

POK NEWS DIGEST

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Compiled by

Dr Priyanka Singh

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg

New Delhi-110 010



Jammu & Kashmir

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

About this Issue

There are several reports in the issue which establish clear linkages between the PoK and the terrorist organizations operating in Kashmir and elsewhere. On the other hand, the suicide bomb attack in Muzaffarabad on June 26 seems to have ushered in a new struggle between the Pakistani army and the militants present in this region. Earlier, the army action against the Taliban raised skepticism amongst local population who were intrigued with such developments. They feared being killed on the pretext of the fight against militants as was done during Zia's authoritarian regime in the 1980's. The local political groups urge Pakistan not to interfere in the affairs of the region and they consider the constitutional packages offered to them as farce.

One of the reports in the issue again reaffirms India's contention about the mushrooming of militants' training camps in the PoK over the years. The growth in such clandestine activities could be attributed to the absence of any socio-economic development here. These training camps are an existential threat not only to India but to the overall security of the region.

Lastly, there are bright prospects for enhancing cross LoC in future trade even though it is facing few difficulties at the moment. At least the traders on both sides have shown adequate interest in this respect.

Priyanka Singh

Political Developments

Manzoor Hussain Parwana, “Gilgit Baltistan: A Saga of Pakistani Colonization,”

United States of Kashmir, June 02, 2009

Gilgit-Baltistan, also called Federally Administered Northern Areas, was once a part of Jammu and Kashmir. But since 1947, when India and Pakistan achieved independence, the unfortunate territory is facing the wrath of colonisation. The people of this strategically important region carved out an independent state, “Republic of Gilgit”, on Nov 1, 1947. While the freedom fighters were preparing to liberate the adjacent Baltistan region, the Pakistan Army invaded Gilgit. The president of Republic of Gilgit was dismissed Nov 16, 1947. Since then, it has been an unending battle for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, who have been resisting against the deprivation of basic human, democratic and judicial rights for 60 years.

<http://ukpnp.wordpress.com/2009/06/02/gilgit-baltistan-a-saga-of-pakistani-colonization/>

“Gilgit Baltistan: Statement by the AHRC,”

June 02, 2009

A statement issued by the Asian Human Rights Commission

The government of Pakistan intends to use force against the people of Gilgit and Baltistan under the pretext of eliminating the Taliban. Recent announcement of the Pakistan Army and its intelligence agency (ISI) stated that the Taliban are taking shelter in the Gilgit and Baltistan areas. They are a disputed part of Jammu & Kashmir, according to the United Nation Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolutions of 13th August, 1948, and of 5th January 1949. The announcement has created insecurity among two million people who are already denied development for 62 years since the creation of Pakistan.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/9657/254/>

Abdul Hamid Khan, “Terrorism in South Asia,”

Pakistan Observer, June 04, 2009

Before discussing terrorism, it would be better to talk something about the 21st century’s conflicts, which

were also an ugly gift of the last century left to the world unsolved. For 20 years or more, a few of us in Pakistan and its occupied Balawaristan (Pakistan Occupied Gilgit Baltistan) and Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoK) have been desperately sending out messages, warning of terrible times to come. No one was giving worth consideration to the sectarian/religious hatred which was taught and propagated during General Zia’s Military regime of Pakistan against non-Muslims and even fellow Muslims in early eighties, when General Zia massacred thousands people of Gilgit by the same Pathan/Pashtoon terrorists (who are now known as Taliban) on the basis of religious hatred and who did not become the part of his so-called Jihad. After 9/11, the world again has been fighting against terrorism. However, the peaceful and democratic voices of the oppressed people of Balawaristan and PoK are ignored. There is no voice in the main world body like UNO and even in UNHRC for these oppressed people of Balawaristan, PoK and Balochistan. The voices of the oppressed people are suffocated in both the places, by in-human and injustice orders and rules of the influential powers.

<http://pakobserver.net/200906/04/Articles03.asp>

To: Government and citizens of Pakistan

Structural adjustments in the administrative setup of Gilgit - Baltistan (so - called “Northern Areas of Pakistan”) are vital, overdue, and shall not be delayed, anymore.

We urge the government of Pakistan to ensure effective and honorable representation of the region’s two million people in the national mainstream. We demand creation of an independent legislative assembly, independent judiciary and a civil services commission. The government has to make sure that the people of Gilgit - Baltistan are not discriminated against at universities, professional colleges and other national centers of learning.

