

The Hindu, 1 December 2004

**CRPF jawan was our man, says ULFA**

GUWAHATI, NOV. 30. The banned United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) has claimed that Samarendra Deka, the CRPF jawan who gunned down seven colleagues before being shot dead near Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, was a member of its military intelligence wing. A caller, identifying himself as the ULFA's 'Commander-in-Chief', Paresh Barua, told a local daily here last night that Deka had been a member of the outfit's military intelligence wing since 1996 and there were more than 150 such members in different security forces.

The Tribune, 1 December 2004

**Road to Muzaffarabad nearing reality**

Jammu, November 30: The indication that the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road would be reopened became more strong, when a high-level official team, led by Mr Alok Rawat, Joint Secretary Ministry of Surface Transport, ended its two-day visit to Kashmir today. The team had been constituted to study the infrastructure needed at the Uri checkpost when the road linking Srinagar with Muzaffarabad was thrown open for travel and trade. The team comprised officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, Immigration Department, Customs and Finance.

The Tribune, 1 December 2004

**Involve Kashmiris in talks, says Malik**

Jammu, November 30: Mr Yaseen Malik, Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), today said that the Kashmir problem would not be solved without a consensus by involving Kashmiris in the dialogue process. Mr Malik, who was talking to mediapersons here, said the problem would not be solved with officials of the India and Pakistan discussing the issue without involving Kashmiris in the process.

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2004

**Army firing leaves civilian dead, 3 injured**

SRINAGAR, Nov 30: In a second incident of its kind in last 24 hours, one villager was killed and three more wounded today when Army soldiers allegedly fired into an angry crowd protesting against search operation in their village in Sumbal area of Baramulla district. While as a defence spokesman claimed that troops opened fire in "self defence" after an angry mob "stabbed" a soldier and a policeman, villagers refuted it saying security forces had "thrashed" scores of youth on which they were protesting.

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2004

**Stress management centre for jawans**

TANGHDHAR (J&K), Nov 30: As the ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control continues, the army has taken up a stress management programme for jawans deployed at border posts here. Jawans at the posts are allowed to spend upto a week at a stress management centre 'Gulchain' where they participate in several recreational and sports activities. "We have started the Centre so that the jawans can take up activities which normally they would not be able to do as they are posted on mountainous posts. The activities act as stress busters for the jawans and they return to the posts rejuvenated", a senior army officer, whose unit runs the centre, said.

The News, 1 December 2004

**Pakistan rejects Indian strategy on Kashmir** (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed its disappointment and shrugged off the nine-point Indian strategy on held Kashmir, saying that this strategy had already been tested time and again and brought no results. "New Delhi appears to be simply playing for time as they really have no policy on Kashmir. We are now entering the second phase of the composite dialogue where the two foreign secretaries will be meeting to discuss security and Jammu and Kashmir," a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told The News in a brief interview.

The News, 1 December 2004

**What is India's game plan on Kashmir?** (Kamal Matinuddin)

So what should Pakistan's policy be on Kashmir? The LoC cannot be accepted as an international border. Pakistan has shown enough flexibility and should insist that a solution of Kashmir is only possible if the concerns of all three parties are addressed to sincerely. The AHC must put their own act together and resolve their differences. Work towards one accepted goal. Pressure on India can be exerted by the APHC if they first prove through an election that they truly represent the majority of Kashmiris. The freedom fighters have to win the goodwill of the Kashmiris and not carry out killings of innocent men and women. They should confine their militant activities against the security forces only.

The Hindu, 2 December 2004

**Work begins on Suchetgarh-Sialkot road** (Luv Puri)

SUCHETGARH, DEC.1. The Jammu and Kashmir Government has started work to widen the Suchetgarh-Sialkot road which will link Suchetgarh with the rest of the country. The narrow road now does not permit free flow of vehicles. As per the Government proposal, Rs.1 crore will be spent on the road widening work from R.S. Pura town to Suchetgarh that is about 10 km away. In first stage Rs.3 lakhs will be spent on metalling 250 metres of the road network till the zero line. The Minister of State for Rural Development, Garu Ram, who laid the foundation stone for the road improvement work said: "The opening of the road would be the best New Year gift I can give it to my constituency. For years economic progress had come to a stand

still and now I hope things will change when the road is finally opened."

The Hindu, 2 December 2004

**Mobile service becomes operational in J&K, North-East**

NEW DELHI, DEC. 1. The Department of Telecom (DoT) has made mobile service fully operational in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeastern States. Curbs on pre-paid cards had been in force there based on security considerations. The relaxation was a follow-up of the Prime Minister's visit to these States. The DoT has asked phone companies to follow certain safeguards, which include despatching the pre-paid SIM cards by post, or courier and activating the service only after receiving the acknowledgement slip from the customers. But, roaming facility to pre-paid subscribers from these States still remains banned.

The Hindu, 2 December 2004

**Time to say goodbye to the gun: Qayyum Khan (Shujaat Bukhari)**

MUZAFFARABAD DEC. 1. The atmosphere of talks and confidence-building measures has forced the pioneers of militancy in Kashmir to rethink and take recourse to political measures to resolve the vexed issue of Kashmir. Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, former Prime Minister of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman, Amanullah Khan, based in Muzaffarabad, have no regrets in admitting that they promoted the "gun culture" in the trouble-torn State of Jammu and Kashmir. But they now believe that the gun had played its role in highlighting the issue and it was time to solve the problem politically.

The Indian Express, 2 December 2004

**Of 47 who surrendered in J&K, 27 are not militants**

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 1: On November 9, a group of 47 "militants" laid down their arms before Director General of J-K Police Gopal Sharma and General Officer Commanding of Army's 16 Corps Ashok Kapur at Nagrota in full media glare. Three weeks later, the J-K police has found that 27 among these "surrendered militants" had nothing to do with militancy and were desperate unemployed men. They had been promised jobs by a local Congress activist and taken to Delhi. They ended up in the Army's Nagrota camp where they posed as militants and lined up for the surrender ceremony.

The Indian Express, 2 December 2004

**J-K completed only 1 out of 54 probes ordered**

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 1: By ordering an inquiry into the killing of the two villagers, allegedly by the Army in Chitru village of Budgam, the Mufti government is setting a stiff record for the coming regimes. It has already touched a landmark of 50 probes into alleged rights violations in the Valley. Since the PDP-led government took over from Farooq Abdullah two years ago, it has, on an average, ordered two magisterial inquiries every month. However, so far not a single probe has nailed any alleged perpetrators. Worse, most inquiries are still under process and those completed don't bind the security forces to take action as they do not fall under the jurisdiction of state.

Greater Kashmir, 2 December 2004

**Mirwaiz announces hunger strike**

Srinagar, Dec 1: Hurriyat Conference (Mirwaiz faction) has decided to go for a one-day hunger strike against the unabated human rights violations across the state. The date and venue, according to the Hurriyat spokesman Shahid-ul-Islam would be disclosed "at the eleventh hour as we don't want (CM) Mufti Sayeed and his police and paramilitary troops to sabotage our programme."

Greater Kashmir, 2 December 2004

**A tangle called Kashmir (Muqtedar Khan)**

If the US genuinely seeks to resolve the Kashmir dispute as part of its overall strategy to eliminate the reasons for terrorism, then in this case the challenge is quite daunting. The US will have to quickly develop a relationship of trust with both India and Pakistan and set things in motion to first build an infrastructure for peace, so that peacemaking can begin in earnest. It will also have to convince both India and Pakistan to allow an open and free dialogue within Kashmir to allow them to arrive at some kind of consensus about their own future so that they will be able to represent themselves effectively.

Hindustan Times, 3 December 2004

**Terrorists storm CRPF camp in J&K; 5 killed**

Srinagar, December 3: At least five security jawans were killed and several others injured when two heavily armed terrorists carried out a suicide attack at a joint camp of CRPF and local police in Sopore area of Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir early on Friday morning. Five jawans have been killed so far and the exchange of fire is going on, a CRPF spokesman said in Srinagar. He said some other security personnel were injured but their exact number was not known. Al Mansoorian terrorist outfit has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Tribune, 3 December 2004

**Team for rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants formed**

New Delhi, December 2: The Prime Minister's Office has constituted an inter-ministerial team for preparing a plan to rehabilitate Kashmiri migrants. The three-member team, led by the Principal Adviser (in charge of Jammu and Kashmir) in the Planning Commission, Ms Kasturi Gupta Menon, will prepare the rehabilitation plan after visiting migrant camps and

discussions with migrants taking into account, among others, means of livelihood, education, health and the security of women, an official press note said here today.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2004

**HM 'launching commander' among 2 top ultras surrender in Reasi**

JAMMU, Dec 2: Two top militants of Hizbul Mujahideen including a "launching commander" of the outfit surrendered before Reasi police in their hideout at Malarh Khud in a dense forest area this afternoon. Surrender of the militants especially the "launching commander" has delivered a major setback to the outfit in Mahore-Gool-Reasi belt where the duo were operating for the last six to seven years.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2004

**Gunmen loot Rs 50,000 from bank**

SRINAGAR, Dec 2: Two unidentified gunmen have decamped with over fifty thousand rupees from a branch of J&K Bank Ltd in Lalbazar locality of Srinagar almost same time when Finance Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig inaugurated mobile Automated Teller Machine (ATM) van at the Bank's corporate headquarters here this afternoon. Meanwhile, a defence spokesman said that one more militant had been killed in Hajan Nar forests of Naristan Tral area in Pulwama district Tuesday night. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that two motorbike borne unidentified gunmen appeared near the branch of J&K Bank Ltd at Budshah Mohalla in Lalbazar locality of Srinagar city this afternoon. The gunmen, riding on unnumbered motorbike, stopped outside the Bank's main gate and one of the gunmen entered inside the branch.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2004

**3 charas smugglers arrested**

JAMMU, Dec 2: Crime Branch, Jammu today arrested owner of a Fast Food at Suwankha Morh in Vijaypur area for being part of a gang which was engaged in selling charas after smuggling it from the Kashmir Valley. He has been identified as Bittu Ram son of Bhagat Ram, a resident of Suwankha Morh.

The Indian Express, 3 December 2004

**The balle-balle bridge** (Editorial)

It is unfortunate that the Indo-Pakistan peace process has tended to remain caught up in a procedural bind - with people-to-people contact routinely considered desirable only in the event of diplomatic deals. But consider the anomaly between the two foreign offices' agenda and popular demands. New Delhi and Islamabad are struggling to finetune the terms of engagement to address problems that could be tractable only to slow, patient and considered dialogue. The people, on the other hand, want little more than the freedom to visit their ancestors' homes, to complete religious pilgrimages whose circuit has been snapped by Radcliffe's line, to just cross the border and satisfy their curiosity about each other.

The Tribune, 4 December 2004

**Police officials told to investigate missing youths' cases**

Jammu, December 3: Following uproar of people over increase in the cases of missing youths in Jammu and Kashmir the police authorities have asked each police station in charge to investigate the matter and submit a detailed report. Police officials in every police station have been directed to identify each case and find out whether the youths stated to be missing have joined militant groups or crossed over to Pakistan or eliminated during operations launched by the security forces.

The Indian Express, 4 December 2004

**In custody, key man in J&K's surrender hoax blames it on his Congress leaders**

CHRRAR-E-SHARIEF, DECEMBER 3: Bashir Ahmad 'Golu', one of the three men who made 27 unemployed Kashmiris pose as militants and "surrender" to the Army last month by promising them government jobs and "a meeting with Sonia Gandhi", is now blaming leaders of his own party, the Congress, for the hoax. "Many big Congress leaders were part of this drama," Golu told The Indian Express today at the Chrar-e-Sharief police station. He is in police custody and will be produced in court tomorrow.

Daily Excelsior, 4 December 2004

**Fidayeen storms SOG camp; 5 CRPF men, militant killed**

SRINAGAR, Dec 3: In a first Fidayeen attack during this year outside Srinagar city, militants stormed Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) guarded Special Operations Group (SOG) camp in the apple town of Sopore in wee hours today, killing five CRPF personnel and wounding two others. One militant was also killed in the attack. Meanwhile, militant outfit Al-Mansoorian claimed the responsibility for carrying the attack. Informed sources in north Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that unspecified number of militants appeared near the SOG camp, housed in a building of District Institute of Education and Technology (DIET) near Town Hall in Sopore township of Baramulla district at around 0600 hrs this morning. Hurling grenades and firing from automatic weapons, the militants managed to enter the fortified camp in which about 40 personnel of SOG and CRPF 16 Bn were present. The camp is located at the town's most "secure zone".

Daily Excelsior, 4 December 2004

**Lashkar, Jaish in drug smuggling in J&K** (B.L. Kak)

It is official discovery: Drugs and opium and charas are consumed by an unspecified number of terrorists in Jammu and

Kashmir. If the statistics available with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in this connection were any guide, the terrorists, especially foreign mercenaries of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) are indulging in smuggling of narcotic substances and drugs. Why and what for? The Home Ministry's answer to this question runs thus: Smuggling of narcotic substances and drugs is indulged in by the terrorists in order to sustain themselves in Jammu and Kashmir. This apart, such drugs are also being consumed by these terrorists, especially the ones owing their allegiance either to the LeT or to the JeM.

Daily Excelsior, 4 December 2004

**HM's ration store destroyed in Doda**

JAMMU, Dec 3: Army and police today destroyed three hideouts of the militants including a ration store and recovered dead body of a civilian, who was killed in May, on the disclosures of a Hizbul Mujahideen militant, who surrendered yesterday in Doda. Official sources said the hideouts were destroyed in upper reaches of Jai and Ply in Gandoh area of Doda district. Recoveries made from the hideout include two quintals rice, two quintals flour, 50 kg pulses, 50 kg sugar, 30 kg suji, 25 kg salt, 30 kg ghee, 25 packets milk powder, 100 battery cells, 50 candles, one canvas tent, one barrel of 200 litre capacity and one tin box.

