

KashmirTimes, 1 April 2007

**Opinion: Win-win for coalition, loss to the people (B Assad)**

This author was about to write on a very different subject pertaining to the sufferings of the people, when the news of setting up Expert Panel to look into the demands of demilitarization came and within no time dozens of PDP workers assembled in the Civil lines area of Srinagar city burning crackers and celebrating what they called victory of PDP. It was also decided to formulate a review Committee to undertake a review of the application of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in different areas of the state. The proposed mechanism would also include a high Power Committee headed by the Defense Minister which would comprise representatives of Central and J&K governments to take decisions on the recommendations of the Expert Panel and Review Committee. On the other hand Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad reiterated his stand on the issue by rejecting the demand for demilitarization adding that no political party should interfere in sensitive matters of security in Jammu and Kashmir. On decision of formation of Committees on the issue Azad emphasized the need of non involvement of political leaders..

Daily Excelsior, 1 April 2007

**Triumphant Mufti says Sonia saved J&K coalition**

Srinagar, Mar 31: The much speculated meeting of Peoples Democratic Party's Political Affairs Committee today expressed satisfaction over Government of India's recent decision of constituting three high level committees to review armed forces special powers and relocation of troops in Jammu & Kashmir. Party's patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed later asserted that the UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi had saved the Congress-led coalition Government in the State by resolving the two-month-long in-house crisis to the best satisfaction of his party and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing a crowded news conference in an ambience of high militarisation armoured bunkers, gun-totting soldiers, rolls of Constantine wires and the busy Residency Road completely blocked for traffic at PDP headquarters this afternoon, Mufti Sayeed asserted that people of Kashmir would get the relief of demilitarisation in near future..

KashmirTimes, 1 April 2007

**Editorial: Selective probes of Hr abuses**

The government claims that it has begun to take action in cases of human rights violations after the Ganderbal fake encounters came to limelight is rather amusing. Just how many cases of human rights violations are being investigated, as compared to the number of complaints and allegations pouring in' In the face of number of complaints, the action is rather negligible. And, if one has to go by the past record of the state government, it may eventually amount to no action at all. First, like always, few handpicked cases are taken up and projected as indexes of the promptness of the government on the human rights front. The states home department has a list of cases in the last seventeen years where inquiries have been ordered. In more than half the cases, the enquiry reports have yet to be finalized. In the rest, the government is unable to talk about what happened. As per the records of the state legislative assembly, the state home department has maintained that enquiries have been ordered in 79 cases of custodial killings and reports in 35 of these have been finalized and submitted while in 44 cases the

reports have not even been finalized.

KashmirTimes, 1 April 2007

**Opinion: Justice, peace and solution in J&K-IV (G Navlakha)**

Recall that the Indian government is showing no inclination towards dismantling militarization. Indeed an additional argument for continuing with militarization will now be provided by the need to impose the agreement reached between India and Pakistan on a reluctant and defiant people. Thus Indian civilian and military entities who occupy , own, manage and control policies over land and water and the attendant financial dependence and their corrupting influence will also have the task cut out to enforce the peace process. Against this background far too much is sheer make believe and far too many imponderables ignored. And contrary to claim neither the current peace process nor promotion of peace through economic reconstruction is capable of burying the right of self-determination and/or solving the problem that has defied solution for six decades. The point is even if for sake of argument one accepts the need to bring down violence it cannot be de-linked from the fundamental demand of the people to be allowed to show through referendum what they desire. It is this de-linking that is the crux of the matter. This negation sinks the process where it really matters; battle of hearts and minds..

Daily Excelsior, 2 April 2007

**Cong leader gunned down at Baramulla shrine**

Srinagar , Apr 1: An unidentified gunman, suspected to be a militant, has gunned down senior Congress activist Jan Mohammad Kakroo at a shrine in his hometown Baramulla on occasion of Eid e Milad un Nabi today. Kakroos assassination has come as this years first political killing in Kashmir valley. Meanwhile, one soldier of Army and two militants have reportedly died in two different gunbattles in north Kashmir since last evening. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that 58 year old Azhar Mohammad alias Jan Mohammad Kakroo S/o Ghulam Nabi Kakroo R/o Kanlibagh, Baramulla town, was coming out of Dargah-e-Aalia in Khwaja Sahab locality of old town, after displaying the holy relic of Prophet Mohammad at 0735 hours when an unidentified gunman drew out an AK 47 rifle and fired at least 10 shots on him in point blank range. Kakroo died on spot. Sources said that Jan Mohammad, who was a leading businessman and political activist for the last 30 years and had also served a 3 year term as President Federation Chamber of Industries Kashmir FCIK, had reached the shrine in old town, in the wee hours for the traditional display of the holy relic..

Indian Express, 2 April 2007

**Kashmir violence falls to all time low**

Srinagar, April 1: The number of daily killings in Jammu and Kashmir has fallen by more than two-thirds, the lowest in the past 17 years, a police official said on Sunday. A cautious peace process between India and Pakistan is believed to have cut the number of terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir. In the past few years, there has been a considerable decline in violence. The killings have come down from 10 a day in 2001 to three a day in 2006, a senior security official, who did not want to be identified, told Reuters. This has been the lowest figure since the insurgency erupted in late 1989. But people are still being killed in daily shootouts and occasional grenade and bomb attacks in the Himalayan

region. On Thursday night, suspected terrorists shot dead five road workers and a day later wounded more than a dozen civilians in a grenade attack..

Greater Kashmir, 2 April 2007

**Editorial: De-militarisation or self-deception'**

An unusually long spell of oppressive rule teaches people a fine art of self-deception. They try to throw away the yoke of slavery and oppression by different methods and faced with a mighty opponent even a small and miniscule concession makes them feel elated. This is precisely what has happened to a mainstream party claiming to represent the true aspirations of the Kashmiri people. They are jubilant that they have received a commitment, not for de-militarisation but for possible relocation of security forces after an assessment is made by the three central committees constituted for the purpose. It is said that a committee is formed only to avoid taking a straightforward decision. A committee is a group of persons who do not want to take a collective decision and are incapable of taking individual decisions. It is a well known fact not only in India but all over the world that Kashmir is totally militarised at present. Different people advance different reasons for this militarisation. However, all seem to either indulge in self-deception or try to deceive one another. No one has the courage to come out with the bare truth. Even if someone comes out with the bare truth, he or she does not have the courage to stand by it.

Times of India, 2 April 2007

**Opinion: Valley needs army (Sandeep Bamzai)**

The government of India should not preside over the demilitarisation of Kashmir. PDP leader Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and his daughter Mehbooba have called for demilitarisation all over again, which chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad is fortunately fighting tooth and nail. Allowing people-to-people relationship through cross-border trade and travel is only one aspect of the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan. What is paramount are India's security and geo strategic considerations vis-a-vis Kashmir. PDP's support for demilitarisation signifies the growing proximity between it and Hurriyat on the one hand and its increasing alienation with the Congress on the other. In fact, one of PDP's electoral planks was disbanding the counter-insurgency force comprising erstwhile militants. Indian army chief General J J Singh rejected Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf's demilitarisation call last year, saying that the Indian army needed to be present in Kashmir. The army's withdrawal from sensitive towns such as Srinagar, Baramulla and Kupwara amounts to the withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, leaving a dangerous vacuum to be exploited by underground militant elements abetted by Pakistan. Besides, Jammu and Ladakh provinces are still part of India..

Daily Excelsior, 3 April 2007

**SH's vehicle torched as PDP men attack Cong MLC**

Srinagar, Apr 2: While a mob of PDP activists attacked Congress party's MLC Ali Mohammad Bhat at Mujgund on Srinagar-Bandipore Road, PDP and Congress supporters clashed at Ganderbal as both the major partners in the coalition Government claimed credit for creation of the new revenue district today. Informed sources told the

EXCELSIOR that hundreds of students had blocked Srinagar-Bandipore and gathered at Mujgund with the complaint that proper teaching staff had not been provided to the local Higher Secondary School by the Government. They were shouting slogans against the Minister for Education Peerzada Sayeed for his continued failure in providing Lecturers for the upgraded High School. They complained that Minister for Education had chosen to remain callous as precious time of the students was getting wasted due to poor performance of the Minister incharge, who, according to them, had no time for villages which had voted for PDP in the last few elections. The mob, which was quickly joined by a large number of residents, intercepted the cavalcade of the Congress party's lately elected MLC, Ali Mohammad Bhat..

Greater Kashmir, 3 April 2007

### **INQUIRY COMMISSION TO PROBE CUSTODIAL KILLINGS**

Jammu, Apr 2: The State Government has appointed a Commission of Inquiry comprising Justice ML Koul, retired judge of High Court, to look into various aspects pertaining to the custodial killings and fake encounters. The SRO issued by Law Department in this regard reads: Whereas, the Government is of the opinion that it is necessary to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to enquire into a definite matter of public importance, namely the recent alleged custodial killing/fake encounter, resulting in the death of some persons like Abdul Rahman Padder son of Ghulam Rasool Padder r/o Larnoo, Kokernag, district Anantnag Islamabad in the Valley; Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir Commission of Inquiry Act, 1962, the Government hereby appoints a Commission of Inquiry comprising Justice ML Koul, retired judge of the High Court with the following terms of reference..

Kashmir Times, 3 April 2007

### **Hurriyat pins hopes in SAARC for Kashmir solution**

Srinagar, Apr 2: Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat Conference today expressed its hope that the SAARC Conference will create a favourable atmosphere for the settlement of political issues including Kashmir issue. A spokesman of Mirwaiz Hurriyat said that a meeting of executive council of Hurriyat was held which was chaired by the chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. He said that the members expressed their hope that the SAARC conference will provide an opportunity to the members countries to achieve a movement forward towards the resolution of political disputes including the Kashmir issue. We hope that the conference will create a favourable atmosphere which will help in accelerating the pace of dialogue process for the resolution of Kashmir issue, the spokesman quoted the members as saying during the executive meeting..

Greater Kashmir, 3 April 2007

### **Editorial: Consolidate the Gains**

There is a lot of forward movement on Kashmir on track two or back channels assert many political leaders in and outside Kashmir. There is no reason not to believe these leaders as the two countries have been engaged on track two for past more than ten years. It is believed that based on the discussions and debates that have been taking place on the back channels the two countries have exchanged highly significant papers that would help in finding out an amicable settlement of the fifty nine old year dispute that has

caused four wars and number of battles between them. The dispute had not only brought the South-Asian region on the brink of a nuclear holocaust but seen in retrospect it has been primary cause of poverty and deprivation for teeming millions that continue to live below the poverty line in the two countries. History in fact had thrown up many opportunities for the two countries to resolve the dispute but they were lost in labyrinth of diplomatic and political showdowns. History is replete with instances that sufficiently prove that the policies of procrastination bear no dividends instead endanger security of any nation state howsoever strong it may be. Procrastination in reality is bureaucratic not even diplomatic tactics that the sub-continent inherited from British Imperialists..

The Tribune, 3 April 2007

**Resentment over not sending militants to JIC (ML Kak)**

Jammu, April 2: Senior functionaries of the state police and intelligence agencies feel perturbed over deviation from the 15-year-old practice of sending those militants, who laid down weapons before the troops, to the Joint Interrogation Centre JIC for ascertaining their antecedents and the purpose for their surrender. A senior police officer of the rank of DIG told this correspondent on Saturday, while referring to the surrender of eight militants in Uri border sector recently, On the one hand we are happy that militants have started laying down their weapons before the troops, on the other hand we are perturbed when we are told that those who have surrendered before the Army should not be sent to the JIC for questioning. He confirmed that in recent weeks over 120 militants, camping across the LoC, had crossed the border from across Keran, Karnah and Uri sectors for surrendering before the troops. He said after handing over their weapons to the senior Army officers, they were handed over to the police after securing an assurance that they would not be arrested and sent to the JIC for interrogation..

Daily Excelsior, 4 April 2007

**Top political brass, officers booked for Mendhar trouble**

Jammu, Apr 3: In a bold decision, police have registered a First Information Report FIR against top political leaders and officers of Mendhar tehsil for fomenting communal trouble in the town last month aimed at harassing the minority community which has very small presence in the border area. Among the big guns who have been booked under FIR No. 36/2007, registered at Mendhar police station with the consent of senior police officers, include National Conference leader and MLA Mendhar Javed Rana, Congress district president Zafarullah, who had lost to Mr Rana in 2002 Assembly elections, Medical Officer, Mendhar Dr Ishfaq, Public Works Department PWD Junior Engineer Farooq Ahmed, Master Ikhlq Ahmed, a senior teacher and Azam Fani, a retired Naib Tehsildar. Two body-guards of Javed Rana also figured in the list of persons, who have been named as accused in the FIR, official sources told the Excelsior..

Kashmir Times, 4 April 2007

**Peace process can be meaningful only if security forces are recalled: Salauddin**

Srinagar, APR 3: The chairman of United Jihad Council UJC Syed Salah-u-din today said that the peace process can be made meaningful if the security forces are recalled to the barracks, draconian laws are repealed and an end is brought to the human rights abuses in the state. In a faxed statement to a local news agency, KNS, Syed Sadaqat

Hussain spokesman of UJC while quoting Salahudin said that the peace process does not hold any meaning unless the steps aimed at solving the Kashmir issue according to the wishes as well as aspirations of people are taken. He said that nobody would be allowed to dump the Kashmir issue in cold storage and that Government of India should abide by the resolutions passed by United Nations in solving the Kashmir issue..

