

The Daily Excelsior, 1 April 2005

Blast in Minister's house, 6 killed

Srinagar: Six persons, including a Congress worker, were killed and five CRPF personnel injured as militants attacked a security camp and bombed the house of a minister in Kashmir valley. A police spokesman said that five CRPF personnel were injured when militants hurled a grenade on their post at Khanyar Police Station in downtown Srinagar at around 1000 hrs today. Militants bombed the house of State Agriculture Minister and senior PDP leader Abdul Aziz Zargar at Manzgam in Anantnag district early today.

The Daily Excelsior, 1 April 2005

Two civilians killed in Rajouri

RAJOURI: Two civilians were killed, one by the militants and another under mysterious circumstances, in the district last night. Official sources said 42 year old Lal Hussain son of Raj Mohd was dragged out by the militants from his house in Allal, Thanna Mandi last night and taken to adjacent village of Manihal where his hands were chopped off. His throat was slit by the militants leading to his killing. Meanwhile, Army today arrested a Pakistan national from Octroi post in Suchetgarh area of RS Pura sector. He has been identified as Azrar, 15, son of Vazil R/o Peshawar.

The Indian Express, 1 April 2005

Three militants killed in gunbattle in J&K (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar, April 1: Three militants were killed by security forces on Friday in Shopian, ending a fierce overnight gunbattle, while one ultra was shot dead in Kokernag area of Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The holed up ultras opened fire on the search party triggering a fierce gunbattle. The encounter ended with the killing of three ultras today, they said. One militant was also killed in an encounter in Kokernag area of the district, officials said.

The Indian Express, 1 April 2005

Militants bomb J-K minister's house (Press Trust of India)

Militants on Thursday bombed the ancestral house of a J-K minister and shot dead another person in separate attacks, official sources said. Militants detonated explosives in Agriculture Minister and PDP leader Abdul Aziz Zargar's vacant house, sources said, adding that there were no casualties. Zargar, who is staying in Jammu, had moved his family to government accommodation here. Noone has claimed responsibility for the incident. Militants shot dead the driver of a mini-bus, Mushtaq Ahmad, and wounded conductor Javid Ahmad Dar at Jehangir Chowk last night. They suspected Ahmad was an informer for security forces.

The Indian Express, 1 April 2005

Kashmiris ignore militant threat to bus (Reuters)

Srinagar, March 31: Kashmiris divided between India and Pakistan for more than half a century vowed on Thursday to board a historic bus linking the two sides despite threats by militants to sabotage the service. Families in Kashmir set aside the militants threats as New Delhi said it would further step up security for the cross-border bus service, due to be launched next week. The bus link, which will connect Srinagar to Muzaffarabad, is seen as one of the most concrete signs of progress in a slow peace process between India and Pakistan. Militants fighting against Indian rule in the disputed region warned people on Wednesday not to travel on the bus saying it was not in the interest of what they say is Kashmir's freedom struggle.

The Daily Times, 1 April 2005

Kashmiris angry at threats by militants against bus journey (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Kashmiris due to ride the first bus between the Indian and Pakistani zones of the divided region hit out angrily on Thursday at militants who issued death threats, amid concerns over the leaking of the passenger list. Four militants groups said in a joint statement on Wednesday that those planning to ride the bus would face the consequences of being branded "traitors" by anti-Indian militants. Police said security for the proposed fortnightly bus service would be reviewed and that investigations were under way into how the passenger list fell into the hands of the militants. The leader of Kashmir's main opposition National Conference, Omar Abdullah, expressed concern at the leak.

The Hindu, 2 April 2005

Passenger threatened (By Luv Puri)

JAMMU. A passenger scheduled to travel to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus has been threatened over telephone by a terrorist outfit. The caller identified himself as an Al-Nasereen terrorist outfit activist, a shadow outfit of the Lashkar-e-Taiba. The caller then threatened to eliminate Mr. Khalid on his return to which Mr. Khalid reportedly retorted. "We live in India and my country would protect me so I have nothing to fear

anyone." Police traced the call to London. As terrorists have been able to get the addresses of the families, the real concern for the security agencies is the security of the people in the far-flung areas of the State where most of the divided families are living.

The Hindu, 2 April 2005

Mufti assures full security to bus passengers

JAMMU. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, said today the passengers of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus would be provided full security. He asserted that those who had issued threats to the passengers would be "defeated by the will and the resolution of the people, as in the past." He was making a statement in the Legislative Assembly in response to a point raised by Opposition members about some terrorist organisations having leaked to the press the names of the passengers and warning them against making the trip. The Mufti said the people of Jammu and Kashmir had faced such situations and nothing would stop them from pursuing the path of peace.

The Hindu, 2 April 2005

Pakistan not to allow political leaders on bus (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: The Pakistan Government has not agreed to the proposal of sending an all-party delegation of mainstream political parties from Jammu and Kashmir on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on April 7, it is learnt. The Central Government had sent the names of some leaders to the Pakistan Government. All the leaders had applied for the Line of Control permit, and necessary formalities had been completed. Observers say that Pakistan's decision has come as a relief to the separatist leadership which would not like the PoK Government according a red carpet welcome to mainstream political parties. Many separatist leaders, including hardliner Syed Ali Geelani, are opposed to the bus service.

The Indian Express, 2 April 2005

Stop calling killers in Kashmir mujahideen (Harish Dugh)

The distinction between letting loose mayhem and terror on an innocent civilian population as opposed to peaceful protest has broken the minds of mainstream media in Pakistan, preventing them from understanding the distinction that qualifies acts of violence as immoral behaviour that is condemnable. Every time there is an act of terror in J&K or anywhere else on Earth wherein people going about their daily chores are killed, the media describes the violence as that perpetrated by mujahideen a.k.a. holy warriors, freedom fighters. Any violence undertaken by terrorists cannot deserve a nomenclature that glorifies their wanton acts. No matter whether the aim is to get freedom for an oppressed people, any violence undertaken by anyone in the name of democracy and freedom must be abjured if any sanctity is to be assigned to their aims and objectives.

The Daily Times, 2 April 2005

Explosives found on Kashmir bus road

SRINAGAR: Authorities found more than 100 kilogrammes of powerful explosives on Friday hidden near the route of the cross-border bus service slated to start next week connecting the Indian held and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Paramilitary soldiers found the explosives hidden in four abandoned motor-scooters near the village of Arampora, about 50 kilometres north of Srinagar, along the historic trans-Kashmir highway linking Srinagar to Muzaffarabad. The scooters were concealed beneath bales of hay in a barn-like building, said Indian Border Security Force spokesman Neeraj Sharma. Sharma said the explosives, which appeared to have been hidden for later use elsewhere, might have been intended to target the bus, which begins its service on April 7 (Thursday).

The Daily Excelsior, 2 April 2005

JK politicians to miss the bus

JAMMU: In a big disappointment to the politicians aspiring to be the part of the historical journey, the Pakistan Government has dashed their hopes by rejecting the list of political leaders from Jammu and Kashmir who wanted to board the maiden bus carrying passengers from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad on April 7. Instead, the sources said, the Pakistan Government has decided that April 7 bus will carry the members of only divided families on this historic journey. The number of such passengers will be confined to 29. Regarding the militant threat to disturb the inaugural bus service, the sources, ruled out a change in the list of 29 passengers booked for the April 7 bus in the wake of the leak of the names of the people cleared for the journey.

The Daily Excelsior, 2 April 2005

4 militants killed in south Kashmir encounters

SRINAGAR: While as three militants were killed in a night-long gun battle with joint party of police and Army troops in Shopian area of Pulwama district, a militant was killed and an Army soldier and a civilian injured in an encounter in Anantnag district last night. Meanwhile, Border Security Force (BSF) today claimed to have

recovered more than 100 kilograms of powerful explosives in Baramulla district. Informed sources revealed that two militants, one among them in injured condition, managed to escape from the encounter site. A spokesman of the Hizbul Mujahideen told a local news agency, that two of its cadres namely Manzoor Ahmed Bhat alias Asif and Mohammed Dilawar alias Irfan. The spokesman claimed that three Army soldiers were also killed and two others injured in the firefight.

The Indian Express, 3 April 2005

Militants threaten peace-bus passengers, again (Reuters)

Srinagar: Kashmiri militants threatened on Saturday to kill passengers planning to travel in a historic bus service that would unite divided families in Indian and Pakistani regions of Kashmir after more than half a century. The four militant groups had earlier in the week warned Kashmiris not to travel on the bus, saying it was a ploy to sabotage "Kashmir's freedom struggle". The militants also said they had phoned several people booked to travel on the inaugural bus and warned them not to board it. But Kashmiris planning to travel across to Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistani Kashmir, have dismissed the militant threat and vowed to board. Kashmir's chief minister, Mufti Mohammad Syed has said passengers would be provided with full security.

The Hindu, 3 April 2005

J&K Assembly passes VAT Bill

JAMMU. The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today passed the Value Added Tax (VAT) Bill, paving the way for the introduction of the new tax regime in the State. Only three days ago the State Government promulgated an ordinance to introduce VAT from April 1. Denying the Opposition criticism, Mr Baig said a vigorous awareness campaign was launched in the State educating the traders about VAT. Earlier the NC members protested against the manner in which the Bill was being passed and demanded a lengthy discussion on the issue.

The Indian Express, 3 April 2005

New threat looms over LoC bus (Muzamil Jaleel)

Srinagar: The biggest-ever confidence-building measure between India and Pakistan is fast turning into another security nightmare, spreading fear across the Valley. Five days ahead of the reopening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road on April 7, militants circulated a fresh threat today, asking the passengers of the first bus to roll on the road "not to play with their lives". Terming the re-opening of the Muzaffarabad road "anti-movement", the statement says, "this bus service is a betrayal of the blood of Kashmiri martyrs and will put an end to jihad in Kashmir." The threat has already made an impact. The 29 prospective passengers, who are supposed to leave for Muzaffarabad after a high-profile ceremony attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, have already gone into hiding.

The Daily Times, 3 April 2005

Militants again warn Kashmir bus passengers

SRINAGAR: Four militant groups on Saturday issued new death threats to people planning to travel on the buses that will soon resume service between both Kashmirs. The militant groups that signed the statement are Al-Nasireen (The Helpers), the Save Kashmir Movement, Al-Arifeen (The Pious) and Farzandan-e-Millat (Sons of the Community). The first two groups are major militant movements, while the others are little known. The groups had issued a similar warning three days earlier. Ordinary Kashmiris appealed to the militant groups to withdraw their threats. Security has been tightened along the bus route. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said on Friday that police jeeps would accompany all buses along the Indian part of the route to prevent militant attacks.

The Daily Excelsior, 3 April 2005

Militant killed, 6 arrested

JAMMU: A militant was gunned down by security forces and police in Nowshera sector in Rajouri district last night while Army arrested one militant and five over ground workers in Surankote area of Poonch district. Official sources said an unidentified militant was killed in an encounter with security and police personnel at village Bhawani in Nowshera sector late last night. One AK-47 rifle, two magazines and 41 rounds were recovered from the slain militant. Five over ground workers of the militants were also arrested by the Army from village Poshiana in Bafliaz area of Surankote. They were acting as guides of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants. Army have handed them over to Surankote police station for interrogation.

The Hindu, 4 April 2005

Buses kept under tight security (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR. Five specially-designed buses of the Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation set to roll on

the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road arrived here from Jammu on Saturday evening amid tight security. The buses designed with facilities such as television sets have been taken over by the security wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police. These buses, sources said, will be handed over to local police on Monday for custody until April 7, when the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, flags it off. And amid raging threats from militants, the moderate Hurriyat Conference says the bus service is a step towards the solution to the Kashmir problem.

The Hindu, 4 April 2005

J&K seeks opening of historic road to Tibet (By Luv Puri)

JAMMU. The Jammu and Kashmir Government has demanded the opening of the historic road that connects Ladakh with Chinese-controlled territory. The demands by the Ladakh legislators to open up trade with China coincides with the coming visit of the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao. Ladakhi legislators say Chinese goods brought clandestinely from across the border are proliferating in the local markets and opening up the border will only legalise the illegal trade benefiting the people of the cold desert. Already regular troop-to-troop level interaction has begun on the Ladakh frontier.

The Indian Express, 4 April 2005

Five persons, including four militants killed in J&K (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: Five persons, including four ultras and a ruling People's Democratic Party worker were killed in separate militancy-related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesman said on Sunday. Two unidentified militants were killed during a fierce encounter with security forces at Krisail village in Bandipore area of Baramulla district, the spokesman said. Security forces shot dead two militants of Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit in a gunbattle at Zahidbagh in Pulwama district on Sunday. Security forces busted three militant hideouts in south Kashmir Anantnag district over the past two days recovering huge quantity of arms and ammunition including 199 rounds, two remote controls, one satellite charger and one AK rifle magazine, he said.

The Indian Express, 4 April 2005

Heavy snowfall damaged fencing along Indo-Pak border: Army (Press Trust of India)

Jammu: Extensive 'damage' was caused to the fencing along the 740-km-long Indo-Pak border by the recent snowfall and avalanches in Jammu and Kashmir, a top army commander said on Sunday. Brushing aside concern over the issue, Gen Sharma said "we are committed to complete the repair of entire fencing as soon as snow melts and survey would be completed". The material required for the re-construction and repair of fencing has been stocked, he said adding fencing has worked as a 'death trap' for the infiltrating militants. The Indo-Pak border truce is holding on and it has entered the 17 month on March 26, 2005. "By and large the Indo-Pak truce has remained incident-free and peaceful".

The Daily Times, 4 April 2005

Kashmiris turning away from bus

SRINAGAR: Ordinary Kashmiris said on Sunday they were scrapping plans to ride the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus because of death threats from militants. The service, set to resume on Thursday, is being viewed as an important confidence-boosting step between India and Pakistan. However, militants have threatened to attack the buses and its passengers. On Saturday, four militant groups repeated death threats against people who take the buses. Police have also increased patrols in the neighbourhoods where would-be passengers live, Makhdoomi said. Still, some Kashmiris said the death threats have prompted them to cancel their travel plans.

The Daily Times, 4 April 2005

Seven militants, political activist, killed in Kashmir (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Seven militants and a political party member were killed in Kashmir at the weekend in the latest violence ahead of the launch of an historic bus service across the divided state, a police spokesman said on Sunday. Security forces killed two militants in Baramulla district near the northern cease-fire border, known as the Line-of-Control, the spokesman said, adding five other militants were killed in Pulwama district just south of Srinagar on Sunday. "Two of the slain militants were from the hardline Jaish-e-Mohammed militant group," the spokesman said. Militants often target pro-India politicians and people they suspect of working for Indian troops.

The Indian Express, 5 April 2005

Dry run of peace buses conducted (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: A dry run of Srinagar- Muzaffarabad buses was conducted on Monday under tight security between Baramulla and Kaman Bridge in Jammu and Kashmir. Ahead of historic journey on Srinagar-Uri-Muzaffarabad road on April 7, dry run of two buses was carried out from Baramulla to Kaman and the vehicles were scheduled to reach Srinagar from Kaman later in the day, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Baramulla, Raja Aijaz Ali, said. Ali said the dry run was scheduled from Srinagar to Kaman Bridge - the last Indian border post in Uri sector -

but was shortened as security checks at some points could not be completed.

The Daily Times, 5 April 2005

No threat to Kashmir bus in AJK: FO

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Monday there was no threat to the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus passengers in the territory of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. "There is no security problem in Azad Kashmir because it is the most peaceful area in the region with a very low crime rate," Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani told reporters in the weekly briefing. Jilani said threats to passengers by some groups in Kashmir was uncalled for because the passengers would be "genuine" Kashmiris.

The Daily Times, 5 April 2005

300 arrested in Kashmir before first bus runs

SRINAGAR: At least 300 people, many of them former militants, were taken into preventive custody on Monday amid extraordinary security precautions ahead of the launch of historic Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service across divided Kashmir, a security official said. Security forces swept through held Kashmir on Monday, rounding up more than 300 people who authorities feared could join violence against the buses or passengers, the security official said on condition of anonymity. Preventive arrests are fairly common in Kashmir, particularly on the eve of important events that authorities fear could be targeted by militants.

The Daily Times, 5 April 2005

2 militants and shopkeeper killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Security forces killed two suspected militants on Monday and a shopkeeper was found hanged in Kashmir, police said. Indian troops shot dead the two militants in the southern Rajouri district during a clash on Monday, said police. Suspected rebels hanged to death a Muslim shopkeeper in the Khonmoh area near Srinagar in a separate incident, added the police. The spurt in violence comes ahead of Thursday's resumption of a bus service linking the Indian and Pakistani zones of Kashmir, a step regarded as a key confidence-building measure between the two countries.