Daily Excelsior, 4 December 2004

**Whom does the Hurriyat represent anyway** (Yogendra Bali)

The split leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, has earned the reputation of raising ever fresh questions about Jammu and Kashmir to block both Indian and Pakistani initiatives for a peaceful resolution of the problems of Kashmiris. And its insistence on blocking these initiatives for peace has blocked all attempts at normalization of Indo-Pak relations, so important for peace and stability in the two nuclear neighbours with promising non-nuclear potential too. Security, stability, peace and development of the region too vitally depended on the peace and stability in India and Pakistan.

The Indian Express, 4 December 2004

**Authentic fakes** (Editorial)

Every authentic surrender of a militant in Jammu and Kashmir holds great significance because it means a defeat - in however modest a fashion - of a project of terror and calculated hate. If, however, this surrender process loses its credibility, if unemployed men are passed off as militants, India loses greatly in its battle against the insurgents. Remember, this is as much a mind-war as it is one of physical attrition.

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2004

**Committee to curb narcotics menace constituted**

JAMMU, Dec 4: Jammu and Kashmir Government has constituted a Divisional Level Anti Narcotic Task Force Committee for stringent implementation of various laws relating to the prevention and cultivation of narcotic and psychotropic substances and to tackle drug trafficking in the State. Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone has been nominated as the Chairman of the committee. The others members include Chief Conservator of Forests, Deputy Commissioners of Jammu, Kathua, Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur and Doda, Superintendents of Police of Jammu, Kathua, Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur and Doda, Directors of Rural Development, Health Services departments while as Senior Superintendent of Police SBJ, Superintendent of Police CIJ would act as Member Secretaries of the committee. Deputy Director Information, Jammu too have been nominated as member of the committee.

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2004

**Beyond the Line of Control-II** (Pushp Saraf)

There is consensus that bus service between not only Muzaffarabad and Srinagar but also other parts should be resumed like for instance between the erstwhile Poonch district that is split on either side. Personally I get a feeling that if the leaders in 'Azad' Kashmir help in this exercise while taking care of the sensibilities of India and Pakistan they would do a great service to people. The resumption of links between the people would lead to a better understanding. This will also help people to develop stakes in peace and compel their respective leaders to fall in line or face marginalisation for their failure to read the writing on the wall.

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2004

**New strategy for J&K** (Sreedhar)

In this new scenario, Pakistan's hurry to clinch the issue in its favour at any cost is understandable. Their impatience is evident from the ideas that they are putting forward to resolve the J&K issue. In the process, they are sensitising their people that the J&K issue is a lost cause like that of Taliban in Afganistan. Shaukat Aziz is trying to do that exactly. In a way it is a good thing.

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2004

**1300 KP migrant families willing to return: Hakeem**

Jammu, Dec 5: Expressing the government's concern about the safe and dignified return of Kashmiri migrants to the valley and their proper rehabilitation, the Minister for Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen sought support of the migrants in this direction. Mr. Hakeem was interacting with some deputations of the Kashmiri Pandit migrants here today said that the present Government has taken serious initiatives in this regard and has even started some prestigious rehabilitation projects like one at Sheikhpura, Budgam at a cost of Rs. 20 crore to construct 200 family quarters and starting a similar one at Harnag, Anantnag.

The Indian Express, 6 December 2004

**Mufti govt taking undue advantage of youth: Omar**

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5: National Conference chief Omar Abdullah today criticised the Mufti government's surrender policy saying the state administration was taking "undue advantage" of unemployed youth of the state. "The recent reports of fake surrender by militants in Kashmir Valley only shows how publicity-hungry the state government was...", Omar said on the sidelines of the 100th birth anniversary of his grandfather and the founder of National Conference Sheikh Abdullah. He said the Mufti government was only taking "undue advantage" of unemployed youth and termed it a "deliberate ploy" for gaining publicity in media. "This move can be counter-productive and the Centre should take an immediate note of such developments," he added.

The Times of India, 6 December 2004

**Britain could help on Kashmir: Musharraf**

LONDON: Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf was quoted on Monday as saying he would welcome British help in his country's negotiations with India over the Kashmir issue. "I would love Britain to play a role," Musharraf, visiting London for talks with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, told the Times newspaper.

Dawn, 6 December 2004

**JKLF calls for united Kashmir for 15 years**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 5: Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman Amanullah Khan has asked the Pakistani and Indian leadership to look into the Kashmir issue from the point of view of Kashmiris. The JKLF chairman said the Kashmir issue should neither be resolved on cultural and ethnic basis nor on socio-economic grounds. Mr Khan reiterated that the best equitable and practicable solution to the problem was reunification of the divided state and making it a fully independent country with a democratic, federal, and secular system of government.

The Hindu, 6 December 2004

**Army Major, 10 others killed in blast** (Shujaat Bukhari)

NAINA (SOUTH KASHMIR), DEC. 5. An Army Major, his 10 colleagues and a civilian were killed in a blast triggered by an improvised explosive device in this remote village of Pulwama district on Saturday evening. In another incident, the Army lifted the siege of a mosque after 48 hours following the killing of three militants holed up there. The IED blast, termed by the Army authorities as the deadliest so far, took place at Naina-Batpora village, around 65 km from Srinagar, when Major Lalit Kumar of Zainpora based 1 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) was leading a 10-member team for an operation in the area. As the private vehicle in which they were travelling reached the spot, the blast occurred.

The Hindu, 6 December 2004

**Time to get serious on Kashmir** (Teresita C. Schaffer & Howard B. Schaffer)

We may now be seeing the first steps toward a new public discussion of how to define the arena within which a solution to Kashmir can be sought. The Indian and Pakistani officials and leaders who are scheduled to meet in the next few months have a unique opportunity to move forward in the long, complicated search for a settlement. First, they should try to expand the common ground that is starting to emerge, and work toward a rough agreement on the principles that could guide a settlement. The goal should be a solution that is peaceful, honourable, and practical for all the stakeholders.

The News, 6 December 2004

**Kashmir options and MMA** (Farukh Ashrafeen)

Experts know Musharraf wants to try a positive approach towards India; some confidence building, some plain talking and some genuine soul-searching with his Indian counterparts to push the dialogue forward on Kashmir. For the Indian ruling elite he now understands Kashmir is the toughest nut to crack. For the Pakistani civil and military government the hardest test has been engaging India on the Kashmir dispute. But the trumpeting of drums by the opposition blaming the President for a U-turn and betrayal on Kashmir is an attempt to harm the cause and block the way forward.

The Hindu, 7 December 2004

**'Pakistan has to dismantle terrorist infrastructure'** (Luv Puri)

JAMMU, DEC. 6. The Jammu and Kashmir Governor, S.K. Sinha, said today said that complete peace would come to the State once the militant infrastructure was totally dismantled across the Line of Control (LoC) and Pakistan's "direct support" to terrorists ended. In an interview to The Hindu, Mr. Sinha said: "Definitely, there is no support from the Pakistan Army when militants are launched to this side of the LoC. The shelling, which was a frequent affair in facilitating their entry this side, has fully stopped after the ceasefire on November 26, 2003. But we are a long way from the time when we can say that direct support of the Pakistan establishment to militancy in the State has stopped."

The Hindu, 7 December 2004

**Pakistan reiterates stand on bus service** (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 6. On the eve of talks for the proposed Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service, Pakistan has said that it would not accept any formula on travel documents of passengers that would raise doubts about the 'disputed nature' of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, said a three-member delegation had already left for New Delhi to discuss the nature of travel documents. "They will have comprehensive discussions on all issues. You know our stand. LoC [Line of Control] is a temporary line and it is not an international border," Mr. Khan said in response to a question at the weekly

news briefing.

The Tribune, 7 December 2004

**Kashmiri groups seek representation in Indo-Pak parleys** (M. L. Kak)

Jammu, December 6: Voices favouring the involvement of representatives of people of Jammu and Kashmir in the ongoing Indo-Pakistan talks keep on multiplying on both sides of the border. A majority of political leaders, including Prime Minister of occupied Kashmir, Sardar Sikender Hayat Khan, JKLF supremo, Mr Amanullah Khan, and others who matter in occupied Kashmir, seem to be in the race with separatists and mainstream political leaders in Jammu and Kashmir while demanding their involvement in the bilateral parleys.

The Tribune, 7 December 2004

**Civic poll in J&K in January**

Jammu, December 6: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has announced that the elections to the municipal corporations of Jammu and Srinagar and other municipalities would be held on party lines in January next. The elections would be held districtwise in eight phases. The Srinagar Municipal Corporation would be the first to go to the polls on January 20, polling for the Jammu Municipal Corporation would be held on February 1.

The Telegraph, 7 December 2004

**Blair steers clear of Kashmir**

London, Dec. 6: Tony Blair had talks today at 10 Downing Street with Pervez Musharraf but the British Prime Minister made it clear that he was happy to let India and Pakistan deal with Kashmir as a bilateral issue. This might disappoint Musharraf who wants the issue to be given the same status as the struggle of the Palestinians. Blair voiced support for the dialogue between India and Pakistan, but steered clear of suggesting Britain could play a role in talks.

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2004

**Jaish 'commander' killed in Bandipore**

SRINAGAR, Dec 6: Security forces have killed a "district commander" of Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit in Bandipore area of Baramulla even as a mob today attacked a Police Station in Anantnag district. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that on a Police information, troops of RR 51 Bn raided a militant hideout at Chak Rishipora in Bandipore area this evening. During the operation, one holed up militant got killed. He was identified as Saifullah, resident of Sahiwal, Pakistan. Officials claimed that Saifullah was a senior militant and "district commander" with Jaish-e-Mohammad.

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2004

**8 LeT, JeM ultras repatriated to Pak via Wagah**

JAMMU, Dec 6: Eight top militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfits have been repatriated to Pakistan through Wagah border after being released from different jails of the country. Forty eight border crossers of Pakistan, who were also involved in the offences like transportation of arms and narcotics besides acting as guides of the militants are also being released "in the next few days".

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2004

**Militant, 18 Bangladeshis arrested**

JAMMU, Dec 6: Troops of Rashtriya Rifles and Rajouri Police today arrested an over ground worker of the militants in connection with killing of five civilians at Gurdanbala in Rajouri district on the intervening night of July 19 and 20. He has been identified as Mohd Hussain son of Karam Din R/o Gurdanbala. Mohd Hussain along with another civilian Hassan Mohd Khuna R/o Manji Dhara had accompanied two foreign mercenaries Ibrahim Salfi and Muslim Siddar in the killing of five members of Abdul Gani's family at Gurdanbala on July 19 night.

The Times of India, 7 December 2004

**Valley's New Voice: Hurriyat Doesn't Represent Kashmiri Aspirations** (Anand K Sahay)

Without Hurriyat's mediating presence, the infiltrating terrorist, on whose shoulders is run Pakistan's "freedom movement" in Kashmir, would be face-to-face with not only the security forces but also the Kashmiri people, whom he has tormented in diverse ways. Fringe secessionism - now represented by Hurriyat - has always existed in Kashmir, even when Sheikh Abdullah was at the height of his powers. It ebbed and flowed according to circumstance. But there was no question ever of the Centre or the state government engaging its spokesmen or despatching interlocutors to importune them for meetings. This is a recent phenomenon whose utility, frankly, is inexplicable.

The Hindu, 8 December 2004

**Urban body elections in J&K after two decades**

JAMMU, DEC. 7. Elections for the urban bodies will be held in Jammu and Kashmir in the next two months after more than two decades. The schedule, except for Leh and Kargil districts, was announced by the Election Commission. A spokesman said the elections would be held on party lines with one-third of the total seats in each municipal body reserved for women. Reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes had also been provided in proportion to their respective population in the municipal area. Urban body polls were last held in Sheikh Abdullah's regime in the early 1980's.

The Hindu, 8 December 2004

### **National Conference joins Hurriyat protest against 'rights violations'**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 7. The National Conference today joined the daylong token hunger strike organised by the moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to protest against "increasing human rights violations by security forces". Led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, senior Hurriyat leader, Abdul Gani Bhat, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Fazl Haque Qureshi and Bilal Gani Lone were joined by hundreds of their workers at the polo ground here, besides the National Conference leaders, Shamima Firdous and Irfan Shah, and the Youth National Conference leader, Farooq Zargar. The National Conference patron, Farooq Abdullah, on Saturday asked his workers to join the hunger strike to make it clear to the Mufti Government that "all was not well in the State."

The Tribune, 8 December 2004

### **JeM commander killed; IED blast averted in J&K**

Srinagar, December 7: Security forces shot dead a self-styled district commander of Pakistan-based outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad and averted a major tragedy with timely detection of an improvised explosive device in Jammu and Kashmir since last night, a police spokesman said today. JeM commander Saifullah, alias Gori, a Pakistani national, was killed in a gunfight at Check-Reshipora village in the Bandipora area of Baramulla district last night, he said. The gunfight erupted when the security forces raided a suspected militant hideout in the village following information about the presence of militants, the spokesman said adding, an AK rifle and four magazines were seized from him.

The News, 8 December 2004

### **Kashmir has to move forward: Musharraf** (Shahed Sadullah)

LONDON: President Musharraf left no doubt whatsoever about his government's attitude towards Kashmir when he unequivocally stated that Kashmir was the core issue between India and Pakistan and that there had to be forward movement on Kashmir if the Indo-Pakistan dialogue was going to get anywhere. Addressing a huge gathering of British Pakistanis and Kashmiris here on Monday evening, President Musharraf stated that Pakistan was on the path of peace with India but it had to be a peace with honour and dignity. "I will not be sold on Kashmir," said the president amidst thunderous applause, making the promise that any settlement would have to have the acceptance of Pakistanis, Indians and Kashmiris.

