

The Indian Express, 1 December 2005

Quake survivors face bitter winter

Drangyari, November 30: Sarwar Jan and her eight shivering children collect a handful of twigs to light a fire in their little tin shed as it snows heavily outside. "I fear they will catch pneumonia going out in such weather," said 45-year-old Jan, tears streaming down her face as her children huddled around a fire, many of them coughing in their dirty pherens (long coat) or ponchos. "They will die ... God save us." Jan and her children survived the devastating Oct. 8 earthquake in South Asia that killed more than 73,000 people and left millions homeless, and are now fighting a harsh Himalayan winter. Nearly 600 people in Kashmir, whose world was destroyed by the quake, live in temporary tin sheds and tents under a thick layer of snow and freezing temperatures in Drangyari, a small valley ringed by lofty snow-covered mountains and pine forests. "Life has become extremely difficult particularly for children. Allah is angry with us. Allah only can save us," said Mohammad Showkat Khan, the chief priest of the village, looking towards the sky as the snow falls.

Greater Kashmir, 1 December 2005

US Congmen for Kashmiris' role

New Delhi, Nov 30: Several powerful members of the US Congress today welcomed the India-Pakistan reconciliation process and the initiatives taken by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf but said the solution to the Kashmir issue was not easy. Mr Dan Burton and Ms Sheila Jackson Lee, who are part of a Congressional delegation visiting India and held discussions with the Prime Minister and several political leaders, said at a joint press conference here that the leaderships of both India and Pakistan had taken a "giant step" forward. However, the solution would not be that easy. Observing that "human rights" situation in Kashmir had considerably improved, Burton said the issue of Kashmir was now being addressed. "It (solution) is not going to be easy. We all understand that. It is still in its infancy," Burton said.

The Indian Express, 1 December 2005

Armed robbers strike bank again, loot Rs 12 lakh

Srinagar, November 30: For the third time in a month, armed robbers struck at a bank today and decamped with Rs 12 lakh. However one of the robbers was overpowered immediately, and police officials said he has provided vital clues which may lead to the solving of all the recent spate of bank robberies. According to eyewitnesses, some youths—accomplices of the robbers—stood in front of the JK Bank branch at Rajouri Kadal in the old city and shouted that a bomb has been planted there. Upon hearing this, people nearby ran for cover. In the melee, a group of robbers, two of them with AK-47s and a third with a pistol, entered the bank, overpowered the security guards, and ran off with Rs 11.77 lakh. While the robbers were fleeing, one of them stumbled and fell down and was immediately nabbed by the guards and people nearby. The arrested person has been identified as Mushtaq Ahmad Akhoun of Zaildar Mohalla in Zaina Kadal. SSP Srinagar Muneer Ahmad Khan confirmed his arrest and said he is being questioned.

Greater Kashmir, 1 December 2005

Militant killed, constable wounded in Valley

Srinagar, Nov 30: A militant was killed and a police constable critically wounded in separate incidents across the state since Tuesday, police and reports said Wednesday. Troops killed a Harkatul-e-Jehad Islami militant during an encounter at Gaur Bijbehara in south Kashmir's Islamabad district on Tuesday night. According to reports, the troops of 1st RR laid an ambush in the area and after spotting the militants engaged him in a gunbattle. In the ensuing encounter, the troops killed the militant. The slain militant has been identified as Noor-ud-Din Khar alias Abu Sadiq son of Muhammad Haleem of Gadool Kokernag. Militants, in a vehicle, fired upon a patrol party of police at Khanyar wounding a police constable on Wednesday afternoon. The militants opened fire on the police critically wounding the constable of police station Khanyar, Zahoor Ahmad (belt No. 3186/S). The injured has been hospitalised.

The Indian Express, 1 December 2005

Militancy has lost ground in J&K: Andrabi

Jammu, November 30: THE Socialist Democratic Party chief Dr Drakshan Andrabi has said that militancy has lost ground in Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing a large number of the party workers at party central office here today, she said that militancy has no public support now at its back. "However it is still backed by some mainstream political groups who owe their existence to the separatism of different kinds," alleged the SDP chief. She said all the political leadership that have been thrust upon the people of J&K from time to time prove to be stereotypes.

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2005

J&K to get 200 mw addl power supply

JAMMU, Nov 30: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has urged Union Power Minister P M Sayeed for additional release of 200 MW of power to the State to meet the shortage caused due to heavy reduction in water discharge

in the rivers and provide relief to the people during current winter when its requirement is more. Mr Azad, while communicating this requirement to Mr Sayeed on phone today also asked Minister for Power Nawang Rigzin to rush to New Delhi to meet Mr. Sayeed and other concerned power authorities so that additional power supply gets materialised. Earlier, the Power Development Department apprised the Chief Minister that as against the state's requirement of about 1800 MW of power per day to provide round the clock power to the consumers, the total availability of power at present is only 950 MW from the Northern Grid, Power Trading Corporation and local sources.

The Indian Express, 1 December 2005

EU adds Hizbul Mujahideen to its terrorist list

London, December 1: The European Union (EU) has added Hizbul Mujahideen, the Pakistan-based outfit carrying out terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir for over a decade, to its list of terrorist organisations. The EU's decision strikes a major blow to the group as restrictive anti-terror measures will be applied to it, including a freeze on its funds, assets and economic resources. The Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) is among the groups active in Jammu and Kashmir and reportedly has strong ties to the Muslim fundamentalist group Jamaat-e-Islami. Founded in late 1980s, the group's primary focus is Indian security forces and politicians in Jammu and Kashmir. It also occasionally strikes at civilian targets. It reportedly operated in Afghanistan and is led by Syed Salahuddin. The outfit claimed responsibility for a car bomb late last month that killed a border guard and injured 21 people on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Greater Kashmir, 1 December 2005

PAK SAYS SELF-RULE IS NO U-TURN

Islamabad, Nov 30: Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that supporting the demand for "self-governance" is not a U-turn on the Kashmir policy. "We also want demilitarization in Kashmir," he said while talking to reporters after the groundbreaking ceremony of Orient Power Company's power plant at Balloki, near Kasur in Punjab province. Asked if supporting the demand for self-governance instead of sticking to the United Nations resolutions was not a U-turn on the Kashmir policy, the Prime Minister said different options were under consideration. "However, there is no secret option in this regard," he added, saying that 'backdoor diplomacy' with India would continue and in case of any development, Pakistan would take the nation into confidence.

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2005

'Pak has not curbed infiltration'

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: The steps taken by Pakistan to control cross-border infiltration have "not been enough" and there has been a spate of violent attacks on civilian and political figures which could undermine the ongoing peace process between the neighbours, Lok Sabha was informed today. India had conveyed to Pakistan at the highest level that the current peace process would be "undermined unless Pakistan takes effective action to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism, including training camps, launch pads and communication links between terror groups on the Indian side and their handlers on the Pakistan side," Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed said during question hour. Maintaining that these steps need to be taken by Pakistan to fulfil its commitment in the January 2004 joint statement, he said Government had been keeping the international community informed of the developments in this regard on a continuous basis.

Daily Excelsior, 2 December 2005

Massive re-construction activities being taken up: CM

JAMMU, Dec 1: 'The State of Jammu and Kashmir being special category State requires to re-orient its development and reconstruction strategy in order to make both plan and non-plan budget fully targeted for developmental purpose so that equitable infrastructure is created in all regions, all districts, all blocks and in all villages to usher the State in progress, prosperity and Khushali,' said Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while reviewing the functioning of Finance and Planning Departments at a high level officers meeting in the Civil Secretariat. Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Anil Goswami and other senior level officers of Finance and Planning departments were also present.

Daily Excelsior, 2 December 2005

Militant, 3 civilians killed in Doda, Poonch blasts

JAMMU, Dec 1: A Harkat-ul-Mujahideen militant and a civilian were killed and two others were injured when a grenade exploded in a house at village Huddal, about 12 kms north east of Gandoh in Doda district early this morning while two boys were killed in an IED blast at Mandi in Poonch district late this evening. Police sources said a militant Abdul Wahid alias Abu Tahir (Call Sign Alfa 2) son of Ghulam Mohd Khan R/o Sawara, Doda had come to the house of Mohammad Hussain son of Alam Din at Huddal in Gandoh in early today. Abdul Wahid was reportedly accompanied by one or two more militants. While both militant and the house owner were engaged in

discussions, a grenade reportedly went off in the hands of militant killing him and Mohd Hussain on spot. One or two other militants, who were present in the house, reportedly escaped after the blast.

Daily Excelsior, 2 December 2005

Karvaan-e-Aman resumes, 25 cross LoC

KAMAN POST, Dec 1: After nearly two months since the killer quake struck Jammu and Kashmir on October 8, the "Karvaan-e-Aman (Caravan of Peace)" from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad today resumed service from the Indian side up to the "Aman Setu (peace bridge)" on the Line of Control (LoC) with 20 passengers on board. Five passengers from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) also crossed over to the Indian side. Regional Passport Officer (RPO), Srinagar S L Ramulu said that the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus resumed service up to the Kaman Post today. The last (14th) Karvaan-e-Aman had rolled out from Srinagar on October 6, two days before the 7.6 magnitude earthquake ravaged Jammu and Kashmir as well as PoK, killing tens of thousands of people and rendering millions homeless on both sides of the divide.

Greater Kashmir, 2 December 2005

4 elderly men from Awantipora arrested, shifted to Kot Balwal (HILAL AHMAD)

Charsoo (Awanti- pora), Dec 1: Rohee Gul is still wearing bridal jewelry. She was married on last Tuesday. Wednesday morning, her 47-year-old father Ghulam Muhammad Bhat, a teacher in a government school, was picked up by troops. Traditionally Rohee is supposed to visit her home again seven days after wedding but she had to cut short her post-marital stay in her in-laws' house after five days and commiserate her mother, Sarah, and six younger siblings. The family doesn't know where the head of the house is, who apprehended him and why. A few paces away from Bhat's house is the modest dwelling of his namesake, Ghulam Muhammad Bhat, a 61-year-old retired schoolteacher. He too was arrested by troops on Wednesday morning. His seven sons, wife Khati, and the only daughter don't know where the aging man is.

Greater Kashmir, 2 December 2005

LoC fencing labourers yet to get wages (SHABIR IBN YOUSUF)

Kupwara, Dec 1: Army authorities haven't paid scores of men of two border villages in Kupwara the wages even though they worked full time as labourers and porters and helped erect the fence along Line of Control, a delegation of the aggrieved men said. The labourers said from January 2004 to October 2005, at least 50 men from two villages, Awoora and Manwan, worked with Army's 26 Madras and 52 Engineering Unit as casual labourers and permanent porters putting their blood and sweat together in laying the fence along the front posts of Shallubutta, Sarbal, Mangear, Pimple Post and K K Gali. Disgruntled villagers said they used their ponies in transportation of ration and other material for army. "They threatened of dire consequences when they approached them for our wages.

