

POK

News Digest

A MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST ON PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

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Jammu & Kashmir

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

In this Edition

The so called Azad Jammu and Kashmir ('AJK') is gearing up for assembly elections to be held on July 21, 2016. The incumbent government in the 'AJK' led by PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party) is soon going to complete its 5-year term. Speculation is rife that in sync with the voting pattern witnessed during preceding elections held in the PoK (Pakistan occupied Kashmir) region over the years, the party in power in Islamabad, in all likelihood, wins the polls in this part as well. Therefore, the PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) is being widely predicted to emerge as the eventual winner in the 'AJK' elections. The PML-N has already fielded key federal ministers to campaign for the Party in the 'AJK'. This is also because the PPP campaign is being aggressively led by the Bhutto scion, Bilawal Bhutto.

After losing out the Gilgit Baltistan elections in June 2015, the PPP is trying to use the 'AJK' elections as an opportunity to revive itself and, therefore, struggling to infuse some confidence in the party. The morale of the PPP has been at an all-time low ever since they were meted out a humiliating defeat in the general elections of Pakistan held in May 2013. As a result, the PPP's strength in the National Assembly of Pakistan was drastically reduced. Besides, anti-incumbency for the PPP-led 'AJK' government is going to impact the party's fate in the region. Similarly on the other hand, there is also a possibility that the PML-N is going to face anti-incumbency factor with regard to its 3 year rule at the federal level. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led by Imran Khan is also investing a good deal of political capital in the 'AJK' elections. With active and energised campaigning, the PTI hopes to make gains, benefitting especially from the support base of former 'AJK' prime minister, Barrister Sultan Mehmood (formerly with the PPP and now chief of the PTI AJK chapter).

In a significant move, India has urged China to refrain from carrying out construction activities in parts of PoK, claimed by India as part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This was confirmed in a statement issued by the Indian Army Northern Command. As indicated in one of the reports included in the current issue, the statement noted that the Government of India has taken note of China's expanding role in PoK and has communicated its displeasure on the issue asking China to stop all such activity. Also, on the upcoming China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Government of India has conveyed its reservations to China, the statement further noted.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“Attique Flies to UK on April 6 for Weeklong Visit”

Pakistan Observer, April 2, 2016

President All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan will leave for United Kingdom on April 6. He will address workers conventions of the party and gathering of British Kashmiri community in different cities of UK during his weeklong visit. He will also address a religious congregation to be organized by prominent spiritual leader, Peer Alluddin Siddiqi at Birmingham City of Midlands besides addressing a memorial reference to be organized by Muslim Conference UK for paying homage to late Mujahid Awal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan. A meeting of the office bearers and workers of Muslim Conference UK Chapter chaired by its president Malik Shabir Hussain and participated by former president MC UK, Chaudhry Bashir Ratvi, General Secretary of the party, Councilor Riyaz Butt, Mumtaz Butt, Azad Nakyalvi, Amjid Abbasi, Raja Raza Khan, Sardar Jawed Abbasi, Profess Imtiaz, Raja Ishaq Shakeel Advocate and others was held at Nottingham. The meeting finalized and reviewed the preparations of party president's visit and decided to accord a warm welcome to him during his visit.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/02/attique-flies-to-uk-on-april-6-for-weeklong-visit/>

“Power generation to be increased to 18,000MW this year: Abid”

The Nation, April 2, 2016

Pursuing its commitment made to the nation before general elections 2013 to wipe out darkness from Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League-N government is vigorously working over its plans to provide uninterrupted electricity to every nook and

corner of the country. To the fulfilment of its claim to completely end power load shedding by year 2018, and to eliminate the power related miseries of masses, a number of small and mega projects have been initiated by the government. Explaining the progress of different projects of the government, Abid Sher Ali noted Diamer-Bhasha and Dasu Dam projects were in progress, adding 70 per cent land for the Diamer-Bhasha Dam had been acquired. "Work on 4th and 5th extension of Tarbela is underway to increase power generation from the project," he stated. Meanwhile, replying to a question in the National Assembly, Abid stated the government released Rs. 45 billion for land acquisition of Diamer-Bhasha dam.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/02-Apr-2016/power-generation-to-be-increased-to-18-000mw-this-year-abid>

“10 MQM workers arrested for hurling stones at Mustafa Kamal's rally”

Dunya News, April 2, 2016

Ten workers of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) were arrested on April 1 for hurling stones at former Mayor Karachi and Pak Sar Zameen Party (PSP) leader Mustafa Kamal's rally in Mirpur Khas. Meanwhile, MQM claims that police raided the house of party's Mirpur Khas Zone In-Charge Mujeeb-ul-Haq and have taken two of his sons into custody during his absence.

According to the details, MQM workers were arrested by the police for pelting Kamal's cavalcade with stones which damaged the vehicles and shattered windows of many. Police noted that they have taken 10 party workers into custody including MQM's Zonal Committee's senior member Abdul Ghaffur Barohi and Shahid Abbasi. Tension ran high earlier as MQM and Kamal's Pak Sar Zameen Party (PSP) workers clashed with one another in the areas of Mirpur Khas and Tando Allahyar. MQM's

enraged group pelted the vehicles of Kamal's cavalcade with stones, shattering the windows of many.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/330396-10-MQM-workers-arrested-for-hurling-stones-at-Must>

“Rehabilitation work of Mangla reservoir to be completed in August”

The Nation, April 2, 2016

In the wake of award of two contracts amounting to Rs1248 million by the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), rehabilitation work to strengthen the reservoir rim of Mangla Dam near Khaliq Abad in the suburban area of Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K), is in full swing. WAPDA is confident to complete the rehabilitation work by the end of August, 2016 in a phased-manner in accordance with the schedule agreed to by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA). It is worth mentioning that the stated contracts were awarded on March 22, and the works started on the sites the same day. The coffer dam on the site is 70 percent complete and is expected to be fully completed by April 10. The coffer dam will facilitate carrying out construction activities without any hindrance and filling of Mangla reservoir. It is pertinent to mention that WAPDA chalked out schedule for execution of the rehabilitation works in such a manner that construction activities shall not affect the filling of Mangla reservoir. It is pertinent to mention that the matter was discussed in an advisory meeting held on April 1 at Islamabad. All the stakeholders including IRSA were satisfied with the measures taken by WAPDA to meet the agreed timelines of the impounding of Mangla reservoir in 2016.

<http://nation.com.pk/business/02-Apr-2016/rehabilitation-work-of-mangla-reservoir-to-be-completed-in-aug>

Arsalan Majeed, “The Fifth province”

Daily Times, April 3, 2016

The people of Gilgit-Baltistan celebrate two independence days every year: August 14, with the rest of Pakistan; and November 1, when they became free. In 2010, Gilgit-Baltistan CM declared that it was now the “fifth province” of Pakistan. In

addition, Azad Jammu and Kashmir are also an integral part of Pakistan's commercial and economic markets, without any border controls. Sost, a busy trading post for trade with China is located in Gilgit-Baltistan and the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project is also in the process of being built on the confluence of two rivers in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. However, Pakistan's constitution does not even mention Azad Jammu and Kashmir or Gilgit-Baltistan, even though residents of the two regions are still subjected to all taxes including income tax, which all Pakistani citizens have to pay. Political leaders in Gilgit-Baltistan have been demanding the right for decades that their region be integrated into Pakistan, but Islamabad still resists. The federal government should pay heed to this dispute between the province and Islamabad, and act on their promises made in the 2013 elections.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/letters/03-Apr-2016/the-fifth-province>

Shabbir Mir, “G-B's recognition: 'Cap Day' to be held annually”

The Express Tribune, April 3, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafeezur Rahman announced “Cap Day” will be marked on an annual basis to promote the culture of the region. He was speaking at a seminar held at Gilgit Press Club on April 2. The event was organised by the Gilgit Arts Council and was titled 'Promotion of Culture and Languages'. “On this day, people will be asked to put on a white cap with a feather in it,” he noted, referring to the practice of wearing these caps in G-B. “This will ensure the practice gets international recognition.” According to Rahman, functions would be held on that day and foreigners would be invited to take part in the event. However, he did not set aside a date for this annual celebration. The chief minister further stated that cultural activities in the region have been suppressed by “fake sects”. He also stated sects have become a part of G-B's identity and have diluted the impact of the region's culture. “But we are trying to give recognition to G-B's culture and will hopefully succeed,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1077789/g-bs-recognition-cap-day-to-be-held-annually/>

“Military College, Islamic Varsity Soon in AJK: Majeed”

