. Sino-Trans and Dry Port had clashed over which company had the authority to run the port. The dispute was taken up in the G-B chief court, which ruled in favour of Dry Port. The company later leased the port to the National Logistics Cell (NLC) for a period of 20 years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1220109/sost-dry-port-sino-trans-files-appeal-chief-courts-decision/>

Naveed Butt/Ali Hussain, “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Senate’s body for bringing gas from Tajikistan to GB”

Business Recorder, November 5, 2016

Interim Report of Senate’s Special Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) strongly recommends laying of a parallel pipeline along the proposed road to Tajikistan to bring natural gas from Tajikistan to Gilgit. The 3rd Interim Report of the Special Committee on CPEC was laid by Senator Taj Haider in the Senate on November 4. According to the report, the Committee noted that Tajikistan and China are working on a 1000 km long \$10 billion gas pipeline project to supply 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year (Line D) from its super giant Galkynysh gas field to China. “The Pipeline from gas field will be going in a North-East direction. Connection from this pipeline will also serve domestic market of south eastern Tajikistan. Let us explore the possibility of negotiating small modifications in the TAPI agreement to supply Gilgit-Baltistan with natural gas from Tajikistan. The Committee can constitute a sub-committee to assist in negotiations with the government of Tajikistan and Afghanistan,” the committee report noted. Pakistan has already signed TAPI, the agreement to bring natural gas from Tajikistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-stories/0/99941/>

“AJK PM Set Two Years for Completion of New Mass Public Welfare Projects”

Business Recorder, November 5, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider has set two years completion period for new developmental projects in AJK and directed all departments to hold review meetings on a monthly basis. While addressing the first fortnightly developmental review meeting on late November 4, the Prime Minister emphasized on transparency in developmental process. The premier formed a committee headed by Minister for Finance to implement financial discipline in AJK. He directed the ministers to hold developmental review meeting of their respective departments on monthly basis. At district level, committees were also formed for review and monitoring the development projects. He further stated that government has limited resources to spend on and it is need of the hour to adopt a policy of austerity. He also stated that all state resources are being utilized for the progress and uplift of the people and special attention is being paid to development of backward and remote areas. He noted that high standard and transparency in the implementation of projects would be the hallmark of government. He also stated, this government should set splendid example by saving national resource in execution of the development projects. He added that public service is the pivot of politics of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government and all efforts are being made under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in this regard.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/326605-ajk-pm-set-two-years-for-completion-of-new-mass-public-welfare-projects.html>

“Gilgit-Baltistan: Grasped by British and colonized by Pakistan but akin to India”

New Delhi Times, November 7, 2016

Prime Minister Modi in his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of Lal Qila (Red Fort) mentioned, along with Baluchistan, of Gilgit-Baltistan. The move has been hailed as the ‘uncoiling of history’ with a

‘strategic’ objective. Gilgit-Baltistan is a chunk of strategically located high-altitude territory at the north-western corner of British India. Gilgit used to be a part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir till the Maharaja leased the agency to British in 1935 for 60 years. The political department in Delhi administered it through a British officer with security handled by the Gilgit Scouts- a military force consisting of British officers. As Indian independence inched closer, the British terminated the lease on August 1, 1947 and returned the region to the Maharaja who appointed Brigadier Ghansara Singh of the J&K state forces as its Governor. Two Gilgit Scouts officers – Major Brown and Captain Mathieson – were loaned to the Maharaja at Gilgit. When Maharaja Hari Singh acceded to India on October 31, 1947, Major Brown imprisoned Brigadier Ghansara Singh in the army canteen, and informed his erstwhile British Political Agent, Lt Colonel Roger Bacon, who was then at Peshawar, of the accession of Gilgit to Pakistan. Major Brown officially raised the Pakistani flag at his headquarters on November 2 and claimed that he and Mathieson had opted for service with Pakistan.

<http://www.newdelhitimes.com/gilgit-baltistan-grasped-by-british-and-colonized-by-pakistan-but-akin-to-india123/>

Sehat Hifazat: “G-B’s residents get new health insurance scheme”

The Express Tribune, November 7, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan on November 6 formally launched a health insurance programme which is supported by the German government. The launch ceremony for the “Sehat Hifazat Health Insurance Scheme” was held in City Park. “The programme has initially been started in four districts,” stated G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman while launching the scheme. He explained that around 40,000 people living in the region would be given health insurance cards under the Rs190 million project. “It will be expanded to other districts in the next phase.” Rehman also stated that the Prime Minister’s health insurance project had already been launched in four other districts of G-B – Skardu, Kharmang, Shigar and Diamer. Under this programme, Rs300,000 had been given to deserving

people. “We will ensure health facilities for the poor in the region over the next three years,” Rehman noted. He also stated that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government was determined to help people living in remote areas and those who fall in the category of ‘underprivileged’ classes.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1222817/sehat-hifazat-g-bs-residents-get-new-health-insurance-scheme/>

Shabbir Mir, “Paving the way: FWO bags tender to build Skardu-Jaglot road”

The Express Tribune, November 8, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan government has tasked the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) to build the much-awaited Skardu-Jaglot road, officials noted on November 7. The road, which is expected to be completed at a cost of Rs46 billion, is the only route connecting Baltistan to the rest of G-B and the country. The road is also significant from the defence standpoint as Kargil, Siachen, Batalik and the Chourbat borders fall in this region. Thousands of security forces are deployed in these areas. “The tender bid was held in Islamabad recently and awarded to FWO,” G-B government spokesman Faizullah Faraq noted on November 7. The existing 250-kilometre road, passing through the towering Himalayan mountain range, is narrow and dilapidated, causing immense problems for travellers. There are accidents aplenty on this road which was initially built in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Over the years, landslides triggered by rains and earthquakes have left the route extremely precarious.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1223706/paving-way-fwo-bags-tender-build-skardu-jaglot-road/>

Ijaz Kakakhel, “Govt asked to include dam, airport, park construction in GB”