Daily Excelsior, 8 December 2004

### **Militants holed up at PDP leader's home in Baramulla**

SRINAGAR, Dec 7: While as two Pakistani militants have got trapped at a PDP leader's house in Baramulla, a Sub Inspector of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) got killed in a shootout at the residence of the Peoples Conference chairman Sajjad Lone in Rawalpora outskirts of this Capital city. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that a Sub Inspector of CRPF, Prem Shankar, got killed in a mysterious shootout at the residence of the PC chairman, Sajjad Lone, at Rawalpora, in Srinagar outskirts late tonight. One version put it as a "misfire" from a colleague's gun but other reports described the shootout as yet another incident of one paramilitary killing the other in a tiff. Officials said that a team of the Police and CRPF personnel had rushed to the spot and its report was still awaited.

Daily Excelsior, 8 December 2004

### **14,000 new jobs for J&K**

NEW DELHI, Dec 7: As many as "14,000 new jobs" were announced by the Government today as a follow up to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's assurance during his visit to Jammu and Kashmir- more than 13,000 of them honorary to be "paid an honorarium." An announcement said the Women and Child Development Department has sanctioned 19 additional integrated child development services projects and 6,817 Anganwadi centres for Jammu and Kashmir.

The Indian Express, 8 December 2004

### **Centre to ask J-K to probe 'surrenders'**

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7: Days after The Indian Express expose on the surrender of 27 unemployed innocent men from the Valley who were passed off at an Army ceremony as "militants," the Centre has promised to tell the Jammu and Kashmir government to look into the incident. Home Minister Shivraj Patil told the Lok Sabha during question hour that the Centre will "certainly ask" the state government to look into the matter. And if needed, the Centre would probe the incident, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 December 2004

### **Manmohan Singh's Kashmiriyat** (Allabaksh)

Those who show interest in finding solutions to the Kashmir issue tend to overlook an important fact that the part of Kashmir under Pakistani control has seen a demographic change with the 'native' Kashmiris being outnumbered by Punjabis and Pathans. The 'native' population has been getting restive in PoK as it is ruled with an iron hand by the Pakistan military. By any independent yardstick, the Kashmiris in India enjoy more democracy than do their counterparts living under Pakistani rule. Words like 'Kashmiriyat' do not make sense in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir which is hardly Kashmiri in character. Let Musharraf show some flexibility in restoring 'Kashmiriyat' in PoK before he talks to India about Kashmir.

The Hindu, 9 December 2004

### **Troop reduction has created goodwill, says Pranab**

NEW DELHI, DEC. 8. The decision to reduce troops in Jammu and Kashmir was taken "consciously" and the move has created a lot of goodwill in the State, the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, told the Rajya Sabha today. The decision has

not adversely affected the situation in the border State even though infiltration attempts by militants went up last month, he said in reply to a question by Amar Singh (Samajwadi Party) and a host of supplementaries by other members during question hour.

The Tribune, 9 December 2004

### **Bullets damage religious place**

Jammu, December 8: A gurdwara in the border village of Dagwar in Poonch district was damaged last night when bullets hit its roof and compound wall.

The locals claim that some rockets were fired by Pakistani troops, but the authorities denied this and said that Indian soldiers had fired the shots when they became suspicious of militants crossing into Indian territory from across the Line of Control. The police said that there was heavy firing by the Indian troops to foil the infiltration bid. Dagwar is the infiltration route of the terrorists from occupied Kashmir.

The Tribune, 9 December 2004

### **2 militants killed in Baramula; 32 hurt in Anantnag explosion**

Srinagar, December 8: About 48-hour-long hostage crisis involving four family members of senior PDP leader in Baramula, ended with the killing of two Pak militants of the Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit by the police and the security forces today. In another major incident at least 32 persons, including two police personnel, were injured in a grenade explosion at Anantnag in south Kashmir today. The police said that the militants hurled a grenade at the old KMD bus stand, Anantnag, at 11.50 this morning, leading to injuries to 32 persons. Three seriously injured were shifted to hospital here where the condition of one constable, Manzoor Ahmad, was stated to be critical. A police Gypsy was damaged in the explosion.

The Times of India, 9 December 2004

### **J-K leaders' Nepal visit hits roadblock**

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the proposed conference on Kashmir organised by an American thinktank in Kathmandu to be attended by Hurriyat leaders, Nepal has made it clear that it will not allow its soil to be used for anti-India activities. "Nepal shares a very cordial relation with India and we will not allow anyone to use our soil to indulge in activities that cause material harm to India," Nepalese Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Dip Kumar Upadhyaya said.

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2004

### **Civilian killed in Poonch blast**

JAMMU, Dec 8: A civilian was killed in a mine blast in forward area of Begun in Poonch sector last night while security forces recovered explosive devices during searches in Doda and Rajouri districts. Official sources said an unidentified civilian was killed when he stepped over a land mine in forward village of Begun in Poonch last night. His dead body was recovered by the security forces this morning. Security forces have sent the body for post-mortem and identification.

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2004

### **Terror infrastructure in Pak, PoK**

NEW DELHI, Dec 8: The Government today reiterated the continued presence of terrorist infrastructure across the border in Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir - progress in the ongoing bilateral peace dialogue notwithstanding. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee told the Rajya Sabha during question hour that there had been no let up in cross-border terrorist activity with as many as 67 terrorist camps and 37 launch pads continuing in existence in Pak and PoK territory.

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2004

### **J&K Police adopts Doogian village**

JAMMU, Dec 8: Home Guard and Civil Defence wing of J&K Police (Aux) on the eve of its annual Raising Day adopted Mohalla Doogian near Bathindi to develop and promote a community Centre to provide schooling to children, vocational training and promote games in the area, in a function held here today. The organisation also held a free medical aid camp in this connection at the village. The adopted locality, though is adjacent to city but it has minimum facilities. On this occasion, a large number of people of the area and children were present.

The News, 9 December 2004

### **Why look for options beyond plebiscite? (Faruk Ashrafeen)**

President's invitation to the people in Pakistan for debating possible options to help resolve the Kashmir dispute is therefore justified and a timely step to avail the opportunity in the atmosphere of dialogue between Pakistan and India. The nation must take it positively and come out with a consensus opinion. The indifference of the people, opposition's non-seriousness and weak lobby at international level on diplomatic front would prove to be a great failure.

The Tribune, 9 December 2004

### **Kashmir roadblock (Editorial)**

Pakistan, it seems, is least interested in the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, proposed by India. It, perhaps, fears that such facilities may strengthen the case for accepting the Line of Control as an international border. But promoting people-to-people contacts between the two sides of Kashmir without the use of passports will, it is believed, provide political leverage to Islamabad. This, however, exposes the real intentions of Pakistan. Contrary to its claims, it is not bothered about the aspirations of the Kashmiris.

The Indian Express, 9 December 2004

**The buzz over the bus** (Editorial)

But India, for its part, should ensure that the arrangements it proposes do not simply become like a regular visa regime by another name. It should ensure this, not because it is answerable to Pakistan, but because it ought to have the self-confidence to assure the Kashmiri people that it is willing to think out of the box. While India has every interest in identifying who comes and who goes, and it has every right not to cede the sovereignty question to Pakistan, it does have a responsibility to ensure that travel across the border is easy. It would only be fitting if India's democracy, while safeguarding its territorial interests, made it easier for Kashmiris from both sides of the border to travel. Pakistan may have no locus standi on the question of borders and identification. But it will be India's greatness if it can demonstrate to the Kashmiris that parchment barriers will not stand in the way of their freer movement.

Greater Kashmir, 9 December 2004

**Surrender drama** (Editorial)

The drama has cast a shadow of doubt on all the surrenders that have taken place in the state during the past fifteen years. The security agencies must explain their position. The general public and the taxpayers in particular cannot be taken for a ride for the petty interests of some unscrupulous elements who stage dramas time and again to prove their worth. The security agencies have proved that their word cannot be taken as final. It is necessary, therefore, to probe all the surrenders that have taken place in the state till date. This alone can expose the unscrupulous elements and this alone can restrain them from staging similar dramas in future. Meanwhile, the government must ensure security of the people who were first to New Delhi and then to Udhampur to show that the situation in the state had undergone a favourable change.

The Tribune, 10 December 2004

**Militants attack SOG camp, two cops killed**

Srinagar, December 9: Two policemen were killed and five others, including a DSP, were injured when militants attacked a Special Operations Group camp of the local police in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir today, official sources said. A group of militants targeted the SOG camp at Imam Sahib in Shopian, 55 km from here, around 4.15 pm, injuring seven personnel, including in charge of the camp, Deputy Superintendent of Police Javid Iqbal.

Daily Excelsior, 10 December 2004

**Isolate them** (Editorial)

Often we have pleaded in these columns that the HM should see the futility of its actions: it would do well to adopt a peaceful course. The HM is concerned about having a dubious reputation is evident from its statement at one time cautioning those exploiting its name. Clearly it needs to do more. One thing is clear. No mercy should be shown to those who don't want to give up the use of the gun. They should be eliminated lock, stock and barrel. They are the biggest hindrances in the way of peace and need to be shown their place.

The Hindu, 11 December 2004

**Geelani, Shabir Shah held, protesters teargassed** (Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR DEC. 10. Police had to deal with scores of protests taken out to mark "Human Rights Day" in Jammu and Kashmir today. Senior separatist leaders Syed Ali Geelani and Shabir Shah were placed under house arrest.

The moderate faction of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and the ruling People's Democratic Party, however, did not join the protests. Javed Mir, head of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Forum, who led a march was wounded in a scuffle with the policemen before his arrest. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front took out a procession in Lal Chowk led by Noor Kalwal and Showkat Bakhshi. The leaders were taken into custody.

The Hindu, 11 December 2004

**Motion tabled to discuss Musharraf proposals** (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 10. The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), a conglomerate of Pakistan's mainstream political parties, has tabled an adjournment motion in the National Assembly seeking a discussion on the President, Pervez Musharraf's statement that there were 15 options available for resolving the Kashmir issue. Gen. Musharraf had said during his recent foreign tour that there were 15 proposals and that Pakistan was ready to discuss all of them with India.

The Tribune, 11 December 2004

**Militants kill 4 cops in Kathua ambush**

Jammu, December 10: Four police personnel were killed by a heavily armed group of terrorists near the Kindli post of the special operation group (SOG) in Kathua district today. The place where the terrorists ambushed the police party is in the Dudu-Basantgarh area near the Himachal Pradesh border. It is two hours' trek to the spot from the road head. The Superintendent of Police Kathua district, Mr Raghubir Singh Manhas, told The Tribune over the telephone that a group of about 12 terrorists ambushed the police personnel at 5 am.

The Tribune, 11 December 2004

**Mufti tells Army to vacate hotels, schools**

Jammu, December 10: Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed today ordered the Home Department to get the tourist infrastructure and schools vacated that were being occupied by the security forces while fighting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr Sayeed,

who was here to review the functioning of the police department, asked the Home Department to get such places vacated from the security forces before the next tourist season. He discussed the situation arising out of the continued occupation of hotels and educational institutions by the security forces.

The Indian Express, 11 December 2004

**Vij denies Army hand in fake surrender**

DEHRA DUN, DECEMBER 10: Army Chief Gen N.C. Vij reacted strongly to Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma's statement and denied that the Army was involved in the fake surrender of "militants" at Nagrota recently. Talking to mediapersons after reviewing the passing-out-parade at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) here, Vij said politicians should not drag the Army into controversies. The J-K Deputy CM had said in Jammu yesterday that there was a possibility that some Army officials were involved in the fake surrender which was first highlighted by *The Indian Express*.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2004

**Hizb ready for any help in Kashmir resolution: Salahuddin**

MUZAFFARABAD, Dec 10: The Hizbul Mujahideen, the single largest indigenous militant group operating in Jammu and Kashmir, has said it is ready to provide "any and every kind of help" to resolve the Kashmir issue and asserted that it will "never hesitate" to participate in any meaningful talks which will lead to an honourable and acceptable solution of the contentious problem. "The Hizb is ready to provide any and every kind of help which would lead to a desired solution of the Kashmir issue," Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin told UNI in an exclusive interview here in the capital of Pakistan occupied Kashmir recently when the Indian journalists visited Pakistan, PoK and northern areas.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2004

**Civilian, young girl killed**

JAMMU, Dec 10: In a major success, troops of Rashtriya Rifles and Doda police tonight gunned down a Hizbul Mujahideen "divisional commander" for Doda and Anantnag Abdul Hamid alias Jamshed Marker at village Dandaal in Kastigarh area of Doda district. In two separate incidents, two civilians including a young girl were killed by the militants in Poonch and Rajouri districts last night.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2004

**Militant killed in Pattan ambush**

SRINAGAR, Dec 10: Security forces today claimed to have killed a militant in Pattan area of Baramulla district. Official sources said that troops of Rashtriya Rifles 29th Bn had laid an ambush outside Shirpora village in Pattan area late last night. In the wee hours today, they noticed some suspicious movement and asked a man to halt. He turned out to be a militant when he, instead, opened fire.

The Tribune, 11 December 2004

**Money is not a problem (Mohan Guruswamy)**

The underlying problem of Jammu and Kashmir is not economic. It is political and administrative.... The only effective antidote to insurgency is the restoration of good government and order. In J&K you have neither. The forces meant to impose order are themselves often quite disorderly. The Indian Army and the various para-military forces work independently of each other and often at cross-purposes. Worse still they work independent of the popularly elected government. We must wonder if powerlessness makes the state government purposeless as well.