Sincerely, The Undersigned

<http://aazur.blogspot.com/2009/06/gilgit-baltistans-constitutional-rights.html>

“Zardari puts off visit to Azad Kashmir,”

Kashmir Watch, June 06, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari put off his maiden visit to Azad Jammu and Kashmir at the eleventh hour on June 06, disappointing the lawmakers who were expecting enhanced developmental funds for their constituencies. While the coalition government, particularly the People’s Party AJK, felt embarrassed at the cancellation of the visit, the opposition Muslim Conference also termed it “disappointing” for the Kashmiris.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1244374599&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

“Assistant advocate generals appointed in AJK,”

June 10, 2009

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir government appointed Raja Fayyaz Haider Nawabi and Shakeel Zaman Advocate as assistant advocate generals for Mirpur Circuit. Raja Fayyaz Haider Nawabi would be on duty from the day of issuance of the notification, meanwhile, Shakeel Zaman Advocate would resume his duties on July 01. It is also important to note that Raja Fayyaz Haider has already served as Assistant Advocate General and has been appointed for a second term.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/06/10/assistant-advocate-generals-appointed-in-ajk/>

“Kaira, Khursheed refuse to meet AJK PPP leadership”

ISLAMABAD: Senior PPP leadership expressed sheer resentment over PPPAJK leadership on account of giving false briefing regarding President Asif Ali Zardari’s visit to Azad Kashmir. Sources stated that Federal Ministers Khursheed Ahmed Shah and Qamar Zaman Kaira refused to meet AJK PPP leadership on this account.

<http://search.live.com/results.aspx?q=Kaira,+Khursheed+refuse+to+meet+AJK+PPP+leadership&src=IE-Address>

“Taliban Hiding in Gilgit Baltistan, Operations in GB,”

Asian Human Rights Commission Press Release, Dardistan Times, June 02, 2009

A recent announcement of the Pakistan Army and its intelligence agency (ISI) stated that the Taliban are taking shelter in the Gilgit and Baltistan areas. They are a disputed part of Jammu & Kashmir, according to the United Nation Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolutions of 13th August, 1948, and of 5th January 1949. The announcement has created insecurity among two million people who are already denied development for 62 years since the creation of Pakistan. The purpose of using the pretext of the presence of the Taliban in the area is to mislead USA and NATO forces who are involved in war on terror. They want to posit that the Taliban is a menace in the construction of the big dams and wish to occupy Gilgit and Baltistan themselves.

<http://dardistannews.wordpress.com/2009/06/02/taliban-hiding-in-gilgit-baltistan-operations-in-gb-asian-human-rights-commission-press-release/>

“Gilgit Baltistan: Pakistani Government Building Illegal Dams,”

Statement issued by the Balawaristan National Front

Gilgit Baltistan is a disputed part of Jammu & Kashmir according to the UNCIP resolutions of 13th Aug. 1948 and 5th Jan 1949. Pakistan has to withdraw all its troops and civilians from its occupied Jammu & Kashmiri region including Gilgit Baltistan according to 28th April 1949 Truce Terms of UNCIP. Instead of withdrawing its troops and civilians, Pakistan is planning to build 5 Mega Dams on this disputed land by violating UNCIP resolutions.

<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/9638/256/>

“PML may quit AJK coalition government: Sources”

ISLAMABAD: The Peoples Muslim League (PML) has started thinking over parting of ways with the coalition government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

for not being taken into confidence on important matters. Sources stated that the coalition partner Peoples' Muslim League started thinking over quitting the coalition government due to the government making important appointments, postings and decisions on its own without consulting them.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=146954>

“SC takes up plea against AJK CJ,”

Daily Times, June 15, 2009

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC) would take up a petition challenging the appointment of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) chief justice. The bench consists of SC Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Justice Ijaz Ahmed and Justice Mahmood Akhtar. Earlier on May 27, the SC had allowed the senior-most judge of the AJK Supreme Court to submit an amended petition against the appointment of AJK SC's incumbent chief justice.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C15%5Cstory_15-6-2009_pg7_7

Masood Rehman, “SC notifies AG on plea against AJK CJ appointment,”

