

Daily Excelsior, 1 May 2006

Four civilians massacred, 5 kidnapped in Basantgarh

Jammu, Apr 30: Militants today gunned down four civilians and held five others as hostage in upper reaches of Lolan Gala, about 10 kms from Basantgarh in Udhampur district. The deceased and the hostages belonged to the minority community. Army and police have launched a massive search operation to rescue five hostages and eliminate a big group of seven militants responsible for the killing and kidnappings, official sources said. Reinforcement of Army and police reached the spot tonight while more forces are being rushed early tomorrow morning. SSP Udhampur Rajesh Kumar was on way to the spot tonight while DIG Udhampur-Doda range Lalat Indu Mohanty and Army Commander of Delta Force are also visiting the spot tomorrow to supervise the search and rescue operation...

Daily Excelsior, 1 May 2006

Self rule in J&K not in national interest: Rajnath

Jammu Apr 30: Warning the Union Government for any move to grant self rule to Jammu and Kashmir, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), president, Rajnath Singh today said that such a step would prove dangerous for the unity and integrity of the nation. Addressing a public rally at Parade here this afternoon, the BJP chief strongly opposed the self rule for the State, saying that J&K is already enjoying self rule under Parliamentary system of democracy. He warned that if decisions regarding granting of self-rule and autonomy will be taken without the consent of Parliament it will be strongly resisted by the countrymen. He also threatened that BJP will launch a nationwide movement against any such move...

Daily Excelsior, 1 May 2006

Hurriyat names panel for talks

Srinagar, Apr 30: All Parties Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz has constituted a six-member-delegation for talks with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh scheduled to be held on May 3 in New Delhi. According to Hurriyat sources, ahead of a joint meeting of general and executive council of Hurriyat to be held on Monday at party headquarters Raj Bagh, Hurriyat on Sunday formulated a six-member-delegation for the talks. Sources revealed that those who have been nominated include senior Hurriyat leader Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Bilal Gani Lone, Agha Syed Hassan, Fazal Haq Qureshi and chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who will head the delegation...

Daily Excelsior, 1 May 2006

Editorial: Wise move

It is to be welcomed that the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference will meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on May 3. Its acceptance of the Prime Minister's invitation speaks of wisdom and maturity. The dialogue between the Mirwaiz Moulvi Umar Farooq-led Hurriyat and the Prime Minister ought to have proceeded on a faster pace. There can't be two opinions that it has not happened. Their first and last meeting was on September 5 last year. Since then a lot of water has flown down the Jhelum and the Yamuna. The reasons for excruciatingly slow progress are only too well known...

Greater Kashmir, 1 May 2006

Return home: Geelani to KPs (Shabir Ibn Yousuf)

Kralpora (Kupwara), Apr 30: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference, on Sunday urged the migrant Kashmiri Pandits to return home. Addressing a big gathering at a Seerat conference here, Geelani said: "Pandits are part and parcel of Kashmir and they must return soon." Asking the migrants not to accept a separate homeland as demanded by some fundamentalist Pandit groups, Geelani said their exile was a conspiracy and the conspirators at the time had thought letting Pandits to go out of Kashmir would enable them to "exterminate all freedom lovers in the Valley."...

Greater Kashmir, 1 May 2006

Violent protests rock Sopur after BSF tanker crushes youth (Ghulam Muhammad)

Sopur, Apr 30: Violent anti-India protests rocked Sopur town on Sunday after a water-tanker of the Border Security Force (BSF) ran over a 15-year-old youth. At least five policemen were wounded after protesters attacked a police station. Eyewitnesses said Nadeem Ahmad Kolu son of Abdur Rashid of Kralteng, Sopur, a motor mechanic was riding towards a playground on his bicycle when a BSF water tanker (PB08B/2636) hit him near Hathishah. He died on the spot. The BSF troopers tried to take the youth's body in their custody but the local residents resisted and

set the tanker on fire. The troopers fired several rounds of ammunition in air to shoo away the protesters...

Greater Kashmir, 1 May 2006

Editorial: Why this indifference?

Even as the State as well as the Union Government has been talking of providing a healing touch to the Kashmiris but both have been maintaining a stoic silence over the disappearances in custody of thousands of Kashmiris. At a few occasions in the past the government unconvincingly tried to attribute the disappearances to the crossing of the persons over to the Pakistan Administered Kashmir. But the disappearance in custody of the two brothers named Mushtaq Ahmad and. Mohammad Shafi of downtown Saffa Kadal, who were arrested by Nepal Police on August 28th, 2000 from Katmandu and subsequently handed over to Indian security agencies defies the 'cross over theory' of the government. Don't the government of India and the state government owe an explanation to the parents of the duo?...

Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2006

19 mowed down in Doda, 9 more in Basantgarh (Sanjeev Pargal)

Jammu, May 1: Striking at two places targetting minorities, the militants gunned down 28 civilians—19 in Kulhand area of Doda district and nine at Lolan Galla in Basantgarh area of Udhampur district since last night. Ten others were injured in Kulhand shoot-out. With nine more bullet riddled dead bodies of the civilians, held hostage by the militants from Lolan Galla in Basantgarh recovered this afternoon, all 13 civilians, kidnapped yesterday afternoon, have been killed by the captors. As reported, four dead bodies were recovered yesterday evening. An 8 year old girl was among the Kulhand victims while three brothers of one family and two brothers of another family were among those killed at Basantgarh heights. Overall death toll in the two carnage stood at 32...

Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2006

Patil, Duggal arrive today

Jammu, May 1: Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil will visit here tomorrow along with Union Home Secretary V K Duggal to review the situation arising out of the killing of 32 civilians of minority community by the militants at Kulhand in Doda and Basantgarh in Udhampur district. Mr Patil and Mr Duggal will be accompanied by other senior officers from the Home and Defence Ministries, official sources said. They will be joined here by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and top police officers...

Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2006

Onset of Sun brought darkness for survivors (Mohinder Verma)

Jammu, May 1: The on-set of the Sun did not bring new rays of hope in their lives but set in darkness that too permanently for them. The Sun unfolded the mayhem caused by the terrorists in their lives under the cover of darkness which made their future totally bleak. Though all the survivors of the Kulhand massacre in Doda district have one or another tale full of sorrow and uncertainty to narrate yet the family of Jagdish Lal, who fell prey to the fire spitting guns of the terrorists, has reached to the cross-roads with none able enough to earn livelihood for themselves after they lost their lone bread-earner...

Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2006

35 kg RDX seized in Bhadarwah

JAMMU, May 1: Army today foiled an infiltration attempt on Line of Control (LoC) at Haq Pathri in Sabjian area of Poonch sector killing one militant while his associate escaped. Security forces today recovered 35 kg RDX and other explosive material from village Runta in Bhadarwah tehsil of Doda district. Official sources said troops of Poonch Brigade under the supervision of Poonch Garrison Commander intercepted two infiltrators at Haq Pathri on LoC this morning and asked them to surrender. The intruders, however, opened firing and tried to escape...

Indian Express, 2 May 2006

Peace march taken out in Doda

A peace march was taken out in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, where 19 Hindus were killed, to express solidarity with families of the victims even as normal life was affected here for the second day due to a bandh called to protest the killings. Members of the separatist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) outfit also took part in the peace march as protestors carrying black flags appealed to people to support the kin of the deceased in their hour of crisis...

Greater Kashmir, 2 May 2006

Editorial: Inhuman!

The invisible hands struck yet again to add new names in the already long lost of orphans and widows. The people heard the shocking news Monday morning amid shock and utter disbelief. This time the enemies of humanity struck in a remote Doda village with a purpose to create a wedge between various communities. Twenty-two innocent villagers fell to the bullets. The people of the state have been facing a very difficult situation for the past seventeen years. There is hardly any family that has not suffered in one way or the other. The people have turned immune. Counting and lifting the dead is the only job the hapless people have been performing...

Greater Kashmir, 2 May 2006

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Daily Excelsior, 3 May 2006

Home Minister visits Basantgarh, GMC

Jammu, May 2: Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil today declared that the terror activities would be curbed in the State for which the Centre and State Government were in constant touch to devise a strategy. After visiting Basantgarh in Udhampur district where 13 civilians of minority community were massacred by the militants and inquiring condition of the injured of Kulhand, Doda shoot-out in Government Medical College, Jammu, Mr Patil told a press conference at Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's residence that an attempt is being made by the militants to divide the people not only in Jammu and Kashmir but in other parts of the country as well...

Daily Excelsior, 3 May 2006

Hurriyat wants regular institutionalised dialogue

New Delhi, May 2: On the eve of the second round of their talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here tomorrow, Jammu and Kashmir's separatist amalgam Hurriyat Conference today said it wanted institutionalization of dialogue with the Centre to solve Kashmir issue and regular holding of the exercise. "We want institutionalising of the dialogue process with the Centre. By this, we mean that these talks should not be treated as yet another meeting with some separatists outfit but as a part of triangular talks between New Delhi, Pakistan and people of Kashmir," Mirwaiz Umer Farooq said on his arrival here at the head of a six-member delegation for the talks...

Daily Excelsior, 3 May 2006

Editorial: Stand up

It is time for all men of courage having faith in communal harmony to stand up and be counted. They must call the bluff of pan-Islamic outfits that are hell bent on dividing people on religious lines in the State. To say that these wicked organisations have not succeeded so far will be wrong. Who can shut his or her eyes to the sordid reality that one minority community has almost been driven out of the Kashmir region? Terrorist outfits have been similarly trying desperately to create the wedge in social structure in higher reaches of this region. Off and on their dastardly acts have triggered migration which has been reversed in a few cases. The only place where they have completely failed so far is this city...

Daily Excelsior, 3 May 2006

Editorial: Balloon in air

About two years ago a group of Indian journalists had an interesting inter-action with "Azad" Kashmir "Prime Minister" Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan in Muzaffarabad, the Capital of the occupied territory. In the midst of other assertions the Sardar had revealed that authorities were thinking of doing away with a provision debarring those from contesting elections who did not swear by Jammu and Kashmir's accession with Pakistan. He had left little doubt that the move was intended to draw the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) into the contest. He was sure that the JKLF stood no choice in any open trail of strength...

Greater Kashmir, 3 May 2006

Geelani: Doda killings un-Islamic

Srinagar: Saying that Islam doesn't allow killing of innocents and unarmed, Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference, has condemned killing of 35 Hindus in Doda and Udhampur districts, and reiterated his demand of probe by international organizations to unveil the killers. "The killing of unarmed people of minority community in Doda and Udhampur is tantamount to murder of humanity. Islam doesn't permit killings on the basis of religion. Our hearts weep, we strongly condemn this inhuman act," Geelani said at a news conference here Tuesday...

Daily Excelsior, 4 May 2006

PM, Hurriyat agree to evolve mechanism to resolve Kashmir

New Delhi, May 3: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today held the second rounds of talks with the moderate Hurriyat Conference during which both the sides discussed "sensitive and important" issues and agreed to evolve a mechanism to resolve Kashmir issue amicably and peacefully. "The talks with the Prime Minister were frank and fruitful... And both sides agreed to evolve a mechanism and discuss specifics to ensure forward movement on the dialogue process," moderate Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq told reporters after almost two-hour-long talks with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister described the discussion as "a meeting of minds" which augurs well for the future of Jammu and Kashmir and the South Asian region...

Greater Kashmir, 4 May 2006

Mirwaiz for continuity in dialogue (Riyaz Masroor)

Srinagar, May 3: Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh Wednesday agreed to Hurriyat Conference's demand of institutionalizing the dialogue process and asked the amalgam to come up with modalities "as soon as possible." However, while the Hurriyat leaders sought continuity in dialogue with both India and Pakistan they are learnt to have remained reserved about their participation in the next roundtable on Kashmir...

Greater Kashmir, 4 May 2006

3 militants, 2 soldiers, cop die in Kangan clash

Srinagar, May 3: Five militants, two troopers, a policeman and a civilian were killed in separate encounters across the state since Tuesday evening, while a policeman was injured in a grenade attack in Khanyar Srinagar. Police reports said three militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit were killed in a fierce encounter in Hayan village of Kangan (Srinagar district) on Tuesday night. The encounter broke after troops of 24 Rashtriya Rifles and police launched a search operation in the village and cordoned off houses of Habibullah Sheikh and Fayaz Ahmad Bhat...