Daily Excelsior, 12 December 2004

**Track II meet on Kashmir begins in Kathmandu**

KATHMANDU, Dec 11: A three-day Indo-Pak informal meet on Kashmir began here today, with participation from both sides of the Line of Control (LoC), including a two-member delegation of the Hurriyat Conference, politicians, former bureaucrats, former Army chiefs and journalists. "It is very positive step towards settling the Kashmir dispute," said Justice Abdul Majeed Malik, chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League of the PoK, about the 'Indo-Pak Track II meet'. Hurriyat Conference leaders Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Abdul Ghani Bhat are taking part in the conference organised by Pugwash, a US-based think tank.

The Tribune, 12 December 2004

**3 Hizb militants killed in J&K**

Srinagar, December 11: Three Hizbul Mujahideen militants, including a self-styled divisional commander, were among five persons killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, a police spokesman said today. The divisional commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen Abdul Hamid alias Jamsheed Marker was killed in an encounter with the Rashtriya Rifles in the Kashtigarh area of Doda district last night, he said.

The Hindu, 12 December 2004

**Hurriyat leaders allowed to go to Kathmandu**

NEW DELHI, DEC. 11. Eight Kashmir leaders, belonging to the separatist camp, left here today to attend the Pugwash Peace conference in Kathmandu, Nepal. Among those who left were Shabir Shah, Abdul Gani Bhatt, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Sajjad Lone and Bilal Lone. The theme of the three-day conference is "Jammu and Kashmir and the India-Pakistan Dialogue: the Prospectus Ahead."

The Hindu, 13 December 2004

**Mirwaiz for political dialogue**

KATHMANDU, DEC. 12. The Hurriyat Conference leader, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, has said that a political dialogue was necessary to resolve the Kashmir problem and all parties in the "conflict should rise above" the traditional stance. The Mirwaiz is here to attend a meeting with Kashmiri leaders from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Altogether 45 participants from India and Pakistan, including retired Generals, former bureaucrats, journalists and politicians are participating in the three-day meet, organised by Pugwash International, Nobel Peace Prize winning Italian organisation.

The Tribune, 13 December 2004

**Two top Harkat militants among five killed**

Srinagar, December 12: Two top militants belonging to the Harkat-ul-Jehadi (HUJ) outfit were among five persons killed while a Kashmiri Pandit was shot at and injured in militancy-related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since last night, an official spokesman said here today. Acting on a tip-off, troops launched a combing operation to pull out hiding militants in the Kot Bagar area in Gool tehsil of Udhampur district in Jammu today. The ultras opened fire on seeing the troops and in the resultant gunbattle. The two militants identified as Mohammad Rafiq and Abdullah were killed, official sources said.

The Tribune, 13 December 2004

**Hurriyat leaders ready to adjust**

Kathmandu, December 12: Leaders of separatist groups in India and Pakistan who want the disputed Kashmir region to be independent of both countries, said here today that they would be flexible in their negotiations on the issue. Representatives from political parties and rights organisations in India and Pakistan have been brought together at the conference to start a dialogue on a people-to-people basis for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. The participants hailed the event as positive and said they wanted to resolve the dispute, which has seen India and Pakistan go to war thrice, peacefully through dialogue.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2004

**465 receive appointment letters in Doda**

DODA, Dec 12: Appointment orders to 465 candidates under Rehbar-e-Taleem scheme of six Assembly constituencies of Doda district including 74 of Kishtwar, 58 of Bhadarwah, 88 of Ramban, 53 of Banihal, 89 of Inderwal and 103 of Doda were distributed here yesterday at a function held under the chairmanship of Power Minister, Mr. Mohd. Sharief Niaz. Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development, Mr. Abdul Majid Wani and Chairman, Social Welfare Advisory Board, Mr. G. M. Saroori were also present.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2004

**High-level meet reviews situation**

DODA, Dec 12: A meeting of high ranking officers of Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF) was held at Batote today. Inspector General of Police Jammu Zone Dr S P Vaid presided over the meeting which was attended by IGP CRPF P M Nair, IGP BSF B D Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Doda Range Satvir Gupta, Brigadier M S Rohil, DIG CRPF (Operations), Rajinder Mani, DIG BSF Ramban, SSPs of Doda, Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban and Commanding Officers of CRPF and BSF deployed in Udhampur-Doda Range. The main impetus of the meeting was on operational matters.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2004

**Kashmir leaders from both sides to meet today**

KATHMANDU, Dec 12 : First ever meeting of Kashmiri leaders from both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) will be held here tomorrow even as hardline pro-Pakistan leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has decided to stay away it. This meeting would be held as a part of Intra-Kashmiri Committee formed during the conference. This meeting assumes significance as this is for the first time that the leaders from the two sides of Kashmir were meeting at an International Forum to discuss the vexed issue.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2004

**Delhi can't compromise more Pak delays bus to Muzaffarabad (B L Kak)**

Islamabad cannot ignore or under - estimate who other factors. First, Pakistan cannot, and should not, prevent India from performing its role of identifying who comes and who goes after the bus service is allowed to be operational on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road. Second, Islamabad cannot stop India from exercising the right not to code the sovereignty question to Pakistan. Gen. Parvez Musharraf may continue to make emotional statements on Kashmir. What is required, if he really and sincerely wants the Indo-Pakistan friendship, is his unbiased directives to official involved in the nitty-gritty of negotiations.

The Tribune, 13 December 2004

**Autonomy for Kashmir (H. K. Dua)**

India cannot simply regard Jammu and Kashmir as a part of the Union and not own the responsibility of winning over its alienated people. Giving more autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir and honest implementation of the promises made or yet to be made can provide a route to winning them over and ensuring peace in the State. And this, in turn, would be a fitting answer to Pakistan's designs on Kashmir.

The Tribune, 14 December 2004

**Geelani sends notice to Shia leader**

Jammu, December 13: Internal dissensions have begun to plague Tehrik Hurriyat Kashmir headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who has decided to deal firmly with those who go against the constitution of the three-month old separatist conglomerate. Mr Geelani has sent a show-cause notice to senior Shia leader Aga Hassan Budgami, asking him to explain why he had participated in the hunger strike organised by the rival amalgam, the AHPC, against alleged human rights violations by the security forces in Srinagar recently. Mr Geelani and the rival action of the Hurriyat Conference headed by Molvi Umar Farooq have often crossed swords after the split in the APHC during the past one year. As such, he could not tolerate one of the members of his faction joining hands with the rival organisation.

The Tribune, 14 December 2004

**Army quiet on fake surrender by ultras**

On the plea that the Army has no "mechanism" for determining whether those 'militants' who laid down their weapons were "fake" or genuine the defence authorities seem to have decided to keep away from the controversy. As many as 47 militants had surrendered and the ceremony was watched by senior Army and police authorities at the 16 Corps headquarters at Nagrota, near here, on November 9. Within one week 26 boys, who had surrendered, were found to be "fake" militants. Preliminary inquiries had revealed that one source Bashir Ahmed Golu had engineered the surrender of 26 civilians who were later sent back to their parents in Budgam district. At one stage the Army authorities are said to have planned to hold a court of inquiry. However, they have abandoned the idea for the time being after suggesting to the state government to hold the inquiry.

The Times of India, 14 December 2004

**Militants hang villager to death in Rajouri**

JAMMU: A group of Lashkar-e-Toiba militants on Monday abducted a villager and hanged him to death from a tree in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said. Four LET militants entered into the house of Mohammad Shabir in Niyalee village of Rajouri district and tortured him severely. He was then hanged with a tree on the outskirts of the village, they said adding security forces recovered the body and handed it over to family after postmortem.

The Indian Express, 14 December 2004

**Villagers say wounded asked to check IED**

PALHALAN, DECEMBER 13: Thousands of villagers blocked the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway today in protest against a Rashtriya Rifles unit having allegedly asked one of them to check an IED which went off, leaving the 30-year-old critically wounded. Protests ended after eight hours when police officers from Baramulla assured villagers that their fears over some of them being used as "human fields" would be addressed. The villagers told Express that Abdul Qadir Waza, a cook, was returning home from his fields when he was stopped by a 29 Rashtriya Rifles patrol.

Daily Excelsior, 14 December 2004

**Intra - J&K dialogue begins at Kathmandu**

Kathmandu, Dec 13: Intra Jammu and Kashmir dialogue to seek dignified and peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue began here today. Former diplomats and retired Generals of India and Pakistan including representatives of various groups and political parties from both sides have been participating in the conference here, sources said. Prominent among those from Hurriyat Conference participating in the Conference were chairman Moulvi Omar Farooq, Prof Abdul Gani Butt, Sajjad Lone, representatives of Shabir Shah and JKLF, chairman Muslim Conference Sardar Atique Khan, former Prime Minister of PoK Barrister Sultan Mehmood, leader of opposition in PoK Assembly, Journalist Ved Bhasin, Mr Bakshi, Jammu University Vice Chancellor Prof Amitabh Mattoo, Raja Farooq Haider Khan and JKNPP chairman Prof Bhim Singh, sources added.

Daily Excelsior, 14 December 2004

**PoK refugees move HC for settlement of claims**

JAMMU, Dec 13: A writ petition has been filed in the State High Court here by SOS- an organisation of PoK refugees, demanding settlement of their unsettled issues. These refugees had migrated to Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India in the wake of partition of the country in 1947. The petition was listed for admission today, but adjourned in view of the suspension of work by Bar Association to mourn the death of Advocate Avtar Singh. The petitioner- organisation claimed that it represents the uprooted people of district Mirpur, Muzafarabad and two-third of Poonch district and has been working for their welfare. In the petition it has been stated that despite approaching the authorities many a times for settling various unsettled issues, no steps have been taken.

Daily Excelsior, 14 December 2004

**Troop reducing in J&K - No cause for anxiety (Dr Brahma Singh)**

All in all it would appear that the furor that is being created over the Government announcement on reduction of troops in J&K is not really necessary. The decision on what strength is required to meet a particular situation is the prerogative of the Army. Let us trust our Army and allow it this privilege.

The News, 14 December 2004

### **Who benefits from Pakistan's 'Kashmir policy'?** (Fakir S Ayazuddin)

I agree that the Kashmir problem is of the utmost importance to us, but cannot understand why trade has to be linked to Kashmir.... Perhaps it is about time for us to look at the economic side of the picture and see how we can benefit -- of course without sacrificing Kashmir.

The Hindu, 15 December 2004

#### **J&K partner state in Pravasi Indians' meet**

SRINAGAR, DEC 14 . Jammu and Kashmir has achieved the distinction of becoming the first partner state for the 31st International Conference of Pravasi Indians to be held in New Delhi on January 10 and 11, 2005. Britain is the partner country for this international conference. The State government has been provided a stall at the conference venue where it would distribute the promotional material to the delegates attending the conference. Around 300 NRI delegates from all over the world would be participating in the two-day conference.

The Tribune, 15 December 2004

#### **Ex-woman SPO killed; 5 ultras held**

Srinagar, December 14: A former woman Special Police Officer (SPO) was among two persons killed while the security forces arrested five militants in Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours, an official spokesman said here today. Militants shot dead former SPO Fahmeda at Hanzipora in Baramula district last night. Meanwhile, Ghulam Qadir Waza, who was injured in a blast at Palhalan Pattan in Baramula, died in the hospital late last night.

The Indian Express, 15 December 2004

#### **UK man in PoK not OK: New Delhi** (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 14: Stung by Britain's decision to appoint an honorary consul at Mirpur in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, New Delhi has registered a strong protest with London on the grounds that the city is located in an area that has been illegally occupied by Pakistan. South Block shot off a letter to the British High Commission last week after the appointment came to its notice through media reports. India has pointed out that the whole of PoK is under illegal occupation of Pakistan, an issue constantly raised by New Delhi. By appointing a consul in Mirpur, sources said, London has clearly overlooked Indian concerns, particularly at a time when New Delhi and Islamabad are engaged in a peace process and are committed to discuss all outstanding issues through dialogue.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2004

#### **Militants gun down father, daughter**

SRINAGAR, Dec 14: Militants have shot dead three civilians, including two females, in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources in north Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that militants today called one Abdur Razaq Shah S/o Samad Shah R/o Kawari, Handwara, through a messenger to their hideout in Handwara forest area. Shah was directed to produce himself before a militant commander alongwith his 16-year-old daughter, Mubeena. The father-daughter duo left the home in the forenoon. Militants reportedly wanted "some clarification" regarding an encounter that took place at Shah's house in October this year. A prominent militant of Hizbul Mujahideen, Nazir Ahmed Shah alias Mike-7, had got killed in the clash between the militants and troops of Rashtriya Rifles 33 Bn at Kawari.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2004

#### **Army says situation improving in J&K**

SRINAGAR, Dec 14: Asserting that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was improving, Army today said the security forces were fighting a battle for restoration of peace in the State and the recent increase in militant attacks would not deter them from continuing the mission. "All the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir are fighting battle for restoration of peace in the State. There are some elements especially the mercenaries who are hell bent upon destroying the peace," General Officer Commanding of Srinagar-based 15 Corps of the Army, Lt Gen Nirbhay Sharma told reporters here.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2004

#### **KPs reject return formula, constitute 20 member Sub Committee**

JAMMU, Dec 14: Kashmiri Pandits once again rejected the return formula of the state Government and constituted a 20 member Sub Committee headed by journalist Sham Koul to frame the charter of demands which among others will stress on permanent rehabilitation of the Community on the conditions set by it. Disclosing this the ASKPC general secretary Hira Lal Chatta said that a consensus has emerged in today's meeting of KP organisations which was held at Geeta Bhavan here. The meeting was organised by ASKPC.