Pakistan Observer, April 4, 2016

The Prime Minister of Azad government of the a State of Jammu & Kashmir Ch. Abdul Majeed has stated foundation stones of two new mega projects Military College and Al Azhar Islamic University will be laid down soon. Addressing annual prize distribution ceremony of district elementary board as chief guest on April 3 the AJK Premier stated we have put AJK on excellent educational path by setting up five universities, medical university, medical colleges in each division, Women University and cadet colleges. The Prime Minister reminded the teacher's community of their responsibilities regarding ensuring quality education in public sector institutions as well. He also stated government allocated 73% of budget for education but the performance of public sector institutions remains poor. He warned the teaching staff of their negligence towards their duties and directed them to admit their children in public sector institutions.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/04/military-college-islamic-varsity-soon-in-ajk-majeed/>

“PPP will not let anyone to steal people mandate, says Ch. Abdul Majeed”

The Nation, April 4, 2016

The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Ch. Abdul Majeed stated that Pakistan People's Party will not let anyone steal people's mandate in forthcoming general elections. According to media reports, while addressing a reception ceremony he stated that people always showed full confidence in PPP leadership and stood up with the party's policies. People's Party government has won the public trust by implementing its people's friendly policies. He stated that opposition could not digest the government mega developmental projects in AJK and now they are (opposition) dreaming of stealing the upcoming elections in Azad Kashmir. "People of Azad Kashmir are well aware of opposition's tactics of making them fool for their vested interests," he added. "Free and fair elections are

basic right of the people of the AJK and PPP will ensure the protection of people's basic right," he made it clear. The Premier further stated that to establish three medical colleges, five universities beside one medical university in short period of time were big achievement of the PPP government, as compared to build a single medical college in past sixty years.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/04-Apr-2016/ppp-will-not-let-anyone-to-steal-people-mandate-says-ch-abdul-majeed>

Rasheed Khalid, “AJK govt 'should be given powers”

The News, April 5, 2016

Pakistani-origin Lord Mayor of Oldham (UK) Attiq-ur-Rahman stated that none of the governments installed in Azad Kashmir in present or past had powers so they cannot be expected to act as harbinger of the liberation movement in Jammu and Kashmir. The Lord Mayor was answering questions of journalists after addressing Meet the Press organised by National Press Club on April 4. Shakil Anjum, president of the NPC, was in the chair. Attiq also stated that the AJK government run by bureaucracy in Islamabad should be given powers to enable the base camp to play its role in liberation struggle. Earlier, addressing the gathering, he stated that Kashmiris are struggling for their right of self-determination through plebiscite granted under the UN resolutions. He also stated that time has come to solve this decade-old dispute which is eating away vital resources of the two countries.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/110327-AJK-govt-should-be-given-powers>

“Patronage: Gilgit-Baltistan seeks PIMS' assistance in health care, medical education”

The Express Tribune, April 6, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government sought help and cooperation of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) for provision of health care and medical education in the region. GB Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman wrote a letter to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University PIMS Vice-Chancellor Dr Javed Akram seeking the institute's

patronage. Rehman noted GB was a newly-established province and required continuous support and patronage from PIMS as well as the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC). The chief minister requested PIMS to facilitate the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in provision of medical facilities in all affiliated hospitals of PIMS through establishing a referral system treatment and prevention “as Gilgit-Baltistan still lacks specialised medical treatment facilities in provincial hospitals”. The chief minister has also sought that PIMS set up a medical college in Gilgit for undergraduate and post-graduate medical education. Moreover, the chief minister sought help in preparedness, rescue and recovery work in the high-altitude expeditions and other disasters and emergencies in Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/08-Apr-16/sc-reverses-court-order-against-shaheen-air>

MA Mir, “On PTI's complaint: Court freezes Centre-funded projects in AJK”

The Express Tribune, April 9, 2016

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court (AJKHC) ordered the suspension of all federal government-funded development schemes in the region on a complaint filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The petitioner alleged the federal ministry for Kashmir affairs kick-started several uplift schemes in an effort to influence the upcoming general elections in AJK. In a short order passed on April 8 during the preliminary hearing, Justice Azhar Saleem Babar issued a stay against all the development projects funded by the Kashmir Council in the region. PTI's Shaikh Maqsood went to the court against the provision of funds to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmakers in the AJK Assembly, alleging the ruling party in the centre wanted to influence the general elections in the region scheduled in June 2016. The plaintiff claimed the funds were being used to “steal the public mandate”. The Federal Ministry for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan recently released millions of rupees in grants to PML-N leaders to complete development schemes within their constituencies.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1081499/on-ptis-complaint->

[court-freezes-centre-funded-projects-in-ajk/](#)

“Political leaders ready for LB polls in Azad Kashmir”

Daily Times, April 9, 2016

Amidst the election season in Azad Jammu Kashmir, the civil society and youth have pressed the need for amendment in the interim act 1974 to bind the elected government to ensure local bodies elections in the state. This demand came up during a policy dialogue arranged by Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR), a training and research think tank, wherein the participants demanded for youth and women empowerment in the local bodies to ensure devolution of power to the grassroots.

Speaking on the occasion, Kashmir Council Member Saghir Chughtai lauded the efforts of the CPDR, saying that deliberate delays of successive governments in holding local bodies' elections have led to a development deficit among different regions of the state, which can only be bridged through immediate transfer of power to the grassroots. Jamaat-e-Islami leader Ejaz Afzal spoke at length on the deliberate delay and neglect of the incumbent government and stated that the revival of local bodies could pose a serious challenge to those who favour dynastic and hereditary politics in the state. He vehemently supported the devolution of judicial, financial and administrative powers to the grassroots.

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/09-Apr-16/political-leaders-ready-for-lb-polls-in-azad-kashmir>

Khalid Mustafa, “Govt to set up LPG air mix plants in Murree, Gilgit, AJK”

The News, April 12, 2016

The government has geared up to install capital intensive LPG air mix plants valuing Rs514 million apparently to provide the gas to the consumers in some parts of the hilly areas instead of enhancing the supply of LPG to the consumers through cylinders which is cheaper mode to supply fuel. On top of that, the burden of the cost of the LPG air mix plants that include cost of LPG storage facility, installation and commissioning, civil works, land and gas distribution network will be recovered from

gas consumers in the form of weighted average cost of gas (WACG). The summary has been prepared by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources signed by its secretary Arshad Mirza and now has been pitched in the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) that met on 11 April with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in the chair. As per the summary, LPG Air Mix plants will be set up with the assistance of gas utilities in Murree, Gilgit, other hilly areas in the north and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/112059-Govt-to-set-up-LPG-air-mix-plants-in-Murree-Gilgit-AJK>

“Gilgit-Baltistan situation”

Pakistan Today, April 11, 2016

Two weeks into the Gilgit-Baltistan nightmare and all that has been accomplished is the military flying out a few of the trapped tourists in addition to trying to rebuild patches of roads where pockets in the rough weather allow. While the men in uniform do their usual disaster management in the face of yet another calamity, the government typically watches from behind the curve. For the thousands upon thousands cut off because of landslides, unrelenting rains, and roads simply being washed away, such news brings little relief. Authorities still only have a rough idea about the deaths, displacement, and damage.

All that is known for certain now is that this is an unprecedented natural disaster to visit GB. Previously, it was spared the monsoon wrath that was usually confined to Fata and Kashmir up to the Neelum Valley. This time, though, the rough weather has unleashed landslides, washed away residences and marketplaces, and put the lives of thousands of residents at the mercy of the extreme weather under the open sky. According to reports, there are no doctors or hospitals in the worst hit areas, and people are just trapped and at the mercy of fate. It is regrettable that the bureaucratic contingency those disaster management authorities that litter the provincial and federal landscapes has been found wanting yet again is no longer a surprise.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/04/11/comment/gilgit-baltistan-situation/>

Sajjad Kargili, “Karbalai writes to PM on Gilgit-Baltistan flood crisis”

Rising Kashmir, April 12, 2016

Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Kargil Asgar Karbalai has written to PM Narendra Modi over the crisis in Pakistan Administered Gilgit-Baltistan after the floods. As per the letter Gilgit-Baltistan has got disconnected from Pakistan after the recent floods. In his letter to PM, Karbalai has written: “Latest flash floods in Gilgit Baltistan areas of Pakistan caused due to torrential rains has paralyzed the entire system, there. The region is cut off from the rest of the world for the last 20 days due to flash floods and landslides. Commodity and food prices have skyrocketed and many villages have been flattened.” Demanding the “kind attention” of the government of India he in his letter wrote, “I would like to draw your kind attention towards the latest statement issued by Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan that situation in the area is worsening due to break down of road network and civic facilities in the region caused by the recent heavy rains and flash floods. The statement further reads as: 'It is beyond the capacity of the Gilgit-Baltistan government to cope with the situation'.” Expressing the need to open Kargil-Skardu road to reach the flood effected victims in Gilgit-Baltistan, Karbalai has requested Prime Minister of India to take up the issue with his Pakistan counterpart so that adequate relief to flood affected victims in Gilgit-Baltistan could be sent. “In these circumstances, it is need of the hour to open the only alternative route Kargil-Skardu road to reach the flood affected victims to ease their hardships,” MLA Kargil's letter read.