Daily Excelsior, 4 May 2006

Editorial: Bandh in Jammu

It did not need call by any political party for people in this region to observe bandh on Tuesday in protest against massacres in Doda and Udhampur districts. This was one of those instances in which the masses wanted to give vent to their feelings of anger and anguish. It is true that every political organisation with some influence on this side of the Pir Panjal had declared total shutdown in advance. But it will not be an exaggeration to say that it had done so after having correctly sensed the popular mood. For obvious reasons the Congress had stayed away from such formal demonstration of protest. It can't be seen as saying or doing something that raises a question about its own competence to govern...

Greater Kashmir, 4 May 2006

India-Pak agree on trans-loc truck service

New Delhi, May 3: India and Pakistan have agreed to start a truck service for trade on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route from the first half of July and a bus service between Poonch in Jammu region and Rawalakot in Pakistan from June 19. The decisions were taken at the two-day talks between the two sides on Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), which concluded here today. The technical level talks on enhancing interaction and cooperation across the LOC were held in pursuance of the Joint Statement of April 18, 2005, and as mandated by the Foreign Secretaries on January 18, 2006...

Greater Kashmir, 4 May 2006

Editorial: Beyond Doda massacre

Agony and pain in Kashmir continues. The only thing in stock for a common Kashmiri irrespective of his religion, caste, gender, age and social status seems to be chastisement, torture, trouble, detention, death and destruction. As

very aptly said by a British author Pearce Gervis in his famous book This is Kashmir, 'Kashmir', ' a land which writers have described as the Happy Valley, yet only those who visit it are happy, not those who dwell therein. These remarks or impressions hold true even today more than a century after publication of this book. The plight of a common Kashmiri continues to be of the same degree as it was during the Sikh and feudal Dogra rule. Majority of Kashmiris continue to live a deprived life...

Daily Excelsior, 5 May 2006

PDP discusses defeat, Hassan Mir and support to Govt

Srinagar, May 4: Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) this evening held a detailed discussion over the conduct and results of the recent by-elections in four Assembly segments, rebel Ghulam Hassan Mir's plans of "breaking the party" as also its form of support to Ghulam Nabi Azad-led coalition Government in Jammu and Kashmir. Apparently the agenda of today's meeting at Pahalgam, according to sources, was a discussion on some proposed amendments in the party constitution. However, the discussion deviated to other burning issues including the by-elections, PDP's defeat in two of the three Valley segments besides the form of support to the Congress-led coalition Government...

Daily Excelsior, 5 May 2006

Basantgarh carnage accused escape after 4 hr battle

Jammu, May 4: Four to six militants, reportedly involved in the massacre of 13 civilians of minority community at Lolan Galla in Basantgarh area of Udhampur district on Saturday, were trapped by Army and police at Lodhra Top in Bareilly Dhar this morning. In four hour long operation, a SOG constable Satvinder Singh was seriously injured while the militants managed to escape. A fresh search operation was launched this evening to trap them...

Greater Kashmir, 5 May 2006

2 Killed, 8 injured in blasts

Srinagar, May 4: Two persons including a non-local labourer were killed and eight others including three BSF troopers injured in grenade blasts at Chadoora in Budgam district on Thursday. Reports said suspected militants aimed two grenades at the vehicles of 43 battalion of BSF near Chadoora Bridge. The grenades missed the target and exploded on road, injuring nine civilians and three troopers of Border Security Force...

Greater Kashmir, 5 May 2006

Mufti seeks militants' help in peace process

Pahalgam, May 4: PDP Patron and former chief minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed on Thursday urged militants to acknowledge the changing situation at ground level and lend a hand to the ongoing peace process. Hailing the opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road for trade and describing the opening of Poonch-Rawalakote road as yet another milestone in reviving the people-to-people contact and building confidence between the people, Sayeed appealed "militants to acknowledge the changes that are taking place at the ground level in the state" and suggested them to give a helping hand to the process of reconciliation and the dialogue aimed at finding lasting solution to the Kashmir problem...

Greater Kashmir, 5 May 2006

Exile on main street - Sajad Lone

It is important to identify the nuanced political distinction between the terms 'resolution' to the Kashmir conflict and a 'solution' to the Kashmir conflict. Resolution is more of a long-term concept and is an improbability at this stage. It could mean settling of all claims on Kashmir of all the actors, once and for all. The peoples of India, Pakistan and J&K have grown up on a diet of vicious rhetoric and hostile folklores and seen the bloody manifestation in terms of violence. Bitter peoples, competing in bitterness, are the most unlikely settings for a resolution...

Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2006

Mobs raze detained 'kingpin's' house amid shutdown, protests in Valley (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 5: Media's no-holds-barred trial of the "sex scandal", which has unnamed Ministers and Police officials in the dock, has menacingly snowballed into anarchy as politicians of all hues today provided background music and mobs did a free-for-all to raze and ransack the house of a woman in Habbakadal area of this capital city. The woman, namely Sabina of Zaindar Mohalla, has been arrested and detained by Police as "kingpin of the sex scandal"...

Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2006

LeT militant, jawan among 3 killed in Doda

Jammu, May 5: A top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant and an Army jawan were among three persons killed in separate incidents across Doda and Ramban while security forces and police recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition during two different search operations in Poonch district. Official sources said troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles and Bhadarwah police launched a search operation at village Garha in Sungli area, about five kms from Bhadarwah at 10.30 am today after developing an information that a group of three to four militants was moving in the area with a view to strike on the civilians...

Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2006

India moving forward to resolve Kashmir: Mirwaiz (Sarwar Kashani)

Srinagar, May 5: While as Hurriyat completed two rounds of talks with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh recently, the chairman of the conglomerate Friday hinted that New Delhi and Hurriyat were forming committees to create a set up in accelerating the peace and dialogue process aimed at resolving the Kashmir issue. Stating that New Delhi too was sincerely approaching the Kashmir issue, All Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Friday said that the solution of Kashmir issue could be arrived at by "cooperation, from all concerned quarters, rather than "consultations based on rigidity"...

Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2006

Editorial: Keep it up

If one goes by available details the second round of talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the moderate Hurriyat Conference in the national capital has passed off smoothly. This is a good development. It does speak of hard work put in by intermediaries. Their first get-together last year was followed by a tacit game of one-upmanship and acrimony. It had been triggered by the Hurriyat faction's childish pranks. Perhaps to demonstrate that it could dictate terms it had declared its preference to meet Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf first before calling on the Prime Minister. On its return from the neighbouring country it had virtually demanded a meeting at the highest level in New Delhi...

Greater Kashmir, 6 May 2006

Editorial: Rage against rackets

The recent expose that made headlines has caused a stir in the Kashmiri society which found expression in the anger in different forms. The Friday's total Bandh observed across the Valley was a stark demonstration of that fury at the state government's failure to stamp it out. The strong protests by people against the abetment of the crime by police supposed to fight the crimes is what has stirred the passions. It is unfortunate that several "political bigwigs" who got the power not because people expressed faith in them but because they had no real popular leader to vote for, should have indulged in criminal activities quite unbecoming to their status...

Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2006

With police in the dock, Asiya out on social policing

Srinagar, May 6: Taking full advantage of the anarchical situation arising out of the media trial of unnamed politicians and police officials, allegedly involved in flesh trade, radical women's organisation Dukhtaraan-e-Millat has launched a fresh drive of social policing in this capital city. Cable operators, Internet joints, PCOs, beauty parlours and restaurants are said to be on Dukhtaraan's hit list. A Dukhtaraan brigade, comprising four Burqa-clad women and two men, today trooped into the house of one Abdul Majeed Shah of Shah Gund, Safapora, at Firdaus Colony in Bemina area and began interrogating two female tenants why they were running "flesh trade"...

Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2006

Two HUJI ultras surrender in Doda

Jammu, May 6: Two militants of Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) outfit including a 'district commander' surrendered before police and Army at Keshwan in Kishtwar tehsil of Doda district today while two youths, who had forcibly been inducted into militancy by a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) 'commander' were rescued by the security forces in Dachhan. A Physical Education Teacher (PET) was shot at and seriously injured by the militants in Mendhar...

Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2006

Who represents whom in Kashmir? - Dr. Jitendra Singh

The most interesting feature of the Valley's current scenario is that the so-called separatists are divided over

separatism while the so-called non-separatists are divided over non-separatism. Another peculiarity is that these mutual differences are based less on ideology or conviction and more on political expediency or personal ambition. This essential contradiction arising thereof adds a hilarious angle to the situation. Different voices are being heard from the Valley and each of these wants to be acknowledged as the voice of the people of Kashmir...

Greater Kashmir, 7 May 2006

Cover up (Zulfikar Majid)

Srinagar, May 6: The sex scandal case took a new turn on Saturday after revelations about tampering of statements by the police came to light indicating that this was done to dilute the original report that had indicted high profile politicians, bureaucrats, police and paramilitary forces officials, and some businessmen. The Greater Kashmir learnt from reliable police sources that "before handing over the sex scandal case to the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI), important statements from the case file were changed on the instructions from police top brass." ...

Greater Kashmir, 7 May 2006

KU students protest, beaten, many wounded

Srinagar, May 6: Kashmir University students Saturday staged a big demonstration march against the alleged government cover up of the recently unearthed sex scandal. However, the troopers of Central Reserve Police Force, ruthlessly beat up the students of the prestigious institution wounding several of them. Reports said the students assembled in the campus and shouted slogans against the alleged government laxity in unmasking and punishing the top police officers and politicians found involved in the scandal...

Greater Kashmir, 7 May 2006

Hurriyat terms sex scandal as war crime

Srinagar, May 6: Hurriyat Conference (Geelani faction) Saturday termed the sex scam as "one of the war crimes, which Indian armed forces are committing in Kashmir," and demanded a probe by UN Tribunal for War Crimes. Declaring the recently unearthed sex scam in Srinagar "a part of the chain of war crimes committed by forces in Kashmir," Ghulam Nabi Sumji, spokesman of the amalgam in a statement said "the links of the scam extend to Delhi." "Indian forces are committing mass rape, custodial killings and other war crimes in Kashmir. The discovery of mass graves at Chaternar, Bandipora and Khanabal, Islamabad provide enough support to it," the spokesman added...

Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2006

Madrassa students protest against sex racket

Srinagar, May 7: Students of a Madrassa staged a march here today to protest the police's alleged failure to act against those involved in a sex racket while a little-known militant group warned Cable TV operators not to air programmes in the Kashmir valley. Nearly 200 boys and girls affiliated to the Dargah-e-Taileen-ul-Quran Pather Masjid took to the streets at Mahrajunj in downtown Srinagar and marched in a procession, demanding an end to "vulgarity, waywardness and immoral activities", officials said...

Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2006

CBI raids houses of 5 Vigilance officials

Jammu, May 7: The Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) today raided residences of five officials of the State Vigilance Organisation (SVO) including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) and an Inspector in connection with investigations of suspended RTO Bhumesh Sharma's case which was transferred from the SVO to the CBI by the State High Court recently. Raids were carried out simultaneously in the house of five officials. Raids, which began at about 11.30 am, continued till 3 pm, official sources said...

Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2006

Hizb 'dist commdr' killed in Tral

Srinagar, May 7: In a joint operation, police and security forces have eliminated one of Pulwama district's most wanted militants and "District Commander" of Hizbul Mujahideen, Mushtaq Ahmed Bhat alias Gowhar, in Noorpora village of Tral early this morning. According to official sources, Gowhar had been operating as a dreaded militant since 1990 and he was responsible for over 50 killings and a large number of IED blasts in Central Kashmir...

Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2006

Editorial: Fight the evil

Last week-end's bandh and violence in the Kashmir region should not come as a big surprise. Any area or community will be up in arms against the evil of prostitution. It is rather late that fire has been ignited in this case. What has taken the lid off the people's anger is the latest exposure about the alleged involvement of bigwigs in a sex racket. It has brought into open the tensions that have been simmering below the surface for quite some time. For nearly a year now responsible sections of the local press have been expressing serious concern over the shameful exploitation of women...

Greater Kashmir, 8 May 2006

Sex Ring: CM assures thorough probe

Srinagar, May 7: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday said Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) will thoroughly probe the sex scandal case and that no politician or government official would be spared if found involved. "Whosoever is involved and whatever position he/she holds would be brought to the justice. The investigation in the scandal has begun and we should wait till final report comes," local news agency KNS quoted CM as saying. Azad said the case has been handed over to CBI and they will reach to the bottom...