Kashmir Times, 4 April 2007

**Editorial: Threatened by peace**

Though so far there has not been any substantial progress in relation to the Kashmir solution still it is a matter of satisfaction that the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan is moving forward inch by inch. With a climate of mutual trust and flexibility from all sides one should hope that the process will be carried forward to its logical end with greater speed. What is pushing forward the process, despite bureaucratic and political wranglings, is the emergence of a powerful peace lobby in both the countries created through people to people contacts. This is obviously not to the liking of the hawks in politics, bureaucracy and security forces as also among the militants who have developed a vested interest in perpetuating the conflict, violence and the climate of mistrust..No wonder that on the eve of the Saarc conference in New Delhi, with scheduled meeting of Indian and Pakistani leaders on its sideline to discuss the bilateral disputes and soon after New Delhi condescended to examine the popular demands in the troubled Jammu and Kashmir for demilitarization, revocation of draconian laws and removal of forces from public and private buildings and sites there has been stepped up violence in different parts of the State.

The Hindu, 4 April 2007

**Editorial: Slogans and substance**

Like the magician Houdini, the Congress-Peoples Democratic Party alliance government in Jammu and Kashmir has once again escaped from what appeared to be certain death. Prime Minister Manmohan Singhs promise to set up an expert committee to review troop deployment has allowed the PDP to back away from its threat to leave the alliance unless a commitment was made to demilitarise the State. Pragmatism appears to have forced PDP leader and former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed to inch away from the precipice. Fortunately, most of the smaller partners of the alliance government threw their weight behind Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, leaving the PDP isolated. Moreover, the prospect that the Congress would remain in power with National Conference support persuaded PDP strategists that they had nothing to gain from pulling out of the alliance now. There is naturally uncertainty about how long the truce will last. While there is little doubt that a sustainable peace in J&K will involve pulling the Army out of areas where terrorist violence has declined, demilitarisation is a profoundly complex issue. Nobody expects the committees deliberations to yield instant results; the best-case scenario is for the exercise to become a focal point for the much needed dialogue on how the lives of Jammu and Kashmirs people can be made safer and freer..

Greater Kashmir, 4 April 2007

**KASHMIR REMAINS CORE ISSUE: AZIZ**

New Delhi, Apr 3: Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz today reiterated his countrys

position that the Kashmir question was the core issue between the two neighbours. From Pakistans perspective, the Kashmir issue must be settled in line with the aspirations and the wishes of the Kashmiri people, he said at an interaction with a group of editors here this afternoon on the sidelines of the 14th SAARC Summit. Kashmir is the key issue. This is the reality, he stressed. He also made it clear that improvement in trade relations between the two countries was dependent on a solution to the Kashmir question. He said Pakistan hoped that the talks between the two countries would lead to an arrangement, a scenario that will be acceptable to the people of Kashmir..

Kashmir Times, 4 April 2007

**Opinion: A new approach to conflict resolution in J&K (Maj. Gen. Raj Kaushal)**

Six decades of turmoil and tribulations in the national and international arena and yet the conflict in J&K is still defying a solution. A problem which has spelled untold misery on the peoples of the state and has been a virtual battle ground between the two South Asian Giants, and of late a Nuclear Flash Point in the International strategic parlance. The K word has continued to remain the most contentious acronym on the Raisina Hill ever since the dawn of independence. Statesmen, Diplomats, Strategists and Soldiers of different hues and vintage have tried their prowess to crack this juggler's nut but with no avail. Are we any where near the solution' Do we have the political will and committed Leadership' Is Pakistan willing to walk the talk' Is the international community willing to support the solution' The short answer to all these questions is bold YES. A solution motivated by the vision of bringing peace and prosperity to the people of Jammu and Kashmir through public private partnership with political patronage is the only way forward! The main drivers of this plan will be the People, Corporate and Political Executives with Security Forces playing a complementary role..

Daily Excelsior, 5 April 2007

**Armys additional role in J&K to end only after peace: Sinha**

Jammu, Apr 4: Governor Lt. Gen Retd S K Sinha today said that demilitarization per se cannot take place in Jammu and Kashmir just as there can be no demilitarization in Punjab, Rajasthan or any other border State of the country. In his presidential address at a National Seminar on J&K and the Region: Strategic Challenges and Opportunities' organised at General Zorawar Singh Auditorium, University of Jammu this morning, the Governor said the Army has to be permanently located in Kashmir to defend its borders. However, the present additional role of the Army in terms of restoring internal peace in a State which is a victim of terrorism, can cease only when peace is restored', he said, adding that troops can then return to barracks or their overall strength in the State reduced. But that will not be demilitarization, he maintained. Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, S K Singh inaugurated the seminar while GOC in C, Northern Command, Lt Gen H S Panag delivered the key note address. The Governor said that solution to problems in the State should not be Kashmir centric and it should be Jammu and Kashmir centric..

Greater Kashmir, 5 April 2007

**Talk to Salahuddin: Omar to India, Pak**

Srinagar, Apr 4: Asking India and Pakistan to hold talks with the United Jihad Council

and Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, the National Conference president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday termed Kashmiris as principal party to the Kashmir dispute. Addressing a rally at Tulmula Ganderbal, Omar said for the success of peace process and withdrawal of troops, both India and Pakistan should hold dialogue with Syed Salahuddin. When Dr Farooq Abdullah was the chief minister he invited five Hizb commanders to a guest house for talks. But in Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's rule the five commanders were eliminated one by one. It clearly indicates who is for peace here and who is not, he said. Omar said the ongoing dialogue process between India and Pakistan would only succeed if Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the wishes of people..

Indian Express, 5 April 2007

### **Centre committed to J&K**

New Delhi, April 4: Assuring the children from the Kashmir Valley of Centres' commitment to help the militancy-hit state, Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil said additional funds had been allocated to Jammu and Kashmir for building infrastructure. Patil, who was interacting with a group of 60 children as a part of their study tour organised by CRPF, responded to all the queries raised by them regarding infrastructure and educational facilities in the state. He said the government is fully committed to help the state in its development efforts and added the state has been given Rs 26,000 crore for infrastructure development. The fruits of this effort will soon be visible, he was quoted by an official spokesman as saying. The group comprises 23 boys and 37 girls from Rahatghar, a rescue and rehabilitation centre in Srinagar, and their age ranges from three years to 17 years..

Greater Kashmir, 5 April 2007

### **Opinion: Complaining police (N A Ganai)**

2500 writ petitions are pending in the Punjab High Court against the police officers who wiped terrorism there. Same is happening in Kashmir, said a police officer in a recent debate on human rights in a one-day workshop here in Srinagar. Greater Kashmir March 21. The title of the debate was also interesting. That there should be equal condemnation of human rights violations by security forces and terrorists. There seems to be confusion among some police officers here about perception of the police and its powers. In such a situation it is indispensable for the police officers particularly local police officers and the constables to understand their role in a conflict like that of Kashmir. To begin with, in conflict areas the State gives enormous powers to the armed forces and police. Powers to kill, crush, raid, arrest and then there are laws enough to protect interests of the State and those who execute its orders. In a disturbed area any police person from a constable to SSP, wields powers that give an impression that he is State unto itself and could do anything..

Daily Excelsior, 5 April 2007

### **Editorial: Fight the beasts**

Three incidents during the last one week in Jammu district bring to the fore the problems women suffer in our society. Two of them have taken place in this city. In one a woman was raped while she was in search of a rented accommodation. This happened in Roopnagar under the Janipur police station. In the other a girl employee witnessed a

vicious attempt on her modesty by her boss in Purani Mandi right in the heart of the Winter Capital. Her shouts alarmed shopkeepers in the vicinity who rushed to her rescue. Another teenager was not so lucky. Her modesty was outraged by three persons in a village in Akhnoor. It is generally known that many women suffer harassment at their working places. They are exposed to offensive conduct and double meaning remarks. It is a matter of record that the highest court in the land has been called upon to intervene in their favour. The Supreme Court has laid down clear guidelines as to how they should be treated in their offices. There are several women organisations both at official and non official level acting as bulwarks against assaults on their dignity. Over the years they have effectively made their presence felt. .

The Nation, 5 April 2007

**Editorial: Kashmir before trade**

As expected, Indian political circles have accused Pakistan of invariably playing the dirty game of sabotaging the SAARC mandate by its insistence on resolving the Kashmir dispute before establishing normal commercial relations between Islamabad and New Delhi. Joined by their media, they have tried to belittle the truth expressed by Mr Shaukat Aziz at his press conference at the end of first day's proceedings of the 14th SAARC summit, when he strongly defended the centrality of the Kashmir dispute in the context of Indo Pakistan relations and called for its settlement conforming to the aspirations of the people concerned. One wonders how the Indians tend to overlook the historical perspective of the dispute in pursuit of imperialist and hegemonistic ambitions at a time when the whole world has awakened to the need for freedom and democracy. New Delhi forcibly occupied the state, later gave solemn commitments enshrined in the relevant UN resolutions about holding a free and fair plebiscite under UN auspices, and the two countries went to war more than once on the issue. By no stretch of imagination could Kashmir be classed as a minor irritant that can be put aside and normal relations allowed to take their course under the SAARC charter..

Daily Excelsior, 6 April 2007

**Azad for common proposals to solve Kashmir**

Jammu, Apr 5: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has said that proposals coming from various political and ethnic groups besides intellectuals and experts from different quarters in context of Indo Pak relations and existing conflict and the important common points drawn from them at different platforms from time to time, will help in finding a meaningful solution of the Kashmir problem. Speaking at the valedictory function of the national seminar on the subject J&K and the Region Strategic Opportunities and Challenges, jointly organised by the Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies and 16 Corps of the Indian Army at Gen Zorawar Singh auditorium here today, the Chief Minister said that various proposals have come from various political parties and individuals and even several came from the Pakistani president, Gen Parvez Musharraf. It is not necessary that all the proposals are considered and sure to lead us towards a purposeful solution to the Kashmir issue but some of the common and most favourable proposals discussed and deliberated upon at various levels can lead the political leadership to find a permanent solution to the issue, further easing tension and moving faster towards the peace process..

The Tribune, 6 April 2007

**19 injured during protest**

Srinagar, April 5: At least 19 persons were injured today when protesters demanding the removal of a garbage dump from Eidgah in downtown city clashed with the police. Residents of Eidgah and adjoining areas took to streets against the alleged inaction of the government for the past two years on their demand to remove the garbage dump from the area, officials said. The police used batons and fired several rounds into the air to control the protesters, who refused to disperse and threw stones at the personnel. The protesters also smashed window panes and damaged two vehicles belonging to mediapersons who were covering the protest, they said..

Daily Excelsior, 6 April 2007

**Withdrawal of troops from J&K not on cards: JJ Singh**

Belgaum, Apr 5: The question of withdrawing or reducing troops from Jammu and Kashmir is not on the cards at present, Army Chief Gen J J Singh said today. No withdrawal or reduction of troops from Jammu and Kashmir is on the cards, he told reporters here. Pointing out that constant vigil was necessary in Kashmir to check infiltration, which would be on the rise during summer, Singh clarified that the levels of deployment of forces in the State were decided on the basis of a constant review of the situation. He said when he was asked by reporters here about the demand by PDP, the partner of the ruling Congress in Jammu and Kashmir, for reducing troops in the State. Singh said the Army's efforts were always directed towards bringing down the level of violence and restoring normalcy in the Kashmir valley..

The Tribune, 6 April 2007

**Opinion: State of coalitions (Inder Malhotra)**

LAST week when newspaper headlines proclaimed, Crisis in Kashmir coalition blows over, there was an audible sigh of relief in the nations capital that transcended even the crazy cacophony over cricket. But already there are doubts about the longevity of this comforting sentiment. The reasons for this should be obvious but need explaining. Jammu and Kashmir is an extremely sensitive state that makes the coalition there, between the Congress, the core of the ruling United Progressive Alliance in New Delhi, and the Peoples Democratic Party PDP of Mufti Mohammed Saeed, a former state Chief Minister and his daughter Mehbooba, distinctive from those in other states. But, far from nurturing this delicate plant, the two sides have let it languish. Conflict ensued soon after the Mufti handed over in accordance with a previous agreement the office of Chief Minister to Congress Ghulam Nabi Azad. Mufti Saeed then embarked on his controversial demand for a quick reduction in the troops in Kashmir and their redeployment away from schools, hospitals, orchards, etc. PDP ministers started boycotting Cabinet meetings..

Greater Kashmir, 6 April 2007

**SHRC recommends relief in fake encounter, disappearance cases**

Srinagar, Apr 5: The State Human Rights Commission SHRC on Thursday recommended relief of Rs one lakh to the family of a Sopur youth, who was killed in a fake encounter by Army on Line of Control LoC. In his complaint to the commission, Muhammad Amin

Banday of Nowpora Sopur had alleged that his son Manzoor Ahmad Banday was picked up by troops and later killed on LoC. The Commission after investigation found that the petitioner's son and six other boys were picked up from the Mosque and done to death on LoC. Disposing the petition, SHRC member Habibullah Bhat observed that on the protest of the villagers, the bodies were handed over to their families. This was a fake encounter on the basis of the Supreme Court law, the member said. He recommended a relief of Rs one lakh and benefit of SRO-43 to the petitioner. Meanwhile, in another case, chairperson of SHRC Justice retd M Y Kawoos recommended a relief of Rs one lakh to a woman of Kupwara, whose husband went missing in 1991. In her petition to the commission, Rafiq Bano of Lolab had stated that her husband Ghulam Rasool left for Srinagar on May 1, 1991 and is missing since then..

Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2007

**SAARC provides fitting space for Kashmir resolution: Mufti**

New Delhi, Apr 6: Peoples Democratic Party patron and former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said that South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation SAARC provides a fitting space for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. If demolition of barriers is the ultimate aim of SAARC in the region, there is no better place to start with than Jammu and Kashmir which has been the worst victim of the regions hostility and fragmentation, he said while addressing a press conference, which was also attended by party president Mehbooba Mufti. Jammu and Kashmir could become the take off point for the South Asian Free Trade Agreement SAFTA as it has historically remained part of Asian trade, business and cultural exchange, he said, adding Kashmirs silk route traditions are still alive in many forms and need to be rediscovered to redefine its trading potential in the region. Mr Sayeed suggested setting up of a SAARC Handicraft Centre in Jammu and Kashmir to revive the States traditional links with the Central and the South Asian region..