Daily Times, June 16, 2009

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court on June 15 issued notices to the attorney general (AG) to assist the court in a petition against the appointment of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir chief justice (AJK CJ). The bench observed it would also issue notices to other respondents if it felt the need and adjourned the hearing for two weeks.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C16%5Cstory_16-6-2009_pg7_18

“Govt taking steps to bring less-developed area at par with developed ones: Kaira,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 16, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira on Tuesday said

steps were being taken to bring the less-developed areas at par with the developed areas of the country. This he said while talking to a delegation of AJK Chamber of Commerce and Industry which called on him here to discuss issues relating to promotion of business and trade in AJK. During the meeting, the delegation highlighted their problems which the minister assured would be resolved soon.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79110&Itemid=1

“GB issues echo at interfaith meet in Geneva,”

Weekly Baang, June 23- June 29, 2009

BRUSSELS: Chairman Balawaristan National Front (BNF), Abdul Hamid Khan highlighted some of the burning issues facing Gilgit-Baltistan at a conference under Interfaith International held in UNHRC building in Geneva. In his long speech during the conference, Khan covered crucial areas such as judiciary, law and order, human rights, constitutional issues and unemployment and the sense of deprivation prevalent among the people of the region. He blamed Pakistan for the problems being faced by the region. He said judiciary doesn't exist as a full and independent department in Gilgit-Baltistan. There are two courts called Chief Court and Appellant Court, whose members (not called Judges) are appointed by the Pakistani minister for Kashmir and Northern Affairs on contractual basis. The judges' appointment is not made on merit basis rather solely on the political and religious considerations. Members/Judges loyalty is not with law or Justice but widely act under the direction from that minister and Pakistan's bureaucrats who are holding administrative, financial and judicial powers in the area. There is no freedom of expression in Gilgit-Baltistan. More than 200 political leaders and workers and religious people were tortured, sent behind bars and many were killed when they dared to express their views against Pakistan, he added.

<http://weeklybaang.blogspot.com/2009/06/weekly-baang-karachi-tuesday-june-23-29.html>

M Taqi Akhunzada, “Baltistan given divisional status,”

The News, June 24, 2009

SKARDU: Baltistan has been given divisional status and it will start functioning from first day of July. President Pakistan People’s Party Gilgit-Baltistan, Mehdi Shah and Chairman District Council Skardu, Raja Jalal disclosed on June 23. Mehdi said that the issue of Baltistan region was longstanding and has been resolved by people-friendly government. Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira had declared commissioner system in the region on his last visit and then both President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani endorsed the step taken by him, he further added.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=184681>

“Gilgit Baltistan: Pakistan has no right to legislate on the region,”

June 23, 2009

SKARDU: The right of legislation in Gilgit-Baltistan rests with the people of the region. The government of Pakistan’s all steps and proposals to make laws and bring constitutional packages etc for the region are unlawful and hold no ground at all, as the region does not fall under Pakistan’s constitution of 1973. This was stated by Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement, Manzoor Hussain Parwana while speaking at a consultative workshop titled “Gilgit-Baltistan’s constitutional status and the government’s constitutional package” organized by the Human Rights Advocacy Network and Sangi Development Foundation .

<http://skardu.blogspot.com/2009/06/gilgit-baltistan-pakistan-has-no-right.html>

“Leadership of Ghizer meets at Gahkuch to Discuss Security: Forces deputed to various border entry point,”

Dardistan Times, June 21, 2009

Religious Scholars, Members of Ismaili Council, Imams of the Mosques, Village Chiefs, social and political leaders called upon a meeting to discuss the

recent threats of Taliban at Gahkuch, Ghizer. The Deputy Commissioner of the area briefed participants in the meeting about the plan to curb a possible aggression from across the borders of the Gilgit Baltistan area. The local leadership was told that upon the advice of the Interior Ministry, security has been put on high alert in various institutions including schools, offices, hospitals and mosques. Any suspect in the region shall be dealt with an iron fist. The government and public will jointly work for peacekeeping in the region. The Shia, Ismaili and Sunni leadership of the Ghizer had a consensus that an outsider would harm them only if an internal factor abets in the extreme and inhumane acts of the perpetrators. It was decided to depute the Gilgit Scouts to major entry routs to Ghizer area. The government also has decided to depute security forces to Batherate Nala, Darkot Pass, Singul Nala, Rawooshan and other possible entries into Gilgit Baltistan from Kalam, Sawat and Afghanistan.