<http://risingkashmir.com/news/karbalai-writes-to-pm-on-gilgitbaltistan-flood-crisis/>

Awais Bin Wasi, “Options on Kashmir”

The News, April 12, 2016

For the past 18 months, the issue of Kashmir has been taken up with renewed vigour by Pakistan's foreign policy planners, signalling that the state is repositioning itself on a principled position on the issue. Much of the credit goes to the incumbent rulers. The recent reassertion of Pakistan's Kashmir policy formally began with the emphatic mention of

Kashmir in Pakistan's PM's speech at the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) held on September 26, 2014. Since then, reverberations of Pakistan's traditional stance have been echoed by the current regime at all important national events, along with the pronouncement of the four point formula at the 70th Session of UNGA in 2015. Moreover, of late, parliament's standing committee on foreign affairs has also put forward policy proposals on the issue, which however, appear to be more cosmetic than substantive. While the renewed interest on Kashmir is encouraging and sends positive signals to Srinagar, it appears more rhetorical than substantive, lacking a concerted policy effort to achieve the desired goals for Kashmir.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/112016-Options-on-Kashmir>

“Pakistan Wants To Change the Demography of Gilgit: Wazahat Hasan”

ANI, April 12, 2016

People living in Gilgit-Baltistan face severe challenges to protect their own rights. Political activists accuse the Pakistan government of trampling upon the state subject laws and subsequently changing the demography of the region. Political leaders of Gilgit not only face life threats but are also discouraged to raise any issue related to human rights. Wajahat Hasan and his brother, Col. (Retd) Nadir Hasan, are victims of police brutality. Wajahat now lives in exile because of life threats. Over the years, Gilgit-Baltistan has suffered due to Pakistan government's indifferent behaviour. Various laws imposed by the Pakistan government targets rights activists and political leaders. Wazahat feel that Pakistan's intention to make Gilgit-Baltistan its fifth province is practically impossible. Gilgit-Baltistan not only faces Pakistan government's apathy but also its natural resources are being plundered by foreign players after the signing of the China-Pakistan economic corridor pact.

<http://www.aninews.in/videogallery9/51852-pakistan-wants-to-change-the-demography-of-gilgit-wazahat-hasan.html>

Shabbir Mir, “Through research: G-B looks for

permanent solution to landslides”

The Express Tribune, April 12, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan government decided to find a permanent solution to landslides, which have repeatedly swept through the region, by conducting a study. The decision came days after the region witnessed heavy rain and landslides that damaged 42 hydropower projects in the region, causing huge losses to the exchequer. “We have decided to conduct a study to settle this issue once and for all,” Farooq Mir, an adviser to the chief minister noted on April 11. “[A] mechanism will be devised [for this purpose].” He also stated experts will conduct the study after visiting the sites. According to Mir, they will suggest measures that would ensure infrastructure remains safe even if landslides occur. The adviser stated 29 of the 42 hydropower projects were repaired last week while the rest would be in working condition over the next 10 days. “Around seven out of 12 hydropower projects in Gilgit have been repaired,” Mir stated. He added over 60% of such projects in the remaining districts have also been repaired and power supply has been resumed. “The floods damaged seven power projects each in Nagar, Astore and Diamer,” the adviser stated.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1082945/through-research-g-b-looks-for-permanent-solution-to-landslides/>

“AJK Minister Blames Kashmir Council for Fiscal Failure”

Pakistan Observer, April 14, 2016

AJK Finance Ch Latif Akber stated that Kashmir Council was responsible for financial crises in AJK. While holding a press conference at Central Press Club on April 13 Ch Latif Akber held Azad Kashmir Council responsible for financial problems of AJK. He also stated the third quarter of funds have not been released yet in a result the financial crises in AJK gone worst. Over draft of State Bank of Pakistan have reached to the limit of 4.7 billions and amount Rs 6 billion more required in next three months to run the government system. He called on federal government to take note of the situation and fulfil its obligations,” he noted. To a question, the finance minister stated that all those people who were affected in recent rains would be

accommodated by the government. He also stated he personally visited the affected areas of Danna along with Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner and affectees would be given special package of financial aid.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/14/ajk-minister-blames-kashmir-council-for-fiscal-failure/>

“PML-N govt has become blind, ruthless: Bilawal”

Pakistan Today, April 13, 2016

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed grave concern over the indifferent and apathetic attitude of both Federal and Gilgit-Baltistan governments towards the sorry plight of torrential rains and flood victims in the northern areas. “Politics is the second name of service but in PML-N case it seems to become completely ignorant towards the people, especially who have been completely ruined and ravaged by the rains, floods and land-slide in the far-flung areas of Gilgit-Baltistan,” Bilawal noted while talking via phone to PPP G-B Chapter President, Advocate Amjad Hussain. Amjad Hussain informed the chairman that no proper help had been provided to the affected people who were facing worst shortage of food and medicines under the open sky. The population was facing tormenting situation and there was no relief and rehabilitation in the sight as the PML-N functionaries were busy in doing politics over other issues, he further added.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/04/13/city/karachi/pml-n-govt-has-become-blind-ruthless-bilawal/>

“AJK PPP Leaders Call on Bilawal”

Business Recorder, April 14, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan and Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majid along with cabinet members and PPP leaders called on Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on April 13 evening. Talking to the delegation, Bilawal stated the PPP would take part in the AJK with the objective to serve the masses.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/politics-a-policy/290369-ajk-ppp-leaders-call-on-bilawal.html>

“Azad Kashmir gears up for Election; initial voter lists issued”

The News Tribune, April 14, 2016

Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir issued initial voters list for election 2016, pending final verification from National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). Election commission issued initial voters lists and objections can be filed by April 18. Inspection of the list would be carried out in the offices of Registration officer and Assistant Registration officer. A total of 37 political parties are contending for Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections 2016 including Muslim Conference, Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan People's Party, Jamat e Islami, Pakistan Muslim League, Jamat Uluma Islam and others. Voter's lists comprise voters in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and residing across Pakistan. Complaints filled by April 2016 would be resolved between April 19-21 and final lists would be issued on April 29. Election Commission spokesperson also stated that elections are expected to be scheduled in the first week of June however the schedule would be issued only in first week of May.

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2016/04/14/azad-kashmir-gears-up-for-election-initial-voter-lists-issued/>

“PML-N is 'Buying' People in AJK for Vote, Accuses AJK PM”

Pakistan Observer, April 14, 2016

Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Ch Abdul Majeed has stated that plan of federal ministers to “conquer” Azad Kashmir in upcoming elections would remain unsuccessful. While talking to various public delegations at Kashmir House on April 13, the AJK Premier stated that federal ministers of Pakistan Muslim League (N) have started efforts to buy people's conscience but they would not succeed. We will not let any party to steal people's opinion and rights and no compromise would be made on people's rights. “People of AJK have rejected politics of Muslim League (N) they only trust in PPP for its strong commitment with protection of people's rights,” he stated. The Premier further stated that people have rejected negative approach

of Muslim League towards resolving issues of the masses. Meanwhile talking about present situation in occupied Kashmir the PM stated that India cannot intimidate the people of Kashmir to surrender their demand for right to self-determination. He stated the international community acknowledges Kashmir as a dispute and wants its settlement as per the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/14/pml-n-is-buying-people-in-ajk-for-vote-accuses-ajkpm/>

“Anti-Pakistan protest erupts in PoK, students demand independent Kashmir”

Times of India, April 14, 2016

The protesters raised issue about job vacancies, which are rare in the area, only being given to Pakistani youth thus marginalising Kashmiri youth of the area. In the midst of unrest, anti-Pakistan protests erupted in various parts of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) on April 13 over Islamabad's discrimination in employment to local youth. The protesters raised issues regarding lack of jobs in the PoK and preference being given to Pakistani youth over Kashmiri youth. About 100 individuals owing allegiance to Jammu and Kashmir National Students Federation (JKNSF) along with some members of Jammu and Kashmir National Awami Party (JKNAP) carried out a demonstration rally in Muzaffarabad area of PoK, condemning the oppressive rule by Pakistani authorities and the local PoK government. The demonstrators raised slogans demanding for an independent Kashmir.

