

ISI tells LeT, Hizb: Send 1,500 to J&K

Asian Age, 8 March 2009

March 7: Islamabad appears to have learnt no lessons even after almost the entire world put it on the mat following the 26/11 outrage in Mumbai and even after the terror attack in Lahore on Tuesday in which visiting Sri Lankan cricketers were targeted. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, in its latest instructions to "area commanders" of the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Hizbul Mujahideen, has directed them to send at least 1,500 militants from 26 camps located in Pakistan-occupied Kash-mir to carry out disruptive activities in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India by the end of March. Intelligence sources here said the ISI's orders were: "Start fresh recruitment at camps at Rawalakot, Muzaffar-abad, Kotli and Mirpur. Arrange huge funds from rich people of Mirpur settled abroad." It made it clear that operations in Kashmir and India should not stop after 26/11 or Lahore.

Mirwaiz's Hizb killer sentenced to life term

Asian Age, 9 March 2009

March 8: Nearly two decades after the sensational murder of Kashmir's popular leader Mirwaiz Muhammad Farooq, an anti-terrorist court in Jammu has awarded life imprisonment to one of his killers, a former commander of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Muhammad Ayub Dar, among five Hizb militants charged with the murder of Kashmir's then chief Muslim cleric, was sentenced on the basis of his confession, the court said.

Obama unlikely to mediate on Kashmir

Hindu, 11 March 2009

Washington: The Obama Administration is unlikely to mediate on the Kashmir issue and the U.S. policy of non-interference will continue despite calls for greater American involvement, according to a latest Congressional report. The Indo-U.S. ties appear all set to deepen under Mr. Obama's presidency notwithstanding apprehensions in some quarters about "potential friction" on issues like Kashmir and nuclear non-proliferation, said the 83-page report on the 'India-U.S. Relations' by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Referring to some apprehensions that the Obama Administration may mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, the report said this is unlikely to happen as the U.S. would continue with its policy of non-interference.

By-poll for 3 Assembly seats on Apr 23, May 7

Daily Excelsior, 11 March 2009

JAMMU, Mar 10: The Election Commission of India (ECI) today announced schedule for by-election to three seats in the State Assembly, which had fallen vacant with the resignations of two former Chief Ministers—Dr Farooq Abdullah and Ghulam Nabi Azad—on April 23 and May 7. The by-election will be held along with the Lok Sabha elections. By-election in Bhandarwah Assembly segment will be held on April 23 while by-poll in two Assembly segments of Kashmir region—Hazratbal and Sonawar—will be held on May 7, official sources said.

PDP to contest all 6 LS seats

Daily Excelsior, 13 March 2009

Srinagar, Mar 12: Riding high on the increased vote share in the recent Assembly elections in the State, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) today said it will not enter into a pre-poll alliance with any national or State party for the forthcoming Parliamentary elections in the State and contest all the six Lok Sabha seats. "PDP will not enter into any pre-poll alliance for the Lok Sabha polls. We will go alone and contest all the six seats," PDP patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed told reporters at his residence here. However, the former Chief Minister kept his party's options of joining a post-poll alliance at the Centre open saying "we will decide about it when we cross the bridge".

Cross-LoC Karvan-e-Aman bus

Daily Excelsior, 13 March 2009

SRINAGAR: Fifty three passengers crossed the Aman Sethu (peace bridge) on the Line of Control (LoC) as Karvan-e-Aman bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad resumed today. The bus service could not operate from March 5, two days after the terror attack in Lahore on Sri Lankan players, following request by the Pakistani authorities that they would not be able to send or receive any passenger because of some administrative problem. Official sources told uni that after witnessing decline, the number of passengers who crossed sides today was highest after Mumbai terror attacks. They said 14 fresh guests arrived here from Muzaffarabad in the bus. They included ten male and four female who had come here to meet their relatives for the first time after their separation in 1947.

Leela Karan Sharma resigns as SAYSS convener

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2009

JAMMU : Leela Karan Sharma, the Convener of Shri Amarnath Yatra Sangarh Samiti (SAYSS) which spearheaded the agitation over Amarnath land row, today resigned from the post to contest upcoming Lok Sabha elections on a BJP ticket. Sharma has tendered his resignation as convener of SAYSS, Samiti leaders Brigadier (retd) Suchet Singh and Narinder Singh said here. "He made up his mind to contest the Lok Sabha elections but we do not know whether he is contesting as an independent candidate or being given mandate by any political party," Narinder Singh said. However, Sharma later said he is likely to contest as a BJP candidate from Jammu-Poonch Lok Sabha constituency and claimed that his name has been finalised by the party panel in Delhi. State BJP President Ashok Khajuria confirmed that Sharma will be the party nominee from the constituency.

Two Foreign militants of LeT killed in encounter

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2009

BARAMULLA: Two foreign militants of Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) were killed in a fierce encounter in the frontier district of Kupwara, official sources said today. They said the security forces conducted a search operation at village Wathersar, Handwara, following a tip-off about the presence of militants. During the search operation, militants attacked the search party with automatic weapons. The security forces retaliated the fire and in the encounter two foreign militants of LeT were killed. Two AK rifles and other arms and ammunition were recovered from them. The search operation was still going on, sources said.