Daily Times, November 8, 2016

A parliamentary body of the Upper House on November 7 recommended to the government to include the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, construction of an airport in Gilgit-Baltistan, and an industrial park in

projects under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). A committee was constituted to resolve a boundary dispute between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. Senator Sajid Mir chaired the committee. Headed by the Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Secretary, the committee will submit its report within 15 days to the Minister of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan about demarcation of boundaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with GB. The demarcation matter was moved in the parliamentary panel through a petition by former Senator Syed Muzammil Shah and others. Deputy Commissioner Mansehra, while briefing the committee on the matter, stated that the dispute would be resolved soon. Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan stated that the border line exists on the Babusar Top, adding the matter could be resolved amicably. Senior officials at the Ministry of Kashmir and GB Affairs were of the opinion that as far as the issue of encroachments in Gitti Dass area and Babusar Top was concerned, the collector Mansehra was fully empowered to take action and remove any illegal encroachments in the territorial limits of the province. They noted that the GB government had always discouraged such encroachments in the territorial jurisdiction of Mansehra.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/08-Nov-16/govt-asked-to-include-dam-airport-park-construction-in-gb>

“Punjab to help out AJK in healthcare sector”

Daily Times, November 8, 2016

The Punjab government decided to provide assistance to the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in the field of medical education and healthcare sector. Sources informed that Azad Jammu Kashmir Health Secretary Khalid Hussain Asad met with Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education (SHC&ME) Secretary Najam Ahmad Shah in his office on November 7 to discuss about the improvement in healthcare sector. During the meeting, allocation of seats for undergraduate and post-graduate students for AJK in Punjab’s medical colleges was discussed. The SHC&ME secretary informed the meeting that the Punjab government has already allocated a total number of 36 seats in medical

and three seats in dental colleges in Punjab for AJK students. The SHC&ME department shall consider allocating 5% quota for students of AJK for post-graduation in FCPS/MD/MS in the next PG induction in teaching hospital and this matter shall be placed before the joint admission board for a final decision. It was also decided that SHC&ME department would consider maximum number of doctors of AJK for two years diploma in anaesthesia to overcome shortage of specialist doctors in this field.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/punjab/08-Nov-16/punjab-to-help-out-ajk-in-healthcare-sector>

“Senate wants CPEC projects in GB”

Pakistan Observer, November 8, 2016

Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (KA&GB) on November 7 recommended to set up an industrial park and a new airport in Gilgit Baltistan. The committee also reviewed the progress of building of Diamer Bhasha Dam and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The committee chaired by Senator Professor Sajid Mir, stated the Ministry of KA&GB and Planning and Development Department of GB will review progress of various projects like dams, renovation of airports and roads in CPEC for providing benefit to the locals. The committee was informed by the ministry of KA&GB and officials of Planning and Development department that there are many projects linked with CPEC especially roads, buildings, dams and electricity projects in Gilgit Baltistan. The body asked the officials to ensure more projects linked with CPEC and provide details regarding ongoing projects. The Minister for KA&GB Ch Muhammad Barjees Tahir, informed the committee that contract of Rs 42 billion has been finalized for Gilgit-Skardu road and government was also establishing a grid station. He stated that the government is going to establish a university in Baltistan and start classes for engineering and medical studies. The officials of planning and development department noted that Diamer-Bhasha Dam, Dasu Dam, and Bunji Dams are included in the CPEC project.

<http://pakobserver.net/senate-wants-cpec-projects-in-gb/>

“Kashmir has major share in CPEC projects: AJK President Masood Khan”

Pakistan Today, November 8, 2016

Azad Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan stated that the Kashmir issue, good governance, the supremacy of merit and development are priorities of incumbent government. Addressing a news conference in Mirpur, he noted Pakistan will continue diplomatic, political and moral support to the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination. He further stated that India has created a war-like situation along the Line of Control (LoC) and working boundary to divert the attention of international community. He also stated that Kashmir has a major share in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, which will consequently bring development in the region. He noted the government is encouraging the private sector in the communication as well as tourism sectors to generate revenue and minimise dependency on Pakistan.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/blog/2016/11/08/kashmir-has-major-share-in-cpec-projects-ajk-president-masood-khan/>

Shabbir Mir, “Govt reluctance: Protesters continue to block KKH near Danyor”

The Express Tribune, November 13, 2016

Protesters have been blocking the Karakoram Highway (KKH) near Danyor intermittently for almost a week to protest against the detention of some of their activists and a ban on staging a religious event inside an educational institution. The protest, however, has not hampered trade under the China – Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), with traffic continuing to flow through an alternative route, the police noted. The protest, staged mostly by religious-political activists and members of the Imamia Students Organisation (ISO), started almost two weeks after the first-ever shipment under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) reached the Sost Dry Port, formally kicking off the multi-billion dollar project considered a ‘game changer’ for the country. Protestors have been staging a sit-in at Danyor on KKH since November 7. The demonstration began a

day after law enforcement detained over two dozen activists, including student leaders of the ISO, who had staged a religious event in a school in Danyor. The event violated a general government-instituted ban on holding events of religious nature in educational institutions in the region.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1229243/govt-reluctance-protesters-continue-block-kkh-near-danyor/>

“Committee holds Meeting to ban on Religious Functions in Gilgit Educational Institutions”

Radio Pakistan, November 14, 2016

The first meeting of a parliamentary peace committee was held in Gilgit and discussed the issue of ban on religious functions in educational institutions. The Parliamentary peace committee will meet again and finalize its recommendations after consultations with all stakeholders to maintain peace in Gilgit. Earlier, Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz -Ur - Rehman constituted a parliamentary peace committee to settle the issue of ban on religious functions in educational institutions.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/14-Nov-2016/committee-holds-meeting-to-ban-on-religious-functions-in-gilgit-educational-institutions>

Shiraz Rathor, “Ministry of Kashmir Affairs operating sans its secretary”

