

Kashmir Images, 1 August 2004

Retirement decision rescinded; rebel Geelani appointed PB chief

Srinagar: To avoid a split in the party, Jamaat-e-Islami's Majlis Shura today rescinded its earlier decision of retiring Syed Ali Geelani and restored its political bureau re-appointing the hardliner leader as its chief. But the decision triggered more differences with the party calling an emergency meeting to sort them out. Threatened by Geelani's decision to hold a meeting of Arakeen-e-Jamaat at party headquarters, Amer-i-Jamaat-e-Islami had called a two day meeting of Shura that concluded today, to discuss the crisis that would head the party to a split. Out of 25 Shura members, nineteen were present in the meeting that was headed by Amer-i-Jamaat-e-Islami, Nazir Ahmad Kashani.

Kashmir Images, 1 August 2004

Seven militants killed

Srinagar: Seven militants were killed and one residential house was razed to ground in different militancy related incidents during last 24 hours. Sources said that a top Al-Barq Commander and his associate were killed in an encounter with the troops of 5 and 29 RR together with the sleuths of SOG at Heevan Chandoosa in the Kandi area of Baramulla. One of the slain militants was identified as Abu Rehman Malik alias Abu Bakar, Dy Chief of Albarq of Lahore Pakistan.

Daily Excelsior, 1 August 2004

Two more counter insurgents killed

SRINAGAR, July 31: With the controversy over the death of two Badijehlan residents deepening in south Kashmir, suspected militants have gunned down two more counter-insurgents in Kulgam area. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that unidentified gunmen, suspected to be separatist militants, kidnapped two young counter-insurgents from their respective residences at Dedipora, in the south Kashmir foothills of Pirpanjal mountain range, late last night. Their bullet-riddled bodies were spotted and recovered at road crossing at the

nearby Kanipora village today. They were identified as Rayees Ahmed Dar alias Sahba S/o Abdul Aziz Dar and Aijaz Ahmed Dar S/o Ghulam Qadir Dar.

Aftab, 01 August 2004

Editorial: Transport system to be improved.

In the recent past, a statement of the government said that it plans to bring about an improvement in the transport system in Srinagar. Govt. is taking such steps to remove the inconveniences of the people experiencing messy transport in the valley since years. Almost every route in Srinagar witnesses frequent jams for hours as it also results in tremendous air pollution hazardous to health. It is very sad to learn that the pollution control board in Srinagar does little to put a check on pollution. The other problem area is that there is no authority to stop drivers from bundling in passengers wherever and when ever they wish. Overcrowding in buses and other passenger ferrying vehicles has become order of the day and government continues to be unmoved with regard to this problem. And this has led to frequent accidents where ordinary people become the victim. The bus drivers should be made to stop on registered bus stops and overcrowding in buses and other passenger ferrying vehicles should be checked. Also traffic police entrusted to look after the transport system in the valley is involved in gross corruption, it should be made to render the services to its best so that transport system comes back on track. The violators of traffic norms should be punished under law so that no body dares to take law into his hands.

Hindustan Times, 2 August 2004

Army grappling with 'child warriors' in J&K

Jammu, August 2: The Indian Army claims to be confronting a new problem along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir--teenaged terrorists, some as young as 13 or 14, wielding sophisticated arms. According to an Army spokesman, Pakistan-based terrorist outfits Jaish-e-Mohammed,

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and even the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen have started pushing in teenagers to the Indian side. The spokesman said in recent weeks, the Army had apprehended nine such children armed with deadly weapons. One of them was identified as 13-year-old Mohammad Islam of Sihota in Pakistan, the spokesman said. The teenager described to the army how he had been motivated for jihad and made to pick up guns.

The Hindu, 2 August 2004

Kashmir: Musharraf's deadline (C. Raja Mohan)

NEW DELHI, AUG. 1. There are two ways in which the Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's latest deadline on settling the Kashmir issue could be interpreted. One is to view his remarks as an artificial time-frame that could wreck the fragile peace process between India and Pakistan. The other is to see his comments as domestic posturing aimed at buying some political space. In a recent interview to the Pakistan media, Gen. Musharraf has defined "a few months, a year or a year and a half at most" as a "reasonable time-frame" for finding a solution to the conflict over Kashmir. Gen. Musharraf was responding to questions on the Indian position that an issue that has divided the two nations for nearly six decades cannot be sorted out within a few months. Gen. Musharraf had previously stated that if there was no progress in addressing the Kashmir question, he is out of the peace process. In laying down what he calls a "reasonable time-frame" for addressing the Kashmir issue, he, it could be argued, is putting India on notice. Pessimists would argue that Gen. Musharraf has begun to shred the valuable ambiguity on time frames in the India-Pakistan peace process. Governments rarely negotiate sensitive issues against a pre-set deadline.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

8 top militants shot in encounters

Srinagar, August 1: Eight top militants, including a self-styled deputy chief of the Al-Burq, were killed in separate encounters

in Jammu and Kashmir, where militants shot a hostage and critically wounded a special police officer, a police spokesman said today. The self styled deputy chief of the Al-Burq, Abdul Rehman Malik, a Pakistan national, and his bodyguard were killed at Chandoosa in Baramula district of north Kashmir, he said. An AK rifle, its three magazines, 83 rounds, a pistol with a magazine, three rounds, a wireless set and a satellite phone were recovered from the slain militants. Three more militants were killed and the house in which they were hiding was damaged in a gunbattle in the nearby Heevan-Sheeri village. Another Pakistani militant Aijaz Ahmad of Multan was killed in an encounter at Potshah-Lolab in Kupwara, he said.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

Geelani is Jamaat panel head

Srinagar, August 1: The Jammu and Kashmir Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) today appointed Hurriyat Conference (breakaway) chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani as the head of its Political Affairs Committee. A JeI spokesman said a Majlis Shoura meeting decided to restore the post of head of the Political Affairs Committee and appoint Mr Geelani to the post. The Jamaat's decision is being seen as a key move to prevent Mr Geelani from floating a party. Mr Geelani, who was representing the JeI in the executive council of the Hurriyat Conference, did not attend any meeting of the conglomerate, demanding action against the People's Conference for fielding proxy candidates in the Assembly elections.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

Good governance key to peace in valley: Governor

Srinagar, August 1: Good governance and economic development were imperative for lasting peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Governor S K Sinha said yesterday. Though a marked difference in the situation was discernible, greater efforts were required to overcome the challenge posed by terrorism from across the border, he said addressing Indian Police Service probationers here. He

cited various measures taken to ensure the region's overall development, remove alienation of the people and combat militancy without causing inconvenience to civilians.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

Farmers give up maize for security

Jammu, August 1: Under a different pattern of anti-infiltration and antiinsurgency operations, the security forces have persuaded farmers to remove tall maize plants from land close to the LoC and vital roads in Poonch and Rajouri sectors. Official sources confirmed here today that police and Army teams were sent to farmers with instructions to reap unripe tall maize plants for security reasons. Harbhajan, a farmer, said, We have been promised compensation for the loss we have suffered by reaping unripe maize crop, but we do not know whether the compensation amount will come from the Ministry of Defence or the state government.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

Jamaat-e-Islami meeting put off to August 8

Srinagar, August 1: A meeting of the Jamaat-e-Islami, scheduled for August 5 will now be held on August 8 to prevent split between hardliners and moderates of this religio-political organisation in Jammu and Kashmir. This follows the constitution of Save Jamaat committee headed by Mohammad Ashraf Sahrai, a supporter of Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Differences between hardliners led by Geelani and moderates led by Ameer-e-Jamaat (chief of the Jamaat), Syed Nazir Ahmad Kashani started growing over one year, when Geelani opted out of Abbas led separatist Hurriyat Conference.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

Jammu-Udhampur rail line to be inaugurated soon

Jammu, August 1: A high-level team of the Railway Ministry and IRCON will visit Srinagar shortly to assess the situation for resuming work on the Qazigund-Baramulla rail line in the Kashmir valley that was

stopped following the killing of an engineer a month ago. Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, has asked the senior officers to visit Srinagar and take steps to resume work on the rail line. During his visit to Delhi, Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed had urged him to get the work expedited. The Chief Minister assured that security would be strengthened at work places of the rail project.

The Indian Express, 2 August 2004

Valley apples too await the healing touch
BARAMULLA, AUGUST 1: Khwaja Mohammad Yaqoob is not a soldier, but every day he goes to battle. The enemies of the 47-year-old apple grower come in different forms: rampant apple scab fungus in his orchard, adulterated fungicides, and a negligent government. A victory against scab, in fact, could be a significant boost to Kashmir's ailing economy. This Rs 1350-crore industry produces 10 lakh tonnes of apples and employs more than five lakh people. Though the Valley's largest industry, it drastically lags behind in both infrastructure and investment. Farmers say almost four lakh tonnes of apples are spoiled by scab each season. One remedy, say apple breeders, could be the introduction of scab-resistant varieties

The Times of India, 2 August 2004

Militants to blacklist Hurriyat leaders (M Saleem Pandit)

SRINAGAR: Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen is likely to issue a list of the blacklisted leaders of both the divided groups of Hurriyat Conference soon, as they according to Ittehad-UI-Majhideen are linked with the Indian intelligence agencies. Though four outfits of United Jihad Council represent Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen, but their names have not been disclosed. The spokesman of the outfit while making the statement impressed upon the people of the state that no constituent or leader of the two divided groups of Hurriyat has reacted to the Unity moves made by the outfit till now. He threatened that action will be initiated against Hurriyat leader after August 6 deadline set by the outfit. The people have

been asked not to raise the voice of dissent against the killing of any Hurriyat leader.

Srinagar Times, 02 August 2004

Editorial: The shifting of bus stands.

The developmental plans of the coalition government are very high and almost on everyday new proposals are being made public. However, details of the work to be executed and its benefits to the society are not made public. If we accumulate the statements issued by the politicians during past 18 months, it will make a voluminous book. Except for the completion of flyover first of its kind in Srinagar, the coalition government has never succeeded in completing a work in due time. Government plans to shift the existing bus stands to other places to widen them and set up them on modern basis to relieve people of the inconvenience. In Srinagar, KMD bus stand would be shifted to Panth Chowk. Transporters believe that the shifting of the same bus stand would not benefit the people and instead add to their inconveniences. It would have been wise to take suggestion from traders community and transporters regarding shifting of bus stands but government didn't bother to take them into confidence. Just a day before, the situation in Pulwama went out of control and police had to resort to tear gas and cane charge to disperse the mob. Here some people favored the Govt decision of shifting of the bus stand while as others equally opposed it. People protested against the rural and urban development minister, Gh. Hassan Mir and demanded his sacking.

Aftab, 02 August 2004

Editorial: Jamat argument unjustified.

The Jamat has expressed great concern over the changing feelings of Kashmiris. In a statement, it said that once upon a time people were doing everything to condemn the acts like demolition of Babri Masjid but now the same people are least bothered about the gross human rights violations in Kashmir. Interestingly, the analysis of this statement of the party may reveal that is justified in one sense and unjustified in the

other. It would be not be out of place to mention that the leaders of Jamat are responsible for the prevailing circumstances in the valley, Jamat itself has not been able to led people to the right path and it claims to be representing voice of valley people. What was told today, something contrary was done the other day and this unrealistic policy has disappointed people. Jamat cannot deny the fact that it is responsible for the turbulent state of affairs in the valley. Though Jamat claims that it was impatient to see miserable life in the ! valley coming to an end, the party is putting no efforts for the same. Politicians and religious leaders have taken people for a ride for their straightforward attitude

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Daily Excelsior, 3 August 2004

Talks with Hurriyat in free manner: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 2: Asserting that the Centre was committed to holding dialogue with separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir, Government today said the parleys would be held in "most free and open" manner and without attaching any conditions. Talks have to be held in free and open manner where all issues would be discussed, highly placed sources said after a meeting between Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and Centre's pointsman for talks on Jammu and Kashmir N N Vohra. The sources said the Centre was committed to an early dialogue with all shades of opinion in the State but was hoping to break the "temporary" deadlock with the Hurriyat

at the earliest. The Centre has never attached any conditions with the talks and was willing to discuss any issues that Hurriyat may wish to raise, they added.

Daily Excelsior, 3 August 2004

Geelani allowed to form new party

SRINAGAR, Aug 2: In a significant development, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) today allowed its senior leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani to form a new independent political party for finding a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue. Mr Geelani also received a shot in the arm when the JeI decided to become the member of the executive council of his faction of the Hurriyat Conference. However, Mr Geelani will continue to remain a basic member of the JeI, a spokesman of the Jammah Zahid Ali said here this afternoon. He said to avoid the present uncertainty within the JeI, following Mr Geelani's decision to form a new party, there was an agreement between Mr Geelani and Jamaat in presence of the Majlis Shoura members late last night that he (Geelani) should be allowed to float a new political party which could address the Kashmir issue more forcefully.

Daily Excelsior, 3 August 2004

IRCON team discusses security

SRINAGAR, Aug 2: A six-member Indian Railway Construction (IRCON) team on visit to the State, today held a detailed meeting with Chief Secretary Dr Sudhir-S-Bleoria and Director General of Police (DGP), Gopal Sharma to discuss security related arrangements in the Valley where IRCON has taken up the ambitious project to construct 120 kilometer Qazigund-Baranmulla rail track. The work on this project came to the halt when Railway Engineers and officials, working in Valley, went on an indefinite strike after IRCON Engineer Sudhir Kumar Pundir and his 20-year old brother Sanjay were killed by some unidentified militants in Sugam village near Shopian town of south Kashmir on June 23. Official sources said that it was in this connection that a six member team of IRCON arrived here to discuss the security

arrangements with local Police so that such incidents don't occur again.

Daily Excelsior, 3 August 2004

Pak has inconsistent policies on Kashmir: JKLF

ISLAMABAD, Aug 2: Observing that Pakistan has inconsistent policies on Kashmir, leader of the Pakistan based JKLF Amanullah Khan has said the entry of Jehadi groups in Jammu and Kashmir has introduced sectarian differences in the Valley. Speaking at a meeting in Gilgit in the northern areas yesterday, Khan said "Pakistan Government has changed its Kashmir policy 12 times since 1947". The entry of "outer forces" in Jammu and Kashmir is more sectarian in nature rather than national, he said while accusing a Jehadi commander of torching the Charar Sharif (the shrine of Hazrat Nooruddin Wali) in Kashmir.

The Tribune, 3 August 2004

Vohra holds talks with Patil

New Delhi, August 2 Centre's interlocutor on Jammu and Kashmir N N Vohra today met Home Minister Shivraj Patil to discuss political situation in the state in the wake of recent developments involving the Hurriyat Conference. The Hurriyat Conference, which has embarked on a unity move following Molvi Abbas Ansari's stepping down as the amalgam chief, has not yet responded to moves by the UPA government for talks, saying that the conglomerate would first like to set its house in order. There have been demands from a section of the Hurriyat that their leaders should be allowed to visit Pakistan. Sources said Hurriyat leaders were also waiting for the outcome of the Indo-Pak dialogue process.

The Tribune, 3 August 2004

NC ex-minister's house attacked; 4 militants held

Srinagar, August 2: Militants attacked the house of a former National Conference minister Sakeena Itoo in South Kashmir injuring a security guard last night and also shot at and wounded two police constables at historic Lal Chowk near here this

afternoon. Elsewhere in the valley, seven persons were injured while the security forces arrested a militant overnight. Panic gripped historic Lal Chowk, in the heart of the city this afternoon when militants shot at and critically wounded constables Farooq Ahmad and Mohammad Sadiq. Militants later escaped despite the presence of large number of security personnel in the area.

The Tribune, 3 August 2004

Former vice-chief of JKLF floats party
Srinagar, August 2: Former vice-chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Javid Ahmed Mir today floated a party, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Forum (JKLF). Announcing its formation, Mir said the Mujahideen outfit appeared in Darhal market in Rajouri, warning people not to help the security forces in their drive against militancy sources said. Some of these posters were pasted yesterday outside shops and places of worship, the sources said and added that these were removed by the authorities. On his resignation from the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Mir said, "I have no differences as such with Chairman Mohammad Yaseen Malik. Our friendship of 20 years was for a cause and it shall remain so. The only difference is that earlier we worked together and now we shall work separately."

Hindustan Times, 3 August 2004

Don gets access to Mufti, leaves police red-faced

Jammu, August 3: In a major security lapse that has the Jammu and Kashmir police red in the face, an underworld don wanted in a number of heinous cases, was part of a delegation of contractors that met chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed recently. That is not all, the don was sitting right next to the chief minister during the meeting. This happened despite the presence of the special security wing of the state police that was escorting the chief minister. Investigations by HT revealed that Braham Jyot, alias Situ, a criminal wanted by the police in connection with many criminal cases, including murder and attempt to

murder, met the Mufti as part of a deputation of contractors in Doda district in the last week of July. Photographs show the criminal sitting next to the chief minister.

Alsafa, 03 August 2004.

Editorial: Political leadership (Hurriyat) of Kashmir pay attention.

In line with the confidence building measures (CBM's), the process of result oriented dialogue between India and Pakistan continues and in the coming days both countries would begin a series of dialogues in New Delhi. While as the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf has stressed upon making the dialogue successful India has said that it want restoration of peace in the subcontinent. Kashmiris too express satisfaction on the advancement of talks between the two countries and hope that both would demonstrate broadmindedness and take more steps aimed at restoration of peace and resolution of bilateral issues. Besides dealing with the volatile situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, USA is paying its attention towards South Asia and off late Kashmir has become the part of its concern. Former Parliament Member (MP) and Chairman National Democratic Front Abdul Rashid Kabli in an interview admitted that USA, Europe Union, Russia, China, France and Britain have started! putting in efforts in a rather subtle manner vis-à-vis resolution of Kashmir issue. He presumed that the resolution of Kashmir issue may take between two to three years and both countries will have a thriving relationship within the span of three years. In the year 1993, USA organized a conference in which non-government delegations from both the countries participated. Ab. Rashid Kabli from Kashmir and Gh. Qadir Shah from Muzafarabad were invited to participate in the conference. In the prevailing circumstances, America, United Nations and other European countries press for the resolution of Kashmir issue and this is something extraordinary. Kashmir is a burning issue, which is the cause of instability in the entire sub continent.

Aftab, 03 August 2004.

Editorial: alternative means of employment.

At regular intervals, reports in newspapers are being published saying that the ban on government jobs/recruitment would be lifted to provide employment to the educated youth and to put a check on growing unemployment. Even if the ban on government jobs is lifted, the problem of unemployment could not be overcome. In a department where there should have been ten employees, 40 employees stand registered. And the fact remains that despite this the performance of Govt. departments continues to be dismal. The appointment of more people in various departments may worsen the matters, as there is no authority to take action against the wrongdoing and lackadaisical attitude. There is no criterion for the appointment in a particular department and these are made on the basis of nepotism, favoritism and under the political influence. Such appointments/recruitment never helped put a check on unemployment which is swelling up with the every passing day. For an educated youth, it would be unwise to rely on government job and there is a need to create alternative means of employment. The creation of alternative means of employment to a great extent may relieve people of day-to-day problems and educated youth may be able to earn their livelihood. Unemployment is a serious problem, which could assume alarming proportions and government should take steps to deal with it. Government should set up industrial units to absorb as many as educated youths as possible

Hindustan Times, 4 August 2004

Pak flexibility on Kashmir at breaking point: Kasuri

Islamabad, August 3: Pakistan will show no more flexibility in future talks with India as it had already done more than enough to achieve success in the ongoing peace process, the country's Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said on Monday while

interacting with a group of Kashmiri leaders. The minister, accompanied by his foreign secretary Riaz Khokhar, was briefing the Kashmiris about the latest development in the ongoing peace process with New Delhi. The Nation quoted one unidentified Kashmiri leader as saying that they were informed that Islamabad has told New Delhi that the former has taken host of confidence-building measures (CBMs) to resolve the Kashmir, and other bilateral issues.....and now the ball was in New Delhi's court.

Hindustan Times, 4 August 2004

Ban fails to stop shahtoosh trade

Jammu, August 4: Shahtoosh shawls are being smuggled from Kashmir to Gulf countries despite a ban on the very production of these items by the Union government. Shahtoosh shawls are banned because the refined wool used in it is extracted by killing Tibetan antelopes found close to the China border in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. But traders maintain that the wool is picked up from bushes with which the antelope scratches its skin during summers. But a recent recovery of about 100 shahtoosh shawls worth Rs 1 crore in Dubai has again brought the spotlight on the smuggling of these shawls from Kashmir.

Hindustan Times, 4 August 2004

Ittihad force gives up on Hurriyat unity

Srinagar, August 4: In a setback to unity efforts between rival factions of the Hurriyat Conference, the Ittihad force, an alliance of neutral groups formed to forge unity among the Hurriyat, decided to call it a day. Announcing the dissolution of the force, Kashmir Bar Association president Mian Abdul Qayoom said both factions of the Hurriyat were equally responsible for the force's failure as they were not sincere in their efforts. Qayoom apologised to the people of Kashmir for the Ittihad's failure.

The Hindu, 4 August 2004

Heritage building in Jammu damaged

JAMMU, AUG. 3. A part of the 150-year-old Mubarik Mandi complex that once housed the Dogra monarchs who ruled Jammu and Kashmir was damaged during repair work. Locals, heritage lovers and conservationists protested against this. Located in the middle of Jammu city, the complex is one of the oldest heritage buildings in the State. The complex later housed Government offices. Now it houses judicial offices and lawyers' chambers.

The Tribune, 4 August 2004

Militants slit woman's throat

Jammu, August 3: Unidentified terrorists killed a girl by slitting her throat in Lasana village of Surankot in Poonch district today. According to the police, the terrorists forcibly entered the house of Mohammad Azam and dragged his daughter about 50 metres away and slit her throat. The terrorists reportedly suspected the family of being informer of the security forces. In another incident, terrorists attacked the police post at Tuliban in the Mahore area last night. The ultras escaped when the police retaliated. The police recovered one gun, two grenades, three AK magazines and 213 AK rounds from a terrorist hideout at Basan in Arnas.

The Tribune, 4 August 2004

Qazigund-Baramula rail line work to be resumed

Srinagar, August 3: Work on the 120-km-long Qazigund-Baramula Railway line in Kashmir valley is being resumed in a fortnight, senior Railway officials said here today. The work was suspended following the killing of an engineer of the IRCON Railway, Sudhir Kumar and his brother in south Kashmir on June 23. Mr S.P. Jain, Member Engineering, Railway Board said here this evening that the issues of security of engineers and workers at the Railway line in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the valley, had been taken up at the level of Prime Minister and the Union Home Ministry. When the arrangements were

finalised, the work on the line would be started, Mr Jain said.

The Times of India, 4 August 2004

Kashmir police foil suicide attackers

SRINAGAR: Police in Jammu and Kashmir have foiled plans for a series of suicide attacks in the winter capital Jammu by arresting two Pakistani guerrillas and six of their accomplices, police here said Monday. A senior police official said the guerrillas had planned to carry out suicide attacks on fortified security force camps at Nagrota, Bantalab and Gandhinagar in Jammu. "We foiled the suicide attacks in Jammu which the militants had planned. We conducted raids after the arrest of a Pakistani militant," the official said. Police in Jammu arrested another Pakistani militant on Sunday.

The Tribune, 5 August 2004

Militants storm CRPF camp

Srinagar, August 4: In the second major attack on the CRPF in less than a week, two militants tonight stormed a camp of the security men at a posh locality here. They hurled a grenade and opened fire, wounding six paramilitary personnel and triggering a gunbattle. They attacked the 69th battalion of the CRPF at a camp near a convent school at Rajbagh locality at 8.50 pm, sources said. Intermittent exchange of fire between the security forces and the militants was on till late night as several CRPF personnel were trapped inside the building. Sources said ultras were also holed up inside the building and the BSF and the Army had joined the CRPF operation to flush them out.

The Tribune, 5 August 2004

Geelani's return surrender by moderates

Jammu, August 4: Moderates in the right wing Jamait-e-Islami succumbed to the pressure by the hardliners when the former, led by the Amir, Mr Nazir Ahmed Kashani, agreed to support Syed Ali Shah Geelani's conglomerate of separatist forces and restored his basic membership of the organisation. Inside reports said that when Mr Kashani and his supporters found majority of members of Majlis Shoura

siding with Mr Geelani they made way for the hardliners so as to avert split in Jamait-e-Islami. Had there been a split the moderates would have been rendered toothless when even militant groups had cast their lot with Mr Geelani.

The Tribune, 5 August 2004

Threat to pilgrims still there: IG

Srinagar, August 4: Threat to attack Amarnath pilgrims by militants was still there, Inspector General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) S.S. Rawat said today. The pilgrimage was so far peaceful, mainly because of the peoples' cooperation and adequate security arrangements made by different the security agencies, Mr Rawat told reporters here today. He said, "We have been receiving information from different quarters besides intercepting messages about the militant planning to attack pilgrims.

The Tribune, 5 August 2004

Militants behead man, son

Jammu, August 4: Terrorists beheaded a man and his son in Dhara Baghla village of Rajouri today. According to the police, terrorists forcibly entered a house in the village and beheaded Anwar Hussain and his minor son. In another incident, terrorists set ablaze two houses of Mohammad Ramsan and Aji in Kot Bahara village of Gool. A police commando, Sohan Lal, was injured in a crossfiring between the police and terrorists near Mendhar in the Poonch district.