Three militants killed, another holed up in Kishtwar mosque

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2009

JAMMU: Three militants holed up in a mosque in Sarawan-Keshwan area of Kishtwar district were today gunned down by security forces. Another militant believed to be a self-styled commander was still holed up in the mosque. The encounter started this morning after troops of 11 Rashtriya Rifle (RR) laid cordon of the area where some militants had taken shelter in the mosque. The militants had entered the mosque and started intermittent firing on troops who retaliated, police sources said, adding in the gunbattle three militants have been killed so far. The identity of the militants could not be ascertained so far as the operation was still on.

Army refuses to be part of Govt probe into J&K killings

Daily Excelsior, 15 March 2009

NEW DELHI, Mar 15: Army has refused to participate in the inquiry being conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Government into the killing of two innocent civilians in Sopore town (North Kashmir) last month, saying such a probe was not valid. The inquiry, initiated by State Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, had blamed the army personnel present at the site of encounter for not verifying the claims of their informers before shooting down the innocents. The civilian inquiry had asked the army to present before it the personnel who were involved in the killing but sources said the Brigade Command informed through a letter that such an inquiry was not valid under the Army Act. Citing the Army Act, the force handed over a statement giving their version of the story, sources said.

Omar favours withdrawal of AFSPA

Daily Excelsior, 20 March 2009

NEW DELHI : Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has favoured the withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the state, saying that the situation was "normalising" there. "I believe it is realistic," he told NDTV when asked if the operation of the act could be discontinued in the state given the situation in Pakistan and the Lok Sabha elections. Noting that the special powers were given to Army due to "unusual situation" that arose in 1989-90, Abdullah said, "(withdrawal of AFSPA) is something we are definitely looking at."

Pak infiltrators killed in Kashmir

Daily Excelsior, 20 March 2009

BARAMULLA: Alert troops foiled a major infiltration bid, first this year, when they gunned down two heavily armed militants in the frontier district of Kupwara, official sources said. They said a group of infiltrators was intercepted by troops at Chowkibal, Handwara, in north Kashmir this morning. When challenged and asked to surrender, militants opened fire with automatic weapons and also hurled grenades.

Army blames three soldiers for Kashmir killings

Hindu, 20 March 2009

Jammu (IANS): The Indian Army admitted on Friday that three of its men were guilty of killing two civilians in Jammu and Kashmir and said that it had ordered disciplinary action against them. A court of inquiry held a junior commissioned officer and two soldiers of 22

Rashtriya Rifles responsible for the incident that took place Feb 22 at Bumai in north Kashmir. The authorities had said initially that the victims died in firing between militants and the security forces. But local residents alleged vocally that they were killed by soldiers. Almost a month later, the army admitted that it was in the wrong.

5 IEDs, 4 AK-74 rifles recovered from Pak-made cylinders

Daily Excelsior, 21 March 2009

JAMMU: Security forces today recovered a huge cache of arms and explosives hidden in Pakistan-made cooking gas cylinders from the Line of Control (LoC) in Mendhar sector of Poonch district, averting a major possible militant attack in light of forthcoming Parliamentary Elections in the State. According to official sources, Army troops manning Dobbri forward out post, facing Goba post of Pakistan forces, in the Balakote area of Mendhar sector, recovered two gas cylinders and a bag filled with arms and explosives from the other side of the barbed fence.

Pak troops fire indiscriminately at Indian posts in Uri

Daily Excelsior, 21 March 2009

SRINAGAR: In a major ceasefire violation after a gap of few months, Pakistani troops fired throughout the night at Indian posts in Uri sector, leaving a soldier injured. A defence spokesman said today that Pakistani troops fired between 1500 to 2000 rounds at the Indian posts in Kamalkote area of Uri sector between 10 pm last night and 3am this morning. Lance Naik Prakash Singh of 10 JAK rifles was injured in the firing. He said the firing from across the border was unprovoked. Indian troops returned the fire but used small arms fire, the spokesman said.

3 more ultras and a soldier killed, toll in 3 days risen to 14

Daily Excelsior, 23 March 2009

SRINAGAR: soldier and three militants were today killed in the three-day fierce encounter going on since March 20 in the woods in the frontier district of Kupwara in north Kashmir, where the army had launched a massive offensive in the vast forest area. With this, a total of nine militants and five soldiers, including a Major, were killed and a jawan was injured so far, a Defence Ministry spokesman told. He said a soldier was killed when he was hit by a bullet during a search operation in the forest. "We killed a militant, who had taken shelter in a house this morning while two others were killed this afternoon," he said.

Army to relocate Bomai army camp

Daily Excelsior, 24 March 2009

SRINAGAR: The defence authorities in Kashmir valley has finally decided to re-locate the Rashtriya Rifles (RR) Bumai camp at Sopore, in north Kashmir. The announcement came about four days after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah directed Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, to identify an alternative site for the RR camp. A defence ministry spokesman said here this afternoon that since the RR camp at Bumai was located near Government Girls Higher Secondary School it was decided to relocate the camp at a suitable alternative site.

