

POK

News Digest

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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

Whether or not the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will benefit Gilgit Baltistan in actual terms, has been an issue of continuing debate in the region and beyond. Ever since the economic corridor project was unveiled, there is a growing sense of uncertainty amongst the locals regarding their share in the development activity that is likely to ensue as a result of the massive connectivity and infrastructure project. The government of Pakistan has issued occasional assurances to the people of Gilgit Baltistan in this regard. The federal government of Pakistan also announced a couple of economic zones to be created in the Gilgit Baltistan region as part of the larger CPEC project. However, Gilgit Baltistan, which is part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, is yet to receive its share in terms of concrete substantial projects that could possibly act as a harbinger of development and prosperity in the otherwise underdeveloped region. Keeping in view Gilgit Baltistan's geographical criticality to the CPEC, it is ironical that the region is still struggling to figure out its role and stakes in the multi-billion connectivity project. The CPEC to be built through Gilgit Baltistan is a massive infrastructure and connectivity project that will connect Kashgar in Xinjiang province of China to the Gwadar Port in Balochistan in Pakistan.

In this backdrop, Pakistan's Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal, floated the idea of initiating some form of cooperation between Gilgit Baltistan and Xinjiang province. Iqbal proposed that the geographical location of the two regions should be capitalised upon by thinking in terms of developing a partnership between the two. As indicated in one of the reports included in the current issue, the minister noted that if such a plan concretises, it will add further fillip to the CPEC.

As widely expected the PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz) emerged victorious in the July 21 general elections held in the so called Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The previous government led by the PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party) was virtually wiped off even as Bilawal Bhutto undertook extensive campaigning in the run up to the 'AJK' elections. Similarly, the Imran Khan led PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf) could not make any significant gain in the 'AJK' election results despite inducting an influential local leader, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry in the party and elevating him as the PTI chief in 'AJK'.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

“PML-N to Launch Revolutionary Dev. Programmes after Coming to Power in AJK: Rashid”

Radio Pakistan, July 1, 2016

Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid stated PML-N, after coming to power in Azad Kashmir, will start revolutionary development programmes in the 'liberated' territory. He was addressing an Iftar party of the PML-N workers at Dudyal in Azad Kashmir. He stated that according to the manifesto, 50 billion rupees will be provided to the Azad Kashmir Government in five years for roads. Helicopter ambulance services will be started in Azad Kashmir. Information Minister stated that Mirpur-Muzaffarabad Expressway will be constructed to connect all parts of Azad Kashmir. He stated that latest facilities, including airports, hospitals, universities and colleges will be set up in Azad Kashmir. He also stated that local government system will also be introduced in Azad Kashmir.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/01-Jul-2016/pml-n-to-launch-revolutionary-dev-programmes-after-coming-to-power-in-ajk-rashid>

Jamil Nagri, “Tribunal declares GB Council election illegal”

Dawn, July 1, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan election tribunal on June 30 declared the recent GB Council's elections as illegal and ordered fresh election to the council through secret ballot. The court suspended membership of the six members of GB Council elected from the region.

The decision was made by Justice Mohammad Alam while hearing a petition of Haji Ali Haider, a candidate for the council, who had challenged the GB Council elections through his counsel Amjad Husain advocate. In his petition, Mr Haider challenged the conduct of GB Council elections by

show of hands instead of secret ballot in the election tribunal. The petitioner stated that the federal government had amended the GB Council election rules, replacing the method of secret ballot with show of hands after the announcement of council election schedule. He argued that conduct of council elections through show of hands was illegal and unconstitutional; therefore, election of six members for the council is declared null and void. The petitioner also stated that the GB government should be directed to issue fresh schedule of the elections through secret ballot. The petitioner maintained that under the 'GB Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009', the GBLA members had to elect six members of GB Council through secret ballot and transferable vote pattern.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1268366/tribunal-declares-gb-council-election-illegal>

“Faryal finalises candidates”

The Nation, July 1, 2016

PPP chief Asif Ali Zardari's sister and head of party's women wing, Faryal Talpur chaired a meeting on June 30 to finalise candidates from Punjab for the upcoming general elections in Azad Kashmir due on July 21. Kashmiris settled in various Punjab districts elect their representatives from this province for the AJK Assembly. Former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Jehangir Badr, Bashir Riaz, Rana Farooq Saeed, Nadim Kaira, Ch Manzoor, Shaukat Basra, Samina Ghurki and Faisal Mir attended the meeting. The meeting decided to award party tickets to four candidates from Punjab: Umer Sharif Bokhari, Shaukat Wazir Ali, Khadim Gujjar and Ch Mir Haider. Faryal told party men that she would be coming to Lahore again before the elections to muster support for the party candidates.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/01-Jul-2016/faryal-finalises-candidates>

Shabbir Mir, “G-B indecisive over boycotting

Shandur Polo Festival”

The Express Tribune, July 3, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan government is undecided over boycotting Shandur Polo Festival. The event, which has been jointly organised by G-B and K-P over the last decade, has become politicised by the boundary issue in recent years. G-B lawmaker Barkat Jamil who is also the parliamentary secretary on tourism, informed the media that the region will participate in the event as it has stakes at the festival. However, another lawmaker Fida Khan noted on July 1 that G-B will not participate in the event as K-P has failed to remove G-B's reservation over the organisation of the event. “We have decided to stay away from the event since K-P is not willing to give us our due share in hosting it,” Fida noted. He was referring to the share of revenue the event generates each year. According to Fida, G-B will organise another event at the same place but after the end of Shandur Polo Festival.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1134990/loggerheads-g-b-indecisive-boycotting-shandur-polo-festival/>

“To the gallows: Three sentenced to death in DSP's murder case in Gilgit”

The Express Tribune, July 3, 2016

At least three men, who were convicted of murdering a DSP and his subordinate in Diامر Valley, were sentenced to death by an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Gilgit. In addition to the death sentence, Khalilur Rehman, Shah Faisal and Abdul Hameed were fined Rs1 million each by Justice Raja Shahbaz Khan of the ATC. Three other suspects in the case Shifa, Amir Hamza and Mohibullah are at large, but were sentenced in absentia. Orders were issued to arrest the suspects immediately. “This high-profile case has finally subsided,” a lawyer noted on July 2, a day after the decision was taken. In April 2013, DSP Attaullah and his subordinate Haleem were on their way to arrest suspected terrorists in Darel Valley when armed men ambushed them. The DSP and his subordinate died on the spot, while three others were injured.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1134977/gallows-three-sentenced-death-dsps-murder-case-gilgit/>

“Reject those who opposed Sadiq Khan, says Rashi”

The Express Tribune, July 4, 2016

Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid on July 3 called upon Kashmiris to reject those who did not support Sadiq Khan, the Pakistan-origin candidate who won the recent London mayoral elections. Addressing an Iftar dinner hosted by Chaudhry Saeed, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate for LA-3 in Mirpur, Rashid stated that the man who canvassed for an 'anti-Pakistan' candidate in the London elections had no right to solicit Kashmiris to vote for his party's candidates in the upcoming elections in the valley.

The minister recalled that during May 2016 mayoral elections in London elections, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan sought votes for his former brother-in-law Zac Goldsmith, not for the Pakistan-origin Sadiq Khan. “How can Imran seek votes of Kashmiris if he did not support Sadiq Khan?” asked Rashid. He went on to say that Imran had persuaded people to send money through 'Hundi', an outlawed practice. However, Rashid stated overseas Pakistanis rejected his 'wrong advice' and remitted precious foreign exchange through banks.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1135740/canvassing-mirpur-reject-opposed-sadiq-khan-says-rashid/>

“Chinese national sentenced to nine years imprisonment for arms smuggling in Pak”

Daily Siasat, July 10, 2016

A Chinese national Wang Jiangquo has been sentenced to nine years imprisonment for trying to smuggle weapons from Pakistan to China via Khunjerab border by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Gilgit. Earlier on July 7, the court also imposed a ban on Wang to visit Pakistan again. Gilgit Anti-Terrorism Court judge Shahbaz Khan hearing the case also asked the Punjab Inspector General of Police to take action against the arms dealer, who sold four pistols and hundreds of bullets to the Chinese national. Wang was arrested by the Khunjerab Security Force (KSF) on May 24 from Khunjerab National Park area of Hunza district near

the China-Pakistan border. A case was registered against him under the anti-terrorism law after which he was shifted to Gilgit for investigation.