The Tribune, 5 August 2004

Kargil to go green with Army help

Srinagar, August 4: A silent green revolution is taking place in the villages of Kargil district in the frontier cold desert region of Ladakh, to overcome the hazards of a long, harsh winter when the area remains cut off from the rest of the world. There are 99 villagers of Minji near Kargil, which have volunteered to be part of the pilot project on green house, started by the Army. Not only would these villagers be able to feed their families with green

vegetables this winter but they would also be able to make some extra money by selling their produce in the market, a Defence spokesman said. Besides the green house could also be used to dry apricots which are available in abundance in Kargil during summers.

The Tribune, 5 August 2004

150 km of border fenced, minister told

Jammu, August 4: The Union Minister of State for Home, Mr S. Raghupathy, today visited the international border in Jammu district to inspect the progress of fencing that has been undertaken to check the infiltration from Pakistan. Mr Raghupathy, accompanied by the Joint Secretary (Home), border management, Mr H.S. Brahma, is on a four-days visit of J&K. He visited the international border in the Ranbirsinghpura sector. The Inspector General of the BSF (Jammu frontier), Mr B.D. Sharma, said out of 191.66 km of the international border, the BSF had undertaken fencing and flood lighting on 185.58 kms and the work had been completed on 150 km.

The Telegraph, 5 August 2004

Pitch for cricket in claw-back Kashmir

Srinagar, Aug. 4: Kapil's Devils played here, so did the bespectacled Super Cat. But for Sourav Ganguly and his boys, it is virgin territory. If the cricket board grants Jammu and Kashmir's wish, India's famed batting quartet of Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Ganguly and V.V.S. Laxman will one day be travelling to the militancy-racked Valley for their first one-day international match. The state is keen to host a match to show to the world that the situation is returning to normal after years of strife. If the Congress chief ministers' conclave in May last year was an attempt to project that the shadow of the gun was slowly passing, chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed realises the power of cricket as the India-Pakistan revival series showed earlier this year.

Srinagar Times, 05 August 2004

Editorial: Now the matter is over.

Information department is a government institution and statements and advertisements issued by the department are about the activities of the government. If Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in capacity of the PDP leader addresses a public gathering or for that matter issues a statement, the information department has nothing to do with it. Every party had an information unit/wing to highlight its activities. Chief Minister is the head of the government and information department takes care of his statements and speeches. Besides being the Chief Minister, Mufti is the leader of a political party and his statements are publicized by the Information wing of PDP and if information department does this job (publication/issue press release etc) it means that the department makes itself the representative of a political party. The statement of deputy CM, Mangat Ram Sharma issued by the information department only highlights the performances of the Congress. Sh! arma has welcomed five members of the Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) who joined the Congress; he said that the strength of party lies in the larger interests of people. He said that the developmental works were largely dependent on the might of the party and the party would be able to execute the developmental works as long as it was strong enough. It is interesting to note that Mangat Ram Sharma without naming any party has said that more leaders/members would join the party. Probably in a subtle manner, he (Sharma) refereed to the rest of three leaders of PDF - Hakim Mohammad Yasin, Sofi Gh. Mohidin and Raman Bala which means that the party (PDF) as a whole is going to join the Congress. But an analysis of his statement also means that the leaders he is referring to could be from any other party - Panthers Party and PDP. In his statement, Sharma didn't utter even a word about the PDP and Panthers Party and repeated that the Congress was the only party meant for the welfare of people in the valley. Even after this clear-cut statement by Sharma, if PDP still believes that the

coalition partner would help party at crucial junctures it is gravely mistaken.

Wadi Ki Awaz, 05 August 2004

Editorial: Human Rights violations may not stop unless black laws are enforce.

We have been writing for long now that human rights violations in the valley are on the rise. While as the leadership of two countries continue to talk about restoration of peace, the human rights violation graph is on the increase with the very passing day. It is disgusting to see that the custodial killings still take place and unwarranted arrests are rampant. As there is no parameter to scrutinize the guilt, a person could be charged at will and put behind the bars for years. The powers that security forces are bestowed with are being misused by them and ordinary people continue to suffer. Though the present government at center decided to repeal POTA imposed by outgoing NDA, it didn't show any interest in taking back the existing (Disturbed State Act). However, the fact remains that even if this act is lifted/repealed there are other numerous acts, which have made the life of people hellish here. Public Safety Act (PSA) which came into being during the National Conference's (NC) tenure is toughest amongst such acts. Thousands of Kashmiris are behind the bars in different Indian jails and interrogation centers since years under this PSA. Though this act was enforced for selected people but during last few years? ordinary people were put to task under the so-called PSA.

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Hindustan Times, 6 August 2004

2 injured in grenade attack in J&K's Doda district

Jammu, August 6: Two persons, including a CRPF jawan, were injured when terrorists exploded a grenade outside a police station in Kishtwar town of Doda district on Thursday evening, police said. Unidentified terrorists hurled a grenade towards the entrance of the police station on hospital road around 8.20 pm on Thursday but it missed the target and exploded at a distance injuring a CRPF jawan and one civilian, the sources said, adding the injured were rushed to sub-district hospital in the town and their condition is stated to be stable.

Hindustan Times, 6 August 2004

Mufti wants Pak tourists in J&K

Jammu, August 6: Allow Pakistani tourists to India to visit Jammu and Kashmir.? This is the plea the J&K government is set to make to the external affairs ministry, which is negotiating with its Pakistani counterpart on easing visa restrictions, sources have

said. Until now, J&K has been kept out of bounds for Pakistani tourists. Exceptions were made only in the case of those who had relatives in the state. Sources told HT the state government sees no reason to bar Pakistanis from visiting the state and has hence decided to approach the Centre. The Mufti Mohammed Sayeed government started deliberating on the issue against the backdrop of anticipated moves by the Indian and Pakistani governments on allowing tourists from each other's country to visit without restrictions on visa.

The Tribune, 6 August 2004

Ultras gun down nine CRPF men

Srinagar, August 5: An Assistant Commandant of the CRPF and eight jawans were killed while seven others were injured when militants made a suicide attack on their camp in the Rajbagh area here last night. The night-long operation which began at 8.45 p.m. last evening also led to the death of a suicide militant in the retaliatory action while his accomplice escaped. It also caused heavy damage to the two-storeyed building housing security personnel. This was the second suicide attack on the CRPF personnel over the past one week. Five CRPF personnel and two suicide militants were killed in the last attack on a camp of the 65 Battalion of the CRPF at Leeward Hotel in the Dal Lake area here on July 27.

The Tribune, 6 August 2004

Kargil echoes with cyber dreams

Srinagar, August 5: It is like any other day in the life of 15-year-old Mohammad Abbas and his younger brother, Ilyas, residents of Trespone village, 30 km from Kargil town in the Ladakh region. Joined by school-mates, they do not go for road-side cricket on the roadside, but head toward the nearby Sadbhavana Internet Caf. There are several other satellite-based internet centres, which have come up in the villages of the Kargil district with the efforts of the Army and some determined civilians. There are at least 700 students in the age group of 6 to 15 years, undergoing primary computer education at these centres. Kargil Computer

Centre (KCC) alone has trained 247 students, including 177 boys and 70 girls, so far. These centres open a window to the outside world for the youth, particularly, during long harsh winters, when the area remains cut off from the rest of the world.

The Tribune, 6 August 2004

Amarnath pilgrims touch 3-lakh mark

Srinagar, August 5: The number of Amarnath pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir has touched an all-time high, with three lakh yatis paying obeisance at the holy cave shrine so far this year. Disclosing this while interacting with a group of students from various parts of the country, the Governor, Lt-Gen S.K. Sinha, who is also the Chairman of the Amarnath Shrine Board, said the number would go up in the next 25 days of the pilgrimage culminating on Raksha Bandhan on August 30. He said the government was endeavouring to give a boost to the tourism sector, which was the mainstay of the people in the valley. He said concerted efforts and normalisation in the situation had resulted in the influx of over two lakh tourists in the past few months, which was much higher than the 28,000 tourists during 2002 and 1.07 lakh in 2003.

The Tribune, 6 August 2004

Army Chief on Kashmir visit

Srinagar, August 5: The Chief of the Army Staff, Gen N.C. Vij, arrived here today on a two-day Kashmir visit to take stock of the situation in the valley and along the forward areas. A defence spokesman said here that General Vij soon, after his arrival here, visited the Amarnath shrine and reviewed the security arrangements. Later, he met the Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Lt-Gen S.K. Sinha (retd), and Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. He was received by the GOC-in-C, Northern Command, Lt-Gen Hari Prasad, and GOC, 15 Corps, Lt-Gen Nirbhay Sharma. The Army Chief is scheduled to visit forward areas on the LoC tomorrow and interact with the Commanders and troops there.

Aftab, 06 August 2004

Editorial: Don't be disappointed.

Failing to bring about unity in the two factions of Hurriyat despite tremendous efforts, the people doing this noble work finally gave up their efforts, as both factions didn't budge even an inch from their respective stands. However, it was interesting to notice that despite the disappointment expressed by the people working hard to bring about unity amongst Hurriyat leaders, the valley people didn't not expressed anger. Basically, the unity efforts received a great setback at the time when Jamat Islami decided to support one faction of the organization and ensured every support to its chairman. The party workers (Jamat) maintain that they had no option other than to extend their support to this faction of Hurriyat as there were indications of fissures in Jamat itself. Jamat argued that the people posing themselves as working hard to bring about unity in the organization were just calling meetings but on ground didn't put in efforts to build an atmosphere of mutual understanding leading to unity. Kashmiris still believe that the two factions of Hurriyat would work under one banner. To people, unity at political level (Hurriyat) is very necessary for strengthening of Kashmir issue at international level. Besides Kashmiris, Hurriyat leaders too have realized that their voice has become less influential and appealing after bifurcation. People are eager to see Hurriyat as a joint force and sooner or later, they will definitely succeed in bringing about unity in the organization. People have a firm belief that their efforts would not go un-rewarded and like earlier there would be a strong voice representing people of Kashmir

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Srinagar Times, 06 August 2004

Editorial: Oil prices and transporters.

The hike in petrol prices has become a concern for valley transporters and during the preceding month petrol prices were increased twice. In lieu of this hike, transporters have demanded that they should be allowed to add to the passenger fare. For the time being, Rs 5 have been added to fare from Srinagar to Anantanag. And the drivers of vehicles ferrying passengers on various routes of Srinagar city have also demanded an increase in passenger fare. During past few years besides the hike in petrol and diesel, the rates of spare parts (automobiles) also have witnessed an increase and this has broken the back of transporters. Also, during the same period road tax, insurance,

puncture tax, fitness fee and permit fee have also added to the problems of transporters and bus owners. It is the responsibility of the coalition government that besides the problems of people, the concerns of transporters should also be addressed.

Srinagar Times, 06 August 2004

Editorial: Natural resources and Kashmiriat.

There is no denying the fact that during last 15 years violence and bloodshed had a telling impact on the every aspect of life and everything. Even the natural resources right from green forests to beautiful lakes lost their naturalness due to gross ignorance by the governments from time to time and people who grew irresponsible in absence authorities which least bothered to take care. It is not only government responsible for the disaster of natural resources but people also played their part in wiping out natural resources. They acted in a very irresponsible manner; cut forests at random and threw everything in the world famous Dal Lake to fill it up. The other side of Kashmir tragedy is that the Kashmiriat (the identification of a Kashmiri) is dying fast. Leaders address people in Urdu and their Urdu is stronger than Kashmiri (their mother tongue). It is disheartening to learn that parents too teach their children English and Urdu and feel proud in! doing so. They believe that by doing so they attain the leadership qualities. The Kashmiri saffron is known for its flavor and therapeutic value but constructions are being raised in saffron fields in Pampore. The Dal Lake is fast shrinking and has reduced to a pond due to carelessness of authorities and lack of civic sense on part of populace. The world over famous things of Kashmir which entitle it to "Paradise on earth" status are vanishing fast and we are least bothered to act in this regard

Hindustan Times, 7 August 2004

Patil reviews J&K security situation

New Delhi, August 7: Home Minister Shivraj Patil on Friday reviewed the security situation in J&K at a high-level meeting in the wake of recent suicide attacks on

security forces. Ministry sources said the withdrawal of the BSF, which is being replaced by the CRPF, will be delayed in the Valley in wake of the fresh attacks. Among others present at the meeting were National Security Adviser J.N. Dikshit, Special Adviser, PMO, M.K. Narayanan, IB Director A.K. Doval and senior officials from the BSF, CRPF and the ITBP.

The Tribune, 7 August 2004

Spurt in terrorist strikes

Jammu, August 6: The sudden spurt in terrorist strikes in Jammu and Kashmir these days has again caused a sense of insecurity among the people. Militants are striking at targets of their choice almost every day here as well as in the Kashmir valley. Those responsible for security view these attacks as a usual phenomenon around Independence Day, but political parties describe this as a deterioration in the situation because of the 'militant-friendly' policies of the Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. Terrorist outfits have adopted a strategy of attacking VIPs and camps of the security forces in the Kashmir valley, besides brutally killing innocent persons in Poonch, Rajouri and Doda districts of Jammu.

The Tribune, 7 August 2004

2 jawans among five killed

Srinagar, August 6: Two soldiers were among five persons killed, while militants attacked a security force camp in the Kashmir valley overnight, an official spokesman said. Militants attacked a security force patrol party at Arigoripora Kangan, about 40 km from here, today, causing death of two soldiers. Militants kidnapped and later killed a person, Abdul Hamid Piswal, at Behak Pahalgam in south Kashmir today, while the body of Samad Lone was recovered at Kralpora in the frontier district of Kupwara. Militants attacked a security force camp with rifle grenades and automatic weapons at Shopian in Pulwama district late last night. One of the grenades missed the target and hit the roof of Ghulam Qadir's house, causing damage. Security forces retaliated but the

militants escaped under the cover of darkness.

The Tribune, 7 August 2004

More aid assured for border areas

Srinagar, August 6: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs S. Regupathy has assured the Jammu and Kashmir Government of maximum assistance in creating infrastructure and improving amenities for people of the border areas for it was one of the best to implement the Border Area Development Programme (BADP). It is the only state which got Rs 100 crore for the BADP, which constitute nearly 29 per cent of the total plan. Out of the total plan of Rs 350 crore for 17 border states, this year Rs 135 crore is being spent on various works under it, an official spokesman said. Reviewing BADP being implemented in 44 border blocks in nine districts of the state at a high-level meeting of civil, police and Army officers here yesterday, the minister said the Centre accorded a priority to complete border fencing on the one hand and speedy execution of other infrastructure development schemes in health, education, agriculture, rural development, road communication etc on the other hand.

The Tribune, 7 August 2004

Plan to develop model villages in J&K

Srinagar, August 6: One village in each rural block of Jammu and Kashmir is being developed as a model village for the implementation of a plan to transform the rural profile in the state. Disclosing this here yesterday, the Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, issued instructions to take up three villages each in Kashmir and Jammu province for the implementation of the plan in the first instance to transform the rural profile. He was addressing a high-level meeting to review the progress of various rural development schemes in the state. He said the development of rural areas was essential for the state.

The Tribune, 7 August 2004

CRPF troops for Kashmir put on hold

New Delhi, August 6: In the wake of the recent fidayeen attack on the CRPF camp in Srinagar, the Centre has decided to put on hold the deployment of the CRPF for counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre has also asked various security agencies to work out a strategy to pre-empt suicide attacks by militants in the militancy-hit states. A decision to this effect was taken at an emergency meeting held by Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil today with heads of para-military chiefs, Intelligence Bureau and senior officials of the Army and External Affairs Ministry following a spate of suicide attacks by militants in the state especially on the CRPF, official sources said.

The Times of India, 7 August 2004

2 Hizb men in city, planning suicide attack

NEW DELHI: As August 15 nears, the threat perception is rising. Delhi Police has been tipped off by security agencies in Kashmir that two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists have managed to sneak into the city and are planning suicide attacks on the eve of Independence Day. According to the tip-off, the two terrorists owe allegiance to Hizbul Mujahideen Pir Panjal Regiment and were in Ghaziabad for almost a month. They are said to be now based in north or central Delhi. "The threat is being taken very seriously though there is no reason to panic. There are suggestions that an Ambassador car is likely to be used for an attack. We have contacted all car dealers to ensure they insist on proper identification of any buyer before finalising a deal," said a senior police officer.

The Tribune, 7 August 2004

Violence in Valley (Editorial)

The Centre's negotiations with the Kashmiri separatists have also run into rough weather with the hardline leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani getting the upper hand. Efforts to unite the two factions of the Hurriyat have also come a cropper. It is not difficult to know why this has happened when there was some progress in the talks between the

Centre's interlocutor and the Kashmiri leaders. Obviously, the forces in Pakistan would not have liked such a turnaround. Through their lackeys in the state, they have scuttled the unity efforts all the while propping up Geelani. However, let it be clear that even for the talks to succeed, there is an urgent need to break the backbone of militancy.

Alsafa, 07 August 2004

Editorial: The deteriorating economy of the state.

The coalition government time and again states that it intends to improve the economic condition of the state. In 1996 when NC took the reigns of power, it vowed to improve the otherwise deteriorating economic condition of the state. In 2002, the PDP and Congress also promised that the coalition government would give it utmost to improve the state economy. As two years had passed by, the coalition government continues to issue statements aimed at the betterment of states economy but there is a little improvement in it. The last 15 years of turmoil had broken the back of trade and commerce in Kashmir. Tourism forms the back bone of the state's economy and it is heartening to notice that during last 4! months tourists in great numbers thronged Kashmir. But Pahalgam blast gave a set back to the tourist inflow and even many tourists scared of this act of violence retuned back overnight. During last few years, the number of unemployed youth had grown manifold in the valley. Though NC and coalition government assured that the issue of unemployment would be dealt with but no substantial steps were taken in this regard. Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his address in Sheri Kashmir cricket stadium promised that the union government would provide jobs to 1 lakh unemployed youth in Kashmir but never kept his promise. The Kashmiris are suffering badly and everybody including government servants, trader and business community rue the state economy. Chief Minister along with many government officials held meetings in Delhi on the issue of unemployment but it appears that there

has been no substantial outcome of such meetings.

Aftab, 07 August 2003

Editorial: A change on ground- now and then.

After a humiliating defeat in the elections (2002), National Conference (NC) fails to play the role of an opposition party. People take sympathies of the party with a pinch of salt. Some sections even call it the frustration of NC. The overall situation in the valley has improved; there are sporadic incidents of violence and ordinary people are spared during counter insurgency operations. In NC government's tenure atleast three-dozen people would get killed on a given day besides many die during custody. In the recent past, CRPF men lost their lives but security forces showed immense patience and no civilian was taken to task for revenge. Today the situation in Kashmir has changed a lot and President Pakistan, Parvez Musharraf deserves the credit for this change. Musharraf enforced ceasefire on LOC and India reciprocated. And this reduced cross border terrorism to a great extent and put a check on unscrupulous elements who were coming to Kashmir with deadly weapons to spread violence. As of now the life in valley has improved and thousands of tourists throng Kashmir to enjoy its beauty. And in spite of attacks on forces, common people are not being targeted.

Daily Excelsior, 8 August 2004

No talks with India until Parliamentary Resolution, AFSPA go

Geelani grafts Tehreek-e-Hurriyat on Jamaat tree

SRINAGAR, Aug 7: Consummating his plan to emerge as the most important separatist leader in Jammu & Kashmir, Syed Ali Shah Geelani today floated his own "Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu & Kashmir" (TH), which will be the key constituent of his "All-party Hurriyat Conference". With support from his parent organisation, Jammu & Kashmir Jamaat-e-Islami, Geelani shall function as chairman of his TH as well as

his faction of the Hurriyat Conference. While addressing a crowded news conference at his Hyderpora residence, Syed Ali Shah Geelani said that "un-Islamic ideologies like secularism, socialism, nationalism and even Communism" had become the "source of inspiration" for the Hurriyat faction led by Maulvi Abbas Ansari and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. He asserted that nothing but Nizam-e-Mustafa could be the source of inspiration for Kashmir's struggle for freedom. This, he said, was his main compulsion to launch a "purification drive" in the Hurriyat.

Daily Excelsior, 8 August 2004

Carbine snatched from Budgam cops

SRINAGAR, Aug 7: Fierce gunbattle between militants and security forces at Konibal in Pampore area has concluded with the death of two militants and three soldiers. The Police personnel have sustained injuries in the operation that rocked the saffron-rich locality for 24 hours. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that in all two militants, a soldier of Rashtriya Rifles 32 Bn and two SOG personnel got killed while as three more Police personnel sustained injuries. As already reported in this newspaper, two militants had been killed by security forces in the gunbattle at Konibal last evening. While the official sources claimed that the slain militants belonged to Jaish-e-Mohammad, independent sources insisted that they were cadres of Hizbul Mujahideen. The SOG personnel killed in the encounter have been identified as Keemati Lal and Rajinder Singh, both selection grade constables of JKAP 6th Bn. Sources identified the slain militants as Furqaan-ul-Islam alias Major Madani and Omar Hayyar alias Dr Zaidi, both Pakistani nationals. Sources said that three to four militants of the group gave a tough fight to the security forces and managed to escape from the cordoned area.

Daily Excelsior, 8 August 2004

Mirwaiz to continue Hurriyat's convenor

SRINAGAR, Aug 7: The Hurriyat Conference faction, led by Mirwaiz Umar

Farooq, held a 3-hour-long meeting at Raj Bagh headquarters of the separatist amalgam to discuss the latest political developments, including Jamaat-Geelani combine, dissolution of Ittihad Force and Syed Ali Shah launching a new political party. Former Hurriyat executive council members Mirwaiz Umar, Prof Gani and Maulvi Abbas Ansari attended the meeting. Bilal Lone of Peoples Conference was represented by a junior Khalil Mohammad Khalil. Faza-ul-Haq Qureshi of Peoples Political Front, Abdul Hameed Bhawani of Ummat-e-Islamia, Saleem Geelani of Democratic Freedom Party (G), Abdul Manan Bukhari of Allama Iqbal Students Movement and Bashir Ahmed Kanth of Tableeg-ul-Islam were present at the meeting as special invitees from the Hurriyat General Council. Sources said that the Hurriyat leaders also attended the prospects of continuing the dialogue with the new UPA Government at New Delhi.

Daily Excelsior, 8 August 2004

Girl tortured for refusal to marry ultra

JAMMU, Aug 7: A retired Sub Inspector of police and a woman were killed in the militancy related incidents across the Jammu region since last evening while a young girl was brutally tortured by the militants and rendered seriously injured for her refusal to marry a Hizbul Mujahideen ?commander?. Meanwhile, a complete bandh was today observed in Baderwah town in protest against firing by the militants on most revered Vasuki Mandir in Baderwah town last night. Official sources said a group of four militants led by Hizbul Mujahideen?s ?area commander? Nazir Ahmed kidnapped a civilian Qamar Din a his niece Ruksana from their house in village Dachan in Gool area of Ramban police district last night. The militants tortured 18 year old Ruksana and his uncle in the captivity

Srinagar Times, 08 August 2004

Editorial: For the attention of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir.

In Jammu and Srinagar based courts dozens of cases regarding the migrant land stand

registered. And among these cases 50% cases involve the custodian department which believes that many people have grabbed the land of migrants. However, there are sizeable number of cases, which people have registered against the custodian department challenging its claim. In most of the cases, the custodian employees mislead the people for their personal gains. Divisional Commissioner is the head of state and has! every right to interfere in this matter. Recently, the Divisional Commissioner held a meeting with concerned officers and studied the documents and evidence of the Nazool land. Divisional commissioner should ask custodian department that during the last ten years how many cases filed against the custodian department were won by the department. The department spends thousands of rupees on advocates (public prosecutors) fighting the cases on behalf of the department. Migrant land is the right of the people who migrated to Pakistan in 1947 and custodian deptt is responsible for the misappropriation/grabbing of the land.

Alsafa, 08 August 2004

Editorial: A visit by a team from center.

To take stock of the prevailing situation in the valley, a team headed by union minister for home, Shivraj Patil held a meeting with the high level state government officials. Security scenario in the valley was also taken up in the meeting with Chief Minister and team also met high-level security officers besides intelligence bureau. The measures to deal with the renewed fidayeen attacks which shook the security agencies were also discussed in the meeting. The union government has admitted that during last few months there has been an extraordinary increase in the violence related incidents. The killings inflicted during this time had also become a concern for the government. The growing relations between two countries had given the people in Jammu and Kashmir a glimmer of hope that peace will return to the region but the violence ridden valley continues to bleed. While as in January this year (2004), the

meeting between Vajpayee and Musharraf saw two countries coming closer; the ever-violent land of Kashmir witnessed a flare up in violence and life was thrown out off gear. The ordinary people were killed and almost every family in Kashmir bereaved. Such visits doesn't make any sense unless and until the thrust is on basic Kashmir issue.

Daily Excelsior, 9 August 2004

Bhaderwah bandh for second day

JAMMU, Aug 8: A Gujjar was shot dead by the militants while four other kidnapped civilians were released after two days captivity in Gunda forests, about 15 km from Gandoh in Doda district today. Official sources said five civilians were kidnapped by the militants from Dul Daraman Gali near Gunda forest where they had gone to graze their cattle yesterday morning. Four of them were this afternoon released while a Gujjar Zakir Hussain, 25, son of Hashim Din was gunned down. Zakir was brother of a SPO Liaquat Ali. His body was recovered by a police party led by Sub Inspector Chanchal Singh and security forces, who have also launched a search operation in Gunda forests to trace the militants involved in the killing and kidnapping.