The Indian Express, 15 December 2004

#### **'Not chasm, J-K a bridge between India and Pakistan'** (C. Raja Mohan)

KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 14: Dispelling political concerns all around and overcoming many procedural difficulties, a rare conversation among Indians, Pakistanis and Kashmiris ended here today with the hope that the state of Jammu and Kashmir could eventually become a bridge between New Delhi and Islamabad.... No one at the conference ceded ground on the controversial question of Jammu and Kashmir. Yet, no one sought to impose a set of positions on the others. The emphasis was on the widely shared interest in promoting peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tribune, 16 December 2004

### **Hurriyat hopeful of getting permission to visit Pak**

Srinagar, December 15: After the conclusion of Kathmandu conference discussing Kashmir dispute, the separatist Hurriyat Conference is hopeful of being allowed to visit Pakistan, its condition prior to the third round of talks with the Central Government. According to sources here, the moderate faction of the APHC led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, which attended the three-day meet in Kathmandu, has got positive indications in this direction. The APHC, which had two rounds of talks with the former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr L.K. Advani, during the NDA government, has been demanding a visit to Pakistan for talks with the leadership there.

The Tribune, 16 December 2004

### **3 fidayeen killed in J&K**

Srinagar, December 15: Three suspected fidayeen were killed by security forces at Sopore in Baramula district today, while four others, including a girl, killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. A group of militants also attacked a police post at Singhpora Chatroo in Doda district of Jammu region and fled with four SLRs, four .303 rifles, one AK rifle, one LMG and a wireless set last night.

The Tribune, 16 December 2004

### **Dilemma over travel to Muzaffarabad**

Jammu, December 15: Will travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, whenever it is reopened, on the Indian passport violate the Parliament resolution on Kashmir adopted in 1994? This question has begun haunting several intellectuals and political leaders following New Delhi's insistence that the proposed travel on the road be based on the passport system. Dr Hari Om, vice-president of the BJP state unit, said today: "If the Indian visitors travel to occupied Kashmir on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road on the passport and other travel documents issued by New Delhi it will amount to violation of the resolution."

The Indian Express, 16 December 2004

### **'7 cops surrender before militants, let them loot'**

JAMMU, DECEMBER 15: Bringing "disgrace to police force," seven cops - without showing any resistance - surrendered before militants and allowed them to loot 11 weapons, a wireless set and ammunition from Singhpora Post in Chatroo forests of Doda district during wee hours today. For their "act of cowardice" all the seven - including six SPOs and a constable - have been arrested and discharged from duty. Sources said, around 3:30 a.m., a group of nearly 15 heavily armed LeT militants fired at the post.

Greater Kashmir, 16 December 2004

### **1000 more troops moved out of Rajouri**

Jammu, Dec 15: As part of the ongoing reduction in the number of security forces in the state, a battalion of Assam Regiment was removed from Rajouri today. About 40 vehicles carrying around 1000 army personnel left for a peace station in central India. This is the fourth battalion to be moved. Talking to reporters, Commanding officer D Jayadev said there has been a decrease in the number of militants in the area and as such the de-induction will not affect counter insurgency operations.

Dawn, 16 December 2004

### **Kashmiris face-to-face** (Editorial)

The Kathmandu conference has set up committees to take this intra-Kashmir dialogue further. While one committee will seek to bridge the differences among the Kashmiri leaders, another will discuss confidence-building measures that can be adopted to promote the Kashmir cause. The third and the most important of these committees is the one which is to explore the next stage in the quest for a solution of the Kashmir dispute. These are positive moves and if the Kashmiri leaders can jointly manage to work out a formula which they find acceptable, India and Pakistan should willingly accommodate it and not reject it on grounds of their own narrow nationalistic or strategic interests.

The Tribune, 16 December 2004

### **Kashmir in Kathmandu** (Editorial)

The Kathmandu conference had the tacit support of India and Pakistan as both had sent their official observers. This means the outcome of the initiative may influence their future moves. The meeting provided an occasion to the Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control to interact among themselves for the first time on a question that concerns them more than anybody else. Interestingly, they disapproved of the use of violence to achieve their objective. They supported the India-Pakistan dialogue process, expressing the view that peace could come back to Kashmir only through negotiations.

Dawn, 16 December 2004

### **Kathmandu moot on Kashmir** (Ahmed Sadik)

If Pug wash can help India and Pakistan overcome the Kashmir impasse it will have succeeded where the United Nations and the big powers have miserably failed. And if this were to actually materialize in the aftermath of the Kathmandu talks, it may well add the new word of "pug washing" to the English language dictionary as indicative of the process of resolving international disputes.

The Tribune, 17 December 2004

**LeT militant, jawan among three killed**

Srinagar, December 16: A Lashkar-e-Toiba militant and a jawan were among three persons killed in separate encounters in Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said today. They said troops launched a cordon-and-search operation in the Talee Dhar forest belt of Baderwah tehsil in Doda district last night. In the subsequent encounter that took place between the troops and militants, one LeT militant, codenamed Abu Amira, was killed. One AK rifle, 3 magazines, 7 grenades and 110 cartridges were seized, the sources said in Jammu.

The Tribune, 17 December 2004

**Panel to assess NGOs' working**

Jammu, December 16: The government has constituted a three-member committee to assess the working of non-government organisations in the state. The nominated members are the Managing Director, J&K Women Corporation, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Director, Regional Research Laboratory, Jammu.

The Times of India, 17 December 2004

**Moderate voice heard in Geelani's Hurriyat**

SRINAGAR: Cracks have begun to emerge in Syed Ali Shah Geelani's Hurriyat Conference after one of the members Aga Hassan Budgami participated in the hunger strike organised by its moderate counterpart led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. Geelani has decided to deal firmly with those who go against the constitution of the three-month-old separatist conglomerate. Geelani formed his own Hurriyat conference under the name of Tehreek-i-Hurriyat early this year.

Daily Excelsior, 17 December 2004

**KPs constitute nine sub committees**

JAMMU, Dec 16: Two day meeting of various Kashmiri Pandit organisations was held at Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra Talab Tillo, Bohri on December 15 and 16. The meeting which was organised by Jammu and Kashmir Vichar Manch (JKVM) was chaired by Prof. R L Shant a renowned scholar. The representatives of camp and non camp organisations attended the meeting.

The Tribune, 18 December 2004

**Hurriyat leaders among protesters held**

Srinagar, December 17: The police used force and held a number of protesters demonstrating against the alleged violation of human rights here today, while several separatist leaders were prevented from leading similar demonstrations at several other places. A number of activists of the Jammu Kashmir Peoples Freedom League were held while holding demonstrations at the TRC here and attempting to take out a procession towards the office of the UNMOG this afternoon. The protesters alleged that security forces committed excesses against innocent masses and violated of human rights.

The Tribune, 18 December 2004

**J&K Govt giving boost to sports**

Jammu, December 17: The state government is busy rebuilding infrastructure, restoring peace and ensuring development in the state. It is also concerned with giving a facelift to sports activities in the state and boosting the morale of young players. In the past year-and-a-half, 34 boys and girls from the state have represented India in various disciplines. During the same period, players in various disciplines have won 155 medals - 50 gold, 52 silver and 53 bronze. This includes the first-ever medal for Jammu and Kashmir in swimming. Five players from the state have been selected in the under-19 national cricket team for the Commonwealth tournament.

The Tribune, 18 December 2004

**7 jawans injured in militant attack**

Srinagar, December 17: Five police personnel and two CRPF men were injured when militants attacked a police station here last evening, while two others, including a militant, were killed and another injured in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. The police here said five police personnel and two jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were injured when militants hurled a grenade at Khanyar police station here last evening. The police personnel fired in retaliation, however, without causing any damage. Those injured were shifted to hospital.

Daily Excelsior, 18 December 2004

**LeT commander killed in Poonch**

JAMMU, Dec 17: A 'district commander' of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was today gunned down in a joint operation by the troops of Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operations Group (SOG) in Surankote tehsil in Poonch district. He has been identified as Abu Umar alias Bravo 1, a resident of Pakistan, presently operating as 'district commander' of the LeT. DIG Rajouri-Poonch range SM Sahai said troops of 25 Rashtriya Rifles and SOG personnel launched a search operation at Neeli Dhok in Gujjar Narh area of Dara Sangla in Surankote this afternoon after developing an information of the presence of three militants.

Greater Kashmir, 18 December 2004

**Gujjars beaten 'savagely' in Kellar village**

Shopian, Dec 17: At least 30 Gujjar and Bakerwals including women and children were beaten by the troops of Rashtriya Rifles in Kathwal Nagbal, a forest terrain between Shopian and Keller areas of Pulwama district for the 'sin of not recognising

two persons who disappeared in forests in front of the troops and the local residents.'

The Hindu, 19 December 2004

**'Government ready to allow more contact between Kashmiris'**

NEW DELHI, DEC. 18 . The Government is ready to allow greater contact between Kashmiris, including the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, living on either side of the Line of Control, informed government sources have said. They pointed out that the recent Pugwash conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, where Kashmiris from both sides of the LoC were present, had official government sanction. They pointed out that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq recently held a meeting with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, in Amsterdam. The Government also had no objections if Kashmiri leaders from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir wanted to visit India.

The Hindu, 19 December 2004

**Divided families across the border a disappointed lot**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 18 . Mohammad Shafi Dinposh is a dejected man. He had, like many divided families across the Kashmir, pinned hopes on the recently-held talks between India and Pakistan over the issue of opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road. The 60-year-old Srinagar resident had been waiting to make the shorter journey through this road to meet his father, Abdul Ahad Dinposh, who is settled in Rawalpindi in Pakistan. He came here in 1947 in connection with his business. The tragedy is that whenever Dinposh made plans to visit his father, it was upset by the heightening of hostilities between India and Pakistan. "This time I had high hopes that the road would be opened going by media reports," he said. "How long will we remain divided?" he asked.

The Tribune, 19 December 2004

**India not for status quo on Kashmir**

New Delhi, December 18: As India and Pakistan brace themselves up for the crucial Foreign Secretary-level talks in Islamabad on December 27-28, there is a feeling in the diplomatic circles that New Delhi would be approaching these talks with an open mind and not with a hardened maximalist position. There is, however, some concern here on certain agenda-driven reports and talks about India's so-called over-willingness for formalising the "status quo position" on the Kashmir issue: meaning that let Pakistan have whatever it has of J&K and let India has whatever it has of J&K and let that be formalised.

The Tribune, 19 December 2004

**Separatists' peace suggestion has few buyers**

Jammu, December 18: Though a majority of separatists in Jammu and Kashmir are in favour of peace in the state, their peace suggestion, mooted at the recent Track-II Kashmir Conference in Nepal, does not seem to have buyers in the valley and across the LoC. Informed sources said the urge for peace had gripped Kashmiri separatists for the past several years following growing threat to their lives. The separatists, according to these sources, have realised the futility of arms. They now want the parties concerned to work for promotion of peace.

The Tribune, 19 December 2004

**Top Hizbul militant held near Moga**

Jammu, December 18: A top Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant, wanted in several attacks on the police and security forces, killings of innocents and IED blasts in the border Poonch district, has been arrested by a special team of the Punjab Police near Moga in Punjab. The Punjab Police later handed over the militant, identified as Abdul Hamid of Kasbalari near Achhad in Poonch, to the Poonch police. A senior police officer told UNI that Hamid was being interrogated at the Mendhar police station. The police was trying to find out if he was also involved in the attack on Poonch police station over two years ago.

The Tribune, 19 December 2004

**New strategy to target cops?**

Jammu, December 18: When the four policemen left their pickets in the Kathua district to negotiate surrender by the ultras, they perhaps least suspected that they were just walking into a death trap laid by the terrorists. Reports now trickling in here indicate that the policemen were not ambushed as such, but were caught in a shower of bullets that were fired at them as soon as they reached a mutually agreed place to finalise the modalities for surrender. A police source told this correspondent yesterday that negotiations had been going on between the police and a group of terrorists who had expressed a desire to surrender. The ultras wanted to be sure that they would not be eliminated and would be given the incentives that had been announced for those terrorists who surrendered.

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2004

**HM 'commander' killed in Bhaderwah, girl in Gool**

JAMMU, Dec 19: A 'tehsil commander' of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit was today gunned down by troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles and Doda police in an encounter at Sherkhi Katari Gali in Bhaderwah tehsil in Doda district. A large quantity of ration, in addition to arms and ammunition, was recovered from the hideout where the militant was eliminated. In another incident, a young girl was kidnapped and tortured to death by the militants in Gool area of Ramban police district last night. Official sources said troops of 4 RR and Bhaderwah police of Doda district launched a search operation in Dal area between Sherkhi and Katari Gali under the jurisdiction of Bhaderwah police station this morning. The operation was launched amidst a hostile weather with heavy rains lashing the area overnight and early today.

The Indian Express, 20 December 2004

**Army finds 23 kg of explosives in Jammu**

JAMMU, DECEMBER 19: The Army seized 23 kg of explosives during search operations at different places in Rajouri and Doda district today, while a top militant of Hizbul Mujahideen was killed in an encounter with the security forces in Bhaderwah tehsil of Doda district. It was during a search operation in Sungli area of Bhaderwah tehsil that troops stumbled upon a militant hideout and seized 20 kgs of explosives, 195 rounds, 13 magazines, one AK rifle, 13 detonators and some IEDs.