Greater Kashmir, 8 May 2006

3 militants, soldier, civilian killed in State

Srinagar, May 6: Three militants, a soldier and a civilian were killed in separate incidents across the state since Friday evening. One militant was killed in an encounter with an Army patrol party in Rafiabad Varmul on Saturday, a defence spokesman said. He identified the deceased as Abid. Police said a militant identified as Abu Akaba of Pakistan was killed in an encounter with troops at Gurh Sungli, Bhaderwah in Doda district on Friday night...

Greater Kashmir, 8 May 2006

Editorial: Blame game?

As the demand for exposing different characters involved in the sex scandal is getting stronger, different mainstream politicians too have joined the chorus. A positive development indeed as everybody or anybody who has a grain of conscience alive is expected to rise to the occasion and help bring the culprits responsible for this heinous crime to the book. The Deputy Chief Minister too is reported to have voiced his concern and demanded action against the culprits through his missive to the CM! However, one is surprised at his move as if it is coming from a person who is not the part of the coalition government that rules the roost! ...

Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2006

54 cross LoC in Chakan-Da-Bagh

Chakan-da-bagh (Poonch), May 8: Fifty four persons today crossed Line of Control (LoC) from this point, which was opened at 2.30 pm for crossing by the civilians of the two sides after a fortnight. While 24 civilians crossed over to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) from this side, 30 civilians came to Poonch from PoK, official sources, who monitored the crossing, told the Excelsior this evening. The crossing continued for two and a half hours, they said. Originally, a total of 73 civilians were scheduled to cross the LoC today from both sides. Nineteen others couldn't cross due to non-completion of formalities. Of 24 civilians, who went to PoK from this side today, 21 hailed from Poonch district. Three others hailed from PoK. They had come to this side along with 16 others from the same point on April 22. Stay of 16 PoK civilians has been extended by another fortnight...

Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2006

Sink differences for resolving Kashmir: CM

Srinagar, May 8: Expressing hope that separatists will take part in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's roundtable conference later this month, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that all parties should set aside their differences to contribute towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue. "Hurriyat Conference has had two rounds of talks with the Prime Minister and both sides were satisfied after the latest dialogue. We hope that they (separatist) will take part in the next edition," Mr Azad told reporters at a ceremony to mark the opening of Civil Secretariat here...

Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2006

LeT 'operational commander' gunned down in Rajouri

Jammu, May 8: Romeo Force and Rajouri Police today gunned down an 'Operational Commander' of Lashkar-e-

Toiba (LeT) outfit in a fierce gun-battle that last two days in Nerhian in Thanna Mandi area of Rajouri district. A huge quantity of ration, 40 kg RDX, three ready to use IEDs and two Kenwood radio sets were recovered during searches in the same area. SSP Rajouri J P Singh said a joint team of 43 Rashtriya Rifles, which was part of Romeo Force, and Rajouri Police launched a joint search operation at Nerhian at Dhara Mangota falling under the jurisdiction of Thanna Mandi police station yesterday afternoon after developing an information that a top Lashkar commander along with his body-guard had taken shelter in the area...

Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2006

Pak soldier arrested in Batalik sector

Srinagar, May 8 : A trooper was injured in an ongoing encounter at Kulgam, where security forces have engaged two heavily armed militants into a fierce firefight, while as another trooper was injured in an encounter at Herman Shopian during the day. On a specific operation in Kulgam, SOG and 9 RR in a joint operation launched an operation late this evening, to flush out the hiding militants. Sources said the operation was launched at Gadipora in Kapran area of Kulgam Shopian belt on Sunday evening at around 2000 hours...

Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2006

Editorial: Not the way

Dukhtaran-e-Millat is back to playing its favourite role as moral police in the Kashmir region. Evidently it feels it can exploit the present resentment against the "high-profile" sex scandal to force its retrogradory viewpoint. The danger is that it may as is its wont overplay its hand. It may end up implementing a remedy which is as bad as the disease it seeks to cure. In the name of exorcising society of its evils the militant organisation and its allies have once again put cable operators, public call offices (PCOs), Internet cafes, beauty parlours and restaurants on their hit list. Given their philosophy it should not surprise anyone that they are up to their old tricks...

Greater Kashmir, 9 May 2006

Protests continue for 3rd day

Srinagar, May 8: Students of Kashmir University held peaceful demonstrations for the third consecutive day on Monday against the recently busted sex scam allegedly involving high profile politicians, bureaucrats, police and paramilitary officers. Reports said the students gathered in the campus and tried to come out. However the heavy deployment of police around the campus halted the procession from moving forward. Students continued the procession and tried to sneak out of the campus...

Greater Kashmir, 9 May 2006

A Working Paper on Kashmir - A.G. Noorani

No settlement of the Kashmir problem is possible unless the falsehoods about Article 370 are first laid to rest; such as that 'self-rule is embedded in Art. 370', whereas it has enabled the Centre, for over 50 years, to amass for itself powers which fall within the State List of subjects for legislation merely by securing the consent of the State government and without any constitutional amendment. This is impossible in regard to the other States...

Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2006

No demilitarisation in J&K: Pranab

Jammu, May 9: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee today categorically ruled out any de-militarisation in Jammu and Kashmir, one of the main demand of moderate Hurriyat Conference, saying number of the troops will not be reduced in the State. "We will not enhance or reduce the numbers of troops in the State", he told a press conference after visiting Thawa in Kulhand and Basantgarh where 32 civilians of minority community were massacred by the militants last week...

Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2006

6 DIGs being promoted to IGP rank, 12 new Distt & Sessions courts being set up

Srinagar, May 9: While Financial Commissioner Home, S B Mathur, has been sent on a central deputation, Director General of J&K Police, Gopal Sharma, has been empanelled as DGP by Government of India. Meanwhile, the State Cabinet, which is meeting with an agenda of over 50 items, is likely to consider an administrative reshuffle in top and middle rungs on Thursday. A number of Financial Commissioners (FCs), Principal Secretaries (PSs), Commissioners and Secretaries to Government, heads of departments as also Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and District Police heads are likely to get new places of posting...

Greater Kashmir, 10 May 2006

Officials at back, Sabina operated through coercion and blackmail

Srinagar, May 9: At a time when Kashmir is in a whirlpool of a sex abuse scandal, another MMS has started making rounds and this time a class 10 girl is visibly drugged in an obscene video clip. The scandal that was exposed after a similar video of a 15-year-old girl was investigated by police leading to startling revelations of a sex abuse ring which operated here with not only the patronage of the state apparatus but a direct involvement of politicians, senior police and security force officers...

Greater Kashmir, 10 May 2006

Flesh Trade in Kashmir: The Facts and 'Folklore'

...Although the scholars like T.N.Madan, Chitralekha Zutshi and Mridu Rai may reject any attempt to understand Kashmir history in terms of a sentimental appeal to 'Kashmiriyat', that is, a memory of the past 'refracted through rose-tinted glasses, in which Kashmir appears as a unique region where religious communities lived in harmony since time immemorial', no one can deny the fact that both the Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims have always abhorred obscenity, licentiousness and intoxicants...

Indian Express, 10 May 2006

Counter-militancy operations stepped up in Kulhand, Basantgarh areas

Following the killing of 32 Hindus in Kulhand and Basantgarh areas of Doda and Udhampur districts, security forces have stepped up counter-militancy operations in these districts of the Jammu region. Foot patrols are conducting the search-and-destroy operations and laying ambushes in the sensitive areas of the two districts, said defence sources. "Upper reaches are dominated by the Army columns," said sources. Sources further said that security at the sight of the incidents has been considerably enhanced by the J&K Police personnel, who were recently imparted counter-militancy training at the Army training camps...

Indian Express, 10 May 2006

Militant hideouts busted, huge cache of explosives seized

Army claimed to have raided several militant hideouts in South Kashmir and recovered a large quantity of explosives and improvised electronic devices (IED) circuits used for preparing car bombs. The Army claimed that the explosives were meant to derail the May 25 round table conference held in Srinagar. Army spokesman Lt Col V.K.Batra revealed that the recoveries made in the hideouts indicate that an elaborate laboratory was being run to fabricate various IED circuits for car bombs. The militants of Hizb and Lashkar were planning to trigger car bombs and explosions at the behest of their mentors across the border...

Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2006

PDP calls for withdrawal of troops, special powers of armed forces

Srinagar, May 10: In an extra-ordinary meeting of its General Council, Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) today passed a political resolution, calling for "measured reduction" of troops in Jammu and Kashmir as also withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Congress party's partner in the ruling coalition, PDP, supported these trademark demands of the hardliner separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani at a time when Union Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee as well as Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad were asking troops how best to firmly combat insurgency in the State...

Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2006

Two LeT infiltrators shot dead on LoC

Jammu, May 10: Army today gunned down two militants thwarting an infiltration attempt in Pathri Gali on Line of Control (LoC) in Mendhar sector in Poonch district while a civilian and a Special Police Officer (SPO) were killed and a civilian and an Army jawan were injured in two separate attacks by the militants in Doda district. Official sources said the militants opened firing targeting an Army column, which was conducting night patrolling at Mangota in Marmat area of Doda district at mid-night last night. Troops retaliated...

Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2006

Editorial: Mislplaced anger

Not very long ago Hizbul Mujahideen had talked of war and dialogue taking place at the same time. Quite a few observers were quick to interpret it as a sign of its changing perception. It was said the "homespun" militant organisation was willing to sit on the negotiation table even while carrying forward its "armed struggle". In our

view, however, such approach was not viable. Those who indulge in violence would never be able to disabuse their minds while engaging themselves in an exercise to search for peace. Normalcy and tranquility continue to elude those parts of the globe where this double-edged tactic was put in practice...

Greater Kashmir, 11 May 2006

Court asks govt to act (Naseer A Ganai)

Srinagar, May 10: In the sexual exploitation case of Kashmir girls, the High Court issued notices Wednesday to Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, seeking their personal appearances on May 12 to explain as to what action government has taken in the matter so far. The Chief Secretary, the court directed, should inform the court whether the government has referred the matter to CBI and if so what progress it has made thereafter. The court directed the DGP that in his reply he should indicate number of cases registered in the matter and the progress of investigation...

Greater Kashmir, 11 May 2006

Asiya demands High Court probe

Srinagar, May 10: Dukhtaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi has demanded setting up of a full division bench in High Court to probe the sexual exploitation of Kashmiri girls allegedly by politicians, police and paramilitary officials, and bureaucrats. Questioning the credibility of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Asiya said, "in order to have result-oriented probe, a full double bench should be constituted in the High Court and a special investigation team should be set up to probe the sex-abuse scandal." ...

Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2006

Several SSPs, DCs among 59 officers transferred

Srinagar, May 11: The State cabinet today ordered promotions of six DIGs as IGPs in the super time scale and ordered transfers and postings of 34 police officers including SSPs of Doda, Udhampur, Rajouri, Kathua and Jammu Border. SSPs of Kupwara and Baramulla have been attached. In civil administration, the cabinet, which met here this evening under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, ordered transfers of 25 officers. Among them were Deputy Commissioners of Udhampur, Doda, Kathua, Rajouri, Srinagar and Anantnag districts besides Excise Commissioner, Jammu...

Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2006

Two LeT militants shot dead

Jammu, May 11: Two ultras including a SPO-turned-militant, two civilians, one of them a VDC member's wife and an Army jawan were killed while another civilian and a jawan were injured in separate militancy related incidents across the region overnight. Troops of 11 Rashtriya Rifles and police intercepted a former Special Police Officer (SPO), who had joined Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) in June 2005, at village Hanjal in Marwah area of Doda district late last night, SSP Doda Prithvi Raj Manhas said...

Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2006

Editorial: Whose freedom?

Normally it would have been taken as a positive signal from Muzaffarabad, the Capital of "Azad" Kashmir as the occupied territory across the Line of Control is locally known. It relates to two organisations condemning the killing of Hindus in Doda and Udhampur districts. The question is not whether these outfits are significant or just exist on paper. It is the expression of sentiments that ought to matter. The first impression that the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League and Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen give is that they are anguished over massacres in Jammu hills. However, it is belied by their subsequent assertions which amount to camouflaging the reality...

Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2006

Surrendered militants need rehabilitation - Sanchet Barua

On some occasions, disgruntled cadres even give up arms of their own accord, because life in the jungle is no longer tenable, or a leadership crisis sparks an exodus. Over the last one year 105 militants sneaked into India from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts and gave up arms in Tripura, and Assam. What prompts a hardcore militant to surrender? Other than disillusionment and a lack of ideology, the discomforts of a prolonged stay in the jungle are the most common reasons for extremists to come over ground...