Daily Excelsior, 9 August 2004

3 militants, jawan killed; 3 hurt

SRINAGAR, Aug 8: Five persons including three militants and an Army soldier were killed and 12 Army personnel were injured in the militancy related incidents today while the militants fired upon a police picket, set up for the protection of minority community in Anantnag last mid-night. Official sources said troops of 49 Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operations Group (SOG) Kulgam gunned down two militants at village Adhamk Bahak in Kund area of Qazigund in Anantnag district this afternoon. The militants were killed in an hour long fierce exchange of gun fighting. They have been identified as Mohd Iqbal Mir R/o Prethar, Banihal and Samiullah, a Pakistani. They were part of the Hizbul Mujahideen outfit.

Daily Excelsior, 9 August 2004

Army constructs play ground

JAMMU, Aug 8: Under Operation Sadbhavana, Army constructed a play ground at Bhawani High School in Noushera (Rajouri). The newly constructed playground was inaugurated and dedicated to the school during an impressive function. A cultural programme was organised on the occasion in which the school children presented colourful items and displayed their talent. Local Garrison Commander of Bhawani gave financial assistance to four widows whose husbands had died in firing from across the border. Army also distributed sweets among children. Prominent citizens of the area, including Sarpanches, Numberdars, Government officials, ex-servicemen and parents of the school children, attended the function. The welcome address was made by Headmaster Raj Nath Raina.

Srinagar Times, 09 August 2004

To cut the size of ministry is a concern for the government. PDP members who joined Congress are proving to be a burden for the party.

Srinagar, 08 August: If parliamentary law regarding the number of ministers in a state is implemented in Jammu and Kashmir, there should be 18 or 20 ministers instead of present 37. PDP and Congress maintain that if parliamentary law is implemented there would a controversy between the parties and this will even lead to failure of the government. A minister of Congress told Srinagar Times that if the cabinet ministers were sacked deputy ministers would also be taken to task and this will lead to a crisis situation in the state. On the directions of Finance Minister, Muzaffar Hussein Beig, the select committee of all parties would meet on 16th of August 2004. It is learnt that NC leader Ab. Rahim Rather may try to advocate the implementation of union government law regarding the size of ministry.

Alsafa, 09 August 2004

Editorial: Stop this nonsense.

In a heart rendering incident in Pattan, a woman was kept hungry for a week and hanged to death. The town observed shutdown to protest the brutal killing and demanded that police should capture the guilty and punish him/her under law. Locals also demanded an impartial probe into the matter as they believe that some blue eyed persons are involved in it. Police apprehended the husband of the said lady however the other family inmates went underground. It was learnt that the couple was living happily and after some time in-laws of Parveena (hanged to death) demanded dowry from her and she would be rebuked day in and day out. Parveena however tolerated all this but criminal in-laws kept her hungry for a week and hanged her to death. Women were treated like animals on dowry related matters 15 years ago and it is disgusting to know that such incidents took place even today with a different methodology. A senior state minister tried his best to enforce the GCA but could not succeed in implementing the act as others didn't support him. Now the chefs in the valley had offered seven varieties to be prepared at a marriage party and promised that they would stick to this. The state government should act against the dowry menace which has come to surface after 15 long years to safeguard the interests of womenfolk.

Aftab, 09 August 2004

Editorial: Why Talks didn't advance.

The talks between two countries on defence related issues didn't draw good results and there was no advancement in these talks. The forces of both the countries are on the high altitudes of Siachan and this came up for discussion. Both the governments spend in crores on forces posted at Siachan and this has a bearing on the economy of the country. Due to the hostile relations, the Siachan (issue) is hanging since 35 years and off late Pakistan asked India to reposition its forces on Siachan and it (Pakistan) will do the same but unfortunately a three day meeting between two countries ended on a rather bad note.

India didn't agree to reposition its forces on Siachen. At the end of three day meeting, a joint statement said that talks on Siachen would continue but the fact remains that both countries are stagnant on their respective positions. However, it is good to see that countries don't grow hostile and wage a war against each other, both believe that a meaningful dialogue could be the solution to the bilateral issues including Kashmir.

The Times of India, 10 August 2004

Kashmir logs on to BPO boom

SRINAGAR: Undeterred by the regular bursts of gunfire, grenade attacks and bomb blasts, a lone tech firm in Kashmir is trying to catch up with an outsourcing boom that has earned India billions of dollars. Magnum Software Services, located on the outskirts of Srinagar, Kashmir's main city and the nerve centre of a 15 years violence, has become the first company in the region to bag an international back-office services contract. The firm has recruited 315 young Kashmiri men and women in recent weeks to format medical files and research data for a Singapore client. Soon it also plans to provide accounting and legal transcription services.

The Tribune, 10 August 2004

Maulvi Farooq installed APHC acting chief

Jammu, August 9: Kashmir Mirwaiz and President, Awami Action Committee, Maulvi Umar Farooq, was today installed as acting Chairman of the APHC. According to Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, Maulvi Umar will continue to head the conglomerate till the election of a chairman. The vacancy had been caused by the resignation of Maulvi Abbas Ansari a month ago. He had stepped down to facilitate reconciliation between the two factions of the APHC. Since the unity moves proved futile after Syed Ali Shah Geelani floated the Tehrik Hurriyat Conference, the executive committee members of the APHC requested Maulvi Farooq to head the amalgam of separatist groups as its acting chairman.

The Tribune, 10 August 2004

Hurriyat (Abbas) rejects talks conditions

Srinagar, August 9: The Abbas faction of the separatist Hurriyat Conference, which had two rounds of talks with the Central Government, here today rejected the UPA government's conditions for holding talks with separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir. It has described Union Home Minister Shiv Raj Patil's statement on the dialogue process with the separatist groups in this trouble-torn state as unacceptable and impracticable. This was stated by a spokesman of the Hurriyat Conference here today after a meeting of its leaders in this regard. Mr Patil had reportedly said there would be no conditions in talks with the Hurriyat "except that I will be talking within the four walls of the Constitution.

The Tribune, 10 August 2004

Top Hizbul commander among six killed

Srinagar, August 9: A top Hizbul Mujahideen commander and two other militants were among six persons killed in the Kashmir valley overnight, official sources said today. Two militants, Divisional Commander Samiullah and Mohammad Iqbal, were killed in an encounter at Kulgam in Anantnag district during a search operation last night, sources said. Two AK rifles, one UBGL with three grenades, two hand grenades, four AK magazines, 56 rounds and one wireless set were seized from the slain militants. Another militant Farid Sheikh of Uri, was killed in an encounter at Uri. One AK rifle, five magazines, 145 rounds and two grenades were seized from him.

The Tribune, 10 August 2004

Soldier killed in ambush

Jammu, August 9: A soldier was killed and three others were wounded as terrorists ambushed a patrol party of Army in Poonch district today. According to reports, a team of the Army was on its way to Pattan Behramgala in Poonch district following reports of presence of terrorists. The ultras, who had taken positions on hilltops, fired at

the troops indiscriminately and hurled grenades. The Army personnel took up positions and a gunbattle between them and terrorists was continuing. Additional troops have been rushed there.

The Indian Express, 10 August 2004

RR men shoot mentally-ill villager

MANIHAL (SHOPIAN), AUGUST 9: Sixteen-year-old Imran Ahmad couldn't cry at his father's funeral. Nor could his relatives. His father, 45-year-old Ghulam Hassan Chopan, was mentally-challenged and was shot dead by Rashtriya Rifles jawans when he kept walking after being asked to stop. Today, this small village, hidden behind apple orchards and willow trees in Shopian valley, mourned in silence as hundreds of RR men maintained a tight vigil. Chopan's body was buried in haste. They (RR men) came to our house. First, they wanted us to hide the killing. When we refused, they asked us to hold the funeral silently, says Chopan's brother, Nissar Ahmad. They didn't even let us cry.

The Indian Express, 10 August 2004

Mufti govt to Sakina: evict house

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 9: At 34, Sakina Itoo may have earned herself a nameplate, wielded power as the lone woman minister in Farooq Abdullah's government and won public acclaim. However, she has also learnt in a hard way that success comes at a cost. Having lost her father and uncle to militants, she abandoned the medical profession and joined the National Conference, and today finds herself in the line of fire from the Mufti government. Having survived 13 assassination bids on her life over the last two years, Itoo was served a notice by the Mufti government last week directing her to evict the posh Jawahar Nagar quarters with immediate effect. A resident of Nooarabad, a remote South Kashmir village, Itoo says if she is thrown out from her government accommodations, she will be a sitting duck for the militants and the people who want me dead.

Daily Excelsior, 10 August 2004

Mirwaiz Hurriyat rejects conditional dialogue

SRINAGAR, Aug 9: In a significant policy statement, Hurriyat Conference faction led by the Awami Action Committee chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, today virtually pulled out of the dialogue process with the Government of India. The separatist conglomerate took exception to the Union Home Minister Shiv Raj Patil's statement and sought to make it clear that it would not hold any talks with New Delhi on the conditions introduced by the United Progressive Alliance government. Meanwhile, Mirwaiz Umar has stressed on the need to involve "separatist groups, Pakistan and Mujahideen" in the dialogue process. The Mirwaiz Hurriyat issued a Press release from its Raj Bagh headquarters while describing the Union Home Minister's statement as "unacceptable and unrealistic". In an interview to PTI on Sunday, Shiv Raj Patil said that there would be no conditions "except that I will be talking within the four walls of the Constitution". "If anything has to be done, it has to be done in a manner which is acceptable to the people in the country and to the Constitution", Patil had said as reported in today's newspapers. He had added: "Supposing you all say that change the Constitution and give them something or take something from them. We are not saying that. No, we will not do that".

Daily Excelsior, 10 August 2004

4 more top militants captured by City police

JAMMU, Aug 9: In ongoing offensive against the militants, City police have arrested four more ultras of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit including a Pakistani taking the total number of arrests made during last one week to seven. With the arrests, the militants' plan to trigger serial blasts in the temple City has been foiled, official sources told the Excelsior today. This is for the first time during one and a half decades of militancy that seven militants including two Pakistanis have been captured alive by the City police in a single operation. This is also for the first time that the militants, plotting

terror attacks in the City, had originated from Mahore tehsil in Udhampur district. All such attacks so far had their origin in Kashmir, Doda and Surankote.

Daily Excelsior, 10 August 2004

Pak youth shot dead in Kathua

JAMMU, Aug 9: Two militants and an Army jawan were killed and another jawan was injured in two separate encounters in the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri today. Official sources said a group of militants opened firing on a patrol party of the Army at Bahram Gala in Surankote tehsil in Poonch district at 8.30 am today. Two Army jawans were injured in the firing. One of them identified as J S Sampat later succumbed to his injuries. Troops retaliated but the militants managed to escape.

Daily Excelsior, 10 August 2004

Exemplary progress in J&K education sector: Baswan

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Militancy may be keeping Jammu and Kashmir in spotlight but the state shines bright virtually unnoticed in making exemplary progress in education sector. The sensitive border state has received a pat from the Union Human Resource Development Ministry for the "extremely encouraging" trend in the education sector. "The state Government's efforts in the education sector is commendable. It was extremely encouraging", Union Education Secretary B S Baswan, who toured various parts of the state for nine days to see progress in the field of education, told reporters here today. Baswan who visited Baramulla, Srinagar, Pulwama, Drass, Kargil and Leh, said the investment in the education was visible in the state.

Daily Excelsior, 10 August 2004

JKLF resumes signature campaign

SRINAGAR, Aug 9: While resuming its signature campaign from the North Kashmir township of Uri, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief, Mohammed Yasin Malik, today condemned security forces for forcing people to hoist Indian flag on the eve

of 15th August. "Indian Independence Day comes with untold miseries for the people of Kashmir. Army and forces choke Kashmiris for this day and it's a brazen act of terrorism," Yasin Malik told a public gathering at Salamabad village in the border town of Uri. Accompanied by other JKLF leaders including Noor Mohammed Kalwal, Sheikh Abdul Rashid and others, Malik also addressed a public gathering at Chandanwari Uri. He said that the signature campaign was a purely non-violent democratic process to demand active involvement of Kashmiris in the process relating to the resolution of Kashmir dispute. Addressing yet another public gathering at Paran Peelan, Malik said, "security forces were forcing Kashmiris to hoist Indian flags on their houses, vehicles and shops" at a many places in North Kashmir.

Srinagar Times, 10 August 2004

Editorial: Azad is no more!

National Conference, PDP and Congress expressed shock and grief over the demise of poet Jagannath Azad. Undoubtedly Azad was a prominent poet in the south Asia. He was among few poets who even after partition touched heights in literature, education and attained intellectual prestige. One reason behind his greatness and success was that he claimed self-confidence and utter commitment towards his profession. Azad always maintained deep association with Kashmir and right from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to Sayeed Mir Qasim's tenure he had a healthy relationship with almost every leader. Interestingly, many people who didn't knew the poet and seemingly have no interest in poetry also expressed anguish on his demise. Chief Minister, Mufti Mohd Sayeed has said that a building would be erected in memory of late poet. It is a good gesture that Mufti has every respect for this great poet of his times. Mufti in his address praised Azad for his love and affection for the nation.

Aftab, 10 August 2004

Editorial: Cut the size of the Ministry.

According to a Supreme Court verdict, the size of ministry in all the states has been cut and it has led to the decline in the ministerial expenses which is good for the economy of the state. However, the jumbo sized ministry in Jammu and Kashmir continues to be eating the very vitals of the state economy. Despite the jumbo-sized ministry, the state government has failed to deliver the goods. There has been no improvement in the functioning of any government department and people allege that few ministers misuse their portfolios and loot public exchequer. These ministers only work for their personal gains and the problems of people continue to remain unattended. The major part of revenue given by the union government for the welfare of the state goes into the hands of ministers and their kins. Government least bothers about the problems of people and the fact remains that in this turbulent valley their problems are being multiplied with the every passing day.

Aftab, 10 August 2004

Kashmiris are brave hearts in the prevailing circumstances. They still hope for unification in Hurriyat.

Srinagar, 09: Majority of people have expressed their concern over the launch of new party by Sayeed Ali Shah Geelani and this has become the point of discussion in political and non political groups. Needless to say, this has added to dozens of political groups already existing in the valley. It is heartening to note that people demonstrate patience and broad mindedness in this crisis situation; but nevertheless they are watching the developments in Hurriyat silently. Majority wants unification among Hurriyat leaders as they believe the organization would be more strong and influential as a joint force. People have a firm belief in "union is strength" and are putting in efforts to forge unity between two factions of Hurriyat. Leaders should respect the sentiments of beleaguered people.

Alsafa, 10 August 2004

Editorial: Indo-Pak relations and Kashmir issue.

One more round of dialogue between India and Pakistan began in Islamabad today. Both countries would discuss cross border terrorism, drug trafficking and trade and commerce. The home secretaries of the two countries would lead the delegations holding talks on drug Trafficking and cross border terrorism. During the current year there were many rounds of talks between two countries and both expressed satisfaction over the outcome of talks. A joint statement issued at the end of meeting upheld that both countries would continue the dialogue process till the end of September. The foreign ministers of two countries had held three meetings during last two months and this gave a boost to the growing relations between two countries. The Kashmir issue is all the more important than all other issues for obvious reasons. During the last 15 years of turmoil more than one lakh people have become the victim of violence. And the irony is that the leadership (Hurriyat) of Kashmir is victim of uncertainty and beleaguered people continue to suffer. Here, the sun rises with a new hope for people and the sunset brings with it the thundering deadly explosions claiming innocent lives. Both countries should take substantial steps towards the resolution of Kashmir issue.

Hindustan Times, 11 August 2004

Religious tourism key to peace: J&K leaders

New Delhi, August 10: Annoyed that Jammu and Kashmir has been kept out of the purview of Indo-Pak exchanges on culture and other fronts, some Kashmiri politicians feel the two countries should encourage religious tourism. Asserting that ruhaniyat (religious feelings) has a key role in the peace process, the politicians said visits by cricket teams, pilgrims and parliamentarians shouldn't be restricted. Demanding that Kashmiri and Pakistani delegations be permitted to visit each other, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti expressed surprise that while Pakistanis are allowed to visit the dargahs of Hazrat Moin-ud-Din Chishti and Hazrat Nizamuddin, they are not allowed to visit Kashmir, the land of shrines.

She feels that such exchanges would provide an opportunity to the people to understand each other better and see the ground realities.

The Hindu, 11 August 2004

Talks only within Constitutional framework: Minister

SRINAGAR, AUG. 10. The Union Minister of State for Home, Sriprakash Jaiswal, has reiterated that talks with separatists would be held within the framework of the Constitution. Mr. Jaiswal's statement comes after the Hurriyat Conference had on Monday rejected the Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil's statement as "unrealistic." Mr. Patil had on Sunday said that the Centre would talk with the separatists with an open mind "but within the four walls of the Constitution." Mr. Jaiswal, who is on a three-day visit to the State, said at a press conference: "We should not take the Hurriyat rejection as final. We do not know which group or who has rejected the statement that talks would be held within the framework of the Constitution." The delay in the ongoing dialogue with the moderate faction of the Hurriyat was because of "their own internal problems."

The Hindu, 11 August 2004

Jehadi groups must pack up when Kashmir issue is resolved: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 10. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that if Pakistan finds a solution on Kashmir with India, all jehadi organisations operating in the country in the name of Kashmir have to "pack up." In candid comments on the dialogue process with India in the course of a long interview to the Jang group of publications, Gen. Musharraf has said that though there were "confusing signals" from India on Kashmir, he was hopeful of a resolution of the issue.

The Tribune, 11 August 2004

SHO, 8 cops hurt in militant attack

Srinagar, August 10: An SHO and eight police constables were among 11 persons injured and two militants were killed in

Jammu and Kashmir overnight, official sources said today. Security forces arrested a militant, along with 14 kg deadly RDX and two detonators, from the Macho area in Badgam district last night. The sources said militants attacked the vehicle of SHO Abdul Ahad at Nagabal Zainpora in Pulwama district this morning, causing injuries to him and eight police constable, including two Special Police Officers (SPOs). The vehicle was also damaged in the firing, the sources said, adding that the militants later managed to escape.

The Tribune, 11 August 2004

Cong blamed for militancy in J&K

Jammu, August 10: Senior BJP leader Chaman Lal Gupta expressed concern over terrorist attack on Gupt Ganga temple at Bhaderwah and militants' violence in other parts of Doda district and in Jammu and Kashmir. He said today these developments were an aspersion on the UPA Government at the Centre. Mr Gupta said attack on the temple, other incidents of killings and abductions, indicated that things were shaping like the situation of 1993 when the BJP had to launch agitation to save Doda, and measures to tackle terrorism.

The Tribune, 11 August 2004

Unified Headquarters reviews security

Srinagar, August 10: The Unified Headquarters headed by the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, met here today and reviewed the latest security situation in the state. The Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Mangat Ram Sharma, the Minister of State for Home, Mr Abdur Rehman Veeri, the Chief Secretary, Dr S.S. Bleoria, the Director-General of Police, Mr Gopal Sharma, the GoC, 15 Corps, Lt-Gen Nirbhay Sharma, the Chief of Staff, 15 Corps and senior police and paramilitary officers attended the meeting. The Union Minister of State for Home, Mr Sriprakash Jaiswal, who arrived on a three-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir here yesterday, reviewed the situation at a high-level meeting with senior state civil, police and security officers. He had also a separate

meeting with the Chief Minister and is visiting the relief camps in Jammu today. The Union Minister is also scheduled to see the border fencing in Jammu tomorrow before his return to New Delhi.

The Telegraph, 11 August 2004

Villagers thrash militants

Jammu, Aug. 10: For once, the boot was on the other foot.

A group of militants who barged into the house of a villager along the Line of Control was soundly thrashed and chased away by locals who banded against them, an army spokesman said. The militants, belonging to the Pirpanjal regiment of Hizb-ul Mujahideen, are believed to have walked into the house in Poonch district and asked the owner to cook dinner and make space for them to spend the night. Disgusted with what was fast becoming a frequent ritual, the man refused to oblige. The militants then threatened him with dire consequences for daring to defy them, forcing him to raise an alarm. Immediately, people from the entire village barged in and unitedly beat them up till they ran for cover.

Tameel -e- Arshad, 11 August 2004

Editorial: Where is the peace?

People denounce the government claims of return of normalcy to the valley and the fact of the matter is that more often than not encounters especially in rural Kashmir claim the lives of ordinary people. High-level government officials claim that it is almost impossible to make foolproof security arrangements at the Line of Control (LOC) to stop infiltration. However, government itself claims that there are so tight security arrangements on LOC that even a bird cannot fly besides the LOC. What ! is the truth? One wonders. Similarly, in spite of the repeated claims that forces are extra vigilant on LOC and could foil even a major infiltration attempt, there are hundreds of militants operating in the valley and their number keeps on multiplying. And this has led to spiraling violence in the valley besides has given a set back to the peace process between two countries. India time

and gain reiterates that talks and violence could not go together but it has failed to plug its porous borders allowing infiltration at a large scale which leads to violence. .

Wadi Ki Awaz, 11 August 2004

Militants attack police party, 9 personnel including an officer wounded.

Srinagar, 10 August: Militants attacked a police party reportedly coming back after assisting 44 RR in conducting the crack down of Zainpora Shopian. Reports said that SHO Zainpora police station among 9 police personnel were wounded when militants fired indiscriminately on their vehicle. Militants snatched 6 rifles and other explosives before they fled from the spot. However, the Sub divisional Police officer (SDPO) Shopian had a narrow escape. Meanwhile, a brother and his sister were wounded in cross fire in Kokernag. In Udhampur 2 LeT men including a commander were killed. Militants hurled a grenade in Lal Chowk Islamabad ! which exploded without causing any damage.

Wadi Ki Awaz, 11 August 2004

Kashmir is an extraordinary issue between India and Pakistan: Musharraf.

Srinagar, 10 August. Pakistan President, Parvez Musharraf has said that there was no breakdown in the dialogue process between two countries and the dialogue was going on. He said this while answering a question during an interview. Musharraf said that both countries were holding dialogue on Sir Crack, Siachan and other bilateral issues. But added that the Kashmir is an outstanding issue between the two countries and the root cause of other bilateral issue. He maintained that the resolution of Kashmir issue could lead to the resolution of all other bilateral issues. To a question Musharraf said that he couldn't say with certainty about the new Congress led government's approach vis-à-vis Kashmir. But he believes that India understands the sensitivity of Kashmir issue. He said he would meet the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh and this will enable him to hold conversations with new government.

Alsafa, 11 August 2004.

The resolution of Kashmir issue would mean an end to the terrorist activities: Musharraf.

Islamabad, 10 August: Pakistan President, Parvez Musharraf has expressed hope that the Kashmir issue would be resolved in near future. In an interview, Musharraf said that he would meet the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh in September and he has already told Foreign Minister, Natwar Singh that once the vexed Kashmir issue was resolved all the bilateral issues would be resolved overnight. He said that the former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharief by his unrealistic approach tried to inflict loss to the Pakistan Army during the Kargil war. He said terrorists somehow inflict damage in any part of the world but the resolution of Kashmir issue would mean their inability to sustain. He said Kashmir is an extraordinary issue, which must be resolved to ensure the restoration of peace in the South Asia. Referring to Siachan, he said that India was at loss obviously more than Pakistan at Siachan border

The Hindu, 12 August 2004

Explosives recovered

JAMMU, AUG. 11. Security forces today recovered 12 kg of improvised explosive device (IED) planted on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway 1 A, the only road link with the Kashmir Valley. It is reported that the IED was planted to target the Amarnath Yatra pilgrims.

The Hindu, 12 August 2004

Army foils bid to attack Amarnath pilgrims

JAMMU, AUG. 11. Suspending the Amarnath yatra for three hours, the Army troops today foiled a terrorist plan to strike at the pilgrims by recovering and later defusing a 12-kg RDX filled improvised explosive device (IED) on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, official sources said here. Militants had planted the IED on the highway at Ramso, 172 km from here, in Doda district to target the yatra convoy on

its way to the Pahalgam base camp from Jammu around 9 a.m., sources told PTI. Just a few minutes before the arrival of the convoy, vigilant troops of a road opening party detected the IED and alerted police and security along the highway, they said.

Hindustan Times, 12 August 2004

Army jawan killed in freak incident in Poonch

Jammu, August 12: An Army jawan was killed when his gun accidentally went off when he was on guard near Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said. The deceased, identified as Sepoy Nek Raj of 25 Punjab Regiment, was on the guard duty at a forward post near LoC when he incident took place, they said. Raj died on the spot, they said, adding that his body would be dispatched to his native place in Punjab on Thursday.

The Tribune, 12 August 2004

Militants planning strikes, forces on high alert

Srinagar, August 11: Police and paramilitary forces have been put on high alert in Jammu and Kashmir after receiving intelligence inputs that militants are planning major strikes on Independence Day, senior security officials said today. "We have received inputs which suggest that militants are desperate to strike on Independence Day, but we are equally adamant to foil it," Deputy Inspector-General of BSF K. Srinivasan said. Quoting intelligence reports and wireless intercepts, he said outfits, including the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, have focused on the disruption of the main function of August 15 to be held in Srinagar where Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed will unfurl the National Flag.