Greater Kashmir, 2 December 2005

Equal development in all regions: Azad

Jammu, Dec 1: The state of Jammu and Kashmir being special category state requires to re-orient its development and reconstruction strategy in order to make both plan and non-plan budget fully targeted for developmental purpose so that equitable infrastructure is created in all regions, all districts, all blocks and in all villages to usher the state in progress and prosperity, said chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while reviewing functioning of Finance and Planning departments. Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Anil Goswami and other senior level officers of Finance and Planning departments were also present. The full presentation of all aspects of State Finance and Planning Departments was made by Economic Advisor Haseeb Drabu.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2005

Attack on security camp 3 wounded, 2 ultras nabbed

SRINAGAR, At least three personnel were injured in an attack on a security force camp in north Kashmir, while two militants were arrested and explosives recovered in the south of the Valley, official sources said today. They said militants attacked a security force camp at Yaribal Banipora in north Kashmir district of Baramulla with automatic weapons. The fire was returned and in the fierce clash which lasted for about 20 minutes, three soldiers were wounded. The militants, however, managed to escape. Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Police and security forces, in a joint operation at village Samboor in Pulwama district, arrested two militants and recovered 10kg of rdx, a pistol with one magazine, six rounds, six timers, two detonators, a wireless set and ten hand grenades. Security forces detected and later defused two IEDs at Pathari. (UNI)

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2005

Axe to fall on corrupt officials soon: Azad

JAMMU, Dec 2: Describing the next few days as very crucial in his crusade against corruption and nepotism in

the State, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today disclosed that action is being taken against the corrupt officials in the administration, including those who looted Jammu and Kashmir under the garb of militancy. "The Government is all set to take stern action against corrupt officers and deadwood in different departments and the results will be visible before everyone from tomorrow," he said in an informal chat with the media persons during his visit to Jammu University here today. Stating that several people were on a spree of looting the State on the name of militancy, Mr Azad gave a clear warning to such officials to take voluntary retirement before they are suspended by his Government.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2005

Railways need more funds for J&K: Lalu

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: Railway Minister Lalu Prasad today said additional funds were required for ongoing projects in Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern Region. He disclosed this at a meeting with Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia to review the 2006-07 annual plan and Budgetary support for enhanced railway investments, an official release said. The minister said there was a need for Rs 4,092 crores for railway projects in North East and Jammu and Kashmir. The money, if allocated, would be used for a mega bridge project at Bogibeel in Assam, Munger bridge over river Ganges, Patna bridge also over Ganges and Kosi Bridge as well as for the Sudoor Gram Sampark Yojana. Progress made on the Dedicated Freight Corridor was also discussed during the meeting and it was decided that both the corridors, Mumbai-Delhi and Delhi-Howrah, would be implemented simultaneously.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2005

Breakthrough in Lone's killing

srinagar, Dec 2: In a major breakthrough, police today arrested three persons in connection with the gunning down of Minister of State for Education Dr Ghulam Nabi Lone here last October. "We have got three of the four key accused in the case," Inspector General of Police K Rajendra Kumar said. He said six people, including two suicide attackers, were involved in the killing of the minister on October 18. Of the two suicide attackers, one was killed on the day of the attack. The other, who had fled after killing Lone, was later shot dead in Baramulla district, the IGP said. The three arrested persons had provided all logistic support and arranged accommodation, vehicles and other necessities for the attackers. Kumar said the three had confessed their involvement in the murder. The accused had planned more high-profile attacks in the near future, police sources said adding they had hired a house just a few metres from the residence of Srinagar SSP Munir Khan.

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2005

Top LeT ultra, civilian killed

JAMMU, Dec 2: A top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant, involved in the killing of six civilians at Neeram, Mahore, was gunned down by troops of 58RR at Thatharaka, Gool in Ramban police district this afternoon while a civilian was kidnapped and killed by the militants at village Karam Katha in Gool last night. Official sources said troops eliminated a Lashkar ultra Nissar Ahmed alias Abu Muslim son of Sulla Mohd Gujjar R/o Nevran Ghat, Mahore in fierce exchange of gun-battle at village Susani in Thatharaka area of Gool. One AK-56 rifle and two hand grenades were recovered from him. Slain militant was involved in the massacre of six civilians at Neeram in Mahore few months back. Meanwhile, militants kidnapped and killed a civilian at village Karam Katha in Gool last night.

Greater Kashmir, 3 December 2005

3 militants killed in Soura

Srinagar, Dec 2: Four militants, four civilians and a trooper of Territorial Army were killed in separate incidents across the State since Thursday evening, police said Friday. Police said three Pakistani militants were killed in "an encounter" on the city outskirts at Soura here on Thursday night. "The encounter broke out after soldiers of 118 battalion of paramilitary CRPF and Special Operations Group (SOG) of police raided a hideout at Aanchar Lake. However, the militants fired upon them triggering an encounter. In the ensuing gunfight, three militants were killed," police claimed. Local news agency CNS had Thursday said the SOG arrested three Pakistani militants who were travelling in a car near Soura. Police identified the slain militants as Obaid-ur-Rehman alias Abu Talha of Faisalabad, Muhammad Saleem alias Abu Abbas of Karachi, Sadakat Ali alias Abu Hamad of Rawalpindi. Police claimed recovery of two AK rifles, four magazines, a pistol, three hand grenades and 20 rounds of ammunition from "the encounter spot."

Greater Kashmir, 3 December 2005

Azad acts tough on corrupt officials

Srinagar, Dec 2: Exactly a month after he took over as the new chief minister of the state, Ghulam Nabi Azad as promised to weed out corruption in the state administration has approved termination of services of at least 60 top government officials involved in corrupt practices, well placed sources told Greater Kashmir. Sources said the

number of top officials who have been identified and are listed as tainted is 100. Sources said most of the officers are from forest department, rural development department and engineering departments. There is likelihood that other officials from other departments with tainted image are also being sent home. Sources said twenty days back, the chief minister had gone through the files of 35 senior level officials who would be prematurely retired as the government was convinced that they have been indulging in corrupt practices. The number is likely to touch 60 in the first instance as of Friday and will follow later after the first round of the list is complete, sources said

Greater Kashmir, 3 December 2005

Hizb asks European Union to reverse ban decision (TARIQ NAQASH)

Muzaffarabad, Dec 2: Kashmir's dominant fighter group Hizbul Mujahideen on Friday asked the European Union to reverse its decision regarding the organisation by "realising the ground realities" in the disputed Himalayan region. The EU on Wednesday added Hizbul Mujahideen to its list of "terrorist organisations," a move that means restrictive anti terror measures will be applied to the group including a freeze on its funds, assets and economic resources. "The European Union has been misled by the Indian government into adopting an unjust and unrealistic approach," said Hizb spokesman Salim Hashmi, in a statement here. "Hizbul Mujahideen is one hundred percent an indigenous, popular and representative organisation of the freedom seeking Kashmiris and is carrying on its target oriented actions only against the Indian occupation forces according to a set code of conduct," he asserted.

Greater Kashmir, 3 December 2005

Demilitarize Kashmir: Geelani (SHABIR IBN YOUSUF)

Handwara, Dec 2: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference Friday said both parts of divided Kashmir must be demilitarised and then plebiscite should be held under the auspices of UN. Addressing a gathering at Wadipora in the border town of Handwara, Geelani said the right of self-determination was "our birthright and the UN resolution are in our support." About the self-rule, Geelani said, "self-governance is only to involve the freedom loving people in election process." The Hurriyat chairman said the people of Kashmir have sacrificed their lives for freedom. He ruled out accepting the LoC that divided the two Kashmiris as permanent border. "That is our land and those are our people. There is no question of accepting LoC as permanent border," he said, adding "peace would prevail only after occupational forces leave Kashmir." Geelani alleged that there has been no let up in the atrocities committed by troops. "People are being detained, killed and tortured without any provocation," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2005

10 injured in 3 incidents of firing in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Dec 4: One militant and one SOG personnel have died and over a dozen civilians have sustained injuries in different incidents of violence in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources told the Excelsior that suspected militants lobbed a hand grenade towards a bunker of CRPF 67 Bn near Hanuman Mandir at Hari Singh High Street at 1155 hours today. It exploded close to the intended target, causing injuries to a head constable as also to a 60-year-old civilian. Both were evacuated and rushed to hospital. Later in the afternoon, suspected militants tossed a hand grenade towards a bunker of CRPF 164 Bn at General Bus Stand Batmaloo. It also exploded close to the intended target, causing injuries to a soldier and six civilians. Most of the injured were treated at SMHS Hospital.

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2005

7 to return, 10 others may cross

JAMMU, Dec 4: Chakan-Da-Bagh on Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district will be opened for civilians' crossing for second time tomorrow in less than a fortnight. While no civilian will cross over to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) from Poonch tomorrow, the number of persons coming to Poonch from PoK was not clear till late this evening. Deputy Commissioner, Poonch Mohd Ramzan Thakur told the Excelsior that in all about 17 civilians were expected to cross the LoC from PoK to Poonch. They included seven civilians, who had gone to PoK from Mendhar and Poonch on November 21, when Chakan-Da-Bagh was opened for first time for human traffic as they had completed their time of stay. They can stay back in PoK only if their stay is extended by Pakistan Government.

Greater Kashmir, 5 December 2005

Mirwaiz to meet Musharraf in Makkah on Dec 7

Srinagar, Dec 4: Moderate Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is likely to meet Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of an extraordinary summit of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) at the Holy city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia on December 7-8, sources said on Sunday. The sources told UNI that the Musharraf-Mirwaiz meeting is expected to take place in Makkah on December 7. They said the proposals of "demilitarisation of Jammu and Kashmir" and "self-rule" will come up for discussion at the meeting.

They would also discuss the emerging "new thoughts" about the resolution of the vexed Kashmir issue, the sources said. The Mirwaiz will also brief the Pakistan President of his recent meetings with the US Congressmen in New Delhi. The 15-member US delegation was led by noted human rights activist Dan Burton, they added.