Kashmir Times, 7 April 2007

**Its a golden opportunity for India, says NC chief (RK Khajuria)**

Jammu, Apr 6: In the backdrop of Hizbul Mujahideen's soft stand favouring dialogue between New Delhi and United Jihad Council chairman Syed Salahuddin, National Conference president Omar Abdullah sees a golden opportunity, which centre should not let pass if it wants to achieve out of the box solution. Talking to the Kashmir Times here today, Omar said, When we have been talking about out of the box solution, this is an opportunity, which centre should not miss. The National Conference president yesterday had urged India and Pakistan to hold talks with UJC chairman and HM supreme commander on troop reduction and other related issues for the success of ongoing peace process. A spokesman of the Hizbul Mujahideen in a statement issued to a local news agency KNS has also described Omars demand as absolutely in tune with the time..

Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2007

**Opinion: Valley-centric Centre (ML Kotru)**

Its the Muslim majority Kashmir valley, stupid, not the State of Jammu and Kashmir that has kept the Government in New Delhi talking to not just Mufti Sayeed but to the separatist groupings as well. Mufti Sayeed, whose party, the Peoples Democratic Party, is

the coalition partner of the moribund Congress Party in the State Government, was perhaps being more than honest when three weeks ago he confessed in an interview that he was fighting for political space. He couldn't have been more honest than that given the competitiveness of the valley parties in giving a sharper edge to the blame game against New Delhi, it is imperative that Mufti Sayeed and his party be seen ahead of the others. Ground realities in the valley may have shown a slowing down of the terrorist killings but the rhetoric basically remains the same. Yes, even during the three years the Mufti held the Chief Ministership before handing over power to the Congress Party to complete the remaining three years of the six year term which Governments in Jammu and Kashmir enjoy..

Kashmir Times, 7 April 2007

**Opinion: A farewell to arms (SI Mir)**

There has been a vociferous and strong public demands from all sections of people in Kashmir for evacuation of security forces and withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act. This followed a series of alarming disclosures of custodial killings of innocent men after branding them as foreign terrorists. This invited strong opposition to the demand from Congress, B.J.P. Shivsena and Panthers Party, Jammu Mokti Morcha and other like minded sections. It is to be noted that most of these parties have their base in Jammu or beyond and their members have no direct experience of living with security forces for last 18 years. They have not gone through the trauma of fixings, custodial killings, disappearances, searching and testing and maltreatments at the hands of the security forces on daily basis. The sadistic approach of these forces in deriving pleasure at what Kashmiris are going through is shocking. These forces are propagating through media that the security forces are deployed in Kashmir for protection of life and liberty of common masses and for upholding of rule of law and democracy. But in truth the people are clamouring for these very rights which they express through their protests and demonstrations that the security forces are violating..

Greater Kashmir, 7 April 2007

**Mufti proposes common market for JK**

New Delhi: Peoples Democratic Party Patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed today proposed development of common market and free economic zones where the two parts of divided Jammu and Kashmir can undertake joint projects of water sharing, environment, tourism, energy and disaster management. If we want to make Jammu and Kashmir borders irrelevant, then Indian and Pakistani leadership should allow free trade, travel and commerce between the two parts of the state, Mufti Sayeed said at a press conference, which was also attended by party president Mehbooba Mufti. The former Chief Minister, who held extensive talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress President Sonia Gandhi and others on reduction of troops in the state, said the relationship between the two sides can be improved and consolidated in social and cultural aspects also..

Daily Excelsior, 8 April 2007

**RTC only representative forum to address J&K issues: Azad**

Jammu, Apr 7: Unfolding political will and determination to resolve all issues pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that he has

recommended holding of 3rd Round Table Conference to the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh to deliberate upon the recommendations put forth by the Working Groups. Addressing day long convention of the Congress workers of Jammu District Urban, Mr Azad said that for the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir a sincere and result-oriented effort has been made to address all issues in representative forum of Round Table Conference involving opinion leaders, political parties, ethnic groups and others from all the three regions of the State. Holding of two Round Table Conferences, constitution of five Working Groups and deliberations and recommendations of these groups have laid smooth path to move forward to settle every issue pertaining to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, he said. The Chief Minister further said prior to constitution of Round Table Conferences and since 1947 no step was taken to involve all political parties, groups and opinion leaders from all the regions to address the issue..

Indian Express, 8 April 2007

#### **Militants trying to regroup in J&K: Police**

Srinagar, April 7: Jammu and Kashmir police said militants were planning to launch coordinated attacks in the state to disrupt the peaceful atmosphere of the past few months. Intelligence reports have revealed that terrorists are attempting to regroup and launch coordinated attacks to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere of the past few months, director general of police Gopal Sharma told reporters here. Sharma said police received specific information that militants of Al Badr and Lashkar-e-Toiba had met on the higher reaches of Harwan to chalk out a strategy for carrying out suicide attacks in the city when government offices move from Jammu to Srinagar later this month. One of the groups had managed to descend into Nishat locality to establish a base for carrying out the attacks, he said. The area was cordoned off and three militants of Al Badr including its divisional commander, who is a Pakistani national, were killed yesterday, Sharma said adding the other group of LeT militants, had fled towards Dachigam area..

Greater Kashmir, 8 April 2007

#### **Opinion: Wests Abandonment of Kashmir Cause (M Ashraf)**

The controversy surrounding the Baroness Emma Nicholson's report very starkly demonstrates the West's total abandonment of the Kashmir's cause. The punch West used to put in reports on Kashmir is totally missing. No doubt the right of self-determination has been upheld but in an apologetic way stating that it is not possible to exercise same in present circumstances. The West has abandoned Kashmir not only as its favourite holiday destination but as also one of its most talked about cause celebre. There was a time when Kashmir was a darling of the entire West. Any discussion about Kashmir in any world forum was spearheaded by the western countries and they would go out of the way to staunchly support Kashmiris' right of self-determination. In most of the debates in UN Security Council, it was always the Communist Bloc which would oppose Kashmiris. The western countries led by USA were in the forefront of the campaign to give Kashmiris their birth right. In fifties and sixties, Kashmir issue was the top story of every section of the western media..

Kashmir Times, 8 April 2007

#### **Mirwaiz urges separatists to unite**

Srinagar, Apr 7: The chairman of Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today called upon the separatists to unite given the most critical phase the freedom struggle is currently going through. Addressing a public rally today at Ganderbal, Mirwaiz said that the Kashmir issue has now attracted the attention of the whole world and the reverberations of it are now being felt from OIC to European and America. He said that the situation is continuously changing across the sub-continent and it has been creating its own impact on the complex issue of Kashmir. A lot of flexibility is being witnessed in the attitudes of both India and Pakistan. These countries would hold a different opinion about the Kashmir dispute till the other day, but now they have realized that the attitudes need to be changed, Mirwaiz told the people who had turned up to listen him. He reiterated that the coming months are extremely important vis a vis Kashmir issue and year 2007 is hopefully going to be a landmark year with reference to the resolution of the Kashmir issue. On this occasion Mirwaiz also made a suggestion saying Jammu and Kashmir be left independent for a period of five years on the experimental basis..

Daily Excelsior, 8 April 2007

**Opinion: Who wants to solve Kashmir' (Dr. J Singh)**

It is interesting. Also quite amusing. Who is a separatist and who the mainstream in Kashmir politics' The two often speak in familiar jargon and more often than not the phrase used by them is interchangeable... albeit depending upon the political situation in which each of them finds himself. But the real question seldom asked is, Do the various Kashmir based political groups actually want to sort out the issue of Kashmir, if at all there is an issue over Kashmir' Do these groups and their leaders hold meetings to solve Kashmir or do they do so with a covert design to further complicate Kashmir' Because on a complicated unresolved Kashmir thrive the fortunes of these masqueraders! Selfrule for PDP is true self-rule. In other words, rule of the self, that is the rule of the PDP and its leadership. Autonomy for National Conference is true autonomy..

Daily Excelsior, 9 April 2007

**J&K refugees discriminated in PoK: EU report**

New Delhi, Apr 8: A European Union report on Jammu and Kashmir has criticised Islamabad for Human Rights violations in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir PoK, including incidents involving persons from Jammu and Kashmir, and asked it to review its concept of the fundamental rights of expression and freedom of religion. The report, which was amended and passed by the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament, noted with concern allegations by human rights groups like Amnesty International of Torture and Detention without due process in PoK. The report, authored by EU MP Baroness Emma Nicholson and passed with a thumping majority of 60 votes to one, deplors documented human rights violations by Pakistan, including in Gilgit and Baltistan, where allegedly violent riots took place in 2004, and the all too frequent incidents of terror and violence perpetrated by armed militant groups. The report, criticised by various pro Pakistan groups, also notes instances of torture and mistreatment or discrimination against refugees from Jammu and Kashmir in PoK..

Daily Excelsior, 9 April 2007

**Advocates of demilitarization unaware of ground reality:CM**

Jammu, Apr 8: Taking a fresh dig at the supporters of demilitarization, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said today that the political parties advocating troop cut in the State were not aware of the ground realities. We cant leave people of the State at the mercy of militants by withdrawing troops from the State, Mr Azad said at a well attended public meeting at Gurha Slathian. Without naming any political party, he reminded the supporters of demilitarization that 20,000 common civilians and 5,000 jawans of belt forces have sacrificed their lives during the period of militancy in the State. The Chief Minister pointed out that recent killings of five labourers from minority community at Kalakot in Rajouri district have shown that militancy was not yet finished..

Kashmir Times, 9 April 2007

**Editorial: Talking to militants**

It is nice, if not really surprising, to hear the NC President, Omar Abdullah exhorting the government of India to enter into a dialogue with Syed Salahuddin, the HM supremo and chairman of the United Jihad Council UJC. In the past, when in power, the NC leadership, never known for their consistency of approach, was always the eloquent advocate of a hammer and tong policy in dealing with militancy. Usually, they had been more than the King, and had always stood for a no compromise military approach in dealing with militancy, either cross border or indigenous. But, now out of power and , probably, sensing that assembly elections are not too far away, they have changed their stand, and have started talking in the language of peace. Although tight at this moment the views of the UJC are diametrically different from those of the NC over the most important issue before demilitarization. While, the NC supports the ruling Congress party against the latters ally in office, the PDP, Salahuddin is on record asserting that demilitarization alone can be an effective prelude to peace. In any case, the NCs visible flexibility over the burning question of a dialogue, obviously without any pre condition, is extremely welcome, and is an advice that New Delhi should follow..

The Tribune, 9 April 2007

**Opinion: Troop reduction in J and K (Lt Gen H Singh)**

The demand by the PDP for scaling down the deployment of troops in Jammu and Kashmir is mere posturing to gain some additional political space in the competitive politics of the state. Moderates in the Hurriyat and the National Conference do not oppose the demand, but question the motives behind it. It is interesting to note that when Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was the Chief Minister as a result of the arrangement between the PDP and the Congress, he did not raise any such demand. Fearing that the Centre might concede the PDPs demand for troop reduction and that the party would steal a march over others, the Hurriyat now wants complete withdrawal of the armed forces. So, it is a mere political one upmanship. There is also a clamour for doing away with the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA. Such demands overlook the basic fact that the Army is deployed for counter terrorism operations, because the situation is well beyond the control of the civil administration and the police including Central police organisations CPOs, and the region is declared as a disturbed area. So, the AFSPA gets related to this classification of the region. If the concerned committee comes to the conclusion that J and K or the valley is no more a disturbed area, then the Army has no business to be there, other than along the LoC..

Daily Excelsior, 10 April 2007

**Azad expects major relief for J&K people at next roundtable**

Srinagar, Apr 9: In sharp contrast to his power partner PDPs hype on the road to Muzaffarabad and Islamabad, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today announced that each and every village in Jammu & Kashmir would be linked to the metalled road network in the next four years. He asserted that all the positive indicators of development from Centre-State relation to flow of funds from the Union capital were today unprecedented in the case of Jammu & Kashmir in the last 60 years. Addressing a mammoth public meeting, attended by more than 10,000 people at Raithan in Budgam district, Chief Minister Azad complained that politics of false emotions had turned out to be the worst impediment in the way of Jammu and Kashmir's growth and development in the last over five decades. He said that one of the economically depressed states in India, J&K was today in need of development roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, power projects, hospitals and water plants. He said that Khushaal Kashmir was his dream, being realised with substantial monetary support from New Delhi..

Greater Kashmir, 10 April 2007

**Police, paramilitary to replace army: Mufti**

Jammu, Apr 9: Former chief minister and People Democratic Party PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed Monday said the time has come for gradual, responsible, and respectable withdrawal of army from the state and its replacement by local police and paramilitary forces. Mufti said the police and paramilitary troopers have started replacing army from Srinagar district. Addressing a public rally at Vijaypur, Mufti said the withdrawal of troops and repeal of special powers to armed forces were important and the army should be deployed to fight external threat. Mufti appreciated New Delhi for constituting three committees to discuss troops cut and repeal of AFSPA from the state. He said the committees would complete the exercise in the coming months..

Kashmir Times, 10 April 2007

**Centre vindicates PDP stance on demilitarisation, AFSPA: Mufti**

Jammu, Apr 9: Chief Patron of People Democratic Party Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today said that centre has vindicated his party's stand on withdrawal of security forces and revocation of armed forces special powers act AFSPA. Speaking at a public gathering in Vijaypur today, Mufti said that committees have been formed for pondering over how gradual, responsive, responsible withdrawal of troops could be carried out and how armed forces special powers act could be revoked. He added that political normalization in the state has gained momentum and time is not far off when police and paramilitary forces would replace security forces. He stressed that people in the state have developed confidence in the political process and have understood importance of sitting across the table for resolution of pending disputes. "We desire to see our young people maintaining law and order..