The Indian Express, 20 December 2004

**Valley waits for real power**

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 19: Barely a month after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh outlined his vision for a "power surplus" Kashmir, the Valley has plunged into darkness. In Srinagar, 19-hour power cuts are a part of daily life these days, while many villages outside have had no power for weeks. "There is an absolute power crisis," says Showkat Ahmad, Chief Engineer, J-K Power Development Department.

The Times of India, 20 December 2004

**Army jawan kills BSF officer in J-K**

SRINAGAR: A BSF officer was shot dead allegedly by an Army jawan near the Line of Control in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said on Monday. Sub-Inspector Yashpaul Singh of BSF was killed allegedly by soldier Devinder Singh at Doodi post in Machil sector yesterday, the sources said. It was not immediately known what led to the incident, they said.

The Tribune, 20 December 2004

**APHC firm on demand to visit Pak**

Jammu, December 19: Notwithstanding known interaction between a group of separatists from the valley and those from across the LoC during the recent conference in Nepal, the APHC, headed by Molvi Umar Farooq, has not dropped its demand for permission to the Hurriyat team to visit Pakistan. The APHC leadership has made repeated demand for visiting Pakistan with the purpose of meeting leaders of various political parties, including those who matter in occupied Kashmir, and those who head different rebel outfits for evolving a joint strategy while seeking the settlement of the Kashmir issue.

The Tribune, 20 December 2004

**Pugwash initiative on Kashmir** (Balraj Puri)

If a dialogue is started and a consensus is reached within the Indian part of the state on the basis of the 1952 commitment of Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah and of the People's Convention, or any modification thereof, it would be easier to initiate a dialogue on the external status of the state with leaders across the LoC and the governments of the two countries. For, there would be better appreciation of the aspirations of people by each community and region.

The Tribune, 21 December 2004

**Heavy rush of passport seekers in J&K**

Jammu, December 20: Weeks before the Indian and Pakistani teams started their deliberations on the pattern that should be adopted for facilitating travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, after it was thrown open, the number of passport seekers in Jammu and Srinagar offices has increased in geometrical progression. Passport officials confirmed that between 20 and 50 applications are received per day from the passport seekers. They said "We have not been in a position to issue the passports under the Tatkal scheme providing for the issuance of passport within a fortnight because of the rush."

The Tribune, 21 December 2004

**Commander of Hizbul among 3 killed in J&K**

Srinagar, December 20: Three persons, including a self-styled commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen, were killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir whereas four persons were injured and five houses damaged in a powerful blast, a police spokesman said today. 'Tehsil commander' of the Hizbul Mujahideen identified as Mohammad Hafiz Bhat, alias Danish, was killed in an encounter with security forces during search operations at Sherki in Doda district last night, the spokesman said. A hideout was also busted during the operation which led to the recovery of a huge quantity of ration and utensils besides some arms and ammunition, he added.

The Tribune, 21 December 2004

**Central team visits migrant Pandits' camps**

Jammu, December 20: An inter-ministerial team of the Centre, led by Ms Sushma Choudhary, Principal Adviser to the Planning Commission, visited various camps of the Kashmiri Pandit migrants here today to see what could be done for their betterment. Ms Meetal Sen, Joint Secretary, Home (Kashmir Affairs), is also accompanying Ms Choudhary. They visited the camp at Muthi today and would go to Nagrota and Udampur tomorrow. During his recent visit here, the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, had announced that an inter-ministerial team would be sent to look into the problems that the migrants were facing here.

Daily Excelsior, 21 December 2004

**16 houses, mosque damaged in blast**

SRINAGAR, Dec 20: Over a dozen houses and a place of worship have suffered minor to extensive damage in a powerful explosion at the residence of a Hizbul Mujahideen militant in Pulwama district. Informed sources said that a massive explosion occurred at the deserted house of the Hizbul Mujahideen "District Commander" Rayees Ahmed Dar alias Rayees Kachru at Punjgam in Pulwama district at 0350 hours during last night. The house was completely razed to rubble. A cluster of at least 15 residential houses and a mosque also suffered damage under the impact of the bomb blast. The explosion was so powerful that it was clearly heard and felt in a radius of 20 Kms. People in Pulwama, Sangham and Awantipore towns said that they woke up due to the extremely loud explosion which shook a vast area.

Daily Excelsior, 21 December 2004

#### **New outfit of 1947 PoK refugees formulated**

JAMMU, Dec 20: A new socio political outfit was launched at Jammu by Advocate Chaman Lal of Poonch to fulfil the demands of public in general and PoK community in particular. The meeting was attended by Brahm Rishi Jagan Nath, Rajeev Chuni, president SOS, Ram Parkash, president BJP State Sharnarathi Morcha, S Mohan Singh, S Mohinder Singh, Ashok Sharma from Poonch, S Mohan Singh, S Gurmeet Singh, S Man Mohan Singh from Simbal Camp, Mrs Shakuntla Devi from Nanak Nagar, Dr Ram Chander Sharma and Sarwan Kumar. All the participants stressed the need to work unitedly for the cause of PoK 1947 refugee community.

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2004

#### **Once dreaded Ikhwanis feel betrayed now** (Peerzada Arshad Hamid)

Islamabad: Residing in a two-story building of a migrant Kashmiri Pandit in a congested locality at Islamabad town in south Kashmir, the counter insurgents commonly called Ikhwanis are spending life in the self-chosen "exile" in their own homeland. They carry with them the infamy of fighting their own people, more often than not, barbarously. So in the vocabulary acquired by Kashmiris in the past 15 years of strife-the name Ikhwan invokes a sentiment of hate, spite and fear. Albeit the dreadful tag attached to them once seems to have lost the vigor, still the message written on the building sends shivers down the spine. They have lost 200 of their colleagues fighting militancy and witnessed a steady decline since the formation of Ikhwan (brotherhood) in late 1994.

The Tribune, 22 December 2004

#### **Land prices zoom in Srinagar**

Srinagar, December 21: Residential plots here have gone beyond the reach of the common man. The growing number of educated people, lack of basic facilities in rural areas coupled with "free flow of black money" in urban areas are considered responsible for the rising prices. The unchecked growth of ill-planned residential colonies here has led to a tremendous pressure on the basic facilities of drinking water, electricity and other civic amenities. At least 8,000 unauthorised constructions have come up within the municipal limits during the past 15 years, according to Mr Mushtaq Ahmad, Divisional Town Planner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation. These structures have come up mainly along the periphery of Srinagar spreading from Zainakote to Peerbagh Nowgam and Buchpora.

The Tribune, 22 December 2004

#### **Blast in south Kashmir**

Srinagar, December 21: Militants detonated a powerful improvised explosives device (IED) targeting Border Security Force (BSF) officials in south Kashmir this morning, official sources said. The militants triggered the blast as soon as the BSF patrol party reached Nudal Tral in south Kashmir. The security forces immediately cordoned off the area and launched a search operation. No arrests had been made so far, the sources added.

Business Line, 22 December 2004

#### **Tourist arrivals in J&K on the rise**

Chennai , Dec. 21: After a gap of 10-12 years domestic as well as foreign tourists are flocking to Jammu and Kashmir, and there has been a substantial increase in the number of tourists visiting the region in the last 12 months, according to Mr Jugal Kishore, Minister for Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir. The number of tourists to Kashmir declined sharply in the last decade due to increased militancy. However, in the last two years, tourists are coming back to Kashmir even as militancy in the State has reduced sharply, he told newsmen. In 2004, around 7 lakh tourists visited Kashmir as against 5 lakh the previous year. The Leh region attracted around 50,000 foreigners this year, and around 10,000 foreigners visited Kashmir in the last 12 months.

Dawn, 22 December 2004

#### **India deploys Israeli drones**

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: The Indian army has deployed for the first time Israeli-built spy planes to track militants in occupied Kashmir. Officials on Tuesday said unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were first used over the Kishtwar mountain heights in southern Kashmir on Dec 17 , two days after insurgents raided an arms dump in the Singhpora town, they said. "We conducted sorties over two days and the data we downloaded from the UAV were vital," a senior official from the army's aviation wing said.

Daily Excelsior, 22 December 2004

#### **Two ultras killed in Mahore**

JAMMU, Dec 21: Army and police today gunned down two top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants including an "deputy district commander" inside a natural cave at village Ganjot in Mahore tehsil of Reasi police district while troops foiled an infiltration

attempt on Line of Control (LoC) in Peer Badesar area of Keri sector in Rajouri district forcing four infiltrators to retrieve. SSP Reasi Jagdish Lal Sharma said the Army and police personnel launched a joint search operation at village Ganjot after developing a specific input that two top Lashkar militants including a "commander" had taken shelter in a hideout at Ganjot.

The Hindu, 23 December 2004

#### **Protests erupt over rape charge against Army unit**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 22: Protests erupted today in Pahalgam against the alleged rape of an elderly woman by the Army. Reports said that troops from the Third Rashtriya Rifles cordoned off the Salar Sheikhpora village in Pahalgam area of Anantnag district during the night of December 20 and 21, entered a house and raped a mother of four, after locking up the other inmates. As news spread, a large number of people took out a procession against the Army personnel. Pahalgam Police have registered a case under Section 116 of 2004 in this connection and a joint civil and army investigation has been ordered.

The Tribune, 23 December 2004

#### **1,000 join BJP in Jammu region**

Jammu, December 22: In a bid to strengthen its base in the Jammu region, the state unit of the BJP has begun targeting political activists of various organisations and those belonging to the weaker sections of society. According to the president of the state BJP, Dr Nimal Singh, "Our efforts to attract people to our party have borne results. During the past fortnight, about 1,000 people, including a large number of women, joined the organisation."

The Tribune, 23 December 2004

#### **Hizbul commander among 4 killed**

Srinagar, December 22: A Hizbul Mujahideen group commander and two other militants were among four persons killed, while the security forces recovered 40 kg of RDX and other explosives in Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours, an official spokesman said today. He said the security forces gunned down HM group commander Ali Mohammad Dar in an encounter at Nagbal Tral in Pulwama district last night. The encounter ensued after a search party was attacked by militants, he said, adding that one AK rifle, three magazines and 15 cartridges were seized.

Daily Excelsior, 23 December 2004

#### **Two JKFF ultras held in Poonch**

JAMMU, Dec 22: In a successful operation, Poonch police have captured alive two militants, who had been deputed to carry out a fidayeen attack at police station or District Police Lines (DPL) in Poonch town on the eve of new year. Police sources said the militants were arrested at village Ari in Mandi sector in the border district of Poonch late last night. They were arrested by a police party on a "very specific information" developed by the police from a hideout in Ari.

Daily Excelsior, 23 December 2004

#### **Inter-ministerial team discusses KPs' return**

JAMMU, Dec 22: Inter-ministerial team headed by Principal Advisor Planning Commission Sushma Choudhary that is currently on 4-day visit to the state today called on Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma and thread barely discussed modalities for devising strategies to redress problems of the Kashmiri migrants presently putting up in various camps. During an hour-long meeting with members of the inter-ministerial team, the Deputy Chief Minister projected various problems confronting the Kashmiri migrants dwelling in camps. He stressed for setting up medical facility centres in all the camps for providing timely medicare to the camp dwellers.

Daily Excelsior, 23 December 2004

#### **15 injured in blast, militant killed**

SRINAGAR, Dec 22: Even as security forces today claimed to have killed a militant in an encounter in Tral area of south Kashmir, a civilian, who had sustained injuries in yesterday's shootout at Batmaloo, died at a hospital. Official sources said that troops of Rashtriya Rifles 42 Bn killed a militant commander of Hizbul Mujahideen in a brief encounter at Nagbal in Tral area today. He was identified as Ali Mohammad Dar alias Bilal S/o Ghulam Ahmed Dar R/o Origund. Troops claimed to have recovered one AK-56 rifle from his possession. Sources said that during the gunbattle, one Khizar Mohammad Wani's house caught fire and it gutted partially.

Daily Excelsior, 23 December 2004

#### **Rs 46 lakh worth fake currency seized**

NEW DELHI, Dec 22: In an indication that Bangladesh has emerged as a route for smuggling from Pakistan, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized fake currency with the face value of Rs 46 lakh and arrested four persons, including two Bangladeshi conduits, here. The consignment, in the denomination of Rs 500, was sent from Pakistan for circulation in the country and was seized at a hotel in Paharganj area of Central Delhi last evening, a DRI official said.

Greater Kashmir, 23 December 2004

#### **Centre says no to foreign funding in JK**

Srinagar, Dec 22: Even as the State has received foreign funding proposals worth crores of rupees in development and humanitarian sectors, the central government is said to have said no to most of these. Development economists in the state are worried because on one hand the State seeks outside investment in sectors where internal resources can be easily

managed and resorts to raising loans on high interest, huge funding opportunities (100 per cent grant) are being lost for no justified reasons.

Greater Kashmir, 23 December 2004

#### **1575 Armymen killed in 4 years**

New Delhi: The Indian Army has lost 1,575 personnel to the ongoing militancy in Jammu and Kashmir over the past almost four years - and a year-wise list shows the number of casualties has shown a decline during the current year. The Army lost 102 Officers, 118 Junior Commissioned Officers and 1,355 Other Ranks from January 1, 2001 to November 30, 2004, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee told the Rajya Sabha during Question Hour.

The News, 24 December 2004

#### **ADB builds bridges in divided Kashmir** (Nadeem Malik)

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank, as a first major intervention by a multilateral aid agency in recent times, has approved two similar projects for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and the held Kashmir. The Bank approved a loan of \$ 250 million for a Multi-sector Project for Infrastructure Rehabilitation in held Kashmir and \$ 57 million loan for a similar project in Azad Jammu and Kashmir to improve the quality of life and economic prospects in Kashmir. The programme aims at restoring existing infrastructure facilities and services in two key infrastructure sectors, the urban and transport sectors.