The Daily Excelsior, 5 April 2005

Two militants, civilian killed in Rajouri

RAJOURI: Two top militants of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit were gunned down by the Army and police in an encounter at village Pangai under the jurisdiction of Thanna Mandi police station today. A civilian was also killed in the exchange of firing while another civilian was injured. One of the slain militant Mujibur Rehman, a resident of Pangai, was a hardcore Hizbul militant. He was involved in a series of killings including the recent killing of a civilian Lal Hussain at Allal, Thanna Mandi. He had served a two year jail term in 1998 but re-joined the militancy later.

The Indian Express, 5 April 2005

Kashmiri driver thrilled to take bus into history (Reuters)

Muzaffarabad, Pakistan: The man chosen to drive the first bus linking India and Pakistan says his selection for the job was a blessing from God and he is thrilled to be playing a part in history. Raja Pervez Khan, from the Pakistan, says he has no long-lost relatives on the Indian side, but he is proud to be driving the vehicle that will reunite families after decades of separation. The service, one of the most concrete signs of improving ties between the neighbours, will link the town of Muzaffarabad, in Pakistani Kashmir, with Srinagar, in Kashmir, 170 km (100 miles) away. Thousands of Kashmiris have applied to make the journey and many hope the new bus will be a first step to a real solution of the Kashmir dispute, at the heart of the hostility between India and Pakistan.

The Hindu, 5 April 2005

Heavy security cover for bus passengers (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR. With militant threats looming large, 23 Muzaffarabad-bound passengers were put under heavy security cover, three days before the launch of bus service across the Line of Control, and the Jammu and Kashmir Government today conducted a dry run to assess the security measures along the route. Twenty-three of the 29 passengers, who are to travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus, were lodged at the Tourist Reception Centre here. Amid tight security, they were whisked away to the centre soon after their arrival here from various parts of the State, the sources said.

The Hindu, 5 April 2005

Hizb warns of fidayeen attacks (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR. The pro-Pakistan Hizb-ul-Mujahideen opposing the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service has warned of fidayeen attacks. The Hizb spokesman, Junaidul Islam, said: "There was no serious attempt by the Indian

Government in the past to resolve the Kashmir issue and at present also has no plans to solve the problem or fulfil its promises." In a write-up in the Urdu weekly, Chattan, he said that to run the bus was "an attempt to give an impression of being the torchbearers of peace and divert attention from the real issue by the Indian Government. The Muzaffarabad bus is clearly "an attempt to sabotage the ongoing freedom movement," he said.

The Hindu, 6 April 2005

Seven injured in blast (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: Two hours after the Army defused two powerful improvised explosive devices at Palhalan on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, militants set off a bomb on the same road at Hanjiwara in Baramulla district. Seven persons were injured. Despite the increased security from Srinagar to the last point along the Line of Control, militants triggered a landmine at Hanjiwara near Pattan when workers were busy repairing the road. Earlier, troops averted a major tragedy on the same road near Palhalan when a routine Road Opening Party of the Army detected two IEDs planted near the road. Elsewhere in the State, two soldiers were killed in a gun-battle with militants who were trying to infiltrate the Indian side from Pakistan, while three militants were shot dead in separate shootouts, police said.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 April 2005

Two jawans killed, two hurt

JAMMU: Two Army jawans were killed and two others were injured while four militants escaped back to Pakistan in an unsuccessful infiltration attempt on Line of Control (LoC) along Ikhni nullah in Jogma area of Akhnoor sector early this morning. Security forces arrested two suspected militants and recovered three kg RDX from their possession in Doda district. Security forces today arrested two suspected militants from village Khangna, in Koti area, about six kms from north of Doda and recovered three kg RDX and three liters of liquid explosive from their possession. The suspected militants were reportedly working for the Hizbul Mujahideen outfit. Security forces also recovered one AK magazine, 70 rounds, 150 Pika rounds and one I Com radio set antenna from Lakharwali Murhi in Thanna Mandi area of Rajouri district last night.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 April 2005

Pak objection forces changes in preparations (Press Trust of India)

KAMAN POST (LoC), Apr 5: Two days before the launch of historic bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, Pakistan has raised an objection forcing the Indian side to go in for last-minute changes in preparations here, reports PTI. Passengers travelling from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad will have to get down at the bridge and walk across to board another bus to reach their destination. An immigration counter has been set up near the bridge where passengers from Muzaffarabad will have to get their documents verified.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 March 2005

5 militants killed, blasts on bus route (From Aijaz Hussain)

SRINAGAR: Separatist militants sped up attacks across Kashmir valley to coincide with the count down of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. A bomb exploded, injuring seven people, and two others were defused today on the route of the first historic bus in Pattan area of north Kashmir ahead of its inauguration on April 7. Meanwhile, five militants including their top 'commander' were killed in two separate gun battles in Kashmir today. The militants succeeded in exploding a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) right on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road which is presently under the care of the J&K Police, paramilitary forces and Army. Meanwhile, in Srinagar city, barricades have been erected around the venue of the flagging off ceremony of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus... Security has been beefed up on all roads leading to the flagging off ceremony.

The Daily Times, 6 April 2005

Landmine blast on Kashmir bus route

SRINAGAR: Seven people were injured in a landmine explosion on Tuesday on a road to be used by the bus service set to be launched this week between both Kashmirs, police said. Five militants and two soldiers also died in separate clashes in the region, police added. The explosion in Hanjiveera village on the bus route injured seven civilians, a police spokesman said. Earlier, troops found two powerful landmines in the neighbouring village of Palhalan on the same route and defused them, a police spokesman said. "The mines were very powerful."

The Indian Express, 6 April 2005

Infiltration bid foiled in Akhnoor, 2 army jawans killed (Press Trust of India)

Jammu: Two army jawans were killed in an exchange of fire with militants who tried to cross over to Indian side via Akhnoor sector of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, defence sources said. A group of militants, who sneaked to Akhnoor sector from across the border in early hours, were challenged by troops in forest area of Akhni Nullah, the sources said. The firing between two sides continued resulting in death of two army jawans, they said adding

the militants fled. The search operation in the forest area was continuing to ascertain whether the militants were still there or crossed over to Pakistani side.

The Indian Express, 6 April 2005

Three persons injured in IED blast along Sri-Muz road (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar, April 5: Three persons were injured in an IED explosion and two powerful explosive devices were recovered along the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, two days ahead of the maiden run of the bus to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Improvised Explosive Device, planted near a passenger shed at Hanjiveera in Pattan area of the district, exploded around 11.30 a.m. injuring three persons waiting for a bus, official sources said. On Saturday, BSF had recovered 117 kg explosives from Arampora-Sopore, off the Srinagar- Muzaffarabad road.

The Indian Express, 6 April 2005

Violence mounts ahead of historic trip (Reuters)

Srinagar, April 5: Militants opposed to a bus link joining parts of Kashmir controlled by India and Pakistan set off bombs and fought gun battles with troops on Tuesday, two days before the service was due to start. The bus service, due to be launched on Thursday, is the most visible sign of progress in a slow-moving peace process between India and Pakistan, who have fought two wars over Kashmir in the last half a century. But militants have repeatedly threatened to sabotage the service and kill passengers, saying the transport link served India's aim to hold on to Kashmir. Nine militants and two soldiers were killed separately across the region in the last 24 hours, security officials said, adding that they expected militants to mount more attacks to intimidate people and derail the service.

The Hindu, 7 April 2005

Militants attack Government complex (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR. A day before the bus to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan occupied Kashmir is to be flagged off, militants today attacked the Tourist Reception Centre here accommodating 24 passengers. Two members of the fidayeen (suicide) squad were killed in the ensuing gun battle and seven persons, including a policeman, were injured. Forty-five persons, including the passengers, were evacuated to safety. The militants, who had hurled grenades and entered the building, soon took position and began firing from all directions. The police, the Central Reserve Police Force and the Border Security Force who were guarding the complex, cordoned off the area. The attack, in the wake of repeated threats by these outfits against the bus service, came at a time when Srinagar was literally under a security cordon. The State Government has not changed any of the festivities connected with the programme.

The Hindu, 7 April 2005

The bus will roll, says Manmohan

NEW DELHI. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has asserted that the "journey of peace" will not get disrupted despite the attack by militants today in Srinagar on the bus passenger complex and he will travel to Srinagar to flag off the bus to Muzaffarabad on its inaugural run tomorrow. Dr. Singh called the attack a "desperate act of desperate men." The Government is firm on not letting militants derail the peace process... Mr. Patil told reporters: "Obviously, it was a very desperate act of some terrorist organisation with an intention to disrupt the on-going peace process. All the 24 passengers [scheduled to travel tomorrow] are absolutely safe." He had spoken to the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayed, and the Union Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad.

The Hindu, 7 April 2005

Bus passengers unfazed (By Luv Puri)

SRINAGAR. The passengers of the inaugural bus to Muzaffarabad are unfazed despite the attack here today by militants and they have decided to make it come what may. Till now, 24 of the 29 passengers have collected their tickets from the counter of the State Road Transport Corporation. Following the attack on the Tourism Reception Centre today, the passengers and the buses have been shifted to the police lines. Three passengers have opted out due to technical reasons while two are yet to report to the authorities. The Jammu and Kashmir Governor, S.K. Sinha, said that such attacks would not shake the determination of the Government to carry forward the peace process.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2005

Farooq condemns security lapse

NEW DELHI: Strongly condemning the militant attack on the Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar where most of the passengers of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus were lodged, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah today termed the incident a "severe security breach". Comparing the breach in security to that of

Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Srinagar prior to Prime Minister's maiden visit to the State after assuming power in November, Farooq said there were yet lessons to be learnt from such continuous attacks on the security system.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2005

Sonia to welcome PoK passengers

SRINAGAR: Congress president Sonia Gandhi, will be the Guest of Honour at the inaugural ceremony of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus tomorrow and will play host to the passengers coming from across the border at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in the evening. Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, his Cabinet colleagues, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and leaders of different political parties will also be present. Meanwhile, militants may have issued repeated threats to them, but the desire to meet their separated loved ones is too strong to stop the people from taking the first bus to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2005

Two militants surrender, two shot dead

JAMMU: Two militants of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfit surrendered before Army and police while two others were killed, on an information given by the surrendered militants in Kishtwar area of Doda district today. In another incident, a young girl and a militant were killed and another girl was injured at village Chalad in Mahore tehsil in Reasi police district. Two constables were injured in stone pelting by the mob on the police party in protest against the killing of a girl and injuries to another. Sources said the surrender by two top commander of JeM was made possible due to a contact established by Army and police officers with local influential persons, who, in turn, motivated the ultras to lay down their arms. Two AK rifles and some ammunition was recovered from their possession.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2005

Kasuri condemns attack, says bus will run on schedule (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Strongly condemning the militant attack today on a building in Srinagar housing passengers of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus, Pakistan said the bus will ply tomorrow as scheduled and arrangements have been made to receive passengers coming from across the LoC. "We have been told by the Indian Government that the bus will be run as scheduled... Pakistan foreign office spokesman, Jalil Abbas Jilani said here. Jilani's comments came after Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri strongly condemned the militant attack on the Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar, saying he and the Pakistan Government were "deeply saddened" by the incident. Kasuri added that confidence building measures like the bus "would go a long way towards resolving the Kashmir problem." He also said Pakistan has denied permission for politicians from Jammu and Kashmir to travel by the bus to enable the divided families to meet.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2005

Srinagar TRC complex perishes in fidayeen strike

SRINAGAR: Making mockery of the government's claims of security arrangements for the passengers of the first bus to Muzaffarabad- which is being flagged off by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here on Thursday-militants today launched a suicide attack on the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) complex. Even as the authorities claimed that both the fidayeen had been killed, at least seven government employees sustained injuries in the three-hour-long gunbattle and the TRC's administrative block was destroyed completely. Director General of J&K Police, Gopal Sharma, said that both the fidayeen were killed in the three-hour-long gunbattle. However, only one dead body was spotted and recovered till late tonight. Somebody, who introduced himself as Sameer Abdullah, told the local news agency CNS over telephone that the suicide attack had been carried out by the newly-forged alliance of four guerrilla outfits... Today's fidayeen strike, that once again took place hours before the Prime Minister's arrival and again at a stone's throw from the PM's venue of the public meeting, is being interpreted as the result of major security lapses.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2005

Bus will go to Muzaffarabad: Patil

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh tonight reviewed the situation at a high level meeting convened by him in the wake of the militant attack in Srinagar ahead of tomorrow's launch of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Home Minister Shivraj Patil and External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh, besides top officials, attended the meeting. "It was an internal meeting," Mukherjee said. Meanwhile, Home Minister Shivraj Patil told reporters here this evening after a high-level meeting of senior officials of his Ministry that the Fidayeen attack on the Tourist Reception Centre in the heart of Srinagar, where the bus passengers were scheduled to stay, was a "very desperate" act of some terrorist organisations who intended to disrupt the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan. Six people, including a policeman, were injured but none of them critically.

The Daily Times, 7 April 2005

Militants kill PDP official in Kashmir (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants shot dead a People's Democratic Party (PDP) official, a day ahead of the historic launch of a bus service across divided Kashmir, police said on Wednesday. Ghulam Rasool was shot dead inside his house in the village of Seer Hamdan in Anantnag district, said a police spokesman. The spokesman blamed militants waging a 15-year-long insurgency against Indian rule in the region for the killing. Militants often target pro-India politicians and people they suspect of working for Indian troops. The killing comes a day ahead of the historic launch of a bus service between the Indian and Pakistani zones of Kashmir.

The Indian Express, 7 April 2005

Terror tries to put brakes on bus (MUZAMIL JALEEL)

SRINAGAR: In a desperate move on the eve of the the first bus journey across the Line of Control, two militants stormed the Srinagar tourism complex today to target passengers of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. In the gunbattle that followed, securitymen shot dead the militants and ensured that the passengers, housed inside the complex, escaped unhurt. But a blaze that started during the exchange of fire gutted the tourist centre. In New Delhi, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the attack would not come in the way of the launch of the historic bus service tomorrow morning. In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri condemned the attack.

The Indian Express, 7 April 2005

India says bus to go despite attack (Reuters)

Srinagar: Indian government officials said the historic bus between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad would leave as planned despite Wednesday's attack by militants on a complex housing passengers. Officials said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh still planned to flag the bus off on its inaugural journey from Srinagar, on Thursday morning. The army said it killed one of the two suicide attackers in the early stages of the raid, but were still hunting the second as night fell over the tense and shuttered city.

The Indian Express, 7 April 2005

Four outfits own responsibility for attack (Reuters)

Srinagar: Four militant groups that threatened to turn the first bus between Indian and Pakistani Kashmir into a coffin claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a complex hiding the passengers on Wednesday. The groups called newspaper offices in Srinagar claiming joint responsibility for the raid that destroyed part of the heavily fortified complex housing more than two dozen passengers in the city. They said two suicide attackers stormed the building... In Srinagar, militant organisations Al Nasireen, Al Arifeen, Save Kashmir Movement and Farzandan-e-Millat, which had threatened to target the bus service and the passengers, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Hindu, 8 April 2005

Bus to Muzaffarabad flagged off (By Harish Khare)

SRINAGAR. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today flagged off two buses carrying 21 passengers on the inaugural run of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service setting in motion a process that optimists believe could transform India-Pakistan relations. Coming a day after the militants' dramatic attack on the Tourist Reception Centre, barely a stone's throw-away from the venue of today's function... the flag-off was a show of strength as well as a commitment to the idea of reconciliation. Internal equations apart, the flag-off ceremony sent out messages to the militants and Pakistan. Dr. Singh called the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, an equal partner in the venture. Dr. Singh hoped that the new route would encourage not just the movement of passengers but would also promote trade links.

The Hindu, 8 April 2005

Dream come true

SRINAGAR. Leaving their bitter past behind, India and Pakistan today took a path-breaking step by launching a bus service across the Line of Control - a dream come true for the divided Kashmiris. The Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) Prime Minister, Saradar Sikandar Hayat Khan, launched the "peace vehicle" in Muzaffarabad and hailed Dr. Manmohan Singh for allowing the reunion of Kashmiris. Passengers were warmly received by cheering crowds in Srinagar and Muzaffarabad. It took more than eight hours for the vehicles to reach their destinations across the LoC as there were receptions all along the 170-km route.

The Hindu, 8 April 2005

30 passengers, thousands of well-wishers (By B. Muralidhar Reddy)

LINE OF CONTROL (PAKISTAN-OCCUPIED-KASHMIR). The 30 passengers, who travelled on the first Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus, made history this afternoon, as they set foot on the Aman Setu (the peace bridge) between India and Pakistan. Though they are a microscopic minority of the 3.2 million people of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK), they carried with them the wishes, aspirations and dreams of the overwhelming majority of people for bonding with their brethren on the Indian side. This was evident in the enthusiastic send-off they received from people of all walks of life - first at the government reception in Muzaffarabad, the PoK capital, and subsequently, at every town and village along the 59 km route to the last inch of territory under Pakistan control. For all the fears in their minds about the implications of Tuesday's attack, the passengers showed no signs of worry.