Srinagar Times, 12 August 2004

Editorial: The future of Kashmiri Language.

What is the future of Kashmiri language? Obviously, nobody has a misconception about this language. In its infancy, when this

language was confined to poetry there were 100 percent populace who could speak and write this language but now when atleast 20 books are being published every year, it is disheartening to note that there are just few readers of Kashmiri literature. And the fact remains that Kashmiri language is our mother tongue. The authors publish these books just for the heck of it or to receive the awards. It is to mention here that every year Sahitya Academy Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy awards the national, regional and local languages for their upliftment and books written in Kashmiri always figure in it. Unfortunately in present times, the Kashmiri language has almost lost its prominence as there is a craze towards Urdu and English amongst Kashmiris. Though this language is a mixture of Hindi, Sanskrit and Persian but it has its own sweetish tinge and uniqueness. It is the responsibility of one and all to get back to the otherwise forgotten language at the earliest.

Srinagar Times, 12 August 2004

India expresses its concern over the cross border terrorism.

Islamabad, August 11: Cross border terrorism and drug trafficking were taken up in a two day meet between the two countries. India and Pakistan reiterated to fight cross border terrorism and root out the drug trafficking. Both countries are looking forward to prepare a memorandum of understanding in this regard. At the end of a two-day conference, a joint statement issued said that both the countries would appoint nodal officers in their high commissions to deal with menace of cross border terrorism and drug trafficking. The Indian delegation which reached Islamabad for the talks was lead by home secretary, D! ahrendra Singh while as home secretary, Tariq Muhammad led the Pakistan delegation. The statement further said that both countries talked in a conducive atmosphere and agreed to carry forward the dialogue process. However, reports said that Pakistan didn't agree to accept that the people fighting in Jammu and

Kashmir were terrorists; it calls them the freedom fighters.

Aftab, 12 August 2004

Editorial: Social evils in our society.

We Kashmiris have been following traditions and rituals since ages and there is no harm in it but there are people who talk high about bringing about a dynamic change in our society but do nothing towards the same. History is witness to the fact that we have never prepared our minds to bring about a positive change in our society and root out growing social evils playing havoc with our culture and tradition. Ironically, the people who strongly condemn the wrongdoings and vulgarity in our society are themselves involved in it. It is disheartening to note that the religious leaders who have the moral obligation of showing the right path to people have also failed to deliver the goods. The people who commit themselves to good deeds and help needy are being discouraged and the people who are involved in gross misdeeds are being encouraged. The obscenity and vulgarity are fast eating up the very vitals of our conservative cultural ethos and we continue to be the mute spectators! We lack commitment towards good and our conscience is dead. We do condemn the wrongdoings but never take steps aimed at bringing about a change in our society.

Aftab, 12 August 2004

Security beefed up in view of Independence Day in the valley. Frisking intensified.

Srinagar, 11 August: In view of the Independence day ahead, the security throughout out the valley has been beefed up and helicopters would be flying all around the Bakshi stadium -the venue of I-day celebrations in summer capital. Security forces have taken positions on rooftops of residential and non-residential buildings around the Bakshi Stadium. The renewed fidayeen attacks have shook the security agencies. It is to mention here that in the recent past, militants had carried out fidayeen attacks in Barzullah, Nehru Park

and Rajbagh killing more than 15 security personnel. Reports from Delhi said that wireless intercepts of militants were heard by security agencies which said that they (militants) were planning to carry out major strikes to disrupt the Independence Day celebrations.

The Hindu, 13 August 2004

Intellectuals oppose Devanagri script for Kashmiri

SRINAGAR, AUG. 12: Taking strong exception to the Union Government's move to introduce Devanagri script for Kashmiri language, various cultural and literary organisations here have decided to launch a Valley-wide agitation to force the Government to reconsider its decision. The Union Human Resource Development Ministry's plans to introduce the script came up for discussion at the two-day conference of Adabi Markaz Kamraz (AMK) held in Kupwara. A host of writers, litterateurs and cultural activists expressed their resentment over this move stating that it was a "clandestine step" being taken at the behest of some "vested interests" who want to hijack the language and give the issue a communal colour. A resolution was passed at the conference to impress upon the government to withdraw the order forthwith or "be ready for dangerous implications which are bound to follow".

Hindustan Times, 13 August 2004

J&K chefs succeed where govt failed

Srinagar, August 13: A social initiative on the part of traditional Kashmiri chefs has made considerable headway in cutting down the wasteful consumption of meat during the wedding wazwan feasts. The cooks are fining and enforcing a social boycott of any of their colleagues who violate the order of cooking not more than seven dishes at the wazwan. The chefs who have got together under the banner Anjoman-e-Behboodi-e-Ashpazan (Society for the Welfare of Cooks) make surprise appearances at weddings. "We check the varieties of dishes prepared," says Ghulam Nabbi, president of the Anjoman. "If we find more than seven

preparations, we impose fines (between Rs 5,000 and 10,000). Besides, we go for a social boycott against these chefs."

The Tribune, 13 August 2004

Vajpayee had a clear vision on Kashmir, says Gani Bhat

Jammu, August 12: Gradually a feeling that the Congress-led UPA government is not sincere in ensuring resumption of talks with Kashmiri separatists has taken roots in the troubled state. The reason being two successive statements by the Union Home Minister, Mr Shivraj Patil, and his junior, Mr Sriprakash Jaiswal, on the issue. The APHC, led by Maulvi Umar Farooq, has already rejected talks with pre-conditions after Mr Patil said the parleys would be held within the ambit of the Constitution. What seemed to have amazed and intrigued separatists and their supporters is the statement of Mr Sriprakash Jaiswal in Jammu on Wednesday. He said the government would hold talks with those groups of separatists that had the support of militants. He even went to the extent of saying that talks would be initiated with those that have the authority of militants.?

The Tribune, 13 August 2004

Three Militants among Eight Killed

Jammu, August 12: Three militants and four jawans were among eight persons killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, where troops foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control, official sources said here today. At Rangoor nallah in Khadi Karmara belt in Poonch district, troops challenged militants, who fired on the troops and in the ensuing gunbattle two Pakistani militants were killed. Two AK rifles, three magazines, seven grenades, 130 rounds, one radio set, two IEDs, 17 detonators, one pistol and some explosive material were seized from the spot, they said.

Greater Kashmir, 13 August 2004

2 civilians, Soldier among 8 Killed in JK

Srinagar, Aug 12: Four militants, a soldier and three civilians were killed in different incidents across the state since Wednesday,

official sources said today. Unidentified gunmen killed two civilians after kidnapping them from their homes on Wednesday in Dassan, Beerwah of Budgam district. Sources said three unidentified gunmen kidnapped Muhammad Yusuf Ganai son of Ali Muhammad and Bashir Ahmad Najar son of Ghulam Ahmad Najar from their homes in Dassan village of Beerwah at around 10 pm Wednesday night. Their bodies were found in a Nallah in Waterpora village by police this morning

Greater Kashmir, 13 August 2004

Committee to recommend 2 members for SHRC

Accountability Commission chief to be decided on Aug 17

Srinagar, Aug 12: The Committee provided under the J&K Protection of Human Rights Act met here today to finalise and recommend to the Governor the names for filling two vacancies of members in the State Human Rights Commission, an official spokesman said. The vacancies were caused due to the retirement of Mohinder Singh and G. Q. Mughal. The meeting was presided by the Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed while Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Tara Chand, Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Finance, Muzaffar Hussain Beig, Chairman, State Human Rights Commission, Justice (ret'd) A. M. Mir and Commissioner/Secretary Law, A. H. Kochak were present. Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Abdul Qayoom could not attend due to indisposition.

Greater Kashmir, 13 August 2004

Pro-movement leaders dividing people: Shah

Srinagar, Aug 12: Indicating that some pro-movement leaders had become tools in the hands of those tasked to divide Kashmiri leadership senior separatist leader Shabir Ahmad Shah today asserted that the line dividing a pro-movement and anti-movement leaders was blurring. Shah while addressing the state level workers meet of

his Democratic Freedom Party reiterated that he would continue to strive for unity despite the open admission that previous efforts to forge unity between contending factions of leaders bore no fruit. "Indian intrigues to divide the leadership are part of the game. But divisive attitude at the part of those owing allegiance to the movement is beyond understanding," he told a gathering of DFP workers who had come from various parts of valley as also Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and Baderwah. Without naming any individual or outfit Shah warned of serious consequences "if we continue to exclude the pro-freedom forces."

Daily Excelsior, 13 August 2004

Mehbooba warns Centre against politicising peace process

BADHORI/VIJAYPUR, Aug 12: Terming Kashmir as a very sensitive issue, Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) chief and Member Parliament, Mehbooba Mufti today warned Centre against keeping political considerations while initiating steps to solve this vexed problem. "Those who are at the helm of the affairs at New Delhi should realise that Jammu and Kashmir is a State with special status and different parameters are required to solve problems of this State", she argued while addressing two public meetings at Badhori and Vijaypur, organised by the Minister of State for Law and Labour, Manjeet Singh, who recently joined her Party. "Donot think what will be its political ramifications in Uttar Pradesh or other parts of the country while initiating steps in Kashmir", she warned the Union Government, and asked the Centre, to keep aside political considerations and vote bank politics and take some concrete steps to solve this problem.

Daily Excelsior, 13 August 2004

Cong worker, 3 Militants, Jawan Killed

JAMMU, Aug 12: A Congress worker, three militants and an Army jawan were killed while another Army soldier was injured in separate militancy related incidents in the Jammu region today. Official sources said police recovered bullet-riddled body of a

Congress worker Liaquat Ali Khan, 40, son of Ghazi Khan, a resident of Sawara, Gandoh, from Nar Gawari dhok, bordering Himachal Pradesh early this morning. He had been kidnapped by the militants of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen outfit on July 11 from Nar Gawari dhok, where he was putting up during summer. Khan, who happened to be close relative of a retired Superintendent of Police (SP) and brother of another influential person Habib Khan, was killed exactly after a month in the captivity last night. His body was spotted by some people this morning and was recovered by the police

Alsafa, 13 August 2004

Editorial: Shortage of food in valley.

People are facing great inconvenience due to the shortage of food at ration depots in valley. The ration depots in the valley are without ration/food and even sugar too is not available at the depots in various parts of the valley. Also for quite some time now, people are not able to get Kerosene oil being used in abundance for cooking and lighting in rural areas. The much vocal coalition government which had promised people of every convenience seems to have failed to provide good governance to the beleaguered people. And the inefficient and incompetent food and supplies department has added to the woes of beleaguered people. The department has confined its work to the preparation of rate lists and least bothers about the problems of valley people. More often than not, people complain about non-availability of food at ration ! depots and when available it is of poor quality and sold at higher rates. As a result people had to buy the food/rice from open market on higher rates. It is the duty of the coalition government to make the food and supplies department accountable so that people are relieved of inconvenience.

Alsafa, 13 August 2004

The state government employees set the deadline the government.

Srinagar, 12 August. Thousands of government employees staged a protest in

front of the new secretariat in Srinagar and threatened to go on an indefinite strike from 1st of September if their demands were not met. In a charged atmosphere, employees chanted slogans against the government and appealed it to accept their genuine demands. Their demands include- the retirement age should be extended to 60 years and dearness allowances (D.A) merged into the basic pay. The employees argued that if government cut its ministry to size (from 40 to 10), they (employees) would withdraw their demands. However, if the govt. didn't cut its ministry to size, employees would not budge an inch from their stated demands. The protesting employees also demanded that the government should send the IAS cadre officers outside the state as soon as they are 57 years of age.

Aftab, 13 August 2004

Editorial: The unkept promise of the union government.

The talks with the Hurriyat conference are possible only under the Indian constitution. Deputy Home Minister, Prakash Jaswal in a press conference said that the organization (Hurriyat) was itself responsible for the failure of dialogue with union government as it was victim of bifurcation and its leaders were involved in mudslinging. The outgoing NDA government had held two rounds of talks with Abbas led Hurriyat conference and the third round was to be held in June but the parliamentary elections saw NDA government's defeat and Congress elected to power. The newly elected Congress government had hinted at Hurriyat leaders to come forward for a dialogue and even other groups were also asked to talk to the union government but Jaswal's recent press conference has made amply clear that the union government is not ready to talk to Hurriyat at least for the time being. His (Jaswal) statement has disappointed many peace loving people in Kashmir who had a glimmer of hope with the growing relations between India and Pakistan.

The Tribune, 14 August 2004

2 militants killed, arms seized

Srinagar, August 13: Three persons, including two militants, were killed, while the security forces seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including RDX, rockets and grenades, and arrested two militants in Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesman said today. He said the body of a Hizbul Mujahideen militant, Umar Usman, was recovered at Ghambir today, while another militant was killed by the security forces in an encounter near the Line of Control (LoC) at Khajaria last night. One AK rifle, one magazine and 26 cartridges were seized from the slain militant.

The Tribune, 14 August 2004

Ansari rejects Centre's talks offer

Srinagar, August 13: Maulvi Abbas Ansari, chairman of the separatist Hurriyat Conference, has rejected the dialogue process with the Central Government under the purview of the Constitution to resolve the Kashmir issue. Addressing a Friday congregation in north Kashmir today, the APHC chairman said it had "never accepted the Indian Constitution and therefore there is no question of talks under the purview of the Constitution". He, however, added that there was no other way to resolve the long-pending issue. Maulvi Abbas blamed both Central and state governments for not being sincere in their approach as the life of common man in Kashmir had been made miserable. He held that the approach had exposed the governments and there was no question of dialogue under such circumstances.

Hindustan Times, 14 August 2004

Security tightened in Jammu and Kashmir on I-Day eve

Srinagar, August 14: Troops on Saturday took positions in Jammu and Kashmir's main hospitals which overlook the venue for celebrations of Independence Day boycotted by terrorists, witnesses said. Troops mounted machine guns and grenade launchers on the top storeys of the women and children's hospitals in Srinagar to keep vigil on Bakshi Stadium which will host a tightly guarded ceremony on Sunday. The

venue has been attacked by rockets and bombs on past Independence Days, which terrorists mark each year with a strike. "We want to provide foolproof security for Sunday's function and that is the reason we have taken up positions in these buildings," a paramilitary officer told AFP.

Hindustan Times, 14 August 2004

For Pandits, home still a distant dream

Jammu, August 14: Lack of a concrete plan to rehabilitate the thousands of displaced Kashmiri Pandits has pushed the community further to the brink. After nearly 15 years in the wilderness, the prospect of their returning to the militancy-scarred Valley looks bleak. To add to their woes, the community is now facing new problems in migrant camps in Jammu. "The older generation is under pressure from a new generation born in the migrant camps. This has forced them to think of alternatives outside the Valley," says one of them. Moreover, Jammu too is fast turning hostile, as the local Dogras now want the migrants to move out. "The Valley is out of bounds for us and we have overstayed our welcome here," says Kanhiya Lal, another migrant. The state government has constructed some flats in the Valley to house the community members but this is unacceptable to a vast majority of the nearly 350,000 Kashmiri Pandits. "A cluster of flats can't offer us the security and freedom we want," says Rajinder, who is in his late twenties and is unemployed.

Hindustan Times, 14 August 2004

Centre may free J&K ultras to facilitate talks

Jammu, August 14: In an attempt to demonstrate its "sincere intentions" to resume talks with the Hurriyat Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, the Centre is working to free a number of local militants from jail. The Centre will also seek an end to all human rights abuses by security forces in the Valley and promise that all charges of abuse would be "thoroughly probed" and the "guilty punished", sources told HT. Hurriyat leaders had told the NDA government

during the first two rounds of talks earlier this year that these measures were necessary to create a climate conducive for future talks.

The Times of India, 14 August 2004

'Forced' to hoist tricolour in J&K

BARAMULLA: North Kashmir is flooded with tricolours, some of which have a light orange band in place of saffron and the green band varying in colour from parrot green to cobalt blue. The Ashokan wheel has only four spikes in some of the flags. But such distortions don't worry the Army, which only wants the flag hoisted on every shop and vehicle. People allege it's being done under fear of a public beating in case of disobedience. For tailor Gulam Hassan Khan, however, it's time to make some quick bucks. He sews and sells at least a dozen flags a day. "How can anyone defy the (Army) orders when even the relatives of state forest minister Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Sofi haven't been spared?" he wondered. He has two small flags hoisted outside his shop.

The Times of India, 14 August 2004

Ceasefire line is not a permanent border: Geelani

SRINAGAR: Breakaway Hurriyat Conference leader Sayed Ali Shah Geelani on Friday opposed conversion of ceasefire line into permanent border between India and Pakistan as a solution to the Kashmir issue. "The ceasefire line cannot be accepted as a permanent border," he said addressing a Friday congregation at Jamia Masjid in Barzullah locality of uptown Srinagar. Geelani said voices were being raised within and outside Jammu and Kashmir to convert ceasefire line into a permanent border and considered it as a solution to the issue. "Had it been so, what was the need for fighting three wars and Kargil conflict?" he asked.

The Times of India, 14 August 2004

Don't make talks conditional: Mehbooba

JAMMU: Peoples' Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti has warned the Centre that putting pre-conditions for talks with Kashmiri groups would hamper the peace

process in Jammu and Kashmir. "If dialogue is held with Pakistan without any conditions, why conditions have been imposed on Kashmiris for initiating the ongoing talks," she said addressing public meetings at Badhoori and Vijaypur in Jammu on Thursday. "This would spoil the conducive atmosphere and the situation will return where it was two years back," she said.

Alsafa, 14 August 2004

Editorial: 15th August and Kashmir.

In the run up to the Independence Day, the frisking in the nook and corner of valley has been intensified and at many places people are being taken into preventive custody by security forces. Also, people are being forced to hoist the tricolor on the roof tops of their houses, passenger ferrying vehicles and other light vehicles and even the two wheeler riders are being forced to hoist the tricolor or face the dire consequences. Since 15 years of turmoil the beleaguered people have been going through this trauma on such occasion (15th August and 26 January). The children who were born during these 15 year ask their parents as to why valley becomes so volatile on this occasion. Since 15 years a lot has changed in Kashmir, traditional ruling party NC was thrown out of power and Mufti led coalition governme! nt is ruling the state. Hurriyat Conference has suffered a major set back, the two factions of Hurriyat are envy of each other and may not unite at all. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government suffered a humiliating defeat paving way for renowned economist Manmohan Singh to be the Prime Minister of the country. India and Pakistan are carrying forward the dialogue process and both countries express their commitment to resolve all the bilateral issues through a meaningful dialogue. But in Kashmir nothing has changed and ordinary people continue to become the victims of violence. While as nation is eager to celebrate the Independence day, the same brings miseries and sufferings to beleaguered Kashmiris.

Srinagar Times, 14 August 2004

Editorial: Talks under Indian constitution.

Though there are dozens of political and separatist groups operating in the valley, but all believe that the dialogue could be the lone solution to the vexed Kashmir tangle. Even, the hard-liners who maintain that the advent of the gun on Kashmir soil highlighted the Kashmir issue at international level believe that dialogue could be the lone solution to the more than 50 year old problem. Both the countries maintain that there has been a positive outcome of the dialogue process going on between the two. In spite of the prolonged Pakistan claim that Kashmir is the root cause of instability and insecurity in the South Asia besides the main cause of all ! bilateral issues between two countries, it is good to notice that it (Pakistan) continues the dialogue process with an open mind and straightforwardness. There is no denying the fact that Kashmiris are the main party to the dispute and India too believes that they should be involved at some stage in the talks. It is good that the Congress government has stuck to the policy of outgoing Vajpayee government. The government is carrying forward the dialogue process with Pakistan but has put a condition that talks would be held only under the Indian constitution. Home minister, Shivraj Patil has made it clear and deputy home minister Prakash Jaiswal has upheld Patil's statement. And as expectedly both the factions of Hurriyat have reacted sharply to the talks offer under Indian constitution. The Geelani group which always opposed the Hurriyat-Center dialogue right from its beginning has said that the new government by making the talks offer conditional (under Indian constitution) has made its intentions clear. Despite being the real representatives of people of Kashmir both the factions of Hurriyat stand nowhere in the current Indo-Pakistan talks.

Srinagar Times, 14 August 2004

During last 5 years, out of 337 human right violation complaints registered, only 8 found correct.

Srinagar 13 August: State police has received 337 complaints of human rights violations in the valley and only 8 have been found correct. Meanwhile, a case has been registered against security forces for the enforced disappearance of a Banihal youth. Reports said that in 1999 out of 21 complaints received 20 were found baseless. Similarly in year 2000 out of 84 complaints registered 80 were dismissed after proper investigations, and only 4 were found genuine. In 2001 out of 140 complaints received 136 were found incorrect. In 2002 out of 71 complaints registered, 63 were found baseless. In 2003, out of 20 complaints received 15 were found baseless and till 13 August 2004, one human rights violation complaint received is being ! probed

Daily Excelsior, 15 August 2004

India will not tolerate any obstruction in fencing: Pranab

NEW DELHI, Aug 14: India will not tolerate obstructions in the erection of anti-infiltration fencing along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee asserted today, asking Pakistan to show more "honesty" in curbing cross border movement of militants. Rejecting Islamabad protests over the fencing work now at its last stages over a stretch of 560 kms of the mountainous LoC terrain, he made it clear that New Delhi will not brook any interference in the fencing work. "The fencing work is being undertaken keeping in view the nations security and it is being erected well within Indian territory," Mukherjee said in his customary Independence eve broadcast to the armed forces personnel.

Daily Excelsior, 15 August 2004

Sharp Shooters Deployed in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Aug 14: Sharp shooters have taken position on all high rise buildings in the city, particularly around the Bakshi stadium, venue for the main Independence

day function. Meanwhile, the operation of Gandola cable car has been stopped and a large number of security force personnel deployed at Gulmarg following information that militants may strike there on the eve of Independence day tomorrow. Official sources said more than 150 people, mostly former militants and known trouble makers have been taken into preventive custody on the eve of the Independence day functions in the Valley. The security forces have further intensified search operations and random frisking in the city following seizure of arms and ammunition, including explosives, rockets and grenade, just half a km from the stadium yesterday morning.

Daily Excelsior, 15 August 2004

8 IEDs Seized; Blast in Kishtwar

JAMMU, Aug 14: A crude device exploded mid air near a CRPF camp in Kishtwar town this morning without causing any casualties or damage while security forces recovered eight IEDs and other explosive devices during a search operation in Mandi sector in Poonch on the eve of Independence Day. Official sources said an unidentified militant lobbed a crude device targeting a CRPF camp at Bus Stand Kishtwar this afternoon. The device exploded mid air and failed to cause any casualties or damage. Security forces and police carried out searches in the area but no arrest was made. It was believed that the device was lobbed from a lane.

The Tribune 15 August 2004

Militants' hideouts in sanitised areas worry security forces

Jammu, August 14: Security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir are concerned at militants establishing "safe sanctuaries" in the areas sanitised earlier. Field reports revealed that militants had made hideouts in upper reaches of Zainpore, Shopian, Kulgam, Achabal, Kokernag, Rajwar, Lolab (in the Kashmir valley) and in Saujia, Mora Bachai, Surankot, Darhal, Kalakot (in Poonch and Rajauri districts). According to these reports, militants have re-established bases in upper reaches of Doda and Kishtwar. Militants setting up hideouts in

Jammu and Srinagar and in Kangan area of Srinagar district has disturbed security agencies. During raids the police arrested more than eight suspected militants in Jammu City and Kathua in past 10 days. These militants were picked up mostly from hotels in Jammu and some of them had come from Doda district for attacks on vital government installations. Others had been assigned the task of kicking up violence on the eve of Independence Day.

The Tribune 15 August 2004

LeT men slaughter Hizb commander

Jammu, August 14: A Hizbul Mujahideen area commander was slaughtered by Lashkar-e-Toiba militants due to group rivalry in Rajouri district. LeT militants kidnapped Hizb area commander Umar Usman from a hideout in the Gambhir Moghalla area in Rajouri district yesterday, sources said. They tortured Usman and later slaughtered him. His body was found lying near a school. Meanwhile, the security forces shot two Bangladeshi nationals, besides apprehending a couple, in the Mangoochak area, Kathua district, last night.

The Tribune 15 August 2004

Recapitulating history to illuminate the present (David Devadas)

August 15, 1947, was a very different day in Jammu and Kashmir than it was in the rest of the country. Uncertainty and strife were the order of the day there on the day when both India and Pakistan were celebrating their new-found independence. It might be useful to go over what happened then, for history can help to illuminate the present. The fact is that the ambitions of that state's ruler and its various political leaders in that turbulent season planted the seeds of today's troubles.

The Hindu, 16 August 2004

Mufti appeals to militants; 14 injured in attack

SRINAGAR, AUG. 15. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, today appealed to militants to lay down arms even as there was a grenade

attack in Baramulla in which 14 persons were injured. The Mufti, who unfurled the national flag at the Bakhshi Stadium and took the salute, said the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Suchetgarh-Sialkot roads should be the first step towards improving relations with Pakistan. "I tell you I am confident that this road will be opened... because people from both sides want to meet each other and interact". However, he said, "we do not say that only the road opening is the issue but we are confident that it will help in building an atmosphere which ultimately can lead to permanent peace." Asking the separatist organisations to accept the offer of dialogue, he said: "The gun is no solution. Only Kashmiris are dying in violence, who else?"