Dawn, 24 December 2004

#### **Pugwash process to seek 'feasible' solutions** (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 23: A conference on Kashmir dispute held recently in Kathmandu agreed to seek peaceful solutions that are 'honourable' and 'feasible', according to a consensus paper of the dialogue sponsored by the US-based think tank, Pugwash. The document, made available to Dawn by a dialogue participant, Sardar Khalid Ibrahim, said the four-day conference that ended at the Nepalese capital on Dec 13 decided to institutionalize the process started by the International Pugwash Foundation.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2004

#### **4 top ultras killed in Mahore, Gool**

JAMMU, Dec 23: Four militants were today gunned down by Army in two separate encounters in Mahore and Gool areas of Reasi and Ramban police districts respectively while security forces destroyed a hideout of the militants at Sabjian in Poonch. Reports said the troops engaged three militants in an encounter at Tiranga area of Mahore tehsil in Reasi police district last night. A contact with the militants was established this morning at 10.40 am. A heavy exchange of firing between the two sides continued for four hours in extreme chilly weather condition with heavy rains in the area and snowfall on the hills.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2004

#### **Pak distances itself from Geelani**

NEW DELHI, Dec 23: The Pakistani establishment has started distancing itself from the hard-core Hurriyat faction of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, which once it promoted, after finding its ideology contrary to 'enlightened and moderate Islam.' Officials here said Pervez Musharraf Government's tilt towards moderate Hurriyat faction, led by Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, was evident as even state-controlled Pakistan Television (PTV) had started giving more coverage to Mirwaiz describing him as 'Hurriyat rehnuma (Hurriyat guardian) instead of the earlier 'Kashmiri rehnuma.'

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2004

#### **4 fake militants held in Banihal**

RAMBAN Dec 23: Police arrested four impersonators/fake militants from Neel area of Banihal tehsil today. All the four youth under the age group of twenty are involved in extortion and in loot of cash and kind from the village after posing themselves militants, police said here today. Sources said that it was the dead night of 12-10-2004 when four masked persons impersonating themselves as militants made their way into the house of Abdul Majeed son of Shamas-u-Din Lone in village Neel of Banihal and demanded huge amounts and threatened carnage of the entire family in case of disobeying the demand. The family members of the family of Majeed, a contractor by profession succumbed before the masked men and paid Rs 40,000 to them to save their lives.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2004

#### **Heal their wounds** (Editorial)

One is happy to note that of late the migrant organisations have shown the inclination to bury their hatchets. They have to put up a unified front to clinch their rightful claim. On the other hand, the major parties like the National Conference, People's Democratic Party and those on the other side of the political range like the Hurriyat Conference, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front have to sit as one and adopt a common approach. Merely expressing pious wishes that the Pandits should come back is not enough. It is even worse to make their return conditional to the support they should extend to one ideology or the other: this would lead to the re-enactment of such environment as had led to their exit in the first place. Leaders of the main outfits should join hands to lead the migrants' return from the front. Otherwise it is doubtful if a breakthrough can be achieved. To expect that the Government or any of its wings can do the magic will be a miscalculation. They can at best be facilitators. And, if cold-blooded they can perhaps force a decision. Doing so, however, is always counter-productive in matters aimed at building harmonious human relations. Therefore, to think that any Central teams even the one steered by a talented and well-meaning officer can perform a miracle is fallacious. Ultimately all will depend upon how the two

communities and their leaders behave vis-à-vis each other.

The Hindu, 25 December 2004

**Pakistan for mutual flexibility on Kashmir, says Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 24 . Ahead of the second round of Foreign Secretaries' meeting on the composite dialogue, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has made it known that Islamabad is ready to show "flexibility" on the Kashmir issue if India is prepared to reciprocate. Addressing the 15th dinner reception of the Pakistani-American Public Affairs Committee on Thursday, Gen. Musharraf said Pakistan had not moved from its "principled position" on Jammu and Kashmir.

Dawn, 25 December 2004

**Kashmir situation improved: India** (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: India has said that the overall situation in the Jammu and Kashmir has improved significantly in recent days, indicating that New Delhi's standard allegations of cross-border infiltration against Islamabad may not be an important factor at last in the foreign secretaries' talks starting in Islamabad on Monday. In its year-end review of the security situation, the Indian home ministry said on Friday: "Overall security scenario has improved significantly. The lower level of violence has resulted in revival of tourism giving a major boost to the economy.

Daily Excelsior, 25 December 2004

**Police repulse militant attack on post**

JAMMU, One person was injured as police repulsed a militant attack on their post in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said here today. A group of militants fired rifle grenades and opened indiscriminate firing at the Indian Reserve Police Post at Dhandli in Udhampur district last night, they said. The security guards deployed at the post retaliated leading to a heavy exchange of fire between the two sides.

Daily Excelsior, 25 December 2004

**HM commander takes the lid off Billawar killings** (Sanjeev Pargal)

JAMMU, Dec 24: A Hizbul Mujahideen "area commander" for Billawar-Bani belt Muzaffar Iqbal alias Umar Mukhtiar, who had earlier worked as "personal bodyguard" of slain HM "divisional commander" Shakeel Ansari, has surrendered before police in Kathua district. The Hizbul "commander" has made important disclosures about the militant attack on a police picket at Lohai Malhar early this month in which three police constables and a Special Police Officer (SPO) were killed.

The Hindu, 26 December 2004

**Militant hideouts busted**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 25. Insurgents kidnapped one civilian and stole a vehicle in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir today, while security forces busted two militant hideouts since last night, a police spokesman said today. A group of militants abducted Mohammad Shafi Wani from his house at Bumdoora village in Anantnag district of South Kashmir this morning, the spokesman said. Militants took away a car belonging to one Nissar Ahmad Wani from Baghat-e-Kanipora on the outskirts of Srinagar last night, he added.

The Indian Express, 26 December 2004

**Swiss cantonal model being explored for Panchayats in J&K**

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25: With Panchayati Raj elections due in Kashmir next month, the Centre is seriously exploring an innovative model of empowering local self-government in the state on the lines of cantons in the federal structure of Switzerland. The philosophy behind this is to give residents a sort of "financial and administrative azadi" by empowering Panchayats with a degree of fiscal autonomy and the right to manage internal affairs at the local level. The idea been discussed by Union Panchayati Raj Secretary Wajahat Habibullah with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh after Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar gave a go-ahead signal.

Daily Excelsior, 26 December 2004

**J&K more free than PoK: US Survey**

WASHINGTON, Dec 25: Disputing Pakistan's claims of Indian oppression in Jammu and Kashmir, a survey by a US think tank has said the State has a greater degree of freedom than Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The 'freedom of the world report 2005' has classified PoK as "not free" as compared to "partly free" status for Jammu and Kashmir. The pronouncement by the think tank Freedom House challenges Pakistan's charges of oppression by India in Jammu and Kashmir and its calls for "self-determination" for the State.

Daily Excelsior, 26 December 2004

**TuM chief commander arrested**

SRINAGAR, Dec 25: A "chief commander" of Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen was captured at Natipora on outskirts of the capital city today by security forces and police. He has been identified as Mohd Shaffi Dar alias Abdullah. Official sources said the TuM chief was apprehended alive in a joint search operation by security forces and police. He was operating as TuM chief for last two years.

Daily Excelsior, 26 December 2004

**J&K signs MoU with UNDP for implementing UEVR programme**

JAMMU, Dec 25: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir have signed MoUs with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office for implementation of the Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction (UEVR) programme in the cities of Jammu and Srinagar respectively. This programme is a part of the Government of India -UNDP, Disaster Risk Management (DRM) programme, and is a national initiative taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs with UNDP support to reduce the vulnerabilities of communities in 169 most hazardous prone districts in 17 states of India.

Daily Excelsior, 27 December 2004

### **2 Pak militants, SPO killed in Valley**

SRINAGAR, Dec 26: Security forces have eliminated two militants in a gunbattle in Ganderbal area and unidentified gunmen, believed to be militants, have shot dead a Special Police Official (SPO) in Bandipore since last evening. Informed sources said that on the basis of a specific information, troops conducted a search operation in Tsoonthwaliwaar area of Ganderbal-Lar belt during last night. During the operation, two holed up militants were detected at a particular hideout. Troops laid a tight cordon around the hideout and directed the militants to come out for surrender.

Daily Excelsior, 27 December 2004

### **Al-Umar Mujahideen re-activates PoK units (B L Kak)**

Land route between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad will not be thrown open to human and vehicular traffic in the near future. But the illegal passage of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir in twos and threes in the coming days and weeks is not ruled out, if one were to go by the uncontradicted reports about the ominous activity triggered by the dreaded outfit, Al-Umar Mujahideen, in some parts of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), including Muzaffarabad. Known for the support, moral and material, to it from Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) since it came into being in December 1989, Al-Umar Mujahideen has avoided to open any office in Pakistan. Instead, the organisation set up its office in PoK's capital city, Muzaffarabad, which, in spite of the US pressure on Islamabad for action against militants and terrorists, has been reorganised. This apart, Al-Umar Mujahideen has also opened units or camps for its members and operatives at nearly half a dozen places across Poonch and Rajouri sectors of Jammu region.

The Hindu, 28 December 2004

### **Soldier dismissed for misconduct**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 27. The Army today dismissed a soldier, found involved in the alleged rape of a 60-year-old woman at Sallar Sheikhpura on December 20, following recommendations by a summary court martial. The Defence spokesman, Lt. Col. V. K. Batra, said the authorities carried out a joint inquiry involving civil and police administration to investigate the allegations of rape. The findings of the medical examination of the victim and the inquiry ordered by Army proved that the allegations of rape were false and malafide, he said.

The Hindu, 28 December 2004

### **Record number of pilgrims visit Vaishno Devi**

KATRA, DEC. 27. The number of pilgrims visiting the Vaishno Devi shrine in the Trikuta hills of Udhampur district this year exceeded six millions, creating a new record today, a day when a thick blanket of snow wrapped the hills. The rush has been unprecedented this year and is not expected to go down during the winter. According to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, about 15,000 to 20,000 pilgrims visit the shrine every day from all parts of the country.

The Hindu, 28 December 2004

### **Not sidelining Kashmir, India assures Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 27. On the opening day of the second round of composite dialogue, India and Pakistan today agreed to continue the process on a sustained and serious basis, narrow down differences and work towards resolution of all issues. The Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, who led the Indian side at the talks was upbeat about the course of the dialogue and told a news conference that while there was progress on some of the proposals, more discussion was required on others. His reference was the wide gap in perception on both sides about conventional Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and differences on nuclear CBMs.

The Tribune, 28 December 2004

### **Two militants among four killed in J&K**

Srinagar, December 27: Four persons, including two militants, were killed while two houses were damaged in a blast in Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours. An official spokesman said security forces gunned down two militants in an encounter at Dessa in Doda district of Jammu region last night. One AK rifle, one magazine, five rounds, two wireless sets and one shotgun were recovered from the slain militants.

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2004

### **Budgam blast toll reaches 3**

SRINAGAR, Dec 27: While Army has recovered a huge dump of arms and ammunition in Pattan area of Baramulla district, yet another civilian injured in the Friday last blast at Pakharpora, in Budgam district, has breathed his last at a hospital. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that troops of Rashtriya Rifles 29 Bn conducted a raid at Tappar Bala in Pattan and unearthed a huge dump of arms and ammunition from a masonry-concrete underground tank. In a handout, a Defence spokesman said that the operation was launched on the basis of Army's own sources. He said that the seizure included 114 UBGL grenades, 171 hand grenades, 97 electronic detonators, one solar missile, 15 time pencils and 15 Kgs of loose explosive. Though

according to sources the recoveries were made on Saturday last, the Defence spokesman claimed that the operation was launched today.

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2004

**LeT's Pakistani commander nabbed in Baderwah town**

JAMMU, Dec 27: In a major success, troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles and Baderwah police today arrested one of the few most wanted Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant from outskirts of Baderwah and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition from his possession. The militant, identified as Asif Mohd son of Mohd Sharif, a resident of Rawlakote, Pakistan, was presently officiating as "district commander" of the LeT for Baderwah.

The News, 28 December 2004

**India to invite more Pak newsmen to held Kashmir**

ISLAMABAD: The Indian government will invite Pakistani journalists to visit held Kashmir after the successful tour of a team of Pak mediemen to India that returned home the other day. The Indian government plans to invite at least 50 journalists, both from the reporting as well as news desk, to enable them to understand the modern India. These views were expressed by senior Indian diplomats at the residence of Indian Deputy High Commissioner to Pakistan TCA Raghavan who hosted a dinner in honour of an official Indian delegation and mediemen on a visit to Islamabad with the foreign secretary, Shyam Saran.

The Hindu, 29 December 2004

**Mufti visits interior Srinagar**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 28. The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, undertook an extensive tour of Srinagar and took stock of the problems faced by people. The J&K Minister of State for Industries and Commerce, Raman Mattoo, Divisional Commissioner Khurshid Ahmad Ganai and Inspector General of Police Javed Makhdoomi accompanied Mr. Sayeed.

The Tribune, 29 December 2004

**India moots five meeting places for divided families**

Islamabad, December 28: Furthering its people-centric approach, India today proposed establishment of five designated points along the border for interaction between divided families on both sides of Kashmir even as differences persisted with Pakistan on the problem of cross-border terrorism. At the two-day Foreign Secretary-level talks that ended here, New Delhi stressed that more needs to be done on Pakistan's assurance that its soil would not be allowed to be used for terrorist acts against India.