<http://www.siasat.com/news/chinese-national-sentenced-nine-years-imprisonment-arms-smuggling-pak-983917/>

MA Mir, “AJK elections: Over 17,000 soldiers posted for poll security”

The Express Tribune, July 10, 2016

To guarantee security during the general elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Pakistan Army will post more than 17,000 soldiers at key places, AJK Election Commission (AJKEC) spokesman Tariq Butt announced on July 9. “The personnel of Frontier Constabulary, Frontier Corps and Punjab Constabulary will also assist the army in all 41 constituencies to ensure free, fair and transparent polling in a peaceful atmosphere in the region,” Butt added. AJK elections: Which party is sharing political space with women? The spokesman noted the ballot papers were being printed under the supervision of Pakistan Army in Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press Islamabad and would be handed over to the returning officers on July 15 in the federal capital. “Deployment of army during the elections in AJK was decided in a meeting held on June 24, between all the heads and representatives of political parties of the region and Chief Election Commissioner Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal,” Butt added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1138649/ajk-elections-17000-soldiers-posted-poll-security/>

“PML-N unveils uplift-oriented manifesto for AJK polls”

The Nation, July 10, 2016

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on July 9 announced its manifesto for the general election 2016 of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) scheduled to be held on July 21. Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage Senator Pervaiz Rashid announced the manifesto at a news conference along with Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Chaudhry Barjees Tahir, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Dr Asif Kirmani,

Chairman Manifesto Committee former Chief Justice Manzoor Hussain Gilani, PML-N AJK-chapter President Raja Farooq Haider, deputy mayors of Islamabad Syed Zeeshan Ali Naqvi and Rifat Javed and other party leaders. Pervaiz Rashid stated that the manifesto had been compiled by a team of experts keeping in view all requirements of AJK and assured that the PML-N would fulfil each and every word mentioned in the development agenda. He also stated that the manifesto committee was formed by Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif as president of the PML-N who appointed former Chief Justice Manzoor Hussain Gilani as head of the manifesto body.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Jul-2016/pml-n-unveils-uplift-oriented-manifesto-for-ajk-polls>

“Five killed as PPP, PML-N workers clash in AJK”

The Express Tribune, July 10, 2016

At least five people were killed after fierce clashes broke out between activists of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the opposition Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) in Azad Kashmir's Haveli district on July 9. According to media reports, the clash broke out during an Eid Milan party where activists of both political groups opened indiscriminate fire, leaving several others, including former minister Chaudhry Aziz, injured. The injured were rushed to local hospitals while funeral prayers of the deceased were offered. Following the incident, enraged activists vandalised shops and public property, halting trading activity in many parts of the district. Meanwhile, the PML-N is observing a protest against the killing of its activists.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1138824/five-killed-ppp-pml-n-workers-clash-ajk/>

Afzal A. Shigri, “GB's hydropower potential”

Dawn, July 11, 2016

Although the Gilgit-Baltistan region is endowed with vast natural resources, the area remains trapped in abject poverty. If these resources were properly harnessed, not only would the area break free of its vicious cycle of poverty, it would also lead

to unprecedented national economic development. Despite this, the inept Planning Division has done nothing to tap into these natural resources and has failed to even come up with a viable plan for such, thereby denying residents of the area and fellow Pakistanis the opportunity to truly prosper. The misery of the people of GB is compounded by the apathy of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, which has also failed to capitalise on these natural assets. Although the ministry's key role is to facilitate the local population in realising self-rule in line with UN resolutions it has failed completely in this regard. The federal government, so busy in trying to control the area, has neglected regional development. Locally elected assembly members must demand the transfer of these subjects to the assembly. The local leadership should rise above partisan loyalties and work collectively by engaging best professionals internationally and seeking investors for these energy projects. The major beneficiary of these energy projects will, in any case, be the federal government with attendant prosperity for GB.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1269985/gbs-hydropower-potential>

“Appeal for international solidarity: Free Baba Jan and 11 other political activists and stop the abuse of anti-terrorism”

Links.Org, July 11, 2016

On the 8th of June 2016, the Supreme Appellate Court in Gilgit-Baltistan upheld the decision of an Anti-Terrorist Court in GB in September 2014[1] and sentenced Baba Jan (central leader of the left-wing Awami Workers Party - Gilgit Baltistan) and 11 other activists[2] to 40 year prison terms under the Anti-Terrorist Act.[3] The three-member SAC bench gave a two-to-one split verdict on the state's appeal against the unanimous decision of the Gilgit Baltistan Chief Court two-member bench to acquit Baba Jan and others of terrorism and violence charges in April 2015. Despite what the severity of the sentence appears to imply, Baba Jan and his companions are not militants who had taken up arms against the state they are progressive political activists and organizers who had simply raised their voice for the plight of displaced persons of the 2010

natural disaster in Attabad, Hunza and organized them against government corruption and delay in payment of the compensation funds and their resettlement.

<http://links.org.au/node/4750>

“Journalists boycott press conference of PTI AJK chief”

The Nation, July 12, 2016

A group of local journalists boycotted the press conference of PTI AJK President and former prime minister Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry in protest against the indifferent and discriminatory attitude of the party's local chapter including its media managers and the electioneering wing. The ugly situation cropped up on July 11 when a group of local journalists, affiliated with the national and state's print and electronic media left the venue of the proposed press conference of Barrister Sultan Mahmood at Central Election office of the PTI in protest. According to the spokesperson for the protesting journalists, the step has been taken for constantly ignoring local journalists in the issuance of advertisements of election campaign of Sultan, the PTI's candidate in Mirpur city LA-III constituency in scheduled July 21 AJK general elections. The boycotting journalists also protested against the inordinate delay in the arrival of Barrister Sultan for over an hour, at the venue of the press conference.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/12-Jul-2016/journalists-boycott-press-conference-of-pti-ajk-chief>

Sardar Sikander, “AJK polls overshadow key political issues”

The Express Tribune, July 13, 2016

A pitched political battle will be waged in Azad Kashmir, overshadowing other important political issues, including planned negotiations on Panama Leaks between the government and the opposition till after the election. Currently, the ruling PML-N seems too busy bracing for the Azad Kashmir political battlefield to care for anything else. Background discussions with party insiders suggested that the top leadership of PML-N believes that the Panama Leaks issue should be

relegated to backburner till the elections in the Azad Kashmir are held on July 21. In a related development, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is learnt to have convened a special meeting of the federal cabinet at the Governor House in Lahore on July 15 to discuss the deteriorating security situation in Indian-administered Kashmir. Following extensive consultations in Lahore, the party leadership decided to deal with 'one core issue at a time', instead of opening up too many fronts.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1140563/political-melee-ajk-polls-overshadow-key-political-issues/>

“Khursheed Shah condemns PML-N's actions in Azad Kashmir”

Daily Times, July 13, 2016

Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Syed Khursheed Shah stated that what the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) was doing to win elections in Azad Kashmir was deplorable. He condemned PML-N's actions in Azad Kashmir and stated that the ruling party was fond of claiming that it had been subjected to oppression time and again. He also stated that the people had been martyred and the blame was placed on Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP). Khursheed Shah further stated that if Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif wanted to win the elections in Azad Kashmir, then he should have conveyed that to the PPP. The PPP would make a sacrifice but if PML-N wins via rigging and violence, then it would only increase hostilities in the region.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-Jul-16/khursheed-shah-condemns-pml-ns-actions-in-azad-kashmir>

“Gilgit-Baltistan has Great Potential for Investment”

Radio Pakistan, July 14, 2016

Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan stated that Gilgit-Baltistan has great potential for investment and Government is giving incentives to investors. This he noted while talking to a Chinese delegation called on him in Karimabad, Hunza on July 14. The Governor also stated that the Chinese investors can take benefit of the opportunities of investment in energy, mining, tourism, education health fields. It was reported that that a 20 member