The Tribune, 16 August 2004

Kashmir returning to normalcy: BSF

Srinagar, August 15: A senior BSF official today claimed that the situation in the Kashmir valley had improved, and infiltration from across the border had also come down. Talking to reporters after unfurling the National Flag at the historic Lal Chowk on the 58th Independence Day, BSF IG J.B. Nagi said there was considerable improvement in the overall situation in the Kashmir valley. The incidents of violence had come down as compared to previous years, he said. About the recent fidayeen attacks on security force camps in the city, Mr Nagi said that such incidents occur, adding, "Until there is total cooperation from the people, these incidents can not be stopped."

The Tribune, 16 August 2004

President to visit J&K on Aug 19

Srinagar, August 15: President Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is visiting Jammu and Kashmir to inaugurate Mata Vaishno Devi University at Katra near Jammu on August 19. The President after inaugurating the university at Panthel near Katra, will interact with students of National Institute of Technology (NIT) here. This will be President's first interaction with students of the National Institute of Technology (NIT)

early known as the Regional Engineering College (REC) a deemed university.

The Indian Express, 16 August 2004

J-K panel gears up for Round 3, waits for Hurriyat reply

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15: Two days after Home Minister Shivraj Patil softened his stand on J-K talks, saying the government was willing to have "unconditional dialogue" with the Hurriyat Conference, the Centre is waiting for a response from the outfit. The Centre's coordination group on J-K met yesterday to take stock of the situation in the wake of political developments in the Valley. The Home Minister had come under heavy criticism from various separatist groups in J-K, including the Hurriyat, after he said the talks would be held "within the four walls of the Constitution". He later clarified that his stance is not rigid and he is even willing to bring a change in the Constitution if it is acceptable to the people of the country. The Centre's interlocuter, N.N. Vohra, said it is a positive signal and hoped it will resume the peace process which seems to have reached a dead-end.

The Times of India, 16 August 2004

Kashmir valley observes shutdown

SRINAGAR: Kashmir valley on Sunday observed a complete shutdown and vehicles were off the roads following a strike call given by various separatist organisations including both faction of the Hurriyat conference on the occasion of Independence day. Although most of the markets are closed on Sundays even the roadside stalls, commonly known as Bangladesh market, were also shut in view of the call given by the separatist leaders and supported by several militant outfits as well. Barring vehicles of few officials and security forces, all the traffic was off roads even as the troops maintained their vigil well after the celebrations were over at all district headquarters of the valley and Bakshi stadium, the main venue of the function in the state.

Greater Kashmir, 16 August 2004

Delhi serious about dialogue: Mufti

Srinagar, Aug 15: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has said that India and Pakistan had realised that dialogue was the only alternative to resolve problems between the two countries even as he maintained that the UPA government would vigorously take forward the process of normalisation, an official spokesman said. He asked the separatist leadership in Jammu and Kashmir to grab the opportunity offered by the Centre's invitation for dialogue. Speaking at I-Day function held at the Bakshi Stadium here this morning, the Chief Minister said that governments of both countries had now recognised the ground realities and were making efforts to resolve their problems through dialogue and discussion.

Greater Kashmir, 16 August 2004

15 Injured in Varmul Grenade Blast

Sopur, Aug 15: Fifteen persons were wounded, three of them critically, when unidentified persons fired a rifle grenade at the venue of Independence Day function at Dangiwachi Rafiabab in Varmul district on Sunday. Eyewitnesses said that troops of 28 Rashtriya Rifles made several announcements on Public Address System asking the villagers to assemble in the higher secondary school, the venue of Independence Day function organised by the 28 RR. As the function was underway, some persons hurled a grenade towards the venue, which exploded near the stage, injuring 15 persons, three of them critically. The explosion created panic as people ran helter-skelter.

Greater Kashmir, 16 August 2004

I-Day in Kashmir: Deserted roads, curfew like situation

Srinagar, Aug 15: Normal life across the Kashmir Valley on the Independence Day on Sunday was hit by protest strike called by two factions of the Hurriyat Conference and different militant outfits. A curfew like situation prevailed in the city and all towns across the Valley. Roads were abuzz with vehicles carrying troops, police and

officials. The government had made tight security arrangements in Srinagar to prevent the militants from disrupting the main Independence Day function at the Bakshi stadium in the heart of the city.

Daily Excelsior, 16 August 2004

**Couple Gunned Down in Rajouri
Two Militants Killed, 2 Arrested**

JAMMU, Aug 15: Two militants were killed and two others were arrested while a couple was shot dead by the ultras in separate militancy related incidents in the Jammu region since last evening. Two IEDs were defused during the day today as the independence day celebrations passed off peacefully across the region. Two militants were gunned down in a joint operation by police and troops of 48 Rashtriya Rifles at Fatehpur, about two kms from Rajouri town late this evening, DIG Rajouri-Poonch range S M Sahai said.

Aftab, 16 August 2004.

Editorial: peace prevailed.

In view of the Independence Day, elaborate security arrangements were made in the valley to ensure that the I-Day celebrations pass on peacefully. Frisking was intensified and house to house searches were conducted through out the valley and it was good to observe that the overall situation remained peaceful. Everybody presumed that militants would do everything to disrupt the Independence Day celebrations but barring sporadic incidents of violence the overall situation remained peaceful. An analysis of this reveals that people deserve the credit for peace on the occasion. Since last three weeks people had to face great inconveniences and the life was paralyzed in the state due to the intensified frisking by security forces through out the nook and corner of the valley but despite all this peace loving people showed immense patience and extended full cooperation to security forces on the occasion. It was only with the cooperation of people that unscrupulous elements didn't succeed in their ill intentions. Government and security agencies should mind that that without the

support of people, the restoration of peace in the valley is almost impassible. People want peace and could go to any extent go achieve it. It is good that over the years people have grown conscious and denounce violence in all its manifestations.

Hindustan Times, 17 August 2004

Hurriyat plans to foil India's bid for UN seat

Jammu, August 17: The two factions of the Hurriyat Conference have decided to launch a diplomatic offensive to undermine India's bid to secure a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The factions led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq plan to send petitions to the United Nations general assembly to foil India's bid. Sources revealed that the campaign would focus on India's 'failure' to adhere to UN resolutions on Kashmir. The Hurriyat plans to rope in the support of Washington and London through their lobbyist citing "India's poor human rights record" in Kashmir. They also plans to cite the reports of Amnesty International and Asia Watch to support their claim.

The Tribune, 17 August 2004

Panthers to oppose no-trust motion against Dar

Srinagar, August 16: In a relief to the PDP-led coalition Government in Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of Legislative Council session, the Panthers Party today decided to oppose the no-confidence motion against the Chairman of house, Abdul Rashid Dar, on the womens Bill issue. The turnaround by the single member JKNPP, which had earlier threatened to support the motion, is crucial for the government which is in a minority in the Upper House. The Opposition National Conference plans to move a no-confidence motion against Mr Dar, accusing him of sabotaging passage of the controversial permanent resident (disqualification) Bill denying property rights to the women marrying outsiders.

The Tribune, 17 August 2004

Two Lashkar men killed

Jammu, August 16: A self-styled area commander of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was among two militants killed in a gunbattle in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, where two militants and four overground workers were arrested and a militant surrendered, official sources said here today. On a tip-off, the Army launched a cordon-and-search operation in the Kakora forest in Rajouri district last night, they said, adding that an encounter took place in the area. In the gunbattle, two LeT militants were killed, they said. The slain militants were identified as Abu Shaku, 'area commander', and Abu Moga, both belonging to Pakistan. Two AK rifles, three magazines, seven grenades, two IEDs, one radio set and some documents were recovered from them.

The Tribune, 17 August 2004

Kashmir returns to normalcy after I-Day

Srinagar, August 16: After the general strike yesterday and a day of high tension following reports that militants would strike during the Independence day celebrations, normalcy returned to the Kashmir valley today. Shops and business establishments were open and traffic on all routes was plying normally with all educational institutions, and government offices and other commercial establishments functioning as usual. Security forces, other than those normally deployed for patrolling in the city and the outskirts, have been withdrawn.

The Tribune, 17 August 2004

Army Chief visits Command headquarters

Srinagar, August 16: The Chief of the Army Staff, Gen N.C. Vij, today said that troops are ready to face any challenge in Jammu and Kashmir. General Vij, who arrived at the headquarters of the Northern Command at Udhampur today, was given a detailed brief about the operational situation in the state. He expressed satisfaction at the operational preparedness of the forces deployed in the state and the successful

counter militancy operations being conducted by the troops.

The Indian Express, 17 August 2004

Under cloud over encounter, BSF officer in Valley faces drug charges

BANDIPORE, AUGUST 16: A BSF Battalion Commander heading counter-insurgency operations in central Kashmir, already under a cloud over an encounter death, is now the subject of a BSF probe into an alleged drugs racket.

Police have recovered three packets of brown sugar from Bashir Ahmad, a constable of the 42 Battalion, deployed at Radar Station, Chrar-e-Sharief. Ahmad has alleged that his Commanding Officer Narendra Singh gave him the drugs, asked him to go on leave and sell the consignment for Rs 1 lakh. A BSF spokesman said an inquiry has been launched against Singh who is reportedly being questioned at BSF's Panthachowk camp.

The Hindu, 17 August 2004

Once Again, on the Edge (Editorial)

Put simply, the process has reached a stalemate: a situation in which peacemakers have found themselves only too often in the past. In 1994, the secessionist leader Shabbir Shah emerged from years in jail and was greeted as the 'Nelson Mandela of Kashmir'. He promised to thread fractious secessionist groups, for which he used the metaphor of "a hundred beads," on to one single rosary. At last count, Mr. Shah's own party had split into four. Yasin Malik came out of jail a year later but hopes that his release would yield political progress were soon belied. His organisation has just suffered yet another split. During the build-up to the 1996 general election, the dialogue that took place between Union Home Minister S.B. Chavan and a group of one-time terrorists went nowhere. It would be facile to attribute these failures only to ego conflicts and bad faith. One major lesson from these events is that agreement on a process — in this case, dialogue — does not automatically yield results. The unhappy truth is that while almost everyone wants peace, wishes are

rarely self-fulfilling. Rigorous thought is needed on exactly what the shape of an abiding peace might be — and hard work is required on the nuts and bolts needed to build it.

Daily Excelsior, 17 August 2004

Mirwaiz says his faction is 'real' Hurriyat

SRINAGAR, Aug 16: In another jolt to the unification of the Hurriyat Conference, amalgam chairman Mirwaiz Omar Farooq has claimed that the faction represented by him is the "real Hurriyat". Hurriyat spokesman Ghulam Hassan Majrooh in a letter to Valley-based mediapersons said the amalgam, headed by the Mirwaiz, enjoys the support of majority separatist organisations. He urged the mediapersons to stop addressing the amalgam as Hurriyat (Abbas) and write only the Hurriyat Conference. However, chairman of the breakway Hurriyat Syed Ali Shah Geelani had recently said the amalgam headed by him represented the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Hindustan Times, 18 August 2004

Gender bias out of J&K Bill, men too may lose rights

Jammu, August 18: Both men and women would lose their citizenship rights in Jammu and Kashmir on their marriage with non-permanent residents. This is one of the modifications added to the original Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill that envisaged rescinding of the citizenship rights of women marrying non-state subjects. The bill will be introduced afresh in the state legislature session beginning in Srinagar on Wednesday. Earlier, it could not be passed in the Legislative Council on March 11 because of a change of tack by the Congress. "This law would be applicable to both the men and women on change of their domicile," reads one of the changes incorporated in the bill. Sources said women marrying non-state subjects would be able to inherit property and also able to retain the same if they were to be divorced or widowed. None of the provisions of the law would, however, apply to the Kashmiri

Pandits who have migrated from the Kashmir Valley.

Hindustan Times, 18 August 2004

PDP indulging in horse-trading, says Omar

SRINAGAR, AUG. 17. The National Conference (NC) president, Omar Abdullah, today accused the coalition Government, headed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), of indulging in horse-trading by wooing the NC members in the Legislative Council to defeat the no-confidence motion moved by his party against the Legislative Council chairman, Abdur Rasheed Dar. He said that in case the Government failed to bring the Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill back to the Assembly in its original form, the NC would do the same in the shape of a private member's bill.

The Tribune, 18 August 2004

Trust vote: Mufti faces uphill task

Jammu, August 17: It would be an uphill task for Chief Minister Mohammad Mufti Sayeed to ensure the defeat of the no-confidence motion that has been moved against the Chairman of the Legislative Council, Mr A.R.Dar, by the National Conference. The "no-confidence" motion moved by the NC against Mr Dar has started generating excitement as the monsoon session of the two Houses is scheduled to begin at Srinagar on Wednesday. The motion is expected to come as a trail of strength for the NC and the PDP particularly in the Kashmir valley.

The Tribune, 18 August 2004

Militant killed; 2 civilians injured in J&K
Srinagar, August 17: An unidentified militant was killed and two civilians injured in separate incidents in Kupwara and Pulwama districts of Jammu and Kashmir since last night, official sources said today. The militant, believed to be a Pakistani national, was killed in a gunfight with security forces at Satkujan village in the Handwara area of Kupwara district this morning, the sources said. They said the gunbattle erupted when security forces

cordoned the village to carry out searches following information about the presence of militants. The operation in the area was still continuing when last reports were received, the sources said. They said militants shot at and injured Ghulam Mohammad Mir when he ventured out of his house at Waderbala in Handwara early today. He was hospitalised.

The Tribune, 18 August 2004

Railway seeks Rs 900 cr for J&K project
New Delhi, August 17: The Railway Ministry today demanded additional Rs 900 crore from the government for financing the Udhampur-Qazigund-Srinagar-Baramula new line to be completed by August 2007. The ministry has also sought from the Planning Commission additional assistance of Rs 2,027 crore as budgetary support to accelerate the completion of various projects, besides increasing the outlay under the Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF). This was over and above the annual plan outlay of Rs 14,498 crore estimated for the current financial year 2004-2005, a Railway Ministry spokesperson said.

Greater Kashmir, 18 August 2004

'NC MLCs offered Rs 25 lakhs to save Dar, defeat PR Bill'

Srinagar, Aug 17: National Conference today said New Delhi and the PDP led coalition in the state have ganged up on Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill and were resorting to horse-trading on an 'unprecedented scale and level' by 'offering bribes to party's members in the state legislative council' where the bill was 'sabotaged' in the last session 'as part of a bigger conspiracy.' Party president Omar Abdullah told reporters that a senior Congress minister (probably referring to Ghulam Nabi Azad) and ruling coalition's members have offered Rs 25 lakhs each to 12 of his 14 members in the state Legislative Council for defeating no-confidence motion against the chairman of the council Abdul Rashid Dar, who according to Omar didn't allow vote on the PR Bill in the last session as part of a conspiracy aimed at

undermining state's autonomy and unique status.

Greater Kashmir, 18 August 2004

Australia asks its nationals not to visit Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu, Aug 17: Following alleged rape of an Australian woman, Australian authorities have reportedly issued a fresh notice to their nationals to avoid visiting Jammu and Kashmir. As per media reports, Australian authorities have taken a serious note of the issue and sought a feed back from their counterparts in India. Allegations leveled by an Australian tourist that she was raped for several days by a houseboat owner has created ripples. Quoting a diplomat, reports said Australian authorities have once again urged their nationals not to visit the state of Jammu and Kashmir for security reasons. "We have been emphasizing the need to follow the advisory," a diplomat was quoted as saying.

Greater Kashmir, 18 August 2004

Contrary to government claims, SOG alive in Kishtwar

Kishtwar, Aug 16: Belying the claims of Peoples Democratic Party led coalition government that the Special Operation Group stood disbanded, the situation in Kishtwar tehsil presents altogether a different story. According to residents, the SOG was still alive and had spread a reign of terror among the inhabitants of this tehsil. Although the August 15 celebrations passed off peacefully, it may take several months for the residents to come out of the trauma allegedly suffered by them during the weeklong 'high security arrangements'.

Daily Excelsior, 18 August 2004

New Delhi not serious about dialogue' Omar accuses Mufti, Cong of horse-trading

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: A day before the summer session of the Assembly begins, National Conference (NC) president, Omar Abdullah today blamed Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's office and some Congress leaders for indulging in "all sorts

of horse trading" to save the chair of Legislative Council chairman, Abdul Rashid Dar, against whom the NC has moved no confidence motion in the Upper House. Terming the concerns of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leadership regarding the Permanent Residents (Disqualification) Bill as "plethora of lies", the NC chief disclosed that the Government was weighing option to re-draft the Bill and asserted that in that case NC would be left with only option of moving a Private Bill in the Lower House. Addressing a news conference at his party headquarters here this afternoon, Omar Abdullah leveled serious allegations against the Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, Congress and Legislative Council chairman, Abdul Rashid Dar for hatching conspiracy in league with New Delhi to "deliberately sabotage" the passage of Permanent Residents (Disqualification) Bill in last session of the Council at Jammu.

Daily Excelsior, 18 August 2004

Infiltration Bid Foiled in Hiranagar; Two More Ultras held in Doda

JAMMU, Aug 17: Doda police today arrested two more militants and sent them for interrogations while a group of infiltrators opened firing on a Border Security Forces (BSF) patrol party damaging a vehicle in forward village of Mangu Chak in Hiranagar sector late last night. Official sources said in its sustained drive against the militants in Doda, police today arrested two more militants identified as Farooq Naik son of Mohd Abdullah and Bashir Ahmed son of Sofa Din, both residents of Basti Koti, Doda. They were arrested on a specific information of their involvement in militancy and were sent to Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC) for sustained questioning to ascertain their links with the militants, the sources said.

Hindustan Times, 19 August 2004

Women in militants' line of fire, over 1,000 killed

Jammu, August 18: It has been a particularly bad year for women in Jammu and Kashmir.

So far, 53 women 'mainly relatives of surrendered militants, informers and security personnel' have been brutalized and killed till August this year. These are official records, but the exact figures are more shocking. "There are many more cases that go unreported. Rape cases are not reported at all. Sexually assaulted women very rarely come forward", said a police officer. The overall record of violence against women in the state is appalling ' 1,019 killings, 247 abductions, 110 hangings and an unspecified number of rape cases.

Militants have slit the throats of more than 20 women 'most of them in the Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur and Doda districts of Jammu region till August this year. These figures prove that militants have shunned their principle of sparing the lives of women and children while targeting their adversaries.

Hindustan Times, 19 August 2004

Hizb leader killed in Rajouri

August 19: The chief commander of the Hizbul Muhajideen Pir Panjal Range (HMPPR) was shot dead in Rajouri district on Wednesday morning, the police said in Jammu. In another incident, terrorists killed four members of a family in Udhampur district. The police zeroed in on Abu Safian in the forests of Dudhsan village and killed him after a gun battle. With his elimination, the police said the HMPPR is completely decimated. Meanwhile, militants killed four of a family in Mala Jamlan village in Udhampur. The family was apparently targeted because one of the members had been a militant who later turned informer.

The Hindu, 19 August 2004

No-trust move against J&K Chairman fails

SRINAGAR, AUG. 18. With one member of the National Conference (NC) abstaining from the House, its no-confidence motion against the Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council, Abdur Rasheed Dar, was defeated today amid allegations and counter-allegations between the ruling and the Opposition parties. The

two motions moved by the NC's Leader of the Opposition, Abdul Qayoom, and another member, Shamima Firdous, were debated for over two hours before it was finally defeated. The vice-chairman for the day, P. Namgayal, voted against it after 14 members each from the ruling coalition and the NC stood up. Chowdary Nizamuddin was the lone member of the NC who abstained from the proceedings and virtually rescued Mr. Dar from getting unseated. (The NC leaders expressed apprehension that he had been kidnapped and wanted intervention from the Chair). However, the lone Communist Party of India member, Abdur Rehman Tukroo, voted in favour of the motion.

The Hindu, 19 August 2004

Militants kill four of Gujjar family

JAMMU, AUG. 18. Four members of a Gujjar family, including a 32-year-old woman, were killed in an attack by suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba militants last night in a remote village of Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir. Police said that militants went to the house of Ghulam Hasan in Maloon Jamslan area and asked for him. As the family members tried to raise an alarm, the militants opened fire, resulting in the death of Ghulam Hasan, his sons Mohammad Sharif (26), and Zakir (16), and his widow daughter Khurshida Begum (32). The killing of the Gujjar family last night is part of a pattern set by the militant outfits in the remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tribune, 19 August 2004

Panel formed to bring separatist groups in Hurriyat fold

Jammu, August 18: Molvi Umar Farooq, who has been assigned by the APHC leadership to work out a process for bringing other separatist groups in the Hurriyat fold, has set up a two-member committee to hold talks with leaders separately. Two members, whose names are still a secret, have been asked by Molvi Umar Farooq, who is functioning as the acting chairman of the APHC, to hold a dialogue with JKLF chief Yasin Malik, Democratic Freedom Party president Shabir Ahmed Shah, Peoples'

League president Abdul Aziz Sheikh and others separately. Reports said that soon after Syed Ali Shah Geelani floated Tehrik Hurriyat recently, Molvi Umar Farooq had established contact with leaders of erstwhile Itihadi Force, but the progress in the efforts of wooing Mr Malik, Mr Shah and Sheikh Aziz back to the APHC was very slow. Hence, the Mirwaiz constituted a two-member committee to have detailed discussion with them.

The Tribune, 19 August 2004

Peerzada is new JKPC chief

New Delhi, August 18: Mr Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed was today appointed President of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPC) in place of Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad. Mr Azad had wanted to relinquish this post shortly after the state Assembly elections, but he was asked to continue. Now that Mr Azad has been inducted into the Union Cabinet, it had become imperative to fill the post. A number of other PCC chiefs also need to be replaced because the present presidents have become ministers either at the Centre or in the state.

Hindustan Times, 19 August 2004

The bad old spirit (Anand K. Sahay)

We could, thus, be approaching a new juncture which could see the nullifying of the gains of the October 2002 assembly election that saw the spirit of democracy triumph. The fly in the ointment for the jihadis is that the ordinary Kashmiri is now not ready to be railroaded into joining a movement of the 1989 type. Indeed, he can be said to be on a retreat from that monster spirit. But in order to prevent his co-option through coercion, the Indian State needs urgently to mobilise and consolidate civil society in Kashmir which desperately seeks shelter from jihad ideologues. This has been a telling lacuna. If this vacuum is not filled quickly, agents of terror will gain. Exclusive reliance on the security apparatus is hardly the answer. It should be remembered, for instance, that it was civil society

organisations that held off the tribal invaders before the forces arrived.

Daily Excelsior, 19 August 2004

LC rejects no confidence motion against Dar

SRINAGAR, Aug 18: After a heated debate by members of the opposition and ruling benches, the no-confidence motion tabled by the opposition National Conference (NC) against the chairman of the Legislative Council and its former leader, Abdul Rashid Dar, was rejected by a voice vote in the Upper House today. While as the NC got 14 votes in favour of the motion including the vote of a lone Communist Party of India member, all the others, including the ruling combine of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress voted against.

Daily Excelsior, 19 August 2004

Top ultra shot dead in Rajouri; 4 members of SPO's family among 6 killed

JAMMU, Aug 18: Four members of a SPO's family and a top Hizbul Mujahideen militant were among six persons killed in the militancy-related incidents across the Jammu region since last evening. Two youths, kidnapped by the militants, were rescued by security forces in Gandoh in Doda district. Official sources said a group of militants entered in the house of Ghulam Hussain son of Mir Baz Gujjar at village Malan Jamlan, about 10 kms from Mahore in Udhampur district last night. The militants, numbering four, first searched Hussain's son SPO Mohd Rafiq Ghoste but he was not present in the house. Later, the militants opened indiscriminate firing on the house inmates killing all four of them on spot. They escaped after the killing.

Daily Excelsior, 19 August 2004

Thick cordon of securitymen on project sites assured

NR to resume work on rail project next month

JAMMU, Aug 18: After nearly two months when the work on Rs 6,000 crore railway project in the Kashmir valley was brought to a grinding halt due to the killing of IRCON

Engineer and his brother by the militants after being kidnapped, Northern Railways (NR) has decided to resume work on the project from the beginning of next month. Highly placed sources in the Northern Railways told the EXCELSIOR that the decision to this effect was taken after the senior officers of the Northern Railways had a meeting with the officers of different security agencies particularly with the State Police in Srinagar yesterday. "In the meeting all aspects with regard to the security of the persons engaged with project were deliberated upon and officers of all the security agencies assured to ensure that incident like killing of IRCON Engineer Sudhir Kumar Pundeer and his brother would not take place", the sources said and added that the officers of the Northern Railways made it clear in the meeting that without proper security arrangements it would be difficult for them to complete the project in time.

Daily Excelsior, 19 August 2004

Politician, surrendered ultra killed

SRINAGAR, Aug 18: A politician and a surrendered militant were killed while as a militant surrendered before the security forces across the Kashmir valley since last night, a police spokesman said today. Elsewhere in the Valley, a major tragedy was averted with timely detection of an IED inside a hospital, while a militant surrendered before the security forces during the period, the spokesman said. The spokesman said Ali Mohammad Dar, who had unsuccessfully contested the 2002 Assembly elections as an independent candidate, was shot dead by militants at Hariparigam in Awantipora area of Pulwama district late last night.