<http://dardistannews.wordpress.com/2009/06/21/leadership-of-ghizer-meets-at-gahkuch-to-discuss-security-forces-deputed-to-various-border-entry-points/>

“Terrorism can hit Gilgit-Baltistan”

Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement Manzoor Hussain Parwana has said terrorism is not only dangerous for any religion, country or region but is also destructive for whole humanity. He said use of force was not enough to crush terrorism because its brutal use makes terrorists a kind of victim gaining them public sympathy. He said to fight and eliminate terrorism, the world has to change its attitude and behavior. He was speaking at a three-day workshop organized by Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA) here.

<http://dailykhabarnama.blogspot.com/2009/06/terrorism-can-hit-gilgit-baltistan.html>

Omer Farooq Khan, “After Swat, PoK left singed by Taliban fire,”

Times of India, June 27, 2009

ISLAMABAD: In a first suicide attack on soldiers in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, at least two army men were killed and three others injured on June 26, army officials staetd. A statement issued by the army said a

suicide bomber blew himself up near an army vehicle at Shaukat Lines in Muzaffarabad, the capital of PoK. The bomber was described as a teenager. According to reports, local Taliban groups against whom Pakistan security forces have launched a major operation in north-western region of Waziristan, are behind the attack. Hakimullah Mehsud, a deputy of Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud, told a news agency that the attack was launched to prove that Mehsud had not been weakened by recent strikes on his suspected hideouts in northwest Pakistan.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-4708921,prtpage-1.cms>

“42 terror camps in AJK, alleges Indian agency,”

Pakistan Observer, June 20, 2009

NEW DELHI: There are still 42 terror-training camps directed against India operating in Pakistan and the so called ‘AJK.’ This was the latest assessment of Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), the agency for all terror-related intelligence under the home ministry.

The MAC agency claims that there are 34 ‘active’ and eight ‘holding’ camps operational across the border. Both Pakistan/Northern Areas and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir have 17 ‘active’ and four ‘holding or dormant’ camps each, says the MAC assessment, based on inputs from Research and Analysis Wing, Intelligence Bureau, Military Intelligence and National Technical Research Organisation, among others. “It is estimated that around 2,200 militants are housed in these camps.”

<http://pakobserver.net/200906/20/news/topstories15.asp>

“The people of Gilgit-Baltistan (Northern Areas) do not have enough digestive power to govern themselves, Former Federal Minister of KANA,”

June 19, 2009

The comments of a former Minister of Northern Areas and Kashmir affairs has been termed as insult by the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan (Northern Areas) do not have enough digestive power to govern themselves; you need to

have the capacity to utilize the power stated by the former Minister for Northern Areas and Kashmir Affairs, Maj (Rtd) Tariq Iqbal in a TV programme. However the trainer of parliamentarians of Pakistan, Muhammad Ismail declared it a white lie and termed constitutional packages as a joke with the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

<http://gbpost.wordpress.com/2009/06/19/the-people-of-gilgit-baltistan-northern-areas-do-not-have-enough-digestive-power-to-govern-themselves-former-federal-minister-of-kana/>

Syed Shoaib Hasan, “Banned Pakistani groups ‘expand’,”

BBC News

Militant groups banned in Pakistan are expanding operations and recruitment in Pakistani-run Kashmir, according to a government report seen by the BBC. The observations are from a detailed secret report submitted to the region’s government on the groups’ activities in the city of Muzaffarabad and elsewhere. Pakistan banned the groups in 2002 after an attack on India’s parliament brought the two states close to war. A senior Pakistani minister denied that such a report had been submitted.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8125039.stm

“AJK bomber identified as Taliban from Waziristan,”

Daily Times, June 28, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: The bomber responsible for the first suicide attack in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was a member of the Taliban from Waziristan, an official stated on June 27. The blast on June 26 hit an army vehicle in Muzaffarabad, the capital of the AJK, killing two soldiers and wounding three others. “The suicide bomber had been identified as Abid. He belonged to the Taliban in Waziristan,” said Raja Kafeel, the spokesman for the prime minister of the AJK. A Taliban spokesman on June 27 said the bombing was in retaliation for military operations against them.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C28%5Cstory_28-6-2009_pg7_3

“50 arrested in connection with Muzaffarabad attack”