The Hindu, 8 April 2005

Omar, Mirwaiz welcome bus service

SRINAGAR. The inaugural run of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus evoked a mixed response from the separatist amalgam. The chairman of Tehreek-ul-Hurriyat, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, called it a symbolic exercise and said the "bus service is no solution to the raging Kashmir issue. We need to move beyond the symbolism to resolve the issue." The chairman of the moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq expressed the hope that softening of the Line of Control would solve the humanitarian crisis of divided families. A strike was called by the United Jihad Council, which has its headquarters in Muzaffarabad of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, and the hard-line factions of the separatist outfits.

The Hindu, 8 April 2005

Militants attempt to thwart service (By Shujat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR. Militants tossed a grenade at a group of people who had gathered to see the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus at Pattan, a highway town 27 km northwest of here. Four persons were injured, police said. Militants targeted a security force patrol wounding two troopers at Chana Khan in Sopore town, off the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, police said. A bomb disposal squad defused an improvised explosive device planted near a petrol pump in the area, reports said. Earlier, gunmen shot and wounded Sheeraz Ahmed Naikoo at Pratapora Shopian in southern Pulwama district. The four groups - al-Nasirin, al-Aarifin, Farzandan-e-Millat and Save Kashmir Movement - issued a statement saying that they had constituted special squads named "shaheedi daste" to target the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus in the future.

The Hindu, 8 April 2005

A dream come true for J&K people: Mufti (By Luv Puri)

SRINAGAR. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, today said the opening of the Jhelum Valley Road is a dream come true for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who have been waiting for this moment for more than five decades. He said the bus has broken down the walls of hatred... the Chief Minister said plying the bus is a major confidence-building measure, which speaks volumes of the trust the country has reposed in the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Emphasizing the need to move ahead on the road to peace, he said there is no other option. He asked the separatists to positively respond to the offer of talks by the Centre. The Chief Minister described Wednesday's attack by militants as a desperate act and said he was happy that it was condemned by all, both in India and Pakistan.

The Indian Express, 8 April 2005

Kashmiri families united by bus meet and weep (Reuters)

Chakothi, Pakistan: Kashmiris wept and hugged each other on Thursday as a new bus service across their beautiful but divided land reunited families split by politics and war for nearly 60 years. Nineteen Kashmiris defied militant threats and crossed into Pakistani-controlled Kashmir to meet their relatives after 31 Pakistanis walked across a bridge the other way, into India, to find their kin. The bus service between the Indian and Pakistani sectors of Kashmir is the most concrete sign of progress in a cautious peace process relaunched last year. The service will only link the main cities of India and Pakistan every two weeks but many Kashmiris hope it will be the first step to a lasting resolution of the dispute despite attacks by the militants who see it as a sell-out.

The Indian Express, 8 April 2005

Minor jolts as militants strike (Mir Ehsan)

Srinagar: Despite the security blanket on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Road, militants struck on the route, blasting an IED and several grenades. Ten people, including three securitymen, were injured. In the morning, as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh addressed a gathering at Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium ahead of flag-off, militants threw a grenade towards security forces at Pattan market. Six people, including a police constable, were injured. Officials said the militants had targetted the policemen manning the road. Militants also struck at Sopore town, a few kilometres off the bus route.

The Daily Excelsior, 8 April 2005

Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Road opens for traffic after 57 years (From Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: One hundred and eighty kilometre long surface communication link between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad was thrown open for the ordinary civilian traffic after a long pause of 57 years today. Even as there was near-total shutdown in response to a call from several militant organisations and the Hurriyat faction led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani in most parts of the Kashmir valley, hundreds of jubilant Kashmiris waived to the commuters all along the motorway. Hundreds of thousands watched the historic occasion while remaining glued to television sets for the whole day and shedding tears of joy and relief indoors. In contrast to a subdued atmosphere in the Pakistani official circles, the Government of India attached unprecedented significance to the defining moment as the first bus from Srinagar was flagged off by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and Chairperson of the Congress-led UPA Government Mrs Sonia Gandhi at Sher-e-Kashmir International Cricket Stadium.

The Daily Excelsior, 8 April 2005

PoK people accord unprecedented reception to passengers (Press Trust of India)

CHAKOTI (PoK): Defying threats of militant groups to attack the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar buses, people of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) today accorded a warm and unprecedented reception to the passengers travelling in the inaugural buses to and from Srinagar. Much to the chagrin of hardline militant groups, thousands of people thronged both sides of the entire 58 km route from Muzaffarabad to Chakoti, the last point of the PoK, to cheer the "bold" passengers from Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, surprising the critics of the bus service and belying all expectations of its protagonists. Surprised over the response to bus in PoK, a Pakistani official said "the writing on the wall is clear that people are tired of 57 year old animosities and wanted to re-establish their links with Kashmiri brothers on the otherside. If there is any doubt in the minds of people about the bus service, it should be removed now".

The Daily Excelsior, 8 April 2005

Permit system an open offer to kill people: Khurana

JAMMU: Hundreds of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers today took out protest rally in the city and courted arrest to register anguish against the Central Government's decision to allow Pakistani citizens to enter the country via Uri on simple entry permit. Coming down heavily on the UPA Government at the Centre, while addressing the dharna, Mr Khurana said "permit system is an open invitation to the terrorists to enter into this side of border and cause blood-shed and mayhem", adding "the permit system has the necessary potential of diluting Indian sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir and helping the forces of disintegration". Later, the BJP leaders handed over a memorandum to Governor for President Dr A P J Abdul Kalam urging him to intervene in the matter so that Indian interests are not harmed any more.

The Hindu, 9 April 2005

Kashmiris have developed hatred for militancy: Congress (Press Trust of India)

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday said the message emanating from the successful launch of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus link was that average Kashmiris have developed a hatred for those who stop meeting among relatives from the two sides of Kashmir. AICC media department chairperson, Ambika Soni, told reporters here that the brave people of the State despite a terror attack barely two days ago on the Tourism Centre came out in open defying forces attempting to deny meeting between brothers and brothers and among other relatives from the two sides.

The Indian Express, 9 April 2005

Pak PM advised against flagging off Kashmir bus (Press Trust of India)

MUZAFFARABAD: While people in PoK gave a euphoric welcome to the launch of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, the Pakistan government made sure the ceremony was an all-PoK affair by not inviting foreign diplomats to witness it, fearing it could give a handle to India to question Islamabad's basic Kashmir stand. Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz reportedly backed out in the 11th hour to inaugurate the bus service after he was advised against flagging it off by Pakistan Foreign Office suggesting that his presence could provide a handle to India to shake loose the country's stated stand on Kashmir. The bus was flagged off by Hayat in presence of ministers of his cabinet and his party leaders. The Pakistan government also did not invite any foreign diplomat, which the PoK officials said was due to "disputed status" of the region.

The Indian Express, 9 April 2005

Two Jaish commanders among three ultras killed

Srinagar: Three militants, including two commanders of Jaish were killed in separate incidents of violence in Kashmir. In one of the incident, militants fired towards police personnel guarding the minority community in South

Kashmir. Meanwhile, security forces also apprehended an upper ground worker at Sopore. Police said from the possession of the militants, army recovered two AK Rifles, nine magazines, four hand grenades, two cell phones and a wireless set. In an another encounter which took place between the militants and security forces at Watigam Dangiwachha in South Kashmir, a militant was killed. . An AK rifle was recovered from possession of the slain militant.

The Indian Express, 9 April 2005

People in Valley skeptical about bus outcome (Safiya Lone)

Srinagar: Even as the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus has crossed the peace bridge, the people in Valley are skeptical about the outcome. Most of the people feel that the bus is not going to change the condition in Kashmir as the ground situation remains the same. The bus is viewed as a step for improving bilateral relations between the two countries and is not a solution to the Kashmir problem. The bus is termed as a step for improving the relations between the two countries. "Both India and Pakistan are showing the international community that they can live in peace," says Shabnum Ara, a student. However, some are welcoming the move and terming it as a good gesture by both the countries.

The Indian Express, 9 April 2005

Bus hype no way out to solve problems of snow-hit: Chaman

Jammu: Denouncing the euphoria being generated on opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, former Union Minister and senior leader of BJP Prof Chaman Lal Gupta said that by doing so the ruling leaders of the Congress and their allies were trying to cover up their failures to sort out the burning problems facing the people. Addressing party activists from Doda and other areas, Prof Gupta said that it was strange people badly affected by snow-storms in Paddar and other areas were still without relief, link roads still remaining closed and electricity was yet to be restored even after expiry of over two months now, the opening of the bus route to Muzaffarabad was being hyped to an extent as if this would solve all the problems facing the people including those of the areas hit by the snow-storms and avalanches. Activists from Doda areas complained that militants were still creating problems and innocents were getting killed.

The Daily Times, 9 April 2005

Pakistan seeking progress on Kashmir through Track II (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: Pakistan is seeking 'visible progress' on the Kashmir issue through Track-II diplomacy, as a group of former Pakistani diplomats held talks with External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh and top officials from Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the foreign ministry on Friday, sources said. Sources said the Pakistani delegation is visiting India on President Pervez Musharraf's initiative with the aim to set some kind of agenda and also to discuss possible confidence building measures (CBMs) before the Pakistani leader's 'informal summit' with the Indian leaders on April 16 when he arrives in Delhi on a three-day visit. Led by Khalid Mehmood, Pakistan's former acting foreign secretary and ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the delegation argued in its talks with the Indian foreign minister and PMO officials that 'some movement' was necessary on the Kashmir front to keep the peace process on track.

The Daily Times, 9 April 2005

Opening more points along LoC possible, says Kasuri

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri on Friday said more entry points along the Line of Control (LoC) were possible in future as another confidence building measure, after the success of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus. Kasuri said the president and the prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir were also willing to open more entry points along the LoC, saying most of the refugees hailed from the area near Poonch district. Extending the Kashmir bus service to Rawalpindi is not a bad idea, Kasuri told CNBC programme 'Tonight at Ten'.

The Daily Times, 9 April 2005

President, PM discuss Kashmir bus impact on peace process

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Friday discussed a number of issues including the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service and its impact on the peace process between Pakistan and India. Sources said the president and the prime minister were satisfied with the successful launch of the bus service and hoped this would prove to be the first step towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue. "They also discussed the outcome of a meeting between Pakistan National Security Council Secretary Tariq Aziz and SK Lambah in Dubai to finalize the agenda for talks between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh," the sources said.

The Daily Times, 9 April 2005

Two militants killed by Indian troops in raid on hideout (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Indian troops killed two militants in a raid on their hideout in Kashmir on Friday, said an Indian Army statement. The clash was the first after Thursday's launch of a trans-Kashmir bus service. The service has been hailed in Kashmir, but opposed by militants and hardline separatists. Four militant groups have threatened to attack the bus. On Thursday, four people, including a policeman, were wounded by a powerful blast that occurred along the route of the first inter-Kashmir bus minutes after the vehicle had passed. Four militant outfits which had earlier threatened passengers, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 April 2005

Pak to reciprocate if India allows Hurriyat leaders' visit (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said it would permit the travel of the Kashmiri politicians on both sides of the LoC provided India allowed the Hurriyat leaders to visit this country. The Government was ready to send the leaders from the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), if the Hurriyat leaders were permitted to travel to Pakistan, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said addressing a reception in Lahore last night. His comments came after Pakistan did not permit the top politicians of Jammu and Kashmir to travel by the inaugural bus service across the LoC. Instead, it said their names were not in the first list and wanted the bus to be used by the divided families. Kasuri's comments were seen here as Pakistan's willingness to permit politicians from PoK to visit Srinagar. India has already clarified that Hurriyat leaders could apply to obtain special permission for travel by the Kashmir buses.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 April 2005

Pak blames vested interests for attack on TRC building (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Holding "vested interests" responsible for the Wednesday attack on a Srinagar building housing Indian passengers, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said that no one would be allowed to "sabotage and create obstacles" in running the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. The statement apparently came after India reportedly took up with Pakistan the absence of condemnation of the incident from the top leadership of the country as well as its hesitation to term it as a terrorist attack. Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri and foreign office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani had condemned the attack soon after it took place on Wednesday.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 April 2005

3 militants killed in Valley

SRINAGAR: Two militants of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) group were killed in an encounter with a joint party of police and army in a Shopian village of Pulwama district today. These sources said that as the troops were laying cordon, militants in the village opened fire on them and tried to escape from the area. However, the troops spotted the militants and engaged them in a firefight. After a couple of hours gun battle, two militants, owing allegiance to JeM were killed. Two AK rifles with nine magazines, four hand grenades, two cell phones and a wireless set were claimed to be recovered from the encounter site. Meanwhile, security forces shot dead one more local militant of JeM Irfan Qazi alias Asif during search operations at Watrigam-Dangerpora in Anantnag district.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 April 2005

3 women injured in blast

JAMMU: Three women were injured when a militant lobbed a Chinese grenade, which fell about 20 yards short of Ahle Hadis mosque at Jhatkatian Mohalla in Talab Khatikan area of the City this evening. The militants slipped away after throwing the grenades. The injured had sustained splinter injuries. Police cordoned off the area after the blast and carried out a search operation. However, no arrests were made immediately.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 April 2005

3 militants among 4 killed

SRINAGAR: Four people, including three militants, were killed and a couple injured in the Kashmir valley overnight, official sources said today. Security forces arrested four militants and recovered some arms and ammunition, while one villager was abducted in the State during the period. Sources said militants attacked a patrol party at Anantnag in south Kashmir last night. Security forces also retaliated, but there was no report of any casualty. Militants later managed to escape, sources added. Security forces gunned down a Hizbul Mujahideen militant in an encounter at Nasoo Bandipora in Baramulla district last night. One AK rifle, three magazines, 110 rounds of ammunition, four UBGLs and one wireless set were recovered from the slain militant.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 April 2005

SPO killed, another hurt in Rajouri

RAJOURI: A Special Police Officer (SPO) was killed and another SPO was injured in an encounter with the militants at village Gudgayal in Kandi area of Koteranka in this district today afternoon. Official sources said a group of five militants, who had mixed up with population, opened firing on the SPOs when they asked them to

show their identity cards. The militants opened firing killing SPO Mushtaq Ahmed R/o Rehan, Kandi on spot and injured another SPO Amit Singh. Police party retaliated but the militants managed to escape.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 April 2005

Visit turns pilgrimage for PoK passengers

SRINAGAR: The visit of 30 Pakistan-occupied Kashmir passengers to Jammu and Kashmir has so far been more of a pilgrimage than a reunion with their relatives, separated since 1947. They offered prayers at the shrine where a large number of people had gathered to have their glimpse. Many of the locals wanted to play host to the visitors, but were not allowed by the security officials escorting the passengers. They prayed for peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, and also for a long-lasting friendship between India and Pakistan.

The Daily Times, 10 April 2005

Kashmir real motive behind India visit: Musharraf (By Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Saturday stressed the need to resolve the Kashmir dispute and said he would discuss the matter with the Indian leadership during his next week's visit to New Delhi. President Musharraf backed the launch of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service, but said it alone would not resolve the dispute. He said the bus service was not a solution to the decades-old problem, but a confidence building measure (CBM) to ease the situation. He claimed a vast majority of Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) had welcomed the start of the bus service.

The Indian Express, 10 April 2005

Transmission tower in J-K bombed

Jammu: After having failed to stop the bus from moving to Muzaffarabad, militants last evening blew up a transmission tower at Kanzgund in Anantnag, plunging entire Valley into darkness last evening. Sources identified the damaged tower as No. 164 along the 220 KV Kishenpur-Pampore line. Significantly, the blast came at a time when a function, organised by state government to honour guests from Muzaffarabad was in full swing, said Power Minister M.S. Niaz. This was the third transmission tower blown up by militants during the last two days...

The Daily Excelsior, 11 April 2005

Hurriyat calls meet to discuss Musharraf visit

SRINAGAR: The Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Omar Farooq has summoned an emergency meeting of its executive committee, the highest decision-making body of the amalgam, on Tuesday to discuss the proposed talks with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf during his three-day visit to New Delhi, beginning April 16. Prof Bhat said the April 12 meeting will decide whether to send formal letters to Dr Singh and Gen Musharraf for talks. The former chairman of the undivided Hurriyat said the separatist conglomerate even this time had already, through media, expressed the desire to meet both Dr Singh and Gen Musharraf. Asked if the Hurriyat would still go ahead with meeting Gen Musharraf if there is no response from the Prime Minister, he said, "this and other aspects will be discussed at the meeting".