Greater Kashmir, 10 April 2007

**Opinion: Competitive Jammunalism (Sibte Saeed)**

One can always trust the highly articulate soldier Governor of J&K to say something that

aims at trivializing the political problems facing the Muslim population of the state. Even while whole of Kashmir was up in arms wailing over their loved ones, graves getting dug up and dead bodies overshadowing the democratic façade of India in Kashmir, Gen. Sinha was busy patting the security forces with very obvious objective. His impressive visage is by now a very familiar image on state TV, too common for a governor, inaugurating a memorial for someone who served as a captain with him in this unfortunate state, or if nothing else do a photo session with the harried and harassed imams of Kupwara or Poonch, returning from a Bharat Yatra or a group of students from Uri or Gurez on way to Sadbhavna yatra to Mizoram. Whatever Gen. Sinha wants to achieve through his high profile Army centric actions, the only sure fall out of these is strengthening a commonly held belief by ordinary Kashmiris that it is only the Army, security and intelligence agencies that hold the state for India..

Dawn, 11 April 2007

#### **Editorial: Troop cut in Kashmir'**

MIRWAIZ Umar Farooq, chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, has done well to make it clear that what the Kashmiris wanted was the valleys demilitarisation and not a redeployment or relocation of Indian troops. Contained in an interview, his views have come in the wake of the Indian decision to set up a committee charged with the task of studying the possibilities of a troop cut in the occupied territory. New Delhi would perhaps never have considered a troop cut if pressures had not developed within the ruling coalition in Srinagar. During talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the latter's visit to the valley, Mufti Mohammad Saeed said his People's Democratic Party would quit the government if India did not reduce the number of troops in the valley. On his return to New Delhi, Mr Singh chose to announce the setting up of the committee shortly before his meeting with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on the sidelines of the 14th Saarc summit conference. This had a positive impact on their talks. However, the announcement by the Indian prime ministers office nowhere used the word troop cut, much less demilitarisation..

Kashmir Times, 11 April 2007

#### **Mirwaizs APHC to hold rally on April 18**

Srinagar, Apr 10: The Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference today held a meeting which was chaired by the Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. The participants took the stock of the current political scenario in the state and formulated the programme for public contact programmes for the near future. A Hurriyat spokesman said today. He said that a public rally would be held in Sumbal-Sonawari on April 18 and other rallies would follow at other places. He said that it was decided that possible steps would be taken to achieve the objective. The spokesman added that the merger of some parties, who have expressed the desire to join Hurriyat, is under consideration. The spokesman said that it was noted with a sense of satisfaction that the efforts being made the Hurriyat are achieving good results..

Greater Kashmir, 11 April 2007

#### **PM chairs meeting on troops cut: Report**

New Delhi, Apr 10: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is reported to have chaired a high

powered meeting here late on Monday night to discuss the setting up of a committee, which will be tasked with the responsibility of ascertaining how and when the phased withdrawal of security forces can take place in Jammu and Kashmir. Defence Minister A K Antony, Army Chief General J J Singh, National Security Advisor M K Narayanan were present at the meeting. The new committee is to work out a mechanism to assess the feasibility of withdrawing troops during the summer months. There was, however, no official word about the nature of the meeting. Last month, Defence Minister Antony had told reporters while on a visit to Kerala that the withdrawal of troops from Kashmir depended on India's neighbours ceasing support to terror groups in the country. It is my dream that the soldiers can go back to the barracks in Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 11 April 2007

**Editorial: Abusing a facility**

All of us need to appreciate that buses across the Line of Control as well as International Border in the State and elsewhere are meant to encourage inter-action between the citizens of India and Pakistan. These vehicles are playing an important role in running over mutual distrust while reuniting divided families. They are helping to do away with quite a few misconceptions among younger generations that have grown up in an admittedly hostile environment in the two neighbouring countries after 1947. Therefore, they are a big boon and a major service that ought to be treated with utmost care. Any abuse of them must be considered more than a mischief to be decisively nipped in the bud. Viewed in this context one must express one's distress over the report that fake Indian currency worth Rs 50000 printed in Pakistan has been brought to this country through the Lahore Delhi bus. A person has been arrested in this connection. He belongs to Uttar Pradesh and is said to have confessed his involvement in a regular fake currency racket. It seems that he is a local courier. The details about who actually brought the illegal cash all the way from Lahore to the national capital are not yet available..

The Tribune, 11 April 2007

**J&K heading for early poll' (ML Kak)**

Jammu, April 10: Is Jammu and Kashmir heading for an early Assembly election' This question has assumed importance following the hectic mass contact programme launched by three mainstream political parties, the Congress, PDP and National Conference, during the past one fortnight. The next poll is scheduled to be held in September October 2008. Indications are that since the existing alliance between the Congress and the PDP is nothing short of marriage of convenience, both the sides prefer early poll to current political uncertainty. While the Congress campaign is being led by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, National Conference president Omar Abdullah, aided by provincial president Ajay Sadhotra, has been seen touring various areas in the state. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti, party chief, give the impression of mustering support for their demand for withdrawal of troops from within the state and repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA..

Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2007

**With 1500 militants in action, Army can't go back to barracks**

Jammu, Apr 11: Army today said time was absolutely not ripe for it to go back to

barracks as there was strong presence of militants in the State, nearly half of whom were Pakistanis controlled by Inter Services Intelligence . I dont think Army can go back to barracks at this stage. Militants can take advantage of the situation. And, we can't leave people under the shadow of gun and allow insurgents to operate, Northern Commands General Officer Commanding in Chief GOC in C Lt Gen H S Panag said on the sidelines of a function for inauguration of Shakti Sadan at Reasi, a home for militancy affected women. There are at least 1300 to 1500 militants operating in the State. A large number of trained militants in Pakistan are awaiting infiltration from across the border. Militants infrastructure in Pakistan is also intact, he said in response to a question..

Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2007

**Omar for ceasefire, talks with ultras**

Srinagar, Apr 11: A new advocate of engaging the Hizbul Mujahideen and Muttahida Jihad Council MJC chief, Syed Salahuddin, with the current peace process between India and Pakistan, National Conference President Omar Abdullah today went a step ahead and demanded immediate ceasefire with militants in Jammu and Kashmir. He said that he was stressing on the two suggestions inspite of the fact that militants had killed nearly 10,000 of his party members and leaders in the trouble-torn State. Proceeding with his current series of public meetings in the State, Omar Abdullah told a thick gathering of party workers at Kurigam in Qazigund area that the Kashmir crisis could not be resolved in absence of the engagement of militant leadership, particularly Hizbul Mujahideen and MJC, with the peace process. He stressed on the need to announce a ceasefire with militants which, according to him, would create conducive atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue process..

Indian Express, 12 April 2007

**Demilitarisation is unthinkable: Omar**

Jammu, April 11: The Opposition National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir has said that demilitarisation was unthinkable in the present context but suggested that armed forces must vacate from civilian areas in the state. As India is sharing borders with China and Pakistan, demilitarisation is unthinkable unless both the neighbouring countries agreed to do so along the borders of India on their side, NC president Omar Abdullah said addressing a series of public meetings in Rajouri district yesterday. However, he said, the NC strongly feels that armed forces must vacate lands occupied in civilian areas which are either being used for public or public services and the fertile land which are source of earning for the farmers. He also said the NC position was that the forces must move out of areas where people feel that militancy has been curbed and while doing so they must move to positions which they held prior to 1989 when the state was not in turmoil..

The Tribune, 12 April 2007

**Most state commissions toothless (SP Sharma)**

Jammu, April 11: While the chairpersons of the State Human Rights Commission SHRC and the State Accountability Commission SAC quit the posts in protest against the inadequate infrastructure for these bodies a few days ago, now it is the turn of the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission to raise the issue because of the lack of

sufficient manpower for its day-to-day functioning. The commission, which was set up in 1987, is functioning without a registrar. The Srinagar Bench of the commission is defunct for the past over a year following the retirement of Jamila Akhtar. Rules provide that the Jammu and the Srinagar Benches of the commission must consist of two members, including the president..

Daily Excelsior, 12 April 2007

### **Lashkar moots Elders Council**

Srinagar, Apr 11: Pakistan-based Jihadi organisation, Lashkar eToiba, has called for constitution of an Elders Council comprising both factions of Hurriyat, Bar Association and Kashmiri intellectuals and asked the Kashmiri separatist leaders to unite on one platform at this crucial juncture. In a statement delivered on newspapers, including EXCELSIOR, Lashkar spokesman Dr Abdullah Ghaznavi asked the split factions of the separatist Hurriyat Conference to unite on one platform at this crucial juncture and salvage the freedom movement from the quagmire of failure. If the split Hurriyat leaders failed to sink their differences and unite on one platform and a solution of the Kashmir problem, not in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, was allowed to be imposed, history would never forgive these leaders, the spokesman said. He said that the freedom movement had entered into a critical phase and required to be actively guided by an Elders Council comprising leaders of the united Hurriyat, Kashmir Bar Association and Kashmiri intellectuals..

The Hindu, 13 April 2007

### **Charge sheet against 11 in fake encounter case**

Srinagar: On the completion of investigation into the second murder in a fake encounter by security forces and police, the Special Investigation Team of the Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday filed a detailed charge sheet against eleven people including a Colonel, a Major and a former Senior Superintendent of Police and a DSP of Ganderbal in the killing of a preacher from Banihal last year. The chargesheet was filed by the SIT in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, M.Y. Akhoun here on Thursday. The officials told the court that an FIR lodged by a Special Operations Group of the police and an Army unit claimed that they had killed a foreign militant but the investigations revealed otherwise. DNA test After the DNA test was conducted on the body of Moulvi Showkat Ahmad Kataria, a preacher from Banihal, it was revealed that he was not a foreign militant but had gone missing on October 5 last year. His body was exhumed in February this year along with four others..

Daily Excelsior, 13 April 2007

### **Azad meets PM to discuss 3rd Round Table Conference**

Jammu, Apr 12: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad tonight called on Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at his residence in New Delhi and discussed with him the holding of third Round Table Conference in the State. After a two days whirlwind tour of Doda and newly created districts of Kishtwar and Ramban during which he addressed five public meetings, Mr Azad flew in to New Delhi this evening on being called by the Prime Minister. Dr Singh and Mr Azad discussed timing, venue and other modalities for holding third Round Table Conference in the State. The meeting between the two lasted

about one hour, authoritative sources told the Excelsior. Last two Round Table Conferences were held in April and May last year, which were attended by all mainstream political parties but was boycotted by both factions of Hurriyat Conference as well as majority of separatist leaders..

Kashmir Times, 13 April 2007

### **Compensation in HR abuse cases**

Jammu, Apr 12: In a state ravaged by violence, recommendations of state human rights commission SHRC which relies primarily on various official reports in reported cases of human rights HR violation are contradicted and even refuted. Independent investigations are initiated by senior officers, conclusions of which often contradict SHRC findings, hence serving to weaken the authority of the SHRC and undermining its role. According to the annual report of state human rights commission SHRC, it made recommendations in 52 cases of alleged human rights violations which included cases of alleged disappearance, custodial killings, death compensation, rent and relief. Action taken report ATR of the state government reveals that despite recommendations made by SHRC which conducts thorough probe into the cases, 22 cases are under verification before deputy commissioners in various parts of the state..

Indian Express, 13 April 2007

### **Opinion: The peace process within Kashmir (Balraj Puri)**

The crisis in the PDP Congress government was finally resolved after the intervention of the prime minister and senior Congress leaders. PDP's Mufti Mohammed Sayeed had asked for a reduction of troops in the state and the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA demands that were contested by J&K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. The terms on which a settlement between the two leaders was arrived at, raises several questions. Why, for instance, were differences allowed to fester until it threatened the very continuance of the coalition? Why is there no permanent mechanism to evolve consensus between coalition partners? The coordination committee, set up to oversee the implementation of the Common Minimum Programme that was adopted when the government was formed, stopped meeting soon after its formation. In fact, the first lesson to be drawn from the recent crisis is the need to revive that committee, with necessary changes. On reflection it also appears that the issues that had precipitated the clash in the first place were not of a fundamental nature. Take the issue of the gradual withdrawal of forces from the state and AFSPA..

Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2007

### **Third RTC in Delhi on April 24: Azad**

Jammu, Apr 13: The third Round Table Conference RTC on Kashmir will be held on April 24 in New Delhi. This was stated by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while addressing a day long convention of Nambardars and Chowkidars at Abhinav theatre here and later speaking briefly to reporters. He said a decision to this effect was taken at a meeting he had with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday in which Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil was also present. He said the conference would discuss the recommendations of five Working Groups set up by the Prime Minister after the second Round Table on May 24, 2005 and provide yet another platform to representatives of

political parties, ethnic groups and opinion leaders from all the three regions to deliberate upon all issues. However, it was not immediately clear whether the separatist groups, including Hurriyat Conference, would participate in the third round..

The Hindu, 14 April 2007

### **Road to Kashmir roundtable may prove to be rocky (Praveen Swami)**

NEW DELHI: Even as preparations have begun for the third in the series of round table conferences on Jammu and Kashmir initiated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a crucial working group that was to have prepared a roadmap for future deliberations on Centre-State relations has reached an impasse. During the three rounds of discussion so far, major political parties merely restated their public positions, showing no sign of flexibility needed to arrive at a common ground on the complex question of recasting the States relationship with New Delhi, sources in the working group told The Hindu. At the working groups March 29 meeting here, National Conference NC leader Abdul Rahim Rather stood by his party's controversial demand for wide ranging autonomy, which was rejected by the Union Cabinet in 2000..

Kashmir Times, 14 April 2007

### **Number of passengers declaims on bus to Muzaffarabad**

Srinagar, Apr 13: Thanks to the complicated procedure for travel documents and the restriction of travel to only those state subjects who have relatives across the Line of Control LoC, the much hyped Carvan e Aman has got rendered to mere symbolism. Getting its name following the historic re-opening of Srinagar to Muzaffarabad road after a gap of 58 years, the Caravan-e-Aman has only ferried a few hundred people across the line of control during the last two years. The re opening of the road, which is reckoned to be the biggest ever Kashmir related CBM, had generated much hype and it was believed that both travel and trade through this traditional route will add a zing to the life on either side of LoC. The highway joining the parts of Jammu and Kashmir which existed in 1947, was re-opened amid much fanfare on April 7, 2005..