Daily Times, November 15, 2016

Ministry of Kashmir Affairs is running its affairs without a secretary for the past month. Due to non-appointment of the secretary, piles of files are waiting for the new secretary. Some most important matters are also lying pending in the ministry. The former Secretary, Abid Saeed, was transferred to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a month ago, but the government failed to appoint his successor. It is interesting to note that no additional or Joint Secretary was given the charge of the secretary of the ministry during his absence. The Kashmir affairs secretary is an important post, as the official also has the additional charge of the Kashmir Council and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Council simultaneously, due to which the development budget

of AJK as well as Gilgit-Baltistan has been stopped. It is pertinent to mention that the Kashmir Council’s rules and regulations permit the appointment of an independent secretary, but the government has put the council under the Kashmir Affairs Secretary just to keep the council under federal government’s control. Similarly, the Gilgit-Baltistan Council’s rules of business say that one out of any five elected members of the council would enjoy the status of in-charge minister, but the federal government always gives the charge of the GB Council to the federal minister for Kashmir affairs.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/15-Nov-16/ministry-of-kashmir-affairs-operating-sans-its-secretary>

“People in Gilgit-Baltistan Suffer From Huge Power Crisis”

Bihar Prabha, November 15, 2016

Winter is knocking at the door of Gilgit-Baltistan with thick snow, frozen rivers and temperatures as low as -15 degrees celsius. However, the region, surrounded by three mighty mountain ranges, is staring at a season of discontent amid a severe power shortage. The irony is that even after contributing hugely to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) power project, its share in the supply chain is negligible. Repeated power outages render heating devices useless, leaving the residents at the mercy of the weather.

<http://news.biharprabha.com/2016/11/people-in-gilgit-baltistan-suffer-from-huge-power-crisis/>

Shabbir Mir, “Vulnerable to natural disasters: Nearly half of G-B houses at risk”

The Express Tribune, November 16, 2016

A ‘hazard mapping’ survey of Gilgit-Baltistan has indicated that nearly half of all the houses in the region were exposed to multiple risks and hazards. The findings were shared by a non-governmental organisation FOCUS Pakistan during a seminar in Gilgit on November 15. FOCUS’ Executive Officer Nusrat Nasab revealed that of the 290 households surveyed, they found that over 46 per cent were at

risk. “Similarly, almost all of the schools, health facilities, mosques and more than half of the bridges, telecom towers and power stations are at direct risk from disasters,” warned Nasab. She added that most of the population living downstream was at risk, as were people living along streams, riverbeds and steep slopes. Even those living near glaciers were at risk. Nasab stated that G-B direly needed early warning systems as the region was prone to natural disasters. In this regard, she noted there was a need for the government to formulate adequate polices and legislation in order to address the matter.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1232675/vulnerable-natural-disasters-nearly-half-g-b-houses-risk/>

“No Shortage of Wheat in any part of Gilgit-Baltistan: Spokesman”

Radio Pakistan, November 16, 2016

Food Department Gilgit-Baltistan has supplied allocated wheat quota to all districts of the region well in time to avoid any food shortage in winter. A spokesman of the food department stated there is no shortage of wheat in any part of Gilgit-Baltistan. He also stated that over one hundred thousand wheat bags have been procured in depots of all districts of the region. He further stated PASCO is providing 1500000 bag wheat allocated to Gilgit-Baltistan annually.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/16-Nov-2016/no-shortage-of-wheat-in-any-part-of-gilgit-baltistan-spokesman>

“Kashmiris Real party of Kashmir Dispute: Masood”

Radio Pakistan, November 16, 2016

President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan stated that Kashmiris are real party of the Kashmir dispute. This was noted by President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir while addressing a delegation of Azad Kashmir Society for National and Social Reforms in Rawalakot on November 16. The President also stated that AJK would become part of CPEC and state government

is engaged in negotiation with federal government on this vital issue.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/16-Nov-2016/kashmiris-real-party-of-kashmir-dispute-masood>

“Settlement of Kashmir issue must for peace”

The News, November 17, 2016

Former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Atiq Ahmed stated peaceful settlement of Kashmir issue was essential for peace, security and stability of South Asia. “If the partition of sub-continent populated with a billion was possible through dialogue, the peaceful solution of Kashmir issue is also possible that way. All major forums of the world support the strong stance of Kashmiris but only India’s intransigence is the obstacle to it,” he noted during a meeting with International Islamic University (IIU) rector Dr. Masoom Yasinzai and President Dr. Ahmed Yousif Al-Draiweesh on campus. On the occasion, they discussed in detail the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir and matters of mutual interest pertaining to high education. He appreciated the role of universities in raising the awareness of Kashmir issue and keeping it alive. The former AJK premier also referred to the efforts of promoting education in Kashmir and stated awareness and identification of problems were key to the solution. He also highlighted the state of educational projects and overall development in Azad Kashmir.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/165434-Settlement-of-Kashmir-issue-must-for-peace>

“AJK Govt Decides to encourage Private Sector for Promotion of Tourism”

Radio Pakistan, November 17, 2016

Azad Kashmir government decided to encourage private sector for promotion of tourism in the region. Official sources noted that Kashmir Council has approved budget for construction of 110 km long road and establishing Tourism Resorts on this road. The tourism resorts would be established at Chakkar, Lasdana, Ganga Chuti, Toli Peer, Divi Galli and other

places. The sources further added that investment in tourism will not only help in generating revenue to the AJK government but alleviate poverty and unemployment.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/17-Nov-2016/ajk-govt-decides-to-encourage-private-sector-for-promotion-of-tourism>

“Protesters block KKH to seek compensation”

Dawn, November 18, 2016

The landowners affected by Karakoram Highway (KKH) expansion project in Gilgit-Baltistan on November 17 staged a protest demonstration in Sust village of upper Hunza and blocked the road to demand compensation. Traders in Sust Bazaar also observed shutter down strike to show solidarity with the protesters. The protesters stated the project was completed in 2007 for which their fertile land and commercial buildings along KKH were acquired but they were yet to be compensated. The protesters noted that National Highway Authority (NHA) was deliberately delaying payment of compensation to them. They also stated that it forced them to protest and go on strike. They demanded action against NHA general manager and other officials. They also chanted slogans against NHA and administration and in favour of the army. The protesters threatened to block KKH for indefinite period if their demand was not met. They appealed to prime minister and chief of army staff to take notice of the issue and take steps to address grievances of the landowners by ensuring payment of compensation to them. The blockade of KKH caused problems to commuters, transporters and truckers. Loaded trucks coming from China remained stranded on the road for several hours. Addressing the protesters, Advocate Amjad Hussain noted it was a sensitive issue. He stated that KKH was routed of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor but landowners in Gilgit-Baltistan were not paid the compensation amount. He also stated that GB Supreme Appellate Court also issued order about the payment of compensation to landowners last year. “NHA had not complied with the court order,” he further added.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1297075/protesters-block-kkh-to-see-compensation>