The Daily Excelsior, 11 April 2005

Process of peace to be consolidated: Mufti

Jammu: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said the re-opening of the Jhelum Valley Road has established peace as a permanent and only acceptable feature of Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the ruling coalition legislators here on the eve of election to six seats of the Legislative Council, Mr Sayeed said the process of peace needs to be consolidated so that its real dividends reach to the common man of the State, who has suffered for long. He said re-opening of the road would mean restoration of infrastructural advantage to the State that in due course of time would bring Jammu and Kashmir on larger socio-economic map of the region. The Chief Minister said rolling of the bus on the Jhelum Valley Road is a historical event that has made positive impact on the entire sub-continent. The Chief Minister expressed the confidence that the frequency of the fortnightly bus service would be increased to make it weekly and ultimately a daily service.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 April 2005

Next bus on April 21

SRINAGAR: The next "Karwaan-e-Aman (caravan of peace)" between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad will roll out from here on April 21, a fortnight after the successful completion of the inaugural run of the cross-border bus on April 7... a list of 119 prospective passengers intending to visit Muzaffarabad in the next bus was handed over to the Pakistani authorities on Friday, a day after 19 Indian and 30 Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) passengers crossed sides on Thursday. It has also been decided to further strengthen the security for the second bus after some minor incidents during the inaugural run.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 April 2005

4 militants, 2 soldiers killed in 3 gunbattles

SRINAGAR: While militants have left two civilians dead and 20 others wounded in a grenade explosion at Shopian in south Kashmir today, at least four militants and two soldiers have died in three separate gunbattles in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources told the Excelsior that militants lobbed a hand grenade in the direction of a patrol party of Rashtriya Rifles 44 Bn at Main Chowk in Shopian town of Pulwama district at 1400 hours today. Defence sources claimed that two militants of Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit got killed. In north Kashmir, sources said that troops of Rashtriya Rifles 18 Bn and Kupwara Police killed one militant in an encounter at Dooraswani forest in Lolab valley. A spokesman of Hizbul Mujahideen has claimed that the militants of his organisation left two soldiers dead and an equal number of them injured in the gunbattle near Palhalan last evening.

The Daily Times, 11 April 2005

Road to peace bumpy despite Kashmir bus (Associated Foreign Press)

NEW DELHI: The first trans-Kashmir bus in decades has rolled and dozens of families have been reunited across the divide, but real progress by India and Pakistan on their core dispute over Kashmir remains a long way off, analysts say. "We basically see this as one of the confidence-building measures," said Ajai Sahni of the New Delhi-based Institute of Conflict Management. "We must understand that for Pakistan, none of the fundamentals have really altered in terms of intent or claim." Though the bus has been hailed as a powerful symbol for peace by the media and analysts on both sides, there is little dispute that the event marks only a small step on the long road to rapprochement for the nuclear rivals. Pakistani defence analyst Brigadier (r) Abdur Rehman Siddiqui however said the bus service was there to stay.

The Daily Times, 11 April 2005

10 people killed and 20 injured in continued Kashmir violence (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Ten people were killed and 20 were injured on Sunday in a grenade blast and clashes between militants and security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, said the police. Two people were killed and 20 injured when militants threw a hand grenade at a security patrol. It missed the target and exploded among the passer bys in Shopian, said a police spokesman. Four of the injured were in critical condition. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. Meanwhile, a militant and two Indian soldiers were killed in a gun battle at Palhalan village. Another two militants were shot dead by troops in Anantnag on Sunday, said the police. Sunday's death toll is the highest since the launch of the Kashmir bus service.

The Daily Times, 11 April 2005

Musharraf meeting Kashmiri leaders today

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf will hold an important meeting with Kashmiri leaders today (Monday) for consultations before his visit to India. Leaders from Azad Kashmir including the representatives of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) will call on him at President's House. The president will discuss at length progress so far made by Pakistan and India in composite dialogue process in general and the Kashmir issue in particular. The president will discuss future strategy with the Kashmiri leaders before his departure to India on April 17.

The Indian Express, 11 April 2005

India races to fix Kashmir fence damage, stop militants (Reuters)

Kaman Post, India: Indian troops are rushing to repair a border fence in Kashmir, badly damaged by the heaviest snowfall in decades, to prevent fresh incursions by militants, a senior army officer said. In 2004, Indian army engineers fenced off most of LoC, in what is seen as an ambitious attempt to curb the influx of militants. So far in 2005, there were four infiltration bids and seven militants had been killed, he said. Militant incursions are usually low during the winter months when snowfall blocks mountain passes and picks up in summer starting in May-June. With the fence making border crossings tough, militants were now trying new routes, a senior intelligence official said.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2005

Governor discusses JK situation with British High Commissioner

JAMMU: Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd) S K Sinha today said that peace constituency in India and Pakistan is expanding fast with things looking much upbeat than ever before. In an hour-long interactive session with British High Commissioner in India... the Governor made a reference to the growing people to people contact, which have assumed the dimension of euphoria in the wake of bus service on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road and said the longing for peace is growing in the region. The Governor attributed the change in overall scenario between the neighboring countries to several factors that include conducive international situation, growing realization in

Pakistan about futility of hostility with India and above all genuine desire for peace on both the sides. On the changing trends in Kashmir, the Governor said that the people are actively cooperating in combating terrorism and their participation in the democratic process, like civic election in the recent past is an indicator of their urge for return of peace and normalcy.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2005

Ex-militant killed, civilian injured

SRINAGAR: Unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants, today shot dead a released militant, Riyaz Ahmed Bhat S/o Mehda Bhat at his residential village of Dooru in Sopore area. Bhat had earlier worked for Aljihad militant outfit. After his arrest and subsequent release from jail, he had not apparently associated himself with any militant or counter-insurgent organisation. Meanwhile, suspected militants have released Mehraj-ud-din Dar of Maharajpora, Sopore, who had been kidnapped from his residential locality on Sunday.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2005

SPO, Imam killed; 4 rifles looted

JAMMU: An Imam and a Special Police Officer (SPO) were killed in two separate incidents while the militants looted four rifles, one wireless set and ammunition from the police personnel in Mahore last night. A group of militants struck in the house of a police constable Nazir Ahmed at Gulabgarh in Mahore tehsil of Reasi police district, where three constables and a SPO had been putting up along with their weaponry for last few days in connection with examination duty. Official sources said it was being ascertained as to how the three police constables managed to survive without any injury. It was also being inquired as to how the cops surrendered the arms without firing a single shot on the militants. In another incident, the militants gunned down an Imam of Jamia Masjid, Kithar in his house at Kithar, Bunjwah in Kishtwar tehsil of Doda district last night.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2005

Separatists viewing peace process positively: CM

JAMMU: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir is on the right track with separatists also now looking at it positively. The Chief Minister said the violence in the State is now on the decline although isolated incidents do occur. He said there is a realization among the people and the governments of both India and Pakistan that dialogue is the only option to address issues. About the starting up of the bus between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, the Chief Minister said it has generated lot of enthusiasm among the people on both sides.

The Daily Times, 12 April 2005

7 people killed in latest Kashmir violence (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants shot dead four people in Jammu and Kashmir while security forces killed three insurgents, police said on Monday. Heavily armed militants killed a policeman during an attack on a police post in Udhampur district and abducted three other policemen, said a police spokesman. Police said that suspected militants also shot dead a woman and two Muslim men in the districts of Baramulla, Doda and Pulwama. None of the dozen militants groups fighting to split Kashmir from India claimed responsibility for the killings. Meanwhile, Indian troops shot dead three militants in Kupwara and Rajouri districts in three separate encounters, police said.

The Daily Times, 12 April 2005

Musharraf will ask India to talk to APHC (By Mohammad Imran and Mubasher Bokhari)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf said on Monday that during his visit to India he would formally invite All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders to visit Pakistan and would also ask the Indian government to start talking to the APHC. "I will formally ask the Indian government to start talking to the APHC and allow them to visit Pakistan and this informal dialogue process between India, Pakistan and the APHC will later be converted to tripartite talks," Sardar Ejaz quoted President Musharraf as saying. He said that during the meeting, the president also said Pakistan wanted to negotiate a settlement of the Kashmir issue.

The Indian Express, 12 April 2005

Militants carting grenades in desi ghee containers: Police (Press Trust of India)

Jammu: Desi ghee containers are coming in handy for militants trying to transport grenades and explosive material into Katra town, the base camp of the Himalayan cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi in Jammu, according to police. A grenade, carelessly thrown behind a hotel in the town, was recovered by police on Saturday and two persons arrested in this connection, they said. "This is a new plan of the militants to trigger explosions in Katra town by transporting grenades in ghee containers," they said.

The Indian Express, 13 April 2005

Positive signals from India to resolve J&K: Mush (Press Trust of India)

Islamabad: Days before his visit to India, President Pervez Musharraf has said that Pakistan would not make one-sided concessions on Kashmir and both the countries would have to be flexible to resolve the problem. At a meeting with leaders of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) here last night, Musharraf also ruled out accepting LoC as the permanent border to settle the Kashmir imbroglio. He said there were positive signals from the Indian leadership on efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue and Islamabad will reciprocate any flexibility shown by New Delhi. Musharraf underscored the imperative need for a fair resolution of the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir issue in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The general said there had been no change in Pakistan's principled stance on the Kashmir issue, which was plebiscite in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The Indian Express, 13 April 2005

12 Bangladeshis arrested in Jammu and Kashmir (Press Trust of India)

Jammu: Security forces today arrested 12 Bangladeshi nationals who were trying to sneak into Pakistan from near the international border in RS Pura border belt, 35 km from here, official sources said. Troops guarding the border saw some movement of people at Saloo area in RS Pura sector in Jammu district early this morning and challenged them, they said. Twelve 12 Bangladeshi nationals -- six men, five women and a child -- who were trying to exfiltrate to Pakistan were arrested, the sources said adding that they were handed over to police.

The Indian Express, 13 April 2005

People's Conference abstains from Hurriyat meeting (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: The People's Conference of Bilal Gani Lone today abstained from the Hurriyat Conference meeting, called to finalise agenda of talks with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and holding discussions with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Although the People's Conference was not against the dialogue process, it wanted a wider representation of people of the state in the talks, he said, "There are many people outside the ambit of Hurriyat. Before we move ahead with the talks process, we should take one and all into confidence," he added. "It has to be a bold decision and everyone should be with it," he added.

The Indian Express, 13 April 2005

Manmohan ready to talk on Kashmir with Musharraf (Reuters)

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Tuesday that he was ready to hold talks over the disputed region of Kashmir with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf who visits New Delhi next week. "Though it is not a state visit and is an informal one, we are prepared to discuss anything with our honoured guest including Kashmir, further CBMs (confidence-building measures) and having a common security," Singh was quoted by the Press Trust of India as saying. Efforts at building greater trust between the two sides received a boost last week after both nations began a bus link between the capitals of Indian and Pakistani Kashmir.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 April 2005

Mufti admits security lapse, orders probe in TRC fire

JAMMU: The National Conference today disrupted Question Hour in the Assembly forcing Speaker Tara Chand to adjourn the House within 15 minutes demanding an inquiry into allegations by NPP president Prof Bhim Singh, a coalition partner, that Congress and PDP were behind the conspiracy in TRC fire on the eve of Muzaffarabad bus flag off ceremony in Srinagar. Later, making a statement in the House, Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed ordered an inquiry into the fire incident and admitted that it was a security lapse. He, however, noted that it was not the first suicide attack as earlier the attacks had taken place in the Parliament, the Assembly and the Army camps.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 April 2005

Sialkote road next priority: CM

JAMMU: Reiterating Government's commitment to open different routes to facilitate interaction between the people of Pakistan and India, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today asserted that Sialkote-Suchetgarh road will be opened very soon. The Chief Minister was of the belief that the opening of roads will help people living across the border in changing their perceptions towards Jammu and Kashmir. Apart from ensure equitable development, the Chief Minister said, 'our priority is to stop harassment of the innocent civilians'. "As soon as we took over power, we directed the security forces not to harass civilians", he said and claimed that policies being propagated by the coalition regime have yielded encouraging results.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 April 2005

Hurriyat endorses Indo-Pak CBMs

SRINAGAR: Endorsing the pace of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan including the reopening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq led Hurriyat Conference today requested to

be associated with the dialogue process between the two countries. The separatist conglomerate announced that it would meet Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf during his upcoming visit to New Delhi this week to seek their greater involvement in talks over Kashmir and expressed desire to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also saying, "it is important to meet both of them". He pointed out that the Hurriyat endorses all the CBMs being taken by India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue. "However, Hurriyat would insist upon Gen Musharraf not to go overboard in the process of confidence building with India before the political as well as the militant leadership is taken into confidence," he elaborated.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 April 2005

3 militants among 4 killed

SRINAGAR: Three militants and a woman were killed and a police station was attacked in the Kashmir valley overnight, official sources said today. A search party was attacked by militants at Pattan last night, a report from Baramulla said. Official sources said reinforcement was rushed to the area from nearby camps after the ultras, holed up inside a house, refused to surrender. Two AK rifles and other arms and ammunition were seized from the slain militants. In another incident, militants attacked Shaheed Gunj Police Station here with automatic weapons. They fled after a ten-minute shootout. Another extremist was killed by security forces in an encounter at Kanihama in the central Kashmir district of Badgam late last night. Militants gunned down a woman at Shopian in south Kashmir district of Pulwama last night.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2005

LeT 'commander' shot dead

JAMMU: A Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) "area commander" was today gunned down by Army and police in an encounter at Kasblari in Mankote area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district. Slain militant has been identified as Abu Qasim, a LeT "area commander" for Mankote and a resident of Sultanpur, Kotli in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). DIG Rajouri-Poonch range S M Sahai said the militant was killed in an hour long gun-battle. One AK rifle, five magazines, five hand grenades and one wireless set were recovered from the scene of encounter. In another search operation, police recovered three Chinese hand grenades, one wireless set and 750 AK rounds in Mendhar.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2005

Militants threaten second bus passengers

SRINAGAR: A conglomerate of four militant outfits-Alnasireen, Alarifeen, Farzandan-e-Millat and Save Kashmir Movement-has warned the passengers of the second Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus against travelling on the coach. Surprisingly, once again, the alliance has released the names of 29 Kashmiri passengers who have been preparing to travel to Muzaffarabad on April 21. In a statement faxed to the local news agency, the militant alliance has threatened the passengers of the second Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus that they would face dire consequences if they travelled on this "coffin". Officials are confident that all the passengers of the second bus would travel to Muzaffarabad without regard to the militant threats.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2005

British envoy meets separatists

SRINAGAR: British High Commissioner Sir Michael Arthur today called on several top separatist leaders here during his three-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir to take stock of the situation in the troubled State in the wake of the resumption of cross-border bus service after more than 58 years, and also to see developments that have taken place since his first visit in March 2004. During his stay in the Valley yesterday, Sir Michael at the head of the New Delhi-based British High Commission delegation met Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik and Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) president Shabir Ahmed Shah among others. The delegation met the Mirwaiz and other Hurriyat leaders who briefed the High Commissioner about the latest situation in the State.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2005

PM ready to talk to Hurriyat even after Musharraf

CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI: Despite the reported keenness of the Hurriyat Conference to meet Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf before meeting him, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said he was ready to have talks with the amalgam of Kashmiri outfits. The Prime Minister observed that there was an elected Government in Jammu and Kashmir which came to power after an internationally recognised elections. But there were some people which were outside the political system and the Government was ready to have a dialogue with them as well if they were interested, he added. Senior Hurriyat leader Abdul Ghani Bhat denied media reports the amalgam had kept any precondition for talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Yesterday, the Hurriyat Conference accepted an invitation to meet Gen Musharraf on April 17 and also expressed desire to meet

the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2005

Two women held with LeT phones

SRINAGAR: Police and security forces have killed two Pakistani militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba and arrested two daughters of a Government official allegedly with a number of mobile and satellite phones of the militant organisation in a search operation in Khansahib area of Budgam district. Five personnel, including a Dy SP, have sustained injuries in the gunbattle. Meanwhile, an Assistant Treasury Officer has been gunned down by unidentified assailants at his home in Awgam, Kulgam, late tonight. During the gunbattle, troops destroyed the two target houses, killing two militants. One militant's body, two AK-56 rifles, one damaged mobile phone and one wireless set were recovered from the devastated houses. Official sources insisted that both were Pakistani cadres of Lashkar-e-Toiba.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 April 2005