Daily Excelsior, 19 August 2004

Strong resentment brewing against foreign ultras

JAMMU, Aug 18: Strong resentment is brewing among the local militants against the increasing acts of sexual assaults by the foreign terrorists on the Kashmiri and other local girls. A local militant, Usman Bhai

alias Bomber Khan of Doda, belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) dared to oppose the humiliating act of his foreign associates on a local girl of Manjakot in Rajouri, was torched and later gunned down mercilessly. This gory incident has sent shock waves among the local cadre, who have vowed to avenge the killing and teach a lesson to those who are perpetuating cold blooded murders and sexually assaulting the local girls. They are looking for the three LeT terrorists—Nizam Ali, Muzam Ali and Chota Babbar, all from Pakistan.

Greater Kashmir, 19 August 2004

Locked library, dusty classrooms mark Urdu dept of Jammu university

Jammu, Aug 18: Once famous for quality education and infrastructure among the Urdu departments of various Universities in India, the department of Urdu in Jammu University is in dilapidated condition today. Locked library, dusty classrooms, stinking toilets, alleged non-cooperation of head of the department with the students and faculty mar the once India's best Urdu department. The scholars, students and even faculty members alleged that feel dejected at the condition of the department. The scholars and students said that books haven't been issued to them from the last three years as the department library is locked. The students said that at least 10 thousand books of library were gathering dust.

The Hindu, 20 August 2004

'More infiltration bids being detected'

NEW DELHI, AUG. 19. The Army has been successful in detecting more infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir due to electronic fencing and better surveillance equipment, the Chief of the Army Staff, N.C. Vij, said today. The Army has detected twice as many infiltration bids in June and July this year as compared to the same period last year, said another senior officer. Before the fence was erected and the Army equipped with thermal imagers, night vision devices and sensors, only one out of four infiltration bids were detected. The detection

rate has gone up this year with the fencing nearly in place and the Army becoming adept at handling surveillance equipment. "Almost 80 to 85 per cent of infiltration attempts are being detected and dealt in appropriate way by the security forces," Gen. Vij told newsmen after flagging off a 22-member Dogra regiment expedition to Mount Kanchenjunga on the Indo-Nepalese border.

The Hindu, 20 August 2004

Deal firmly with terrorism, says Farooq
KATRA (UDHAMPUR), AUG. 19. The former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah, said today that the country should fight terrorism in all its dimensions firmly. There was no question of starting a dialogue with militants till the violence ended. Speaking as a special invitee at the inauguration of an university here, Dr. Abdullah said: "The dialogue process may have started between India and Pakistan, but we are long away from friendship. Let me be very clear to every one in the country that Pakistan wants Jammu and Kashmir, which would never happen. (God forbid) If Jammu and Kashmir becomes a part of Pakistan, then Farooq Abdullah would migrate from here." According to Dr. Abdullah, secularism is the strength of the country and there is no question of looking back from the ideals set by the great founding fathers of the Constitution. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir who belong to various cultures and religions are proud Indians and would remain so."

The Tribune, 20 August 2004

Top Lashkar militant, 6 others killed in J&K

Srinagar, August 19: A top militant of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was killed in an encounter with security forces here last evening. Six others, including three militants, were killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. The police here said Manzoor Ahmad Darzi, alias Manzoor-ul-Islam, of the LeT was killed in an encounter with police and security forces near Jhelum Valley Medical

College on the bypass at Bemina on the outskirts of Srinagar last evening. The encounter ensued when militants boarding a Maruti car fired upon the patrol party. Another militant travelling in the car escaped. One AK rifle, three magazines, 79 rounds and two hand grenades were recovered.

The Times of India, 20 August 2004

Outrage over move to change Kashmiri script

SRINAGAR: The Centre's move to make Devnagari the script of Kashmiri language has irked separatists and mainstream politicians alike in Kashmir. While the All Parties Hurriyat Conference headed by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has urged the literary, cultural and artistic circles of society to resist any effort by Centre to change the script, president of the ruling People's Democratic Party, Mehbooba Mufti, and president of the National Conference, Omar Abdullah, have vowed to take up the issue with the United Progressive Alliance government. Slamming the official efforts in this regard, a spokesman for the moderate Hurriyat group said that the step was part of the imperialistic designs of the Indian government.

The Indian Express, 20 August 2004

Death is destiny': Israeli tourists flock Kashmir

Srinagar, August 19: Gulzar Ahmad, owner of a handicraft shop near scenic Dal lake in Srinagar, recently changed the language of his outlet's signboard from English to Hebrew. It was another sign of the new acceptance of visitors from Israel. For the second successive year, Israelis top the list of foreign tourists visiting the region. "Seventy per cent of my customers are Israelis," said 50-year-old Ahmad, a Muslim. "So I changed my signboard to attract more Israeli customers." On the face of it, Kashmir, once a tourist haven but now the centre of a bloody Islamic insurgency, seems like a most unlikely destination for Israelis who are themselves battling Palestinian Islamic militants at home.

The Indian Express, 20 August 2004

Chaos over women's Bill in J-K Assembly
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 19: The Women's Bill rocked the state legislative today, prompting the adjournment of both the Houses till Monday. No sooner had the Assembly started functioning than members of the National Conference, led by A.R. Rather, stormed the Well of the House and raised slogans like Bill ko wapas lo, dogli policy nahin chalegi (Get back the Women's Bill, down with dual policy). The NC legislators shouted towards the treasury Benches, which later forced Assembly Speaker Tara Chand to adjourn the House. Rather and other legislators wanted the Bill to be put on top priority. However, the Speaker followed the schedule, holding the Question hour, thus having the NC members on their feet. The House was adjourned.

Daily Excelsior, 20 August 2004

JuM chief commander, 2 soldiers among 7 killed

SRINAGAR, Aug 19: Following the killing of former Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) militant leader turned Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen 'chief commander', Manzoor Ahmed Bhat alias Manzoor-ul-Islam, in an encounter with security forces in Bemina locality of Srinagar last night, his hometown Anantnag saw protests with people engaging themselves in ding dong battles with police. While as hundreds of people attended his funeral procession, angry mob ruffed up separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah amid pro-Azadi slogans. Meanwhile, two Army personnel and two militants were among six persons killed in Kashmir valley since last night. According to a police spokesman, a joint party of BSF 193 Bn and police signalled a white Maruti car to stop for checking near erstwhile Jehlum Medical College in Bemina locality of Srinagar last night. However, the spokesman said, the vehicle tried to sped away with two militants firing indiscriminately from inside the car.

Daily Excelsior, 20 August 2004

Assembly adjourned amid pandemonium

SRINAGAR, Aug 19: Amid noisy scenes and protests by the opposition National Conference (NC) legislators demanding a statement from Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed over the Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill, Legislative Assembly was adjourned till August 23 without transacting any business here today. As soon as the Assembly proceedings began this morning, opposition leader, Abdul Rahim Rather demanded a discussion on the controversial Bill. Rather was joined by his other fellow NC legislators in his demand and sought the Chief Minister's statement on the Bill. However, the Speaker Tara Chand refused to entertain the plea arguing that till the report on the Bill was presented, there could be no discussion on it. But the NC members continued with their demand and alleged that the state Government was playing with sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 20 August 2004

Infiltration on rise: Gen Vij

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir have shown a sharp rise recently, almost double the figures of last year, even as security forces had been able to thwart most of them, Army Chief N C Vij said today. "There is no doubt that infiltration attempts are increasing day by day", Vij told reporters but asserted that with the completion of the anti-infiltration fencing and placement of advanced detection equipment, the Army was getting a good success rate in curbing infiltration. "Almost 80 to 85 per cent of these attempts are being detected and dealt in appropriate way by the security forces", the Army Chief said after flagging off a 22 member Dogra regiment expedition to world's third highest peak 8,611 metre High Mount Kangchenjunga on the Indo-Nepalese border.

Daily Excelsior, 20 August 2004

Hurriyat creates 4 new cells

SRINAGAR, Aug 19: The moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference said today it has

created four new cells in order to streamline the amalgam and make it more effective. The decision to create administrative, press, public relations and human rights cells was taken at a meeting of the Executive Council of the amalgam which met here with founder chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq in the chair, a spokesman of the conglomerate said. He said the Executive Council, the highest decision-making body of the amalgam after a three-hour long discussion, appointed chairman of People's Political Front Fazal Haq Qureshi as head of the administrative wing of the conglomerate. Shahidul Islam, a senior leader of Awami Action Committee and special secretary to the chairman, has been assigned the additional charge of Press secretary of the amalgam.

The Hindu, 21 August 2004

Kashmir women oppose 'move' to amend Bill

JAMMU, AUG. 20. The re-surfacing of controversy over Permanent Resident Disqualification (2004) Bill has once again triggered protest by women, who have opposed the demand by some quarters to introduce the Bill in its original form which lapsed more than two months ago. Women's groups such as Nari Manch have threatened that they will take to the streets if any attempt is made to bring any Bill which is discriminatory in any respect. On the other hand, the National Conference has threatened that it will stall the proceedings of the Legislature, till the time the Bill is re-introduced. The party has termed the passage of the Bill as essential in the larger interest of the people.

Hindustan Times, 21 August 2004

Geelani under house arrest

Breakaway Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Geelani was placed under house arrest on Friday. Sources said that police swooped on Geelani's Hyderabad residence at 6.00 a.m. on Friday and held him inside the house. A spokesman for Geelani said that he was scheduled to visit the family of militant leader Manzoorul Islam at Anantnag, and

address a Friday congregation there. He said, "they (police) prevented him even from offering Friday prayers in the local mosque."

The Tribune, 21 August 2004

Infiltration bid foiled, two militants killed
Srinagar, August 20: Security forces today foiled an infiltration bid by killing two militants near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said here. After detecting movement of some militants who were trying to sneak into the valley from across the border in the Nowgam sector of frontier district of Kupwara, troops of 28 Madrass laid multiple ambushes and challenged the ultras immediately after they intruded into this side.

The Tribune, 21 August 2004

CRPF cover for rly teams in J&K

New Delhi, August 20: The 143 Battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been asked to provide security to the survey/construction teams of Indian Railways in Jammu and Kashmir. CRPF Director-General J. K. Sinha said to ensure the effective management of internal security, more than 86 per cent of the CRPF had been deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, north-eastern states and states tormented by left-wing extremism. The CRPF had been providing effective security cover to Amarnath yatris and the yatra had remained free of any untoward incident so far, Mr Sinha said.

Daily Excelsior, 21 August 2004

Major breakdown in Gladni station

Power supply disrupted in Jammu

JAMMU, Aug 20: Power supply to several areas of Jammu city was disrupted due to major breakdown at Gladni station at around 12 noon today. A Power Development Department (PDD) spokesman, said that a major fault developed at 33 KV system at Gladini at around 12 noon today. With this, the power supply to the areas like Trikuta Nagar, Gandhinagar, Shastrinagar, Nanak Nagar, Gangyal, Channi Himmat, Residency Road and surrounding areas including PHE installations was suddenly stopped. He said

the supply shall remain remain affected till the system at the Gladni station is restored.

Daily Excelsior, 21 August 2004

Pakistani among 4 infiltrators arrested in Hiranagar sector

JAMMU, Aug 20: Police today arrested four infiltrators including a Pakistani national from forward village Tarnah in Hiranagar sector in Kathua district after they had intruded about two kms inside the Indian territory. Official sources said a police naka party observed movement of four infiltrators moving towards Jammu-Pathankote national highway this morning and asked them to surrender. The infiltrators tried to escape back to Pakistan but they were chased and arrested by the police party. Sources said the infiltrators had managed to escape two nakas of Army and BSF before reaching Tarnah and getting trapped in police cordon. They have been shifted to Hiranagar police station for questioning. They have been identified as Mohd Hafiz son of Zaffar Mohd, a resident of Fishary Bazaar, Karachi in Pakistan, Mohd Alam Shah son of Hakim Ali, Abdul Zabbar son of Abdul Rehman and Abdul Manaam son of Abdul Sattar, all Bangladeshis.

Daily Excelsior, 21 August 2004

Army jawan killed in Surankote

JAMMU, Aug 20: An Army jawan was killed in an encounter at Mehandi Wali Dhok in Surankote tehsil in Poonch district last night while an Army jawan deserted his post along with an Insas rifle in Balakote sector but was re-arrested from Gurdaspur in Punjab today. Official sources said an encounter took place between the troops of 45 Rashtriya Rifles and security forces at Mehandi Wali Dhok last night. In the gun-battle Sepoy Subash Chander was killed while the militants managed to escape. Meanwhile, an Army jawan of 21 Punjab identified as Kuldeep Singh deserted from an Army post in forward area of Kanga in Balakote sector in Poonch yesterday along with an Insas rifle and 200 rounds.

Daily Excelsior, 21 August 2004

CRPF security cover for rail project

NEW DELHI, Aug 20: Amid security concerns over the ambitious rail project in Kashmir, the Government has given CRPF the responsibility of ensuring protection of the personnel engaged in construction of the rail line in the Valley. Stating this here today, CRPF Director General J K Sinha pointed out that a battalion strength comprising nearly 100 officers and jawans will provide security to survey and construction teams involved in the project. The task of protection has been handed over to CRPF in the wake of security concerns after abduction and killing of an IRCON engineer in the Valley about two months ago. Sinha, who was addressing officers and men of the force at a function here, underlined that CRPF was providing effective security to the Amarnath pilgrims, both en route and at the camps and had ensured incident-free pilgrimage.

Daily Excelsior, 21 August 2004

Two Pak intruders among 4 killed

SRINAGAR, Aug 20: Security forces foiled yet another infiltration bid when they killed two heavily armed militants in the Nowgam sector early this morning. Elsewhere in the Valley militants killed a person, detonated a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at Litter and also shot at and critically wounded one person at Pulwama today, sources said. A report from Baramulla said troops guarding the northern borders noticed a group of militants sneaking into this side from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the Nowgam sector in the wee hours today. On being challenged near a particular place, the militants opened fire on the troops. The fire was returned and in the fierce clash two infiltrators were killed. A security jawan also killed in the encounter. Two AK rifles, six magazines, two hand grenades, one wireless set, 22 rounds of ammunition and two letter pads were recovered from the slain militants, the sources said.

Daily Excelsior, 22 August 2004

4 of family injured in grenade blast; 2 militants killed in Kulgam

SRINAGAR, Aug 21: While as two Hizbul Mujahideen militants were killed in a gun battle with security forces in Kulgam area of south Kashmir today, unidentified persons lobbed a hand grenade on the house of a former militant, wounding four of his family members including three women, late last night. Informed sources in south Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that, troops of SOG Kulgam and RR 9 Bn cordoned Khul village in Kulgam area after a specific information about the presence of militants in the village yesterday morning. According to these sources, as the troops were laying cordon in the village, militants fired at them running towards the nearby fields. However, troops immediately laid cordon around the field and intermittent firing followed for whole day. Sources said that today, as the closed in from all sides, militants fired heavy volume of fire on them resulting in a fierce exchange of fire.

Daily Excelsior, 22 August 2004

Power crisis continues

JAMMU, Aug 21: Even after its claim to restore power supply by 2 pm on Saturday, the Power Development Department (PDD) has failed to restore normal power supply in Jammu, Rajouri and Poonch districts. The crisis has been continuing for the last more than 44 hours. While in some areas the power supply was restored after 28 hours, but again another fault developed at the power station and the supply was snapped at around 3 pm on Saturday. Entire Jammu city and areas of Poonch and Rajouri, except Gandhinagar, Trikuta Nagar and Bari Brahmana Industrial area were plunged into darkness this evening after the major shutdown. Massive leakage in the systems installed at the Gladini station on Narwal Bypass Road created another crisis for the maintenance staff today, as a result restoration work got affected.

Daily Excelsior, 22 August 2004

Kashmir fast emerging as favourite destination for Southeast Asian tourists

Srinagar, Aug 21: Kashmir is fast becoming a preferred destination for Southeast Asians

particularly tourists from Malaysia who are eager to visit here and see the charms of the Himalayan valley including snow and glaciers. "The 5 million Malay speaking people of our country want to visit Kashmir and enjoy the beauty of the place", said A. Baharuddin, a tour operator of Malaysia who has been bringing his compatriots here since 1968. Baharuddin today called on the Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed here this morning along with his latest group comprising 34 tourists. The group is a mix of different communities including Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists. They interacted with the Chief Minister and shared their experiences about the visit.

The Hindu, 22 August 2004

Resentment in J&K Congress over new chief

SRINAGAR, AUG. 21. A change of guard in the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Congress has evoked strong resentment from most of the party leaders who have urged the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Ghulam Nabi Azad, to continue on the post in "the larger interest of the party." The Congress high command appointed the Rural Development Minister, Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed, as the new president of the Pradesh Congress Committee following Mr. Azad's reluctance to continue in the post given his pre-occupation at the Centre.

Greater Kashmir, 23 August 2004

NC, PDP head for collision; Congress looks to Delhi

Srinagar, Aug 22: As regional parties National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were busy in chalking out strategies to outwit each other on the controversial Permanent Residence Disqualification Bill ahead of Monday's crucial assembly session, Congress waited for instructions from New Delhi. "We will generally oppose the bill in any form. We have also issued the whip to members to oppose the bill, but we have not received further instructions from New Delhi yet," Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma told Greater Kashmir on phone from

Jammu. Sharma further said, "Being a national party we have our own compulsions to keep the national interest in mind."

Greater Kashmir, 23 August 2004

'NC not honest on Bill'

Srinagar, Aug 22: Member Parliament and President Peoples Democratic Party, Mehbooba Mufti has accused the National Conference of staging another drama on the Permanent Resident's (Disqualification) Bill in the Legislative Assembly after having sabotaged its passage in the Upper House earlier this year. She said NC was not sincere about this important issue and its sole aim was to have the Bill defeated. In a statement, Mehbooba Mufti said that despite having only 16 MLAs, her party ensured the passage of the Bill through a unanimous vote in the Legislative Assembly. She said all political parties voted for the Bill but the National Conference suddenly made a volte face and sabotaged its passage in the Legislative Council. She said several members of the party absented themselves when the crucial vote on the Bill was to be taken in the House. She said the Chairman Legislative Council has recently unveiled the facts about the whole drama staged by the National Conference. The party, she said, had been exposed for its double standards.

Greater Kashmir, 23 August 2004

Evidence proves fake encounter: Family

Islamabad, Aug 22: The family of Manzoor-ul-Islam, one of the pioneers of the ongoing armed struggle in the state, has refused to buy the police version of on his death, saying circumstantial evidence proves he was arrested prior to killing. Referring to, what the family said, circumstantial evidences and information from some sources, they said Manzoor was arrested Tuesday evening and killed within hours in a fake encounter in Bemina. Manzoor's brother, Samir Ahmad (22) who runs a computer shop near his residence in Islamabad was picked up by the SHO Sadder Islamabad, the same evening when Manzoor was killed, the family said.

Greater Kashmir, 23 August 2004

Irked by EU report on Kashmir, India withdraws patronage to visits

Jammu, Aug 22: Furious with an "interventionist" report by a European parliamentary delegation whose leader called Jammu and Kashmir "the world's most beautiful prison," India has withdrawn official patronage to such visits. New Delhi will not however stop such visits to Jammu and Kashmir or any other place. "If they want to go they are free to do so but there will be no official patronage," a senior official was quoted as saying. India had already stopped extending such patronage to the annual visit by the European Union (EU) ambassadors based in Delhi since last year after they started "lecturing" the government on improving the human rights situation in the strategic border state.

Daily Excelsior, 23 August 2004

4 militants, 2 jawans killed

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: Two Army personnel and four militants, including two top militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen were killed in separate militancy-related incidents across Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours, an official spokesman said. Two Army personnel identified as Sepoy Kuldeep Singh and Deepak Arun were killed when heavily-armed militants ambushed a patrol party of 47 Rashtriya Rifles at Check-Natnoosa in border district of Kupwara last night, he said. He said troops fired back but the militants fled the scene taking advantage of darkness. A hunt has been launched to nab them. Two top Hizb militants were killed in a gunfight with troops during a search operation at village Khul in Kulgam area of Anantnag district last night, the spokesman said.

Daily Excelsior, 23 August 2004

Pak strangulating rights of Kashmiris in PoK: Gilani

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: An amalgam of overseas Kashmiri outfits has lashed out at Pakistan for "strangulating" rights of Kashmiris in areas under its occupation. In

a letter to Lord Nazir of the House of Lords of Britain, chairman of International Kashmir Alliance Syed Nazir Gilani said the leadership in Muzaffarabad (capital of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir) has continued to serve "as an instrument of the establishment in Islamabad. "Due to constant fear of being proposed and disposed, it has not even hesitated to strangulate its own people." "The history of 57 years of local politics and administration is replete with examples of shame and disgrace," Gilani said. "While India has realised that no military might can vanquish a movement, (Pakistan) continues constitutional restraint on the expressed politics in PoK and the primitive means of administration in Gilgit and Baltistan," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 23 August 2004

'Disappeared' appears in PoK, invites parents for marriage

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: Nailing the propaganda unleashed on alleged disappearances to malign the security forces, parents of a disappeared person have found to their extreme happiness that their 'disappeared' son is getting married in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). The happy parents of a sleepy village of tehsil Kulgam could not have asked for more when they opened a letter from Muzaffarabad which came out to be of their lost son. The missing son Javid Ahmad Bhat has informed them of his welfare through this letter. 'Disappeared' in July 1998, Javid is now working as a salesman in kiriyana store in Muzaffarabad. There was something more in store for the tormented parents. Their son is getting married in PoK and he has invited his father and mother to come and bless him on the auspicious occasion. The family is now busy in seeking passports to visit PoK to participate in the marriage of their 'disappeared' son. This is not the only case. In fact, information received by some of the parents of so called disappeared sons, revealed that their 'dear ones' who had ex-filtrated for arms training, have been traced out in PoK through different contacts. Dr.

Zulfikar Hussain Kathu of Tangmarg who had crossed over to PoK in 1995 is found to have been settled in Bagh district of PoK.

Hindustan Times, 23 August 2004

Govt not to impose Devnagri in J&K

August 23: The government on Sunday denied reports that any decision had been taken to award prizes in Kashmiri language to writers who used Devnagri script besides Perso-Arabic script. "The ministry has no intention to impose Devnagri on the Kashmiri language," it was stated. The NDA government had approved the suggestion that prizes be awarded to Kashmiri writers in the Devnagri script.

Hindustan Times, 23 August 2004

Jammu students donate pocket money for TN fire victims

Jammu, August 23: Students of Delhi Public School here donated their pocket money for the children and families still coming to terms with Tamil Nadu's Kumbakonam fire tragedy. Class V student Shivani Gupta, who put all her pocket money in the donation box, told HT: "I know the money we are collecting or our prayers can't bring them back. But we want to tell their families that we are with them, even though they are so far away". Like Shivani, there were hundreds of others who expressed similar sentiments. The students held placards that not only spoke of their concern but also raised some serious safety issues. A team from DPS will soon make its way to Kumbakonam to personally hand over the cash contribution of more than Rs 3 lakh as well as clothes and medicine.

The Tribune, 23 August 2004

Getting mobile connection uphill task in J&K

Jammu, August 22: Getting a mobile phone connection may be a child's play in most parts of the country, but not so in Jammu and Kashmir. In this state that has been battling against terrorism for almost 15 years now, it can take anything up to two months to get a mobile connection after one applies for it. The problems for intending mobile

phone users in this state are compounded by a large number of factors, including the absence of private players so far. Till now, the only company operating in the state is the state-run BSNL. Also, there is no concept of pre-paid mobile connections here, which makes it impossible for people coming here for a short period to use their handsets.

The Tribune, 23 August 2004

Police told to probe youths' disappearance

Srinagar, August 22: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed the police to register a case into the enforced custodial disappearance of two youths, reportedly arrested by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) from Batamaloo 14 years ago. The high court order came on a writ petition that Muhammad Maqbool Bhat, son of Habibullah Bhat, and Naseer Ahmad Dar of Kangan Bagh had left their homes on July 21, 1990, and their whereabouts remain unknown till date. The petitioner alleged that the youths were reportedly arrested by the CRPF. Justice R.C. Gandhi in his judgement ordered Batamaloo police station to immediately start investigating the case. The Additional Advocate General, Mohammad Ameen Rathore, in his argument told the court he did not know that the Gangbough area came under the purview of Batamaloo police station. However, the Judge asked the SHO, Batamaloo, to hand over the case to police station concerned if the Gangbough area does not come under the purview of Batamaloo police station.

The Tribune, 23 August 2004

Army deserter arrested

Jammu, August 22: Army officials yesterday arrested a sepoy who had deserted allegedly the troops during an operation in Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said. Sepoy Gurmeet Singh, who had deserted Army during an operation in Parholi area along the Line of Control in Rajaouri district on Thursday night, was arrested this morning from a bus stand in Gurdaspur, Punjab, the sources said. The jawan had escaped from

the spot during the operation along with his service weapon and other ammunition, they said. Armed forces launched an operation to trace out, they said adding that on specific information, a team of army officials was sent to Punjab yesterday. Gurmeet had gone to his home in Gurdaspur after fleeing from operation, they said, adding he was being brought back here for interrogation.