Chinese delegation led by Mr. Yuan Jianmin is nowadays on a visit to Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/14-Jul-2016/gilgit-baltistan-has-great-potential-for-investment-ghazanfar>

“Azad Kashmir elections: Ex-PM incites workers to open fire, carry arms”

Daily Dunya, July 14, 2016

After a sad incident of two deaths during Azad Kashmir elections, Barrister Sultan Mahmood on July 14 started infuriating workers and provoked people to open fire instead of teaching them about tolerance in politics. In the wake of Kashmir elections, situation remained tensed in District Haveli as two people lost their lives during a clash between two political groups. Instead of preaching peace, the leadership had started evoking party workers. Former Prime Minister (PM) Barrister Sultan Mahmood during an election campaign openly provoked people to carry arms and open fire if situation worsens.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/345077-Azad-Kashmir-elections-ExPM-incites-workers-to-o>

“Info Minister Lauds PM for Pleading Kashmir Cause at Global Forums”

Radio Pakistan, July 14, 2016

Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid stated that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is effectively pleading the cause of Kashmir at global forums. Addressing PML-N workers at Charhoi near Kotli in Azad Kashmir on July 14 evening, he asked Kashmiri voters to strengthen their cause by exercising their right to vote in favour of PML-N. Pervaiz Rashid noted PPP government in Azad Kashmir has failed to deliver during its tenure. He also stated that the Charhoi Tehsil headquarters will not be shifted to any other place.

The Information Minister further stated that under the PML-N manifesto, fifty billion rupees will be allocated for road infrastructure in Azad Kashmir. He noted the Prime Minister has promised to set up two airports in Azad Kashmir besides an expressway from Mirpur to Muzaffarabad. Besides, hospitals will be set up in all the tehsil headquarters of Azad Kashmir. He later stated five helicopters

will be dedicated for ambulance service in the far flung areas.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/14-Jul-2016/pm-effectively-pleading-cause-of-kashmir-at-global-forums-rashid>

“AJK minister attacked”

Dawn, July 15, 2016

The Minister for Electricity, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, escaped an attempt on his life in G-10/4 on July 14, the police stated. Mr Rathore, son of former Prime Minister Mumtaz Rathore, was staying with his cousin in G-10/4 and was travelling to Kashmir House for a meeting when gunmen opened fire on his official vehicle in street 43. “He was saved because he ducked when the fire started,” a police official stated, adding that another man accompanying the minister in his car also remained safe. The police collected evidence from the attack site and also moved the minister's car to the police station. The minister told the police that the gunmen had been waiting for him and had started firing when they saw his car approach. The police also stated that Mr Rathore had enmities in his native town in Kashmir as well as in Islamabad. The minister had been booked along with a few others by the district police of Haveli, Azad Kashmir after five were killed and many injured during a clash between PPP and PML-N workers when they were campaigning for the upcoming elections.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1270927/ajk-minister-attacked>

MA Mir, “Regional peace: Bilawal pleads for UN intervention in Kashmir”

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2016

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called upon the international community to help settle the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to ensure durable peace in South Asia. The PPP chairman while addressing a pre-election rally in Rawalakot, some 120 kilometres off the capital of the Azad Kashmir region, appealed to the United Nations to resolve the contentious issue as per the wishes of the Kashmiri people to bring peace. “We demand the world community to give the right of self-determination to the people of Indian-administered

Kashmir. If a referendum can be held in Scotland, then why not in Kashmir,” asked Bilawal, referring to last year's vote to seek independence for Scotland from the UK. The PPP chairman also questioned the silence of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the latest spate of violence in the valley triggered by the murder of a Kashmiri youth by the Indian army, terming it “unfortunate”.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1142131/regional-peace-bilawal-pleads-un-intervention-kashmir/>

“Thousands protest in Azad Kashmir after unrest”

The Express Tribune, July 15, 2016

Thousands of protesters marched in Azad Kashmir on July 15 to denounce recent deadly clashes with Indian security forces, with some calling for war over the disputed frontier. About 4,000 people gathered in Muzaffarabad, some carrying photos of slain rebel leader Burhan Wani, whose killing last week sparked unrest that killed 32. Students, lawyers, traders, political activists and members of militant groups gathered at protest on July 15, where the local head of hard-line militant group, Jamat-ud-Dawa, issued a call to arms.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1142523/thousands-protest-azad-kashmir-unrest/>

“PPP candidate from Mirpur City boycotts AJK polls”

Samaa TV, July 16, 2016

In a surprising and dramatic move, PPP-nominated candidate from Mirpur City LA-III electoral constituency Ch. Muhammad Ashraf announced on July 16 to boycott the elections scheduled on July 21 General Elections in AJK as a protest against the absolute hostile, negative, hypocritical and insincere behaviour of Prime Minister Ch. Abdul Majeed towards him as well as his election campaign in the constituency. The furious and dissident Ch. Ashraf, also sitting Special Assistant to AJK Prime Minister and former City Mayor announced to boycott contesting the AJK Legislative Assembly Elections on July 16.

<http://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/2016/07/ppp-candidate-from-mirpur-city-boycotts-ajk-polls/>

“Imran Khan to hold nine rallies in three days in Azad Kashmir”

Daily Dunya, July 17, 2016

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on July 17 arrived in Pakistan from London. According to details, a schedule for Imran Khan's public rallies in Azad Kashmir was also issued. Khan shall pay visit to various areas in Azad Kashmir from July 17 to July 19. PTI's central media cell stated that Imran Khan shall begin a three-day visit to Azad Kashmir on July 17. He shall address public rallies at various locations on the first day, including Charhoi, Sahensa and Chaksawari. PTI Chairman would then address public rallies at Bagh, Pathka and Muzaffarabad on July 18 whereas he shall be addressing public gathering in Samahani, Khari Sharif and Dhadhiyal on July 19.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/345362-Imran-Khan-to-hold-nine-rallies-in-three-days-in-A>

“Interior Minister Grants Power to Army for Supervising AJK Polls”

Radio Pakistan, July 17, 2016

Interior Ministry issued the notification to grant powers to the Army under Article 245 for supervising security and law and order in Azad Kashmir during elections. The requisition for the services of Army in Azad Kashmir election was sent by the Chief Election Commissioner Azad Kashmir to the Interior Ministry. However, Interior Ministry stated that it is not possible to appoint army in some areas.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/17-Jul-2016/nisar-grants-power-to-army-for-supervising-ajk-elections>

“Bilawal vows to make Kashmir 'The Valley of Benazir'”

Daily Times, July 17, 2016

Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari promised people of Azad Kashmir that if they elect PPP in the coming election, he would make Kashmir 'Waadi-e-Benazir' (The valley of Benazir). "If the valley would look like Benazir, it would be like a mother," he noted. Addressing a

public rally at Muzaffarabad, he urged the people to vote for PPP, vote for a peaceful Kashmir, and vote for Bilawal. He also stated that the PPP has clear stance on terrorism.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/17-Jul-16/bilawal-vows-to-make-kashmir-the-valley-of-benazir>

“PPP speaker for AJK assembly disqualified”

Geo News, July 18, 2016

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly Speaker Sardar Ghulam Sadiq was disqualified over corruption charges on July 18, three days before the general elections. A two-member High Court bench disqualified the Pakistan People's Party leader for taking two salaries. Sardar Ghulam Sadiq won elections from LA-18. Fierce competition is expected in the upcoming elections. The Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf are the three main contenders for the general elections. On the 43 seats, 423 candidates are contesting. Over 2,200,000 are expected to vote in the elections scheduled for July 21. Twenty nine seats will be voted on for directly by people in Azad Kashmir. The other 12 seats will be voted for by Kashmir refugees settled in various parts of Pakistan. There are eight reserved seats in the assembly, of which five are for women, one for a technocrat, one for a religious scholar and one is for an overseas Pakistani. Forty two political parties have registered themselves from Azad Kashmir in the Election Commission of Pakistan. Of them, 26 political parties are taking part in the elections held this year.