India, Pak to exchange list soon

SRINAGAR: A day after four militant groups claimed to be in possession of the names of the bus passengers bound for Muzaffarabad on April 21, the authorities today said India and Pakistan were yet to exchange the final list of people who would board the next "Karwaan-e-Aman (caravan of peace)"... Regional Passport Officer John S Silshi... refused to comment on the claim by militants that they were in possession of the list of the Indian passengers who would board the next cross-border bus on April 21. The Pakistani officials also forwarded a list of 50 passengers from PoK intending to visit Srinagar, he added. Despite militant threats, the cross-border bus service will operate uninterruptedly on April 21 and in future as the Government is determined to continue with the process of allowing the divided families to meet each other after more than 58 years of separation, official sources said today.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 April 2005

3 civilians killed in Mahore

JAMMU: Three civilians were killed by the militants and an ex-serviceman was seriously injured in separate incidents in Udhampur and Rajouri districts last night. Official sources said a group of militants last night struck at three separate places in Mahore tehsil in Reasi police district in Udhampur and gunned down one civilian besides slitting throat of two others. They said all three killings were reported to have been executed by one group of the militants belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen outfit. Though identity of the killers hasn't been established so far, they were believed to be locals, they added. Sources said the civilian killings were aimed at terrorising the local people, who had openly been assisting the security forces and police in anti-militancy operations. In another incident, the militants opened firing on police personnel at village Saranoo in Rajouri late last night. The police party retaliated.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 April 2005

14 Pak prisoners from J&K jails among 24 repatriated

WAGAH: Twentyfour Pakistani prisoners languishing in different jails of India were today released and repatriated back home. While seven of these Pakistan nationals were released from the Amritsar jail, 14 were brought from Jammu, two from Delhi and one from Jaipur. Most of these prisoners had strayed into India by mistake at different points along the Indo-Pak border and were languishing in Indian jails for the past six months to three years. The repatriation of the prisoners was delayed by a day following delayed receipt of Emergency Immigration Certificates (EICs) and formal clearance from the Pakistan High Commission New Delhi for repatriation.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 April 2005

Militant, civilian killed as 4 ultras trapped in Budgam

SRINAGAR: In search of the most wanted Pakistani militant commander 'Chacha', security forces have launched yet another major operation at Kanir village in Budgam-Chadoura belt. At least one militant and a civilian got killed in the fierce gunbattle this evening as the officials believed that all the four militants, who had escaped from a similar operation in Takiya Farooq Shah village yesterday, have been trapped. Meanwhile, security forces have killed three militants of Hizbul Mujahideen in a separate encounter in Pulwama district. Contrary to the official claim that the two militants killed at Takiya Farooq Shah were members of Lashkar-e-Toiba, a spokesman of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, Jameel Ahmed, told the local news agencies today that the slain guerrilla duo belonged to his organisation.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 April 2005

Musharraf favours LoC as soft border

NEW DELHI: Ahead of his week-end visit to India, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today indicated that he

favoured converting the Line of Control as a "soft border" but would not accept it as a permanent border for a final solution to the Kashmir problem. Musharraf, who arrives here Saturday on a three-day visit, said he had "made very clear to Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh that we cannot accept the LoC to be the final solution. We have to find an out-of-box solution". Musharraf said the atmosphere for talks was now much better, but his weekend meetings with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would have to concentrate on trying to get closer to a solution on the Kashmir issue.

The Daily Times, 15 April 2005

First cross Kashmir train launched (Associated Foreign Press)

UDHAMPUR: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday flagged off the first train on a cross-Kashmir service which will eventually link the militancy-wracked northern parts of the Himalayan region with the rest of India. The train between Jammu, held Kashmir's southern winter capital, and Udhampur, about 55 kilometres further northeast, will eventually end in Baramulla, 55 kilometres west of the summer capital Srinagar -- all areas considered to be hotbeds of militants fighting Indian rule in the state.

The Daily Times, 15 April 2005

Militants renew threat against Kashmir bus

SRINAGAR: Separatist Militants in Jammu and Kashmir renewed their threat on Wednesday against people planning to ride the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus to Azad Jammu and Kashmir. However, militants oppose the move and have warned people against travelling on the bus between Srinagar in India and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan. The faxed statement from the militant groups also contained a list of 28 passengers who plan to board the bus on its second trip. The militant signatories to the statement are Al-Nasireen (The Helpers), Save Kashmir Movement, Al-Arifeen (The Pious) and Farzandan-e-Millat (Sons of the Community). The first two groups have launched deadly attacks in the past, but little is known about the other two groups.

The Hindu, 15 April 2005

Kashmir-related CBMs in the offing (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI: With India and Pakistan looking positively at the results of the recently introduced Srinagar - Muzaffarabad bus service, space has opened up for more Kashmir-related confidence-building measures as the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, prepares to hold talks with the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, on Saturday. On the table are proposals for family reunions and meetings along the Line of Control in Mendhar, Poonch, Suchetgarh, Uri and Tangdhar along the Neelam Valley, a suggestion made in concrete terms by India to Pakistan in December, 2004. Though officials confirm that discussions on possible agreements during Gen. Musharraf's visit were going on, they were reluctant to state categorically whether or not these would be clinched during the visit.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 April 2005

LeT top brass wiped out

SRINAGAR: In a major setback to militancy in central Kashmir, security forces have eliminated four prominent Pakistani militants at Kanir village in Budgam-Chadoura belt. Officials claimed that in the 24-hour-long operation, troops had wiped out the top brass of Lashkar-e-Toiba but unofficial reports identified the slain militants as the members of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen. Defence sources identified three of the militants killed as Al-Badar's Kashmir valley chief 'Gen' Umar alias Y-9, "divisional commander" for Budgam Rehman alias Nayeem Bhai and "district commander" for Budgam Chacha alias Y-8. J&K Police sources, however, insisted that Lashkar-e-Toiba's top brass in Budgam district had been wiped out in the joint operation conducted by RR 35 Bn and SOG Budgam. In all four AK-56 rifles, five grenades, one UBGL, one binocular, three mobile phone sets and two wireless sets... have been recovered from the devastated site of the encounter.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 April 2005

3 militants, jawan killed

JAMMU: Three militants and an Army jawan were killed while another militant was injured in two separate encounters in Gool and Thanna Mandi areas of Ramban police district and Rajouri today. Troops also destroyed a hide-out of the militants and arrested a Bangladeshi national. Bodies of two slain militants have been recovered from the scene of encounter but their identity hasn't been established so far. The outfit they belonged to was also not known. Recoveries made from their possession include two AK rifles, three magazines, two grenades, one radio set and some ammunition. Troops didn't suffer any casualties in the operation.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 April 2005

List of passengers swapped (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR: As the authorities mulled running the second Muzaffarabad-bound bus from Uri instead of Srinagar,

India and Pakistan today exchanged list of prospective travellers for the bus which will roll out on April 21. Regional Passport Officer Kohn S Shilshi... who returned here from Uri after exchanging the list, said the Pakistani side had cleared 32 passengers to travel on the second bus from the Indian side. In the wake of April six militant attack on the Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar where passengers of the inaugural bus were lodged, security agencies are keen to run the second bus from the border town of Uri, official sources said. Four militant groups -Al Nasireen, Al Arifeen, Save Kashmir Movement and Farzandan-e-Millat - have issued a threat to passengers of the second bus as well.

The Daily Times, 16 April 2005

8 die as troops raid hideouts in Kashmir (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Six militants, including three wanted commanders, a soldier and a Muslim civilian were killed in Indian held Kashmir during raids by Indian troops on Friday, a day before the arrival in India of President Pervez Musharraf, the army said. Soldiers killed four militants in a raid on a rebel hideout in the central Kashmir district of Budgam in the early hours of Friday, an army spokesman said, adding that a civilian had died during the exchange of fire. Another militant was shot dead in a separate raid by Indian troops in the southern town of Kulgam, the spokesman said. In other violence on Friday, suspected militants shot dead an alleged army informer in northern Baramulla district, police said.

The Daily Times, 16 April 2005

Second bus could start from Uri instead of Srinagar (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: The authorities are considering running the second bus to Muzaffarabad from the border town of Uri instead of Srinagar citing security considerations as the reason, official sources said in Srinagar on Friday. The idea to run the bus from Uri came up because the town is "much safer" being situated in a 'highly-sanitised' zone and having virtually zero militant presence, sources said. The security cost would also be minimal from Uri, they added. However, the state government is keen on running the service from Srinagar so that the title does not change from Srinagar-Muzaffarabad to Uri-Muzaffarabad, sources said. India on Friday gave broad indications of a possible agreement with Pakistan on the issue of providing joint security to the passengers travelling by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus.

The Indian Express, 16 April 2005

Allow people in on visa only: BJP to PM

Jammu: SENIOR BJP leader Kuldeep Raj Gupta has strongly opposed the permit system for the Uri-Muzaffarabad bus passengers. In a statement here on Friday, Gupta said this would lead to resentment among those who were in possession of custodian property and people would become landless overnight. He appealed to the Prime Minister to allow people from the other side on visa only. The BJP leader said that lakhs of people in the state were in possession of such land which belonged to those opted for Pakistan at the time of partition and reclamation of the land by the original owners coming from across the border would lead to chaos. He said that bus service to Muzaffarabad and opening of any new roads might create a situation of no return for India if cautious approach was not followed. Gupta further said that militants in large number could use the bus for a safe passage into India and that would spell doom for country.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 April 2005

Everlasting peace is imminent: Mufti

New Delhi: The Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today reiterated his commitment for ensuring ever lasting peace in Jammu and Kashmir, which has witnessed the agony of turmoil during last one and half decades. He said that since the period his Government has taken over the reins of the state, in sequel to peoples mandate through free and fair elections, the peoples confidence and faith in democratic institutions have been strengthened. He added that inspite of threat, intimidation, and random killing of candidates by militants, people thronged in large numbers to exercise their franchise. Mr Sayeed said that normalcy is fast returning in the State. Since his Government has taken over strict orders have been issued to address the grievances of the people so that action is taken against any security personal, who is found guilty of any kind of human rights violation.

The Daily Excelsior, 17 April 2005

Separatists reach Delhi to meet Musharraf (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: The separatist Hurriyat leaders from Jammu and Kashmir arrived here this evening to hold talks with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf tomorrow even as hardline Jamaat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani maintained that he would not be supporting any unity moves. The Pakistan President would be meeting first with a four-member delegation of moderate Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq which would be followed by an interaction with a six-member delegation of Tehrek-e-Hurriyat led by Geelani and then with JKLF chief Yaseen Malik and Shabir Shah. Geelani, who has been opposing bus service between Srinagar and

Muzaffarabad, clarified that he would be meeting Musharraf to put forward his perspective and would not support any of his moves to unite the separatists in the State.

The Daily Excelsior 17 April 2005

No space for gun in emerging situation: Mufti

JAMMU: Reiterating that the gun was no solution to the problems being faced by the people in Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today said that emerging situation in the Jammu and Kashmir has also closed the option of the gun to resolve the problem as the dialogue has taken the centre stage in addressing all the issues concerning the people. He said public opinion is growing against the violence particularly when the option of dialogue and discourse is available. The atmosphere of peace and reconciliation is emerging in Subcontinent and winds of change have swept entire State of J&K, he added. He said the successful completion of recent civic polls and plying of Srinagar, Muzaffarabad bus service shows the determination and will of the people to carry forward the ongoing peace process despite threats and intimidations.

The Daily Excelsior, 17 April 2005

HM commander, Shabir Bidoori among 6 militants killed (From Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: In a major setback to Hizbul Mujahideen in south Kashmir, security forces have finally eliminated the top-wanted "divisional commander" Shabir Bidoori, alongwith one "district commander" of the outfit at Mirhama village, near Bijbehara, in Anantnag district. In separate operations, two militants of the organisation have died in an encounter with security forces at Kundalan in Shopian and one more at Brinel Lamad in Qazigund area. Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Javed Makhdoomi said that it was irrelevant as to what Shabir Bidoori did hold in his organisation. He said it was significant that Bidoori was Hizbul Mujahideen's senior most militant and also the most wanted among all guerrilla outfits. In all, 32 militants have been killed by Police and security forces in a series of operations in Anantnag district in the last three months.

The Daily Times, 17 April 2005

Second Kashmir bus passengers' list swapped: No change in departure venue

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has denied reports that the second Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus due to run on April 21 would depart from the border town of Uri instead of Srinagar. Reports aired by some television channels and also carried by some newspapers had stated that security constraints might force the administration to run the second bus from Uri instead of from Srinagar to the Kaman Bridge on the Line of Control. However, authorities said there was no change in the departure venue for the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. Meanwhile, Pakistan has cleared 32 out of a total of 119 entry permit forms of passengers forwarded by India, while New Delhi has cleared the entire list of 47 prospective passengers received from Islamabad for the second Kashmir bus.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 April 2005

Municipal Councillor shot, civilian killed

SRINAGAR: Militants today shot at and injured a newly elected Municipal Councillor in Baramulla district. Ghulam Mohammad Teli was fired upon by militants inside the lawns of his house at model town Sopore this afternoon, the spokesman said. Teli has been admitted to a hospital. Militants kidnapped and later shot dead a civilian Mushtaq Ahmad Mir while he was on his way home at Kokernag area in the district.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 April 2005

Two jawans, civilian injured

JAMMU: Two Army jawans and a civilian were injured in two separate incidents in Poonch district today while security forces destroyed five hideouts of the militants and recovered a large quantity of arms, ammunition and ration. Official sources said an Army patrol party was ambushed by a group of militants at village Jugal Dheri in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district early this morning. The patrol party retaliated. An exchange of firing between the two sides continued for about 30 minutes after which the militants escaped taking cover of darkness and a surrounding forest area. Two Army jawans were injured in the firing.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 April 2005

Disunity among separatist groups comes to fore (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Disunity among the Kashmiri separatist groups came to the fore today during their separate meetings with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf with the moderate Hurriyat supporting the Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan and the hardline group flaying Islamabad on the issue. The Mirwaiz welcomed the ongoing peace process between the two countries and said they should also be involved in the process so that an everlasting solution could be found to the Kashmir issue. He supported the step-by-step approach adopted by the two countries and said the amalgam would meet in Srinagar again and

hold discussions about the future strategy. Firebrand leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, whose delegation of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat was first to meet Musharraf, opposed the CBMs saying this was giving a sense of anxiety to the Kashmiris.

The Hindu, 18 April 2005

Premature dissolution of Jammu and Kashmir Panchayats draws flak (By Luv Puri)

JAMMU: The decision to prematurely dissolve three-year-old Panchayat bodies in Jammu and Kashmir is turning out to be battle of sorts between the ruling coalition and the Opposition as the latter has termed the action "undemocratic." The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, has defended the decision, saying fresh elections would help to bring peace to the rural areas of the State. The State Legislative Assembly on Saturday approved a bill for an amendment to the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, after a walkout by the National Conference, paving the way for premature dissolution of all Panchayats. This sparked off an uproar among the Opposition members who alleged that the premature dissolution was undemocratic.

The Hindu, 18 April 2005

Involve Kashmiris in peace process: Hurriyat

NEW DELHI: The Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, met the leaders of the separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) for nearly three-and-a-half hours at the Pakistan House here on Sunday night. Both the factions of the group - moderate and hardline - led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Syed Ali Shah Geelani met Gen. Musharraf and apprised him of their views on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. They stressed upon the need to involve the people of Kashmir in the peace process. Mirwaiz Umer Farooq told newsmen that the people of Kashmir and the political leadership of the State should be taken into confidence as the peace process progressed. The hardline leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who led a five-member delegation of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat... said that the current confidence building measures were meaningless unless the human rights violations and killings were stopped in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Hindu, 18 April 2005

Musharraf for deeper analysis of J-K; rejects changes in boundary (Press Trust of India)

New Delhi: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today said India and Pakistan needed to discuss the resolution of Kashmir problem by analysing in deeper context the issue of independence, self-governance, autonomy, joint control and joint management to arrive at an "out-of-box solution. He said while resolving the Kashmir issue step by step, there was need to generate public debate and support among the people involved-Kashmiris. Asserting that the terrorist attack to derail the bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad was not acceptable, Musharraf said a decision has been taken and the peace process cannot be allowed to be disrupted. Musharraf virtually brushed aside Indian stand that boundaries cannot be altered and made it clear that Line of Control (LoC) cannot be the final solution.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 April 2005

4 militants killed in Poonch, Gool

JAMMU: Army and police today gunned down four militants in two encounters in Gool and Poonch. DIG Rajouri-Poonch range S M Sahai said three unidentified militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were gunned down by the Army and police at Sheen Dhara in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district at 11 am today. The militants were killed after two hour exchange of firing. Efforts were on to ascertain identity of the slain militants. Three AK-47 rifles, nine magazines, one radio set, one binocular, one diary, a holy book and a steel trunk were recovered from the slain ultras. Another unidentified militant was shot dead by Army in Gool area of Ramban police district today. One AK Rifle and one damaged radio set were recovered from him.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 April 2005

Musharraf flays Geelani's opposition to bus link (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has flayed the opposition to Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service by hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani and militant groups and told the separatist outfits to consider India's offer for talks saying this could lead to trilateral dialogue. Asserting that the bus service was agreed to after gauging the popular demand for it on both sides of LoC, Musharraf told the Pakistan media before leaving from Delhi to Manila that he has not understood the logic behind the opposition to the bus link. He said he has discussed Kashmir and all other issues with Singh and there was progress on all issues. "We certainly have decided to take the resolution of Kashmir issue forward" in a purposeful manner to reach for a final resolution, he said.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 April 2005

Kashmir solution through irreversible peace process: India, Pakistan

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan today firmly resolved not to allow terrorism to impede the "now irreversible" peace process and continue discussions in a sincere, purposeful and forward-looking manner for a final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue. The two countries also announced opening of more transport and trade links as part of radical confidence building measures being taken by them to promote people-to-people contacts and enhance economic and commercial ties. In a statement, released by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf at the end of the General's three-day historic visit to India, the two countries decided to immediately hold discussions on contentious issues like Sir Creek and Siachen. The General firmly ruled out conversion of the LoC into international boundary between India and Pakistan and suggested a three-phased formula for resolving the Kashmir issue. Gen Musharraf was of the view that first consensus on resolving the problem should be evolved by involving the people of Kashmir. Secondly, there should be a public debate and public support for any proposed solution and then the two countries should start looking for a final settlement.