They also raised anti-Pakistan slogans resulting in crack-down on the rally by the local police. The protesters carried placards which read "Kashmir Bachanay Nikley Hain, Aao Hamaray Saath Chaloo". Police resorted to heavy lathicharge on the peaceful demonstrators and roughed them up in a savage manner taking many of them into police custody.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/anti-pakistan-protest-erupts-in-pok-students-demand-for-independent-kashmir/1/642461.html>

Shabbir Mir, “Security guards for KKH trained by G-B police”

The Express Tribune, April 14, 2016

In a bid to provide security to passengers, Gilgit-Baltistan police started a programme under which private security guards are being trained to handle weapons. Once trained, the guards will be required to accompany buses travelling on Karakoram Highway (KKH) from G-B to other cities. Police spokesperson Mubarak Jan stated on April 13 the first batch of trainees comprises 33 guards employed by Northern Areas Transport Corporation and Silk Route Bus Service. The guards are at Police Training College, Gilgit-Baltistan for a two-week-long session. He also added, “The first phase of the programme was inaugurated by G-B IGP Zafar Iqbal Awan.” Jan stated, “More guards will be trained in the second phase to enable them to deal with emergencies on KKH the only route that connects G-B with the rest of the country.” The decision was part of an arrangement in which the convoy system was withdrawn earlier on February 3, 2016 putting an end to the travel woes of passengers who frequented the route. Under the convoy system, which existed from 2012 to 2016, 50 to 100 vehicles were required to move in groups from Gilgit-Baltistan's Diamer district till Besham, Shangla in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The convoy was escorted by K-P's law-enforcement agencies. KKH is the only route that connects G-B with the rest of the country. However, the dilapidated highway and the convoy-system caused the 15-hour Gilgit-to-Rawalpindi journey to stretch up to 22 hours.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1084087/security-guards-for-kkh-trained-by-g-b-police/>

“PM announces compensation for AJK landslides affectees”

Aaj TV, April 15, 2016

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced monetary compensation for those affected of recent landslides in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Under the compensation package, the owners of the completely damaged houses would get Rs 5,00,000 each, while a sum of Rs 2,50,000 would be given to the owners of partially damaged houses, stated a press release of the PM office media wing. The Prime Minister also stated that he would soon visit

the areas affected by the landslides and personally meet the people affected by the landslides and floods.

<http://aaj.tv/2016/04/pm-announces-compensation-for-ajk-landslides-affectees/>

“New Electoral Grand Alliance in the Offing”

Pakistan Observer, April 16, 2016

Intense political readjustments are going on in Azad Kashmir to face the coming general elections likely to be held in June 2016. Party groupings and regroupings are taking place at a fast political pace, those in the Kashmir circles noted on April 15. Behind the curtains efforts, for a new which the Kashmiri circles call grand alliance seems in the offing; its components would be AJK-PPP, Muslim Conference, JUI-F and a few others having strong public following in AJK. Reports say that at Mujahid Manzil, the prominent Kashmir leaders who held talks with the chief of Muslim Conference, ex-premier AJK Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan include AJK PM Ch. Talking on the occasion, former AJK Premier Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan cautioned that use of Kashmir Council funds on 'conquering' coming AJK elections would never be allowed. He urged on Chief Election Commissioner to take firm notice of distribution of Kashmir Council funds to rig the coming polls in AJK. He reminded that AJK territory is the base camp of liberation struggle; no negative 'game' can be allowed to be played on it at all, he warned.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/16/new-electoral-grand-alliance-in-the-offing/>

Baseer Ahmed, “All parties should respect each other's mandate: Rashid”

Aaj TV, April 16, 2016

Information Minister Parvez Rashid on April 16 stated that all parties should respect mandate of each other, Aaj News reported. “Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) always respects mandate of every party,” he stated while addressing inaugural ceremony of a passport office in Bhimber, Azad Kashmir. He also stated oppositions had always done conspiracies against PML-N and their leadership. Media was once again being used for negative propaganda against Nawaz Sharif. He

further stated Imran Khan, who is levelling allegations against the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is in London and taking part in election campaign of Gold Smith for the office of London Mayor against a Pakistan-origin candidate Sadiq. Parvez Rasheed stated if oppositions did not do conspiracies against the government, Pakistan would reach the destination of development. The minister stated that with the support of people of Azad Kashmir, PML-N would make government in Azad Kashmir. Nawaz Sharif's health was better than before, he stated.

<http://aaj.tv/2016/04/all-parties-should-respect-each-others-mandate-rashid/>

“Lawmakers to resist changes to GB Council polls rules”

Dawn, April 16, 2016

The opposition parties in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assemble on April 15 threatened to move court if the federal government amended the GB Council election rules. The federal government plans to amend the rules to replace the method of secret balloting with show of hand with an aim to restrain party members from switching loyalty. Polls for the GB Council, which serves as the upper house of the parliament, are scheduled to be held on April 18. The term of the previous council members ended in May 2015 but the fresh elections could not be conducted till date. Representatives of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-F, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Pakistan People's Party, Islami Tehreek-i-Pakistan (ITP), and Balawaristan National Front (BNF) met to devise a line of action in the face of the federal government's decision to amend the laws just days before the elections to the council. The opposition parties termed the decision to amend rules through the federal ministry of Kashmir affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan as illegal and unconstitutional.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1252367/lawmakers-to-resist-changes-to-gb-council-polls-rules>

Anila Ishaq, “Plight of the poor in Gilgit Baltistan”

Dardistan Times, April 16, 2016

Recently I had a chance to visit the DHQ hospital in Baltistan. While I was sitting in the waiting room, a

couple made their way through the crowd and sat next to me. I couldn't help my curiosity. The man was sunburnt, lanky and wore sheer innocence on his face. The lady fidgeted nervously and had a face full of freckles. The child, barely three, had a protruded abdomen-- one of the signs of ringworm infestation. There was one thing common in them -- they all had put on plastic shoes. This pained me a lot. It turned out that the lady was referred here from a far off place namely Thale. It was feared that she might have appendicitis. Considering, it was not an emergency; the doctors refused to operate on her. It was feared that she might have appendicitis. Considering, it was not an emergency; the doctors refused to operate on her. The DHQ Hospital of the Baltistan's capital, Skardu, is facing an acute shortage of nitrous oxide, the gas crucial for the induction of anesthesia. The only anesthetist in the entire city is overburdened with work.

<http://www.dardistantimes.com/articles/plight-poor-gilgit-baltistan>

“NEW AJK Voters Addition is Pre-Poll Rigging: Joint Presser”

Pakistan Observer, April 17, 2016

Prominent political and religious party's leaders led by Prime Minister Ch Abdul Majeed held a joint press conference and expressed dissatisfaction over certification process of voter lists by NADRA declaring it pre poll rigging in upcoming elections by Muslim League (N) through federal government. President All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Secretary General Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf Dewan Muyyudin, JUI AJK Chief Mulana Muhammad Saeed, Secretary General Azad Jammu & Kashmir Jamaat e Islami Dr Muhammad Mushtaq and Tahir Khokhar of MQM Azad Kashmir joined President of PPP AJK during the press conference. The party heads noted that adding new voters in lists sent by Azad Kashmir Election Commission was not in the domain of NADRA, AJK Election Commission sent voter lists to NADRA for certification without approval of AJK government which was violation of rules. The leaders accused NADRA for adding 10 to 15 thousand voters in the lists sent by election commission. The leaders stated that NADRA was

authorised only to verify the voter lists but election commission gave permission to NADRA for addition which seems to be clear intentions of federal government of pre poll rigging.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/17/new-ajk-voters-addition-is-pre-poll-rigging-joint-presser/>

“Bilawal slams PML-N for 'pre-poll rigging' in AJK”

Dawn, April 18, 2016

PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condemned the federal government for what he called carrying out pre-poll rigging in Azad Jammu and Kashmir ahead of general elections. “By selectively doling out development funds to candidates belonging only to the PML-N, the federal government has resorted to the worst form of pre-poll rigging which must not be allowed,” he noted in a statement issued on April 17. “The Pakistan People's Party condemns this devious scheme to manipulate elections and demands this illegal practice to be stopped immediately,” he stated. Mr Bilawal stated that announcing development projects at this point and doling out funds to PML-N candidates was tantamount to buying votes. “Distributing the Kashmir Council funds among favourites is an insult to the mandate of the people,” the PPP leader declared. He also stated that he was shocked by devious methods adopted by the federal government to manipulate elections in AJK. “There also are disturbing reports that non-Kashmiri Pakistani citizens living elsewhere in the country have been registered as voters in various constituencies in connivance with some federal government agencies,” he alleged.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1252782/bilawal-slams-pml-n-for-pre-poll-rigging-in-ajk>

“Engr. Mushtaq Ahmad, Macro Hydropower of Kashmir”

The Nation, April 19, 2016

Azad Jammu & Kashmir, is blessed with abundant natural resources of water and minerals. It is a land with scenic valleys, lush green hills, snow covered mountains, beautiful landscapes and thick forests, witnessing maximum rainfall per annum. It has four

ivers, numerous perennial tributaries, brooks, streams and immense touristic sites. Three rivers Neelum, Jhelum and Poonch flow from Jammu & Kashmir to Azad Kashmir, whereas fourth river Kunhar flows from KPK to Muzaffarabad. This is the shortest river whose length may not be more than 30 km in the territory of Azad Kashmir, yet a hydropower plant is under construction on it. It is heartening to know that 20 macro hydropower projects of cumulative power generation capacity of 7566 MW are in different phases of implementation on these four rivers. There is only one storage dam in Azad Kashmir i.e. Mangla dam and electricity is its by-product like that of Tarbela dam. All other macro hydel projects are on run-of-river (R-o-R) mode except 53 MW Hari Ghail HPP which is on run-of-nullah mode.