Afshan Zahra, “Pakistan and Kashmir inter-related: President AJK”

Aaj TV, November 19, 2016

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan stated that Pakistan and Kashmir are inter-related and Pakistan is incomplete until Kashmir becomes part of its territory. He was addressing a seminar organized by Punjab University, Department of Political Science and Centre for South Asian Studies at Al Raazi Hall on November 18. PU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Mujahid Kamran, senior journalist from Indian Occupied Kashmir Murtaza Shibli, Director CSAS Dr Umbreen Javed, faculty members and a large number of students were present on the occasion. He also stated they were determined not to surrender on Kashmir. “This is not Line of Control between Pakistan and India, rather this is Cease-fire Line”, he noted.

<http://aaj.tv/2016/11/pakistan-and-kashmir-inter-related-president-ajk/>

“AJK governance: JI extends support for education reforms”

The Express Tribune, November 22, 2016

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)-Azad Kashmir chapter offered its support to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government in its efforts to improve the education system of the state. JI-Azad Kashmir chapter chief Abdul Rashid Turabi on November 21 met AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider. Among other issues, they discussed education reforms in AJK. Turabi extended his support for undertaking reforms in the education department and introducing National Testing Service (NTS) to ensure provision of quality education. The two also discussed tense situation along LoC, ongoing Kashmir freedom movement and good governance in AJK. Turabi lauded the PM for highlighting the Kashmir issue during his five-day visit to Europe.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1238789/ajk-governance-ji-extends-support-education-reforms/>

“CM Sindh vows to Chair Cabinet meeting at Gilgit Baltistan”

Business Recorder, November 25, 2016

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, in principle November 25 decided to construct Sindh House in Gilgit-Baltistan and own a tunnel in the area as “Sindh Tunnel” which was one of the routes of CPEC there. He took this decision while talking to chief minister of Gilgit -Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez Rehman who called on him at the CM House, noted a statement. The Sindh CM noted that it was PPP government in the center which made Gilgit Baltistan as province and with the passage of time it would emerge as full-fledged province with a constitutional cover. “Our government sowed the seed of making Gilgit Baltistan as province and definitely it would grow and the life of poor people of the area would change your tourist industry that would flourish with the development of infrastructure,” he stated. Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan stated that he had offered all the four provinces of the country to build their provincial houses in the region. “I would allot you (Sindh) land if you construct Sindh House as you have constructed in Islamabad,” he noted. Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah appreciating his spirit accepted the offer to construct Sindh House there, “This would help to interact with the people of Gilgit Baltistan,” he stated. The GB Chief Minister also stated that there were five natural tunnels from which CPEC route had been taken out. “I am offering you to own a tunnel and develop it according to the culture of Sindh and Sindh Tunnel would represent the people of your province in our area,” he stated.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/329794-cm-sindh-vows-to-chair-cabinet-meeting-at-gilgit-baltistan.html>

“AJK to build bunkers along 640km LoC”

The Nation, November 25, 2016

Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan announced that bunkers will be constructed at a cost of Rs6 billion pledged by Pakistan along the 640-kilometre Line of Control in AJK. He was

addressing a ceremony held to distribute compensation cheques to the affectees of the unprovoked Indian firing at Government Girls Degree College in Chowki town, Samahni sector of Bhimbher district. He disclosed that government of Pakistan has pledged to provide a Rs6 billion for the construction of bunkers on 640 km long LoC. The AJK premier stated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif assured the AJK government of assistance for the people living in the LoC areas. Responding to a demand of the local population, Raja Farooq Haider noted all the health units along the LoC were being upgraded and equipped with latest instruments. Required medical staff and medicines would be available at these centres to tackle any emergency situation, he added. He noted India created a war-like situation on the LoC and the people of AJK will fight shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces of Pakistan. The cheques worth Rs300,000 each were disbursed to the heirs of martyrs. Similarly, cheques worth Rs250,000 were given to disabled persons and Rs100,000 each was given to those injured in the recent Indian firing on the LoC in Bhimbher district of Mirpur division.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/25-Nov-2016/ajk-to-build-bunkers-along-640km-loc>

“Entire country will benefit from CPEC, says Gilgit-Baltistan CM”

The Daily Siasat, November 27, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafizur Rehman stated that all China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects will be completed by 2029 and the entire country would benefit from it. “Today, Russia is getting closer to Pakistan as the government is steering us out of isolation internationally with its correct economic policies,” Rehman noted at the Karachi Press Club on November 26. He also stated that the country has wasted numerous opportunities earlier but CPEC would certainly boost the economy. Stating that the work on the Rs35 billion fiber-optic cable laying project under CPEC has been completed in Gilgit-Baltistan, Rehman further noted an alternate

communication system to the region will be provided by it.

<http://www.siasat.com/news/entire-country-will-benefit-cpec-says-gilgit-baltistan-cm-1074090/>

“Establishing the writ of law: Police baton charge female protesters to clear highway”

The Express Tribune, November 28, 2016

Ghotki police baton charged female protesters on the National Highway near the Mirpur Mathelo Bypass to clear the highway on November 27 night. The police also arrested many women, who were later released. An armed clash took place between the Chijan and Bozdar tribesmen over the ownership of a house in Channa Muhalla, Mirpur Mathelo. During the scuffle, persons of both tribes used wooden sticks and pieces of rocks to attack one another. As a result, Sughra, wife of Ghulam Mustafa Chijan, was injured, causing the assailants to flee. Later, scores of women belonging to the locality, along with the injured woman, staged a protest demonstration on the National Highway near the Mirpur Mathelo Bypass, due to which traffic was suspended. Mirpur Mathelo police rushed to the scene and, instead of talking to the protesters, resorted to baton charging them and arrested some women who were taken to the police station and later released.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1247168/establishing-writ-law-police-baton-charge-female-protesters-clear-highway/>