Greater Kashmir, 14 April 2007

### **Opinion: ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF KASHMIR (Dr. Mubeen Shah)**

1) Proper working of the Raw Material Bank presently run by SICOP: This Raw Material Bank should handle not only Silk for the Carpet Industry but also Pashmina. In order to make it successful the KCC&I has projected under a financing model given to Banks for financing artisans the provision of Raw-material by SICOP. 2) Financing by Banks The KCC&I have identified one of the greatest problems of our artisans who are the producers of Handicraft of being under financed..

The Tribune, 14 April 2007

### **Morcha flays Centre for Kashmir centric policies**

Jammu, April 13: The Jammu Mukti Morcha JMM yesterday criticised Kashmir-based political parties for pressurising the government that India should talk to Pakistan-based Syed Salahuddin for a solution to the Kashmir problem. Virender Gupta, president of the JMM, accused the Centre of being equally responsible for the mess in Kashmir as it had been pursuing Kashmir-centric policies to appease the Kashmiri leaders by ignoring the

Jammu and Ladakh regions, that had always remained patriotic towards India. He said that not only the PDP leaders Mufti Sayeed and his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti, but also the National Conference chief, Omar Abdullah, and other Kashmiri leaders had suddenly started the rhetoric of dialogue with Salahuddin, who was supreme commander of the United Jihad Council that heads 19 terrorist groups operating in the state..

Kashmir Times, 15 April 2007

#### **Azad urges separatists to join RTC**

Srinagar, APR 14: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that the separatist parties would lose a golden opportunity in case they do not take part in the third round table conference to be held in New Delhi on April 24. He said that militant leaders like Syed Salahudin are welcome to join the dialogue process aimed at solving the Kashmir issue provided he drops the gun. Talking to media persons on the sidelines of his visit to Tulip Garden here today Azad said that the Hurriyat leaders should not miss the chance of taking part in the third round table conference. He added that this is a golden opportunity of mitigating the sufferings of people and the same should not be wasted. Hurriyat Conference whether it is the Mirwaiz faction or the Geelani faction should not miss the opportunity and they should take part in the third round table conference..

Greater Kashmir, 15 April 2007

#### **Opposition points out the 'dark' side of Roshni Scheme**

Srinagar, Apr 14: The widow of Dewan Jawalla Sahai, who had given substantial money to Maharaja Gulab Singh when he purchased Jammu and Kashmir from the British through Treaty of Amritsar for Rs 75 lakhs, owned 120,000 kanals of land in Islamabad, Kulgam, Awantipora and other areas. In Kulgam Tehsil it was difficult for people to bury their dead as almost all the belonged to the Sahais widow. The Raja of Chenani area in Jammu owned 310,000 kanals of land. And when on 17 October 1950, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah declared policy of liquidating the big landed estates and transferring land to tiller by enacting Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, these mammoth land holdings were reduced to mere 182 kanals. Now 60 years down the line, when chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad describes Jammu and Kashmir State Lands vesting of ownership to occupants Amendment Act, 2006, commonly known as Roshni act, as landmark legislation and compares it with the land to tiller, many people scoff at the claim..

Daily Excelsior, 15 April 2007

#### **Opinion: J&K problem, the pathways to success (RS Jamwal)**

As the state enters a crucial phase when lot of uncertainty is prevailing in the State, the agenda of politicians to bring prosperity in state seems to have changed from development to politics of Brinkmanship. Mufti Sayeed is talking of Self Rule, Demilitarization, repeal of AFSPA, the real issues in the state seem to have been blurred or put on the back burner. How to come out of present quagmire, reduce violence, make the state compete with other states surging ahead in many spheres of life and make use of the Human resources available in the state, which are being diverted towards the path of destruction, militancy, terrorism, are the issues that need to be confronted head on by everybody. As the State becomes more and more dependant on central grants and the

issues in J&K get more and more confusing and complex, the need for exceptional leadership in our State continues to grow..

Greater Kashmir, 15 April 2007

### **Resolve Kashmir or face consequences**

Srinagar, Apr 14: People's Democratic Party PDP Patron, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed has warned India and Pakistan that if they failed to resolve the issue of Kashmir, they should get prepared for a colossal cost. Addressing a public gathering here, he said the fast changing ground realities in the sub-continent necessitate initiation of concrete measures for peaceful and ultimate settlement of the Kashmir issue. India and Pakistan must grab this historic opportunity and address the issue that has made the people of Jammu and Kashmir to pay a huge price, he said. The former Chief Minister said while the external dimensions of the Kashmir issue are being handled through bilateral diplomacy, the initiative must be supplemented by substantial internal measures offering general relief to the people of the state. However, he said all such processes and initiatives would be meaningless unless people on the ground, who have been the worst sufferers of the conflict, feel the change..

Daily Excelsior, 16 April 2007

### **Centre-State ties not on agenda of third RTC**

New Delhi, Apr 15: The third Round Table Conference on Kashmir, to be held here on April 24, would skip the thorny issue of Centre-State relations but discuss the recommendations of the four Working Groups to move forward and ensure that views of different segments are incorporated. The fifth and most important Working Group, constituted for deciding the Centre-State relations and is headed by Justice retd Sagir Ahmed, was yet to finalise its recommendations, official sources said. The group, which was constituted on May 25 last year, was to go into the issues of strengthening relations between the State and the Centre as also deliberate on matters relating to the special status of Jammu and Kashmir within the Indian Union, methods of strengthening democracy, secularism and the rule of law in the State. This group was also to deliberate on effective devolution of powers among different regions to meet regional, sub regional and ethnic aspirations..

The Hindu, 16 April 2007

### **Mirwaiz rejects appeal to join roundtable (Shujaat Bukhari)**

Srinagar: The head of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, on Sunday rejected Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's appeal to take part in the third roundtable conference scheduled to be held in New Delhi on April 24. Dismissing it as a cover up to hide the crisis in the coalition Government, he said: Delhi is not sincere in resolving the Kashmir issue. In an exclusive interview to The Hindu, the Mirwaiz said the roundtable conference had no relevance with the process of finding a solution to the Kashmir issue. Reiterating his party's stand on dialogue he said, We support every step which is meant for finding a solution to the Kashmir issue. Earlier also roundtable conferences were held but it is different from our agenda. It is mainly for discussing relations between Srinagar and New Delhi, the issues of governance and economic development..

Kashmir Times, 16 April 2007

**Is AFSPA in J&K infructuous (SJ Hashmi)**

Jammu, Apr 15: Having violated the legal provisions of the act, has Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA become infructuous in Jammu and Kashmir? This is in view of the fact that Supreme Court in the year 1998 had directed that the act should be periodically reviewed after every six months which has never been done. It is important to mention here that AFSPA was enforced in 1990 when the state was placed under Governor Rule. The then Governor Jagmohan through a notification announced the implementation of the act. Records suggest that in 1996, when democratic institutions returned to functioning in the state, central government should have sought an opinion from the state government regarding the ground situation and implementation of AFSPA, which was never done. It is further learnt that if there was no provision in the Act to do so, subsequent direction from the Supreme Court of India in the year 1998 should have been obeyed. Although, when AFSPA was invoked in Jammu region in the year 2001, records available show that Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah had given his consent verbally for the same..

Daily Excelsior, 16 April 2007

**Opinion: Northern Areas and ICG Report (D Suba Cahndran)**

..For the first time in the last sixty years, there is an increasing interest at the international level on what is happening inside PoK and the Northern Areas. And for the first time, the international community is beginning to understand Pakistan's negative propaganda on J&K and realize the problem in and of Kashmir is not related only to Kashmir Valley. Clearly, it is India's interest to pursue this international attention on the other side. Issues such as governance, self rule and demilitarization cannot be debated only in Indian part of J&K; it needs to be extended to PoK and Northern Areas. These reports provide a platform for such an initiative..It is unfortunate, that the Government, especially New Delhi, except for the legal rhetoric that the entire J&K belongs to India, failed to take steps to analyse what is happening in Northern Areas. There was a feeble response, that too only once, when the entire Gilgit region was burning with sectarian violence, New Delhi announced that it was concerned. Should New Delhi only be concerned and not do anything about it? Should it extend open diplomatic and political support to groups that are willing to fight for better governance?

The Tribune, 16 April 2007

**Plot to kill CM; 4 held**

Jammu, April 15: Four overground workers of terrorists, including a woman, were yesterday arrested by the police at Ramban on the charges of hatching a conspiracy to eliminate Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. Those arrested have been identified as Farooq Ahmad and his wife Haseena Begum, Mohammad Akhtar Naik and Abdul Rashid. They had entered the venue of Azad's Thursday rally by claiming to be Congress activists. However, the police swung into action and removed these persons from there..

Greater Kashmir, 16 April 2007

**Musharraf's plan to divide JK, says Barrister Sultan**

Lahore, Apr 15: Pakistan administered Kashmirs former prime minister Barrister Sultan Mehmood strongly opposed on Saturday the four-point formula given recently by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf for resolving the Kashmir dispute, saying it not only amounted to a departure from Islamabad's principled stand on the issue but, if accepted, would also lead to the division of what Kashmiri people believe to be an indivisible state. At a news conference here, Barrister Sultan, now the president of the Peoples Muslim League, analysed the formula in detail, and said the softening of the Line of Control, demilitarisation, self governance or joint management of the disputed territory would mean Pakistan and India should continue to control the areas already with them, a solution he termed unacceptable to the Kashmiris on either side. He also disagreed with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's idea of abandoning armed struggle to find a political solution to the dispute.

Daily Excelsior, 17 April 2007

**Peace process heading towards logical conclusion: Mufti**

Srinagar, Apr 16: People's Democratic Party PDP Patron, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said that time has come when the people of the State must embark together in the common quest for dignity, peace and prosperity. The peace process initiated in April 2003 is now heading for a logical conclusion of lasting and dignified peace for the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the region, he said. Addressing a series of meetings of the PDP workers from Devsar, Shangus and Wachi constituencies here this morning, the Mufti said although the future is full of great opportunities, so are the challenges. He said the expectations of the people are high and the timing is most appropriate and feasible for the much-needed breakthrough on the Kashmir issue. PDP workers, Mufti Sayeed said, have a historical role ahead as the party has in a very short period emerged as the genuine and authentic voice of the State..

Kashmir Times, 17 April 2007

**Editorial: Deception over demilitarisation**

Virtually cornered by the PDPs stand supported by the shouting and weeping millions of Kashmir and other so-called disturbed districts of J&K the Government of India was left with no option but to discuss the question of the gradual demilitarisation of Jammu and Kashmir, i.e. bringing down the number of security personnel to that of 1989 level. Visibly, New Delhi agreed to discuss this question with considerable hesitation and reluctance, apparently, determined never to implement demilitarisation in any form. So, two committees were constituted to study this question and the related one concerning the possible withdrawal of the AFSPA. Strangely enough, both these so called high-powered committees have only bureaucrats as their members some in uniform and some in civvies. One of these is headed by Shekhar Dutt, the present defence secretary, while the other one by the Defence Minister himself. Bureaucrats, by training and temperament, seek solution to problems through legal measures and force and have little appreciation of concessions and dialogues as aids to a settlement..

The Tribune, 17 April 2007

**Meetings galore to discuss peace**

Jammu, April 16: Hectic activity towards hammering out a solution to the Kashmir

problem is on the cards next week when, besides the round table conference of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, two other high-profile meetings will be held for the purpose. These conferences have generated a lot of interest, particularly among the people of Jammu and Kashmir who are yearning for peace because of the 17 year long turmoil created due to cross border terrorism. All this has started following the recent meeting of heads of the Saarc countries in Delhi in which Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of Pakistan, was also present. The US based Pugwash has organised a two day conference at Cochin on April 22 and 23 to discuss Kashmir. Several leaders from this side of Kashmir and the occupied Kashmir PoK are expected to attend the meeting. Some Kashmir-based top separatist leaders, who have said no to the Prime Ministers round table conference, are expected to fly to Cochin to participate in the Pugwash conference..

Greater Kashmir, 17 April 2007

### **Editorial: Heading Spirit matters**

It augurs well that the mindset of our political leadership has changed. Leaders both believing in the finality of accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and those espousing the cause of right to self determination or advocating total independence have by and large brought a lot of flexibility in their political stances. There are indications that some kind of broad consensus or unanimity of thought is emerging amongst the Kashmir leaders for ending the stalemate over the resolution of Kashmir problem. The truth that it has been this problem that has caused wars between India and Pakistan in the past and is a source of perennial agony, suffering and torture for people of the state has started dawning upon even on political leaders who had learned operating only the levers that would catapult them to power. Seen in retrospect right from 1947, the year Kashmir problem was born a lot was contributed to the agony of Kashmir by divisive leadership..

Daily Excelsior, 18 April 2007

### **Azad for easing travel restrictions across LoC**

Jammu, Apr 17: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Tuesday that three pronged strategy put in place to address all issues relating to Jammu and Kashmir has yielded encouraging results. Not only dialogue process between India and Pakistan is on fast track but development and restoration of normalcy in the State has also received a considerable fillip, he added. He was addressing well attended public meetings at Surankote and Mendhar in Poonch district. Mr. Azad said that in the next roundtable conference at New Delhi on April 24 the State Government would urge for simplifying travel procedure across Line of Control. We will be discussing how to make the travel easier and comfortable from both sides of LoC, he announced. He said the Government of India has already taken up the matter with Government of Pakistan that people on both sides of LoC should be allowed to visit religious places besides facilitating cultural exchange, exchange of students and media persons as well as trade..

Kashmir Times, 18 April 2007

### **Mirwaiz urges unity among separatists**

Srinagar, Apr 17: The chairman of Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today said that unity among the separatist leadership is the need of the hour and added that we need to put in collective efforts for achieving the collective objective.