Greater Kashmir, 5 December 2005

Geelani allowed to perform Hajj

Srinagar, Dec 4: As a goodwill gesture, the government has allowed Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference, to proceed to Saudi Arabia for Hajj pilgrimage after being denied permission continuously for the past five years, sources told the UNI Sunday. The sources said Geelani, along with his wife Jawahira will leave for Jeddah, the capital of Saudi Arabia, on December 7. The annual Hajj would be performed in January. They said Geelani and his wife had applied for Hajj pilgrimage more than a month ago. The sources said the hardline Hurriyat leader had completed all the formalities and submitted the application forms to undertake the pilgrimage with the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Budgam.

The Indian Express, 5 December 2005

4 militants, one policeman killed in Valley violence

Srinagar, December 4: In stepped up violence in the Valley, four militants and a Special Task Force (STF) personnel were killed, while 15 persons including seven security men were injured in attacks by militants. In a fierce gun battle with the army, three militants were killed in south Kashmir's Kokernag hamlet. An Army spokesman said the soldiers of 36 Rashtriya Rifles (RR), Special Operations Group (SOG) of police and Territorial Army, on specific information about the presence of militants, launched an operation against them in Kazwan Gali in South Kashmir. Three militants were killed in the army operation. Two of the slain militants were identified as Ayub Khan alias Abu Haider of Pakistan and Mustaq Ahmed Khan alias Abu Osama. The spokesman said both the militants belonged to Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). The identity of the third militant has not been ascertained.

The Indian Express, 5 December 2005

Kashmir a trilateral issue: Shankracharya (Rakesh Rocky)

Jammu, December 4: Advocating unconditional talks with separatist groups, the Shankracharya of Goverdhan Puri Swami Adokshjananddevtirath today urged that Kashmiris should be included in the ongoing Indo-Pak talks for the solution of the vexed Kashmir problem. "Talks and the peace process should continue, but it is also important that Kashmiris, the main sufferers, should also be involved in the talks," said the Shankracharya. He even supported talks with the militants saying that "circumstances make a person a militant". He said without including the Kashmiris in the talks, they would have no meaning. The Shankracharya said "even if there is need to make some amendment in the Indian Constitution, it should be done... Constitutions are amended for the welfare of the people."

The Indian Express, 6 December 2005

Abdullahs take their autonomy plan to US (Rakesh Rocky)

Jammu, December 5: ONCE a strong critic of Pakistan, the National Conference today said if the Pakistani leadership wants to listen to them on autonomy, there is no harm in talking to them. "Delhi is interested only in talking with those who are talking of azadi. If people in Pakistan want to listen us on autonomy, why should we not talk to them? Delhi mein koi hamari baat sunne ko taiyaar nahin hai. If things go well, I will visit Pakistan in the beginning of next year and meet their leaders," Omar Abdullah told The Indian Express on Monday. On the other hand, his father, National Conference patron Farooq Abdullah today disclosed that Omar had submitted proposals on autonomy to an all-party US delegation led by Dan Brown in Delhi recently.

The Indian Express, 6 December 2005

Villager's killing triggers protests against RR (Mir Ehsan)

Srinagar, December 5: MASSIVE protests were held at Tangmarg today against the killing of a civilian allegedly by the troops of Rashtriya Rifles during a search operation. Army, however, contested the claim saying that the civilian got killed in the exchange of fire between troops and militants. A Major was also injured in the cross-fire. This morning, hundreds of villagers blocked Srinagar-Gulmarg highway and started protesting against the killing of Ghulam Mohamad Rather. Villagers alleged that troops of 52 Rashtriya Rifles cordoned off Numbalhar village in the wee hours and asked the villagers to come out from their houses for search operations. As the villagers started assembling in a local ground, an Army officer's weapon accidentally went off. Villagers said on hearing the gunshots, the troops accompanying the officer started firing indiscriminately, injuring Ghulam Mohammad Rather.

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2005

Stay of 4 PoK 'PM' relatives extended

CHAKAN-DA-BAGH (LoC), Dec 5: Three civilians from Mendhar and Poonch, who had crossed over to Pakistan

occupied Kashmir (PoK) on November 21 from this point in Poonch district, returned today after completing 15 days stay in PoK while four others stayed back as their stay was extended by Pakistan's External Affairs Ministry. There was, however, no fresh crossing from either side on this point today, SSP Poonch S D Singh, who was here supervising security arrangements for the LoC crossers, said. A total of nine persons had crossed over to PoK from here on November 21. They included seven persons from Mendhar and Poonch, who had gone to meet their relatives in PoK and two PoK citizens, who returned to their houses.

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2005

Two militants killed, Army Major injured

Srinagar, Dec 5: Two militants were killed in separate encounters at north Kashmir Handwara and Bijbehara in south Kashmir today, while as militants opened fire during search operations in a village near Baba Reshi, killing a civilian and injuring an Army Major. According to sources, a foreign militant was killed in an encounter at Rajwar Handwara today in an encounter after troopers of 21 RR laid an ambush over militants. Sources said that the identification of the deceased militant was being ascertained. Some arms and ammunition were claimed to have been recovered from the slain militant. Troopers gunned down a Hizb militant in an encounter at Bijbehara last night. The slain militant was identified as Mohammed Shafi Bhat of Arwani, Anantnag.

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2005

Hizb commander among 5 killed

Srinagar, Dec 5: Five militants, including a Hizbul Mujahideen commander were killed and an Army Major was wounded in separate incidents across the state since Sunday, police and reports said on Monday. Troops killed a militant during an encounter at Waderpayeen Rajwar Handwara on Sunday. According to reports the troops of 21 RR laid an ambush in the area and after spotting the militants, they opened fire killing a militant. The identity of the slain militant is being ascertained. A Hizbul Mujahideen commander was killed by troops during a gunbattle at Arwani Bijbehara on Sunday. The slain commander has been identified as Muhammad Shafi Bhat alias Zahid son of Wali Muhammad of Arwani. The troops according to a police spokesman recovered arms and ammunition from the encounter site.

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2005

Musharraf's self-rule is Sheikh Abdullah's autonomy: Omar (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR, Dec 5: National Conference (NC) president Omar Abdullah today claimed that Gen Pervez Musharraf's proposal of self-governance as solution to the Kashmir problem was nothing different from the concept of greater autonomy envisioned by his grandfather Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1950s. He said that "thousands of Kashmiris killed in the last 16 years" have given sacrifices to convince everybody from Musharraf to Mufti Sayeed that self-governance or greater autonomy was the only solution to the Kashmir turmoil.

The Indian Express, 7 December 2005

Centre denying me permission for Haj: Geelani

Srinagar, December 6: Chairman of the hardline Hurriyat faction Syed Ali Shah Geelani on Tuesday claimed that he was being denied permission by the authorities to visit Saudi Arabia to perform Haj. "Barring my wife and myself, all those who have applied for permission for this year's (Haj) pilgrimage from Budgam district were provided travel documents on Monday," said Geelani. As per the schedule announced by the authorities, residents of Budgam district will leave for the pilgrimage on Wednesday. Geelani said he had been applying to go to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj since the 2000 and each time he was denied permission due to his "stand on Kashmir".

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2005

4 militants killed in Uri

Srinagar, Dec 6: In a bizarre incident, which instigated violent protests in entire Sopore town today, three local youths attempted to set ablaze a local Masjid during the preceding night. People however, overpowered one of them and handed him over to police. According to details, residents of Sopore took to streets on Tuesday expressing resentment against the desecration of Masjid by three youths and demanded that the involved youth be handed over to them. Locals, while giving out the details of the incident, said three youths, identified as Mushtaq Ahmed Dar, Qaiser Ahmed Darzi and Javed Ahmed Shah barged inside the Sopore Jamia Masjid during the preceding night. Locals alleged that these youth later burnt the furniture of the mosque. The residents putting up near the Masjid realized that there was something wrong within the premises discovering the trio inside the Masjid doing something fishy. Presence of the youth in such a condition infuriated the residents. While two of them managed to escape by scaling a wall, one of them Mushtaq Ahmed was caught on the spot.

Greater Kashmir, 7 December 2005

NGOs oppose sending quake orphans outside JK

Srinagar, Dec 6: To resist Government's decision to send orphans of earthquake ravaged Uri and Tangdar to orphanages outside the state, various local and National NGOs have decided to launch an agitation and move Court. Spearheading the campaign to "save the orphans," Voluntary Association Network (VAN) of Kashmir, an amalgam of 25 local NGOs and Confederation of Voluntary Association (COVA), a representative body of 800 National organisation have joined hands under the banner of NGOs Coordination Committee. "We'll resist any move of the Government to shift about 550 orphans of Uri and Tangdar to Maharashtra. When the NGOs are ready to adopt the orphans we fail understand why it (Government) is interested to handover them to an NGO Bhartiya Jain Sangthan outside," Mazhar Hussain, director COVA told a news conference here on Tuesday.

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2005

Two militants killed in Doda, 2 held in Udhampur

JAMMU, Dec 6: Two Harkat-ul-Mujahideen militants were gunned down by Army in an encounter in Thathri area of Doda district today while two harbourers of the ultras were arrested in Basantgarh area of Udhampur. Troops recovered three AK rifles and a large quantity of ammunition during a search operation in Thanna Mandi. Official sources said troops launched a search operation at village Bhatogira near Tanta forests in Thathri area of Doda district in wee hours of this morning after developing an information that two Harkat militants had taken shelter in the area. Both the militants were gunned down in two hour long operation. An Army jawan sustained minor injuries in the gun-battle. Slain militants have been identified as Mohd Shabir Ahmed alias Zarar son of Ghulam Nabi Dar R/o Kukota, Kishtwar and Zaffar Hussain alias Haq Nawaz son of Showkat Ali R/o Kukota, both activists of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. Recoveries made from the scene of encounter included one AK rifle, one Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL), two UBGL grenades, three AK magazines and one radio set.

Greater Kashmir, 7 December 2005

7 fake militants detained

Srinagar, Dec 6: The inhabitants of Ajas Bandipore in north Kashmir's Varmul district nabbed seven fake gunmen who were trying to abduct a woman in the area on Monday evening. According to KNS the seven persons carrying fake weapons appeared from an unregistered vehicle and tried to abduct Kulsuma wife of Bashir Ahmad Dar who was going to fetch water. Quoting witnesses, the news agency said the people stopped the vehicle when the gunmen tried to take the woman away, and apprehended the fake gunmen. The people severely thrashed the fake gunmen and damaged their vehicle. The agitated people snatched the fake weapons from the persons and handed them over to the police.