Greater Kashmir, 12 May 2006

CBI starts probe (M Hyderi/Arif Wani)

Srinagar, May 11: After days of suspense over the probe to be undertaken by India's premier investigative agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team on Thursday finally commenced its work on the sex scandal for bringing to book those ministers, bureaucrats, officers of JK police and paramilitary forces allegedly involved in the sexual abuse of girls. Reliable sources told Greater Kashmir that the Jammu and Kashmir police before handing over the case to the CBI had 'spared' some of the high profile names from the tainted list fearing 'legal ramifications'...

Greater Kashmir, 12 May 2006

Editorial: Strike a balance (Zahir-u-din)

The reaction evoked by the sex scandal reflects that the society was determined to fight prostitution, promiscuity and waywardness tooth and nail. There is no denying the fact that some vested interests exploit young girls and force them into the oldest profession of the world, but the society also needs to take tangible measures, from time to time, to prevent it from getting polluted. Besides the onslaught of the cable television, there are other factors responsible for the mess this overwhelmingly Muslim society finds itself in today. Surprisingly nobody bothers to look into the causes of the deterioration.

Greater Kashmir, 12 May 2006

The politics of social degradation - Shahnaz Bashir

Is State really prepared to take up the challenge of eradicating corruption? If yes, some questions arise. Does it understand the difference between material and moral corruption? Does it care for the software before it repairs the hardware? Debates-done, but we don't subscribe to farce. We don't believe in the desperate creation of a utopia unless the truth of the things is accepted. We don't trust melodramatic sentiments until the real story is unraveled. A couple of days back a viral infection was detected in the software of our society. Busting of a sex scandal has shocked everybody and everybody waits for what will happen next. Will the names of the involved be exposed?...

Greater Kashmir, 13 May 2006

CBI interrogates accused

Srinagar, May 12: The team of visiting Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday recorded the statements of Sabeena, the kingpin in the sexploitation scandal and other accused. Local news agency KNS said the 12-member CBI team headed by its Deputy Inspector General (DIG) interrogated Sabeena, her husband Abdul Hamid Bulla, surrendered militant Shabir Ahmad Kalla and Meraj-ud-Din, for over four hours...

Greater Kashmir, 13 May 2006

'Molestation' of Handwara woman sparks protests (Sabir Ibn Yousuf)

Kralgund/Srinagar, May 12: Sameera Bano, 26, was lying semiconscious on the roadside in Kralgund in the midst of thousands of slogan-shouting protesters on Friday. She alleges that she had barely managed to save her honour when a soldier of 30 Rashtriya Rifles tried to rape her inside the kitchen of her home in Ashpora village of Handwara. The shock of the sexual assault—rejected by the Army as baseless while police has registered an FIR against the soldiers—had left her speechless. A man was holding a saline dextrose bottle in hand feeding the essential fluids to resuscitate Sameera...

Greater Kashmir, 13 May 2006

3 militants killed

Srinagar, May 12: Three militants were killed across the state since Thursday night, police said Friday. Police said two militants were killed in an encounter with troops at Narwani, Shopian in Pulwama district on Thursday night. The encounter broke out after the soldiers launched an operation in the area. In the meantime the militants who had taken shelter in the house of Muhammad Yusuf Shehri, opened fire on them, resulting in the gunbattle that went for the whole night. The gunbattle ended in the killing of two militants who have been identified as Abu Saqib and Ghulam Ahmad alias Muntazim of Takipora Shopian...

Greater Kashmir, 13 May 2006

Editorial: Pathribal Killings

After a lapse of three years, the CBI has finally charge sheeted the culprits of Pathribal Killings. It was one of the worst episodes of Human Rights violations committed in Kashmir and reminded one about the killings in Bosnia and Kosovo. The perpetrators there were put on a War Crimes Trial under Global Supervision. In a way Kashmir

deserved similar treatment. Anyhow, even the present action is commendable as it has not spared even very senior officers of the Armed Forces. Only regret is that it has taken such a long time to establish the truth...

Daily Excelsior, 13 May 2006

Azad inspects work on Rawalakot project

Chakan-da-Bagh, May 12 : Badly damaged and in disuse since the 1971 Indo-Pak war, the Poonch-Rawalakot Road is being spruced up and the landmined stretches sanitised for the bus service between India and Pakistan to be launched on June 19. "The preparations on the Indian side would be complete by June 10 so that the Poonch-Rawalakot road across the Line of Control is started on schedule on June 19," Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who visited the area to review the pace of work, said today. Mr Azad today said the opening of this service between India and Pakistan should be followed up with trade on the route...

Daily Excelsior, 13 May 2006

Editorial: PDP in search of identity

A story is much in circulation these days. This refers to late National Conference leader Mirza Afzal Beg's penchant for waving green flag or handkerchief at public meetings during his days with the Plebiscite Front. It seems to be a figment of imagination. Those who have attended these gatherings in the late 1960s are quite surprised. They clearly recall that the Mirza was not given to indulging in such theatrical performances. Invariably Sheikh Abdullah himself would be present on the spot. His anger against New Delhi notwithstanding he would not permit any symbolism that exposed him directly either to the charge of communalism or having a tilt towards Pakistan...

Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2006

Two BJP workers killed, 41 hurt in Doda grenade attack

Jammu, May 13: Two Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) activists were killed and 41 others were injured, four of them seriously, when militants lobbed a grenade on a procession being taken out jointly by the BJP workers and the people, who had shifted here from Kulhand after the killing of 19 people, at New Bus Stand in Doda town this morning. Tension gripped Doda town after the blast as BJP workers enforced a bandh in Doda, Bhadarwah, Kishtwar and Batote towns shouting slogans against militants and the Government...

Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2006

Azad meets PM, discusses roundtable

New Delhi, May 13: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during which various issues including the forthcoming roundtable conference on Kashmir to be held on May 25 was discussed. During an hour-and-a-half long meeting, Azad and Singh gave finishing touches to the roundtable conference and also discussed the issues of participation of separatists in the meeting. He also briefed the Prime Minister about militancy related situation in the State...

Indian Express, 14 May 2006

Lift ban on TV channels, J&K militants urged

In a rare display of courage, cable TV operators staged a peaceful march in Srinagar to appeal to militant groups to reconsider their ban on beaming of all satellite channels in the Kashmir Valley. As nearly 500 cable operators marched from Iqbal Park in the heart of the city, some of them shouted slogans like "Please lift the ban on cable transmission" and "Don't snatch our livelihood and don't punish us for the evil deeds of others". Following a threat of suicide attacks by four militant groups -- Jaish-e-Mohammed, al-Badr, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and al-Madina regiment -- the cable operators suspended their operations across the Valley yesterday...

Indian Express, 14 May 2006

Grenade attack leaves 2 dead, 39 injured

Barely 13 days after having killed 19 Hindus in Kulhand area, militants struck once again killing two more Hindus and injuring 39 others when they lobbed a grenade on a BJP's protest rally, which was demanding adequate security for the minority community in the region. This is the second attack by the militants on minority community members during the last fortnight in Doda, which is the native district of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. Today's attack came around at 11.25 am when surviving Hindu villagers from Kulhand along with people from other parts of the district were taking out a procession organised by local Bharatiya Janata Party leaders...

Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2006

Terror attacks aimed at ethnic cleansing: Advani

Jammu, May 14: Veteran BJP leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha L K Advani today said the recent militant attacks in Doda were aimed at ethnic cleansing. He said the militant strikes were similar to the attacks carried out by them in Kashmir in 1989-90 to drive out Pandits from the Valley. "There is a definite difference between the terrorist attacks at New Delhi (on the eve of Diwali), IISc Bangalore and Varanasi temple and this month's terror strike at Doda and Basantgarh. While the other attacks were carried out by the militants to show their presence to the Government and give a feeling that they had neither been concurred nor finished, the attacks at Doda and Udhampur were part of a sinister design and well planned to force migration of minorities"...

Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2006

Azad hopeful of separatists joining Srinagar roundtable

New Delhi, May 14 : Expressing hope that the separatist outfits would join the May 25 second roundtable conference in Srinagar, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said the groups have no reason for not taking part in the dialogue process aimed at finding lasting peace in the strife-torn State. "I have held discussions with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Home Minister Shivraj Patil and everyone was looking towards the meeting with great hope," Azad told PTI here. About the participation of separatist groups, including the Hurriyat Conference in this meeting, he said he would like to see them come to the dialogue table now. "What reasons would they give now for their non-participation?" Azad asked...

Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2006

Civilian killed, 2 buried alive

Srinagar, May 14 : A civilian was killed in an ambush and two people buried alive, whileas security forces averted a major tragedy by defusing an Improvised Explosive Device in Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours. A report from Baramulla said massive protests erupted at Kunan Poshpora in Kupwara district today after a 32-year-old man was allegedly killed by troops in an ambush last night. Sources said the troops had laid an ambush at Kunan Poshpora village after they received information that militants were hiding there...

Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2006

Editorial: Attack in Doda

In a way the latest grenade attack in Doda town is an extremely serious development. This is one of the few occasions when the militants have nearly timed an assault with a political rally. Two persons were killed and more than 40 were injured when they struck near the bus stand of the district headquarters. This was when the Bharatiya Janata Party had staged yet another demonstration in protest against the twin massacres in Kulhand and Basantgarh recently. Normally the terrorists have taken care to keep off political agitations. Their excursions in the predominantly Muslim Doda town have also been very rare. By and large they have driven vicarious pleasure by creating bedlam in areas where Hindus and Muslims are almost evenly balanced. Their evil intention has been to create a communal divide...

Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2006

Editorial: Behind our back

What is happening across the Line of Control (LoC)? The reference in this behalf is strictly to terrorism and its merchants. In the session of Parliament that has just begun in the national capital there are three tell-tale mentions as replies to apt queries. One can just quote them in order to get a near-total picture. One of them relates to terrorist training camps. The Ministry of External Affairs answers: "There were about 58 terrorist training camps in operation in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan before the earthquake of 8 October 2005. Of these about 29 camps located in PoK and North West Frontier Province of Pakistan were damaged or destroyed in the earthquake. Some of the damaged or destroyed camps have been reconstructed and training activities have commenced."...

Greater Kashmir, 15 May 2006

Editorial: Stop them

The general public has very rightly demanded stern action against the persons involved in the sex-scandal unearthed recently. Some names got exposed somehow and the rest must be unveiled as soon as possible. The people have a right to know what is happening around and who are bent upon polluting the society. There is no denying the fact that the scandal is being investigated and exposing the names may hamper the probe. But, the law enforcing agencies got enough time and evidence against the people involved in the detested practice. Now has come the time

when the authorities must act and arrest the pimps, prostitutes the exploiters and all those who facilitate the detested practice in one way or the other. Identifying the persons and booking them under relevant provisions of law cannot be put on hold for long for a variety of reasons...

Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2006

No question of demilitarisation in J&K: Patil

New Delhi, May 15 : Government today ruled out demilitarisation or reduction of force in Jammu and Kashmir but said it would continue dialogue with those who abjure violence and other responsible groups to bring peace in the State. "There is no question of demilitarisation... Nor withdrawal of forces... It can only be considered if there is peace and tranquility (in J&K). Instead of cutting down forces, we are strengthening the forces by recruiting heavily, Home Minister Shivraj Patil said in Lok Sabha while intervening in a debate on a BJP-sponsored adjournment motion on the killings in Doda earlier this month...

Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2006

HC to monitor probe (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 15: A Division Bench (DB) of Jammu & Kashmir High Court today took a serious note of the character assassination campaign against innumerable men and women set into motion by invisible elements in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir valley in the backdrop of so-called "sex scandal". The DB declared involvement of any person in printing, publishing or circulating of character assassination posters as contempt of court in addition to normal crime and directed Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police to immediately arrest this menace and ensure safety and security of the men and women assailed in this campaign...

Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2006

5 wounded in Srinagar blast

Srinagar, May 15: Even as two militants have been trapped in a gunbattle in Kulgam area of south Kashmir this evening, suspected militants have slaughtered four abducted civilians in Bandipore and Rafiabad area in north Kashmir since last evening. Meanwhile five persons, including a CRPF soldier, were injured when militants hurled a grenade towards a paramilitary picket in downtown area of Srinagar this evening...

Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2006

Editorial: For fair play

Slowly and surely a silent revolution has taken place in the State particularly in the Kashmir region. There is not a single voice of protest against the Central Bureau of Investigation's probe into Pathribal killings. No murmur has been caused either now that the CBI has been assigned inquiry into the much-ballyhooed sex scandal in Srinagar. This speaks of the investigating agency's credibility. But it also indicates the changing mindset of the political class especially and the people at large. Not very long there would be a tendency on the part of a section of political leaders to cry foul the moment a Central body was involved in any exercise in the State...

Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2006

Editorial: Need for balance

It is strange that even after Kulhand and Basantgarh massacres one should be talking of demilitarisation in the State. One can understand if Pakistan and militant sympathisers seek it. Whatever their protestations about peace in public their hidden support and admiration for the terror apparatus does surface time and again. They take vicarious pleasure in describing the terrorists as "indigenous freedom fighters" even though they are strangers to this land and are fully foreign trained. It will serve their purpose if there is no law and order on this side of the Line of Control. Nothing has been done in Pakistan to dismantle Lashkar-e-Toiba which is being invested with new names...

Greater Kashmir, 16 May 2006

Cracks widening in coalition (Riyaz Masroor)

Srinagar, May 15: Even as the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad Monday dismissed any serious problems within the coalition government, cracks in the five-party alliance looked widening further following fresh assertions from two major partners-Congress and PDP. While the PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti Sunday hinted at midterm poll, Deputy Chief Minister and senior PDP leader Muzaffar Hussain Baig indicated PDP's disinterest about its alliance with the Congress...

Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2006

PM's 2-day Kashmir visit from May 24

Srinagar, May 16: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will visit the Kashmir valley for two days from May 24. This was informed by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad here today. He said during his stay, the Prime Minister will attend the second round-table conference on Kashmir. Dr Singh will also chair the Unified Command meeting and review the progress of the ongoing Prime Minister's reconstruction programme which was sanctioned last year. "He will be briefed by the State Government on the amount spent under the package and also about the requirements," the Chief Minister said...

Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2006

2 militants, JCO killed in Kulgam encounter

Srinagar, May 16: Two militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba as also a Junior Commissioned officer (JCO) of Army have died in the overnight gunbattle between militants and security forces in Kulgam. Yet another militant has been killed by security forces when he was infiltrating into the Valley with his group in Keran sector of Kupwara district. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that both the holed up militants have died in the overnight gunfight between militants and security forces at Nunmai village in Kulgam area of south Kashmir...

Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2006

DB asks CBI to record detainees' statements in presence of judge

Srinagar, May 16: Continuing its hearing on the High Court Bar Association (HCBA) PIL about the burning 'sex abuse scandal', a Division Bench of J&K High Court today directed CBI to record the statements of two female detainees in presence of a senior judicial official in the next two days. CBI sought modification of yesterday's court order regarding daily submission of status report and argued that associating a Special Investigation Team (SIT) with the investigation would be prejudicial to the sovereignty of the central agency...

Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2006

Editorial: Take no chances

Given the sudden spurt in serious militant activity one feels constrained to make a suggestion. Nothing should be left to chance so far as the security of places of worship is concerned. Of course, a lot is being already done in this direction. We know it from our daily experience in this city. Security forces must be congratulated for the deft manner in which they regulate the entry into the Raghunath Temple without offending the sensibilities of hundreds of regular and occasional devotees...

Indian Express, 17 May 2006

JKVM raises issue of ban on cable operations in Valley

Raising the issue of recent diktat of militants to ban cable operations in Valley, Jammu and Kashmir Vichar Manch (JKVM) today said "elections, administration, development and works are of secondary matter when the very survival is under threat." In a press conference here today, Jammu and Kashmir Vichar Manch president T N Razdan questioned the exercise of constitutional authority by the State government, which has a direct bearing on the return of Kashmiri pandits back to Valley. "We lost our homes because the government refused to come to grips with the situation."...

Indian Express, 17 May 2006

BJP will keep issue of Hindus' killings boiling (Rakesh Rocky)

Striving hard for its revival in the strife-torn Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP is all set to launch a bigger agitation in the state on the issue of killing of members of the minority community in Jammu region. Militants, a fortnight back, had killed 34 Hindus in Udhampur and Doda districts. The BJP, which bit dust in the Jammu region, where it had eight seats till October 2002 Assembly election but could win only one seat later, will make these killings a poll plank...

Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2006

Patil assures safer transportation of villagers from Doda

New Delhi, May 17: Describing today's grenade attack by terrorists on a group of protestors at Doda as "serious", Home Minister Shivraj Patil said the Government would "qualitatively upgrade" security apparatus in the area, including beefing Village Defence Committees (VDCs) and arming their members with AK-47 rifles. "The Government is not opposed to arming members of VDCs with AK-47 rifles, but it has to be ensured that these weapons are given to the right people for strengthening security and are not misused under any circumstances," Mr

Patil said in the Rajya Sabha.

Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2006

16 injured in another grenade attack at Doda

Jammu, May 17: In yet another strike on the minority community, a militant today lobbed a grenade on Ram Lila Grounds in Doda town, where the people from Kulhand and other areas had been putting up, this afternoon injuring 16 persons. In another incident in Gandoh in Doda district, the militants decamped with SLR of a BJP leader's PSO while a civilian was killed in exchange of firing between VDC members and the ultras...

Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2006

Pranab rules out withdrawal of troops in J&K

New Delhi, May 17: Defence Minister Pranab Kumar Mukherjee today ruled out any withdrawal of troops from Jammu and Kashmir, saying the threat perception did not allow such a step. He also said there was no question on any withdrawal of troops in Siachen so long as talks going on with Pakistan on the issue do not yield any result. Mr Mukherjee was replying to supplementaries in the Rajya Sabha during the question hour...

Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2006

Baig says Mufti didn't cover up flesh trade (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 17: Responding to a statement from the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed and newspaper reports claiming that the former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed had ordered cover up of flesh trade in 2004, senior PDP leader and Dy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig today asserted that all the five cases filed in 2002-05 period had been properly investigated and challaned in the court. He admitted that "powerful people" were involved in the scandal but expressed surprise that senior Police officials had never brought this menace to the notice of Chief Ministers---Dr Farooq Abdullah, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and Ghulam Nabi Azad...

Daily Excelsior, 19 May 2006

26 hurt in Pulwama, Srinagar attacks

Srinagar, May 18: Four persons, including three militants, were killed while as twenty-six persons were injured in two incidents of grenade attacks in Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours. According to details, at least 25 persons got wounded in a grenade attack at Pulwama in south Kashmir, while as a civilian was killed and a lady injured in a grenade attack at Bohri Kadal in down town Srinagar today whileas three militants were killed in a fierce encounter at Meliyal Kupwara...

Daily Excelsior, 19 May 2006

Top ISI agent crosses through LoC, arrested (Gopal Sharma)

Poonch, May 18: A top agent of Pakistan's Inter- Services Intelligence (ISI) agency and an important activist of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), who crossed to this side from Tatta Pani LoC point in Mendhar areas of Poonch, has landed himself in the police lock up. Wanted by Poonch police since 1986, the man crossed to this side alongwith a group of 30 persons from PoK through Tatta Pani (Balnoi) Line of Control point on May 15. The Intelligence sleuths, on the basis of specific inputs nabbed him from the house of Badder Din, son of Alam Din of Khanetar in district Poonch last night...

Greater Kashmir, 19 May 2006

Moderates talk tough

Srinagar, May 18: Elders as well as young guardians of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Thursday sounded harsh as they spoke to a seminar titled Kashmir dispute and dialogue process, which was held in APHC auditorium. Terming the Roundtable Conference (RTC) a farce, former Hurriyat chairman Moulvi Abbas Ansari said that Indian leadership is on record saying that Hurriyat was the sole representative of the people. "Now they are calling those who are ruling here at their behest," Ansari said, adding Indian government needed to pick up the process from the point Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh had left it in September 2005...

Greater Kashmir, 19 May 2006

Mirwaiz terms RTC half circle

Srinagar, May 18: Terming New Delhi's initiative about roundtable conference a half circle, Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Thursday asked Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to complete the circle. "We

want J&K to be addressed as a whole. People from both sides of the divide should be involved," Mirwaiz asserted during a seminar at Hurriyat's Rajbagh headquarters. Although he built a strong case favoring New Delhi's exclusive engagement with APHC regarding Kashmir resolution, Mirwaiz withheld the decision about Hurriyat's participation in the second roundtable meeting scheduled in Srinagar on May 25...

Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2006

DB orders identification parade of 56 men, including Commissioner, DIG (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 19: A Division Bench (DB) of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) of High Court Bar Association (HCBA) regarding the recent exposure of a 'sex abuse scandal', today directed CBI to conduct the identification parade of 56 men before the detained women who have mentioned them as operators and beneficiaries of immoral trafficking. Those to be paraded in presence of a judicial officer include a man, who, according to the detainees, was a Commissioner to the J&K Government, as also a Government of India official holding the rank of DIG in Border Security Force (BSF)...

Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2006

Militants may show presence coinciding roundtable: CM

Srinagar, May 19: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today expressed apprehension about mischief by militants in the State coinciding with the second round-table conference here on May 24-25 to be chaired by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. "The round-table is of international significance. Some boys here and there will like to create a situation that they are very much here," the Chief Minister said while addressing the executive meeting of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) here...

Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2006

Omar asks separatists to avail peace opportunity (Sarwar Kashani)

Omar asks separatists to avail peace opportunity (Sarwar Kashani) Pattan (Baramulla), May 19: Expressing hopes that the upcoming roundtable conference to be held in Srinagar would bring a basket of contentment for the much tormented people of Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference president Omar Abdullah today made an appeal to the separatists asking them not let go the ample opportunity of bringing peace in the region and resolution to the vexed issue of Kashmir...

Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2006

Editorial: Let truth prevail

It is doubtful whether political mudslinging over Srinagar's sex scandal is serving any purpose. Hardly a day passes without one leader or the other not kicking up dust. The danger is that their partisan ferocity may well come in the way of facts. If their aim is to mollify the public outrage they should wait for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to complete its probe. They should draw comfort that the judiciary is also seized of the matter. All kinds of utterances may well complicate the scenario. The controversy involves two key issues of tremendous significance. Of course, one is whether a section of people in influential positions has extended patronage to the alleged sleaze...

Indian Express, 20 May 2006

ISI is backing militant outfits, says PoK leader

The ISI continues to support various militant outfits, including Lashker-e-Toiba, which was provided with international aid received by the Pakistan government after the devastating earthquake in Kashmir last year, a leader from Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir said here today. Speaking on the concluding day of the two-day conference on Kashmir held on the outskirts of the national capital, president of PoK-based Jammu and Kashmir National Students' Federation Fazal Mahmood Baig said, "The one party that is most responsible for out gulami (slavery) is Pakistan. I say this here and I say it on the other side of the border as well." ...

Greater Kashmir, 20 May 2006

Roundtables, packages fruitless: Geelani (Shabir Ibn Yousuf)

Handwara, May 19: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference Friday said roundtable conferences wouldn't help solve Kashmir dispute. "We've not offered sacrifices for roads, railway line and packages but for complete independence from India," Geelani told a gathering at Handwara in Kupwara district. "During last 58 years," he said "120 conferences were held to resolve the issue, but nothing came out of these futile conferences." "One lakh people haven't offered sacrifices for self-rule, autonomy or irrelevant borders, but for freedom of the state," Geelani insisted...

Greater Kashmir, 21 May 2006

Geelani rejects RTC-II invitation (Riyaz Masroor)

Srinagar, May 20: Projecting Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah as the starting point of “sellout”, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Chief Syed Ali Shah Geelani Saturday dismissed the ensuing roundtable conference as an attempt to enforce status quo on Jammu and Kashmir. He called for a complete shutdown on May 24 and 25, the scheduled dates for the proposed meet. Addressing a news conference at the Rajbagh headquarters of his faction of Hurriyat Conference, Geelani rejected the written invite from Government of India for his participation in the ensuing roundtable meet...

Greater Kashmir, 21 May 2006

2 militants, soldier killed in JK

Srinagar, May 20: Two militants, one civilian and a soldier were among four persons killed in various incidents across the state since Friday evening. Four civilians and one soldier were injured in these incidents. Troops arrested two men from different places in the Valley. Troops killed two ‘unidentified militants’ in an encounter at Awatkulnar Milyal, Trehgam in Kupwara, in North Kashmir on Saturday, police officials said...