<http://nation.com.pk/columns/19-Apr-2016/macro-hydropower-of-kashmir>

“Gilgit-Baltistan Council: PML-N bags four seats”

The Express Tribune, April 19, 2016

Four of six candidates from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz were elected as members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council after voting was held through a “show of hands” on April 18. Islami Tehreek Pakistan's (ITP) Agha Syed Abbas Rizvi was also elected along with an independent candidate from Diamer, Syed Afzal. Polling was held at the G-B Legislative Assembly Hall in Gilgit under the supervision of the region's election commission. All 33 members of the G-B Assembly voted in the presence of the media. Those PML-N members who won their berths on the council included Ashraf Sada, Wazir Ikhlaq, Sultan Ali Khan and Arman Shah. Afzal, who contested the election as an independent, also received a vote each from PML-N and Pakistan Peoples Party. He is likely to join the latter after taking oath. G-B Assembly opposition leader Shah Baig, a senior JUI-F leader, also voted in favour of ITP's Rizvi, helping him win.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1087330/gilgit-baltistan-council-pml-n-bags-four-seats/>

Shabbir Mir, “In case of emergency: G-B govt to

construct depot in Gilgit”

The Express Tribune, April 20, 2016

The government in Gilgit-Baltistan has plans to construct a bulk depot in Gilgit to store grains so it can be used in times of crisis, Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman stated on April 19. Rehman's remarks came during the proceedings of G-B Legislative Assembly that convened for the first time after the region faced an acute shortage of supplies. The shortage lasted for over two weeks when Karakoram Highway linking G-B to rest of the country was cut off at several places by landslides triggered by rains. “We will construct a depot that will have the capacity for 10,000 bags,” Rehman told the house chaired by Speaker Fida Muhammad Nashad. The chief minister added an alternative route, Babusar Highway, would be constructed soon to ensure G-B remains connected with the rest of the country in case KKH is inaccessible. “The federal government has allocated Rs82 billion for it and the project is reflected in the Public Sector Development Programme 2016-17,” the CM maintained. He noted steps were also being taken to enhance the storage capacity for petroleum products in G-B.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1087885/in-case-of-emergency-g-b-govt-to-construct-depot-in-gilgit/>

Tariq Naqash, “Apprehensions about voter lists unfounded: AJK's CEC”

Dawn, April 20, 2016

The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is slated to address concerns of political parties and provide them a level playing field, but political heads should avoid giving their own dates for election, lest it creates misunderstandings.

This was stated by AJK Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal at his meeting with the heads or senior representatives of political parties on April 19. The meeting was held in the wake of allegations by some political parties, mainly the ruling PPP, that the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) had entered thousands of additional votes

in the voter lists of 29 constituencies, located in AJK. Dismissing the apprehensions as unfounded, the CEC reminded the participants that the agreement with Nadra was struck by the AJK government for verification of electoral rolls, exclusion of fake and inclusion of leftover votes. The Election Commission, he stated, was carrying out its responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution, relevant laws and the terms and conditions of the agreement.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1253248/apprehensions-about-voter-lists-unfounded-ajks-cec>

Khawaja Daud, “PM Nawaz should step down over Panama leaks: AJK govt spokesman”

Daily Pakistan, April 20, 2016

An Azad Jammu and Kashmir minister demanded Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to step down following the Panama leaks scandal. “Now the prime minister should resign from his office forthwith as he has lost the confidence of the masses and it is morally obligatory on him the step down,” stated AJK Information Minister Abid Hussain Abid, who is also the government spokesperson. He noted that because the international scandal prime ministers and leaders of other countries have shown courage and quit their offices. “As many as 12 key leaders have withdrawn from their posts so far which include Iceland, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Spain and Germany,” he stated, asking PM Nawaz to follow suit and quit the office.

<http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/pm-nawaz-should-step-down-over-panama-leaks-ajk-govt-spokesman/>

“AJK Polls: Greater Fairness Needed”

Pakistan Observer, April 21, 2016

Sardar Khalid Ibrahim Khan, President Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party warned that official funds either of AJK, or Kashmir Council or of Federal Government must not be used for electoral purposes. Addressing party workers, he stated this misuse of authority and official resources must be stopped forthwith. Apart from Sardar Khalid Ibrahim, there have been statements from some other leaders as well in the backdrop of some visible moves by ruling parties in Islamabad and Muzaffarabad.

There are genuine complaints that PML-(N) Government and PPP's AJK Government are misusing official resources to run their election campaigns. We have observed during the last several weeks that some Federal Ministers and leaders of PML (N) have been frequently visiting Azad Kashmir and addressing public gatherings on official expense. In fact, media parties are also taken to cover these events on government expense. Similar complaints have also been made against PPP Government in Azad Kashmir for misuse of authority or official machinery for electoral purposes.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/21/ajk-polls-greater-fairness-needed/>

“Majeed urges Journalist Community to Play Role in Highlighting Kashmir Issue”

Radio Pakistan, April 22, 2016

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed urged the journalist community to play their pivotal role in highlighting the longstanding Kashmir issue in its true perspective at international level. Talking to a delegation of newly elected office bearers of Chakswari Press Club in Islamabad, he noted state government fully believes in freedom of press. He urged the international human rights bodies to play their role in resolving Kashmir issue under UN resolutions to establish durable peace in South Asia.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/22-Apr-2016/majeed-urges-journalist-community-to-play-role-in-highlighting-kashmir-issue>

“Govt. Taking Tangible Steps to Enhance Quality of Education: Yaqoob”

Radio Pakistan, April 22, 2016

The Azad Kashmir President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan noted government is taking tangible steps to enhance quality of education in the state. Addressing a ceremony in Kotli University, he noted government has established number of higher education institution in the state to provide higher education to masses at their door steps.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/23-Apr-2016/govt-taking-tangible-steps-to-enhance-quality-of-education-yaqoob>

MA Mir, “Polling schedule: Kashmir Council elections set for May 15”

The Express Tribune, April 24, 2016

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission (AJKEC) on April 23 announced the polling schedule for four Kashmir Council seats. The four members of the Kashmir Council completed their five-year term on April 20, 2016. The AJKEC stated voting will be held in the AJK Assembly Hostel on May 15, with a list of the winning members to be displayed the same day. The six council members are elected by members of the AJK Legislative Assembly via secret voting. The AJKEC will release the final list of Kashmir Council candidates on May 13. The procedure for the candidates who contest the council elections is the same as the procedure for assembly elections. Under the Act 1974 of the AJK Constitution, the Kashmir Council was formed to serve as a bridge between Muzaffarabad and Islamabad. The Prime Minister of Pakistan heads it as chairman, while Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs is its minister in charge. The Kashmir Council also has the right to appoint judges to the AJK high court, AJK Supreme Court and the chief election commissioner. The council consists of six members, elected by the AJK Legislative Assembly, while the other six are nominated by the Prime Minister of Pakistan from the Parliament.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1090510/polling-schedule-kashmir-council-elections-set-for-may-15/>

Abdul Hameed Shaheen, “I don't believe in switching ideology in changed milieu: Abid”

Kashmir Watch, April 25, 2016

Sardar Abid Hussain Abid, Information Minister of Azad Kashmir stated that he does not believe in changing ideology in changed conditions. I am not of that mettle. Service to the people, lessening graph of youth unemployment and increasing travel and transportation facilities to the masses have been my key achievements in my area. People can themselves see these indicators on ground, he noted addressing a big public meeting on April 24 after inaugurating a macadamised local link road.