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2005

Geelani rejects self-governance

Srinagar, Dec 6: Rejecting the self-governance option as proposed by Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf for the resolution of Kashmir, separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today said that the demilitarization formula should be coupled with the assurances of United Nations take over of the territory to facilitate plebiscite in entire Jammu and Kashmir. During a press conference here today at APHC – G headquarters, pro Pakistan Geelani while rejecting the offer of self-governance said that nothing less than the plebiscite under UN supervision in Jammu and Kashmir was acceptable to the people here. Claiming that he holds a larger people's mandate than any other leader in JK, Geelani said that through close public contacts he, beyond a shadow of a doubt, knows what people want. "They (people) don't want self-governance or autonomy.

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2005

International flights to land at Srinagar by next year: Azad

SRINAGAR, Dec 6 : Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said international flights would be landing at the Srinagar airport by next year. Mr Azad said work on the infrastructure at the airport would be expedited to enable international flights land directly in Srinagar in about one and a half years time. "It is very important to have good infrastructure, including customs and immigration facilities, at the airport before allowing international flights," he told reporters before flagging off the inaugural Srinagar-Delhi Air Deccan flight. The airport being in a safe area, construction work during this summer could be undertaken in three shifts, he suggested. On the domestic front, he said with the Air Deccan Delhi-Srinagar flights, a total of 32 aircraft from Delhi would be landing here in a week. The figure would be around 50 if the flights via Jammu are included.

The Indian Express, 8 December 2005

Drop the gun or face action: CM to ultras (Muzaffar Raina)

Srinagar, December 7: In his first public meeting in Kashmir after assuming power in the state, J&K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today served an ultimatum to militants to drop the gun or face action. Azad chose Hadipora village in Rafiabab, considered a stronghold of militancy, as the venue of his first speech. The J-K Chief Minister also hit out at Pakistan, though without taking its name, and said "those abetting militants do not want people in Kashmir to live in peace". The speech marks a departure from his predecessor Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who

avoided harsh language both against militants and Pakistan. Azad said militants should surrender and join the mainstream. "If they (militants) continue with their activities, they will be dealt with sternly," he said.

Greater Kashmir, 8 December 2005

Faith is stronger than grief in quake-hit Uri (ZULFIKAR MAJID)

Upper Dachi (Uri), Dec 7: Khadim Mir Ali's mere bone and skin, his wrinkled face and silver white beard testify to his claim that he is 80. But age and destruction caused by Oct 8 killer quake have failed to deter him from undertaking Holy pilgrimage to Makkah on December 23. "Faith makes mountains move and it made me to leave the past behind," Khadim, whose house in this hamlet of Uri was razed to ground in the tremors, said with a glow on his face. "When the quake hit, I only prayed to Allah to keep me alive till I reach to Makkah and Madinah and fulfil the desire which every Muslim has." An imam at the local mosque, Khadim had applied before October 8 for Hajj pilgrimage, for which, he says, he had been saving money for the last 10 years.

Greater Kashmir, 8 December 2005

2 soldiers killed in Kulgam

Srinagar, Dec 7: Militants killed two soldiers during an encounter in Kulgam area of south Kashmir's Islamabad district on Tuesday night, reports said Wednesday. Reports said troops of 1 and 9 Rashtriya Rifles cordoned off Panuea village of the area and launched a search operation during which they came under heavy fire from the militants present there. Two soldiers killed in the firing were identified as Havildar Charan Singh and rifle man Suleman. The militants managed to escape from the village, reports added. Unidentified gunmen sprayed a volley of bullets on Mushtaq Ahmad Dar son of Ghulam Din Dar of Azad Gunj Varmul wounding him critically in the same area on Wednesday evening. Mushtaq has been shifted to Srinagar in critical condition. Unidentified gunmen kidnapped one Basharat Ahmad of Harwan on the outskirts of Srinagar from the shop of Muneer Ahmad at Lal Chowk near here Wednesday afternoon. Police has started investigation.

Greater Kashmir, 8 December 2005

BIG 6 IN VIGILANCE NET

Srinagar/Jammu, Dec 7: The State Vigilance Organisation (VO) has filed cases against six state government officials for possessing assets disproportionate to their income. The officers are: G N Bodha, director Social Welfare Department, Kashmir; Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, Superintending Engineer; Hakim Mukhtar, Divisional Forest Officer, Kupwara; Bomeshwar Sharma, Regional Transport Officer, Lakhapur; Kiran Wattal, Joint Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation; and Purshottam, Girdawar Udhampur. In a statement, the VO said the organisation raided and searched 20 places belonging to the accused officials in Srinagar, Islamabad, Jammu, and Udhampur on Wednesday. The statement said, "The state wide raids have yielded information about the huge assets including residential buildings, land, business establishments, vehicles, and educational institutions acquired by these officials. The raiding parties also collected the details of bank accounts and movable assets of the accused."

The Indian Express, 8 December 2005

OGW held, arms seized

Jammu, December 7: ONE overground worker was apprehended by security forces in Buddhar in Doda on Tuesday while arms and ammunition were recovered by the security forces from two hideouts in Doda and Rajouri today. Based on a specific information, the security forces apprehended one overground worker on Tuesday. The person apprehended has been identified as 40-year old Bashir, son of Noor Mohammad of Buddhar near Thathri in Doda district. He was arrested by the security forces for providing shelter and aid support to the militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba, said defence sources. Later, Bashir was handed over to the police post, Joalpur, some 4 km west of Budhar in Doda district. In another incident, based on specific information, security forces recovered a cache of arms from a natural cave type hideout. The recoveries included RPG rocket with boosters, IED battery nine volumes and RC IED box.

Greater Kashmir, 8 December 2005

Azad to 'weed out corruption'

Srinagar, Dec 7: Saying that he is confident of peoples fullest cooperation "in my fight against corruption, nepotism, unemployment and poverty," Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has reiterated the resolve of the present coalition government to free this state from such social evils and bring about revolution in the work culture in the administration, which would help in developing "Khushal Kashmir." Addressing a public gathering at Hadipora-Rafiabad on Wednesday, the Chief Minister, according to an official spokesman, said the main agenda before the present government was to alleviate unemployment in the state. Saying that government jobs could not be provided to every youth he called upon them to avail self employment programmes launched by the government from time to time.

Greater Kashmir, 8 December 2005

Geelani going for Hajj (M HYDERI)

Srinagar, Dec 7: Confusion surrounding Syed Ali Geelani's pilgrimage to Holy Makkah ended on Wednesday when he confirmed that Government has allowed him to undertake the Holy journey. Geelani, who heads a faction of Hurriyat Conference, said Kashmir's Divisional Commissioner, Bharat Bhushan Vyas, telephoned him on Wednesday afternoon to convey the message. "Vyas sahib told me that the government has given me the clearance for the pilgrimage," Geelani told Greater Kashmir. "It was a verbal information," he said, adding he was yet to receive the official documents. Geelani, 75, was scheduled to leave for Jeddah, the capital of Saudi Arabia, along with his wife Jawahira on December 17. Given the uncertainty revolving around the journey Geelani's wife had decided to leave for the pilgrimage with her brother on December 7.

The Indian Express, 9 December 2005

J&K Accountability Commission rejects plea of state minister

Srinagar, December 8: The Jammu and Kashmir Accountability Commission today rejected the plea of state minister Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed to defer the proceedings against him in the multi-million panchayat electrification scandal till his petition seeking the removal of commission chairman Justice R P Sethi before the Governor is disposed off. Mere filing of application does not warrant deferring the proceedings. It is not sustainable and therefore rejected, Sethi said disposing off the plea of the minister moved through his counsel. The minister has submitted a petition before governor S K Sinha seeking removal of Sethi as chairman of the Accountability Commission on the grounds that his approach towards him in the panchayat electrification scam was biased.

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2005

Sonia to spend 2 days with quake victims

SRINAGAR, Dec 8: Chairperson of the UPA Government at the Centre and President of All India Congress Committee, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, who is reaching on an extensive tour of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, will spend two days and a night with the victims of the October 8th earthquake in Poonch, Uri, Tangdhar and Srinagar. On her arrival in a special aircraft, Sonia Gandhi will be received at Jammu airport by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, a number of his Cabinet colleagues and senior Congress leaders. Mrs Gandhi, accompanied by Mr Azad and others, is scheduled to fly to Poonch in a helicopter. From the helipad, she will straightaway drive to villages Khari Karmara and Gulpur where she will interact with the earthquake victims and distribute relief among some of them.

Greater Kashmir, 9 December 2005

5 MILITANTS AMONG 6 KILLED

Srinagar, Dec 8: Five militants and a Special Police Officer (SPO) were killed during separate incidents across the State since Wednesday evening, police and reports said Thursday. Suspected militants lobbed a grenade on Karan Nagar police station here on Thursday afternoon which, after exploding, damaged the windowpanes of the building on Thursday afternoon. No casualty was caused in the blast. Police later cordoned off the area and conducted searches. No one was detained in the operation. Police sources said troops were making searches at Dahrera near Mendhar in Poonch this afternoon when three militants fired at them. In the ensuing exchange of fire lasting over two hours, two militants were killed, while the third managed to escape.

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2005

Two comdrs, SPO among 5 killed

JAMMU, Dec 8: Four militants and a Special Police Officer (SPO) were killed in three separate encounters across Poonch and Doda districts today. Slain militants included two 'commanders' of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit. Official sources said troops of 17 and 37 Rashtriya Rifles, assisted by police, launched a search operation at village Dahrera in Gursai area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district at 3 am today after developing an information that three top LeT militants had taken shelter in a natural cave. The cave which was 10'x10'x4' with an entrance of 2'x2' was located by the troops at 9 am and immediately thereafter a contact was established with the militants. A heavy exchange of firing ensued between the two sides which continued till 3.30 pm. All three militants were killed in the operation one by one while security forces didn't suffer any casualties in the operation.

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2005

Mirwaiz meets Musharraf in Mecca

SRINAGAR, Dec 8: Moderate Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today met Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of an extraordinary two-day summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) at the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, which began yesterday. Spokesman for the Mirwaiz Advocate Shahid-ul-Islam said that during the hour-long meeting, the proposals of "demilitarisation of Jammu and Kashmir" and "self-rule" came up for discussion. Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshheed Mahmud Kasuri, Information Minister

Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and Pakistan Muslim League leader and Senator Mushahid Hussain were also present at the meeting. They also discussed the emerging "new thoughts" about the resolution of the vexed Kashmir issue, he said. The Mirwaiz briefed the Pakistan President of his recent meetings with the US Congressmen in New Delhi. The 15-member US delegation was led by noted human rights activist Dan Burton.