“Masood Khan Invites Chinese Investors to Invest in Azad Kashmir”

Radio Pakistan, November 28, 2016

A nine-member delegation of Chinese investment group led by Senator Talha Mahmood called on AJK President Masood Khan in Islamabad. They discussed matters of mutual interest, including progress on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project. On the occasion, the AJK President noted that accomplishment of CPEC will take Pakistan-China to the new heights. Masood Khan invited the

Chinese investors to invest in Azad Kashmir as well, and assured them his full support in this regard.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/28-Nov-2016/masood-khan-invites-chinese-investors-to-invest-in-azad-kashmir>

“AJK committed to support liberation of IoK: Farooq Haider”

The Nation, November 28, 2016

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Raja Farooq Haider reaffirmed the commitment of the AJK government to utilize its full strength and resources for the liberation of Kashmir. He assured the people of IHK that they would never find themselves alone in their struggle for right to self-determination. Prime minister also lauded the services of lawyers' community for the stability of a democratic system and supremacy of constitution in the country. He also stated the commitment of lawyers for the protection of democracy and democratic system was proof of their determination. He further stated the lawyers' community had given numerous sacrifices for restoration of judiciary and added that the role of lawyers' community is of paramount importance in introducing reforms in the system of provision of justice.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/28-Nov-2016/ajk-committed-to-support-liberation-of-iok-farooq-haider>

“Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister visits Jinnah Naval Base at Ormara”

Daily Times, November 29, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez Ur Rehman visited Pakistan Navy's Jinnah Naval Base (JNB) at Ormara, Balochistan. The dignitary witnessed operational arrangements as well as various social empowerment initiatives undertaken by Pakistan Navy for socio-economic uplift of coastal area populace. He was accompanied by Vice Admiral Waseem Akram, Commander Coast during the visit. The Chief Minister visited Pakistan Navy Cadet College Ormara and Bahria Model College where

he witnessed parade display and other activities by cadets and students of Bahria Model College respectively. The Chief Minister also visited PN hospital, PNS DARMAAN JAH where he was briefed about the medical services being provided to local public as well as the medical camps frequently organized by Pakistan Navy in coastal areas. Later, Commander Coast Vice Admiral Waseem Akram briefed the guest about PN initiatives for security and development of the region. The dignitary appreciated and acknowledged the efforts being put in by Pakistan Navy for defence of Coastal areas as well as social empowerment initiatives for betterment of local populace.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/29-Nov-16/gilgit-baltistan-chief-minister-visits-jinnah-naval-base-at-ormara>

Mohammad Jamil, “Is resolution of the Kashmir dispute possible?”

Daily Times, November 29, 2016

Speaking in the National Assembly during a debate on the LoC situation, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, noted, “Pakistan is ready for a dialogue with India on the condition that Kashmir dispute is part of it...Pakistan is fully capable of defending its borders and will not accept any Indian influence or hegemony under any circumstances.” The fact that only 60 out of 342 members were present to discuss such an important issue of Kashmir, which Pakistan considers its jugular vein, only showed the seriousness of the parliamentarians. They appear to be more interested in increasing their salaries, perks and privileges than discussing issues of national importance. Anyhow, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reiterated for the umpteenth time that Pakistan wants to settle all issues with India through dialogue. But how long will he and his aides keep harping on this tune to international community’s great fun and to their own peoples’ humiliation? But India neither accepts UNSC resolutions nor third-party mediation nor out of box solution. The question is what could be done that international community takes Pakistan seriously? Pakistan should work hard to put its house in order and set its priorities right. It should focus on

building large reservoirs on a war footing to ensure availability of water to the farmers to produce food for the growing population, and electricity for Industries at an affordable price to make them competitive in the world market. Secondly, those politicians and businessmen who have stashed billions of dollars in foreign banks should bring them back and invest in Pakistan. And last but not the least, there should be socio-economic justice in the country to create unity among the people.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/29-Nov-16/is-resolution-of-the-kashmir-dispute-possible>

D Suba Chandran, “Pakistan’s corridor of uncertainty”

The Hindu, November 29, 2016

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor became operational during the second week of November 2016. Pakistan’s prime minister, chief of army staff and other senior officials along with some Chinese were in Gwadar, witnessing the departure of the first shipment from the port, after having arrived there through different routes from Kashgar and from within Pakistan. ‘Game-changer’ is the phrase being used by many in Pakistan to describe the \$45-billion CPEC. The pace at which the project progressed despite political controversies deserves admiration: the Chinese and the Pakistanis went ahead with the corridor within a period of two years. Finally, from an Indian perspective, there are a few issues. Firstly, the CPEC as a corridor runs through Gilgit Baltistan; besides investments on the KKH, the Chinese are also investing in hydel projects in a region that our parliamentary resolution considers Indian. Secondly, perhaps, there is something for New Delhi to learn from the pace at which the CPEC got operationalised. Still, despite all these problems, the Chinese have succeeded in getting goods from Kashgar into Gwadar within two years. A regional comparison with Chabahar and Sittwe would highlight the pace at which the Chinese have operated: it is something widely admired in our neighbourhood.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/pakistan-cpec-china-and-india/article9398836.ece>

“President AJK congratulates new CJCS, COAS”

Pakistan Observer, November 29, 2016

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Masood Khan on November 28 welcomed the appointment of Lt-Gen Zubair Mahmood Hayat as new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of the Staff Committee (CJCS). In a statement, the President also congratulated the new Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa. He congratulated the outgoing Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Raheel Sharif upon the conclusion of his tenure. The President lauded General Raheel Sharif’s efforts to combat terrorism. He also recognised the dedicated services of outgoing CJCS General Rashid Mahmood.