MUZAFFARABAD: Implementing stringent security measures large-scale police raids and arrests were made in Azad Kashmir Capital Muzaffarabad after June 26 suicide blast. Muzaffarabad law and enforcement agencies arrested 50 suspected men for having no valid identity papers, sources claimed. The entire state has been placed on high alert with intensified security checks on entrance and exit points of Kashmir.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=147416>

Khalid Khokhar, “Talibanization, Gwadar Port & transit trade,”

Pakistan Observer, June 28, 2009

When Pakistan and China signed MoU in 2004 for further expansion and upgrading of the existing Karakoram highway that links Gilgit to Kohat via Chitral, Dir, Swat connecting Gwadar to Western China, it alarmed many countries. US viewed the Highway project as alarming for its endeavours in exploiting the riches of CARs. India considered it as a dangerous development for its security. The Kashgar-Gwadar trade route affected the trade and economic interest of neighboring states of the region. Side by side, China started laying rail-link from Shanghai to Kashgar. In order to deny Chinese access to Gwadar and to stop Pakistan from exploiting economic benefit, the theme of provincial rights and backwardness proved quite successful.. However, the same strategy could hold the grounds in the tribal areas and NWFP. Therefore, keeping in view the environment of the area and emotional attachment of the people with the Islam, the propaganda theme regarding the presence of Osama bin Laden & al Qaeda leadership was blown out of proportion. The western media was already showing concern regarding militants’ infiltration to orchestrate and launch cross-border attacks from their sanctuaries on Pakistani soil. Similarly, Afghan President Hamid Karzai accused Pakistan of alleged relationship

between ISI agency and the militants.. Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Pentagon, US Gen. David Petraeus, commander Central Command, US think tanks and media cartels, questioned the alleged relationship between ISI and the militant Talibans.

<http://pakobserver.net/200906/28/Articles03.asp>

B.Raman, “Why suicide attack on Pakistan army in PoK?”

Two soldiers of the Pakistan Army were killed and three others injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK), early on the morning of June 26, 2009. 2. The Pakistani media has carried conflicting versions of the suicide attack. The “News” (June 26) reported that “a suicide bomber ripped through an Army vehicle near Shaukat Lines, Muzaffarabad” without giving other details. The “Daily Times” of Lahore (June 26) reported that “he blew himself up near an army vehicle.”

<http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com/2009/06/why-suicide-attack-on-pakistan-army-in.html>

“Visit to EU remains successful: AJK President,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 1, 2009

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Raja Zulfikar Khan on June 1 described his visit to Europe as successful in terms of mustering support for the resolution of Kashmir issue. He said that European parliament could play an important role in resolving international issues including Kashmir and his visit would go a long way in drawing their attention to the Kashmir dispute. Addressing a press conference on his return from abroad visit, he said Pakistan government gave special attention for the resolution of longstanding issue of Kashmir through peaceful means.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=77611&Itemid=1

Economic Developments

“Pak, China sign loan agreement for \$300 million,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 18, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has signed an MoU, with the Government of China on June 18 to reconstruct and rehabilitate three major cities of AJK destroyed in the 2005 earthquake, under AJK Urban Development Programme. The umbrella contract for this project has already been signed between ERRA and the two Chinese Construction Companies.

In order to assist the Government of Pakistan to complete the development work in the earthquake affected areas of Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot, the Government of China offered credit worth US\$ 300 million, whereas the Government of Pakistan contributed additional US\$ 53 million to complete various reconstruction projects under AJK Urban Development Project.

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79380&Itemid=2

“ECC approves establishment of 16-20 hydel projects on River Gilgit”

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet (ECC), which met under the chairmanship of Mr. Shaukat Tarin, Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance at the Prime Minister Secretariat, accorded permission for the establishment of 16-20 hydel projects on River Gilgit as IPP. The ECC also considered the tabled items of making amendment in the 1995 Hydel Policy and decided that all actions thereto may be completed within a period of one month, besides approving the summary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources relating to fixation of CNG prices recommended by OGRA.

<http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/details.php?id=146834>

“Cross-LoC trade to soon get industrial items,”

June 16, 2009

JAMMU: Cross-LoC trade on Poonch-Rawalakote route besides Uri-Muzaffarabad in Kashmir is likely to get a major boost shortly with authorities mooting

a proposal for import-export of industrial items on both routes.” On the persistent demand of traders, authorities have, in principle, decided to facilitate import-export of industrial items on two cross-LoC routes. The proposal will be sent to External Affairs Ministry, which has the final authority to add or delete items approved for import-export in consultations with their counterparts in Pakistan”, official sources stated.