Macadamization of three roads at Derair and their interlinkage would facilitate the local population as well as tourist traffic to this area, he added. PPP-AJK has played a dynamic role in carrying out overall development in the region, laid down a grand network of higher professional education. Our people believe in the philosophy of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir and are determined to return this party back to power on the basis of its performance.

<http://kashmirwatch.com/i-dont-believe-in-switching-ideology-in-changed-milieu-abid/>

“All Resources Being Mobilized to Provide Basic Necessities of Life to Masses: Majeed”

Radio Pakistan, April 25, 2016

The Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed stated that all available resources are being mobilized to provide basic necessities of life to masses at their doorsteps. Talking to various public delegations in Muzaffarabad on April 24, he stated that government is taking revolutionary steps for the socio-economic uplifts of the state. AJK Prime Minister noted that government is paying full attention to the problems of common man and no compromise would be made on the right of state citizens. He also stated that government is committed to serve the masses with missionary zeal and prompting politics of reconciliation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Deputy Speaker Shaheen Kousar Dar, Minister Forests Sardar Javed Ayoub and Minister Law Syed Azhar Gillani were also present on the occasion.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/25-Apr-2016/all-resources-being-mobilized-to-provide-basic-necessities-of-life-to-masses-majeed>

MA Mir, “No quorum: All ruling party MPs absent from assembly”

The Express Tribune, April 26, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (AJKLA) session had to be adjourned due to lack of quorum after all ruling Pakistan People's Party parliamentarians failed to attend session. The session was adjourned without taking up the agenda. PML-N's Opposition Leader Farooq Haider Khan

stated Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed sat in his chamber along with other MPs from his party but did bother to attend the session. Khan stated it was duty of the ruling party to complete the quorum as the session had been summoned on the government's requisition. The opposition leader also criticised the AJK government for “trying to curtail powers of the chief election commissioner (CEC)”. Responding to the criticism, political adviser to AJK PM Shaukat Javid stated opposition's criticism was meaningless. He also stated the session was adjourned as per the rules.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1091616/no-quorum-all-ruling-party-mps-absent-from-assembly/>

“People Will Vote us on Performance Base: Minister Inquilabi”

Pakistan Observer, April 27, 2016

Higher Education and IT minister of Azad Kashmir Ch Maqloob Inquilabi noted that his party would go to the people for vote on the basis of performance of their party government during past five years. We produced better results of public services, laid a great creative network of higher education in AJK for the benefits of the future generations. We established a fine tradition of tolerant politics in the territory. But despite that those who oppose us are overlapping the limits of gentlemanliness in politics and public ethics; he noted this while opening higher secondary school at village Gayaean. Minister Inquilabi stated that Kashmir Council elections would be held on time. We will not let anyone to fulfil his unlawful wish. Every public body is bound under constitution and law, no one can trespass, he added. He criticized those who use unethical language against the prime minister. Perhaps abusing others gives them peace of mind but he warned such elements that abusers are never remembered by the honoured public. He also stated that despite many obstacles in the way, we succeeded in establishing higher education institutions, tourism and constructional projects. He further stated that April 30, 2016 public meeting of chairman Pakistan People's Party Mr Bilawal Zardari Bhutto would set the boundaries of new politics. His public meeting is scheduled to be held at Kotli open ground. Independent sources noted

that public meeting arrangements are being made briskly and the AJK PM himself is touring the area these days for the purpose.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/27/people-will-vote-us-on-performance-base-minister-inquilabi/>

“CJ stresses bench-bar co-op for speedy justice”

The Nation, April 27, 2016

Azad Jammu & Kashmir Chief Justice Azam Khan stressed dispensation of speedy and inexpensive justice through improved cooperation between the bench and the bar. The chief justice of AJK Supreme Court was speaking as chief guest at the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of District Bar Association Mirpur on April 26. Justice Azam stated that since the Supreme Court of AJK was already determined to maintain the supremacy of law, justice and the constitution; the mutual cooperation and liaison between bar and the bench could ensure speedy and inexpensive justice and perform an affective role to wipe out corruption and injustice from the society. After administering oath to the office bearers of the DBA elected for next one year term, the CJ continued that the independence of judiciary lies in the might of the bar. He also added that the judiciary could not perform with full independence if the bar could not perform its due role for the purpose.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/27-Apr-2016/cj-stresses-bench-bar-co-op-for-speedy-justice>

“Pak shelves proposal of annexing Gilgit Baltistan from PoK”

DNA, April 28, 2016

Under pressure, Pakistan has apparently shelved the idea of annexing Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) to make it country's fifth province. In a letter to Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has ruled out any change in the constitutional status of Gilgit Baltistan (GB). "I appreciate your views on the impact of any possible change in the constitutional status of GB on the Kashmir cause. Your concerns and suggestions are valuable and are being examined with meticulous

care... I would like to make it unambiguously clear that Pakistan is fully aware of the sensitivities attached to Gilgit-Baltistan with regard to Jammu and Kashmir dispute," Sharif stated in his letter. The letter comes in response to the communiqué sent by Malik to Pakistan premier in January raising fears over the moves to merge Gilgit Baltistan with Pakistan. "This will have implications on the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. If Pakistan imposes its sovereign writ over Gilgit Baltistan, India will then have a political and moral right to integrate Kashmir with it," Malik wrote to Sharif.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-pak-shelves-proposal-of-annexing-gilgit-baltistan-from-pok-2206857>

“Progress, Prosperity of Pakistan, AJK Interlinked: Kirmani”

Radio Pakistan, April 28, 2016

Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Dr Asif Kirmani says progress and prosperity of Pakistan and Kashmir are interlinked. He was speaking at a ceremony along with Minister for Kashmir Affairs Barjees Tahir, AJK PML (N) in Bagh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Dr Kirmani stated PML (N) would put up candidates on all seats for the elections of AJK Legislative Assembly. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Chaudhry Barjees Tahir stated as per instructions of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, problems of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir would be resolved on priority basis.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/28-Apr-2016/progress-prosperity-of-pakistan-ajk-interlinked-kirmani>

Shabbir Mir, “Election of G-B Council members notified”

The Express Tribune, April 28, 2016

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Election Commissioner Syed Tahir Ali Shah notified the names of six members who were elected to the G-B Council, the upper house of the region's parliament. As per a copy of the notification available, Arman Shah, Sultan Ali Khan, Muhammad Ashraf Sada and Wazir Ikhlq Hussain were members elected from the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. In addition, Islami Tehreek Pakistan's Syed Muhammad Abbas and Syed Afzal, an independent candidate, were

named members of the council. Four of the six candidates from ruling Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) were elected to the upper house last week through a show of hands in Gilgit. Polling was conducted in the G-B Assembly hall under the supervision of the regional election commission. All 33 members of the legislative assembly took part in the polling process. The elections took place after five years. They were conducted under an amendment incorporated by the government in the G-B Empowerment and Self Governance Order, 2009. This allowed lawmakers to show their hands for candidates they wanted to vote for instead of a secret ballot.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1091624/election-of-g-b-council-members-notified/>

“Bilawal to visit Kotli”

Daily Times, April 28, 2016

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will visit Kotli, Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) on April 30 to address a public meeting. It was officially declared by the AJK government on April 27. AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed noted that people of the Jammu Kashmir would warmly welcome Bilawal at Kotli. He also stated that people of Kotli waiting anxiously for Bilawal. He added that his government would continue delivering its services to the people and welfare of a common man would remain on the party's agenda.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/28-Apr-16/bilawal-to-visit-kotli-on-saturday>

“Three alleged terrorists involved in Nanga Parbat massacre arrested in Gilgit”

Dunya News, April 29, 2016

Security forces have arrested three alleged terrorist believed to be linked to massacre of ten tourists at the base camp of Nanga Parbat. Alleged terrorists have been identified as Irfanullah, Habib-ur-Rehman and Qaribullah. They have been shifted to Islamabad for interrogation through PIA flight PK-606. At least ten foreign climbers were massacred on June 22, 2013 at the base camp for the 8,126-metre (26,660-foot) Nanga Parbat, Pakistan's second-highest mountain. The victims were

identified as three Ukrainians, two Chinese -- including Chinese-American Chen Honglu -- two Slovaks, one Lithuanian and one Nepalese as well as a Pakistani guide. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was to avenge the death of their deputy leader in a U.S. drone strike. But the group is known to make exaggerated claims. The attack took place in an area that has largely been peaceful, hundreds of kilometers (miles) from the Taliban's major sanctuaries along the Afghan border. The attackers disguised themselves by wearing uniforms used by the Gilgit Scouts, a paramilitary force that patrols the area.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/334434-Three-alleged-terrorists-involved-in-Nanga-Parbat->