The Tribune, 23 August 2004

Leadership crisis worries Kashmiri Pandits

Jammu, August 22: Over three lakh Kashmiri Pandit migrants have been plagued by leadership crisis following the birth of several community organisations and rapid fragmentation of established bodies. "We do not have a single leader who can claim to represent a majority of the community people," said Mr Ramesh Kumar of the Muthi migrant camp in Jammu. It all started with the split in the Panun Kashmir, a premier organisation of displaced people, in 1993 when Mr Ashwani Chrungoo quit the organisation and floated the Panun Kashmir Movement. Since then there has been no going back and another jolt to this main organisation came when Dr Agnishekhar and Dr Ajay Chrungoo fell apart, thereby giving rise to three groups in the Panun Kashmir.

The Tribune, 23 August 2004

'Politicking on daughters' Bill gains momentum

Jammu, August 22: The three main political parties in Jammu and Kashmir are trying to exploit sentiments of the people by sticking to their guns on the issue of the controversial daughters' Bill that seeks to deny citizenship rights to women marrying outside the state. Much noise is expected to be witnessed on the issue in the Assembly when it reassembles at Srinagar tomorrow. The house was adjourned for four days on Wednesday amidst din created by the National Conference (NC) members. It is almost certain that the Bill that was expected to be introduced in an amended form would not get passed as the ruling PDP and the

Opposition NC, that are in favour of the legislation, do not have a two thirds strength in the house. Even knowing the fact, both these parties were trying to widen their support particularly in the Kashmir valley by repeatedly raking up the issue.

The Hindu, 23 August 2004

Ladakh: gateway to Central Asia (C. Raja Mohan)

Most Indians tend to attach the word "remote" to the spectacular region of Ladakh. But the people there never saw themselves as isolated. Ladakhis remain acutely conscious of their geopolitical location at the heart of the trans-Himalayan and trans-Karakoram trade routes. Unlike its fair weather road links to India, Ladakh has always been well connected geographically to Tibet, Xinjiang and Central Asia.... By developing an all-weather road network to Leh and reopening the historic trade routes between Ladakh and China, India can gain reliable access to inner Asia.

Daily Excelsior, 24 August 2004

CRPF deployment to begin in Srinagar city

Centre reviews J&K situation

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: The Centre today reviewed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and asked the Union Home Secretary to work out a detailed plan for re-deployment of para-military forces in the militancy-torn State. The move would enable deployment of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), which was put on indefinite hold by the Government following some lapses in the road opening earlier this year besides simultaneous suicide attacks on its camps in Srinagar city, official sources said. The deployment of the CRPF was likely to begin on the outskirts of the city after the situation was analysed by Union Home Secretary Dharendra Singh in consultation with various security agencies operating in the State, they said. The Union Home Ministry had issued an order in May this year putting on hold the take-over of counter-militancy operations in the State by the CRPF till further orders.

Daily Excelsior, 24 August 2004

HM militant among 5 killed; Major tragedy averted on NH

SRINAGAR, Aug 23: Five persons, including a Hizbul Mujahideen militant and a Special Police Officer, were killed and seven others injured in separate incidents across the Kashmir valley. This apart, security forces averted a major tragedy with timely detection of a powerful IED on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway today. Official sources said that the Hizbul Mujahideen militant, identified as Mohammad Ibrahim, was killed in an encounter at Warnav in Kupwara district early today and one AK rifle, three magazines, 47 rounds and a wireless set were recovered from him, they said. The sources said militants shot dead SPO Bashir Ahmad Mir in Sopore area of Baramulla district this afternoon. A taxi driver Mohammad Maqbool Bhat was also injured in the shooting and was hospitalized.

Daily Excelsior, 24 August 2004

Jaish 'commander', Army jawan killed

RAJOURI, Aug 23: An 'area commander' of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfit and an Army jawan were killed while another jawan was seriously injured in two separate encounters in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch today. Two top militants of JeM escaped during the gun-battle. Official sources said security forces from Darhal in Rajouri district launched a search operation in Jabri forest area late last night after getting a tip off that three top Jaish 'commanders' had taken shelter in an abandoned dhok. Troops cordoned off the area where the militants were hiding. A contact with the militants was established at 6 am and in the next 45 minutes heavy exchange of firing, one militant was killed, the sources said.

Greater Kashmir, 24 August 2004

Lawmakers hurl chairs, tables and abuses on each other

Srinagar, Aug 23: The Legislative Council today witnessed violent scenes with MLCs

breaking and throwing chairs on each other and hurling abuses over the controversial Permanent Residence Disqualification bill, forcing the chairman to adjourn the house for the day. As soon the chairman of the council started proceedings this morning, deputy opposition leader Ram Paul sought clarification from the government regarding the 'mysterious' disappearance of Nizam-u-Din Khatana, who abstained himself on 18th August when NC had moved no confidence motion against chairman Abdul Rashid Dar. Ram Paul said NC would not allow any business in the council till PR disqualification bill was not presented in its original form in the council. He sought answer from chairman that why the house was not called for three months after March 11.

Greater Kashmir, 24 August 2004

Chaos continues in Assembly

Srinagar, Aug 23: National Conference once again stalled the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly today over Permanent Residence Disqualification Bill and didn't allow the chief minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed to give a statement on the issue, forcing him to call a press conference inside the Assembly premises. The Chief Minister in the press briefing strongly criticized the opposition for "blocking normal business of the house" and accused NC of making an issue out of nothing. NC, however, refuted the allegations saying PDP was misleading the people and blamed it for sabotaging a piece of legislature having significant importance for the state. Soon after the entry of speaker Legislative Assembly Tara Chand in the house, the leader of the opposition Abdul Rahim Rather stood up to know the fate of adjournment motion, which he had forwarded to the speaker. Rather was adamant that the adjournment motion should be given precedence over all other business items listed for the day.

Greater Kashmir, 24 August 2004

Hurriyat faction likely to continue 'unconditional' talks with New Delhi

Srinagar, Aug 23: The Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is likely to continue dialogue process with New Delhi, but would seek a "guarantee" about the unconditional nature of the talks, sources said on Monday. They said the talks issue would dominate a crucial meeting of the Hurriyat faction convened here Tuesday. Other equally important issues like the recent efforts undertaken by Mirwaiz to unite the separatists on a single platform would also be discussed threadbare in the executive council, working committee and the general council of the faction. On the talks issue, sources said, the members were of the view that "Indian Government should be bluntly told to clarify its stand" following the recent statement by Home Minister Shivraj Patil and his deputy.

The Tribune, 24 August 2004

CRPF defuses IED on Srinagar-Jammu highway

Srinagar, August 23: Five persons, including a Hizbul Mujahideen militant and a special police officer, were killed and seven others were injured in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, where security forces averted a major tragedy with the timely detection of a powerful IED on Srinagar-Jammu national highway today, official sources said. The Hizbul Mujahideen militant, identified as Mohammad Ibrahim, was killed in an encounter at Warnav in Kupwara district early today and one AK rifle, three magazines, 47 rounds and a wireless set were recovered from him, they said. The sources said militants shot dead SPO Bashir Ahmad Mir in the Sopore area of Baramula district this afternoon. A taxi driver Mohammad Maqbool Bhat was also injured in the shooting and was hospitalised.

The Tribune, 24 August 2004

Militant outfits relax dress code stipulation

Jammu, August 23: The scene is changed in the valley as militant outfits no longer impose a dress code on Muslims, especially the women in Poonch, Rajouri and Doda districts. School and college going girls can

be seen moving around without purdah (veil) or even the Iranian-style headgear in Muslim dominated areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Many have also started wearing western dresses like jeans and trousers. Senior police officers said during the past three years militants have not imposed any dress code because killing of three girls in the Thanamandi area in Rajouri, two years ago, for defying dress code had evoked a sharp reaction from all quarters. The anger of people against attacks on women in different parts of Kashmir had unnerved the militants. The officers said the dress code imposed by various groups of militants, from time to time, between 1991 and 1997 was part of an attempt to make their presence felt. Later on they were allegedly advised by forces from across the border to desist from imposing a dress code and attacking those defying their orders with guns or acid.

The Times of India, 24 August 2004

Kashmir can send us to war: Pak

NEELA BUTT, Pakistan: Pakistan said on Monday that the threat of war with India would remain until the Kashmir issue is resolved. "Kashmir is the only issue between Pakistan and India, and the threat of war with India will remain as long as the issue of Kashmir is not resolved," Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said in a speech to people in Pakistan's 'portion' of Kashmir. "All negotiations will end in failure if the Kashmir issue is not solved," he said. He also denounced Indian allegations that Islamic militants were still crossing from Pakistan despite Pakistani claims it has stopped them.

Daily Excelsior, 25 August 2004

Assembly adjourned for fourth day; Rather smells conspiracy, Govt blames NC

SRINAGAR, Aug 24: For the fourth consecutive day, Legislative Assembly was adjourned Tuesday even as there was comparatively less commotion in the House than previous days with Leader of the Opposition Abdul Rahim Rather alleging

Government's conspiracy in adjourning the House. While as Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed assured the House that the Permanent resident (Disqualification) Bill would be put to vote in the current session only, National Conference (NC) members reiterated their demand that there should be debate first and later voting on the Bill. As the Lower House met at its usual time at 0930 hrs this morning, Leader of the Opposition, Abdul Rahim Rather, quickly demanded discussion on the Bill and gave reference to the NC's adjournment motion the other day. He refuted the charges that the NC was not allowing the House to run. However, members of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress combine immediately shot back and accused the NC for forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House. "NC Assembly chalney nahin dete hai (NC is not allowing Assembly to function)," they shouted.

Daily Excelsior, 25 August 2004

PDP to move private member's bill: Baig

SRINAGAR, Aug 24: In an attempt to end the stalemate over the controversial women's bill in the State legislature, ruling People's Democratic Party will move a private member's bill in the lower House tomorrow with some amendments to the original one that created nationwide uproar in March this year. PDP MLA Peer Mohammad Hussain will move a private member's bill tomorrow in the lower House. The bill will be moved as the original bill (on women's rights) which was passed by the Assembly in March has returned from upper House without passing, State Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig told reporters after the lower House was adjourned for second day in succession.

Daily Excelsior, 25 August 2004

Two militants killed, 4 Surrender

RAJOURI, Aug 24: Two militants were gunned down by Army and police in an encounter at village Mangota in Thanna Mandi area this afternoon while the ultras set ablaze a house at village Galuti in

Manjakote last night. Official sources said a joint team of Army and police launched a search operation in Mangota this morning following reports that three to four militants had sneaked into the area. The militants were spotted at 4 pm and in the half an hour gun-battle, two of them were gunned down by the security forces. Exchange of firing between the two sides was going on when the reports last came in. Two more militants were still trapped in the area, the sources said. Bodies of the slain militants have been recovered from the scene of encounter. One of them has been identified as Shiraz Ahmed son of Nissar Hussain R/o Mangota. Identity of his associate has not been established so far. Recoveries made from their possession included two AK rifles, seven magazines, 150 rounds and two hand grenades.

Daily Excelsior, 25 August 2004

APHC meet to discuss talks, unity moves
SRINAGAR, Aug 24: A meeting of the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) which got underway here today is expected to discuss several crucial issues including talks with the Centre and the unity move between the two factions of the amalgam. An APHC spokesman said that the meeting, presided by acting chairman Mirwaiz Maulvi Omar Farooq, would also take up organisational matters and give approval to recent decisions taken by the Executive Council (EC) members. Sources said the meeting will also discuss the dialogue process with the Centre on the Kashmir issue. The Hurriyat had earlier held two rounds of talks with former Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani on the Kashmir issue and agreed to continue the dialogue.

Daily Excelsior, 25 August 2004

Now women VDCs pick up gun against militants
JAMMU, Aug 24: Picking up gun against militants by the village men is okay, but if the women folk follow the suit, it turns incredible for everyone. But the compelling circumstances have now forced the village women of J&K to pick up gun and protect themselves from the militants and save their

honour and dignity. The incident of Katha on June 26 this year, in which militants killed twelve women and children and several more incidents of sexual assaults and torture of many women and young girls, the women folk have now made up their mind to fight against the terrorists. They showed their willingness to get weapons and training from the security forces to protect themselves and their children from militants' excesses. If one visits the villages of Marah and Kulali bordering district Poonch, the scene is very different there as compared to other villages. One would find people with guns standing on the roof tops guarding their homes. The VDC members including women, get together from cluster of houses and lay ambushes on routes of ingress to that cluster in order to save any civilian killing.

Daily Excelsior, 25 August 2004

Nine Bangladeshi nationals including a woman arrested

JAMMU, Aug 24: Security forces arrested nine Bangladeshi nationals including a woman from Samba and Akhnoor sub-sectors when they were trying to cross over to Pakistan. An official spokesman said that eight of them were arrested two kilometres short of Pahadpur Border Outpost in Samba sub-sector last evening. All were heading towards International Border under the cover of darkness when their movement was spotted by 6th Sikh Regiment of the Army. All were immediately taken into custody and after sustained interrogation handed over to local police. Nothing incriminating was recovered from their possession.

The Tribune, 25 August 2004

Top Jaish militant killed in J & K

Srinagar, August 24: Security forces gunned down 'Divisional Commander' of Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammad Mohammad Sami Usman while eight persons were injured in other militancy - related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir overnight, an official spokesman said today. He said an encounter took place at Tongwali Dhok village last night during which Usman, alias Hamza

Ansari, was killed. One AK rifle, four magazines, 120 rounds of ammunition, three hand-grenades, one detonator and 18 pencil cells were recovered from the slain militant. A woman, Fazi, was injured in a shootout between militants and security forces at Wachi in the south Kashmir district of Pulwama early today.

The Times of India, 25 August 2004

6,000 Kashmiri men join Indian Army

JAMMU: Nearly 6,000 men from Jammu and Kashmir have been inducted into the Indian Army's counter-insurgency units deployed in the state, officials here said. The men, recruited to six battalions of the Territorial Army – a civilian force of volunteers – from across Kashmir, have now returned to the state after training for deployment in operations. "They are being attached to the Rashtriya Rifles to fight insurgents in Kashmir," a top official in the army's Northern Command told IANS. The men – drawn from Doda, Poonch, Rajouri, Kupwara and Baramullah districts – were recruited into the Territorial Army as part of a special employment package framed by the Indian government for youth in the insurgency-hit state.

The Hindu, 26 August 2004

J&K Bill: changes seek to put men and women on equal footing

NEW DELHI, AUG. 25 . The proposed amendments to the controversial J&K Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill, 2004 may not find enough support in the two Houses, but the changes appear to be steps in the right direction. They seek to bring both men and women under the purview of the Bill, and protect the interests of those citizens who have been forced to migrate from the State due to militancy from 1989 onwards.

The Hindu, 26 August 2004

National Conference prevented from tabling Bill

SRINAGAR, AUG. 25. The Congress, the major partner in the People's Democratic Party-led Government, today prevented the

opposition National Conference from tabling a private member's Bill depriving women of the State of some of their rights if they marry outside the State. The Assembly witnessed uproarious scenes and was adjourned twice. The Congress did not allow even the introduction of the Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill saying its passage required a two-thirds majority. The Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Baig, took a lenient view and did not object to its introduction. But the Congress along with the Panther's Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Jammu Mukti Morcha forced the Speaker, Tara Chand, to announce that the Bill required a two-thirds majority.

The Hindu, 26 August 2004

Do not ignore Kashmiri Pandits: Pallone

WASHINGTON, AUG. 25. The Democratic lawmaker, Frank Pallone, has written to the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, expressing concern that Indian Government did not make a mention of the Kashmiri Pandits as part of its policy on Kashmir. The lawmaker from New Jersey urged Dr. Singh to include the Pandits in any future policy discussions. "Given the urgency of addressing the plight of Kashmiri Pandits, I was disappointed that the new Government did not mention the Pandits as a part of its policy on Kashmir. I urge you to include the Pandits in any negotiations with Kashmiri constituents and in developing the future course of action in Jammu and Kashmir," Mr. Pallone wrote in his letter.

The Tribune, 26 August 2004

APHC ready for talks without preconditions

Srinagar, August 25: The All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) is ready to hold a "serious and sincere" dialogue with the Central Government without any preconditions to resolve the long-pending Kashmir issue and restore an everlasting peace in the region. "We have made our stand very clear that the talks should be unconditional, Kashmir-specific and with the involvement of Pakistan", said acting

chairman of the APHC, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. He said the APHC had also made its point clear that it would like to visit Pakistan after the third round of talks with the Government of India to exchange views with the political and militant leadership there.

The Tribune, 26 August 2004

Two kids killed in RPG attack in Doda

Jammu, August 25: Two children were killed and their parents wounded critically in an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) attack by militants on a house at Karara in Doda district last night, the police said today. The RPG was fired by militants at a Central Reserve Police Force camp at Karara, but it missed the target and exploded in the nearby house of Mohammad Hanief. In the blast, Hanief's one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Nasira Bano and nine-year-old son Babar were killed, while he and his wife, Shahida Bano, survived with serious injuries.

Hindustan Times, 26 August 2004

Infiltration bid foiled, terrorist killed in J&K

Srinagar, August 26: Security forces have foiled an infiltration bid by terrorist by killing one of them and recovered huge quantity of Indian and American currency besides arms and ammunition, including 200 gms of RDX, near Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, BSF sources said on Thursday. A group of heavily-armed terrorists tried to sneak into Indian territory from across the border near Line of Control near Kupwara district on August 24, the sources said. They said the BSF troops engaged infiltrators in an encounter at Butshaw in Tungdhar of the district and killed one of them.

Hindustan Times, 26 August 2004

J&K domicile row: HC order ignored (Arun Joshi)

Jammu, August 26: Despite the Jammu and Kashmir High Court ruling of October 7, 2002, stating that the "daughter of a permanent resident marrying a non-permanent resident won't lose the status of

permanent resident," married women are still being asked to prove their domicile status. Such violations of the order are taking place regularly, yet contempt of court proceedings haven't been initiated against the guilty. In violation of the order, the state has issued and is still issuing thousands of Permanent Resident Certificates (PRC) to women that contain the clause "valid until marriage." The PRC is an important document and is needed for gaining admission to schools or getting government jobs among other things. Three hundred PRCs are issued in Jammu tehsil alone every month, said a revenue official.

The Indian Express, 26 August 2004

Leave Kashmir: Israel tells its citizens

Jerusalem, August 26: Fearing attacks by terrorists on its nationals, Israel has instructed its citizens to leave the Kashmir valley immediately. The foreign ministry in a statement called on all Israelis currently in Kashmir to leave as soon as possible and to avoid visiting the region. "The advisory has been issued at the recommendation of the anti-terror headquarters attached to the Prime Minister's office," foreign ministry spokesman David Saranga said. Officials expressed concerns that terror organisations active in Kashmir have spotted the presence of Israelis and could be planning an attack.

The Indian Express, 26 August 2004

J-K sets Rs 180-cr Wular plan rolling

JAMMU, AUGUST 25: The Wular Lake, which has been at the centre of Indo-Pak talks at Islamabad, is back in news. And this time, for different reasons. Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has instructed the environment and ecology department to begin work on the conservation of the lake, under a Rs 180-crore plan put together by the government. Last year, the Chief Minister had convened a meeting and told experts that the records should be tallied to demarcate the area of the lake. Now that the mapping of the lake is over, work will begin on its demarcation and conservation. Under the Rs 180-crore plan for conservation and demarcation of the lake, the government has

said the eviction of the encroachments will also be taken up. The government has identified, through a survey, that around 6,000 kanals of this freshwater lake has been encroached.

The Indian Express, 26 August 2004

Teachers stir in J-K for equal pay

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 25: It's a regular scene now. Hundreds of teachers gather at Srinagar Municipal Park and hold a dharna, demanding the Mufti Sayeed government fulfill its promises of removing pay anomaly and regularising temporary teachers. Minutes later, the police take a few dozen into custody. Then a small group protests at the CM's Maulana Azad Road residence. For the past five days, teachers have hit the streets daily, reminding the government of its promises, but in vain. The teachers have called for equalisation of pay with other government staff and regularisation of Rehbar-e-Taleem (RT) teachers and others working against migrant posts. In 1999, the state reached an agreement with the teachers to equalise pay but five years later, nothing has been done. Last year, when teachers struck work, CM Mufti Mohammad Sayeed brokered a deal, saying the decision would be implemented in 20 days.

Hindustan Times

The older Manipur (Arun Joshi)

August 26: The flames in Manipur may have been temporarily doused, but it has raised more questions than it answers. At a time when the government has decided to repeal Pota, the nation is embroiled in yet another debate over the merits of two other controversial laws, the Disturbed Area Act (DAA) and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). These laws confer unbridled powers on the security forces to detain and even kill a person suspected of being a terrorist or helping one. Is it really imperative to bestow such powers to security forces in terrorism-hit parts of the country? Or can things be managed without these laws? These questions have assumed extraordinary significance in another Indian state: Jammu and Kashmir. The DAA and

AFSPA have been in force in J&K since July 4, 1990. They have survived nearly seven years of central rule and two 'popularly' elected governments. The year 1990 was the beginning of the most turbulent period in J&K history. The masses were out on the streets and the militants were protected by the people, who believed that azadi was round the corner. Kashmir was slipping and militants were having a complete run of the place and controlled the minds of the people. The events that took place in Manipur are, therefore, not alien to J&K. There are countless cases of custodial killings, rapes, mysterious disappearances and houses destroyed. On occasions, the guilty have been punished. The army maintains a meticulous record of all these punishments but never publicises it lest soldiers get demoralised. More than 14 years having passed, the laws remain in place. The militant leadership has been grabbed by foreigner from al-Badr, the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, while only the remnants of the indigenous Hizb-ul-Mujahideen remain. If local support is vanishing or has disappeared — as claimed — then the soldiers do not need special powers to fight militants. They are within their rights to kill any foreign mercenary and there is no risk involved in enraging or harming the locals, who, in any case, are veering round to the security forces' side.

Daily Excelsior, 26 August 2004

BSF deserters' gang commits fraud of Rs 15 lakh in bank

JAMMU, Aug 25: After committing fraud of lakhs of rupees and escaping from the clutches of police in West Bengal, the two Border Security Force (BSF) deserters yet duped the Bank of Baroda officials of Rs 15 lakh in Jammu. The Jammu police managed to bust this gang involved in the fraudulent withdrawal of lakhs of rupees on the name of BSF and arrested six of its members including kingpin. Police spokesman said that a police party of Trikuta Nagar Police Station under the supervision of SSP Jammu, Dr Kamal Saini and DySP East

Rajeshwar Singh arrested two of the gangsters under suspicious circumstances from Saraswati Dham on Railway Road. Both were put to sustained interrogation during which police came to know that they were impersonating as Border Security Force (BSF) personnel and duping Bank of Barora (BoB) officials, Purani Mandi branch by withdrawing lakhs of rupees through personal consumer loan scheme on fake names.

Daily Excelsior, 26 August 2004

LeT commander shot dead in Rajouri, civilian be-headed

JAMMU, Aug 25: Two children were killed and their parents were injured in a grenade attack by the militants on their house in Gandoh area of Doda district last night. In other incidents, a civilian was killed by the militants in Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district while police and Army eliminated a dreaded Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) 'commander' in Thanna Mandi area in Rajouri district this evening. Official sources said the militants fired a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) on a picket of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at village Khara in Gandoh area in Doda district late last night. The grenade, however, missed the intended target and fell on the house of Mohd Hanief son of Abdul Karim, a resident of Trakhhal, presently putting up at Khara. House of Hanief was extensively damaged after being hit by the rocket. Hanief's two children Nassara Bano, one and a half year old and Babar Hanief, nine, were killed on spot in the attack while Hanief and his wife Shahida Begum were injured.

Daily Excelsior, 26 August 2004

Z-category security for 7 separatists

SRINAGAR, Aug 25: The state Government is providing Zcategory security to seven separatist leaders including the present Chairman of the separatist Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq. In addition security cover has been provided to four other Hurriyat leaders besides, two maternal uncles of the Mirwaiz. In a written reply in the Legislative Council the

Government today said that the security cover has been provided keeping in view the threat perception these Leaders face. According to the written reply those separatist leaders who are getting Z-category security cover include Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, Professor Abdul Gani Bhat, Molvi Abbas Ansari, Sajad Gani Lone, Bilal Gani Lone, Shabbir Ahmad Shah and Hashim Qureshi. Besides, these seven leaders Salim Geelani and Aga Abul Hussain has been provided X-category security cover by the State administration. In addition to this two maternal uncles of the Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, Molvi Manzoor Hussain and Molvi Shafkat Hussain have also been provided security cover.

The security cover has also been extended to 824 mainstream political activists that include 399 from the National Conference, 135 from the Congress, 141 from the Peoples Democratic Party, Six from the Peoples Democratic Forum, 30 from the CPI(M), 47 from the Bhartiya Janata Party, Two from the Shiv Sena, 19 from Panthers Party, 10 from Janata Dal (all groups), 23 from the Awami League/ Awami Conference, Five from the Bhahujan Samaj Party, Three each from the Awami National Conference and Lok Jan Shakti party and One from Rashtriya Lok Dal. In addition to these political activists security has been extended to 79 other persons that include 16 journalists from the State and One Ex-Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim.

The Hindu, 27 August 2004

Shot in the arm for Geelani faction

SRINAGAR, AUG. 26. Syed Ali Shah Geelani's hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference was on Wednesday recognised as the "real Hurriyat" by the senior Kashmiri separatist leader and chairman of the People's League, Sheikh Abdul Aziz. Mr. Aziz, who attended a function organised to formally launch the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat-e-Jammu and Kashmir recently founded by Mr. Geelani, said: "It has formally been decided that we will support [the] Hurriyat Conference led by Mr. Geelani. After a

meeting in a day or two in which some issues will be sorted out, a formal announcement will be made."