<http://pakobserver.net/president-ajk-congratulates-new-cjcs-coas/>

“Diamer Basha Dam to Play Vital Role in Overcoming Electricity Shortage: CMGB”

Radio Pakistan, November 29, 2016

Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz-ur- Rehman noted that the Diamer Basha Dam will play a vital role in overcoming electricity shortage in the country. Talking to a delegation in Gilgit, he stated forty-eight thousand of canal land has been acquired for the dam at a cost of 68 billion rupees. He also stated that the Diamer Basha Dam being four time higher than Tarbela dam, will produce 4500 MW hydel electricity.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/29-Nov-2016/diamer-basha-dam-to-play-vital-role-in-overcoming-electricity-shortage-cm-gb>

“Debating media’s role: Journalists need greater understanding of rights”

The Express Tribune, November 30, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan’s Minister for Information Iqbal Hasan on November 29 complained that journalists in the region lacked an understanding of human

rights. “In the context of Gilgit-Baltistan, the history of media [here] shows that there is a dire need to provide awareness through media to and get a clearer picture of the relationship between media and human rights,” he noted while addressing a seminar on “Media and human rights in Gilgit Baltistan- Trends and Dimensions” at the Karakoram International University (KIU) on November 29. He lamented that local media outlets did not have enough understanding of human rights. Talking about the recent agreement signed between KIU and China, he stated KIU would prove to be a “hub for research and educational activities” in meeting the challenges G-B was likely to face in the wake of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1248747/debating-medias-role-journalists-need-greater-understanding-rights/>

MA Mir, “New inductees: AJK govt expands cabinet by three”

The Express Tribune, November 30, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan decided to extend the state cabinet, sources noted. This follows a similar move by the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Punjab, where the provincial government on November 28 inducted 11 new provincial ministers. Now, the PML-N-led government in AJK has decided to expand its nine-member cabinet by adding three members and a special advisor to the AJK premier. Sources further stated that among the new inducted members is former president of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed. Saeed, who hails from Mirpur, defeated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) AJK head and former AJK prime minister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry during the elections in July 2016. Sources further stated that Saeed is being brought in to take over the reins of the finance ministry, which is currently being managed by Dr Najeem Naqi.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1248751/new-inductees-ajk-govt-expands-cabinet-three/>

Economics Developments

“Inviting investment: AJK premier offers rebates for entrepreneurs”

The Express Tribune, November 4, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider on November 3 announced a number of welfare projects for the valley. Addressing a high-level committee in Muzaffarabad, the PM stated that investment by entrepreneurs in tourism, agriculture and livestock sectors in the region will be encouraged. For this purpose, Haider noted that the AJK government would offer tax benefits to entrepreneurs to generate economic activity in the region and create job opportunities for the locals. He added that the government would introduce reforms in the education system to promote merit, instead of nepotism. Further, clan and tribal affinities for appointments to government posts would be discouraged.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1220112/inviting-investment-ajk-premier-offers-rebates-entrepreneurs/>

Shabbir Mir, “Teething problems: G-B excise department decries understaffing, lack of authority”

The Express Tribune, November 9, 2016

Due to lack of adequate laws and shortage of staff, Gilgit-Baltistan’s (G-B) Excise and Taxation department has been unable to adequately carry out its duties. “The situation has badly affected the performance of the department as it lacks the legal cover to crack down even on stolen vehicles,” an official stated on November 3. “Due to the lack of relevant laws, we are unable to confiscate vehicles smuggled into the region,” added the official, requesting anonymity. The official continued that the department was trying its best to handle motor vehicle registration fees and other allied taxes in the best way possible. The department was formed in 2009 after

the region’s constitutional status was brought at par with a province under the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1224857/teething-problems-g-b-excise-department-decries-understaffing-lack-authority/>

“Power Generation: Centre releases Rs240m for two projects in G-B”

The Express Tribune, November 13, 2016

The federal government released Rs240 million for two small power projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B). These include Rs140m for 16MW hydropower project at Niltar and Rs100 million for another 20MW hydropower project at Hanzil. According to official documents, seven power projects were approved for Gilgit-Baltistan in the federal public sector development programme. However, funds have been released only for the Niltar and Hanzil power projects. The centre has yet to provide allocated sums for the remaining power projects in G-B, official sources noted. The total budget allocated by the federal government through Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs is Rs11.75 billion and Rs4.5 billion has been released for G-B so far. The ministry has also released Rs4.6 billion for various projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir under the PSDP allocations.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1229238/power-generation-centre-releases-rs240m-two-projects-g-b/>

“14MW Naltar Hydro Power Station to be Commissioned in November”

Radio Pakistan, November 17, 2016

In Gilgit, fourteen megawatt Naltar hydro power station will be commissioned in the last week of current month. Power department sources noted that the cabling work of power House is at completion

stage. The project after commissioning will help to minimize load shedding from Gilgit city and suburbs.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/17-Nov-2016/14mw-naltar-hydro-power-station-to-be-commissioned-in-november>

“Rs 5b Allocated to Overcome Power Shortage in GB”

Radio Pakistan, November 23, 2016

The federal government allocated five billion rupees under public sector development program for producing hydro energy to overcome its shortage in Gilgit Baltistan. This was stated by Minister

Information Planning and Development Gilgit Baltistan Iqbal Hassan while responding to the questions of Radio listeners during a live program in Radio Pakistan Gilgit. The Minister stated that Gilgit Baltistan Government is also spending three billion rupees for energy sector and establishment of grid station. He visited various sections of Radio Pakistan Gilgit and got information the medium.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/23-Nov-2016/federal-govt-allocated-rs-5b-for-overcoming-power-shortage-in-gb>

International Developments

“Kashmir EU-Week all set to be launched today”

Pakistan Observer, November 7, 2016

Kashmir Council EU (KC-EU) is all set to launch the week-long event of “Kashmir EU-Week” at European Parliament in Brussels on November 7. The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir (AJK), Raja Farooq Haider will inaugurate the event at the European headquarters. The Kashmir EU-Week’s programmes comprising international conferences, seminars, debates, workshops, video casting of a documentary and a photos and a handicraft exhibition on Kashmir would be held from 7th to 11th November in capital city of Belgium. The Kashmir EU-Week is being hosted by Sajjad Haider Karim (MEP), Afzal Khan (MEP) and Friends of Kashmir Group. A statement issued by KC-EU noted that guest participants from other countries started to reach Brussels. The Chairman of Kashmir Council EU Chairman noted that the people of Kashmir have offered matchless sacrifices for the resolution of Kashmir dispute and the use of brute force cannot stop them from continuing the struggle to achieve the inalienable right to self-determination.