Shabbir Mir, "Tourism in the shadow of checkpoints"

The Express Tribune, April 30, 2016

If a given area is dotted by checkpoints, rest assured it is beset with serious law and order issues. In Gilgit-Baltistan, however, it is the other way round. In areas where the law and order situation is stable, there are endless checkpoints. In the small city of Gilgit alone, the number of checkpoints manned separately by the police, Gilgit Scouts and Punjab Rangers are over a dozen, with security men occupying virtually half of the roads, staring at passers-by. At some places, security men go so far as to ask locals for proof of identity, implying distrust. Similarly, dozens of such checkpoints have sprung up along the strategic Karakoram Highway, which connects Gilgit with the rest of the country. Travellers are made to appear before police in checkpoints, to submit details of their visit. This

happens at many places, from Besham to G-B, a distance of more than 300 kilometres, testing the patience of passengers. Foreigners are grilled further by the police most of them are, understandably, not fluent in English being asked to write down their names, passport numbers, purpose of visit and so on, in a notebook kept specifically for that purpose. Certainly, the purpose of setting up of checkpoints was to help curb violence. It worked, as G-B is now one of the most peaceful regions of the country. The law enforcement agencies should now revisit the policy to replace it with one that is essentially more people-friendly. Tourism is the mainstay of the G-B economy and it cannot be promoted under the shadow of check posts.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1094465/tourism-in-the-shadow-of-checkposts/>

Economic Developments

“Development projects: AJK premier urges speedy work”

The Express Tribune, April 3, 2016

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majeed directed the local government on April 2 to ensure the delivery of all possible civic amenities to the masses in remote and far flung areas of the region. Addressing a meeting of Coordination Council for Rural Development at the Kashmir House he noted that all on-going projects must be completed in the set time frame. The premier also advised the audience to take up development related issues on war footings so that they could be solved and projects be completed in time. Majeed noted that the government was working on a public welfare agenda for speedy development and progress in far-flung areas.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1077835/development-projects-ajk-premier-urges-speedy-work/>

“Progress: AJK PM speaks on developments in the state”

The Express Tribune, April 6, 2016

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government is offering best suited and conducive atmosphere for foreign investors to launch investments in tourism, industrial and hydel power sectors, stated AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed. Speaking to various public representative delegations at the Prime Minister House, he stated that the AJK government had taken all necessary measures to turn it in to a true model welfare state by ameliorating the lifestyle of the common man without any discrimination. “The PPP government in AJK has started mega projects in just one year and is focusing on hydel power, tourism, education, health, transport and telecommunication.” he added. Majeed reiterated the efforts of his government to make the state a model one by establishing a

network of universities in different disciplines and providing civic amenities in all spheres of life.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1079300/progress-ajk-pm-speaks-on-developments-in-the-state/>

“AJK CS for Checking Expenditures and Overspending”

Pakistan Observer, April 14, 2016

Earthquake Reconstruction, Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has completed 10,002 projects in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), worth billions of rupees to help improve quality of life. In a monthly review meeting, different projects were discussed in detail. The meeting was presided over by ERRA, Acting Deputy Chairman Brig. Abu Bakr Amin Bajwa and reviewed progress of completed and under construction projects. Deputy Chairman congratulated ERRA staff and also those who worked devotedly in the past with collective efforts which made possible to complete over ten thousands projects.

He expressed his commitment to complete task assigned by the Government of Pakistan and the confidence shown by international community. Director General (DG) State Reconstruction Rehabilitation Authority AJK (SERRA), DG Pakhtunkhwa Reconstruction Rehabilitation Authority (PERRA), Projects Directors, ERRA officials and NESPAK representatives also attended the meeting. Acting Deputy Chairman stated that despite facing funds problems we are committed to complete ongoing projects especially educational institutes. “It is unfortunate that Balakot site has not been handed over to ERRA and we stand by the people of old Balakot to develop safe housing projects with all civic amenities,” he further stated.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/15/ajk-cs-for-checking-expenditures-and-overspending/>

“Mirpur bypass road, other work to cost Rs1.25 billion”

The News, April 20, 2016

Wapda General Manger Ghulam Sarwar Memon stated that he is grateful to those affected by the raising of Mangla Dam for their sacrifices for the nation. He was speaking at the start of construction of Mirpur bypass road and repair of the damaged Khaliqabad area at a cost of Rs1.25 billion. This has been made possible by the efforts of Ghulam Sarwar Memon and Commissioner Mirpur Division Raja Amjad Pervez Ali Khan and above all the government of AJK. It may be recalled that when water level in Mangla Dam was raised in 2014, a big breach at Khaliqabad had inundated the entire area and rung alarm bells in many low areas of Punjab. The construction work of the dam and roads is being carried out directly under the supervision of chairman Wapda and chief engineer Wapda, Javed. They noted that the construction and repair work is likely to be completed by August 2016.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/113869-Mirpur-bypass-road-other-work-to-cost-Rs125-billion>

“PM Delegates Powers to GBDWP for Approving Dev. Scheme Worth Rs 750”

Radio Pakistan, April 22, 2016

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif delegated powers to Gilgit-Baltistan Development Working Party (GBDWP) for approving development scheme worth 750 million rupees. Chief Minister Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman stated this while responding to a question in Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly on April 22. He also stated Prime Minister has also given approval of quarterly release of wheat quota to Gilgit Baltistan from Punjab.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/22-Apr-2016/pm-delegates-powers-to-gbdwp-for-approving-dev-scheme-worth-rs-750m>

International Developments

“China told to cease construction in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir: Army”

Hindustan Times, April 29, 2016

India has asked China to stop its reported construction activities in parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the Indian Army stated on April 29. A spokesperson for the army's Udhampur-headquartered Northern Command noted in a statement: “There have been no instances of incursions by Chinese troops into Indian territory.” At the same time, he added that there was no commonly delineated Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China. “There are areas along the border including in Ladakh where India and China have differing perceptions of LAC. Due to both sides undertaking patrolling up to their perception of the LAC, transgressions do occur. “Regarding construction activities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the government has seen such reports and has conveyed its concerns to China about their activities and asked them to cease such activities.”

The spokesperson noted there had been 118 infiltration attempts from Pakistan into Jammu and Kashmir last year. “Of these, only 33 succeeded while the rest were foiled by troops. “Up to March 31 this year, there were 24 infiltration bids on the LoC (Line of Control) and only 18 succeeded.” The spokesperson further stated issues related to infiltration along the India-Pakistan border were taken up with Islamabad at the appropriate level. “Necessary steps are taken to ensure that the national security concerns are adequately addressed through capability and infrastructural development. This is a continuous process,” the statement noted. India has registered its protest against the \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that runs through a part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/china-told-to-cease-construction-in-pakistan-occupied-kashmir-army/story->

[AV9U7wgZJNGh6ZznIb0k7O.html](http://www.indiatoday.in/story/china-constructing-road-tunnels-in-pok/1/634056.html)

Ashraf Wani, “China constructing road tunnels in PoK?”

India Today, April 3, 2016

India has accessed video of China constructing road tunnels and underground power projects in PoK. When Army commander in Kashmir, Lt Gen Satish Dua was asked about Chinese presence in PoK he stated, "Everyone knows they are constructing roads there and as far as we are concerned we have planned a network of road construction in the area, whether it is Kashmir or Kargil and it's an on-going process." But the Chinese in POK are going beyond roads. The Chinese Ministry of Water and Power and the State Grid Corporation of China are working closely with Pakistan to build an interconnecting electrical grid between the two countries to enable them to utilize each other's energy potential. Pakistan's Water and Power Secretary Muhammad Younus Dagher confirmed this at the Global Energy Interconnection Conference in Beijing where more than 700 delegates were present. Trade between Pakistan and China is likely to increase by 24 percent after completion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project. This comes after the recent developments in the UN where China stood against India's interest in Jaish-e-Mohammad Chief Maulana Masood Azhar who India believes to be the perpetrator of the terror attack on Pathankot airbase.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/china-constructing-road-tunnels-in-pok/1/634056.html>

“DLP launches signature campaign in Europe”