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/109624-Gearing-up-for-the-AJK-Elections>

“Crisis brewing: G-B Supreme Appellate Court strips chief court registrar of powers”

Dawn, July 19, 2016

The Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court Registrar Mumtaz Ahmed, who was accused of harassing and handcuffing the general manager of a hotel, was stripped of his judicial and administrative powers on July 18. This seems to have sparked a judicial crisis in G-B as scores of lawyers took to the streets

and held a demonstration against the court decision. Moreover, a meeting of judges was underway to discuss the emerging situation. G-B Supreme Appellate Court Chief Justice Dr Rana Shamim passed the orders of withdrawing Ahmed's powers while hearing a suo motu notice on the complaint of Serena Hotel Gilgit General Manager Faisal Qayyum who had stated he was handcuffed and humiliated on the registrar's orders for failing to reserve rooms for his guests in his hotel. The decision against Ahmed came after G-B chief court and lower court judges "vowed to go to any extreme in fulfilling their duties honestly."

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1144368/crisis-brewing-g-b-supreme-appellate-court-strips-chief-court-registrar-powers/>

“Bilawal warns govt against rigging Azad Kashmir elections”

The News, July 19, 2016

Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a press conference where he slammed the PML-N leadership and warned them against rigging in the upcoming Kashmir elections. During his talk, Bilawal criticized Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif repeatedly and even stated that he supported Imran Khan against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Bilawal stated that Kashmir had the highest literacy rate among all the provinces of Pakistan. He also stated that PPP had worked for education in the province and established universities for Kashmiris. "How many times have you heard the word Kashmir from the Prime Minister's lips?" he stated. "The Prime Minister went to India and he didn't even meet with the Hurriyat members. But he did manage to meet some steel tycoons," added Bilawal. He also warned the government that if the elections of Kashmir were rigged, then the PM would forget about the 2014 sit-in protest.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/136048-Bilawal-warns-govt-against-rigging-Azad-Kashmir-elections>

“JK BJP expresses concern over the presence of Chinese forces in Gilgit & Baltistan of POK”

Scoop News, July 19, 2016

Present Situation in Kashmir require sympathetic approach and activism of all administrative units

and further civil society be involved to bring normalcy. Pakistan has no locus to interfere in internal affairs of Jammu and Kashmir rather Pakistan should see the pity condition of public living in Gilgit, Baltistan and in Sind provenance of Pakistan. Pakistan is hub of terrorism and killer of democracy. We have not forgotten attack of Pakistan forces under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif in Kargil. Nawaz Sharif should resolve the issues of militancy within Pakistan. He should respect the law and should work for peace instead of provoking the separatist on Indian Territory. We are a nation with democratic setup and we are aware, how to deal with our internal issues. We have dealt with a number of serious challenges and we want to express our concern about the presence of Chinese forces in Gilgit and Baltistan of POK.

<http://www.scoopnews.in/det.aspx?q=58705>

“Pakistan to Continue Moral, Political and Diplomatic Support to Kashmiris”

Business Recorder, July 20, 2016

Federal minister for Kashmir Affairs Chaudhry Barjees Tahir stated that people and the government of Pakistan would continue extending moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris for self-determination. Addressing PML (N) election rally for the party's candidate in Mirpur city Ch. Muhammad Saeed on July 18 in connection with scheduled July 21 general elections in Azad Jammu Kashmir, the minister stated that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif raised the issue of Kashmir at UN thrice in the most effective manner. He stated that Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif wanted welfare and uplift of Kashmiri people. The minister asked people to make corrupt leaders accountable and defeat them with their power of vote.

He alleged that AJK Prime Minister Chaudry Abdul Majeed emerged as the pioneer of corruption in AJK. He also stated that on coming to power in AJK PML (N) will recover the looted money from the sitting corrupt AJK ruler. Barjees Tahir announced that affectees of Mangla Dam would be compensated and mega projects in health, education and communication launched for uplift of Kashmiri

people. He stated that construction of railway track to and from Islamabad to Muzaffarabad and Mirpur-Muzaffarabad was under serious consideration of federal government.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/pakistan/309616-pakistan-to-continue-moral-political-and-diplomatic-support-to-kashmiris.html>

“Corps Commander Rawalpindi Visits Azad Kashmir”

Radio Pakistan, July 20, 2016

Corps Commander Rawalpindi Lt Gen Malik Zafar Iqbal visited various areas in Azad Kashmir to review the security arrangements ahead of general elections in the area. The Corps Commander visited army troops who have been requisitioned by the government and the Election Commission of AJK for assistance in conduct of safe and secure General Elections.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/20-Jul-2016/corps-commander-rawalpindi-visits-azad-kashmir>

Tariq Naqash, “Arrangements made for AJK polls: CEC”

Dawn, July 20, 2016

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal stated on July 19 that adequate arrangements had been made to ensure transparency, fairness and impartiality of general elections to be held on July 21. Speaking at a press conference, he noted that 17,000 army personnel, 4,000 Frontier Constabulary soldiers, 4,000 policemen from Punjab, 2,000 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and some 5,200 from AJK had been deployed in the 29 constituencies.

Another 4,900 army personnel would be deployed in the 12 constituencies in Pakistan along with personnel of law enforcement agencies, he added. The CEC noted that 14 constituencies in AJK had been declared either sensitive or most sensitive and, therefore, deployment of troops there would be higher than other constituencies.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1271968/arrangements-made-for-ajk-polls-cec>

“Men outnumber female voters in Kashmiri

polls”

Daily Times, July 20, 2016

Although women make almost half of the population of Azad Jammu Kashmir, their number of votes is far less than that of men. The total number of registered female voters for elections of the Legislative Assembly is 1,190,839 as compared to 1,483,747 to that of male voters, meaning around 11 per cent of women remained unable to get their votes registered for the polls. The interesting thing is that there is not even a single constituency among the 29 constituencies of AJK's districts and 12 constituencies of refugees in Pakistan where women registered voters outsmart the male voters. In the Kotli District, having the highest number of voters among all districts, the number of female voters is 196,609 against 246,230 male voters. Muzaffarabad has 191,112 registered female voters against 238,164 male voters; Poonch District has 141,334 female voters against 169,634 male voters.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/20-Jul-16/men-outnumber-female-voters-in-kashmiri-polls>

“Five-year Gilgit, Xinjiang partnership proposed”

Daily Times, July 20, 2016

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal stated on July 20 that cooperation between Gilgit-Baltistan and Xinjiang, an autonomous territory in northwest China, can add a new chapter in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) because of their geographic proximity. The minister proposed a five-year plan for promoting cooperation and partnership between Gilgit Baltistan and Xinjiang in various fields. “We need to learn from China's development experience of establishing economic zones like the Kashgar economic zone,” he added. He expressed these views while having a meeting with the Chinese businessmen and stated that economic integration and regional connectivity between Pakistan and Xinjiang was critical for making CPEC a success. He also stated that CPEC would take this friendship from higher than Himalayas to higher than stars. He noted that regional and economic integration was very significant for the success of the CPEC projects. The federal minister mentioned that Zhnag

Chuxian, secretary of the Communist Party of Xinjiang, had a fruitful visit to Pakistan which laid foundation for stronger regional cooperation. He further added that the success of CPEC depends on business-to-business and people-to-people contacts of both the countries. Ahsan stated: “We need to develop a very comprehensive roadmap of cooperation” in different sectors between Pakistan and China particularly between the Gilgit Baltistan and Xinjiang.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/20-Jul-16/five-year-gilgit-xinjiang-partnership-proposed>

“423 candidates to contest AJK general elections”

Samaa TV, July 20, 2016

A total of 423 candidates are in the run to contest elections, on direct adult franchise basis, on all 41 seats of the 49-seat AJK Legislative Assembly being held on July 21, it was officially declared by the AJK EC. AJK Election Commission released the list of validly nominated candidates, belonging to various political parties as well as independent candidates for the Election -2016 -polling to which is being held on July 21. Arrangements have been finalised for elections on July 21 at two constituencies of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly falling in Karachi. A total 46 polling stations have been set up for the elections in Karachi, where over 12659 voters will cast their vote in LA-30 Jammu and LA-36 Valley constituencies of the metropolis. There are 2574 total votes in Karachi West, 713 in Karachi South, 2102 in Karachi East, 638 in Karachi Central, 1553 in Malir and 698 in Korangi.