The Daily Times, 19 April 2005

Kashmir can erupt again if not resolved: Musharraf (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: President Pervez Musharraf has said that the Kashmir issue cannot be resolved militarily and that it could erupt again unless a solution is found that is acceptable to India, Pakistan and Kashmiris. In a clear snub to Kashmiri hardliners objecting to Pakistan's dealings with India through confidence-building measures (CBM), President Musharraf said he would go by what the majority wanted and "if the vast majority accepts it, it is OK". The Pakistani president said he did not know what would happen in the next 10 to 15 years if the Kashmir problem is not resolved now. He said the problem could not be resolved overnight, suggesting it should be tackled in three stages.

The Indian Express, 19 April 2005

3 Lashkars among 5 ultras killed in J&K

Jammu: Five militants, including three belonging to Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit were eliminated in separate encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, a student was also injured in Valley. Police has claimed to have recovered arms and ammunition from the militant hideouts. The recoveries from the site of encounter included three AK-47 rifles, nine AK magazines, one radio set, one binoculars and one diary, one Kuran and one steel trunk containing administrative stores. In a separate shootout between militants and an army patrol, a student was also injured.

The Indian Express, 19 April 2005

Musharraf tells Hurriyat leaders to 'use brain', slams hardliner Geelani (Press Trust of India)

Islamabad: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has flayed the opposition to Srinagar-Muzafarabad bus service by hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Geelani and militant groups and told the separatist outfits to consider India's offer for talks saying this could lead to trilateral dialogue. Asserting that the bus service was agreed to after gauging the popular demand for it on both sides of LoC, Musharraf told the Pakistan media before leaving for Delhi to Manila that he has not understood the logic behind the opposition to the bus link. Replying to a question about demand for including Kashmiris in talks, Musharraf dropped an open hint for the Hurriyat leaders saying they should use their "brain" and join the talks with India and Pakistan separately as it is the step in the direction of trilateral talks.

The Hindu, 19 April 2005

"Sell-out by Musharraf" (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: The joint declaration by India and Pakistan to further the agenda of confidence-building measures (CBMs) has generated cautious optimism among the people in Kashmir. Militant organisations and the hardliner separatist camp have reacted strongly to the developments. They accused the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, of "selling out" on Kashmir. Though the people welcomed increasing the frequency of the trans Line of Control (LOC) bus service and opening up the link for using trucks for the purpose of trade, the general feeling in the Valley was that "no serious steps have been taken to address the real problem of Kashmir." But the militant camp is visibly disturbed to see "a change in Gen. Musharraf's policy." Calling him the "Kargil hero," four militant outfits - Al-Nasireen, Save Kashmir Movement, Al-Arifeen and Farzandan-e-Millat - termed the progress a "sell-out." "He has surrendered before India," said a joint statement issued by the outfits.

The Hindu, 19 April 2005

India-Pakistan peace process 'irreversible' (By Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI: In a great leap forward, India and Pakistan underlined on Monday that the peace process between the two countries was "now irreversible." They agreed to open trade across the Line of Control by allowing trucks between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, open the trans-LoC Poonch-Rawalakot route and take steps for the meeting of divided families along the LoC. "In this spirit, the two leaders addressed the issue of Jammu & Kashmir and

agreed to continue these discussions in a sincere and purposeful and forward-looking manner for a final settlement. They were satisfied with the discussions and expressed their determination to work together to carry forward the process and to bring the benefit of peace to their people," the statement said.

The Indian Express, 20 April 2005

Work on seven major power projects in state may start before year-end (By Ishfaq Naseem)

Jammu: This year people have something to cheer about on the power front, with the construction of seven major power projects likely to take off in the state. The state government decided to take up the construction of seven major power projects at a recently held meeting of officials of the Power Development Corporation. Sources said that the seven projects over which the construction would begin are New Ganderbal, Sawalakote, Parnai, Baglihar-II, Bursar, Pakal Dal, and Uri-II. A power capacity of 1180 Mw would be added with the completion of these projects, thus leading to curtailment of expenditure over purchase of power for the state, he added.

The Indian Express, 20 April 2005

CPM hails determination of PM, Musharraf for peace

Jammu: Declaring the on-going peace process as irreversible was the biggest achievement of the Delhi summit, and people in the region were now sure about better relations and understanding between India and Pakistan, stated CPI (M) state secretary M.Y.Tarigami in a statement while expressing his view over the joint statement issued by the two leaders yesterday. Tarigami welcomed the determination of the two leaders to carry forward the dialogue process and to bring benefit of peace to their people. Tarigami expressed his satisfaction over the resolve of the two leaders to enhance interaction and cooperation across the LOC, including agreed meeting points for divided families, trade, cultural interaction and opening up of the Poonch-Rawalakote road link. Tarigami, however, said that more CBMs were required to bring in peace and prosperity to the suffering masses in the state and further said that the people of the state should have active participation in bringing about peace in the region.

The Daily Times, 20 April 2005

Two militants killed in Kashmir (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Indian troops shot dead two commanders of the banned militant outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba in held Kashmir during a clash in northern mountains, an Army spokesman said on Tuesday. "The two commanders from Lashkar-e-Taiba group were killed in a clash by army soldiers in the Lolab forests of Kupwara district," spokesman Lieutenant Colonel VK Batra said. Batra identified one of the commanders as Waqar Bhai. Indian troops have shot dead seven rebel commanders from various groups, including the top brass from al Badr group, in the past week. "The successes are the results of beefed-up operations against the militants in Kashmir," Batra said.

The Daily Times, 20 April 2005

Azad Jammu and Kashmir govt bans militant group's publication

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has banned a monthly magazine 'Shahadat' owned by the militant organisation Tehreekul Mujahideen, sources told Daily Times on Tuesday. Sources said it was for the first time that a militant publication had been proscribed by the AJK government during the last 15 years. Tehreekul Mujahideen, led by Sheikh Jamilur Rehman, had been publishing the magazine for the last eight years from Muzaffarabad. The magazine focussed on the Kashmir movement in the Indian-held Kashmir. Sources said the magazine in its recent issue published a few articles on the recent visit of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the split in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the role of Pakistan, India, and the US in starting the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service and had condemned these governments along with the AJK government. The magazine was especially critical of Pakistan's policy on Kashmir.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 April 2005

Zee Group keen to invest Rs 500-cr in J&K

JAMMU: With both the countries meeting each other on a cheerful note an atmosphere of positiveness is seen all around. After a long silence it is felt that there will be some solution to the never -ending problem of the Kashmir issue. The positiveness is also seen in the treatment that the J& K state government is showcasing which is turning corporates to the State. Essel Group is keen on contributing to the socio-economic well being of the State by promoting mutually beneficial business ventures. When contacted, Mr Ashish Kaul, Vice President, Essel Group ... said, "Essel group is looking at investing in a State to the tune of Rs 500 crore. Although these are initial plans the investment can increase subsequently..."

The Daily Excelsior, 20 April 2005

Hizb commander among 3 killed

SRINAGAR: While security forces have killed two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen in an encounter in Kandi area of

Kupwara district and eight people have sustained injuries in a grenade blast, unidentified gunmen have shot dead a contractor in Tangmarg today. During the search operation, an encounter took place between the holed up militants and security forces. Two militants got killed. Two AK-56 rifles are claimed to have been recovered from the site of the gunbattle. A Defence spokesman claimed that Javed Ahmed Pir was Hizbul Mujahideen's "divisional commander". Independent reports, however, did not confirm it.

The Daily Excelsior, 21 April 2005

Two militants killed in Mendhar

JAMMU: Army today gunned down two militants in an encounter at village Sangiot in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district while a couple was injured in a blast at Tata Pani in Kalakote tehsil. DIG Rajouri-Poonch range S M Sahai said troops of 38 RR and police killed two Pakistani militants at 4.10 pm today in Sangiot area after two hour long gun battle. Security forces busted two hideouts of the militants at Murimal in Gulabgarh and Azmatnabad in Thanna Mandi. Recoveries included 17 blankets, two kg milk powder, 1.5 kg milk packets, 100 kg atta, 180 kg rice, 30 kg cooking oil, 30 kg dal, 10 kg tea, utensils, clothing and other administrative stores. Six kg RDX, three AK magazines and 100 rounds were recovered by security forces during a search operation at Kakora in Rajouri today.

The Daily Excelsior, 21 April 2005

2 civilians killed, 17 injured in Sopore blast

SRINAGAR: A young man and a woman died and seventeen more civilians sustained injuries in a grenade attack of the militants on security forces in Sopore today. Meanwhile, security forces have killed three militants in an encounter in Rafiaband area of Baramulla district and suspected militants have killed a special police official (SPO) in Tral. Informed sources told the Excelsior that a militant lobbed a hand grenade towards a security forces patrol in Ashpir locality of Sopore town in the forenoon today. It missed the apparent target and exploded at a crowded public place, causing splinter injuries to 19 civilians. Reports from Sopore said that the explosion evoked widespread condemnation but people avoided to register their protest against militants responsible for the blast.

The Daily Excelsior, 21 April 2005

Threat to peace process from extremists still exists: PM (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Maintaining that India should remain "conscious of the difficulties ahead", Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said the threat to the peace process from extremist forces and terrorist organisations has not been eliminated and he looked forward to Pakistan implementing its assurances in letter and spirit. Asserting that redrawing of boundaries was not possible, he said both countries have agreed to pursue further measures to enhance interaction across the LoC. Declaring that India was committed to peace and friendship with Pakistan, the Prime Minister said that he and the Pakistan President agreed that attempts by terrorists to disrupt the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service have been condemned by the two countries, "giving us confidence for its continued and successful operation".

The Daily Times, 21 April 2005

Militants kill 3, wound 9 in Kashmir attacks

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants in the Jammu and Kashmir hurled a grenade at a paramilitary post, killing three civilians and injuring 15 others, while a policeman was killed in a separate attack, said police on Wednesday. Militants lobbed the grenade in Sopore, but it missed its intended target and exploded on the roadside, killing a vegetable seller, said police officer Junaid Ahmad. He said that a woman who was wounded in the blast later died at a local hospital and six were in critical condition. In another incident, suspected militants shot and killed a police constable in Awantipora, police said.

The Daily Times, 21 April 2005

India has realised Kashmir solution must reflect Kashmiris' wishes: Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday said that the only acceptable solution of the Kashmir issue would be the one reflecting the wishes of Kashmiris. Briefing journalists, Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said the Line of Control (LoC) was a problem and it could not be the solution. Jilani said the Indian leadership had realised that the Kashmir issue needed to be addressed according to the wishes of Kashmiris. Jilani said the Kashmir issue got maximum time during a one-on-one meeting between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and during the delegation-level talks.

The Daily Times, 21 April 2005

Musharraf vows to stop militants in Kashmir

MANILA: President Pervez Musharraf pledged on Wednesday to curb attacks by militants in Kashmir to promote the peace process with India and forge a solution to the territorial dispute in the Himalayas. President Musharraf,

on the last day of his visit to the Philippines, said Islamabad had made ending the decades-old dispute over Kashmir a priority of five key programmes to market Pakistan as an investment haven in South Asia. President Musharraf said Pakistan would stop militants from attacking bus services across the ceasefire line in Kashmir, and urged more confidence-building measures to move the peace process forward. He said acts of terrorism, like an attack on the recently resumed bus service, "must be suppressed at all cost".

The Indian Express, 21 April 2005

Two LeT militants from Pak eliminated in Poonch dist

Jammu: TWO Pakistani militants owing allegiance to pan-Islamic Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit were killed in an encounter with the joint operation group of army and police in Sangiot area, five kms east of Bhimber Gali in Poonch district today. Meanwhile, security forces seized six kgs of RDX from a militant hideout in Kakora area in Rajouri district. The slain have been identified as Abu Adil and Zaffar Iqbal, both resident of Pakistan. Two AK-47 with magazine sand some ammunition were seized from the encounter site. During the past one month more than 500 kgs of RDX have been seized from different militant hideouts in Jammu and Kashmir, sources said.

The Hindu, 21 April 2005

Kashmir should remain core issue, says Geelani (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: Visibly upset with "radical shift in Pakistan's Kashmir policy," the hardline Hurriyat Conference leader, Syed Ali Geelani, said today that Kashmir should remain the core issue between the two countries and that any "out-of-box solution" was unacceptable. According to him, the recent developments suggested that Islamabad had changed its stand vis-à-vis Kashmir. Mr. Geelani, who has been the leading voice of dissent on the ongoing peace process, met the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, during his recent visit to Delhi. But says he was not convinced with the General's argument on changed strategy to resolve the Kashmir issue. The U.N. resolutions should form the fundamentals of a solution," he said addressing a press conference here.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2005

Two separatist leaders released

SRINAGAR: Two separatist leaders, affiliated with the hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference in Jammu and Kashmir and arrested under the Public Safety Act, were released from jail by a court here. Shabir Ahmad Khan of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, was released by a lower Court today as Jammu and Kashmir High Court quashed his eight-month detention last month, official sources said. The duo were among three separatist leaders of hardline Hurriyat faction released on court orders within a week. Welcoming the release of senior party leaders, Hurriyat Conference today said over 1,500 people were still behind bars in different jails in and outside the State.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2005

Lambardar, 3 sons shot at; 2 ultras killed

RAJOURI: Militants shot at and seriously injured a Lambardar and his three sons including an Army jawan at village Naika Majari in Harni area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district last night while two militants were killed and two Army jawans were injured in two separate encounters in this district. Sources said the Lambardar had earlier also been receiving threats from the militants. In an encounter in Kunda forests in Shahdara Sharief area of Rajouri, a militant was killed and two Army jawans were injured this evening. Slain militant has been identified as Abu Abdullah. One AK rifle and some ammunition were recovered from him. Another unidentified militant was killed by security forces at Thelapera in Budhal area this morning. One AK rifle, two magazines and 21 rounds were recovered from the slain militant. A militant Tanveer Hussain son of Halim Shah, a resident of Churang, Rajdhani today surrendered before Army in Thanna Mandi area.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2005

Two militants killed in Valley

SRINAGAR: Two militants were killed in a gun battle with Army and police in central Kashmir district of Budgam today. Sources said that the bodies of both the militants were charred beyond recognition. However, these sources said, one of the slain militant was identified as Bambar Khan of Al-Badr Mujahideen on the basis of accounts of locals. Meanwhile, unidentified gunmen kidnapped a 60-year-old person, identified as Abdul Ahad Sheikh from his house at Karhama in Kunzar area of Tangmarg during last night.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2005

Bus-2 of caravan-e-aman runs smoothly

AMAN SETU (LoC): Braving threats of four militant organisations, 26 people from Jammu and Kashmir today left Srinagar and reached Muzaffarabad alongwith 12 people from PoK who stayed in the State for two weeks. While 14 of the 19 Kashmiris returned to Srinagar after spending a fortnight in PoK, 11 fresh visitors accompanied them

from Muzaffarabad to Srinagar. The exchange of passengers on this sensitive point of the LoC marked part-II of the caravan-e-aman-a bus service introduced between the two capital cities after a gap of 57 years on April 7th last. Taking threats of an alliance of four guerrilla outfits seriously, authorities had made elaborate security arrangements for smooth operation of the incoming and outgoing J&K SRTC coaches today.