Greater Kashmir, 9 December 2005

Valley protests blasphemy, Quran desecration

Srinagar, Dec 8: A shutdown was observed in several parts of the Kashmir Valley on Wednesday to protest a Danish newspaper publishing "caricature" of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the alleged desecration of the Quran in Sopur town. Shops and business establishments in most parts of this capital city, including nerve centres Lal Chowk, Budshah Chowk, Hari Singh High Street, Gaw Kadal, Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Exchange Road and Koker Bazar remained closed. The strike call was given by the Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani. The Kashmir Bar Association and other groups had supported the shutdown. Reports and witnesses said traffic plied normally though most of the shops and commercial establishments across the Valley were closed. Work in courts was affected as lawyers stayed away. In border district of Kupwara, reports said hundreds of people took to streets in the town to protest the blasphemy.

Greater Kashmir, 10 December 2005

MUSHARRAF STAMPS USK MODEL (RIYAZ MASROOR)

Srinagar, Dec 9: Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf has sought formal proposal about the concept of "United States of Kashmir (USK)" from Mirwaiz Umar Farooq during an exclusive session on the sidelines of the OIC's two-day Summit that concluded in Makkah Thursday, highly placed sources disclosed to Greater Kashmir. They revealed that during his about one hour meeting with Mirwaiz Umar, heading a faction of Hurriyat Conference here, and Prime Minister of Pakistani administered Kashmir (PaK), General Musharraf also agreed to the concept of an all-party meet comprising the political leadership from either side of the Line of Control (LoC) wherein the USK model including those broached by the President himself would be debated over. The meeting has been long sought in the name of intra-Kashmir conference by various political quarters including Hurriyat Conference.

The Indian Express, 10 December 2005

Four officers attached

An official spokesman here said that the government accorded sanction to attach these officials with their respective administrative departments pending investigations by the Vigilance Organisation into the cases registered against them. Giving details, he said that G.N.Bodha, Director Social Welfare, Kashmir, has been attached with General Administration Department and Hakim Sheikh Mukhtiar, Incharge DFO, Kupwara, with the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir. Similarly, Bhomesh Sharma, incharge RTO, Kathua headquartered at Lakhanpur and Purshotam Singh, Girdawar Qanango Settlement, Udhampur, have been attached with Divisional Commissioner, Jammu. The government also ordered that the senior most Deputy Director, Social Welfare in the Directorate, would look after the work of the post of Director Social Welfare, Kashmir, in addition to his own duties till further orders.

Greater Kashmir, 10 December 2005

Court quashes Aasiya's detention

Srinagar, Dec 9: The High Court on Friday quashed the detention of Syeda Aasiya Andrabi, chief of all-women outfit Dukhtaran-e-Millat (daughter of faith). Justice Nirmal Singh quashed Aasiya's detention order after hearing arguments of the petitioner's counsel Mian Abdul Qayoom, and the deputy advocate general MA Wani, who represented the state. Aasiya was arrested along with her seven associates during the DM's campaign to stamp out flesh trade and obscenity from the society in September. She challenged the detention order. The state filed counter stating that the detainee was detained under Public Safety Act (PSA) as her activities were "prejudicial to the security of state." The seven DM activists were released a month later while Aasiya is serving detention in Central Jail Srinagar.

Greater Kashmir, 10 December 2005

Boy wounded in Keran blast (SHABIR IBN YOUSUF)

Kupwara, Dec 9: An 8-year-old boy was critically wounded when a explosive device allegedly planted by troops went off at Keran here on Friday. Army has however refuted the allegations. Ayaz Ahmad Mir son of Abdul Majid Mir was playing near a graveyard when the blast took place, witnesses, said. "We heard a deafening sound and saw Ayaz in a pool of blood, "his uncle said. The residents said the troops have planted mines near the fencing of the graveyard. " We had many times requested Army to de-mine the area to save our lives but they didn't take

any action, "they said, adding many persons were killed in the mine blasts. Col Juneja, officiating PRO Defence, refuted the allegations. "There are no mines in the village. "Actually the boy was fiddling with a grenade when it exploded. His uncle is a supporter of militants," the PRO told Greater Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 11 December 2005

Transporters strike sparks fuel crisis (ARIF HALEEM)

Jammu, Dec 10: A day after High Court ordered the state coordinator of major oil supplying companies to make alternate arrangements for supplying fuel to the consumers hit by the strike of oil tanker owners, fuel was supplied at some spots on Saturday. Though majority of the petrol pumps in the city ran dry, fuel was available at Narwal and some petrol pumps on the highway. Major oil suppliers like Hindustan Petroleum and Indian Oil Corporation pumped into service their own tankers and supplied fuel at these selected spots. However, no fuel was available at most of the petrol pumps in the city. "Our pump went dry three days ago, we are waiting for tankers to fill it again," said Kamlesh, a worker at a petrol pump near Panama Chowk. In Jammu, out of 31 pumps, 27 had gone dry on Friday and the other four were supposed to exhaust their reserves by Saturday. Anan Sharma, president of J&K Petrol Tank Owners Association Friday said more than 50 percent of the petrol pumps in the state had gone dry and the crisis would deepen in the coming days.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2005

2 militants killed in Valley

Srinagar, Dec10: In an ongoing fierce encounter between militants and forces at a remote hamlet in Kulgam in south Kashmir today, two militants have been killed so far while as police claimed recovery of two AK assault rifles from a passenger bus in downtown area of Srinagar. According to sources, a joint party of SOG and 9RR laid a cordon around Zangilpora Kulgam this afternoon. Sources said that police had been tipped off that a group of around eight militants was holding meeting in the village. However, as soon as the security forces surrounded the area, the militants opened fire on them ensuing into a fierce gun battle, which was going on till reports last came in, sources said. Unconfirmed reports said that two militants were killed in the gunfight till now, however, Victor Force confirmed the killing of one militant only. Meanwhile, police last evening, claimed recovery of two AK assault rifles from a passenger bus JK01F-2791 during routine search operations near Alamgiri Bazar in downtown Srinagar. The driver of the said vehicle has been arrested.

Greater Kashmir, 11 December 2005

Shora-e-Jihad rejects self-rule

Srinagar: Rejecting the self-rule proposal, the Shora-e-Jihad, at a meeting on Saturday, said self-rule or autonomy was not any solution to Kashmir dispute. In a statement, a spokesman of the Shora-e-Jihad said, "There is only one roadmap acceptable to Mujahideen and people that is: (a) to accept Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory; (b) complete withdrawal of troops from Jammu and Kashmir; and (c) plebiscite under the UN supervision. This is the only roadmap advocating aspirations of all the people of state." The spokesman asserted it was high time India accepted the ground realities and recognized Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory. He welcomed OIC on recognizing the need to address Kashmir issue for the welfare of Ummah in south Asia. "But at the same time there is need to remove some pro western elements from OIC who always dominate the OIC and proceed with western policies in Muslim Ummah," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2005

Still lot to be done in quake-hit areas: Sonia

NECHIAN, TANGDHAR, Dec 10: UPA chairperson and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi today expressed satisfaction over the ongoing relief and rehabilitation work in the quake-affected areas of Jammu and Kashmir, but said a lot still needs to be done. "Yes, I am satisfied with the ongoing relief and rehabilitation work in the quake-affected areas. But it can never be enough. A lot still needs to be done," Ms Gandhi told reporters here. "We have to carry on with the work till every single person gets relief and is rehabilitated," she added. The Congress president said she has received several complaints, though no major one, in almost all the affected areas about the relief distribution among the joint family. "There are many families living in one house or structure. The cheque is naturally given to the head of the family. The other families do not get anything. They want some more relief," she added.

Greater Kashmir, 11 December 2005

PROTESTS, CLASHES MARK RIGHTS DAY IN JK

Srinagar, Dec 10: Protest demonstrations and hunger strike by pro-independence leaders marked the International Human Rights Day here on Saturday. Police used batons and rounded up around 50 activists as they proceeded towards the headquarters of United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) at Sonawar here. However, prominent leader Shabir Shah managed to present his memorandum to the military observer. Meanwhile, around hundred JKLF activists sat on a token hunger strike outside their party

headquarters in Maisuma. Second rung leaders of Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat Conference including Advocate Shahid-ul-Islam, Javed Ahmed Mir and Muhammad Yusuf Naqash led the protest demonstration against the human rights abuses. The protesters shouted slogans in favor of Azadi and Islam and demanded end to all forms of human rights violations.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2005

President praises role of Lok Adalats in J&K

CHANDIGARH, Dec 10: Free Legal Aid and Lok Adalat programmes launched by Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice B A Khan for settlement of claims of victims of the devastating earthquake in the State came in for praise from President A P J Abdul Kalam here today. Addressing a gathering on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, the President while emphasising on the dispensation of justice at the grassroots level, said that he had found an effective utilisation of the Lok Adalat route for disposal of compensation claims of earthquake victims in Jammu and Kashmir thus avoiding future litigation. It may be recalled that the President had recently visited the quake-hit areas and had appreciated the Chief Justice's 'Justice at Doorstep Programme' and setting up of what he called mobile courts in rural areas.

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2005

Govt rules out extension of ST amnesty scheme (Neeraj Rohmetra)

JAMMU, Dec 10: The State Government has categorically ruled out extension of Sales Tax amnesty scheme, which comes to an end on December 31 this year. Authoritative sources told the Excelsior that the scheme provided amnesty from interest and penalty for the dealers registered with the Sales Tax department for the period of six months and the scheme had been enforced from July 31 this year. Though certain quarters were interested in extension of scheme for next year as well, it wasn't possible legally and even a Cabinet decision couldn't help in this direction. Sources emphasized that shortly after the expiry of the deadline, the department intends to vigorously pursue its revenue collection efforts in the entire State. There were indications that the department would intensify its recovery drive further in next year.

Greater Kashmir, 12 December 2005

Govt failed to end Gujjars' problems: Mian Altaf

Srinagar: Former minister and senior leader of opposition National Conference, Mian Altaf has accused the government of indifference in resolving the long-standing issue confronting Gujjars. Speaking at one-day Tribal Conference at Kupwara on Saturday, Altaf said the Gujjars of Kupwara were fighting "a big battle" for their identity. "You've achieved some success in your just struggle to get your problems resolved," Altaf, who was the chief guest in the function, said. "Government has only made plans for development of Gujjars but failed to execute them, as a result Gujjars are fighting for survival." "The tribal sub plan funds are being misused and the Gujjars struggle to meet two ends. Government has betrayed the Gujjars and CBI should investigate the bungling," he demanded. Altaf said for speedy redressal of Gujjars' problems, the State government should take up the matter with Central government.