<http://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/2016/07/423-candidates-to-contest-ajk-general-elections/>

“PLA, Pakistan troops launch first joint border patrols near PoK”

The Indian Express, July 21, 2016

Chinese and Pakistan border troops have for the first time launched joint patrolling of the border connecting PoK with Xinjiang province amid reports that over 100 Uighurs have fled the restive region to join ISIS. The state media reported about

the joint patrol even as Chinese President Xi Jinping asked the Chinese Muslims to practice their religion 'as part of Chinese society and direction'. The People's Daily Online published a dozen photos with a caption “the frontier defence regiment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Xinjiang, along with a border police force from Pakistan, carry out a joint patrol along the China-Pakistan border”. The photos show teams of armed troops from both sides conducting foot patrols in a number of areas. This is the first time China-Pakistan began joint patrols in recent years though Chinese troops have been conducting patrols in the area since 2014. Though there is no write-up to provide details of the joint patrolling and what prompted both the countries to launch it, it coincides with reports of over 100 Uyghur Muslims sneaking out of Xinjiang to join ISIS.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/china-pakistan-troops-border-patrols-pok-xinjiang-2928145/>

Pusp Saraf, “Two sons of Gilgit-Baltistan”

The North Lines, July 21, 2016

The distance between Skardu and Astore in the mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan region, part of Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistan's illegal occupation but often in the news because of Chinese activities, is about 130 kilometres by road. This is not a vast difference given the present means of transportation. Yet, these have produced two powerful personalities which were poles apart in terms of ideological convictions which they followed to the hilt till the end of their lives. Mr Balraj Madhok, a former president of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (now Bharatiya Janata Party), was born in Skardu on February 25, 1920. He passed away in New Delhi on May 2, 2016. Mr Amanullah Khan, founder of the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was born in Astore on August 24, 1934. He died in Rawalpindi (Pakistan) on April 26, 2016.

<http://thenorthlines.com/two-sons-gilgit-baltistan/>

Shabbir Mir, “Making space: Classrooms double as hotel rooms due to tourist influx in G-B”

The Express Tribune, July 21, 2016

Thousands of tourists visit the region to escape the

sizzling heat and enjoy the breath-taking view of valleys, plateaus and rivers. As a result of the influx, hotels were packed to capacity and failed to accommodate more people. Most tourists were forced to stay outdoors without proper arrangements and security. "Facilitating tourists is our top priority, they are our guests," stated G-B Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman while chairing a meeting. The situation triggered by the influx of tourists was reviewed. "Since schools are closed due to summer vacations, the school building should be opened for tourists so that they can stay there." The chief minister also asked the administration to set up 22 tent villages in different valleys to accommodate tourists. The chief secretary's office has taken notice of these directives and issued instructions to the relevant officials in valleys. According to official statistics, over 250,000 tourists have visited Gilgit so far. The influx continues and it is expected that more than 0.5 million tourists will visit G-B by October 2016.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1146634/making-space-classrooms-double-hotel-rooms-due-tourist-influx-g-b/>

"SC judge not allowed to cast vote in AJK"

Saama TV, July 21, 2016

Justice Akram Saeed, a senior judge of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Supreme Court, was barred from casting his vote during the region's general election on July 21. The judge did not bring his original identity card when he came to cast vote in a polling station at Bhimber town of Azad Kashmir. After being barred from voting, the judge left the polling station, reports noted.

<http://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/2016/07/sc-judge-not-allowed-to-cast-vote-in-ajk/>

"Govt to Honor Mandate of People of AJK: Pervaiz"

Radio Pakistan, July 21, 2016

Minister for Information Pervaiz Rashid noted that the government of Pakistan will honor mandate of the people of Azad Kashmir. Talking to media in Islamabad, he stated Kashmiris exercised their votes freely and independently to elect their representatives, which is a good omen for

democracy. Responding to a question, the Minister stated Imran Khan dreamed of toppling the government in past, but ended his sit-in with his own marriage. Pervaiz Rashid stated the entire nation was observing Black Day but Imran Khan remained aloof to this cause and kept busy in announcing an anti-government movement. He further stated it is callousness of Imran Khan that he always announced protest movement in August, when the entire nation celebrates its independence. Answering another question, the minister stated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has very effectively raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir at world fora, including the United Nations Security Council.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/21-Jul-2016/govt-to-honor-mandate-of-people-of-ajk-pervaiz>

"PML-N grabs 31 seats in AJK elections"

Dawn, July 23, 2016

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) bagged 31 seats, followed by three each by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Muslim Conference (MC), two by the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and one by the Jammu Kashmir Peoples Party (JKPP) in the general elections held on July 21 for 41 seats of the Legislative Assembly, it was formally announced on July 22.

According to the AJK Election Commission, one independent candidate also managed to win his contest. Of the total 29 seats in AJK, the PML-N won 22 while it grabbed nine from 12 constituencies located in various parts of Pakistan. The MC clinched all its three seats from AJK. The PPP bagged two seats from AJK and one from Pakistan while the PTI won both its seats from Pakistan.

In Muzaffarabad division comprising Muzaffarabad, Hattian Bala and Neelum districts the PML-N made a clean sweep by winning all seven seats in the division. In Neelum district, PML-N secretary general Shah Ghulam Qadir secured a landmark victory with the highest lead of 23,000 votes. Mr Qadir, who defeated opponents from the PPP, PTI and MC, is the only politician whose son has also made his way to the assembly. Asad Aleem Shah returned from a Kashmiri

refugees' constituency in Rawalpindi. PML-N president Raja Farooq Haider won the poll in Hattian Bala district.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1272615/pml-n-grabs-31-seats-in-ajk-elections>

“23 UN Resolutions Promise Kashmir Right to Self-Determination: Raja Zafarul Haq”

Business Recorder, July 25, 2016

Chairman Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Leader of the House in Senate Senator Raja Zafarul Haq on July 24 stated United Nations has not one but 23 resolutions on Kashmir and in all of them Kashmiris were promised the right to self-determination. He was speaking to party workers at the residence of senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Syed Zafar Ali Shah. The meeting was called to express gratitude on regaining of health by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and success of PML (N) in elections of Azad Kashmir. Raja Zafarul Haq stated the world could not sleep in peace without resolving the Kashmir issue. He also stated that Pakistan would continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people. The victory of Pakistan Muslim League (N) with heavy majority was expression of trust in the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, he added.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/front-top/310397-23-un-resolutions-promise-kashmiris-right-to-self-determination-raja-zafarul-haq.html>

“Tareen blamed for PTI's drubbing in Kashmir elections”

ARYNews, July 24, 2016

A Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) official blamed the party's senior leadership over PTI's poor performance in Azad Kashmir elections. Coordinator of PTI's Policy Council Yasir Fayyaz, in an email sent to its Chairman Imran Khan, noted that the election results of the Azad Kashmir polls were an eye-opener for the party's top leadership. Fayyaz blamed Imran Khan, PTI's General Secretary Jahangir Tareen and party leader Barrister Sultan Mahmood over the party's poor show in the elections. He also stated that PTI failed to win the elections as it did not select proper candidates for the polls. “Imran Khan and Jahangir Tareen were on

foreign tours when they were needed for the electioneering,” the letter stated. “Imran Khan should prove he can be with the masses instead of traveling in helicopters and luxury vehicles,” Fayyaz wrote. The PTI worker also criticized the party chairman over not attending renowned social worker Abdul Sattar Edhi's funeral prayers.