A spokesman of Hurriyat said that Mirwaiz made these remarks while addressing to a function wherein Jammu and Kashmir Pahari Republic Forum announced its merger with the Mirwaiz Hurriyat. According to the spokesman Mirwaiz said that the leadership must realize the fact that united efforts would help us to achieve our objectives. The spokesman said that Mirwaiz while referring to the ongoing peace process remarked that this process would only bring about desired results when the inclusion of Kashmiris will be made certain..

Daily Excelsior, 18 April 2007

### **Separatists blowing hot and cold over PMs RTC**

Srinagard, Apr 17: By all indications, Prime Minister Manmohan Singhs third Roundtable Conference RTC of different political parties on Jammu & Kashmir problem is likely to end up as a mainstream exclusive. With Hurriyat Geelani having made it unambiguously clear that it would not participate in the conclave on its existing terms of reference and others notably Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's faction of the separatist umbrella still blowing hot and cold, none of Kashmir's formidable separatist outfits is likely to oblige the Prime Minister or his man of the series in the state, Ghulam Nabi Azad. Eversince Prime Ministers holding of the first RTC at New Delhi in February 2006, Hurriyat Geelani has adopted such a hardline posturing that its participation in these political processes is apparently impossible, in near future at least..

Greater Kashmir, 18 April 2007

### **Editorial: Sustain the Dialogue**

In the changed global scenario cooperation and not confrontation is the new diplomatic mantra. Nations are vying with each other to explore the avenues of cooperation and integrate with the global mainstream. In tune with emerging scenario when India and Pakistan after the end of nine months stand off in year 2000 very rightly decided to bid adieu to confrontation and embark on the path of peace and prosperity it had brightened hopes for better future for more than 130 million people living in the sub continent. The two countries had also resolved to find peaceful solution of all outstanding issue including that of Kashmir problem. This resolve by the then Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a dove in hawks of the saffron tribe and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf made all well meaning people agog. The peace process initiated by the two leaders with all pits and potholes on otherwise bumpy tract moved on slowly and steadily. There were all indications that if pace is maintained it will reach to its logical conclusion. Notwithstanding the pace suffering with change of government in New Delhi it was pragmatic on the part of Congress led coalition government to decide to carry forward the dialogue process.

Daily Excelsior, 19 April 2007

### **Azad meets PM, Patil ahead of third RTC on Kashmir**

New Delhi, Apr 18: Ahead of the third Round Table Conference RTC on Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other senior leaders here to finalise the agenda for the meet and apprise the Central leadership of the situation in his State. During his meeting of over 90 minutes with the Prime Minister, Azad gave a detailed analysis of the sudden spurt in

militant activities in the State during the past fortnight, official sources said. The two leaders also discussed the recommendations of four Working Groups constituted last year to improve infrastructure and other facilities in the State. Azad informed the Prime Minister about progress made by the fifth Working Group headed by Justice Retired Sagir Ahmed, which is reviewing Centre State relations and is yet to finalise its recommendations. This panel is likely to submit its report by the end of June, the sources said..

Kashmir Times, 19 April 2007

### **Thinning out troops sooner the better: Mehbooba**

Kishtwar, Apr 18 : Peoples Democratic Party PDP President, Mehbooba Mufti has said the gradual withdrawal of armed forces from the State is a key component of the reconciliation and resolution process and the thinning of troops must start, sooner the better. The Government of India must grab the opportunity and relax the security situation in the State as the continued use of army and security forces is unfair to them as well as the people of the State, she said. She also demanded that the Village Defence Committees be disbanded accusing them of creating a divide between communities. Addressing an impressive public meeting here today, Mehbooba while reiterating her party's demand for reduction of troops, revocation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA and vacation of civilian and institutional properties by the security forces, said that PDP respects and trusts the commitment and sincerity of the UPA leadership especially Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh in this regard..

Daily Excelsior, 19 April 2007

### **JKLF to launch safar-e-azadi from May 6**

Srinagar, Apr 18: With a many mainstream and separatist politicians holding public meetings across the State, Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front JKLF chairman, Yasin Malik, today announced that his organisation would launch a mass contact programme, titled safar e azadi The Journey of The Freedom from his ancestral village in Kokernag from May 6. As widely expected, Malik also announced that JKLF would not participate in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's third Round Table Conference on Kashmir later this month. Addressing a news conference here this afternoon, Yasin Malik said that he had just received Government of India's invitation seeking his participation in the Prime Ministers 3rd Round Table Conference on Kashmir. However, he said, JKLF had turned down the invitation and made it clear that the organisation would only participate in such a political exercise which would involve the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that it was unfortunate that New Delhi and Islamabad had not associated the representatives of the Kashmiri people with the so called peace process..

Dawn, 19 April 2007

### **Mirwaiz urges India to hold talks with AJK leaders (Jawed Naqvi)**

New Delhi, April 18: The All-Parties Hurriyat Conference on Wednesday urged Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to invite leaders of Azad Kashmir to a third round of roundtable talks he wants to hold on April 24. Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq told Dawn from Srinagar that his group would attend the talks but only if the agenda to

resolve the Kashmir dispute, with focus on the four-point plan put forward by President Gen Pervez Musharraf, was put on the table. We applaud President Musharraf's flexibility in the quest to resolve the dispute. India has shown none, the Mirwaiz, Kashmiris respected spiritual leader, said. We don't mind Kashmiri leaders who are inclined to support India to state their case at the talks. But preference should be given to the agenda for which our people have given the supreme sacrifice. The ball is in India's court..

Kashmir Times, 19 April 2007

**Editorial: Yet another RTC**

The manner in which New Delhi has gone ahead with the announcement of holding another so called Round Table Conference on April 24, apparently at the behest of the State chief minister, raises further doubts about real purpose behind such an exercise. The holding of such a meet with the exclusive participation of the mainstream politicians and a few hand picked non entities would be viewed in the context of the growing demands for providing a political space to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the ongoing peace process, and differences within the ruling coalition in the State over the issues of demilitarization, repeal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA and increasing human rights abuses in the troubled state which virtually threatened the very survival of the Congress PDP coalition. The crisis was averted for the time being with New Delhi setting up three panels to go into the demands raised by the PDP as a face saving device. While these panels have yet to begin their exercise, whatever their worth, voices against demilitarization and repeal of draconian laws are becoming louder and louder with the Defence Minister, who heads the main panel, joined by the army top brass, the state governor and chief minister joining the chorus..

Daily Excelsior, 20 April 2007

**Azad rejects Mehboobas demand to disband VDCs**

Sunderbani, Apr 19: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today categorically rejected PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's demand for disbanding Village Defence Committees VDCs. Instead, he declared, the VDCs would be further strengthened. The VDCs have done a good job in tackling militancy. They will be strengthened and, wherever necessary, will be assisted by Special Police Officers SPOs, Mr Azad said addressing a massive public meeting in this town in Rajouri district this afternoon, without naming the PDP chief. Only yesterday, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, whose party is main partner in coalition Government headed by Congress, had demanded, while addressing a public meeting at Kishtwar in Doda district, that VDCs should be disbanded. Majority of VDCs, it may be mentioned, exist in Doda district. Referring to recent killings of five labourers at Panglar in Sunderbanis adjoining Kalakot tehsil last month, the Chief Minister said the massacre has substantiated the claim that withdrawal of troops was not possible at this stage..

Greater Kashmir, 20 April 2007

**Hashim hails Geelani, questions Mirwaiz**

Srinagar, Apr 19: Democratic Liberation Party DLP chairman Hashim Qureshi today questioned the refusal of the moderate Hurriyat Conference and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front JKLF to participate in the round-table conference, but lavished praises

on Syed Ali Shah Geelani for never changing his stand. How could the moderate Hurriyat, JKLF and others justify their refusal to take part in the round-table conference when they are dying to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh separately, Qureshi told a news conference here. He said the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders could have presented their viewpoint at the conclave in a much better way. The DLP chief said the moderate Hurriyat Conference use every kind of pull and pressure tactics to seek an invitation from the Centre for separate talks with the Prime Minister.

Daily Excelsior, 20 April 2007

### **Cong must take lead to resolve Kashmir: Mufti**

Srinagar, Apr 19: Peoples Democratic Party PDP patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said that Congress led UPA Government at the Centre must take a lead in resolving the contentious Kashmir issue. Not only the people of Jammu and Kashmir, but of the entire country want Kashmir issue to be settled. It will be in the interest of the country in general and the Congress in particular to seize the historic opportunity and amicably settle the problem to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned, Mufti Sayeed told a public meeting at Ganderbal near here this morning. The Mufti claimed that the regions stability could only be ensured through political and economic stability in Jammu and Kashmir. He said the sub continent in general and Jammu and Kashmir in particular has suffered immensely due to the lingering problem.

The Tribune, 20 April 2007

### **Opinion: Musharraf's proposal (PC Dogra)**

There has been a lot of hype in the media about the four point proposal of President Pervez Musharraf with specific reference to demilitarisation and joint control. We Indians get swayed in no time. The proposal was not critically analysed in the context of the prevailing situation in the valley. The Government of India waited for some time for public opinion to crystalise and then came up with its response that it was not acceptable to India. Our leaders rightly judged the pulse of the people and the ground reality in the Kashmir valley. There is no doubt that post-9/11, the attitude of the Pakistan President has changed from jihadist to diplomatic. He had said some time ago that the way to liberate Kashmir is through jihad and not negotiations..

Greater Kashmir, 21 April 2007

### **Hizb rejects Azads offer**

Srinagar: Sharply reacting to the statement of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, the Hizbul Mujahideen on Friday said there was no question of renouncing the gun, and described any such condition for dialogue as condition of insincerity. Azad on Thursday said the troop withdrawal would be possible only after militancy ends. But Hizb spokesman Junaid-ul-Islam in a tele-statement to the CNS said, Only gun would force India for complete withdrawal of troops from Jammu and Kashmir. Islam said, Azad is a politician who has been reared by India in its lap. He said people of Jammu and Kashmir were aware about the anti Kashmir policies of Congress.

Daily Excelsior, 21 April 2007

### **BSF opposes demilitarisation**

Srinagar, Apr 20: Opposing any demilitarisation in Kashmir, a senior Border Security Force BSF officer, however, admitted that infiltration from across the border has come down as compared to previous years. Demilitarisation will take us again to 1990 situation when militants were moving freely, killing innocent people destroying Government and private property, Inspector General IG of BSF J B Negi told reporters at a function organised in connection with passing out parade at Humhama today. Mr Negi said there was a considerable improvement in the overall situation in Kashmir valley, including remote areas. But if we withdraw security forces from any area, the people of that area will be exposed to militants again, he warned.

Kashmir Times, 21 April 2007

**Opinion: Kashmir and Indian apologists (K Hasan)**

Why are even otherwise well intentioned and fair minded Indian writers incapable of being objective when it comes to Kashmir or Pakistan for that matter? 'Demystifying Kashmir, a recent book by Indian academic Navnita Chadha Behera provides yet another instance of this intellectual lack of honesty. Put under the looking glass by a number of leading South Asia experts in a review article published by the journal Asia Policy, it becomes evident that prejudice often gets the better of even Indian academics when dealing with Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2007

**RTC will be result oriented: Azad**

Jammu, Apr 21: Articulating his firm belief in viability and effectiveness of dialogue to work out solution to issues, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today expressed optimism that 3rd Roundtable on April 24 would be result oriented. He said RTCs provide common platform to every shade of opinion from all over the State to put forth their views and discuss issues collectively. Addressing public gatherings at Manjakote and Koteranka, far off areas in Rajouri district, he said that opening of Poonch Rawalakote road by UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi in June last not only fulfilled the long cherished desire of people but addressed humanitarian concerns as well enabling large number of divided families residing on either side of LoC to meet.

Indian Express, 22 April 2007

**PDP hails Centre's move to pull out troops from private places**

Jammu, April 21: The ruling PDP in Jammu and Kashmir has welcomed Centres reported move to pull out troops from orchards and other private places in the state, terming it as an important confidence building measure ahead of the third round table conference. It is a significant and laudable confidence building measure in the run-up to the third edition of the round table conference on Kashmir, she told a public meeting in Doda district. Her party expected more such positive measures from the Centre in near future, the PDP president said. Her party is looking forward to more such concrete measures including troop reduction and revocation of the Armed Forces Special Power Act, she said. Such measures would consolidate peoples faith in democratic institutions and facilitate peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue, the PDP leader said..

Greater Kashmir, 22 April 2007

### **Mufti disfavours SalahudDins inclusion in talks at this moment**

Pulwama, Apr 21: Terming the participation of United Jihad Council Supremo Syed SalahudDin in ongoing India Pakistan talks as conditional, Peoples Democratic Party PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed said the completion of ongoing peace process and restoration of peoples faith in both the countries is must before involving SalahudDin and other active militant leaders in the dialogue. Talking to reporters after a public rally at village Bandzoo here Saturday, Mufti said including SalahudDin in the ongoing talks at this stage would mean putting cart behind the horse as the dialogue is a long process. Talks in Northern Ireland are on for five years, Mufti said, adding that unless a solution is ultimately worked out over Kashmir issue, involving militant leadership will not yield any purpose..

Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2007

### **Opinion: Bid to woo Kashmir separatists! (Dr. Jitendra Singh)**

It is interesting, if not hilarious. It is quixotic, if not expedient. Till only the other day, the National Conference NC leadership was vociferously accusing the Peoples Democratic Party PDP of hobnobbing with militant organisations to stay in power and demanding withdrawal of troops from Kashmir to appease the militants. Today, the National Conference President is forcefully exhorting the Government of India to enter into dialogue with Syed Salahuddin, the Hizbul Mujahideen supremo and chairman of the United Jihad Council UJC even though not long ago the NC leadership was vehemently opposed to any move by the Centre to engage the Hizbul or the Hurriyat in any discussion and had even threatened to boycott any meeting at which the Hizbul or the Hurriyat representatives were invited to participate..