Daily Excelsior, 12 December 2005

Fake currency seized

SRINAGAR, Dec 11: A shopkeeper was killed while security forces seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition besides fake currency notes across Kashmir since last evening, an official spokesman said today. A powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast rocked the Baramulla town late last night, official sources said. They said militants exploded the IED at Khanipora in north Kashmir's Baramulla district when a convoy of security forces passed through the area. However, there was no loss of life or property, the sources said. The impact of the blast was so powerful that its sound was heard in the radius of about 5 km. The spokesman said unidentified gunmen shot dead Mohammad Amin Ganai, a butcher, at his shop in Chandilora near Tangmarg last evening. Security forces seized two hand grenades concealed in a milk container from a Matador near the grid station at Behama chowk in Ganderbal on the outskirts of the Srinagar city, he said, adding the driver of the vehicle was being questioned.

Daily Excelsior, 12 December 2005

5 workers of Chenab project stabbed

JAMMU, Dec 11: Five members of Chenab Hydro Power Project Workers Union of Baglihar Project were stabbed by members of Khohistani Workers Association of the Sawlakot Project at Kanga under the jurisdiction of Ramban Police Station in Doda district. Police sources said that three members of the Chenab Power Project Workers Union, affiliated with CITU, were on their way to Sawlakot Project to address the meeting of their supporters there and frame a unit of the Union there when they were stopped by a group of activists of Khohistani Workers Association led by Yaqoob Ali, who allegedly inflicted severe injuries on trio with sharp-edged weapons.

Daily Excelsior, 12 December 2005

Explosives, ammunition seized

JAMMU, Dec 11: Security forces today destroyed two hide-out of the militants and recovered a large quantity of explosives and ammunition in Rajouri and Mahore. During a search operation at Khawas in Budhal area of Rajouri district, security forces busted a hide-out of the militants and recovered four RPG rockets, four UBGLs, six grenades, three AK magazines, 216 AK rounds and 148 Pika rounds. Another hide-out was unearthed at Khala near Mahore in Reasi police district. Recoveries included two hand grenades, seven rounds of 7.62 mm, 19 rounds of 5.56 Insas, 17 AK rounds, seven AK ammunition, 16 rounds of Caliber, one AK magazine, 20 Pika rounds and 12 pencil cells.

The Indian Express, 13 December 2005

J&K: Ex-gratia relief of Rs 460 mn distributed in Karnah

Srinagar, December 13: An ex-gratia relief of Rs 460 million has been distributed among the quake victims of Karnah area of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesman said here today. Relief amount were distributed among 5711 persons whose houses were fully damaged. Another 333 whose houses were partially damaged were also provided with relief, spokesman said. This was stated at a joint meeting of government officers and representatives of various NGOs held at Tangdhar. Besides, 6191 temporary sheds were completed for which Rs 30,000 was provided in each case. Additionally, Rs 5000 each have been provided to 2178 families as incentive, he added. The meeting was informed that 50,000 cubic feet of timber was also provided to the quake victims.

Greater Kashmir, 13 December 2005

Dal encroachers again attack LAWDA men (ARIF SHAFI WANI)

Srinagar, Dec 12: Four policemen and four officials of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) were injured in violent clashes at Saida Kadal here on Monday. The incident—second of its kind in two weeks—occurred when LAWDA's demolition squad reached Ashai Bagh and demolished two illegal under-construction sheds and a kitchen. The situation took an ugly turn when the crowd attacked the squad with stones. Four policemen and LAWDA's four officials, including its secretary Ghulam Mustafa Khan and demolition officer Waqar Ahmad Shah sustained injuries, witnesses told Greater Kashmir. The crowd also smashed the windowpanes of LAWDA vehicles damaging four of them, they said

Greater Kashmir, 13 December 2005

Troops, police detain 10 in Valley

Srinagar, Dec 12: Troops and police have detained 10 persons during two raids at Panzla Rafiabab in Varmul district and Shalimar here. According to CNS the police and troops raided various places at Panzla Rafiabab and detained Farooq Ahmad Gujjar son of Abdul Sattar, Fayaz Ahmad Magray son of Abdul Hameed Magray, Ashiq Ahmad Sheikh, Nazir Ahmad Khan son of Majnun Ahmad Khan, Nissar Ahmad Magray and Ghulam Nabi Magray. The families of the detained have demanded their immediate release. The police, according to the CNS detained Fayaz Ahmad Dar son of Abdul Hameed and Javed Ahmad Wani son of Abdul Aziz of Arabal Shalimar. Two more persons from the Shalimar and Harwan area were detained by police. The arrested are Bashir Ahmad Bhat son of Ghulam Qadir Bhat and Nazir Ahmad Reshi son of Muhammad Maqbool Reshi.

Greater Kashmir, 13 December 2005

3 militants among 5 killed

Srinagar, Dec 12: Three militants were among five people killed in the Valley in separate incidents since Sunday night, police and reports said on Monday. Police said the troops of 19 Rashtriya Rifles and CRPF 77 battalion cordoned off Kralapora Sogam and during searches came under heavy gunfire from the militants triggering an encounter. In the ensuing gun battle, the troops killed two militants belonging to Al-Badr, police said. The slain militants have been identified as Imran Bhai of Pakistan and Ajaz Ahadam of Wadipora Sopur. In the exchange of gunfire, house of Ghulam Nabi Mit was gutted, the police said, two AK rifles, seven magazines, two hand grenades, one wireless set and Rs 3 lakh in Indian currency were seized from the encounter site. However, the villagers, according to UNI alleged that the troops fired mortars to destroy the house due to which some more residential buildings were damaged.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2005

Mufti surfaces in Jammu

Jammu, Dec 12: After a brief political hibernation, former Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed surfaced in the winter capital of the state Monday afternoon where he held a two hour meeting with senior party leaders. Mufti, who was replaced by Congress Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on November 2, reached Jammu from New Delhi, where he was reportedly camping for the last three weeks. Accompanied by his daughter and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mahbooba Mufti, the former Chief Minister drove straight to the state guesthouse, where he would be staying for next few days. Sources said that Moulana Iftikar Hussain Ansari, who

recently joined PDP, was among others who were waiting for Mufti at the guesthouse. It was reliably learnt that Mufti was expected to return on November 17 to attend the special session of the state assembly but he surprised even his close aides, when he informed about his arrival this morning.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2005

7 cross LoC point in Mendhar sector

TATA PANI (LoC), Dec 12: Four persons from Kotli and Mirpur in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) today crossed the Line of Control (LoC) from this point in Mendhar sector of Poonch district while three PoK residents, who had crossed LoC on November 28, returned to their houses after spending 15 stipulated days with their relatives in Mendhar. This point, located in Balnoi area of Mendhar sector, was opened for second time today for crossing by the civilians. However, no resident from this side crossed over to PoK today. Four PoK residents, who crossed the LoC, are Nazir Hussain son of Mohd Din R/o Mirpur, Kotli, Raja Abdul Qayoom son of Sattar Din R/o Mirpur, Sayeed Mehmood-ul-Hassan son of Sayeed Asgar Ali Shah and his wife Sayeed Mariam, both residents of Kotli.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2005

Mufti in Jammu

JAMMU, Dec 12: Former Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayed arrived here this afternoon. After change of guard on November 2, 2005, this was first visit of Mufti Sayeed to the Winter Capital. Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Minister of Irrigation and Flood Control, Qazi Mohammed Afzal, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Abdul Aziz Zarger along with senior leaders of the party were present at the airport to receive the former Chief Minister. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed was accompanied by his wife. Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) president and Lok Sabha member from Anantnag-Pulwama, Mehbooba Mufti also accompanied the former Chief Minister. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed arrived Jammu by Jet Airways flight which landed at 1.15 pm. He later straightway went to the Circuit House. Large number of party workers were also present to receive their leader.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2005

HuM commander among 2 militants killed

Srinagar, Dec 12: Two militants including an area commander of the militant outfit Harkat-ul-Mujahideen were killed in an encounter at Nagbal Sogam, Kupwara in north Kashmir last night, while as police recovered a body from a rented house at Gaw Kadal, here this morning. According to sources, a joint operational party of 19 RR and 77 Battalion CRPF, on a tip off, launched search operations in Nagbal village of Sogam in Kupwara last night. Sources said that the militants after being surrounded opened fire on the troopers from the house of one Ghulam Nabi Mir. The troopers returned the fire triggering a fierce gun battle during which two militants, including HuM commander, were killed. Sources said that both owed allegiance to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and were identified as the area commander of HuM, Imran Bhai of Pakistan and Ajaz Ahmed War alias Umer of Sopore. Sources said that two AK-47 rifles and two hand grenades were recovered from the encounter site, while as the house of Mir was raised to rubble during the course of the gunfight.

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2005

Geelani rejects third option

Srinagar, Dec 12: Veteran separatist leader and chairman of his own faction of Hurriyat, Syed Ali Shah Geelani launched scathing attack at moderate leaders of Hurriyat led by Mirwaiz, Pakistan, OIC and India on Monday while rejecting any third option, other than accession to India or Pakistan, as the possible solution to the Kashmir issue. At a seminar held today in connection with observance of Human Rights Day, the hardline separatist Geelani dealt alike with India, Pakistan, Mirwaiz and OIC criticising their conduct. He took a strong dig at Mirwaiz Umar Farooq for what he opined 'giving India a wicket of advantage by being part of the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan'. Hitting hard at Mirwaiz, Geelani said, "They're falling into a trap which will lead them no where. Unless complete demilitarization is not done, ongoing peace process can't be successful."

The Indian Express, 14 December 2005

Another Big One unleashes panic, no loss of life reported (Riyaz Wani & Anand Bodh)

Srinagar/Jammu, December 13: After the killer October earthquake, which killed around 1,400 people, J-K again woke to the alarming shudder of the strongest aftershock so far - 6.7 on the Richter scale. At around 3.17 a.m., when the houses and shelters started jolting, it was a brush with a familiar fear, bringing people out in a jiffy, distraught and scared. However, Director, Meteorological Department, C.L. Ram said the quake was in no way related to the October 8 tremblor, but part of the aftershocks associated with the November 27 earthquake along Iran's southern coastline - 5.9 on the Richter scale. "The epicentre of today's quake is 400 miles away in Hindukush mountains of north-eastern Afghanistan and has no relation to Kashmir quake," Ram told The Indian Express. As for the aftershocks of Kashmir earthquake, Ram said they are already abating in frequency.