<http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/06/16/cross-loc-trade-to-soon-get-industrial-items/>

“Reviving sick units in AJK,”

Kashmir Watch

Azad Kashmir Government has decided to take measures for the revival of dozens of sick industrial units located in Mirpur, Bhimbher and Kotli districts. The announcement by the AJK Minister for Commerce and Industry at a meeting of the departments concerned was expected to be welcomed by business community and the people of the three districts at large as the revival of the units would open up job opportunities for them.

http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1244376244&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

Sayed Abid Hussain, “Kashmiri traders want Line of Control erased,”

June 09, 2009

MIRPUR: AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry Executive Committee member Khalid Sharif urged the need for an early liberal regime to ensure free movement of Kashmiri traders from both sides of the Line of Control in order to make the ongoing trans-LoC trade more vibrant. Khalid further said that the free movement of the members of the business community from both sides of LoC was very important for the promotion of trade between both sides of Kashmir.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=181940

Sayed Abid Hussain, “Allotment of land at cheap rates for power project criticized,”

The News, June 11, 2009

MIRPUR: The former prime minister of Azad Jammu Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on

June 11 criticized the coalition government of AJK for allotting valuable state land at Mangla in Mirpur district on very cheap rates to a private company for setting up a hydropower project. Addressing a press conference in Mirpur, Sultan expressed dismay over the incumbent premier Sardar Yaqoob led AJK government's decision of ticking the aforesaid decision of the recently-removed Prime Minister Sardar Attique led government of allotting the state land on 99-year lease to Atique's close associate from the local business community.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=182372

“Rs. 35.40 billion tax-free AJK budget announced,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 20, 2009

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu Kashmir's people friendly and tax-free budget for the next financial year (2009-10) was announced with an outlay of over Rs.35 billion. The budget was announced in Azad Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly which met on June 20. The total outlay of the budget is Rs thirty-five billion four hundred and six million in which Rs ten thousand seven hundred and fifty million have been set aside for development purpose.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79547&Itemid=1

“KANA gets Rs25.5b under PSDP,”

The News, June 13, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The government has allocated Rs 25.5 billion for Kashmir and Northern Areas Division under Public Sector Development Programme (2009-10) to execute 23 development projects, of those 14 projects have already been initiated. According to the PSDP, the amount of Rs 23.31 billion has been allocated for ongoing projects and Rs 22.1 billion for the projects yet to be initiated in fiscal year 2009-10. The estimated cost of all the projects is Rs 212.7 billion that includes Rs 184.29 billion for ongoing schemes and Rs 28.4 billion for the new ones.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=80450>

“NA approves Charged Expenditure for year 2010,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 23, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on June 23 approved Rs. 4,844,985,751,000 for Charged Expenditures included in Demands for Grants and Appropriations for the year ending on June 30, 2010, presented by Minister of State for Finance and Economic Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar. The Lower House approved Rs. 1,389,914,000 for Superannuation Allowances and Pensions. For Grants-in-Aid and Miscellaneous Adjustments between the Federal and Provincial governments it approved Rs. 42,350,000,000.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79749&Itemid=2

Sayed Abid Hussain Shah, “AJK budget 2009-10 termed balanced,”

The News, June 24, 2009

MIRPUR: People representing the business community, pensioners, public servants and the common man have dubbed the budget 2009-10 of Azad Jammu Kashmir worth Rs35.40 billion balanced, tax-free and people-friendly. Commenting over the budget, Executive Committee member of AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry Khalid Latif said on Tuesday public will indeed benefit from the budget because of being people-friendly.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=184629

A.G. Noorani, “Is LoC trade collapsing?,”

Dawn, June 27, 2009

President Asif Ali Zardari spoke not a day too soon when, on June 9, he publicly emphasised the need for opening trade across the Line of Control in Kashmir. That it is on the verge of collapse is little known outside Kashmir or in the corridors of power in Islamabad and New Delhi. The correspondents, Hamidullah Dar and R.S. Gull, are objective and fairly note the contrast between the dismal trade across the Jhelum Valley Road and the surge on the Poonch crossover at Chakan-da-Bagh.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/07-is-loc-trade-collapsing-ha-08>