Greater Kashmir, 21 May 2006

4 Militant outfits tell separatists don't attend RTC-II

Srinagar, May 20: Al-Nasireen, Farzandan-e-Millat, Save Kashmir Movement, and Al-Arifeen militant outfits have warned to sabotage the Round Table Conference scheduled to be held in Srinagar on May 24. The outfits also asked the separatist leadership to stay away from the conference. A spokesman of the outfit in a faxed statement said, “all preparations to sabotage the conference have been completed.” Terming Kashmir a disputed territory and India’s control over it as illegal, the spokesman said, “India and Indian leaders cannot hold conferences here.” The spokesman said such conferences are ‘held to hoodwink the international community’...

Daily Excelsior, 21 May 2006

Mortar bomb seized, IED defused

Jammu, May 20: Border Police in Kathua today arrested two activists of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), who were in direct contact with LeT’s Doda-based commander Abu Talha. Two mobile telephone numbers of Abu Talha were also found in their possession. In other incidents, a civilian was shot at injured by the militants at Keshwan, Kishtwar while an IED was neutralised by police at Dhundak in Surankote tehsil of Poonch district...

Daily Excelsior, 21 May 2006

Begin J&K corruption eradication from top! - Dr. Jitendra Singh

It is like the proverbial chicken-egg story accompanied with the ever unanswered question “Who came first ?” The Government officials blame the businessmen, traders, suppliers and contractors for relentlessly chasing them with bribes to secure out-of-the-way favours or inappropriate monetary profits. The bribers-----whether businessmen or others-----accuse the officials in administration of demanding bribes directly or indirectly by deliberately sitting over the office files. Either way, the result is perpetuation of a culture of corruption. The Azad Government in Jammu and Kashmir professes its resolve to root out corruption but, is the new Chief Minister too new to be oblivious of the patrons of corruption sitting under his very nose and the loopholes in system that breed nothing but corruption?...

Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2006

IGP injured, 7 killed in fidayeen strike on Azad's rally (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 21: In yet another major security lapse, militants in Police uniform today reached close to the dais and struck on a Youth Congress rally at Sher-e-Kashmir Park, killing three political workers and two Police personnel, minutes before the scheduled arrival of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. IGP Kashmir, K Rajendra Kumar, was among 25 persons injured in the shootout that was immediately claimed by militant outfits Lashkar-e-Toiba and Al-Mansoorain. Militants---two of them killed in the encounter---carried out the suicide attack on a day when the ruling Congress party was paying homage to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 15th death anniversary in the Civil Lines and the separatist Hurriyat Conference was remembering Mirwaiz Farooq and Abdul Gani Lone at Iddgah Grounds in downtown...

Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2006

PM to go ahead with Srinagar visit

New Delhi, May 21: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would go ahead with his two-day visit to Srinagar from Wednesday for the second roundtable meeting on Kashmir despite today's attack by militants on a Congress rally there. "The Prime Minister is looking forward to visiting Srinagar and participating in the second round table meeting on Jammu and Kashmir scheduled for 24th and 25th May", Sanjaya Baru, Media Advisor to the Prime Minister, said. Condemning the attack, the Prime Minister said such "cowardly" attacks will not weaken the resolve of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to seek a peaceful resolution to the problem of the State, a statement issued by Baru said...

Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2006

Mirwaiz hints at Hurriyat spurning roundtable (Sarwar Kashani)

Srinagar, May 21: Ahead of executive council meeting of All Parties Hurriyat Conference to be held on Monday, Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today in his telltale signs over amalgam's participation in Prime Minister's roundtable conference clearly hinted that Hurriyat won't be participating in the confab. Addressing a huge gathering at Iddgah, he said that entering into dialogue with New Delhi was a segment of the struggle but clued that Hurriyat won't participate in the roundtable. The inkling about Hurriyat's non participation in the roundtable confab comes ahead of the Hurriyat executive and general council meeting to be held on Monday, where final decision in this regard will be arrived at...

Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2006

Editorial: Not a surprise

That hardcore Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has turned down the invitation to participate in the second roundtable in Srinagar should not come as a surprise. It is in keeping with his known stance. Somehow he is convinced that such get-togethers can't lead to any solution. His answer, therefore, has always been an emphatic no. He has minced no words while saying that he is prepared to settle for a dialogue if New Delhi recognises Kashmir as a dispute territory. Of course, he does not believe that confidence-building measures (CBMs) can do any miracle. He would like the primacy to be given to conflict resolution...

Greater Kashmir, 22 May 2006

No change in PM visit

New Delhi, May 21: Despite the militant attack on a Congress rally in Srinagar Sunday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he would visit Kashmir, as scheduled, to attend the roundtable conference convened by him for May 24-25 in an effort to carry forward the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir. Condemning the attack on the rally, the Prime Minister said, "Such cowardly acts will not weaken the resolve of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to find a peaceful resolution to the problem of the state." "It is only through dialogue that we can find a lasting solution," Dr Singh added...

Indian Express, 22 May 2006

Security further alerted in Jammu

Following today's militant attack on the Youth Congress rally at Srinagar, security has been beefed up in Jammu and its surrounding areas. While the special nakas have been put up on the important entry points, the Special Operation Group (SOG) personnel have launched regular search operation in the forest area of Recca and Manda, said sources, adding that nakas had been instructed to conduct thorough checking of vehicles entering the city...

Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2006

Editorial: Dastardly attack

The widely telecast image of a "police man" moving around rather freely with a gun in hands in Srinagar's Sher-e-Kashmir park will be firmly etched in the memory of every viewer. He managed to pass off as one more cop attending to his duty. That was until he proved that he was actually a wolf in the sheep's clothing. One must congratulate brave photographers who have caught him in the dastardly act of shooting indiscriminately on innocent citizens. There is nothing new about the modus operandi adopted by the terrorists while attacking a Congress rally in the Summer Capital on Sunday...

Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2006

Driver killed, 30 wounded in 4 blasts

Srinagar, May 22: A day after the deadly suicide strike on the Chief Minister's rally and two days before the Prime Minister's scheduled arrival for holding his second roundtable conference of political parties, militants today carried

out a series of grenade attacks in this capital city. Driver of a tourist coach got killed and thirty persons, including 20 civilians and 10 personnel, sustained injuries in these attacks...

Greater Kashmir, 23 May 2006

Hurriyat says no

Srinagar, May 22: Hurriyat Conference Monday ended a weeklong suspense as its chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq disclosed that the amalgam had decided not to join the roundtable moot beginning here Wednesday. Arguing that a crowd comprising "political hypocrites even Ikhwanis (government gunmen) with no agenda" would not help in Kashmir settlement, Mirwaiz however kept open the option of meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on sidelines of the roundtable. Following a marathon meeting of Hurriyat's executive council at its Rajbagh headquarters, Mirwaiz read out a two-page statement before the newsmen and refused to take any queries...

Greater Kashmir, 23 May 2006

Unjustified, says Azad

Srinagar, May 22: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has termed the Hurriyat refusal to attend the second roundtable conference as 'unjustified' and held that the amalgam would prove a 'loser.' Talking to Greater Kashmir on Monday Azad said that he had personally pursued the Hurriyat concerns and had convinced the Prime Minister over the three conditions put forward by Mirwaiz group. "They stayed away from the first roundtable on three pretexts. One, they had problem with the crowd. Second they had said that they were not warned about the session beforehand. And third, they had complained that they were not invited respectably," Azad said, adding that all the conditions had been fulfilled...

Greater Kashmir, 23 May 2006

NC threatens not to participate

Srinagar, May 22: National Conference on Monday threatened not to participate in the round table if Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Hurriyat leaders separately on the sidelines of the conference. "We won't participate at all. I think other like-minded political parties should also abstain from the conference," National Conference President Omar Abdullah told a news channel. He said when Pakistan had recognised the National Conference and its President Pervez Musharraf had met him separately, then why the Hurriyat was being rigid...

Greater Kashmir, 23 May 2006

Editorial: Dialogue of the dumb

Residents in the posh colonies of Srinagar on the banks of world famous Dal Lake must be cursing the day when they decided to build their residences in this most enchanting green area of the city. Arrival of every VIP from India puts them under virtual siege. The area from Dal Gate to Nishat Garden gets converted into a high security concentration camp. There have been many encroachments and illegal constructions in this green belt. The most effective way to get these vacated is to ensure the visit of a VIP at least once in a week. Layers of security personnel have been put all along this beautiful tourist boulevard..

Indian Express, 23 May 2006

Army, police officers meet, sound high alert

Rajouri/Jammu, May 22: With just two days left for the round table conference at Srinagar, security has been tightened in the Jammu region. High alert has been sounded in view of apprehensions of any major attack by the militants. Security has been tightened in the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch which have seen minority killings in the recent past. Sources said that additional security has been deployed in pockets inhabited by minority community. The decision in this regard was taken at a high level meeting attended jointly by the senior Army and police officers here today, a senior security officer told ENS...

Indian Express, 23 May 2006

Pandits to raise Doda killings at roundtable

Jammu, May 22: This time, at the second roundtable conference in Srinagar on May 25, the Kashmiri Pandits will take up the issue of recent killings of Hindus in Doda and Udhampur to justify their stand on their return and rehabilitation process. Nodal Pandit organisations like Panun Kashmir (PK) and All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (ASKPC) will take up the issue of the massacre of Hindus in Doda recently and link it with the circumstances under which Pandits had to migrate in Nineties...

Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2006

Fear and despair loom large on round II of round-table (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 23: Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's much hyped roundtable conference on the Kashmir problem is taking place here in an ambience of terror. What was left vacant by militants has been filled up by fresh bunkers and barricades besides thick columns and contingents of Police and security forces. Army, paramilitary troops and Police have combed everything from Zethyar forest bushes to the houseboats on Dal Lake to ensure smooth proceedings at SKICC on May 24 and 25. Sharp-shooters and helicopters have been put on duty to maintain security of the PM's venue. It has obviously resulted in curfew-like situation in an area which was otherwise bustling with tourist activity until yesterday...

Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2006

Civilian killed in Bhadarwah

Jammu, May 23: Police today arrested a woman militant of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit from Beri Bagh, about two kms from Doda while a civilian was beheaded by the militants near his house at village Thanala in Bhadarwah tehsil last night. Official sources said Rubeena wife of Shakeel Ahmed, a resident of Beri Bagh, Doda was arrested early today after her name surfaced during overnight interrogation of top Hizbul Mujahideen militant Ashraf Lohar, who was arrested last week. At her behest, police recovered one pistol and one grenade, which had been given to her by Lohar...

Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2006

Editorial: In reverse gear

The decision of the moderate Hurriyat Conference to keep off the second roundtable also has come as a big surprise. To use a sports terminology it is against the run of play... What went wrong where and when is not very clear. The reaction of the separatist conglomeration suggests that it is upset because of the violation of some understanding reached with the Central Government. Apparently it is aware or has been told about all those invited for the big event. It is cut up is evident from its reaction: "Hurriyat Conference considers that a crowd comprising of political hypocrites and Ikhwanis (counter-insurgents) with no agenda can hardly produce a result for permanent solution of the Kashmir problem which the people in entire South Asian region desperately long for."...

Greater Kashmir, 24 May 2006

Escape from talks a blunder: Azad (Riyaz Masroor)

Srinagar, May 23: Expressing dismay over the non-participation of separatists in the roundtable, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has ruled out any exclusive meeting between the Prime Minister and Hurriyat leaders on the sidelines of the meet saying, "The Central government crossed all limits and did not confine the dialogue to a limited circle. Therefore no party has a chance to furnish any pretext. This is unfortunate that when India was asking to come forward and suggest the solution these (separatist) leaders were not ready to come," Azad told reporters in SKICC, the venue of Thursday's roundtable...

Greater Kashmir, 24 May 2006

Fidayee blows up BSF bus

Srinagar, May 23: Day before the roundtable conference, a fidayee rammed an explosive-laden car into a bus carrying BSF personnel killing two soldiers and wounding 20 others on the Airport road in Srinagar. A BSF spokesman told UNI that the suicide bomber rammed his Maruti car into the vehicle (HR55D 3945) carrying BSF soldiers, destroying it completely on the heavily-guarded Srinagar-Airport road this evening. He said one BSF soldier was killed and ten others wounded, some of them critically, in the attack...