The Hindu, 22 April 2005

Pakistani citizens to lose residency rights in Kashmir

JAMMU: In an interesting development, the State Government has rejected the Permanent Resident Certificates (PRCs) of 12 people who migrated from this part to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to take up Pakistani citizenship. The residency rights of 12 members of a family were rejected as they came back to the State on a Pakistani citizenship and therefore lost their state subject rights automatically. The case is set to act as a precedent as it means that any former state subject coming back to the State on a Pakistani passport cannot reclaim his or her property. There have been demands in some quarters that those who had left the State before 1954 should be allowed to come back and re-claim their property.

The Hindu, 22 April 2005

Second bus leaves without incident

SRINAGAR: The second bus on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road left on Thursday without incident, or for that matter, the fanfare witnessed on its inaugural run on April 7. While 38 passengers from here travelled to the other side of the Line of Control (LoC), the number of passengers coming from Muzaffarabad was less at 28, including 11 new passengers. There was tight security right from Srinagar to Kaman Post and even school buses were not allowed on the road till the "caravan of peace" had crossed the outskirts of Srinagar. Four militant organisations - al Nasireen, Save Kashmir Movement, al Arifeen and Farzandan-e-Millat - have not withdrawn their threat to "turn the bus into a coffin." Unlike the panic created on April 6 after the attack on the Tourist Reception Centre, the atmosphere was relaxed on Thursday.

The Hindu, 23 April 2005

Soft borders will help create climate for Kashmir settlement: Manmohan (By Siddharth Varadarajan)

ON BOARD PM'S AIRCRAFT: In clear and direct language, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said on Friday that if the process of allowing increased interaction between the people of Jammu and Kashmir was to continue, it would "create a climate conducive to the final settlement" of the "territorial dispute" in the divided State. Asked for his opinion on Gen. Musharraf's call for soft borders in Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Singh said he himself had been saying that India and Pakistan have to look at the Kashmir problem in a "different perspective." In saying that a soft border would help India and Pakistan move towards a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute - rather than representing a final settlement by itself - Dr. Singh would appear to have opened the door to alternatives which satisfy both the Pakistani position that the LoC cannot be made permanent and the Indian position that the line cannot be redrawn.

The Hindu, 23 April 2005

Bid to take out Eid procession foiled, 80 persons held in Srinagar (Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: Police burst teargas shells and resorted to lathicharge to disperse an Eid-e-Milad procession taken out by the Democratic Political Movement here on Friday, in defiance of prohibitory orders. About 80 processionists were arrested. The separatist leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, was put under house arrest. The procession by the DPM, led by its recently-released chairman, Firdous Ahmed Shah, was broken up even as it began. The DPM is a constituent of the Geelani-led Hurriyat Conference. Earlier, members of the Islamic Students League took out a procession from Madina Chowk but most of them including its leader Bakhshi Shakeel, and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Forum chief, Javed Mir, Noor Kalwal were arrested.

The Indian Express, 23 April 2005

Ultra attacks force Sopore councillors to resign by the dozen

Sopore: Following the attack on two Municipal councillors in Sopore and abduction of the son of the council's president, councillors of Sopore Municipal Council (SMC) are increasingly choosing to give in their papers. More than 12 councillors have publicly announced their resignation, but the government says only one has resigned officially. The resignations have come in the wake of militant attacks on the councillors. Militants seriously injured a councillor, Ghulam Ahmad Teli, at his residence a few days ago. He announced his resignation later. An abortive bid was made on the life of another councillor in which a civilian was seriously injured.

The Indian Express, 23 April 2005

Forces turn the heat on: 9 ultras killed

Srinagar: After the Manmohan Singh-Pervez Musharraf meeting last week in New Delhi, the security forces are

turning the heat on militants, killing nine today in two separate encounters, a day after gunning five militants across the Valley. Yesterday late at night, four militants were shot dead in an encounter with security forces at Churanda, Uri, near the Line of Control. A police statement tersely said four heavily-armed militants died after a gunbattle with security forces. A large cache of arms were recovered from the site of the encounter, including two AK rifles, one UBGL, nine hand grenades and a wireless set. Police said Rs 965 in Indian currency were also recovered from a militant. The upswing in the violence today follows another bloody day yesterday when five militants were killed in two separate encounters, including a top commander of Al-Badr outfit.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 April 2005

70 separatists detained

SRINAGAR: Hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani was today prevented by police from venturing out of his house even as 70 separatist activists were detained when they tried to take out a 'Milad' procession in defiance of prohibitory orders here. Geelani was not allowed to leave his Hyderpora residence, a spokesman of the amalgam said here. The firebrand separatist leader was planning to lead a procession to mark the birthday of Prophet Mohammad in Lal Chowk area. Earlier, police detained nearly 70 separatist activists from Abi Guzar and Fatehkadal areas of the city for defying prohibitory orders, official sources said. At least 55 activists of Islamic Students League (ISL) and Democratic Political Movement (DPM) tried to take out a procession from Abi Guzar area of Lal Chowk, the sources said.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 April 2005

Two infiltrators among 5 militants killed

JAMMU: Five militants including two infiltrators were gunned down by the Army in three separate encounters today while security forces busted two hideouts of the militants. Official sources said troops observed a group of militants trying to infiltrate into Indian territory from Line of Control (LoC) in Sabra Gali of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district in early hours of this morning. The militants opened firing on the Army personnel, who retaliated. Exchange of firing between the two sides continued for 15 minutes in which two infiltrators were killed. Security forces didn't suffer any casualties in the operation. Identity of the militants hasn't been established so far. The fleeing militants also managed to take away weapons of the infiltrators along with them. Recoveries made from him included one AK rifle, three magazines and 19 rounds. Slain militant was a Pakistani, the sources said.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 April 2005

Farooq asks Musharraf to stop terrorism in J&K

SHILLONG: Asking Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to 'deliver' what he 'agreed' upon in Delhi on stopping terrorism in Ja-mmuh and Ka-shmir, National Conference patron and former J&K Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah today called for monitoring of Islamabad's purchase of US arms. Although General Musharraf's visit was stated to be held in an 'atmosphere of cordiality' and his talks with the Hurriyat Conference leaders were also 'candid and straight', it remained to be seen how far he could 'deliver' what he had agreed in Delhi, Abdullah said here. "I hope and pray he (Musharraf) will be able to deliver and his visit will end terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir," the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister who is on a two-day visit here to spread awareness on AIDS, said.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 April 2005

Two more infiltrators killed

JAMMU: The Border Security Force (BSF) today repatriated three Pakistani students including a Chartered Accountant, to Rangers after they inadvertently crossed over to Indian territory at Jaman Bela post in Akhnoor yesterday. Meanwhile, Army today gunned down two more infiltrators on Line of Control (LoC) at Sabra Gali in Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district taking death toll during last two days to four. Four AK rifles and other ammunition have been recovered from the infiltrators. Official sources said the BSF authorities decided to repatriate three students after it was established during preliminary questioning that they had crossed the International Border on a motor-cycle No. 3990 TSM by mistake. Meanwhile, troops who had launched a massive search and cordon operation at Sabra Gali in Mendhar sector of Poonch district yesterday after eliminating two infiltrators, encountered two more militants in Sabra forests this morning and challenged them. In the exchange of firing, both militants were killed.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 April 2005

Separatists, politicians share platform, demand more CBMs (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR: Notwithstanding ideological differences, several separatist leaders today shared a platform with mainstream political leaders here, putting forth their views on how to resolve Kashmir issue and demanding more Kashmir-specific confidence-building measures. The participants in one voice supported the on-going peace process between India and Pakistan, in particular the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, sources said.

Former chairman of Hurriyat Conference's moderate faction Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, chairman of breakaway faction of People's Conference Sajad Gani Lone, JKLF leader Ghulam Rasool Dar Eidi and Democratic Freedom Party leader Moulana Abdullah Tari attended the four-hour closed-door meeting. Though invited, no one from Hurriyat's hardline faction, headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, turned up for the meeting.

The Daily Times, 24 April 2005

Kashmiri Hindus criticise Indo-Pak peace process

NEW DELHI: Panun Kashmir, an organisation of displaced Kashmiri Hindus, has warned that the "flawed" peace process with Pakistan could push India towards a "second partition". The organisation also accused Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government of "giving Pakistan equal status to decide the future of Jammu and Kashmir". Warning that the confidence building measures may be used by Pakistan to promote its "partisan interests" in Kashmir, Chrangu said, "These could prove self-destructive and lead to the second partition of India. Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party's Kashmir unit has demanded the involvement of people of Jammu and Ladakh in the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

The Daily Times, 24 April 2005

Pakistan and India should resolve Kashmir: Musharraf

JAKARTA: President Pervez Musharraf on Friday said Pakistan and India should take advantage of improved bilateral relations and resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir. The president was briefing UN Secretary General Kofi Annan about his talks with the Indian leaders during his recent visit to India. Mr Annan welcomed the thaw in relations between the two South Asian countries.

The Daily Times 24 April 2005

11 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Indian troops shot dead 11 suspected militants, four of them near the border with Pakistan, while rebels killed two civilians, the army and police said. The latest violence came a day after a second successful bus run between the Indian and Pakistani zones of the disputed region, despite threats by hardline groups to attack it. "Four of the militants were killed in the Rampur area of ... the Uri sector," as they entered Indian Kashmir from the Pakistani zone, army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel VK Batra said. Five more militants were killed in a fierce clash near the northern town of Handwara. In other violence Friday, militants shot dead a youth in the district of Pulwama and killed another by slitting his throat in the northern Baramulla district, police said. The militant attacks have continued despite last week's talks between Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who vowed to settle the decades-old dispute over Kashmir.

The Daily Times, 24 April 2005

Kashmir solution in 2-3 yrs: Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Saturday that the Kashmir issue might take two to three years to resolve. "Pakistan is ready to show flexibility to resolve the longstanding issue of Kashmir provided India also does so," Rashid said at a press conference. He said it did not mean that Pakistan had given up UN resolutions on Kashmir. "We want a solution to the issue according to Kashmiris' wishes," he said, adding Pakistan was looking for a respectable and acceptable solution of the issue without victory or defeat to anybody.

The Daily Times, 24 April 2005

Hizb to consider truce offer (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Held Kashmir's main militant group said on Saturday it would "seriously consider" any ceasefire offer by New Delhi to end bloodshed in the insurgency-racked region. The statement by a top Hizbul Mujahideen leader to a local news agency followed a pledge this week by India and Pakistan to reach a "final settlement" on Kashmir. "If they (the Indians) are serious about it (a ceasefire), Hizb would seriously consider it," Gazi Misbahudin, chief operational commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, told the Kashmir News Service.

The Daily Excelsior, 25 April 2005

Army porter killed, civilian injured

JAMMU: An Army porter was killed by the militants and another civilian was shot at and seriously injured in Mahore and Gandoh last night while security forces and police recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition from separate places during the search operations. Local militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were suspected to be behind the killing. Another civilian Farooq Ahmad son of Mohd Shafi was shot at and injured seriously by the militants in his house at village Thaloran... Police last night recovered a consignment of arms from village Shap nullah in Chadwal area of Hiranagar sector in Kathua district. Recoveries included one AK rifle, one magazine, 210 rounds, one wireless set, four rifle grenades, one hand grenade, one pouch, 60 meters fuse

wire and one compass.

The Daily Times, 25 April 2005

Armed struggle will continue till Kashmir free: MJC (By Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: The Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) has said that militant organisations will not give up their weapons till Jammu and Kashmir is freed from Indian rule. MJC Chairman Syed Salahuddin told Daily Times on Sunday that people suggesting times had changed and the role of the gun in liberation movements after 9/11 had ended were living in a "fools paradise". About the recent Indian offer of talking to militant leaders, he said they (militants) were not ready to be part of a dialogue at the cost of freedom and that the freedom struggle would continue till Kashmir's liberation. Kashmir's political leaders should set aside their differences and unite, he added. Talking about the current India-Pakistan dialogue, he said Kashmiris would not gain anything from it. The MJC was not against the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service, but was against the procedures under which it was started because it feared that the service was an attempt to create soft borders, he said, adding, "The bus service has put the real issue on the backburner."

The Indian Express, 25 April 2005

Al-Mansurian on US foreign ultra body list (Press Trust of India)

New Delhi, April 24: THE US has put Al-Mansurian, a shadow outfit of Lashker-e-Taiba, which is carrying out terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, on the list of Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) and specially-designated global terrorists. This is seen as a part of the US's continued efforts after the September 11 attack. The Treasury Department has put all the alias of the the LeT in the list. The list released by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) also includes other names of the Lashker which were announced by the terrorist group after it was banned by the US in December 2001 and by Pakistan in January 2002. Of this, Al-Mansurian or Al-Mansoorian is the only terrorist outfit which is active in Jammu and Kashmir and has carried out various actions resulting in the death of innocent civilians...

The Hindu, 25 April 2005

Willing to consider truce offer, says Hizb (Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen has said that it was willing to "seriously consider" any truce offer by New Delhi's to put an end to 15-year-old bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir. The Hizb `chief operational commander' Gazi Misbahuddin told the local news agency, Kashmir News Service, that any ceasefire announcement should be followed in word and deed on the ground. Gazi, who is the top commander of the Hizb in Kashmir, reiterated the outfit's stand of involving the people of the State in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem. "In these circumstances, it is futile to expect a ceasefire from New Delhi but if they are serious about it we will seriously consider it." Militants were representatives of the Kashmiri people and the Pakistani leadership had realised it, he said and added that confidence-building measures failed on many occasions, as there was no progress on the core issue.

The Daily Excelsior, 26 April 2005

PDP activist, militant killed

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants have gunned down an activist of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Lolab area of Kupwara district and security forces have killed a Kashmiri militant in Kokernag area of Anantnag district since last evening. Informed sources said that unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants, kidnapped a PDP activist, namely Sajjad Masoodi S/o Mohammad Anwar Masoodi, from his village Khurhama in Lolab valley of Kupwara district late last evening and shot him dead in a nearby jungle. Sources said that troops of Rashtriya Rifles 36 Bn conducted a cordon-and-search operation at Suyan Kokernag. During the operation, an encounter took place between the holed up militants and security forces in which one local militant got killed. One AK-56 rifles, one wireless set and a quantity of ammunition were recovered from his possession.

The Daily Times, 26 April 2005

Pakistan sidelining Kashmir dispute, says Hizbul leader

LAHORE: The chief of Kashmir's largest militant group accused the Pakistani government on Monday of sidelining the Kashmir dispute with India. Hizbul Mujahideen leader Syed Salahuddin also said that insurgent groups could hold talks with India over Kashmir, but New Delhi should first declare the territory a "disputed region." Salahuddin did not openly reject efforts by Pakistan and India to improve relations, but said Pakistan had "sidelined" the Kashmir issue while India stood its ground. "Pakistan seems to have changed its stance on Kashmir while India is still determined on its stance," Salahuddin told journalists during a visit to Lahore.

The Indian Express, 26 April 2005

Unidentified men slit throat of youth

Jammu: TWO unidentified persons killed a 30-year-old youth by slitting his throat on Saturday night. According to sources, two unidentified persons came to the dhok of Abdul Ahmed on Saturday night and took him along with them in front of his relatives. Sources said that nearly after taking him one km away from the dhok they killed him by slitting his throat. Police after registering the case has initiated the inquiry. Meanwhile, an ambush party was fired upon by militants at Kachnari (Gul) on Sunday. This was retaliated by the security forces and later they recovered One AK magazine, 30 rounds AK ammunition and 17 rounds fired cases.

The Indian Express, 26 April 2005

'Councillors in Valley under ultras' threat'

Srinagar: JAMMU and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) has expressed its concern over the resignations submitted by the recently elected municipal councillors across the Valley. Dozens of municipal councillors elected in the civic polls that were held in Januray-February 2005, after a gap more than 25 years, have resigned after militants attacked many councillors killing some of them. Vice president of JKPCC Bashir Ahmad Magray, while expressing his concern over the resignations, has said that lack of security and transport facilities to the councillors has forced them to take such a step. Magray said that the militant attacks on the councillors, in which some of them were killed, has created fear and a sense of insecurity among the them in the Kashmir Valley. Magray has urged upon the state government to provide adequate security and make necessary arrangements for these councillors.

The Hindu, 26 April 2005

'We have moved towards final solution to Kashmir' (By B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Sounding upbeat, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has claimed that his talks in New Delhi have yielded positive results as Pakistan and India had resolved clearly to move towards a final solution to the Kashmir dispute. "My talks with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, yielded positive results and led to a joint statement, which reflected a clear resolve to address all issues and a resolve to move towards a final settlement of Kashmir," he said. Specifically commenting on the outcome of his talks with the Indian leadership, Gen. Musharraf said: "A breakthrough has been achieved in the peace process between the two countries."