Greater Kashmir, April 26, 2016

Jammu Kashmir Democratic Liberation Party (DLP) launched two-day Europe-wide signature

campaign in Amsterdam on April 23 and 24, a DLP spokesman noted in a statement. “Hundreds of signatures were gathered in two days by holding the signature campaign in Amsterdam's main city centre at the Rembrandt-Square. Signature campaign is an effort to create awareness regarding the Kashmir-issue in general and the proposed annexation of Gilgit-Baltistan by Pakistan and the illegal construction of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor in particular. Thousands of booklets with Jammu & Kashmir's historical and political background and flyers with an appeal to support the cause were distributed to the European public,” the DLP spokesman stated. “The Party leader Junaid Qureshi stated that if Pakistan imposes its sovereign writ over Gilgit-Baltistan, India will have a political

and moral right to fully integrate JK into India and scrap Article 370 of its constitution which gives J&K a special status. This would pave way for further division of already divided Jammu & Kashmir. It is very important to raise our voice against such designs and seek support on international platform and among international human rights organizations and activists,” he further added.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/story/215791.html>

Other Developments

“Enforcement of Uniformed Educational System Stressed”

Pakistan Observer, April 1, 2016

A daylong policy dialogue cum seminar engaging all major political entities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir concluded with unanimous consensus on the demand for depoliticizing educational system in the state. The dialogue was titled 'Reviving Public Education System in AJK. A Citizens Perspective' was organized by Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) in a local hotel. The dialogue aimed to generate and inquire about the citizens' perspective besides to invite the view point of the masses with healthy suggestions to ameliorate the public system education system in AJK. Addressing the seminar, key speakers including AJK Minister for Higher Education, Matloob Inkalabi, Deputy Leader of Opposition AJK Legislative Assembly and PML-N AJK leader Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, Vice Chancellor MUST Prof Dr. Habib ur Rehman urged the need of collective efforts by the government, political entities and civil society to improve the public sector education system in the state.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/01/enforcement-of-uniformed-educational-system-stressed/>

“Gilgit-Rawalpindi bus service suspended”

Business Recorder, April 3, 2016

The local administration of Gilgit-Baltistan barred public transporters to operate from all districts of the region to Rawalpindi as security has not been

provided on the Karakoram Highway. Due to closure of the service, hundreds of passengers have been stranded at different places and it is feared that if the situation persists, there will also be scarcity of daily used items in the Gilgit-Batistan. In recent years after terrorist attacks public transporters were allowed to travel only in convoys and under security.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/32113/>

“Youth Need Political Role in Building Society”

Pakistan Observer, April 6, 2016

Young people of Azad Kashmir urged the government and political leadership to consult them in the decision-making process and take them into confidence before going to upcoming state elections. It was stated in the concluding ceremony of a four-day capacity building workshop titled: “Youth Political Participation by Enhancing Advocacy and Engagement” organized by AJK-based research and capacity-building organization Center for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) on April 5. Deputy Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly Shaheen Kauser Dar, Commissioner Mirpur division Raja Amjad Parvez Ali Khan, senior journalist Altaf Hameed Rao, Muhammad Shakeel, Executive Director CPDR Ershad Mahmud, Dr. Waqas Ali Kauser and Malik Waseem shared their views and experiences with the 25 young people.

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/06/youth-need-political-role-in-building-society/>

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“Gilgit-Baltistan not a dispute, Rulers made it, Speaker”

Daily Salaam, April 1, 2016

Speaker of the legislative assembly Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Fida Mohammad Nashad has stated that Gilgit-Baltistan is not disputed, rather it was made disputed by the rulers. He further stated that other provinces were integrated into Pakistan out of partition formula but Gilgit-Baltistan got independence and then joined Pakistan out of choice. While addressing degree college students, the speaker noted that without a revolution in the education sector, economic prosperity is meaningless. Terrorists want to destabilise Pakistan. People have sacrificed a lot for the nation. In his concluding remarks, he stated people need to get united against terrorists.

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

“Unexecuted Projects would be completed under the supervision of Army: Chief Minister”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, April 14, 2016

Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan stated that in past the region was known as the graveyards of the unfinished projects. We have tried to change that stigma. After completing the paper work of the all development projects of Nigar and Diamer, work will soon be started. In his meeting with the cabinet ministers, he also stated that his government has decided to complete all the development projects under the army supervision. He also insisted to accelerate the work on KKH and work on 10 bed hospital in Nigar.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=04-14-2016&img=04-14-2016page-1-1

“Council Elections and Matter of Conscience”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, April 18, 2016

The stage is set for the Gilgit-Baltistan Council

elections. These elections will be more about money and conscience. Under the autonomy order of 2009, the 33 members of the GBLA will vote for the election of six Council members while the remaining would be nominated by the prime minister of Pakistan from the members of Pakistan parliament. Along with three reserved seats, the prime minister of Pakistan will be the chairman of the 15-member Gilgit-Baltistan Council. At the moment, the ruling PML-N has the majority in the GBLA but there is also representation of Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen, Islami Tehreek, PPP, PTI and JUI. Based on its numerical strength, the PML-N is firmly looking for at least 5 out of the 6 seats to be elected by the GBLA. In this regard, the chief minister has already discussed the names of the PML-N candidates for the Council. As the opposition parties lack unity, there is no certainty about their joint candidates or the prospects of winning any seat. In this scenario, there are chances that the members would be cashing in on the situation in their individual capacity, hence, there are talks about money being used to buy votes and members being offered up to 10 million rupees for a single vote. The end result of the drama would be a politician would have to spend over 50 million of rupees to buy sufficient number of votes to become a member of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council. And anyone entering the assembly after spending a huge amount of money would certainly be targeting getting back double the amount in five years.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=04-18-2016&img=04-18-2016page-2-1

“Kachu Imtiaz Haider's Membership terminated from MWM”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, April 21, 2016

The Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen, Gilgit-Baltistan, announced to terminate the membership of Kachu Imtiaz Haider for voting in the Council elections against the party policy. A statement issued by the

party stated that Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen has no room for any sell outs and, therefore, it has terminated the membership of Kachu Imtiaz Hussain, who had won the election to the legislative assembly on the party's ticket. It further stated that a formal application will be submitted to the speaker of the assembly for removing the membership of Kachu Imtiaz. The MWM further stated that opposition leader Shah Baig was a man of principle and the MWM pays him tributes for standing with the party till the end. It also stated that by compromising on principles, Kachu Imtiaz lost his integrity and would have to face the political consequences of his decision. On the other hand, Kachu Imtiaz noted that when there was no candidate of MWM, he had no other option but to vote for the government candidate. He also stated that when there was no candidate of his own party, there was no question of violating the party policy. He further stated that as there were only two candidates, he did not want to vote for the losing candidate and waste his vote. He stated he used his vote for Syed Afzal on the promise that Afzal would spend 50 per cent of his development funds in my area. He noted he took the decision in the best interest of his area.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=04-21-2016&img=04-21-2016page-1-3

“Construction of Dams Pre-requisite for Progress and Development”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, April 22, 2016

There is huge potential to exploit the water resources in Gilgit-Baltistan. But no government has ever paid any interest in this direction. Constructions of small dams is also viable option to address the load-shedding. Although Sadpara Dam at Skardu was constructed but due to technical fault it cannot store much water in winters. Construction work on Bunji and Diamer Dam is very slow. Timely construction of these dams could have addressed the electricity crisis of the nation. Due to

load shedding and scarcity of electricity, many industries in the country have closed. Had governments in past constructed dams on time we would have been self-sufficient in energy aspect. Our industrial sector would not have been affected. Therefore, the need of the hour is to start constructing small dams in Gilgit-Baltistan and, more importantly, complete them on time. Once Bunji Dam is completed, it can generate 700 MW electricity. There is need to coordinate with the federal government on land acquisition and financing these dams.

http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/popup.php?r_date=04-22-2016&img=04-22-2016page-4-4

“Ignoring Gilgit-Baltistan in CPEC will create Mistrust”

Daily Baad-e-Shimal, April 25, 2016

Member of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly Raja Jhanzaib warned federal government of overlooking Gilgit-Baltistan. In his press statement, Jhanzaib stated that Gilgit-Baltistan has a vital strategic significance but the rulers do not acknowledge it. They are continuously ignoring it. People of the region consider themselves as Pakistani. He further stated that ignoring Gilgit-Baltistan in CPEC will create further mistrust. This would affect the corridor negatively. For Gilgit-Baltistan, the CPEC is a matter of life and death. Only Pakistan army knows the importance of the region.

<http://www.dailybaadeshimal.com/?page=cGFnZS03&dt=MDQtMjUtMjAxNg>

Fact sheet on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir

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

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

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

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

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Area: 13,297 square km

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

Capital: Muzaffarabad

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

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

President: Sardar Yaqoob Khan

Prime Minister: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

AJK Council: Total 12 members

AJK Legislative Assembly: Total seats are 49

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan

Area: 72,496 sq. kilometers

Population: 870,347 (1998 population census)

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: Nine

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan Council: Total 15 members

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

Governor of G-B: 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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