International Developments

“Pak-Sino signs loan agreement for reconstruction in AJK,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 19, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan signed a MoU, with the Government of Peoples Republic of China in Beijing, for AJK Urban Development Programme for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of three major cities of AJK which were destroyed in the deadly earthquake of 2005. The umbrella contract for this project has already been signed between ERRA and the two Chinese Construction Companies at ERRA headquarter, on February 14, 2009, as stated in the press release on June 19.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79424&Itemid=2

“World Bank (WB) refuses to finance Bhasha dam,”

June 25, 2009

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has refused to finance the Diamer-Basha dam project worth \$11.8 billion while saying the site of the dam is controversial between India and Pakistan. However, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is ready to fund the mega project but has linked the credit supply with a consensus resolution from the Parliament in favour of the project to ensure that the project is not disputed.

Basha Dam is in fact situated in Gilgit-Baltistan in the Diamer District, however, only turbines are situated in the area of Basha, which is part of Pakistan and comes under the province of NWFP but the people of the area are Shina speaking Kohistanis. Initially Govt. of Pakistan named it only Basha Dam but under heavy pressure from the people of Gilgit-Baltistan the said dame was renamed as Diamer-Basha dam.

<http://gbpost.wordpress.com/2009/06/25/world-bank-wb-refuses-to-finance-basha-dam-2/>

“UK to play role to resolve all issues: Brinkley,”

Pakistan Observer, June 18, 2009

MUZAFARABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Robert Brinkley admiring the Pak-Army role in war against terror assured that UK will always play its full role to resolve all issues through negotiations. He expressed these views at a reception hosted by President AJK Raja Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the honour of the UK HC at the Presidency on June 18. Mrs. Robert Brinkley, First lady Mohtarma Fakhria Zulfikar, Secretary High to commissioner Mohtarma Banish Ali, Secretary Presidential affairs Mohtarma Mudhat Sehzad also attended the ceremony and exchanged gifts.

<http://pakobserver.net/200906/18/news/topstories13.asp>

Other Developments

“Microsoft, Aga Khan to launch tech centres,”

Daily Times, June 16, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Microsoft and the Aga Khan Foundation in Pakistan inked an agreement to establish the country’s first pilot Community Technology Learning Centres in the remote Northern Areas of Gilgit and Hunza. By expanding ICT access and training resources to these rural areas, these centres will offer local residents new social and economic opportunities. This was jointly stated by CEO of the Aga Khan Foundation in Pakistan, Al-Nashir Jamal and Country General Manager of Microsoft Pakistan, Kamal Ahmed.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C16%5Cstory_16-6-2009_pg5_9

“BISP poverty survey to be completed by end of July,”

Associated Press of Pakistan, June 07, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Poverty survey being carried out under a pilot project of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to identify more deserving families will be completed by the end of July 2009. Farzana Raja, Chairperson BISP stated that the first ever poverty survey is initiated in 16 districts for all the provinces including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas. She further said that the districts for the survey are selected on basis of their poverty level, accessibility, security situation and the presence of the surveying organizations.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=78148&Itemid=2

Yousaf Ali, “Worst road condition affecting tourism in NAs,”

The News, June 30, 2009

GILGIT: The worst condition of road is the main reason for the dwindling tourism in the beautiful valleys of Northern Areas where tourist activities are almost invisible in the peak season. There are certainly other reasons contributing to the worsening tourism activities

(Other Developments continued after Abbreviations)

ABBREVIATIONS

AJKHEB	Azad Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Electric Board
AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
BNF	Balawaristan National Front
CBM	Confidence Building Measures Programme
CDP	Community Development Programme
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBR	Federal Board of Revenue
GBDA	Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance
GBUM	Gilgit Baltistan United Movement
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
JIAJK	Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu & Kashmir
KAC	Kashmiri American Council
KKH	Karakoram Highway
KNM	Karakoram National Movement
LoC	Line of Control
NLI	Northern Light Infantry
NALA	Northern Areas Legislative Assembly
NAEDC	Northern Areas Executive Development Committee
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PoK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POGB	Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan
PPP	Pakistan Peoples’ Party
UJC	United Jihad Council
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority

in this most peaceful region. The other reasons include the unclear status of the areas, their name and the sectarian tension, which sometime result in clashes.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=185741