<http://arynews.tv/en/tareen-blamed-for-ptis-drubbing-in-kashmir-elections/>

“PML-N Victory in AJK Election Reflects People's Trust on Party: Yousf”

Radio Pakistan, July 24, 2016

Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf stated people of the country have rejected politics of sit-ins and anarchy. Addressing a public gathering in Manshera on July 24, he noted success of PML-N in Azad Kashmir elections is reflection of people's trust in the party. Sardar Muhammad Yousaf noted economy of the country is on the track of development due to the leadership of the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. He also stated government is utilizing all available resources to improve living standard of common person. The Minister stated that work on the Hazara Motorway is underway and its completion will open new avenues of development in the country.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/24-Jul-2016/pml-n-victory-in-ajk-election-reflects-people-s-trust-on-party-yousaf>

“NA Body Directs for Payment against Land Acquired for GB Development Projects”

Business Recorder, July 25, 2016

National Assembly Standing Committee directed the Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan to release the outstanding payments of the land given for the local development projects without further delay and submit a report in this regard in the next meeting. During the 20th meeting of the Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (KA&GB) held on July 25 at the Parliament House, the Chairman NA Body Malik Ibrar Ahmed directed to ensure payments at earliest. The Standing Committee was briefed by the Senior Officers of the Ministry about development of power and tourism sector in GB region and properties of the State of

Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan briefed the Committee on the management of Jammu and Kashmir State Properties in Pakistan.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/front-top/310608-nobody-directs-for-payment-against-land-acquired-for-gb-development-projects.html>

“AJK assembly elections”

Aaj News, July 25, 2016

The political party which rules Islamabad is always expected to win in AJK, and that has happened once again. The Pakistan Muslim League (N) has won hands down taking 31 of the contested 41 seats in the 49-member Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly. And to the obvious disappointment of both Imran Khan and Bilawal Bhutto, who had undertaken quite a few hectic electioneering forays into Azad Kashmir where they addressed public rallies at a number of places in sweltering heat, the gains were less than few. Their parties won two seats each, and of the two won by the PTI none was from AJK and only one by the PPP. Others' gains were as expected: the Sardar Attique-led Muslim Conference got three seats, Jammu-Kashmir People Party (JKPP) 1, Independent 1, and none by MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami. The sitting PPP prime minister did win, but not the chief of PTI in Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmud. Out of the 12 Kashmiri migrants' seats the PML (N) and its ally, JKPP bagged 9. The fact is that the heat and fury injected into campaigns was absolutely absent from the polling which was merely 30 percent of the vote bank

<http://aaj.tv/2016/07/ajk-assembly-elections/>

“Only Kashmiris can give verdict on Kashmir: Pak”

The Tribune, July 25, 2016

Insisting on its right to comment on developments in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan today stated only people of the state could deliver a verdict on the future of Kashmir and not External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Countering Swaraj's statement that J&K belonged to India, Pakistan Foreign Affairs

Adviser Sartaj Aziz stated: “Such a verdict on the future of Kashmir can only be given by the people of Kashmir and not by the External Affairs Minister of India. This right has been promised to the people of Kashmir by the UN Security Council. It is high time that India allowed the people of Jammu & Kashmir to exercise this right through a free and fair UN-supervised plebiscite. Once the majority of the people of Kashmir have voted for joining either Pakistan or India, the whole world will accept this verdict of the Kashmiri people.”

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/only-kashmiris-can-give-verdict-on-kashmir-pak/270921.html>

Kamran Rehmat, “Making sense of PML-N sweep in AJK”

Gulf Times, July 25, 2016

If there's one corollary that can be drawn from the Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly elections held on July 21, it is that Project Democracy is not only alive, but kicking. Some 2.6mn votes were cast in a largely peaceful milieu, auguring well for participatory politics. A total of 423 candidates contested 41 seats on the basis of direct adult franchise, the 10th time such an exercise was undertaken. Out of these, 29 seats were meant for all 10 districts of AJK and 12 for Pakistan-based refugees from Kashmir valley, Jammu and other areas. But it goes without saying that both the PPP and PTI have their tasks cut out to revive their political fortunes before the 2018 general elections. As for the PML-N, the triumph should reinvigorate the resolve to get down to business and reward the people in AJK for standing by them against all odds. With a sweeping majority, they have the option to even go against the run of play and explore the prospect of a coalition in good faith for the larger Kashmiri cause.

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/504828/Making-sense-of-PML-N-sweep-in-AJK>

“Barjees rejects rigging claims in AJK polls”

The Nation, July 26, 2016

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Barjees Tahir rejected allegations as baseless that the Federal government used Kashmir Council funds in AJK Legislative Assembly

elections held on July 21. He stated this during an interaction with media persons at his office on July 25. He also stated that PTI could not win a single seat from AJK and had only won two seats one from Lahore and other from Peshawar. The Minister further stated that Bilawal Bhutto, PPP Chairperson is following the footsteps of PTI Chief Imran, adding, ruling party PML-N does not believe in politics of revenge.

<http://nation.com.pk/national/26-Jul-2016/barjees-rejects-rigging-claims-in-ajk-polls>

“15% children in Gilgit-Baltistan still out of school: ASER report”

Daily Times, July 27, 2016

Despite the recent focus of the federal and provincial governments on enrolment drives, around 15 percent of children aged between six and 16 years are still out of school in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2015 survey of Gilgit-Baltistan. The situation poses a serious challenge to the federal and the provincial governments in the wake of strategic importance of GB region with regard to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The startling figures further reveal that the remaining 85pc that are enrolled in the 6-16 age bracket are not learning much either. Gilgit-Baltistan Deputy Speaker Jafarullah Khan released the report. Around 500 volunteers managed by Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) and the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) conducted the ASER 2015 survey.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/27-Jul-16/15-children-in-gilgit-baltistan-still-out-of-school-aser-report>

“Pakistan occupied Kashmir burns as locals clash with police, allege elections rigged by Nawaz Sharif's party”

India.Com, July 27, 2016

Widespread protests and conflagrations were reported from all across the 10 districts of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, after locals in what has come to be known as 'Azad Kashmir', alleged rigged elections. Violence erupted in large parts of PoK as

locals' anger and resentment against fixed elections on July 21, spilled out onto the streets. The elections saw the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) win 32 out of 41 seats, or over 75 per cent of the seats. Major PoK towns, including Muzaffarabad, were reported to be embroiled in violence all through on July 27 and 28. Muzaffarabad became the epicentre of the violence after PML (N) supporters killed a supporter of the Muslim Conference (MC). Other towns reeling under the violence include Kotli, Chinari and Mirpur. Protesters burned tyres, blocked traffic and clashed with the police, in protest of the elections. PoK administration responded with clamping down on the press, with all major newspapers operational in the area, being gagged, even as protesters held demonstrations outside PoK Assembly hall and other government buildings.

<http://www.india.com/news/india/muzaffarabad-pakistan-occupied-kashmir-protesters-clash-with-police-rigged-elections-1361738/>

Sarfaraz Ali, “PML-N nominates Raja Farooq Haider Azad Kashmir's new prime minister”

Daily Pakistan, July 27, 2016

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz nominated Raja Farooq Haider as Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), after it swept the Legislative Assembly elections in the semi-autonomous constitutional zone. The decision was taken during a meeting convened by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is also head of the PML-N. The meeting was attended by federal party leadership and the newly-elected members of AJK's Legislative Assembly at the PM House. The AJK-designated prime minister stated that he would meet the expectations of the party leadership. “My agenda will be merit, good governance and zero tolerance for corruption,” he added. On July 24, Raja Farooq Haider denied reports that the newly elected parliamentary committee of the Pakistan Muslim League in AJK had nominated him as prime minister with consensus. The meeting of the newly elected parliamentary committee was held at the residence of Raja Farooq Haider Khan in Muzaffarabad. Earlier, reports suggested that

journalist-turned-politician Raja Mushtaq Minhas could be the first choice for nominated as Prime Minister of AJK.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/headline/pml-n-nominates-raja-farooq-haider-azad-kashmirs-new-prime-minister/>

Ayaz Amir, “How to help embattled Kashmir”

The News, July 29, 2016

We have a Kashmir joke in the form of Maulana Fazlur Rehman as head of the National Assembly's Kashmir Committee anything to keep the Maulana happy. But we have no Kashmir policy, at least none that does any good to the people of Kashmir. We should respect the difference between the constitutional positions of the two Kashmirs. India claims Jammu and Kashmir as its integral territory even if there is a clause in the Indian constitution conferring a special status on the state. Constitutionally, Azad Kashmir is not a part of Pakistan. It is a separate entity. This may be a fiction but it is in Pakistan's interest, and the interests of the Kashmiri people, if meaning and substance is put into this fiction if Azad Kashmir is turned into a showcase of development and progress and if in the running of its affairs Kashmiris call the shots and not imported bureaucrats or the GOC 12 Division sitting in Murree. Pakistan should learn to trust the people of Azad Kashmir. The recent elections have thrown up a tried and tested leader in the form of Raja Farooq Haider. This is a good opportunity to begin the process of devolving real power to the Azad Kashmir assembly. It is the AJK prime minister who should be addressing the world on behalf of the Kashmiri people. If he is a person of authority and standing the world will listen more carefully to him than to the jokers usually sent out to speak on behalf of the Kashmiri people.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/138472-How-to-help-embattled-Kashmir>