Greater Kashmir, 14 December 2005

Mahbooba Mufti's self-rule trial balloon doesn't take off (HILAL AHMAD)

Jammu, Dec 13: Mahbooba Mufti's reticence on the idea of self-rule proposed via media by Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf is understandable. She supported the idea and also advised dissenters in the party to keep mum because her word was party's policy: final and unalterable. But most of the party leaders have no concrete idea of what the self-rule meant. Most party leaders said the idea hasn't been discussed yet. It seems the party's understanding of the idea is sketchy and as opposition groups and observers see it, Mahbooba's hasty endorsement of the idea is a stratagem to show that party was not ideologically bankrupt. By rushing to media and supporting a vague proposal, the party didn't want to be seen as deficient in ideas in the season when roadmaps and proposals on Kashmir are being exchanged like shuttlecocks on media and across diplomatic channels.

Greater Kashmir, 14 December 2005

Kupwara woman found alive 63 days after quake (TARIQ NAQASH)

Muzaffarabad, Dec 13: Surprised by themselves over the wonders of Nature, doctors at a charity hospital on Tuesday said they were striving to bring life back to Naqsha Bibi, the 43 year old survivor recovered from the rubble of her house more than two months after the devastating earthquake. Bibi was brought to the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) hospital here on Monday from Kamsar refugee camp, five-kilometres on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad, about 24 hours after her recovery from her collapsed house "as she was not taking any meals," according to Dr Riaz Ahmed, head of PIMA hospital. "Looking at her appearance, I will believe that she did get trapped in the debris for a long time," Dr Martin A Norgard, told Greater Kashmir in the intensive care unit of the hospital. Dr Norgard, who travelled all the way from Denmark to serve the earthquake victims, was also of the view that Bibi could possibly be suffering from some psychiatric problem.

The Indian Express, 14 December 2005

Muslim educationists, lawyers favour separate state for Jammu region

Jammu, December 13: Describing the move for separate state for Jammu as secular, some prominent Muslim educationists and advocates today supported the cause of separate state for the Jammu region. They expressed these views at a meeting with the people of all sections of the society to know their feelings, aspirations and response towards concept of reorganisation of the Jammu and Kashmir state and creation of separate state for this region. The meeting was organised by Jammu Mukti Morcha here today. The meeting was presided over by Prof Virendra Gupta, president of Jammu Mukti Morcha. H.B.Khajuria, senior vice president of JMM, highlighted the purpose of the meeting.

The Indian Express, 14 December 2005

NC to hold president polls in Jammu (Rakesh Rocky)

Jammu, December 13: For the first time in the history of National Conference, the party is to hold its election for the president in Jammu on December 19. Omar Abdullah, who took over the party reins from father Farooq Abdullah in 2002, is all set to be re-elected unopposed. A day after the election of the president, the party will hold a meeting of its legislators in which strategy will be discussed for the forthcoming special session of the Assembly to be held on December 22. The legislative party meeting of December 20 will be chaired by NC chief Omar Abdullah. NC Patron Farooq Abdullah, who will attend the party president election on December 19, will also be present at the legislative party meeting. This will be for the first time that the National Conference will host its election for the president at the winter capital Jammu. A month ago, the Congress too had created history by naming a chief minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad, from the Jammu region.

The Indian Express, 14 December 2005

J&K: Ex-gratia relief of Rs 460 mn distributed in Karnah

Srinagar, December 13: An ex-gratia relief of Rs 460 million has been distributed among the quake victims of Karnah area of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesman said here today. Relief amount were distributed among 5711 persons whose houses were fully damaged. Another 333 whose houses were partially damaged were also provided with relief, spokesman said. This was stated at a joint meeting of government officers and representatives of various NGOs held at Tangdhar. Besides, 6191 temporary sheds were completed for which Rs 30,000 was provided in each case. Additionally, Rs 5000 each have been provided to 2178 families as incentive, he added. The meeting was informed that 50,000 cubic feet of timber was also provided to the quake victims.

Daily Excelsior, 14 December 2005

Under Secy among 6 Sectt officers named as accused (Sanjeev Pargal)

JAMMU, Dec 13: An Under Secretary of Law Department, posted in Civil Secretariat, is among six officers, who have been identified by the police investigators as accused in fake appointments and stolen cars purchase scam involving two officers—one posted in the Secretariat and another a Patwari, who were arrested by Nowabad

police yesterday. The Under Secretary, who is likely to be detained by police for questioning, was in possession of a stolen car. He had purchased the car from Abdul Majid Zargar, a Head Assistant in ARI & Training Department of the Secretariat and Krishan Dutt, a Patwari, who were in custody of Nowabad police and were produced before the newsmen yesterday.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2005

Seven militants killed; war-like supplies recovered

Srinagar, Dec 14: In a 'major blow' to largest militant group Hizbul Mujahideen, Army today gunned down six of its active militants, including two top commanders and most wanted ultras during a nocturnal operation in Khag Beerwah in central Kashmir. In south Kashmir district of Anantnag, a top commander of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen was killed in Achhabal area on Tuesday evening. Meanwhile, Army claimed to have recovered heavy war-like supplies during separate raids on militant hideouts in Kupwara, north Kashmir. Defence sources said that the troops of 34 RR, on a local tip off, launched a major operation to flush out Hizb militants hiding in Pati Poshkar village of Khag Beerwah. Sources said that a cordon was laid around the village early this morning at around 0530 hours. The militants hiding in the residential house of one Abdul Majeed Wani were asked to lay down their arms, however, they refused and opened fire on the search party of the troops and attempted to break the cordon.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2005

Student shot dead in Doda

JAMMU, Dec 14: An 8th class student was shot dead by the militants after his refusal to join militancy at Tanta in Gandoh area of Doda district last night while ultras shot at and injured a Village Defence Committee (VDC) member. Official sources said a group of Hizbul Mujahideen militants entered into the house of Mohd Iqbal at Tanta and asked him to handover his 16 year old son Liaquat Ali, an 8th class student to them for joining militancy. Earlier also, the militants had sent feelers through some Over Ground Workers to Mohd Iqbal to let his son join militancy but he had turned down the offer. Last night, the militants kidnapped Liaquat Ali after he refused to accompany them. They took him to an adjoining field and shot him dead. The militants escaped after the killing. A Defence release, however, said that Liaquat Ali had already joined the militancy and was killed by his rival group.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2005

DB hears officers in person; status report filed

Jammu, Dec 14: Division Bench of the State High Court Jammu Wing, comprising Chief Justice Bashir Ahmed Khan and Justice YP Nargotra today considered the status reports filed by the various authorities in traffic management case and heard officers in person and Advocates appearing for the various departments. The Division Bench later granted further time to the officers concerned to ensure the compliance of the Court directions and to maintain the traffic system in the city. Earlier the officers who appeared in person extended assurance to comply with the Court orders. The Division Bench issued direction to the JDA to work promptly on the plans regarding shifting of the General Bus-Stand and also regarding the parking spaces in the city within the time schedule fixed by the Court.

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2005

Hurriyat flays Govt for delay on PoK visit

SRINAGAR, Dec 14: The moderate Hurriyat Conference today criticised the Government for its "delaying tactics" in clearing the amalgam delegation's visit to quake-ravaged Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) with relief material. At a marathon meeting of the executive committee and the general council here, the Hurriyat Conference lamented that the Government was yet to clear the visit of the amalgam leaders to PoK with relief material. Hurriyat sources said that the emergency meeting, summoned by amalgam chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, criticised the Government for its "delaying tactics" in clearing the visit. The Hurriyat leaders said the visit was necessary to be undertaken immediately as the harsh winter has already set in PoK and in view of the incessant snowfall in the past few days. The sources said the 21-member Hurriyat delegation, led by Mirwaiz Farooq, is awaiting travel documents for undertaking the visit to PoK.

The Indian Express, 15 December 2005

Hurriyat now banks on Saudi (Riyaz Wani)

Srinagar, December 14: When Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz visits India in January, he will raise the Kashmir issue with the Government of India, Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq told a closed-door session of the amalgam here. Sources said Mirwaiz told a joint session of the Hurriyat Executive and general council that Abdullah had assured him that on his visit to New Delhi - the first by a Saudi king in 50 years - he will specifically raise the Kashmir issue and stress on its resolution. Besides, he also told the session that Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has asked the Hurriyat to formally send its proposal on the United States of Kashmir to Pakistan so that it is seriously considered. Hurriyat, on its proposed visit to Pakistan, will now present a copy of

the proposal to the Pakistani President. Today's Hurriyat session was held to brief the members about Mirwaiz's visit to the meeting of Organisation of Islamic Conference and Istanbul.

The Indian Express, 15 December 2005

Muslim educationists, lawyers favour separate state for Jammu region

Jammu, December 13: Describing the move for separate state for Jammu as secular, some prominent Muslim educationists and advocates today supported the cause of separate state for the Jammu region. They expressed these views at a meeting with the people of all sections of the society to know their feelings, aspirations and response towards concept of reorganisation of the Jammu and Kashmir state and creation of separate state for this region. The meeting was organised by Jammu Mukti Morcha here today. The meeting was presided over by Prof Virendra Gupta, president of Jammu Mukti Morcha. H.B.Khajuria, senior vice president of JMM, highlighted the purpose of the meeting.

The Indian Express, 15 December 2005

Army guns down two top HM men (Majid Jahangir)

Gulabdaji (Beerwa), December 14: When this tiny hamlet hidden deep inside the Brarinar hills of central Kashmir woke up to the rattle of gunfire early this morning, its calm was broken for the first time in three years. At noon, when the firing stopped and troops picked up the bodies of six militants, the scared villagers peeped through their window panes to find two top commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen from neighbouring villages also among the dead. Army's spokesman in Srinagar Col Hemant Jeneja said one of the killed militants is a district commander and another one is a battalion commander of the HM. "After a specific tip-off, we cordoned off Gulbadaji last night and killed the six militants, including these two top commander," Jeneja told The Indian Express. In fact, an Army officer of 34 RR associated with the operation termed the killing of the six militants as a great success.

Greater Kashmir, 15 December 2005

Jagmohan, Mufti masterminded KPs exodus: Bhim (ARIF HALEEM)

Jammu, Dec 14: Professor Bhim Singh, chief patron of National Panthers Party (NPP), a coalition partner of the government, Wednesday said the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in 1990 was masterminded and executed by then governor Jagmohan and Home Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed.

Known for his iconoclastic and near anarchist views despite being part of the government for three years, Bhim told reporters here that migration of more than two hundred thousand Pandits "wasn't possible without the help of state apparatus." "I can prove that Jagmohan and then Home Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed were behind the mass migration of Pandits," Singh said. He said there was no ethnic crisis in the Valley as it is being portrayed in media. "Muslims and Pandits are ethnically same. Kashmiri Muslims have always been secular; they were not responsible for the exodus of Pandits. Some people played to fundamentalist agenda of Jamaat-e-Islami."