The Daily Excelsior, 26 April 2005

Hurriyat to talk to Kashmiri Pandit outfits

JAMMU: Asserting that it was keen on return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley, the Hurriyat Conference today said it will invite representatives of the displaced community next month to discuss the issue. A meeting of the representatives of Kashmiri Pandits from Jammu and other parts of the country would be held in Srinagar in the second half of next month with the Kashmiri leadership of APHC where threadbare discussions are scheduled on the issue of return of Kashmiri Pandits, president of J&K Freedom Party Syed Salim Geelani told reporters here. "Kashmir is incomplete without Kashmiri Pandits and present Kashmiri leadership is trying to fill this gap," Geelani, incharge of public relations wing of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat led by Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, said. However, Geelani said, the demand for separate homeland by a few Pandit organisations is not a solution.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 April 2005

Militant killed, another surrenders

JAMMU: A militant of Hizb-e-Islami outfit was killed while another militant of Al-Badr outfit surrendered before Army in two separate incidents in twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch today. Troops gunned down a top Pakistani militant Moosa Gujarati, an "area commander" of Hizb-e-Islami in an encounter at village Harni in Gursai area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch early this morning. One AK rifle, four magazines, 30 rounds and two hand grenades were recovered from the slain militant. A militant of Al-Badr outfit surrendered before police along with one pistol, two magazines, 15 rounds and one hand grenade in Dharamshal area of Kalakote tehsil in Rajouri district. Army arrested two Bangladeshi nationals in Suchetgarh area of RS Pura sector when they were trying to exfiltrate to Pakistan.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 April 2005

6 militants killed in Kupwara

SRINAGAR: In a major cordon-and-search operation, security forces have killed six militants in Chokibal area of Kupwara district today. Early this morning, a fierce gunbattle commenced between the holed up militants and security forces which lasted for the whole day. Six unidentified militants were killed. A Defence spokesman described it as a neat and clean operation, while claiming that none of the troopers or civilians had sustained any harm. He said that after killing six spotted militants, troops extended the search operation to the adjoining forest area as some militants of the group were suspected to have escaped. Sources said that the militants killed in the gunbattle with Army were all unidentified. However, four of them were believed to be Pakistani nationals.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 April 2005

J&K my Ministry's agenda No.1: Sahai

Srinagar: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said the recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir have brought about vast improvement in the situation and called upon people to stand guard to the emerging scenario... the Chief Minister said positive atmosphere has developed in the state with India and Pakistan coming closer and deciding to sort out differences through dialogue and reconciliation. He said the J&K specific confidence building measures taken by the two countries have led to a new hope and prospect in the state. He said the Prime Minister visited Jammu and Kashmir five times, which shows the importance he has attached to the State. He said the need of the hour is to accept the ground reality and help promote the emerging atmosphere. He said gun has no place in the current situation and alluded to the repeated offer of dialogue by the Prime Minister to separatists.

The Daily Times, 27 April 2005

Think-tank proposes Kashmir settlement guidelines

WASHINGTON: "Guidelines" for a Kashmir settlement devised by the Stimson Centre, a local think tank with an interest in Kashmir, call for a peaceful settlement that takes into account the "wishes of all concerned." The guidelines seek a Kashmir settlement through peaceful means alone that take into account the wishes of all concerned. All parties are to stop resorting to force, violence and coercion. There should be no threats by force or violence to the governing institutions and political processes currently existing on both sides of the Kashmir divide, pending the resolution of their status through a final settlement involving all parties. The guidelines also call for respect for the lives, liberty, human rights and dignity of the people living on both sides of the Kashmir divide.

The Daily Times, 27 April 2005

Seven killed in Kashmir violence (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Indian troops killed six militants in a mountainous Kashmir district bordering the Pakistani-zone of the divided state, while suspected rebels hanged to death a civilian, police and army officials said on Tuesday. The rebels were killed during gun battles in the forests of Kupwara district, army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel VK Batra told AFP. "The operation in the forests is continuing," he said, adding the troops were searching for more militants. Five assault rifles, 10 Chinese-made grenades and one radio set were recovered from the site of the fighting, Batra said. In the neighbouring Baramulla district suspected rebels hanged to death a Muslim civilian, police said. No rebel group claimed responsibility for the killing.

The Daily Times, 27 April 2005

Kashmir linked to Pakistan's national identity issue (By Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The Kashmir issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily without addressing the issue of Pakistan's national identity of which Kashmir is a part, according to a US academic. Dr Stanley Kober of the Cato Institute, asked by Daily Times to comment on the outcome of President Pervez Musharraf's visit to India and its implications for Kashmir, said the major outcome of the recent meeting was the focus on confidence-building measures (CBMs). Ideally, he pointed out, they worked in two ways. First, and most immediately, they could allow the parties to move away from "hair-trigger" military postures, he added. Over the long term, growing confidence could help ameliorate perceptions that impelled countries to view each other as adversaries, he said.

The Daily Times, 27 April 2005

I will not make a U-turn on Kashmir, says president

LAHORE: President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday resolved that he would not make a U-turn on Kashmir by any means. Speaking to PTV, President Musharraf said he wanted to comfort Kashmiris by resolving the Kashmir issue once and for all. "I want to tell all Pakistanis and Kashmiris that I am doing this with all my sincerity, more for Kashmiris than for Pakistanis," he added. President Musharraf said a lot of thought and sensibility was required to carry forward talks on Kashmir. "I expect all Pakistanis to support me in my effort to resolve the Kashmir dispute," he said.

The Indian Express, 27 April 2005

Area commander of Hel killed

Jammu: AN area commander of Harkat-e-Islami militant outfit was killed in an encounter with the troops of Romeo Force in Harni Gursar area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district. While troops averted major tragedy by timely detecting RDX filled ghee tin planted near Khuninala in Surankote. Sources said troops of Romeo Force following specific information about the presence of militants launched a search operation in the area. On seeing the troops, coming the militants hiding there opened indiscriminate fire. In the ensuing encounter, an area commander of Hel was killed. However, his accomplice managed to flee. The slain ultra has been identified as

Abu Musa, resident of Pakistan. Meanwhile, troops averted a major tragedy by timely detecting a ghee tin filled with RDX planted by the militants near Khuninala area of Surankote tehsil in Poonch district.

The Indian Express, 27 April 2005

World terror attacks tripled in 2004, half of them in Kashmir

Washington: The U.S. count of major world terrorist attacks more than tripled in 2004, a rise that may revive debate on whether the Bush administration is winning the war on terrorism, congressional aides said on Tuesday. The number of "significant" international terrorist attacks rose to about 650 last year from about 175 in 2003, according to congressional aides briefed on the numbers by State Department and intelligence officials on Monday. The aides were told the surge partly reflected an increased tally of violence in India and Pakistan related to the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which both countries claim, and the devotion of more manpower to the U.S. monitoring effort, which resulted in more attacks being counted overall.

The Daily Times, 28 April 2005

9 killed in Kashmir (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Indian troops on Wednesday killed nine suspected militants in three separate clashes in Indian-controlled Kashmir, officials said. Eight of the militants were killed in two separate clashes in the forests of Kupwara district near the heavily militarized ceasefire Line of Control that divides the state. Another rebel was shot dead by troops in southern Anantnag district, police and Border Security Force officials said. Kupwara's forest-clad hills are frequently used by rebels to infiltrate into Indian Kashmir, according to Indian army officials. As part of a 15-month-old peace process, Pakistan has pledged to crackdown on militants crossing from Pakistani-controlled soil into Indian Kashmir. Over 40,000 people have been killed since the revolt erupted in 1989, officials say. Separatists say the toll is at least double that number.

The Daily Times, 28 April 2005

APHC to unite in wake of Musharraf's visit (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: President Musharraf's message to the APHC factions, to unite or lose relevance in their Kashmir struggle, has made Hurriyat leaders scramble to unify. The moderate APHC announced in Srinagar that it would increase unification efforts to bring all pro-freedom groups under one umbrella again, a move coming two days after hardline faction leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani said that he was not against unity. APHC moderates' chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq welcomed Geelani's statement regarding unity and said the conglomerate should now try to unify the APHC.

The Daily Excelsior, 28 April 2005

Kupwara encounter toll reaches 10

SRINAGAR: While security forces today killed six militants and militants shot dead three persons, including a Police constable, total number of the militants killed in the 48-hour-long operation in Kupwara forests has reached 10. Informed sources told the Excelsior that Army, which has been joined by Border Security Force, has killed four more militants in the massive cordon-and-search operation going on in Drangiyar forests in Chokibal area of Kupwara district. On Tuesday, troops had killed six militants and expanded the operation to a vast area. Defence sources today said that four more militants have been killed in the same operation in the last 24 hours. They said that the search was underway for some more militants who were suspected to have escaped.

The Daily Excelsior, 28 April 2005

Militant shot dead in Doda

JAMMU: A militant was gunned down by security forces today at village Trang in Udhyanpur area of Doda district. The militant was killed in an hour long encounter with security forces this morning. Identity of the slain militant hasn't been established so far but he was believed to be an activist of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit. One pistol, six rounds and one magazine were recovered from the slain militant, official sources said. After the encounter, the security personnel carried out searches in the area and recovered 60 kg ration and utensils.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 April 2005

Win-win situation for all imperative to solve Kashmir: Governor

NEW DELHI: Jammu and Kashmir Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd) S K Sinha today emphasized political solution for Kashmir imbroglio with win win situation for all concerned India, Pakistan and people of Kashmir. He said improvement in situation has been so great during the past two years that at times one has to rub one's eyes in disbelief so see the welcome change in the overall scenario. The lobby for peace has been growing strong and the international climate is also conducive which can help in achieving the goal of peace, prosperity and final settlement of the Kashmir problem, he added. Expressing satisfaction over the winds of change sweeping over

India and Pakistan and also internally within Kashmir, the Governor stressed the need on promoting a situation in which a political solution may emerge to the satisfaction of all.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 April 2005

Three attacks on police personnel in Valley ASI, cop, PDP activist among 6 killed

SRINAGAR: In three simultaneous attacks, militants have killed three personnel of Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP), including an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI), in Kashmir valley last evening. An activist of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is among four civilians killed in other incidents of violence since last evening. Informed sources told the Excelsior that unidentified gunmen appeared in a locality behind the famous Nishat Bagh in Srinagar outskirts last evening and they kidnapped ASI Ali Mohammad of the Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) from his home. Reports from south Kashmir added that unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants...

The Daily Excelsior, 29 April 2005

6 ultras killed, arms haul in Rajouri

JAMMU: Army today foiled an infiltration attempt on Line of Control (LoC) in forward village of Balnoi in Krishna Ghati (KG) area of Mendhar sector in Poonch district killing four militants while two ultras were eliminated in two separate encounters in Rajouri and Doda district. Rajouri police recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition from Chakka Kheti in Kandi area including one M 16 rifle... and one global communication set used by Al-Qaeda... Official sources said the troops of 1st JAK Rifles and 141 bn BSF thwarted an infiltration attempt by a group of militants at Balnoi this morning after about two and a half hour long encounter. Recoveries made from the infiltrators include six AK rifles, 19 magazines, 180 rounds, one Elink wireless set, one UBGL, two grenades, 19 hand grenades, two kg explosives, Rs 6700 Indian currency and one binocular. Security forces didn't suffer any casualties in the operation, the sources said, adding two to three militants were still at large. An unidentified militant was gunned down by the security forces at village Dareji in Kandi area of Koteranka in Rajouri district.

The Daily Times, 29 April 2005

Kashmiris' sacrifices will bring results: Aziz

LUDDHAR: Sacrifices by the Kashmiri people will not be in vain and they will get their rights, with the support of the Pakistani people, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told a public gathering here on Thursday. Aziz said the government wanted a solution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and stressed there would be no compromise on the Kashmir issue.

The Indian Express, 29 April 2005

4 infiltrators killed after 15-hr long encounter in Mendhar

Jammu/Srinagar: Troops foiled an infiltration bid killing four militants while they were trying to crossover to Indian side from the line of control (LoC) on Pioneer Hills in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district while 35 kgs of RDX, 46 explosive devices and M-16 modern warfare rifles were among huge cache of arms and ammunition seized during separate search operations in Rajouri and Doda districts. This is the second infiltration bid by ultras in the past one week after melting of snow along LoC. The identity of the slain ultras is yet to be ascertained. Six AK rifles with 19 magazines, 180 rounds, a UBGL, two UBGL shells, and nine hand grenades were seized from the encounter site. In another encounter troops of 166 Mountain Brigade killed a foreign militant owing allegiance to Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit in Kalakote area of Rajouri district. Meanwhile, security forces today recovered a huge cache arms and explosives, including 35 kg of RDX, 46 explosive devices and two M-16 modern warfare rifles from Rajouri district. Senior security force officer said the M-16 rifles are used by US and Pak soldiers.

The Indian Express, 29 April 2005

2000 ex-servicemen, war widows participate in rally

Jammu: At least 2000 ex-servicemen and war widows participated in the ex-servicemen rally organised by the Tiger Division at Zorawar Stadium, Sunjwan, here today. Both the government and private agencies had set up 15 stalls to encourage self-employment among the ex-servicemen and their dependents. Earlier, Commander Sunjwan Brigade welcomed the participants and apprised them about the conduct of the rally. Addressing the rally, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Tiger Division Maj Gen Vinay Sharma thanked the ex-servicemen for their large participation.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2005

2 Army sources killed at Baramulla shrine

SRINAGAR: Militants tonight gunned down two Army sources at a crowded shrine in Baramulla town. Earlier, today militants killed a constable of Special Operations Group (SOG) of Anantnag District Police in an attack in Pahalgam area. Informed sources told the Excelsior that unidentified militants struck on two counter-insurgent

sources of Army at a revered shrine in Baramulla town, killing them both on spot, at 2010 hours this evening. . No militant outfit had claimed responsibility of the shootout till late tonight.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2005

Top HM ultra held in Kishtwar

JAMMU: Army and police today apprehended a militant and his associate, belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, during a search operation at Puhi, Kishtwar in Doda district. Official sources said the militants were arrested from a hideout at Puhi in early hours of this morning. A militant, killed yesterday in an encounter with security forces in Koteranka, Rajouri, was today identified as Abdullah Bukhari of Hizbul Mujahideen Pir Panjal Regiment, a 'section commander' for Kalakote. Security forces recovered one UBGL launcher, eight UBGL grenades, 21 solar rockets with fin, 17 solar rockets without fin, seven hand grenades, one pistol and 13 rounds during two search operations at Bakarwal Sopur in Hari Budha and Jabra in Darhal area of Poonch and Rajouri districts.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2005

Militants lose top commanders as peace process moves ahead

SRINAGAR: Even as India and Pakistan have declared to set out on irreversible peace process, Army and other security forces have dealt a major blow to almost all militant groups active in Kashmir valley, neutralising 152 ultras, including 38 top commanders, since the beginning of this year. Pro-Pakistan militant outfits Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen have borne the brunt losing 24 commanders, including three divisional commanders and 13 district commanders, according to statistics compiled by the Army. Al-Badr militant outfit also suffered heavily at the hands of security forces as it lost 10 of its men, including five top commanders in the battleground. Army authorities maintain successes in the anti-militancy operations was mainly due to support and tip offs from the local populations. In the current month alone, the Army has eliminated nearly 100 militants, the officials said.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2005

Hizb initiative to unify Hurriyat factions

SRINAGAR: If reports reaching here from Muzaffarabad are to be believed, Kashmiri guerrilla organisation Hizbul Mujahideen has been desperately trying to reunify the split factions of the separatist Hurriyat Conference. In the last two years, everybody from the Hurriyat's well-wishers in Srinagar to its masters in Islamabad has failed to forge unity among the fragmented constituents of the conglomerate. Mirwaiz has claimed at least twice in the last 16 months that he had tried his best to reunify the split factions and other estranged leaders of the conglomerate. Later, he admitted candidly that his efforts had failed. Though neither Geelani nor Mirwaiz were available for comments on the fresh development, Mirwaiz told his audiences at Jamia Masjid that he had started a fresh effort of forging unity among the divided separatist leaders.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2005

Governor sees silver linings in Kashmir clouds

NEW DELHI: Governor Lt. Gen (Retd) S K Sinha today said the dark clouds over Kashmir are now showing many silver linings, holding a promise of bright sunshine. Delivering a lecture on Kashmir in New Delhi, he said that pleasant winds are blowing across the sub-continent and an atmosphere of trust and understanding is building between India and Pakistan, beneficiaries of which would ultimately be the people of Kashmir, who yearn for peace and return of normalcy. Lt Gen Sinha said the challenge before the present generation of people in India and Pakistan is to work out a solution which will satisfy all. On the security scenario, the Governor said the incidents of violence came down from 3479 in 2003 to 2586 in 2004, showing a reduction of 26 pc. He said the real success story in countering terrorist violence has been the erection of a 750 kilometer long barbed wire along the LoC by September last year.