Neelofar Qureshi, “A Tale of Two Kashmirs”

Kashmir Images, July 30, 2016

The reported protests and the resultant police brutality in Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) illustrates that all is not well in the Kashmir that

calls itself 'Azad' (free). Coming at a time when the “Kashmir banega Pakistan” (Kashmir will become part of Pakistan) chant is resounding in 'other Kashmir' (Indian administered Kashmir or IaK), this development across the LoC comes as a whammy for the pro-Pakistan camp. The separatists want us to believe that we will get 'azadi' (freedom) only when we submit ourselves to Islamabad and they are not at all enthused by the idea of an independent Kashmir. Though anti India sentiments in IaK are high, the very idea of being controlled by Islamabad instead of New Delhi is similar to being shifted from an iron cage into a golden one. And this is where we need to sit back and think because any emotional decision on our future could subsequently bring us grief and remorse if it turns out that we have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. The tragedy of the Kashmiris is that though there are two Kashmirs, the story in both is basically the same. The idea of going with Pakistan has caught public imagination as we have been told that all is hunky dory in PaK but past events as well as the current protests in Muzaffarabad remind us that the utopia we seek may not be there. Yes, we may be having religious affinity with Pakistan but given the spectre of sectarian violence has taken firm roots there one has to be extremely careful and guard against being over-influenced by the religion factor.

<http://dailykashmirimages.com/Details/116521/a-tale-of-two-kashmirs>

Economic Developments

Khalid Mustafa, “AJK power tariff raised by over 120pc per unit”

The News, July 1, 2016

The government increased the electricity tariff for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) by over 120 percent to Rs5.79 per unit from Rs2.59 per unit. The AJK government has been getting the electricity from three electricity power distribution companies (Discos) at the bulk rate of Rs2.59 per units since 2007. The government of Pakistan had to pick huge subsidy in the head of AJK which will now reduce to some extent and give some breather to the central government after increasing the AJK tariff up to Rs5.79 per unit. “We have decided to increase the tariff to Rs5.79 per unit after ample consultations with AJK government and in this way the step can be termed as consensus decision,” a senior official of Ministry of Water and Power noted. “We are now poised to send a summary to ECC for approval of the arrangement done between federal and AJK governments. After that Nepra will be told that the new tariff of AJK stands at Rs5.79 per unit.”

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/132049-AJK-power-tariff-raised-by-over-120pc-per-unit>

“ECC Approves Transfer of all Hydropower Projects to Provincial Governments”

Radio Pakistan, July 1, 2016

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet approved in principle transfer of all hydropower projects to the respective provincial, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan governments. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar chaired the ECC meeting in Islamabad on July 1. The Committee also approved enhancement of water use charges from 0.15 rupees per kilowatt-hour to 0.425 rupees per kwh for all upcoming private sector hydropower projects which have not yet achieved Financial Close. It was also decided that the WUC would be reviewed every five years to determine if an

increase is required. ECC approved grant of Government of Pakistan sovereign guarantee against financing facility of 10.40 billion rupees from local banks for interconnection of imported coal based 1320 MW power plants at Bin Qasim near Karachi. ECC also approved proposal of Revenue Division for extending reduced withholding tax rate of 0.4 percent for non-filers up to 31st of July.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/01-Jul-2016/ecc-approves-transfer-of-all-hydropower-projects-to-provincial-governments>

Hasnaat Malik, “Untying the knots: SC will decide sales tax fate on power to AJK”

The Express Tribune, July 6, 2016

The Supreme Court is set to adjudicate on whether sales tax can be imposed on electricity being supplied to Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). The two-judge bench, headed by Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan, admitted the Islamabad Electric Supply Company Limited's (Iesco) petition for regular hearing against the Islamabad High Court's June 9 judgement. The judgement declared that areas under AJK do not come under the ambit of exports; therefore, these areas cannot be exempted from the levy, charge and collection of sales tax. On December 14, 2010, Iesco received a show-cause notice from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in which it was alleged that electricity is being supplied in AJK without charging sales tax. The FBR had contended that all taxable supplies made by Iesco were chargeable to sales tax unless otherwise specifically exempted under the sales tax Act-1990. The FBR in the show-cause notice had raised a demand of sale tax to the tune of Rs1.26 billion from the tax period commencing from July 2008 to June 2012.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1137243/untying-knots-sc-will-decide-sales-tax-fate-power-ajk/>

“Islamabad-Muzaffarabad Motorway &

Muzaffarabad Mirpur Expressway to be built soon: Birjees”

Radio Pakistan, July 24, 2016

Minister for Kashmir Affairs Choudhry Birjees Tahir stated that the PML-N government will launch mega projects in Azad Kashmir including Islamabad-Muzaffarabad Motorway and Muzaffarabad -Mirpur expressway. Addressing a public meeting in Safdarabad, Sheikhupura on July 24, he noted Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif always fulfilled his promises. The Minister stated Azad Kashmir elections have proved that people have rejected politics of sit in and agitation.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/24-Jul-2016/islamabad-muzaffarabad-motorway-muzaffarabad-mirpur-expressway-to-be-built-soon-birjees>

International Developments

“China not interested in including Diamer-Bhasha Dam in CPEC”

The News, July 28, 2016

China has given cold shoulder to the idea of including the \$14 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects' list owing to which the Ministry of Water and Power has carved out a plan to construct the dam portion from the national exchequer, a senior official of the ministry noted. The official noted that some eight months back the Planning Commission had raised the point with Chinese authorities who did not encourage the idea on the plea that the project has a long gestation period and China will get the returns on its investment on the project very late. However, CPEC project director Major General Dr Zahir Shah says that the project is still under debate at the joint working group level. However, he admitted that no decision has so far been taken by Chinese authorities on the Planning Commission's request even after a lapse of over 8 months. It is pertinent to mention that Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal had informed media from both countries on November 17, 2015 at the concluding session of the First CPEC Media Forum that Pakistan had asked China to include Diamer-Bhasha dam in energy projects to be undertaken under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Since then the no decision has been taken so far at Joint Working group level that has compelled the MoW&P to construct the dam portion of the Diamer-Bhasha project on our own.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/138262-China-not-interested-in-including-Diamer-Bhasha-Dam-in-CPEC>

“Australia, Gilgit-Baltistan's Joint Education Initiative Launched”

Business Recorder, July 29, 2016

The Australian High Commission in Islamabad and

the local government of Gilgit Baltistan launched the 'Gilgit-Baltistan Education Strategy 2016-2030' aimed at promoting equal opportunity of education to girls and boys. Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson, Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan Mir Ghazanfar and Education Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Muhammad Ibrahim Sanai launched the project at the 8th meeting of Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Conference held on July 28. The Education Strategy was revised as part of the Australian government-funded AUD 12.46 million Gilgit-Baltistan Education Development and Improvement Program (EDIP) 2010-2015, delivered through the Aga Khan Foundation, a statement from Australian High Commission stated. High Commissioner Adamson speaking at the occasion noted the government was pleased to assist in improving the accessibility and quality of education in the most remote and marginalized communities of Gilgit-Baltistan. "Providing equal opportunity for girls and boys to access quality education is critical," she stated. Adamson stated Australia was proud to support Pakistan on the path to building high-performing and inclusive education systems.