Daily Excelsior, 23 April 2007

### **India for e linking Srinagar, Muzaffarabad**

NewDelhi, Apr 22: In a move aimed at facilitating movement across the Line of Control, India is likely to moot a proposal to Pakistan for e linking Srinagar and Muzaffarabad for quick clearance of documents of people travelling between Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan occupied Kashmir. This was discussed at a recent meeting held here by the External Affairs Ministry to review progress on confidencebuilding measures initiated by the two countries, especially on Kashmir, informed sources said. The proposal, which came from the Jammu and Kashmir Government, will do away with cumbersome and time-consuming procedures under which applications for travel get delayed for months together, they said. Under the proposal, which is being seriously discussed in the ministry, two nodal offices will be earmarked in Srinagar and Muzaffarabad and e linked to each other. This will ensure that all applications are processed as quickly as possible, the sources said.

Greater Kashmir, 23 April 2007

### **Geelani stages strong comeback**

Srinagar, Apr 22: An aged ice cream seller from Lucknow, Muhammad Yasin had nearly sold out his kiosk by the time Syed Ali Geelani reached the premises adjacent to Martyrs graveyard in Eidgah on Sunday. As Geelanis supporters streamed through the disfigured and oddly fenced Eidgah grounds, it took his aides over half an hour to escort him toward

dais. The 76 year old Geelani had undergone a successful renal surgery in Mumbai early this month. Complaining pain in kidney, the ailing leader, however, spoke with an unaffected pitch and urged people to favor complete withdrawal of armed forces from J&K against all the alternative solutions leading to status quo. Geelani perceived a backroom pact between India and Pakistan over J&Ks status quo and said, We shall not let it happen. He pledged while holding the martyrs as witness that the struggle to oppose all 'these status quoist solution would be opposed through a peaceful struggle' for right of self determination..

The Tribune, 23 April 2007

**Roundtable: Mufti keeps cards close to chest**

Jammu, April 22: The stage is set for the participation of political parties and individuals from a cross-section of society at the third Roundtable Conference scheduled in Delhi on April 24, with separatists boycotting the meeting. But the recent din of demilitarisation in J and K as demanded by Peoples Democratic Party PDP patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who is now calling the shots for disbanding the village defence committees in the state, it is to be seen how forcefully he would be able to present these specific issues at the conference. Already being dubbed as a hardliner and even being alleged of being hand in glove with militant outfits by the right wing forces like the VHP and the BJP, the Mufti has gained a stature or at least an image of the one who could be recognised by the Centre as a man representing the hardliners, if not the pro freedom forces..

Kashmir Times, 23 April 2007

**Editorial: Pact on J&K'**

The reported statement of the Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid. M. Kasuri that India and Pakistan are moving towards a settlement of the Kashmir issue that might not be the first choice for all the three parties, India, Pakistan and Kashmiris, raises natural doubts that India and Pakistan have already agreed on a package bypassing the people of the troubled state. Kasuri has been quoted by a Pakistani newspaper as claiming that lot of ground has been covered for an agreement on Kashmir and some areas of differences are being sorted out, certain steps are needed to create a conducive environment so that the two governments could see the package to the people of Pakistan, India and Jammu and Kashmir. Though the Pakistani foreign minister declined to divulge the details of the package, and New Delhi is maintaining discreet silence about it, his disclosure naturally casts doubts about the two countries having made a deal which does not take the people of the troubled State, whose future is being negotiated, into confidence.

Daily Excelsior, 24 April 2007

**Relief for militants kin, easier crossLoC movement on agenda**

NEW DELHI, Apr 23: The third Round Table Conference on Kashmir, to be chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here tomorrow would discuss easing movement across the Line of Control and the contentious issue of providing relief to kins of militants killed in encounters. The conference, being held after nearly a year, would discuss the recommendations of the four Working Groups that were set up at the end of the second round in Srinagar last year. However, the recommendations of the fifth and crucial Working Group, which has been formed to look into Centre-State relations, could not be

completed in time, official sources said. Though majority of separatists, including both moderate and hardline Hurriyat Conference factions, decided to boycott the Conference, Hashim Qureshi, one of the founders of JKLF who now heads Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Liberation Party, is the lone separatist present at the meeting. He had attended the first round table but boycotted the second one..

Greater Kashmir, 24 April 2007

**Hurriyat denies militant presence in rally**

Srinagar, Apr 23: If there were any doubts that Syed Ali Geelanis show of strength on Sunday had watered down the ensuing Round Table Conference, States reaction to it unwittingly dispelled them. Geelani and his senior aides were booked under section 13 of the unlawful activities act for inciting antinational passions during a charged rally that received the ailing separatist Sunday. The move triggered a controversy with the Hurriyat claiming to have informed the district administration beforehand and the later denying that any permission was granted. No, we didnt allow them. Since they violated the law they have been booked, says Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Sheikh Aijaz Iqbal. He also admitted that the rally attracted unexpected response hence no police action was possible. We had Police inputs that holding a rally in Idgah ground would be dangerous. We told Hurriyat people on phone that final Police clearance was awaited..

Kashmir Times, 24 April 2007

**Editorial: More bark, less bite**

Like the proverbial case of there being many a slip between the tongue and the lip, the action does not match the optimistic rhetoric being churned out pertaining to Confidence Building Measures CBMs in Kashmir. Whether it is making conditions conducive for dialogue or offering any other kind of Confidence Building Measures, there is much being talked about but on ground everything that is spoken about becomes invisible. For the last over two years, since the peace process began, India and Pakistan have taken recourse to some healthy statements, though interspersed by a little hawkishness. That may evoke optimism but for an enduring atmosphere of hope, the peace process has to move beyond the simple confines of just statements, which too sometimes appear contradictory. In principle, both India and Pakistan have agreed to offering Confidence Building Measures for the people of Jammu and Kashmir..

Dawn, 24 April 2007

**Editorial: Roundtable on Kashmir**

IT IS unlikely that the third roundtable on Kashmir which opens in New Delhi today will produce a breakthrough for the India-Pakistan dialogue. It would have been a happy omen if the various parties taking part in the meeting as well as the Kashmiri leaders who have chosen to stay away could have reached a consensus on the broader issues concerning the states future. This would have facilitated meaningful negotiations with Pakistan. It is certainly a sign of progress that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is talking to the Kashmiris the exercise started in February 2006 with the second roundtable held in May 2006. But it is disappointing that not much headway is being made on substantive issues. Some mainstream political parties of the Valley, such as the Hurriyat and the JKLF, as well as the militant Jamaat i Islami, are not participating in these conferences.

They have their reservations about the Indian government's approach..

Daily Excelsior, 24 April 2007

**Editorial: Why trip at all'**

Each time a group of militants comes back home from the other side of the Line of Control a sentimental chord is struck. They are reunited with their families. Tears overwhelm them. Their misadventure has made them wiser. That is the first impression one gets. Having left their homes in the late 1980s or early 1990s they realise that they have ended up chasing a mirage. They were lured by the slogans of those who had no sympathy for them but their own hidden agenda to fulfil. They thus became fodder in a bigger and vicious machine that has gradually acquired only the label of terror. The same story has been repeated in the case of 24 of them who have surrendered to the Army at Uri last week. Their disclosures are in tune with all that we have been told earlier by the other boys who have suffered like them. They were given arms training in Azad Kashmir as the Pakistan-occupied territory is locally known and Pakistan..

Daily Excelsior, 25 April 2007

**PMs vision of naya Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh**

New Delhi, Apr 24: The Round Table Conference on Kashmir today favoured increased cross LoC movement of people and goods and sought strengthening of human rights protection as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced setting up of two committees for implementation of decisions for the State. Wrapping up the day long conclave, Singh said the Government was working on a blueprint of a new future for the State and announced setting up of a standing committee and a monitoring mechanism to ensure speedy implementation of decisions for benefit of the State. The meet, attended by leaders of mainstream parties but boycotted by separatists, discussed suggestions of four Working Groups on J&K and endorsed these, including strengthening of mechanism for relief of victims of militancy and violence. The third roundtable asked the Centre and the State Government to facilitate return of Kashmiri Pandits displaced from their homes since the outbreak of militancy and resolve the problems of refugees from Pakistan, who migrated to Jammu and Kashmir in 1947, in a time bound manner..

Kashmir Times, 25 April 2007

**Kashmiri worried over progress of peace process (Athar Parvaiz)**

Srinagar, Apr 24: The government officials in India and Pakistan particularly those in Pakistan might be claiming that the peace process between the two countries is about to yield a solution of Kashmir issue, but the people at large and the intelligensia in Kashmir strongly differ with it saying the peace process which appears to be an open ended one, is yet to yield anything for Kashmiris. We are not impressed, said Dr Sheikh Showkat, a wellknown political commentator, about the progress of peace process between India and Pakistan during a seminar organised by coalition of civil society here on Saturday. Dr Altaf, who also spoke on the occasion, remarked that he was relieved of a nagging confusion which he was nursing about the resolution of Kashmir issue by the statements of Pakistan Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri and JKLF chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik..

Indian Express, 25 April 2007

**Opinion: Moving on the Kargil-Skardu road (D Suba Chandran)**

The third round table conference on Jammu and Kashmir took place in Delhi on Tuesday. Ushering in peace within Kashmir remained the focus of the deliberations but we also need to look at the bigger picture. And this is where the Kargil Skardu road comes in. Speaking at a function in Kargil in June 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had announced that parts of Ladakh Gilgit and Baltistan are under the control of foreign troops and that the government is considering the opening of the Kargil Skardu road. While the local population in Kargil and Baltistan across the LoC is enthusiastic about such a route, the proposal itself seems to have been put on the back burner. Why is this road important? Much has been written about the divided families of the Kashmir Valley. The opening of the Uri Muzaffarabad road made everyone realise there are other divided families too in the Jammu, Rajouri and Poonch districts, for instance..

Indian Express, 25 April 2007

**On the table**

With both the hardliners and the moderates steadfastly boycotting its proceedings, the only commendable aspect of Tuesdays third round table conference on Jammu and Kashmir, arguably, was that it took place at all. Facetious as this may sound, there is some virtue in remaining steadfast about an open-ended search for peace in the state. But the process needs to be animated by a unifying idea. It is this search for that big idea that leads to the suggestion that may be India needs to look beyond its borders for models of reconciliation. How, for instance, was a ten year insurgency, that claimed innumerable lives in Nepal, brought to an end? Two common objectives credible democracy and the end to autocratic palace rule brought the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists insurgents on to the negotiating table. The 12 point understanding reached between these two entities last November was broad enough to paper over the considerable differences between them, and provided a sound basis for further negotiations..

The Tribune, 25 April 2007

**PoK refugees court arrest**

Jammu, April 24: Several hundred migrants from PoK, who had crossed the border in 1947 and then during the two wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, today courted arrest on the city outskirts demanding compensation and rehabilitation package for them on a par with Kashmiri Hindu migrants. They began a protest march towards the Suchetgarh Indo Pak border check post, 15 km from here, threatening to cross the border, but were stopped on way near Jammu airport. Raising anti J and K government slogans, residents of Jammu and those, who had migrated from Sialkot, Mirtpur and Muzaffarabad in the past 60 years, held a dharna where they were stopped by the police and later courted arrest..

Daily Excelsior, 26 April 2007

**RTC endorses Working Groups approach**

Jammu, Apr 25: The third Round Table Conference held yesterday in New Delhi and presided over by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has, in principle, endorsed the approach suggested by the Working Group on Confidence Building Measures CBMs

across different segments of society in the State including strengthening human rights protection, improving relief and rehabilitation of widows, orphans and other victims of militancy and violence and preserving rich and diverse cultural landscape of the State. A statement adopted at the end of third RTC, which was released to the press late last night, said the RTC appreciated the concerns expressed by the Working Group regarding the rights of all minorities in J&K, and an urgent need to facilitate return of Kashmiri Pandits to their hearth and homes..

Greater Kashmir, 26 April 2007

**CRPF withdrawn from downtown**

Srinagar, Apr 25: The Central Reserve Police Force CRPF has withdrawn its personnel and removed the post near the grand Jamia mosque at Nowhatta in the downtown city after nearly 18 years. The personnel of the CRPFs 96 battalion were at present deployed in the post set up in the Kawoosa building at the Nowhatta chowk. A CRPF spokesman said the company has been shifted to other parts of the Kashmir valley for deployment. We have handed over the building to the owners, he added. The post had been first set up by the CRPF which handed it over to the BSF in 1992..

Daily Excelsior, 26 April 2007

**Editorial: Looking ahead for lasting peace**

What has been the achievement of the Third Round Table Conference held in New Delhi on Tuesday? Full details of who said what at the day-long conclave are yet to be known. What is abundantly clear, however, is that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has invested it with a lot of significance. He has once again underlined the nations desire to move ahead on all issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir. He has put the normally controversial matters in correct perspective. For instance, he has promised steps to minimise human rights violations. Lest he should be misunderstood he has hastened to clarify that he does not mean an immediate reduction in troops which would depend on the scale of terrorism..

Kashmir Times, 26 April 2007

**Editorial: Monologue, not dialogue**

Another Round Table Conference has ended without achieving much as far as the real issue of Kashmir problem is concerned. Despite the slew of recommendations mooted by the five Working Groups that were constituted in the second round table conference and the flexible shades of opinion voiced by the prime minister, chief minister or other participants of the round table conference, the event has hardly addressed the problem of starting the basic process of a dialogue with Kashmiris. No doubt, several issues that were taken up at Tuesday's conclave in New Delhi were people oriented and any positive step in this direction would help reduce the alienation of the masses and act as genuine confidence building measures. Whether it is doing away with draconian laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act, troops pull out, release of prisoners, packages for the displaced communities, or travel permits, all these steps would help ease tensions and build a conducive atmosphere for negotiations..