Five more militants killed in Kupwara encounter

Daily Excelsior, 24 March 2009

SRINAGAR: Security forces today gunned down five more militants in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district as the fierce gunbattles between security forces and militants continued for the fifth day today. With this, the death toll of militants in the operation, which commenced on March 20, has reached 16. Eight army personnel, including a major, have so far been killed in the encounter that raged on in the dense forests. The five militants were killed in Shamshabari ranges in Hafrada forest today, a defence spokesman said. Combing operation was on when last reports came in, the spokesman said

Omar asks for extension of PMs reconstruction plan upto 2012

Daily Excelsior, 25 March 2009

NEW DELHI : With PM's Reconstruction Plan for Jammu and Kashmir coming to an end this month, the state government has asked for its extension for another three years and demanded inclusion of 15 new items under the scheme. State Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, demanding that the Plan, which was started in 2004 and is ending this month, should be extended till 2012, official sources said. Besides asking for the extension, the letter also contain a wish list of 15 items to be part of the scheme, including setting up of a new power project at Ghandarbal at the cost of Rs 470 crore, they said

LT warns of fresh attacks on Indian Army

Daily Times, 26 March 2009

SRINAGAR: Banned militant organisation Lashkar-e-Tayyaba on Wednesday warned of fresh attacks against Indian troops, as the Indian Army said a "large number" of guerrillas were poised to infiltrate Indian-held Kashmir (IHK). Eight soldiers and 17 militants were killed in protracted gun battles that started Saturday in IHK's Kupwara district, close to the Line of Control (LOC). Lashkar said its men were involved in the clashes, some of the fiercest in recent years. "The gun battles should serve as a message to India that the struggle for Kashmir's freedom is on with full vigour," Lashkar spokesman Abdullah Ghaznavi said.

Top LeT militant among two killed

Daily Excelsior, 26 March 2009

SRINAGAR: A top Lashkar-e-Toiba militant was among two ultras killed in separate encounter with security forces in Kashmir Valley, a defence spokesman said today. Self-styled district commander of LeT Abdullah Uni was killed in an encounter with troops of 28 Rashtriya Rifles, nine Para and special operation group of local police at Dorusa-Lolab last night, the spokesman said

Rajnath reminds people of Jammu agitation ahead of LS polls

Daily Excelsior, 27 March 2009

JAMMU : Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) national president and senior leader Rajnath Singh today wooed the Jammu electorate by reminding them of the two-month-long Jammu agitation ahead of the Lok Sabha polls scheduled to begin from April 16. "The people of Jammu during the Amarnath land agitation stood united and fought against the decades' old discrimination. They trusted the BJP and the results were clearly visible during the Assembly elections as the party won 11 seats," Mr Singh said while addressing a public rally here this afternoon

Governor nominates eight members for J&K Legislative Council

Daily Excelsior, 28 March 2009

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Governor N N Vohra today nominated eight members, four each of coalition partners Congress and National Conference (NC), to the Upper House of the State Legislature. An official spokesman said the Governor has nominated Mr Javed Ahmad Rana (NC), Dr Mehboob Beg (NC), Sheikh Ghulam Qadir Pardesi (NC), Ajay Kumar Sadhotra (NC), Ravinder Kumar Sharma (Congress), Mr Subash Chander Gupta (Congress), Bashir Ahmad Magray (Congress) and Amrit Malhotra (Congress) as members of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council against the available seats

Reducing vigil in J&K is premature: Army

Daily Excelsior, 29 March 2009

Reducing vigil in J&K is premature: Army

SRINAGAR: Warning that separatists and other like-minded political parties trigger anti-security force protests to gain political mileage in view of decrease in violence in Jammu and Kashmir, the army today said reducing vigil will invite an increase in the presence of terrorists. "A let down in the vigil will invite an increase in the presence of terrorists who are simply waiting for an opportunity of this nature. Thus, any talk of reducing vigil in J and K is premature to say the least," a senior army officer said. The army has also prepared a security assessment analysis after the Bomia (Sopore) incident, which has detailed information on militancy, violence, separatists machinations and terrorists' strategy in the state

Top militant killed

Daily Excelsior, 29 March 2009

SRINAGAR: Three militants including a self-styled commander of Lashker-e-Toiba (LET) outfit were killed in two separate operations in Jammu and Kashmir. Abu Baker, a self-styled commander of the LeT was today killed in a gunfight with security forces during search operations at Hangulul-Putshaie in Lolab area of Kupwara district, a defence spokesman said. The encounter took place during a search operation by security forces in the area following information about presence of militants.

'Plans to disrupt polls from across the border will be foiled'

Daily Excelsior, 30 March 2009

SRINAGAR : Jammu and Kashmir Government today warned that attempts could be made to disrupt Lok Sabha polls in the state from across the border, but those will be foiled. "We are well aware of the threat that is posed to elections. I am reviewing the situation on a regular basis with my two security advisors and taking whatever steps are necessary," Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told reporters here. "We do understand that attempts would be made to disrupt the elections and we will do everything possible to render those attempts unsuccessful," he added