The Tribune, 27 August 2004

Pak infiltrator among seven killed

Srinagar, August 26: Security forces gunned down four militants, including a Pakistani infiltrator, and arrested three others while militants shot dead three persons in Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours. An official spokesman said security forces killed a Pakistani infiltrator immediately after he sneaked in from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) in Tangdhar sector last evening. Later, one AK rifle, nine magazines, 335 rounds, one wireless set, four grenades, 200 gm RDX, 12 IED remotes, four detonators, one satellite phone, Rs 14 lakh and US \$ 29,900 were seized near the encounter site.

Daily Excelsior, 27 August 2004

Main stress on 28 bridges, 21 tunnels 3-tier security for Jammu-Udhampur railway track proposed

JAMMU, Aug 26: With much-awaited train on Jammu-Udhampur track is all set to chug next month, Crime and Railways Police has proposed 3-tier security all along the track and the same is being actively considered by the State Government keeping in view the vulnerability of the track. Highly placed sources told the EXCELSIOR that soon after the track got ready for running of the train the Crime and Railways Police, which is presently guarding Jammu-Kathua track alongwith Railways Protection Force (RPF), prepared a proposal about the requirement of men and machinery to effectively guard the track and submitted the same to Police Headquarters (PHQ) for further submission to the State Government. "The proposal is presently under the active consideration of the State Government and likely to be finalised with next couple of days as maiden train on Jammu-Udhampur track is all set to chug", the sources disclosed and said that since this 56 kilometre track has 21 tunnels and 28 major bridges the stress was laid on

setting up of pickets on both ends of the bridges and tunnels in the proposal

Greater Kashmir, 28 August 2004

Tough days ahead for Mufti as PDP-Cong void likely to increase

Jammu, Aug 27: The defeat of Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill in the legislative assembly has added to the worries of the chief minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed who not only faces serious problems with its coalition alliance - Congress, but even some of his own party legislators are reportedly on the war path. After several months of politicking the Bill finally became the victim of what is now being seen as an attempt by all major political parties to meet their own political ends. "Every one of them claim themselves to be the champion of the interest of Kashmiri people but the fact is that they are only interested for their own political gains". That is how a common man described the situation after watching the 'high voltage drama' of state assembly on the television. The bottom-line is that the gap between the People's Democratic Party and the Congress is widening with each passing day. How far can Sayeed balance the shaky equations of coalition politics shall finally determine whether or not the alliance lasts its full six-year term?

Greater Kashmir, 28 August 2004

Legislature buries PR Bill

Returned bill too rejected by voice vote; Stop calling Kashmiris Pakistani agents: NC to Delhi

Srinagar, Aug 27: Amidst anti-Speaker slogans, the Legislative Assembly today rejected the Permanent Residents (Disqualification) Bill by Voice Vote introduced by the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, generating heated debate in the House with National Conference accusing New Delhi of adopting anti-Kashmiri policies. The bill was earlier returned by the Legislative Council. The speaker allowed discussion on the Bill saying he had relaxed the rules. During the discussion the ruling Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP) and opposition National Conference (NC) castigated New Delhi for 'suppressing Kashmiri voices and raising fingers over the credentials of mainstream Kashmiri politicians.' The National Conference members advised New Delhi to stop holding talks with separatists, describing it as exploitation of Kashmiris.

Daily Excelsior, 28 August 2004

People protest US atrocities in Iraq; 10 injured

SRINAGAR, Aug 27: At least 10 people were injured as demonstrators protesting US attacks on the Iraqi city of Najaf clashed with police in several parts of Srinagar today. Groups of youth took to the streets soon after the Friday prayers shouting anti-US and anti-government slogans at Nowhatta, Bohrikadal, Naidkadal, Zadibal, Khanyar, Hassanabad, Rainawari and Sampora-Panthachowk localities in the city, official sources said. They burnt American flags and effigy of US President George Bush. As the police tried to persuade them to disperse, the protestors turned violent and hurled stones at them. At least 10 people, including three policemen, were injured in the pitched battles between the demonstrators and cops, they said. Police fired warning shots after lathicharge and bursting of teargas shells failed to bring the situation under control.

Daily Excelsior, 28 August 2004

Couple, 3 militants killed

JAMMU, Aug 27: Three militants including two Pakistanis and a couple were killed in the militancy related incidents across the Jammu region overnight. Official sources said three militants entered in the house of Mohd Ashiq son of Abdul Aziz Malik at village Sona Bagh in Cobra Dhok in upper reaches of Reasi tehsil late last night. The militants rained bullets on the house inmates killing Ashiq and his wife Naseema Begum on spot. The militants escaped after the killings.

Greater Kashmir, 28 August 2004

Mufti blames Greater Kashmir

Srinagar: It appears that the Chief Minister is playing an ostrich by trying to downplay outbreak of cholera in certain pockets of the Valley. In the legislative assembly today the chief minister has accused Greater Kashmir of indulging in yellow journalism, while referring to the news report carried by this newspaper in Friday's issue. As has been our policy, we reported the outbreak of the disease only after satisfying ourselves and having clinching evidence about the very presence of the infection in the valley. We did the story with the quotes from highly responsible officials both in the Health and Medical Education department as well as from the Public Health Engineering Department. And we did it in all sincerity to caution our people against falling a prey to the dreaded disease by ignoring basics of hygiene.

The Hindu, 28 August 2004

J&K ruling partners quarrel over Women's Bill

SRINAGAR, AUG. 27. The discussion over the Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill took an ugly turn today with the Deputy Chief Minister, Mangat Ram Sharma, and the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Baig, entering into a verbal duel. This brought to the fore the deepening crisis within the coalition partners in the Mufti-led Government. Mr. Baig was in agreement with the opposition National Conference in saying that the people of Kashmir were not being trusted by New Delhi and "are always under an eye of suspicion". He said "when we oppose the Bill we are being dubbed as Pakistani agents. We continue to die for the nation and only last week militants threatened to kill my two nephews and made an announcement to this effect from a local mosque".

The Hindu, 28 August 2004

Displaced by war, cut off by a fence

PALLANWALA (AKHNOOR), AUG. 27. The residents along the Line of Control here are leading a hand-to-mouth existence as the much-promised relief and compensation has

failed to reach them. The migrants are lodged in makeshift camps in the interiors and their return has been principally delayed due to fencing operations and slow demining operations in the belt. Over 6,000 families had started living in these camps during the Kargil war in 1999, when Pakistan troops opened indiscriminate fire on the villages. A majority of the families have not gone back to their houses. Their return has been delayed due to fencing along the Line of Control which has cut off a majority of the villages. In all, 21 villages have been directly hit by the migration and many of the households are in the below poverty line (BPL) category. The situation is worst in Chapriyal where 1000 acres have gone to the other side of the fence and there is no immediate solution to their problem. In Khour area, 500 families cannot cultivate their land as it lies on the other side of the fence.

The Tribune, 28 August 2004

Sikhs from Jammu to boycott Khalsa march

Jammu, August 27: Several Sikh organisations have appealed to people not to participate in the Khalsa march which was being carried out from Jammu to Amritsar by former Punjab minister Sucha Singh Langah in connection with the celebrations of the 400th Prakash Divas of Guru Granth Sahib. The appeal was made at a meeting of the Sikh sangat held here today under the chairmanship of Mr Mohan Singh, president, of the Sangat. Others who participated included Mr Karanjeet Singh Bali, Mr Janak Singh Sodhi, Mr Harbax Singh Bali, Mr Jaswant Singh Trali, Mr Kirtan Singh, Mr Onkar Singh, Prof Joginder Singh and Mr Nirmal Singh.

The Hindu, 28 August 2004

BSF commanders protest firing on troops
JAMMU, AUG. 27. At the sector commanders meeting held between the Border Security Force and the Pakistan Rangers, India expressed its protest over an incident of firing on its troops along the International Border. The Indian side

complained of an attack on BSF men by armed intruders at Mangu Chak on August 16 in which the Local Company Commander and his squad narrowly escaped. The holding of the sector commanders meeting in Suchetgarh sector of Ranbir Singh Pura is significant as the opening of the Suchetgarh-Sialkot Road is becoming a popular demand on both sides of the border. The Indian side was represented by the Sector Commander of the BSF for Jammu, DIG, P. K. Mishra, while the Pakistan delegation was led by the Chenab Rangers Sector Commander, Colonel Rabnawaz.

The Hindu, 29 August 2004

Jammu and Kashmir Houses adjourned sine die

SRINAGAR, AUG. 28. Both Houses of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislature were adjourned sine die today after a brief but stormy session over the controversial Permanent Residents' (Disqualification) Bill that was defeated yesterday. However, the Opposition National Conference vowed to continue the struggle to bring back the Bill in its original form and announced to move a no confidence motion against the Speaker, Tara Chand. The Assembly, which met here today again, witnessed uproarious scenes as the Opposition members accused Mr. Chand of playing a partisan role while dealing with the Bill. Proceedings were disrupted, in spite of repeated pleas from Mr. Chand, who adjourned the House sine die. He expressed displeasure at the Opposition's attitude and said that given the importance of the Bill and the persistent demand from them (National Conference members), he suspended the rules and allowed discussion on it. The Opposition did not allow the House to function, he said, adding that "the Bill was put to vote and since it did not get the required two-thirds support it fell." The Legislative Council was also adjourned sine die.

The Hindu, 29 August 2004

Women in Jammu celebrate fall of Bill

JAMMU, AUG. 28. Women in the old lanes of Jammu celebrated the defeat of the Permanent Resident Disqualification Bill, 2004. The Bill was defeated by a voice vote in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Friday. Women groups had been opposing this Bill, as it sought to deprive women of the right to remain a State subject, pursue education, take up employment and inherit property once they marry a non-permanent resident. The president of the Jammu and Kashmir chapter of the Kasturba Gandhi Trust, Lalita Nagar, said: "The rejection of the 'archaic' Bill is a victory for all those who believe in democracy. The Bill, if passed, would have posed social problems for the State."

The Hindu, 29 August 2004

Peace at a crossroads (Praveen Swami)

As things stand, then, the mileage counters of the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir seem to have been reset to zero. Internal dialogue between secessionists and the Indian Government seems stalled, a consequence of both sides being unwilling or unable to make major unilateral concessions. Both India and Pakistan seem to be having trouble making headway on the most apparently simple moves to defuse tension.... Like most things to do with Jammu and Kashmir, it is hard to predict what might happen next: peacemaking here has had a soap opera-like history, littered with unexpected comic twists and tragic denouements. What is starting to become clear, though, is that with a change of Government in New Delhi, one act in the bloody drama in Jammu and Kashmir has come to an end.

The Hindu, 29 August 2004

Jihadi groups: alive and killing (Praveen Swami)

A study of Pakistan's recent crackdown on terror also illustrates another disturbing development — the close links between Islamists fighting in Afghanistan and West Asia, groups Pakistan opposes, and those operating in Jammu and Kashmir, which Pakistan not-so-secretly endorses. Weeks

after Mr. Sohail's story of arrest, Pakistani authorities detained two key figures in Pakistan's jihad apparatus, HuM's Fazl-ur-Rahman Khalil and Qari Saifullah Akhtar, the head of its sister organisation, the Harkat-ul-Jihad-a-l-Islami (HuJI). Both organisations were founded with cash and guns paid for by the U.S., in the course of the jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Soon after the end of that campaign, HuJI and HuM merged to form the Harkat-ul-Ansar, which for a while became among the most dreaded organisations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 29 August 2004

Unprecedented crisis for PDP, Motion likely against Speaker Assembly adjourned sine die

SRINAGAR, Aug 28: With the National Conference (NC) and the Congress gaining ground in their respective constituencies of Kashmir and Jammu, the controversial Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill is increasingly snowballing into an unprecedented catastrophe for the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). As most of the PDP leaders—including Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and the Law & Parliamentary Affairs Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig—remained absent, main Opposition party NC today grappled with the saboteurs of the Bill, forcing Speaker Tara Chand to adjourn the Legislative Assembly indefinitely. As soon as the Speaker occupied his chair and ordered commencement of the Question Hour, entire NC camp stood up to pronounce on Mr Tara Chand that his act of calling the voting on the PR Bill on Friday was "unconstitutional". Speaker had treated the Bill as "Constitutional amendment" and declared it as "failed" even as 47 members were insupport and 34 were opposing the same. Bills of Constitutional amendment require two-third majority for passage.

Daily Excelsior, 29 August 2004

3 militants involved in Surankote massacre killed

JAMMU, Aug 28: Romeo Force today killed three militants including a 'commander' of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit, who were involved in massacre of 13 civilians including women and children at Tiali Katha in Surankote on intervening night on June 25 and 26 this year. Defence sources said Abu Zubair alias M-7, an 'area commander' of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit, who had led the militant group that rained bullets on innocent civilians at Tiali Katha, was among three militants gunned down by the troops of Special Force in a fierce exchange of gun-battle for four hours in Hill Kaka area of Surankote tehsil in Poonch district this morning.

Daily Excelsior, 29 August 2004

CAG recommends closure of SRTC, SFC
JAMMU, Aug 28: In a significant recommendation, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has suggested the closure of State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) and State Financial Corporation (SFC) for incurring losses for five consecutive years. "The two statutory Corporations had been incurring losses for five consecutive years leading to negative net worth. In view of poor turnover and continuous losses, the Government may either improve performance of these Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) or consider their closure", the CAG said in its latest report. Pointing out a sorry state of affairs in the PSUs, the CAG observed that even after the completion of 26 to 35 years of their existence, the turnover of five working companies was less than Rs 5 crore in each of the preceding five years of their latest finalised accounts. The CAG identified the companies as State Horticulture Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation Limited, Handicrafts Corporation Limited, Himalayan Wool Combers Limited, Industrial Development Corporation Limited and Tourism Development Corporation Limited.

Daily Excelsior, 29 August 2004

Two sisters die in IED blast; HM 'commander' shot dead

SRINAGAR, Aug 28: While as 'divisional commander' of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) was killed in a gun battle with SOG Srinagar here this afternoon, two young sisters died when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) went off in the lawns of their house in Kulgam area of south Kashmir today. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that on a specific information personnel of SOG Srinagar laid cordon around the house of one Tariq Ahmed Bafanda at Rajouri Kadal near Gani Stadium in downtown locality of Srinagar at around 1230 hrs today. These sources said that as the troops advanced towards the targeted house, a militant inside the house opened fire on them. The fire was returned resulting in an encounter.

Hindustan Times, 30 August 2004

Pak proxy war costs Rs 50 cr

Jammu, August 29: Ever wondered how much it costs Pakistan to bleed Kashmir? A paltry Rs 50 crore per annum. This surprisingly low cost of waging 'proxy war' — that has India spending several times more to fight it — has been revealed in statistics compiled by officials here based on instances chronicled since the Kargil conflict of 1999. "It could be less or slightly more. The figure veers around Rs 50 crore per annum," sources said, albeit the channels of money laundering were well established. The US dollar appears to be the most favoured currency for such funds. Infiltrators killed in encounters have been caught with US dollars. Indian and Pakistani currencies are also in vogue. The Pakistani currency is meant as a reassurance to foreign militants waiting for their turn to return home after completing their tenure. This money comes from across the border, diplomatic channels and through tourists, official sources said.

The Tribune, 30 August 2004

4 militants among seven killed

Srinagar, August 29: Seven persons, including four militants, were killed while security forces arrested two militants and recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition in Jammu and Kashmir in the

past 24 hours, an official spokesman said today. He said a fierce encounter took place between militants and security forces during a serach operation at Lowa Katha, in Rajouri district today. During the three-hour long shootout four militants were killed, he said and added a large cache of arms and ammunition were recovered from the encounter site. The identity of the slain militants could not be established yet, he said.

The Tribune, 30 August 2004

Kashmiri militants may be protecting poppy crop to generate funds

Chandigarh, August 29: A deadly connection between Kashmiri militants and the illegal growing of poppy and cannabis in the troubled state has surfaced during a recent raid, first-ever at a major scale, in Pulwama and Anantnag districts. The scale of the crop destroyed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in its first-ever such an exercise in Jammu and Kashmir in June this year indicates that the militants were protecting these crops, informed sources told *The Tribune*. The NCB team faced resistance from militants but it was foiled with the help of the Rashtriya Rifles.

The Tribune, 30 August 2004

Operation Sadbhavana evokes good response

Udhampur, August 29: The "Operation Sadbhavana" launched by the Army to win the hearts and minds of the terrorism-affected people, particularly in the remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir, has evoked good response and the victims have started coming forward to provide valuable information to the security forces. Under the unique Operation, the Army has launched several development schemes in the far-flung areas where the civil officials feared to venture out earlier. As a first step, the Army at its own expenses is rebuilding bridges, roads and school buildings destroyed by the Pakistan-sponsored terrorists. This has provided a great relief to the people who were facing lots of problems in the absence of any physical infrastructure.

The Hindu, 30 August 2004

Arrest warrant against Shah

JAMMU, AUG. 29. The Presiding Officer of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act Court here has issued an arrest warrant against the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Mohammed Shah, the separatist leader, Sayed Ali Shah Geelani, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front leader, Mohammed Yaseen Malik, and 15 others for dishonouring the national flag. According to a first information report, these leaders not only instigated the people of the State to fight against the Government and but also dishonoured the national flag at a public meeting in Srinagar on August 20, 1987.

Daily Excelsior, 30 August 2004

LeT hitman Kale Khan among 8 top ultras eliminated in Rajouri

RAJOURI, Aug 29: Army today foiled two major infiltration attempts on Line of Control (LoC) in Nowshera and Keri sectors killing eight militants including a Lashkar hitman Kale Khan in day long fierce gun-battles. An Army jawan was also killed and another injured in one of the operation. Official sources said the troops came into action after being tipped off by a group of children and police that they had seen six militants with arms at Lowa Katha in Nowshera sector yesterday afternoon. The infiltrators were heading towards Lowa Katha village. The troops surrounded the village. A cordon was maintained throughout the last night to ensure that the infiltrators didn't manage to slip away. A contact with the militants was established at 8 am after which a heavy exchange of gun-battle took place between the two sides, the sources said.

Daily Excelsior, 30 August 2004

CAG's serious strictures against Tourism Department

All tourism based units turn defaulters

JAMMU, Aug 29: All 4307 tourism based units, set up in the Kashmir valley in 1998 by advancing an amount of Rs 6.47 crore,

have turned out to be defaulters. Not even a single penny has been re-paid by the units in last more than six years. Pointing out this in its latest report, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) revealed some important information about the scam. It quoted the Tourism Department as saying that the recoveries were not done on the instructions of the then Minister of State for Tourism in 2003. Under the scheme, six types of tourism based units including shikarawallas, photographers and hawkers etc (totaling 4307 units) were advanced Rs 6.47 crore in March 1998 as soft loans at the interest rate of five per cent for a period of three years after which it was chargeable to prevailing bank rates. The loan was to be liquidated in five years in half yearly installments after moratorium of two years and the interest after a moratorium of one year.

The Hindu, 31 August 2004

'People's Tribunal' to probe disappearances

SRINAGAR, AUG. 30. Alleging that incidents of disappearance of people were continuing in Jammu and Kashmir, parents of those missing today said they have decided to appoint a 'people's tribunal' to probe the cases if the government did not appoint any commission. "We demand setting up of a commission to probe all the cases of disappearances and if the government fails we have decided to appoint a people's tribunal," Parvez Imroz, Patron of the Association of Parents of Deposed Persons (APDP) told reporters here. He said the proposed tribunal will be headed by retired judges and some eminent personalities from Kashmir and outside.

The Hindu, 31 August 2004

Armymen killed

SRINAGAR, AUG. 30. Three Army personnel were killed in a powerful blast when they mishandled some explosive substance, official sources said today. The personnel of the Ninth Engineering Wing of the Army were killed in the workshop inside

their camp at Arkchinmal in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.

The Tribune, 31 August 2004

Agonising wait for loved ones

Srinagar, August 30: This is not only her story but of many others in the trouble-torn Kashmir valley, suffering from militancy for the past about 15 years. Ms Hajra Sofi, an elderly woman from Onagam village in the Bandipora area of Baramulla district in north Kashmir, craves to have a glimpse of her son Bashir Ahmad, who, she alleges was picked up by security forces about eight years ago. Ms Hajra Begum was here today among scores of others like her to attend a meeting organised by the Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) on the occasion of the International Day of the Disappeared. "Stop disappearances in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere" was the main focus of the kith and kin of the disappeared persons. Wearing white bands with the names of the disappeared persons, inscribed on them, they expressed their concern over the apathetic attitude of the authorities. They claimed that there was no end to the forced disappearances at the hands of various security agencies.

The Tribune, 31 August 2004

4 Lashkar militants killed in J&K

Jammu, August 30: Four Lashkar-e-Toiba militants were gunned down by the security forces and a jawan lost his life in an encounter in the Chingus forest area in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir last night, official sources said today. Troops launched an operation in the forest belt near the Line of Control acting on BSF inputs, leading to a gunbattle between the militants and the Army personnel, they said. Four LeT militants were gunned down by the Army men, the sources said, adding a jawan died on the spot and two others were injured.

The Statesman, 31 August 2004

Kashmir Tangle (Dipak Basu)

The problem of Kashmir remains because India today cannot see the reality. If

Pakistan insists that it has the right to absorb the rest of the Kashmir because of religion and if India insists on secularism and as a result refuses to consider any alternative solution, there is no common ground. It is thus essential to change the mindset of the two countries. The time has come to take logical steps.

Daily Excelsior, 31 August 2004

Pilgrimage symbol of Kashmir's pluralistic ethos: Governor

4 lakh visit Amarnath shrine

CAVE SHRINE AMARNATH, Aug 30: With special pujas in serene spiritual ambience at the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji in south Kashmir this morning, the annual pilgrimage came to an end today. An all time record of over four-lakh devotees paid obeisance at the shrine, 13500 feet above sea level from July 2 when Governor, Lt. General (Retd.) S K Sinha performed Pratham Pujan at the Holy Cave. This morning, General Sinha joined the Chari Mubarak in offering pujas amid the chanting of Vedic hymns by Shri Deepinder Giri, Mahant of Dashnami Akhara, Pandits and Sadhus. A stream of devotees led by the Holy Mace kept pouring from the wee hours to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva in the midst of high pitch Upcharan of Har Har Mahadev.

Daily Excelsior, 31 August 2004

Pak bid to create wedge in moderate Hurriyat camp

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: In an apparent attempt to give credence to Tehrek-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Pakistan has invited Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, JKLF leader Yaseen Malik and Shabir Shah to meet its Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri who arrives here this weekend. The three leaders received calls from Pakistan High Commission here asking them to meet Kasuri who will be arriving here this weekend for holding talks with his Indian counterpart Natwar Singh. Pakistani mission has been actively meeting separatist leaders from Kashmir to woo them to join Geelani's

faction. The proposed meetings are seen in that direction only as the Pakistani mission has simply chosen to ignore senior Hurriyat leaders like Abdul Gani Bhat, Maulvi Abbas Ansari and Bilal Lone, amalgam sources said.

Daily Excelsior, 31 August 2004

Three jawans killed in Kargil blast; 3 militants shot dead in Rafiabad

SRINAGAR, Aug 30: Even as a group of five militants has reportedly escaped from a cordoned village in Beerwah area of Budgam district today, security forces today claimed to have killed at least three militants in Rafiabad area of Baramulla district. Official sources said that security forces conducted a search operation at Bekhipora Sheikhpora village in Rafiabad locality of Baramulla district. During the operation, an encounter took place between the holed up militants and security forces in which one militant got killed. Officials identified him as Rizwan and claimed that he was a Pakistani national. Sources said that on a specific information, troops of Rashtriya Rifles 28 Bn conducted a cordon-and-search operation at Manchan in Rafiabad area today. During the search operation, an encounter took place. Officials said that two militants got killed and a soldier sustained injuries. However, it could not be ascertained from independent sources immediately whether both the individuals killed in the gunbattle were militants.

Daily Excelsior, 31 August 2004

CAG detects Rs 5-cr excess payment in SPD

JAMMU, Aug 30: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has castigated the Stores and Procurement Department (SPD) in its report for the year 2003 pointing out many irregularities in its functioning. During the audit of accounts of the Department the CAG has noticed the cases of short receipt of supplies, avoidable and excess payments aggregating Rs 5.79 crore. The report reveals that the accounts made in monetary terms were flawed as the receipts of materials against the advance

payment were not monitored and inventories in excess of the prescribed stock reserve limit were maintained. Passing the strictures against the Department it observed the Department had not maintained quantitative accounts viz Priced Stores Ledgers (PSL) as well as bin cards of the stores and the accounts maintained in monetary terms were flawed.

Daily Excelsior, 31 August 2004

PL joins Geelani led Hurriyat

SRINAGAR, Aug 30: Hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani today received a shot in arm when pro-Pakistan Peoples' League headed by Sheikh Abdul Aziz joined it. Criticising the rival Hurriyat faction headed by moderate leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq for holding talks with the Centre, Sheikh said "they have deviated from the Hurriyat constitution and entered into talks ... A futile exercise". He said his party has already rejected the talks. "History is witness that dialogue between Kashmiri leadership and the Government has concluded in sell out", he claimed.