“Conservationists express concern over threat to predators, scavengers,”

Internews, June 29, 2009

GILGIT: Conservationists in Northern Areas expressed concern about the threat that predating and

scavenging animals face from human vengefulness when livestock owners poison the carcasses of killed animals to punish the predators. Carnivores play a critical role in the ecosystem. They remove sick and injured animals through predation, scavenge to remove disease-carrying dead carcasses, and eat species (such as rodents) that can negatively affect people’s livelihoods through damage to crops and as vectors of disease.

http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/Display_news.asp?section=World_News&subsection=Pakistan+%26+Sub-Continent&month=June2009&file=World_News2009062973125.xml

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir-An Overview

Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), legitimately an integral part of the Indian Union is presently under Pakistan's control. Pakistan occupied the territory as a result of tribal invasion in 1947 engineered by the Pakistani army. It covers one-third of the total area of 86,023 square miles/ 222,236 square kilometers of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The area under occupation comprises two administrative units: Mirpur- Muzaffarabad and Gilgit Baltistan referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and the 'Northern Areas' respectively by the government of Pakistan. Pakistan ceded a segment (2,700 sq miles) of this occupied territory lying to the north-east border of the Northern Areas known as the Trans Karakoram Tract to China in 1963.

“AZAD KASHMIR”

Pakistan envisaged the Azad Kashmir as a country with a President, a Prime Minister and a Legislature of its own according to the Karachi Agreement of April 28, 1949. These structures and the designations are only titular in nature as this invaded territory is neither a country nor even a province. Significant subjects such as defence, supposed 'foreign policy' of POK, rehabilitation of refugees and the overall control have been carefully placed under the discretion of the political establishment of Pakistan.

Area: 13,297 square km

Mirpur comprises 3 districts: *Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur*

Muzaffarabad is divided into five districts: *Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Poonch, Sudhnati*

Population: 3,271,000 (1.685 million Male, 1.665 million Female)

Capital: Muzaffarabad

“President”: Raja Zulfikar Khan

“Prime Minister”: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan

“Azad Jammu and Kashmir” Council: Total 11 members- 6 from the government of AJK and 5 from the government of Pakistan. The AJK Council is headed by the President AJK.

Legislative Assembly: 49 seats

Tribal population: Awan, Abbassi, Ansari, Gilani, Gujar, Jarral, Jat, Qureshi, Malik, Mughal, Pashtuns, Rajput, Rachyals, Sudhan, Tarkhan

NORTHERN AREAS

The **Northern Areas** officially referred to by the government of Pakistan as the **Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA)**, is the northernmost political entity within the Pakistan occupied part of Kashmir and is a self governing unit under Pakistani control. The area is five times bigger to that of Azad Kashmir. The status of this region being unstated in the successive constitutions of Pakistan over the years, the people are denied basic socio-political and legal rights. The Northern Areas have no representation in the National Assembly and are governed by the Northern Areas Council headed by Minister of Kashmir and Northern Areas. A Judicial Commissioner exercises judicial powers in the absence of a High Court. The population mainly comprises Shia, Sunni and Ismaili Muslims. Ethnic groups include Baltees, Shinas, Vashkuns, Mughals, Kashmiris, Pathans, Ladhakhis and Turks.

Governor/ Commissioner: Imran Ali

“Chief Minister”: Irfan Ali and Shahid Hussain

Legislature: Northern Areas Legislative Assembly (29 seats)

Languages: Balti, Shina, Brushaski, Khawer, Wakhi, Turki, Tibeti, Pushto and Urdu

Area: 72,496 km

Capital: Gilgit

Districts: seven

Baltistan is divided into *Ghanche and Skardu*

Gilgit divided into *Astore, Diamer, Ghizar, Gilgit and Hunza Nagar*

Population: 1.5 million

Political groups: United Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' National Party, Balwaristan National Front (BNF) and Gilgit Baltistan United Action Forum for Self Rule, Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM).

Literacy rate: 14% male- 3.5% female

State of Infrastructure: No pipelines for water supply and no electricity supply for at least two thirds of the population in Northern Areas.

Disclaimer

PoK News Digest is a collection of news reports and press releases published in various newspapers and local media related to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), referred as 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Northern Areas' 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

Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: www.idsa.in; Email: lbscidsa@gmail.com