Greater Kashmir, 24 May 2006

Sex abuse: accused questioned, not paraded (Zulfikar Majid)

Srinagar, May 23: The CBI couldn't hold the identification parade of 56 accused in sexual abuse case till Tuesday evening, sources told Greater Kashmir. Although the CBI had called several people including a Deputy Superintendent of Police, a manager of a prominent Srinagar hotel and a top businessman for questioning during last three days, only two accused, Shabir Langoo and Meraj-ud-Din were detained. Sources said that of 42 girls "who were allegedly sexploited by the accused" most have disappeared mysteriously from their houses...

Greater Kashmir, 24 May 2006

PM arriving today

Srinagar: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will arrive here Wednesday on a two-day visit during which he will chair the second round-table conference besides reviewing political, security and economic situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The Prime Minister will arrive here in the afternoon and straightway attend for the first time a Unified Command meeting where he would be briefed about the overall security situation besides various measures taken in view of the recent militant attacks in several parts of the state...

Greater Kashmir, 24 May 2006

There is more to it than meets the eye - Shafi. A. Athar

I usually do not take my engineer friend Mukhtar seriously when he makes comments on various aspects concerning our society. But a remark, he made in mid nineties, reverberates in my mind. Unconfirmed reports were making rounds that some people were indulging in sexual harassment of hapless womenfolk. Mukhtar said, I ponder what will be the situation when fear of gun will be completely lifted. Because gun has been able to eradicate certain vices like use of liquor in open spaces. And when recent sex scam came into news I just thought over whether the fear of gun has receded. And then started the blame game...

Greater Kashmir, 24 May 2006

Sajjad, Puri say no; LUTF, BJP, JMM too stay away

Srinagar, May 23: Following the Sunday's Fidayeen attack on Congress rally and Hurriyat Conference's refusal to participate the second roundtable, most of the invitees from 'separatist' as well as 'mainstream' camp have developed cold feet about joining the crucial Kashmir moot on Thursday. Abstainers also include those who had attended the first roundtable in February. Apart from the separatist Democratic Liberation Party Chairman Hashim Qureshi, Peoples Conference leader Sajjad Gani Lone and Political Party Chief Hilal War, State BJP President Dr Nirmal Singh as also the leaders from Ladakh Union Territory Front and Jammu Mukti Morcha decided against participation...

Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2006

PM suggests 5 point programme to build a new Kashmir

Srinagar, May 24 : Talking tough, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today asserted that attempts by "some elements" within Jammu and Kashmir to disrupt peace process would be firmly thwarted and proposed focus on a five-point programme to build a new Kashmir. Addressing the second Round Table Conference (RTC), the Prime Minister said the welfare of J&K is of "top most priority" of the Congress-led UPA Government. He said it was Government's endeavour to put behind the tragic memories of the past while working to build a prosperous future for the State. Singh, who is having the second such meeting in three months, said "there are some elements within the State who do not wish this dream to become a reality. Their inhumane acts have cost many lives, destroyed many families. Who these elements are, we all know", he said without elaborating...

Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2006

DB asks CBI to identify and catch 'big fish'

Srinagar, May 24: A Division Bench (DB) of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, monitoring the investigation of a high profile 'sex scandal', today directed CBI to concentrate on a minor girl's statement and arrest the influential politicians and officials if identified in an identification parade. Meanwhile, two leading transporters from Jammu, who were the prime accused in a flesh trade racket claimed to have been exposed by Police in 2004, sought CBI probe in the case which has been since challaned in a junior court...

Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2006

Indo-Pak talks on Siachen fail

New Delhi, May 24: With Islamabad refusing to agree on authentication of present troop positions on Siachen glacier, the talks between India and Pakistan on demilitarisation of the world's highest battlefield failed to yield any breakthrough here today, but the two countries decided to continue with the ceasefire there. Concluding the two-day Defence Secretary-level talks, the two countries, however, issued a joint statement in which they agreed to continue the negotiations to resolve the vexed 22-year-old issue in a peaceful manner....

Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2006

Editorial: Mystery of May

Normally the month of May is considered very significant for the Kashmir region. It is during this period that most of the tourists start coming in. They in turn bring economic prosperity to those engaged in the hospitality trade.

That is why many local inhabitants believe that those who can't earn in May will never be prosperous. This has been the perception at least till the terrorism begun in the late eighties. The scenario had changed dramatically once the guns started booming. The tourist traffic had declined for well over a decade. Of late it has again picked up. But it appears that this May is being different...

Greater Kashmir, 25 May 2006

Day 1: PM promises new Kashmir

Srinagar, May 24: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday proposed a five point program to build a 'new Kashmir' saying that those who had crossed the Line of Control (LoC) could return. While spelling out the agenda for the second round table conference being held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre here, Dr Singh reminded that violence does not help anyone. Emphasizing that his government will concentrate on working towards a sound future for Jammu and Kashmir, he proposed a five-point programme to 'build a new Kashmir'...

Greater Kashmir, 25 May 2006

PM vows no custodial deaths

Srinagar, May 24: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday asked the armed forces to be humane and work within prescribed parameters while dealing effectively, efficiently and firmly with militants in Jammu and Kashmir and asserted that there will be zero tolerance for custodial deaths. "It is possible and desirable that you should be firm but humane, effective and efficient, in control but unobtrusive," the Prime Minister told the forces while chairing a Unified Command meeting here for the first time....

Greater Kashmir, 25 May 2006

4 blasts mark RT

Srinagar, May 24: Fifteen civilians, eight paramilitary troopers and policemen including a CRPF officer were injured in four separate grenade explosions in Srinagar and Islamabad districts on Wednesday. Elsewhere in the Valley, two persons including a PDF worker were killed and a civilian injured since Tuesday evening. Twelve persons including two CRPF cops sustained injuries when militants tossed a grenade at a CRPF picket at Qamarwari Chowk, in the outskirts of the Srinagar on Wednesday afternoon...

Greater Kashmir, 25 May 2006

Editorial: RTC mess-up

There has been a sea change in Indo-Pak relations during the past two years. The dialogues between leaders of the two countries have brought out substantially good results. Many an important and incredible Confidence Building Measures (CBM's) have been implemented successfully. The opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road and allowing people to travel across the LoC without a passport was unimaginable till the recent past. Restoring of trade links between two Kashmir's which had been snapped after the State got vivisected as consequences of the United Nation's passing resolutions for holding of a Plebiscite in the state under its aegis and asking India and Pakistan troops to ceasefire and remain wherever they were...

Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2006

PM announces 5 working groups for J&K

Srinagar, May 25: In a new initiative to usher in peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today announced his decision to discuss autonomy and self-rule for the State and declared the Government's readiness to talk to militants if they shun violence. Addressing a press conference here at the end of two days Roundtable conference, Dr Singh announced setting up of five working groups to discuss various issues relating to J&K, including devolution of powers and regretted boycott by Hurriyat Conference of the Roundtable. He hoped better sense will prevail on the separatist amalgam to join the dialogue process..

Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2006

KPs to get I-cards within 6 months

Srinagar, May 25: Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today said the process of nation-building should include winning back "as our own" the destitute families of terrorists killed in police action. "It is important that in our efforts at nation-building, we win back as our own the destitute families of those terrorists who have been killed in police action," the Prime Minister said in his concluding remarks at the roundtable conference here. "We have initiated a number of schemes for rehabilitation of orphans who have been victims of terrorism. Such schemes must be extended to all orphans who need help in building for themselves a life free from violence and perceived

revenge, as upright citizens of this great State of India," Singh said...

Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2006

4 tourists from Gujarat killed, six wounded in Srinagar grenade attack

Srinagar, May 25 : Four tourists— two children and two teenagers— from Gujarat were killed and six others wounded, three of them critically, as militants hurled a grenade at a Bourns bus on the city outskirts this afternoon. Official sources said unidentified militants hurled a hand grenade towards a tourist bus at Botapora near Hazratbal, about 12 Km from here this afternoon. The grenade exploded near the bus resulting in on the spot death of two children and injuries to seven others...

Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2006

'Minority killings' turn out to be a hoax call

Jammu, May 25: Two civilians were found dead under mysterious circumstances in Kishtwar tehsil of Doda district this morning while a rumour about the killing of 10 civilians of minority community in Kandi area created panic in Rajouri. Official sources said two civilian with gun shots were found dead at near Kishtwar town this morning. They have been identified as Mohammad Amin son of Mohd Qasim and Noor Din Gujjar son of Gaffar, both residents of Sigdi, Bhatta. A Chinese pistol and two bullets had been tied around the neck of Noor Din, the sources, adding besides the pistol, security forces and police also recovered four fired cases and two live rounds of ammunition from near their bodies...

Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2006

Editorial: Dimensions --- internal and external

Terrorism must end. Demilitarisation should be expedited. There ought to be homecoming of Kashmiri Pandits. Harmonious relation among all regions is among the identified priorities. Kashmiri youth across the Line of Control deserve a passage back home. How can one forget all-round economic development? It needs to be pushed forward. Peace process with Pakistan has to proceed smoothly in the interest of all. Briefly, these issues represent the key areas of concern involving the State. To say that the vicious gun culture has played havoc with Jammu and Kashmir will be stating the obvious. It is also perfectly in order if a civil society has the inherent strength to sustain and develop itself...

Greater Kashmir, 26 May 2006

Kashmir shuts on Hurriyat call for second day

Srinagar, May 25: Life across the Valley was crippled for the second day Thursday against the second roundtable conference called by Prime Minister here. There was however movement of people late in the afternoon only when the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh finished his roundtable conference and left for New Delhi. Singh had arrived here Wednesday for the two-day roundtable. Here in Srinagar, shops, commercial establishments, banks and educational institutions remained closed and traffic was off the roads in response to the strike called by Syed Ali Geelani-led Hurriyat Conference...

Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2006

Azad oversees despatch of terror victims' bodies

Srinagar, May 26: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today personally oversaw despatch of four dead bodies of tourists who were killed in a militant attack at Batpora, Srinagar yesterday, from the airport here this morning. The injured and other members of bereaved families were also flown to their destination by air. The families of the victims were wailing and crying and Mr. Azad in an emotional atmosphere himself patted and pacified them. He said that such attempts of militants shall not deter brave tourists to visit Kashmir...

Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2006

India to convey concern to Pak during talks

New Delhi, May 26: Taking a strong view of the spurt in terrorist violence in Kashmir, India will convey its concerns to Pakistan and remind it of its commitments to dismantle terror infrastructure in territory under its control during Home Secretary-level talks next week. "We will convey our concerns (on terrorism) to Pakistan. We will present to them full facts and figures (on terror activities)" Union Home Secretary V K Duggal, who will be leading a nine-member delegation to the two-day talks in Islamabad from May 30, said today...

Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2006

HM-HUJI clash in Kishtwar

Jammu, May 26: Police today claimed that three militants of HUJI outfit were gunned down by Hizbul Mujahideen militants in inter-gang rivalry at Lohi Dhar in Chatru area of Kishtwar this morning. However, body of not even a single militant had been recovered till late this evening. Official sources said a heavy exchange of gun-fighting took place between HUJI and Hizbul cadre at Lohi Dhar this morning. Exchange of firing continued for more than one hour after which the militants dispersed. "No body of any militant has been recovered", the sources said...

Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2006

Editorial: Around a table

As preparations were being made for the Srinagar roundtable conference a leading New Delhi newspaper drew a telling cartoon. Its caption read: "Roundtables make you go in circles covering all spheres in a whirlpool of bureaucracy with zero results." It sounded rather cynical at that time. In the end, however, there are a few who will nod their heads in approval especially in view of the hype built during the run-up. Nevertheless a dispassionate assessment is needed before passing a judgment. Could there have been a better show and outcome in the given situation? Yes, the participation could have been more authentic...

Greater Kashmir, 27 May 2006

2 accused former ministers 'absconding' (Zulfikar Majid)

Srinagar, May 26: The identification parade of several accused allegedly involved in sexual exploitation of Kashmiri girls was held in presence of a magistrate as ordered by High Court at Humahama here Friday. However, CBI couldn't bring two former ministers involved in the case to the parade as they have fled to New Delhi four days ago to evade arrest. "The CBI raided their residences. They are presently in New Delhi as they were alerted after High Court had given clear instructions to bring everybody involved in the case for the parade," sources told Greater Kashmir...

Greater Kashmir, 27 May 2006

Editorial: Zero Tolerance

The Cambridge dictionary defines hypocrisy, 'when someone pretends to believe something that they do not really believe or that is the opposite of what they do or say at another time'. What can one call a statement which says opposite of the real truth and actual ground situation? After converting the Sun City, which had started becoming a Tourist Paradise into a garrison town of the security forces with its over a million inhabitants as well as thousands of tourists prisoners in their homes/hotels, if someone says that he believes in minimum disruption of public life with maximum security and zero tolerance for custodial killings, the above definition of hypocrisy gets vindicated...