Daily Times, 26 April 2007

### **EDITORIAL: Manmohan Singhs simple vision for Kashmir**

The Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, inaugurated the third roundtable conference on Kashmir in New Delhi on Tuesday and aired his vision of splitting the state of Indian held Kashmir into three: Naya Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. He called it a simple vision which, he argued, must become a model of real empowerment of the people and comprehensive security for them. But he admitted that this vision could not materialise unless differences with Pakistan were resolved and the trust deficit casting a shadow on our relations overcome. Mr Singh had aired his simple vision on Kashmir last year too at the Srinagar University. As he spoke in New Delhi, the Hurriyet Conference leaders from Kashmir were conspicuous by their absence: they had boycotted it because, they said, it promised nothing new. Knowing he was not saying something that would inspire the world with its originality, Mr Singh went into his general good wishes for the region where SAARC held out the only sane view of the future..

Daily Excelsior, 27 April 2007

### **Another plot to kill CM at Bandipore rally foiled**

Srinagar, Apr 26: Another plot to assassinate Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad in a suicide attack in his rally at Bandipore today has been foiled by police with the arrest of three militants including a Pakistani national. The plot, albeit unearthed on Tuesday, was kept as a secret till the rally of Mr Azad which concluded peacefully this afternoon. A senior police officer told the Excelsior that a top Lashkar e Toiba LeT militant Showkat Ahmed was arrested from Srinagar two days back by police. He was subjected to questioning during which he revealed that LeT, Jaish e Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen had hatched a joint conspiracy to assassinate the Chief Minister at Bandipore during his Thursdays rally..

The Hindu, 27 April 2007

### **Six hardline Hurriyat leaders arrested**

Srinagar: The police on Thursday arrested six leaders of the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference when they were about to address a press conference here and give a call for protest against the alleged demolition of a mosque inside the Hariparbhat fort. Hurriyat sources claimed that two of them were booked under the Public Safety Act. As senior leaders of the Hurriyat Ghulam Nabi Sumji, Massarat Alam Bhat, Firdous Ahmad Shah and others arrived at a hotel around 12.30 p.m., the police swooped on the hotel and whisked them away. The leaders tried to resist the police and raised pro-freedom and anti India slogans. This police action has exposed the Indian democracy and there is complete suppression as far as the freedom of expression is concerned, one of the leaders shouted. They were taken to the police station at Kothibagh..

Indian Express, 27 April 2007

### **Seize the opportunities**

Srinagar, April 26: Describing the recent roundtable conference as a historic chance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to address all their issues, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said a three tier strategy would be adopted to implement the suggestions of the working groups set up by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. A three tier strategy would be launched to implement the recommendations of the working groups. Short, medium

and long term approaches are being put in place in this regard, Azad told a public gathering in Bandipora district. He said wisdom lied in seizing the rare opportunities that time provided. Wiser are those who seize the rare opportunities times provides..

Greater Kashmir, 27 April 2007

**Delhi responding to withdrawal demand: Mufti**

Kokernag, Apr 26: Claiming that New Delhi is responding positively to his party's demand of troop withdrawal from the Valley, Peoples Democratic Party PDP Patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed on Thursday said, Our demand has been taken seriously and action has already been initiated to vacate the civilian properties and orchards occupied by the troopers. Addressing a gathering in this south Kashmir township, Mufti said, The process has to expand and gather momentum on the ground as such measures are now certainly unavoidable. Mufti said that the fundamental input for transforming the state's future scenario is that the people must get the relief and get associated with the peace process..

Daily Excelsior, 28 April 2007

**Geelani, Shah, four other separatists under house arrest**

Srinagar, Apr 27: The breakaway Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani and four other senior leaders of the amalgam and head of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party DFP Shabir Ahmad Shah have been put under house arrest in the Valley. The separatist leaders were to lead demonstrations in the city after Friday prayers in protest against the alleged demolishing of an ancient mosque in the premises of Hari Parbat Fort, also known as Koohe Maran, overlooking the Srinagar. However, the officials have denied that the mosque has been demolished. Official sources said the leaders were put under house arrest as a precautionary measure..

Kashmir Times, 28 April 2007

**Protestors clash with cops at Nowhatta, several injured**

Srinagar, Apr 27: On the first Friday after the removal of a security force camp at Nowhatta Chowk, the youth clashed with the police. At least two dozen persons including three journalists and four cops were injured during the clashes between cops and youth, protesting against the alleged demolition of mosque at historic Hariparbat. The CRPF 96 bn vacated the camp on Tuesday last and handed over the possession of the house back to its owner. After the eruption of militancy in 1990, authorities had set up first security force camp at Nowhatta to curb the movement of militants..

Daily Excelsior, 28 April 2007

**Fake encounter probe panel meets on June 4**

Srinagar, Apr 27: The Makhan Lal Kaul Commission of Inquiry, probing the alleged custodial killings and fake encounters, including that of carpenter Abdul Rehman Padder, in Jammu and Kashmir will hold its first public sitting here on June 4. According to a notification, the Commission would hold its first public sitting here on June 4 at 1100 hrs to consider the terms of reference, draft regulation of its procedure and tentative programme in the presence of parties interested. It said the statement or complaints regarding the matters should be filed within a period of one month from the date of the

notice at the office of the Commission..

Indian Express, 28 April 2007

**Desist from human rights violations, Azad to police**

Udhampur, April 27: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad asked the police and security forces to desist from any human rights violations while undertaking anti militant operations in the state. The police have to create a best-ever image in the public. They have to play best-ever role in stamping out militancy and educating people to rise against terrorism, Azad said. Upholding human rights should be the priority and the best way is to maintain peace without infringing into the rights of citizens, he said and asked the police department to ensure safety of general public while dealing with militancy..

Kashmir Times, 28 April 2007

**Editorial: A perilous path**

The government seems to have tread on a perilous path by arresting the leaders of Hurriyat G on Thursday while they were addressing a press conference in Srinagar, close on the heels of the mammoth rally addressed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani. The ailing leader himself was placed on house arrest on Friday. The arrests are condemnable not only for the fact that these are based on fabricated charges but also for the fact that they symbolize the ugly repression of the state. The unprecedented manner in which Geelani has been placed under house arrest without allowing him to meet visitors and the way the other Hurriyat leaders were picked up by police personnel who barged inside during a press conference are a clear manifestation of this repression.. On the one hand this week witnessed the third round table conference where a working group, earlier formed in the previous RTC, forwarded suggestions about release of political prisoners and on the other hand, the state police was busy pressing charges against Geelani and other leaders of his action of the All Party Hurriyat Conference..

Daily Excelsior, 28 April 2007

**Opinion: Pak solution of Kashmir problem (ML Kotru)**

A Kashmir solution is round the corner. That is what Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri tells us publicly. A solution, he assures, is much closer than most imagine. Then, the rider, which by itself is unusual for a country ruled by a General, a serving one, who also couples as the country's President, that the solution would be referred to his country's Parliament. Should the Pakistani Parliament reject it, the solution ceases to exist. One thing, though, Kasuri does not tell us. Which Parliament 'The existing one or the one that is to be elected with Benazir Bhutto, by all available accounts, a contender' The General, in all his magnanimity, has forgiven her for all her and husband Asif Zardari's sins. Should be parliamentary approval, spoken of by Kasuri, be necessary for the solution to be accepted the point arises that the political animal that she is, would Benazir be expected to sign on the dotted line when the solution comes for approval..

Indian Express, 29 April 2007

**Political climate heats up in Valley (Muzamil Jaleel)**

Srinagar: With the arrival of spring, Kashmir is witnessing unprecedented political

activity across the mainstream separatist divide. In fact, there have been 25 political rallies this month alone. As hardline leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani vowed to carry on the separatist struggle despite a possible Indo Pak agreement, the Hurriyat moderates sought support for the Indo-Pak peace process. Mainstream parties like the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party and Congress have, meanwhile, begun public campaigns, hinting at an early Assembly election. With speculation rife that New Delhi and Islamabad were making serious headway to resolve Kashmir, and with infiltration at its lowest ebb, politics has suddenly started taking centre stage. The change started from Ganderbal, where the 2002 Assembly polls witnessed an upset when Omar Abdullah lost this traditional National Conference bastion to the PDP. On April 4, Abdullah went back to the constituency to begin his public contact campaign..

Daily Excelsior, 29 April 2007

### **Omar for mercy to militants, punishment to Hurriyat**

Srinaga, Apr 28: National Conference NC President, Omar Abdullah, today lashed out at Kashmirs separatist leaders and arch rival on the mainstream political stage, Peoples Democratic Party PDP, for running the politics of vested interest over the blood of Kashmiri people. He asserted that those making fiery speeches at Martyr Graveyard would soon be held accountable for every killing that has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir in the last 17 years of separatist turmoil.

Greater Kashmir, 29 April 2007

### **Opinion: Kashmir Problem Resolved' (M Ashraf)**

President Musharraf has categorically stated that the Kashmir Problem may be resolved sooner than later. According to him reasonable progress has been made between the two rival claimants of the troubled State. There had earlier also been a strong rumour floating all over the place that India and Pakistan have reached some sort of an understanding through back channel diplomacy for the resolution of the decades old vexed problem of Kashmir. It was said that the approach to the ultimate solution. President Musharraf has categorically stated that the Kashmir Problem may be resolved sooner than later. According to him reasonable progress has been made between the two rival claimants of the troubled State. There had earlier also been a strong rumour floating all over the place that India and Pakistan have reached some sort of an understanding through back channel diplomacy for the resolution of the decades old vexed problem of Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 29 April 2007

### **Qayyum for safe passage to militants**

New Delhi, Apr 28: Former Prime Minister of Pak occupied Kashmir PoK Sardar Abdul Qayyum today sought safe passage from the Indian Government for militants operating in Jammu and Kashmir saying they would be accepted there. He also denied there were terrorist training camps in PoK. May be some belonging to the Lashkare Toiba LeT school of thought are existing on that side of Jammu and Kashmir. If they get the safe passage, they might return home PoK. We are ready to accept them. Instead of keeping the irritant there, it is better they are moved to this side PoK, he said. Giving a lecture on Kashmir issue at the observer research foundation, Qayyum claimed that talks were on with Indian side on the issue..

Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2007

**Pak army trying to prevent surrender by militants**

Baramulla, Apr 29: The Pakistan army is keeping a close watch on militants in 52 training camps across the Line of Control LoC to ensure that they do not surrender to Indian authorities, senior Army officials have said. Despite the ongoing peace process, the training camps across the border are still operational and hundreds of trained militants are ready to find their way into the Kashmir valley, they said. The Indian Army has learnt that over 700 Kashmiri youths who have been trained in training camps in Pakistan occupied Kashmir are ready to infiltrate into the Indian side. According to our information, there are 52 training camps operational in Pakistan and PoK and five of them are in Muzaffarabad alone, Brig Narinder Pal Singh Hira, Station Commander of 12 Infantry Brigade said. The Indian Army has a list of Kashmiri boys who crossed the LoC and is in constant touch with their parents to motivate their children to surrender..

Daily Excelsior, 30 April 2007

**Open 7 new cross LoC points: WG**

Jammu, Apr 29: Working Group on Strengthening Relations Across the Line of Control headed by M Rasgotra has recommended liberal travel regime for the people of two divided parts of Jammu and Kashmir including treating Permanent Resident Certificates PRCs as basic document for issuing travel permit. It recommended opening of seven additional routes for bus service between divided State and two additional contact/meeting points. The Group, which was among five Working Groups set up after second Round Table Conference in Srinagar in May last year, has also called for broadening scope of visits across LoC by including more persons instead of confining the issuance of travel permits only to divided families. Out of five Groups, four have submitted their reports..

Kashmir Times, 30 April 2007

**Law of land will be supreme: Kalam**

ON BOARD SPECIAL AI, Apr 29: With the European Parliament President raising the death sentence awarded to Mohammed Afzal Guru for his role in the Parliament attack, President A P J Abdul Kalam has said judicial and other processes of India would be adhered to in deciding the matter. Wrapping up a five-day visit during which he addressed European MPs and made a state visit to Greece, a calm-looking 75 year old Kalam said he had told European Parliament President Hans Gert Pottering that clemency for Guru would be decided on only after legal procedures were completed. Kalam was replying to questions from reporters accompanying him, who asked whether there was any pressure from the European Parliament on granting clemency to Guru. Well, they did not pressurise or anything. They raised the issue. In fact the European Parliament President raised the issue during a one to one meeting and I said the law of the land will be supreme, he said..

Kashmir Times, 30 April 2007

**Editorial: Murderers in uniform**

The Indian police never had the reputation of being a very civilised, fair minded,

lawabiding institution, although they are the state's law enforcing arm. The corruption and misuse of power indulged in by the lower ranks of the police is proverbial. The man in khaki is still the most dreaded man in the area, and most villagers pray that their sons become one. Not for nothing did Justice A.N. Mullah of Allahabad high court refer to the Indian police, sometime around 1960, as the largest single body of gangsters. But, if that was the sad fact nearly fifty years ago, the situation today is many times worse. The process started with the rise of insurgencies, first, in the north east, and then in the forms of Naxalism in West Bengal and violent separatism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The pillars of democracy, like the rule of law and the rights of an individual, came to be ignored in favour of extra judicial actions taken in the name of national integrity.. All forms of extralegal actions, like fake encounters, custodial killings, and just disappearance after arrest, came to be increasingly accepted as necessary in the so-called national interest.

The Tribune, 30 April 2007

**Roundtable conference: Parties come out of hibernation**

Jammu, April 29: The third roundtable conference RTC has triggered political activity and a series of public meetings by mainstream parties and separatists giving an impression that snap polls might be held for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly. The Kashmir valley has become a battlefield where not only the coalition partners, the Congress and the PDP, were holding separate public meetings almost every day, but Opposition parties have also started flexing their muscles. With a term of six years, the elections for the Assembly here are due in November next year, but feverish political activity points towards early polls. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad recently asked Congress activists to be prepared for early elections..