<http://pakobserver.net/kashmir-eu-week-all-set-to-be-launched-today/>

“Gilgit-Baltistan leader meets Madhav, talks Legislative Space”

Business Standard, November 22, 2016

A leader of Gilgit-Baltistan met BJP general-secretary Ram Madhav in the US seeking his help in creating legislative space for the people of this part of Jammu and Kashmir, as the two senior leaders discussed the violation of religious freedom and rights in the region. During the meeting, Madhav and Senge Sering, Director of Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress, discussed issues related to the

“chronic Kashmir dilemma” with focus on the ongoing political development in the region. “People of Gilgit-Baltistan continue to suffer due to absence of constitutional rights and Pakistan lacks the legal capacity to grant the locals citizenship. India therefore, must create space for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in its legislative institutions and help internationalise the matter,” Sering noted after meeting Madhav. Sering spoke on the need to revive dialogue with Pakistan to discuss confidence-building measures related to cross Line-of-Control movement. Currently, there are over 15,000 people living in Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan who belong to separated families and await a decision by both the countries to open Skardu Kargil and Ghanche-Nubra roads to facilitate meetings and reunions, he stated.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/gilgit-baltistan-leader-meets-madhav-talks-legislative-space-116112200061_1.html

“UK stresses lasting solution to Kashmir”

The Nation, November 26, 2016

The British Foreign Secretary noted that his country would continue to encourage India and Pakistan for starting positive dialogues to find a lasting solution to Kashmir issue. Azad Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan called on the British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson at the British High Commission and briefed him about the deteriorating situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in AJK due to frequent Indian firing. The AJK president apprised the British foreign secretary of the recent flagrant targeting of a passenger bus and an ambulance near Dudhnial in the Neelum valley by Indian forces. He apprised Johnson that international community, particularly the UK, should take note of the gravity of the. On the other side, the AJK authorities took stock of the current situation along the Line of Control (LoC). They decided to provide full medical facilities,

shelters and all basic necessities for the affectees. The authorities held a high level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan, an AJK government spokesperson noted. Addressing the meeting, the AJK prime minister directed the government functionaries to be alert for any

emergency response to tackle the situation. He also directed to ensure medical treatment facilities, medicines, availability of doctors and paramedical staff in all hospitals for the victims.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/26-Nov-2016/uk-stresses-lasting-solution-to-kashmir>

Other Developments

“Why are GB people more industrious than Chitralis?”

Chitral News, November 28, 2016

Despite the fact that Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan fall in the same geographical zone and for centuries have shared culture, weather, advantages and hardships together, the attitude of the people largely differs from one another. The people of Chitral are by and large lethargic and avoid laborious jobs which is why the Afghans and Pathans from down districts have come and taken over businesses like butchery, bread baking (tandoors), fulfilling jobs like masonry and unskilled labour requirements in Chitral. On the other hand the people of GB, particularly of Hunza have proven themselves to be industrious and hard working in no less a magnitude than the Afghans and Pathans. In the tourism sector, Gilgit Baltistan is way ahead of Chitral with hundreds of trained tour guides and high altitude porters hailing from Hunza and Skardu areas.

Even in the field of high value businesses like transportation, import/export, etc. the Gilgitis are much advanced. Various kind of fruit e.g apples, apricots, pears, cherries, mulberries, plums, grapes, pomegranates, and wide variety of expensive herbs which are a joint product of Chitral and Gilgit, are scientifically dried and packed in Gilgit and sold in Islamabad and all over the country. Their produce is even exported to Chitral where it is found in local dry fruit shops and the shopkeeper proudly presents them as product of Gilgit. In Chitral, fruit trees are either not looked after or the fruit is wasted without making good use of it. What could be the reason for this difference, one wonders.

<http://www.chitralnews.com/news/gb-people-industrious-chitralis/>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“No One is Above the Law”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, November 4, 2016

Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman noted that Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) along with other opposition parties protested and blocked the KKH. Although we take demonstrations as healthy practice of democracy but blocking KKH is illegal. Even being in power we take permission for any political demonstration or gathering. No one is above the law. A legal action should be taken against those who blocked KKH. PPP’s white paper is not based on facts. Tenders were issued for every project. No big project was completed during last five years of PPP’s rule. Gilgit Baltistan had become a land of dead projects. Under PML-N’s two year rule, work has been started on all projects, many had been completed on time. On various occasions protests and demonstration are done for the public good. But it makes no sense to block traffic on the national highway as it create problem for ordinary people. KKH is a very important highway. Blocking it brings all systems on a stand still. Since PML-N came into power, it has done a tremendous work that should not be underestimated. The provincial government has done a good job. It has completely reformed health and education sector. Development and infrastructure project are coming up with great pace. Load shedding is being addressed now and special procedures are being put to address it. The teachers are being appointed on merit. Corruption menace has to be resolved. We people of the region should understand the importance of the CPEC. It is good news for us that finally Gilgit Baltistan has been awarded two economic zones. The government has already done a feasibility study for these zones. Land for these economic zones has been identified. All political parties and people should work together for the betterment of Gilgit Baltistan.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=11-04-2016&img=11-04-2016page-4-4

“For Foreign Investment in GB, Legal Hurdles should be Removed”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, November 5, 2016

A Senate Committee on Corridor advised Federal government that foreign investment in GB is only possible once legal impediments are removed. In its report, the committee noted that a feasibility study for two economic zones should be done after consultation with experts. It also raised the issue of constitutional identity. According to the report, the issue of constitutional identity should be raised at every forum. It also urged constructing two lane highway along the KKH. The report also asks for constructing a road connecting Astor and Neelum.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=11-05-2016&img=11-05-2016page-1-1

“Important Decisions taken in Cabinet Meeting”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, November 6, 2016

The cabinet ministers of Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly took number of important decisions in the last meeting. The cabinet has given nod for regularising hundreds of adhoc/contractual employees. The cabinet decided to establish an anti-corruption cell. Most interesting decision taken by the cabinet is banning interest oriented business at micro level. The cabinet also took notice of the recent protests. In its warning to the government employees, the cabinet took decision that those employees who join anti-government protests would be terminated from their services. The cabinet in its decision also gave nod for formalising the technical and vocational board.