Greater Kashmir, 27 May 2006

Mere conferences won't do -Ali Asrar

...Necessity to recall the word, "truth" is that we see Kashmiris divided now in smaller groups, each group led by a too small a leader, who blows himself to the size not proportional to his existence. It is equally truth, that slogan, which had given us some sort of strength to stand united in the past, do not even, make noise of empty vessels now. Instead antonym to our slogans have taken roots and are expanding fast to split our community further...

Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2006

Roundtable at Srinagar ignored nationalistic forces: ASKPC

Jammu, May 27: All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (ASKPC) today alleged that the second roundtable conference convened by Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh at Srinagar has ignored the nationalistic forces including the people of Jammu and Ladakh regions as well as Kashmiri Pandits. "This roundtable was to discuss the agenda of separatists including the autonomy of National Conference (NC) and self rule as demanded by People's Democratic Party (PDP)" alleged Hira Lal Chata, secretary general, ASKPC while addressing a press conference along with his party chief, Pt. Amarnath Vaishnavi here today...

Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2006

No solution possible if Jammu, Ladakh ignored: Charak

Jammu, May 27: Dogra Sadar Sabha president and Minister incharge Roads and Buildings, Gulchain Singh Charak has said that no solution of the Kashmir issue was possible without the active participation of the groups and people from Jammu and Ladakh regions. Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Charak who represented Dogra

Sadar Sabha in the second Round Table Conference of Prime Minister held at Srinagar recently, said that Jammu and Ladakh regions alone comprise nearly 75 % area of the Jammu and Kashmir State...

Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2006

Mumbai travel agent among 5 killed

Srinagar, May 27 : Five persons, including a counter-insurgent and a travel agent from Mumbai were among five people killed in Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours. Informed sources said that a militant-turned-counterinsurgent Abdul Rashid Khan at Bandipura market in Baramulla district today. A woman, identified as Hashima, was also killed in the firing incident while her son was injured, the sources said. They said one person belonging to Gujjar community was killed and another injured when they stepped on an explosive device in Ketsal forests of Bandipura area...

Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2006

Editorial: Paradise or hell?

... In the nineties the "local" militants ended up killing each other much to the glee of forces that had given weapons in their hands. A number of leaders of rival Hurriyat conferences have been eliminated by mysterious assassins in the none-too-distant period. What is this if not a clear indication of a tit-for-tat mindset? As they say even a child knows about it in the Valley. How can those claiming to be genuine leaders of the "movement" be in the dark about the vicious phenomenon? It is high time that we started seeing the whole scenario in correct perspective...

Greater Kashmir, 28 May 2006

Soldier assaults schoolgirl in Singhpora (Hilal Ahmad)

Srinagar, May 27: A Rashtriya Rifles soldier assaulted a schoolgirl in Singhpora Pattan triggering off a massive protest demonstration. People of the area have given three days time to police to book the culprit failing which they threatened to resume the protests. The incidents occurred barely a day after Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said that he was optimistic that his 'zero tolerance concept' would bring an end to the abuses and that he 'has instructed the security forces to be more mindful of human rights and be sensitive to the liberties and self respect of ordinary people.'...

Greater Kashmir, 28 May 2006

Round Table Nightmare (Ajaz ul Haque)

Earthquakes, floods, famines, fires and Round Table Conferences. Of all these calamities the last one has turned out to be more dangerous in effect than the first four. Natural catastrophes catch us unawares and befall us against our will, this one is invited. We waste our time praying for the protection from the four mentioned, let's from now onwards add one more to the list of misfortunes from which we seek deliverance from the Creator. At long last the ordeal is over but not before leaving some dead, many wounded and all tortured physically and psychologically as well...

Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2006

Militants made two attempts to kill Rajendra at SKIMS (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 28: Militants, who failed in two successive attempts to kill the injured IGP Kashmir, K Rajendra Kumar, at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Science (SKIMS), Soura, today gunned down an injured Army source inside a ward at the Police and CRPF-guarded hospital, hours after killing his accomplice at his home in Sopore. Both the Army sources had sustained gunshot wounds in a militant attack on them in Sopore on May 19. Meanwhile, Army and Budgam Police have killed two militants in a fierce gunbattle at Rathsun in Beerwah area today...

Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2006

8 police officials, 3 politicians among 20 detained by CBI

Srinagar, May 28: Having conducted the identification parade of 30 persons from a list of 70 men and women, CBI has arrested 15 persons and also detained five J&K Police women officials for sustained questioning in the infamous 'flesh trade scandal'. Those identified by a minor "victim" of the 'sex racket', include an officer holding the rank of Dy SP. Informed sources told EXCELSIOR that for the last three days, CBI conducted multi-tier identification of about 30 persons from among the list of 70 men and women in presence of a senior judicial officer...

Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2006

Insurgency and friendship cannot go together - Brig. (Retd.) S.N. Sachadeva

Certain issues bordering on civil-military relations have been rattling the military mind for quite sometime. In all such cases, the army-infantry, by virtue of its very role in anti-insurgency operations, has to bear the brunt of stresses and strains physical as much as psychological. One such issue relates to the dichotomy in operational command and control of the security forces engaged in anti-insurgency operations in Kashmir and the north-eastern states. Dichotomy in any type of military operations is anathema to the elements of effective command and control...

Indian Express, 29 May 2006

BJP holds rally for Doda migrants

Jammu, May 28: The workers of state Bharatiya Janata Party staged a dharna today at Indira Chowk in support of the demands of the Doda migrants. The BJP activists took out a protest rally, which started from Geeta Bhawan passed through Purani Mandi and City Chowk. At Indira Chowk, they staged a dharna, where Hindu migrants from Doda have been protesting for the last several days in favour of their demands. Addressing the dharna, state BJP chief Dr Nirmal Singh said that the central party leadership was in regular touch with the Union Home Minister and asking him to accede to the demands of the agitating Doda migrants so that they could go back to their places and live peacefully...

Greater Kashmir, 29 May 2006

Editorial: Serious approach

...By reopening different routes between two divisions of Kashmir is definitely a step forward but more and more needs to be done to make the Line of Control as irrelevant so that the two countries can have peace and allow the divided people to reunite. The people of the divided state have been longing for peace for so long. They deserve to be treated like humans and their genuine aspirations need to be addressed in right earnest. They have grown sick of living constantly under the shadows of gun. Theirs is the world's highly militarized territory which in no way is good for them or for that matter for the two countries...

Greater Kashmir, 29 May 2006

Politics, Prostitution and Police - unholy alliance -M G Hassan Mukhtar

The recent Sabina Sex Scandal unearthed in the city of mosques and shrines - Srinagar, the heart of the Emperor Jehangir's Paradise on Earth shook the very conscience of the general public not only in Kashmir but outside also. Last year the much publicized Anara Gupta Sex Scandal in the Temple city of Jammu has since long taken a back seat. The issue is as old as the human history itself. But with the passage of time, the subject matter has created more interest not only through visualization, imagination but even experiencing it practically. Like other free and liberal socio-economic concepts, the sexual entertainment industry is all welcome to every one with no age bar...

Greater Kashmir, 30 May 2006

Court orders in-camera trial

Srinagar, May 29: In a major development in the sexual exploitation case, the High Court on Monday conceded to Bar Association's plea of in-camera trial and custodial interrogation of the accused. The Division Bench of the court comprising Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain and Justice Bashir Ahmad Kirmani passed the orders after perusal of case diaries submitted by Centre Bureau of Interrogation (CBI) and hearing arguments of the Bar counsels who had prayed for "custodial interrogation of accused named by Yasmeena and camera trial of the case."...

Greater Kashmir, 30 May 2006

3 militants killed

Srinagar, May 29: Three militants were killed in two separate encounters with troops in Srinagar and Islamabad since Sunday night. Several persons were also arrested. Police said two unidentified militants were killed in an encounter with troops at Parimpora in the outskirts of Srinagar on Sunday night. Troops killed a district commander of Al-Jehad militant outfit identified as Muhammad Rafiq Tragwal son of Ghulam Muhammad of Drigam Banihal of Doda in an encounter at Uranhall, Bijbehara on Sunday, police said. Troops of 15 RR, stationed at Kaloosa, arrested Shahid Rashid Sheikh, an auto rickshaw driver, son of Abdur Rashid sheikh of Bandipora on Monday. His father lodged an FIR in a local police station...

Greater Kashmir, 30 May 2006

Asiya for agitation if accused spared

Srinagar, May 29: Chief of Dukhtaran-e-Millat Asiya Andrabi has threatened 'mass agitation' over the sexual exploitation of innocent girls if the accused VIPs in the sex ring were not jailed till June 2. In her mission to bring the 'sexploiters' to the book, Asiya looks to the state High Court on which, she said in the courtroom Monday 'nation has trust.' The deadline came in a party poster, released here on Monday. Through this poster, Andrabi vowed to expose politicians, bureaucrats, Police officers and others involved in the sex ring...

Greater Kashmir, 30 May 2006

No way to react- Fiaz Fazili and Hakim Showket

Kashmiri women protest against sex scandal. Do they deserve water canons. Police, as goes the news, in Kashmir used water canon to disperse dozens of women, many wearing black veils, during a protest over a suspected prostitution ring involving politicians. What was their demand? 'Sexploiters leave our land and face wrath of Allah,' read one banner carried by the protesters in Srinagar. Then, Why water; why cane charge? Who gave orders for this? The protesters, led by daring Asiya Andrabi, who has been campaigning against prostitution and alcohol consumption. Previous government tried to choke her voice by imprisoning her...

Daily Excelsior, 30 May 2006

Editorial: Highly disquieting

A report in this newspaper makes a highly disquieting reading. Two attempts were made on the life of Inspector-General of Police (Kashmir) K. Rajendra Kumar after he was admitted in the prestigious Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura in the Summer Capital. These reveal new murky dimensions of terrorism as well the story why he was eventually flown to the national capital for further treatment. Certain "invisible hands" were at work to finish the job that the terrorists had left unfinished on May 21 at a public meeting at Srinagar in which Mr Rajendra Kumar was seriously injured...

Daily Excelsior, 31 May 2006

Cop killed, 23 hurt in blasts

Srinagar, May 30: Two militants, suspected to be involved in the attack on former minister Ali Mohammed Naik were killed in an encounter at Tral while as a cop was killed and at least 23 persons were injured in separate grenade attacks in Srinagar and Sopore on Tuesday. According to sources, two militants were killed in a night long encounter with the troops at Amirabad in Trumbal Tral in south Kashmir on Tuesday. Sources said that troopers of 44 and 53 RR in a joint operation with 74 Battalion BSF and the personnel from Special Operations Group (SOG) Tral, cordoned off the Trumbal village in Tral last night evening...

Daily Excelsior, 31 May 2006

Editorial: Speed up

The well-intentioned recommendation of the second roundtable in Srinagar about the constitution of five working groups should be implemented soon. These panels will be required to deal with the subjects that mostly concern the ordinary citizens in the State. What is also significant is that these will consist of political leaders who are sons of the soil. This is the impression that one had got at the end of the conference. In fact, when asked about the result of the exercise, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had remarked: "If all these gentlemen put together their wisdom, knowledge and experience we will have a constructive outcome."...

Greater Kashmir, 31 May 2006

CBI "decoding" key victim's DoB (Riyaz Mazroor)

Srinagar, May 30: Probe into the sex ring Tuesday took a new turn with the key victim Yasmina's birth record becoming the secret code. To "decode the secret," Srinagar Municipal Corporation has sealed its Birth and Death (B&D) registration department immediately after the sleuths of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) approached Registrar B&D. Various quarters including woman activist Asiya Andrabi have sensed foul play in the whole thing and they fear "fudging" of Yasmina's birth record...

Greater Kashmir, 31 May 2006

Amarnath Shrine Board killing Pahalgam (Shafa'at Rasool)

Srinagar, May 30: After the last year's controversy that saw the state chief minister's office and the governor's house come in public on their disagreement over the duration of amaranth yatra, the yearly pilgrimage is triggering yet another storm this year. An official report has indicted the Shri Amaranthji Shrine Board (SASB), the body headed

by state governor Let Gen (retd) S K Sinha that controls the pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Amarnath, of failing to protect the fragile mountain eco-system of Pahalgam...