The Tribune, 29 December 2004

**Infiltration goes down due to snowfall**

Jammu, December 28: The level of infiltration from across the LoC has further gone down following heavy snowfall in the border sectors of Poonch, Rajouri and Kupwara in recent days. Official sources said that during the past three months the rate of ingress of militants from across the LoC had declined owing to decreased support from the Pakistani agencies end on account of completion of the fencing project and improved border management by the Indian troops. The sources said that during the past 10 days hardly any incident of infiltration had been registered because of heavy snow in the upper reaches of Kupwara, Poonch and Rajouri sectors.

The Tribune, 29 December 2004

**Hizbul militant arrested**

Srinagar, December 28: A pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen militant has been arrested in Badgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesman said today. 22-year-old Latief Ahmad Rather, a resident of Qasba Naugam and affiliated to the Hizbul Mujahideen group, was nabbed at Deobagh village adjacent to the old airfield last evening, the spokesman said. He said a pistol, its one magazine, three cartridges, a damaged wireless set and Rs 97,000 were seized from the possession of the militant. Earlier in a press release, the spokesman said the militant was killed.

The Tribune, 29 December 2004

**Kashmiri Pandits stress on 'separate homeland'**

New Delhi, December 28: Representatives of Kashmiri Pandit, at an international conference, have cautioned against any settlement with, "Pakistan involving dilution of Indian sovereignty in Jammu and Kashmir". This, they claimed, could lead to a second partition. Fearing that the dilution of Indian sovereignty in the state could be done vis-à-vis granting of autonomy, porous borders, international protectorate, demilitarisation of the Line of Control (LoC) etc, it was put forth that such steps would eventually lead to the country's "second partition."

The Indian Express, 29 December 2004

**Mufti nephew held for funding militants**

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 28: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's nephew Mufti Sarwar has been arrested for his alleged links with militants.

Son of the CM's cousin Mufti Sarief-ud-din, Sarwar, was allegedly funding militant activities after making "easy money" through gold smuggling, duping business men and running a car theft racket. "This is a message that everybody is equal before this

government. He (Sarwar) can be a relative to us but he is not above the law," said PDP president Mehbooba Mufti. "The police can take action against anybody found involved in any illegal activity irrespective of who they are. We are not interfering in the work of the police."

The Indian Express, 29 December 2004

**Army wants Valley to touch base before switching on mobiles**

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 28: In these South Kashmir villages, a cellphone connection now comes with a rider. After passing the elaborate registration process by service providers, including a police verification, users have been asked get themselves registered at the local Army camp.

"The Army has told us to register our mobile connections with their local unit here," says an Airtel customer from Kulgam one of the villages in this area, who did not wish to be identified. "It was a dream for me to get a cell phone. But, I think to shun it now," he says.

Greater Kashmir, 29 December 2004

**Tehreek commander held: Police**

Srinagar, Dec 28: Police today claimed to have achieved a major success by arresting the operations chief of Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TUM), Muhammad Shafi Dar s/o Abdul Gani Dar of Palpora Srinagar. "On a specific information police arrested Dar on December 26 and with his arrest police would be able to solve many cases", DIG Central Kashmir Range Hemant Lohia told reporters at a press conference. "Dar was made operations chief of TUM five months back. A satellite phone and an AK rifle were recovered from his possession. Some more arrests and recoveries are expected in future as local people are coming forward with information", Lohia claimed.

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2004

**147 militants killed, 55 nabbed in**

UDHAMPUR, Dec 28: A total of 147 terrorists have been eliminated and 21 nabbed by the Police of Udhampur-Doda range alongwith Army during the year 2004. This apart, 55 ultras laid down their arms. Disclosing this, DIG of Udhampur-Doda Range Satvir Gupta said that during the year 2004, 156 operations were launched in the entire range resulting into killing of 147 militants and recovery of huge cache of arms and ammunition.

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2004

**Nowshera migrants to get relief at par with border migrants**

Nowshera (Rajouri) Dec 28: Minister of State for Revenue, Dr. Romesh Sharma has said that border migrants of Nowshera teshil would be also provided all facilities at par with other border migrants uprooted due to cross firing in the State. Addressing a public meeting at Nowshera yesterday, the Minister said that matter regarding provision of relief, ration and compensation in lieu of killing of their pet animals in cross border shelling has already been taken up with the Centre with a plea to release funds at the earliest. Funds would also be provided for tractorisation of their agricultural land, he added.

Business Line, 29 December 2004

**Kashmir Conference in Kathmandu - Showing the way to peace in the Valley (G. Parthasarathy)**

If we are genuinely interested in de-freezing the situation in J&K in human and diplomatic terms, we should devise innovative measures for travel across the LOC in both the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and the Kargil-Skardu sectors. The argument that such movements would facilitate terrorism is far fetched. Terrorists do not cross boundaries with travel documents. We should also seek arrangements for trade across the LOC and examine whether the situation could be improved by contacts between academic and other institutions in Jammu and Srinagar with counterparts in Muzaffarabad, Gilgit and Skardu. For too long has Pakistan isolated the people of the Northern Areas from the rest of the world.

The Hindu, 30 December 2004

**Mufti kin had strong links with militants, say police (Shujaat Bukhari)**

SRINAGAR, DEC. 29. The police have arrested a close relative of the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, following a warrant issued by the District Magistrate of Anantnag under the Public Safety Act (PSA) for unlawful and anti-national activities. A case has been registered and the person has been sent to the Kot Bhalwal jail in Jammu for a period of two years. Sarwar Mufti (23), son of Shariefuddin Mufti, was arrested by the Bijbehara police from his house on Monday evening after the District Magistrate issued the warrant and sent it to the police for execution.

The Tribune, 30 December 2004

**Three civilians, militant killed in exchange of fire**

Srinagar, December 29: Three civilians and a militant were killed while four others, including an Army jawan, were injured in an exchange of fire near Awantipora in Pulwama district today. Those killed included a mother-daughter duo travelling in a bus and a farmer working in the fields at Lalgam on the Rajpora-Tral road near the highway town of Awantipora. Sources, however, said an Army jawan was also killed in the incident. The police said three civilians, including two women killed in the incident, had been identified as Nazir Ahmad Dar, Rifat Jan and her mother Jameela.

The Tribune, 30 December 2004

**Kashmiri children express sympathies with tsunami victims**

Srinagar, December 29: It was a heartfelt sympathy with earthquake affected people of Chennai from the 10-year-old Yasir

Ahmad Sheikh, who along with other students from Kashmir had visited Chennai only 10 days before the tragedy. Yasir and his schoolmates still cherish the hospitality offered to them by the students in the South, at the end of their two weeks tour from Kashmir to Kanyakumari that concluded here today. Yasir and other students, who started their journey from here on December 12 were speaking on the occasion of conclusion of the Border Security Force sponsored "Bharat Darshan Tour" of Kashmiri students here today. The students mainly included orphans and victims of militancy from various districts of the valley.

The Tribune, 30 December 2004

#### **Govt keen to make local bodies powerful**

Jammu, December 29: Asserting that the government is keen on decentralisation and will hand over all powers to elected representatives in municipal corporation and other local bodies, the Minister for Tourism and Urban Development, Mr Ghulam Hassan Mir, today said coalition partners would extend all support to candidates having a recognition as dedicated and honest persons in their areas and would not float their candidate against such persons in the ensuring municipal elections.

The Tribune, 30 December 2004

#### **Minister wants credit societies revived**

Jammu, December 29: The Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives, Mr Abdul Aziz Zargar, today called for reviving all cooperative credit societies to provide hustle-free lending facilities to the peasants, especially small and marginal farmers. He said the number of kisan credit cards should be increased to enhance the coverage of institutional credit. Speaking at the one-day workshop on "doubling of credit flow to agriculture in next three years" organised by NABARD here this morning, the minister asked the banks to improve the credit flow to the agricultural sector in view of its tremendous economic and employment generation.

The Indian Express, 30 December 2004

#### **NC leader shot dead in Kawdara**

SRINAGAR, DEC 29: National Conference leader Farooq Ahmad Zargar was today shot dead by militants in J-K. The militants shot at Zargar, the provincial president of Youth National Conference, at Kawdara on Nallamar Road here around 11.15 am, the sources said. He was rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to the injuries, they added. No militant outfit has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. The NC demanded an inquiry into the murder of Zargar and termed his killing as an attempt to derail the panchayat and civic elections due next month.

The News, 30 December 2004

#### **Kashmiri leaders to meet in Washington in Feb**

ISLAMABAD: Leaders from both sides of Kashmir would meet in Washington in the first week of February to hammer out a solution to the dispute. The first such meeting was held in the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu early this month. This time chairman of his own faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Geelani, would also attend the meeting. Previously, he was stopped from travelling to Kathmandu on the pretext of some "Technical Reasons".

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2004

#### **3 HM militants arrested with Rs 9.38 lakh hawala money**

JAMMU, Dec 29: A joint team of Special Operations Group (SOG) and Army Intelligence last night arrested three Hizbul Mujahideen militants of Doda at Tarore near Bari Barahamana on Jammu-Pathankote national highway and recovered Rs 9.38 lakh hawala money, hidden in a Maruti Van. The hawala money had been given to the militants by an international hawala racketeer Javed Ahmed Wani at Atta, Noida, Uttar Pradesh and was being taken to Doda for delivery to Hizbul Mujahideen "area commander" Maqsood Ahmed, official sources said. Wani is a resident of Ghat, Doda.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2004

#### **Forced marriage costs Pak militant dearly**

JAMMU, Dec 29: Forced marriage with a Doda girl cost a Pakistani militant Asif Mohd Khan dearly. Not only the young girl, Naida Begum daughter of Mohd Iqbal, a resident of Dedni, Marmat, managed to escape from clutches of the militant but also gave Army and police some "vital information" which finally led to his arrest on Sunday night from outskirts of Bhaderwah. Naida Begum along with her friend Mubina daughter of Atta Mohd, also a resident of Dedni, Marmat, falling in upper reaches of Doda district had gone to collect woods as usual when they were kidnapped by two top militants including Asif Mohd Khan son of Mohd Sharief, a resident of Rawlakote, Pakistan and Mudassar son of Fazal Hussain, a resident of Krewa, Bhagwa. The kidnapping took place in the month of June this year.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2004

#### **Top HUJI ultra Tahir Billa killed in Darhal**

RAJOURI, Dec 29: In a major success, troops of Gorkha Rifles and Rajouri Police today eliminated a most wanted militant Abdul Tahir alias Billa in a fierce gun-battle in Khoyla forest area in Darhal. Known as Tahir Billa, the "chief area commander" of Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) outfit was active in Darhal and other parts of Rajouri district for last seven years. Tahir Billa son of Mohd Hussain R/o Topa, Darhal had twice undergone training in Pakistan. Billa was infamous for his "burqa drive" launched in Darhal, which subsequently spread to Rajouri, in the year 2003-04. Two girls were shot dead and some others were injured while many others had abandoned their studies during the drive.

The Indian Express, 30 December 2004

**How Rao broke the ice in J&K** (Wajahat Habibullah)

Today, there is growing recognition that the resolution of Kashmir lies in dialogue. The intellectual leadership, including the local press, now urges dialogue. These trends owe much to the way the siege at Hazratbal was handled. And, at every critical moment of that siege, when I was overcome by doubts, Rao stood by me. I remember particularly that when food was first served to the inmates of the shrine, most of whom were civilians, there was public criticism. I therefore called the PM, who came to the phone personally and advised me to persist in my efforts. On November 3, a military truck rammed the car I was driving in from the Raj Bhavan with Lt Gen Zaki, an advisor to the governor, injuring him and almost killing me. The implementation of the settlement was delayed to November 16, because of suspicions that the crash was not an accident. However, as I recovered in New Delhi, I was often called in for consultations by the PM, who was determined, despite opposition, to see that power was returned to the people and was anxious to explore ways to conduct elections.

Greater Kashmir, 30 December 2004

**Good beginning** (Editorial)

Kashmiris have suffered badly due to enmity between India and Pakistan. Kashmir was divided. Thousands of people were forced to migrate and an equal number had to taste death. And, today when the two countries are strengthening bonds of friendship and understanding, they must take measures to bring the much-needed solace to the beleaguered Kashmiris. While playing the historic role the two countries should not forget Kashmiris. They need to be taken into confidence and involved in the peace process. History is witness to the fact that bilateralism has not yielded desired results. And then principles of natural justice require that the fate of a people cannot be decided without consulting them. Remember a solution, which accommodates India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu Kashmir will alone work.

The Tribune, 31 December 2004

**Five militants among 7 killed in J&K**

Srinagar, December 30: Five militants were among seven persons killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. The police here said that militants shot dead two persons, including a former militant, and injured another when they intruded into the house of Assadullah Bhat at Wagoora in Budgam district last night. Those killed included Abdul Rashid, a released militant of Hizbul Mujahideen, who was in the house of his relative Assadullah Bhat. The house owner's son, Mohammad Ayub Bhat, was also killed in the shootout. Another son of the house owner, Ashraf Bhat, a tractor driver, sustained injuries and has been hospitalised. A large number of residents joined the funeral prayers of the deceased today.

Daily Excelsior, 31 December 2004

**HUJI militant killed by HM ultra**

JAMMU, Dec 30: A Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) militant was gunned down by the activists of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit in a case of inter-gang rivalry at village Morian in Manjakote area of Rajouri district last night. Official sources said Army and police rushed to village Morian under the jurisdiction of Manjakote police station at 4 am today after getting a tip off about a shoot-out between two militant outfits. A bullet-riddled body was recovered from the spot which initially was believed to be that of Shabir Hussain Chechi, a "district commander" of HUJI.