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/311371-australia-gilgit-baltistans-joint-education-initiative-launched.html>

“Pakistan should fulfil its part of UN resolutions before pointing fingers at India, say Kashmiri leaders”

Business Standard, July 16, 2016

Exiled Kashmiri leaders in Geneva and Brussels have criticised Pakistan for not fulfilling its part of the UN resolutions on Kashmir and have stated that Islamabad has no right to point fingers at India when it itself remains in violation of the resolutions it so frequently flags and talks about. Mr Jamil Maqsood, Secretary, Foreign Affairs of the United Kashmir People's National Party, who is currently

based in Brussels, stated, "Since the Pakistan Army continues to occupy large parts of Kashmir in defiance of the UN resolutions, it has no right to talk about the implementation of the UN resolutions whose first condition is the de-militarisation of areas held by the Pakistan Army." Clearing doubts over the UN resolutions on Kashmir, the senior Kashmiri leader from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir stated that the UN resolution is actually very clear. There are three steps - they were sequential and they were conditional - The very first step was that Pakistan was supposed to demilitarise to the satisfaction of this UN body that was to be established.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/pakistan-should-fulfill-its-part-of-un-resolutions-before-pointing-fingers-at-india-say-kashmiri-leaders-116071600115_1.html

Jyoti Malhotra, "In Siding With Pak On Kashmir, China's Clear Message To India"

NDTV, July 21, 2016

India and China seem to be hitting a downward spiral, with China not-so-subtly warning India that it could take Pakistan's side in the Kashmir dispute, especially if relations deteriorate to the point that Beijing feels it continues to be challenged by Delhi in the wake of the debacle at the Nuclear Suppliers Group. On July 19, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman dropped his usual reticence to unilaterally comment on the escalating crisis within the Kashmir Valley, in which nearly 50 people have been killed in the violence so far following the death of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan

Wani. "China has taken note of relevant reports. We are equally concerned about the casualties in the clash, and hope that the relevant incident will be handled properly," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang stated in remarks posted on the Foreign Ministry website.

<http://www.ndtv.com/opinion/in-siding-with-pak-on-kashmir-chinas-clear-message-to-india-1434147>

Other Developments

“Huge ecological imbalance plagues Gilgit-Baltistan region”

Business Standard, July 20, 2016

The huge ecological imbalance has plagued the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Frequent floods, landslides and other natural disasters are a now common sight. But the dreary picture seems rosy to the Pakistani establishment, who clearly and intentionally ignore the susceptible ecological threats to the region due to over exploitation and poor handling of the situation. The Gilgit-Baltistan region, where China is heavily investing in several projects, is losing its sheen as a hotspot for natural resources. The foreign investors have over-exploited the region for economic gains, leading to ecological imbalance.

But the much touted USD 46 billion China-Pakistan Economic corridor has hardly benefited the local population, which continues to face the apathy of the administration. The locals believe the frequency of natural disasters is gradually increasing, thereby putting their lives at risk.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/huge-ecological-imbalance-plagues-gilgit-baltistan-region-116072000595_1.html

Extracts From The Urdu Media

“Power Projects and Federal Government's Decision”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, July 5, 2016

Federal government has made important and timely decisions by allowing provinces to construct hydro-electricity projects. Although, no details are available about the decision. The main questions regarding the decision are who is going to fund these projects? What would be the role of WAPDA? And how much autonomy provinces will get in this regard? It is a reality that Gilgit Baltistan is facing huge energy crisis. This is not something new. We are facing this crisis since last 40 years. Load shedding has made us beggars. Gilgit Baltistan has an enormous energy resource. Small power projects can be constructed in large numbers in Gilgit Baltistan and these projects require smaller budget. 50000MW electricity can be generated in Gilgit Baltistan. But irony is that we cannot even produce 500MW for the people of Gilgit Baltistan. There is no big power project coming up in Gilgit Baltistan. The federal government is silent on this. Provincial government is ill-equipped and does not have enough resources to construct power projects on its own. It is very unfortunate that for a quite long time Islamabad did not allow provinces to construct projects perhaps because centre did not want to see provinces developed and powerful.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=07-05-2016&img=07-05-2016page-2-1

“We are being made another Philistine by snatching our land”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, July 13, 2016

Pakistan people's Party leader Amjid Hussain Advocate addressed a large gathering in Gilgit. In his address, he noted that our land is being forcefully snatched and Gilgit is being turned into a modern Philistine. Our property is stolen from us.

This should not happen. This process of land snatching should end. If government wants land it should buy it from people. We will not allow anybody to steal our land. In his address, he criticised both federal and provincial governments. According to Amjid, Nawaz Sharif has given Gilgit Baltistan nothing except empty promises. Whatever Gilgit Baltistan has today it is because of Zardari. Today's chief minister position is because of the political system that Zardari gave to Gilgit Baltistan. Nawaz has only given us one thing and that is tax. The Gilgit Baltistan government has spent 5 billion rupees in one year only to purchase expensive cars. Money has been spent on foreign tours where PML-N leaders consume expensive wine. They have spent nothing on poor people of Gilgit Baltistan. Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan and IGP have lost their credentials and have become PML-N workers. They do everything to please PML-N.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=07-13-2016&img=07-13-2016page-1-3

“Unnecessary delay in election is not good for people and candidates”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, July 15, 2016

Pakistan Peoples Party candidate for Hunza, Wazir Baigh stated that candidates are unnecessarily facing the brunt of postponing of the by elections of Hunza. According to Baigh, it is responsibility of the election commissioner to conduct election but it seems that election commissioner is not powerful enough to conduct election. A drama was created by few politicians who do not want the election to be held. These politicians assembled people on the pretext that a Chinese delegation is coming and they wish to interact with people. Officials at top got an excuse that elections cannot take place in this situation. This was a deliberate move.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=07-15-2016&img=07-15-2016page-1-44

“Chinese Investors Visit”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, July 18, 2016

A 61 member delegation from Xinjiang province of China is on a visit to Gilgit-Baltistan. They met Chief Minister, governor and other officials of Gilgit-Baltistan. They were briefed about Gilgit-Baltistan's economic conditions and areas of joint venture. The delegation also visited Chilas where deputy commissioner of Diamer briefed them about ground reality of the region. This delegation- a part of CPEC- is on visit to see the areas where development is possible in Gilgit-Baltistan. It is stated that CPEC is a game changer and this is true. Recently Pakistan faced failure on every diplomatic front. Iran, India and Afghanistan are constructing Chabahar port. Afghanistan also prefers Chabahar over Karachi port. Relations with Afghanistan and Bangladesh are very bad. During such circumstances, the CPEC is a ray of hope. How much Gilgit-Baltistan will get is a debatable question but both China and Pakistan cannot afford to ignore it. For the success of CPEC, people of Gilgit-Baltistan have to be satisfied first. Two economic zones have been announced and it is likely that they would be constructed on time. China can invest in Gilgit-Baltistan. For Chinese investors, there are huge resources in Gilgit-Baltistan that needs to be utilised. The government of Gilgit-Baltistan would ensure the security and safety of Chinese investors.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=07-18-2016&img=07-18-2016page-2-1

“Sartaj Aziz Committee Report”

Daily Bang-e-Sahar, July 23, 2016

While answering a question during a press conference, Sartaj Aziz stated that the Committee headed by him will handover report to Nawaz Sharif very soon. This special Committee is headed by Sartaj Aziz and is supposed to give report on constitutional status of Gilgit Baltistan. But let us not forget that this Committee was established a year ago. This Committee was formed to give input

to federal government whether Gilgit Baltistan would be integrated as a fifth province or there is a need to reform and amend existing system. After its formation, there was no news in media about it. No one knows who are the other members of the committee? What were their contributions? Were people of Gilgit Baltistan were consulted? Nothing has come out in public domain yet. It is also true that neither people nor Gilgit Baltistan government ever pressurised Islamabad in this matter. Suddenly, Sartaj Aziz came with this statement. People of the region had almost forgotten it. But we should not get excited with the news. The reports that are coming out from Islamabad give an impression that nothing is going to happen in this regard. Islamabad is not ready to give us anything. There are fewer chances that Nawaz Sharif is going to take it seriously. Only Chief Minister Hafizur Rehman is making noise in this regard and talking about it. He is the only one who seems to be optimistic. He believes that Islamabad will offer him something.

http://www.dailybangesahar.com/popup.php?r_date=07-23-2016&img=07-23-2016page-2-1

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 Muhammad Masood

Prime Minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

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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