<http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/?dt=MTEtMDYtMjAxNg%3D%3D>

Sayed ur Rehman, “We Need rights not Constitution”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, November 8, 2016

In Gilgit Baltistan we have been facing electricity crisis since long. Day by day, the electricity scarcity is only rising. From the beginning of December, we say goodbye to electricity. People are not saying anything about it as we are now used to it. We are used to not having electricity for months. People of GB do not come out on streets because we have some government officials who live in government accommodation that do not face load shedding. In Gilgit Baltistan, winter starts from September to April and during these months we do not have electricity. Many power projects have been built over the years but load shedding has not reduced. There are special electricity lines for the rich and they do not face load shedding at all. Even the capital of Gilgit Baltistan does not have clean drinking water. We do not have resources to purify water or make water from canals fit for drinking. We do not see this crisis addressed in near future. The government is not paying any interest to these problems. Few NGO's are helping people to get clean water but they too are discriminatory. They show preference for few people or areas. It was only in 1979 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto started subsidising wheat. Since then, we are getting cheap flour. We the people of Gilgit Baltistan have not forgotten this. We are still thankful to him. When people started asking for constitutional identity, the centre decided to end the wheat subsidy. People started protesting against this act and the centre was forced to rethink on that. Now the provincial government is talking about imposing tax system. They say that since Gilgit Baltistan is being provided a provincial setup, it is imperative to impose taxes also. If the government is hell bent on imposing taxes, then they should give us complete and full provincial status. It is interesting to note why the centre suddenly started thinking about imposing taxes- it is only when we started talking about a constitutional status. Let us pause for a second and think why a common man would think about constitutional status. For him everything is fine if he gets to live a comfortable life with all his basic needs met. What we need is a basic

right to live a comfortable life. We do not need a constitutional status without basic rights.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=11-08-2016&img=11-08-2016page-2-2

“Hafeez Group in PML-N is a B team of Ahle Sunnat: Jameel Ahmad”

Daily Ausaf, November 13, 2016

Deputy President of Pakistan People's Party Gilgit Baltistan Jameel Ahmad stated before media that Hafeez ur Rehman is in contact with Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat group. Hafeez is a B team of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat in Gilgit Baltistan government. He further noted that only the PPP is working to maintain communal harmony in the region. According to Jameel, Hafeez is favouring a particular sect that would create suspicion among the people.

http://epaper.dailyausaf.com/page?station_id=4&date=2016-11-13

“Those who are Doing Business on Dead Bodies are against Peace: Hafeezur Rehman”

Daily Ausaf, November 16, 2016

Hafeezur Rehman in his address noted that few political parties are doing business on the dead bodies. He further stated that few people are exploiting poor men and women for their political ends. Hafeez also stated that previous government demoralised officials and wanted to become a dictator. Those who plundered public wealth will be taken to justice by auctioning their private property. Hafeez was addressing a public gathering after inaugurating a water supply plant in Chotyal.

http://epaper.dailyausaf.com/page?station_id=4&date=2016-11-16

“Steps Taken for Economic Zones”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, November 18, 2016

The Planning Commission decided to take help from Germany and Italy for feasibility report on two

economic zones in Gilgit-Baltistan. It was decided in a meeting presided over by Hafeezur Rehman. In the meeting, it was decided to prepare a full report so that work on industries would be started soon. In this regard both Germany and Italy have offered assistance. According to the sources, there could be one or two economic zones near the KKH area. The economic zones will be spread out to a very huge area in which industries, residential area and warehouses would be built. Economic Zones itself would be new cities. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a feasibility study. Establishing economic zones in Gilgit Baltistan is a welcome step. Earlier it was reported that economic zones will be built in Gilgit only. PML-N Gilgit Baltistan, should try to gain as much as from CPEC so that Gilgit Baltistan also gets progress and prosperity. Many people will get jobs, poverty will be reduced and people are praying that new factories and firms should come up in Gilgit Baltistan. Our politicians and representatives in Senate and Assembly should raise issues at every forum so that Gilgit Baltistan is not neglected. It is good to hear from PPP's leader Rehman Malik that Gilgit Baltistan is given its full share in the CPEC and its constitutional status is granted. At the same time, he also noted that government is not sensitive in giving Gilgit Baltistan a constitutional status. The PPP is raising the issue of Gilgit Baltistan's constitutional status at every forum.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=11-19-2016&img=11-19-2016page-4-4

“After crackdown Nationalists went underground”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, November 23, 2016

Many nationalist leaders went underground and others left the country after intelligence agencies and police went after them. According to the sources, the JIT got intelligence that many nationalists have left the country. Balwaristan Nationalist Front Chairman, Sheer Nadir Shahi went underground after taking pre-arrest bail from Islamabad High Court. It is reported that a huge cache of arms have been recovered from Ghizer district. Ghizer is in news for all bad things. It has become a headache for law and enforcement agencies.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=11-23-2016&img=11-23-2016page-1-1

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

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

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

(Source: Jammu & Kashmir Government website at <http://www.jammukashmir.nic.in/>, accessed on November 14, 2010)

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

Population: 2.973 million (1998 population census), Male, 1.850 million; Female, 1.832 million

Capital: Muzaffarabad

Kashmir (Muzaffarabad Division) comprises of 3 districts: Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Neelum, Hattian

Jammu (Mirpur Division) comprising of 5 districts: Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur, Sudhnati/Pallandari and Rawalakot/Poonch, Haveli

President: Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan

Prime Minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

AJK Council: Total 17 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

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

Governor of G-B: Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan

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

Political Parties and Groups: Balwaristan National Front (BNF), Gilgit-Baltistan Thinkers Forum, Gilgit-Baltistan, United Movement (GBUM), Baltistan

National Movement, Karakoram National Movement, Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA), Gilgit Baltistan

National Alliance (GBNA), All Parties National Alliance (APNA)

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

Disclaimer

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

POK NEWS DIGEST



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