Greater Kashmir, 15 December 2005

And now separatists'Darbar Move (RIYAZ MASROOR)

Srinagar, Dec 14: A competitive zeal is driving separatist forces, including those betting on 'gray'area of Kashmir politics, to Jammu following the high-pitch diplomacy favoring an 'interim Kashmir solution.'The trend betrays lackluster public response to the 'new options'in the most affected region of Kashmir Valley and a slight but sharp interest evinced by substantial sections in Jammu society. Besides a protest demonstration in Shaheedi Chowk on World Human Rights Day last week, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq-led Hurriyat Conference held several public meetings in Jammu City including a special session with Kashmiri Pandits in the Mishriwala migrant camp. A lower rung Hurriyat activist has been camping in Jammu and interacting with various sections for last three months. Insiders disclosed that Mirwaiz Umar would shortly address a public rally in Jammu to kick start the 'Mission Jammu.'

Daily Excelsior, 16 December 2005

Woman among 2 killed, PDP worker injured

SRINAGAR, Dec 15: Two persons, including a woman, were killed and two others, including a PDP activist injured in separate incidents of violence in the Valley since last evening, while as a militant was injured when an explosive went off at Batamaloo today. Official sources said that suspected militants at Jamia Mohalla, Baramulla in north Kashmir, opened indiscriminate firing targeting one Showkat Ahmed Banday, district secretary PDP, resulting in severe injuries to Showkat and two others, identified as Mohammed Ashraf Bhat, working in MES and a woman Sabeena Akhter of Baramulla. The injured were rushed to hospital, where Mohammed Ashraf succumbed to his injuries later. Showkat who was battling for his life in hospital till reports last came in, had contested Municipal elections on PDP ticket. However, after the killing of a Congress candidate from his ward the elections were cancelled. Unidentified gunmen shot dead a woman Maroofa Akhter, 21, daughter of late Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh of Chowgalpora, Damhal Hanjipora in Kulgam area of south Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 16 December 2005

Azad's takeover as CM a new trend in J&K: Sinha

JAMMU, Dec 15: Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha today said that a new trend has begun in the history of Jammu and Kashmir after take over of Ghulam Nabi Azad as first Chief Minister of the State from Jammu region. Addressing the gathering at a function organised in connection with the centenary celebrations of Dogra Sadar Sabha here, the Governor said that Dogras have played a great role in creation of this State. The brave Dogra hero General Zorawar Singh extended its boundaries. The supreme sacrifices of the Dogras can not be ignored and the entire nation acknowledges it, he added. The land of Dogras has not only produced great Generals but also the great people who excelled in the field of Civil services, Culture, Art and the social service. Even the people like Mr Azad and many others are excelling in the political field. Congratulating the Dogras from this platform to have Mr Azad as its first Chief Minister from this region, Mr Sinha termed it as good gesture and new beginning.

Daily Excelsior, 16 December 2005

Open Jehlum valley road for trade: Mufti

JAMMU, Dec 15: Former Chief Minister and PDP chief patron Mufti Mohd Sayeed today called for opening of Jehlum Valley road for trade and increasing frequency of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. "This would be logical follow up to the breaking of barriers between India and Pakistan and their declaration to find a solution to Kashmir issue", Mr Sayeed said in his first reaction after handing over the Chief Ministership to Ghulam Nabi Azad on October 2. "Opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road was a momentous development in six decades of an uneasy relationship between two neighbours. This should now be upgraded from its symbolic significance", he said addressing convention of District and Zonal presidents of the PDP for Jammu province here. He said the road provided a historic link to the Kashmir valley with rest of the sub continent and full utilisation of its trade potential would go a long way in economic development and resolution of conflict in the region.

Daily Excelsior, 16 December 2005

Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service resumes

SRINAGAR, Dec 15: The Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, suspended following the October 8 devastating earthquake, was resumed today with seven passengers on board. The peace bus, Karavan-e-Aman, resumed its operations from Srinagar to Kaman post with seven passengers on board, Regional Passport Officer S L Srinramlu said here, reports PTI. Although 15 passengers were cleared to travel, only seven, including five stranded passengers from Pakistan occupied Kashmir, boarded the bus, which started its operation after a gap of two months and nine days. More passengers might join at Uri or Salamabad, he said. Ten Indian passengers, who were stranded in PoK following the October 8 earthquake, were expected to return home along with some fresh arrivals as well in the return journey of the bus, which runs between the two sides of the Kashmir.

The Indian Express, 16 December 2005

No change in J&K status: India

New Delhi, December 15: There have been no discussions with Pakistan on changing, in any form whatsoever, the status of Jammu and Kashmir, government told the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. In a written reply, Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed said there is no question of India accepting any change in the status of Jammu and Kashmir which is and will remain an integral part of India. He said India is committed under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration to resolve all issues with Pakistan peacefully through bilateral discussions and Jammu and Kashmir is one of the issues being discussed with Pakistan within the framework of India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue. On Siachen issue, Ahamed said India's consistent position is that authentication of the presently-held positions has to be the first step before any redeployment of troops is considered.

Greater Kashmir, 16 December 2005

Shifting of kids a conspiracy: Hurriyat

Srinagar, Dec 15: The All Party Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar today said shifting of children from October 8 killer quake areas to outside Kashmir was a deep rooted conspiracy. The amalgam sees a conspiracy against the people of Kashmir in shifting of earthquake ravaged children from their respective areas to outside the valley, a spokesman of the Hurriyat Conference said after a two-day long extraordinary meeting of Executive Committee and General Council here. He said recent shifting of 500 children from the quake hit areas here to Maharashtra was discussed in the meeting in detail. The members said shifting of children from Uri and other areas to different parts of India by the authorities and later handing them over to different intelligence agencies was part of a conspiracy. The spokesman said the meeting was informed that government was not sincere to provide education to these children but to convert them and keep them away from their culture.

The Indian Express, 17 December 2005

Peace bus reunites Kashmir after quake

Srinagar, December 16: The peace bus linking both sides of LoC halted by the devastating Oct 8 South Asia earthquake resumed on Thursday, Indian officials said. "The bus has resumed its service from Srinagar to Kaman post with seven passengers on board," S.L. Srinramlu, a passport officer in Jammu and Kashmir said. The 170-km highway between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad was reopened in April, connecting the two sides for the first time in almost 60 years. But the South Asia quake, which killed almost 75,000 people, blocked the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road and damaged the Aman Setu, or Peace Bridge. Indian officials said 15 passengers were cleared to travel but only seven, including five stranded passengers of PoK, boarded the bus on Thursday. At least 10 passengers from J&K stranded in PoK since the quake were expected to return home.

Greater Kashmir, 17 December 2005

Self-rule 'author' visiting Valley (SHOWKAT A MOTTA)

Srinagar, Dec 16: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's "self-rule" and demilitarization on both sides of the disputed territory will get a fillip with the arrival of Farooq Kathwari, considered to be the real author of the proposals, in Valley in a day or two. Sources said Kathwari left Pakistan on Friday where he headed a seven-member delegation of International Refugee Group (IRG) to assess the requirements of earthquake survivors in 'Azad' Kashmir. Former US envoy to New Delhi, Frank G Wisner was part of the team. Kathwari, 58, an expatriate Kashmiri who started out selling Kashmiri antiques and ended up heading an international company selling traditional American furniture, is the chairman of US-based Kashmir Study Group (KSG), a high-profile organisation of some senior US senators and diplomats.

Daily Excelsior, 17 December 2005

Keep off Kashmir; India tells OIC

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: India today rejected all references to Jammu and Kashmir made at the December 7-8 summit of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) at Mecca and said the organisation had no locus standi to comment on matters concerning India's internal affairs. "We have consistently maintained that the OIC has no locus standi to comment on the matters concerning India's internal affairs, and we completely reject all such references," a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said in response to a question. The spokesman said India was "surprised" that the OIC in its third extra-ordinary session of the Islamic summit conference held in Mecca from December 7-8, should have made references on Jammu and Kashmir, an integral part of the Indian union, in its final communique. The OIC said it "extended" support to the "inalienable right" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir for "self determination" in accordance with the UN resolutions.

Daily Excelsior, 17 December 2005

J&K reeling under severe power crisis (Neeraj Rohmetra)

JAMMU, Dec 16: Notwithstanding strenuous efforts by the State Government to get additional release of power from New Delhi, the State still seems to be reeling under a power crisis. While the State has a requirement of about 1800 mw of power per day, it is unable to meet its requirement despite the fact that it is overdrawing as much as 250 mw of power almost on daily basis. The gravity of the situation can be gauged from the fact that even several important and strategic installations have been deprived of power in view of frequent power curtailments. Sources stated that while the administration was trying to cope up with situation while informing the public about scheduled power cuts, the lack of power availability with the Department was compelling it to go for additional unscheduled cuts that has complicated the situation further.

Daily Excelsior, 17 December 2005

5 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Dec 16: Five persons were killed while security forces averted a major tragedy after they defused five Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Kashmir overnight, an official spokesman said. Militants shot dead Shabir Ahmad Sheikh at Nihalpora Pattan in north Kashmir district of Baramulla last night while a bullet riddled body of Shaban Dar was recovered at Shatmuqam Mawar in the frontier district of Kupwara today. Shaban was kidnapped by militants early this week from his Panzala house. Two persons were also killed by militants at Mohalla Jamia in the same district last night, he added. Meanwhile, police recovered five Improvised Explosive Devices from Ganderbal area of Srinagar district, foiling militants' plan to strike at security forces, an official spokesman said today. A police party recovered four IEDs fitted in four gas cylinders and another IED concealed in a tin cannister near a stream at Wurpush in Ganderbal area, 22 kms from here, the spokesman said. The recoveries were made following a specific tip off on the presence of explosives hidden in the area and were likely to be transported to the summer capital at a later date.

Daily Excelsior, 17 December 2005

Top HM commander Sangar Pathan shot dead in Darhal

JAMMU, Dec 16: Two militants and an Army jawan were killed in an encounter at Gurnuwali dhok in Darhal area of Rajouri district last night. There were reports that one of the slain ultra could be the most wanted militant of

Rajouri-Poonch, Sangar Pathan, involved in more than 25 killings. "There is definite resemblance between one of the militant killed in the gun-battle and Sangar Pathan. A special team, which had face to face encounters with Pathan twice earlier, is being deputed from Rajouri to the encounter site tomorrow to establish identity of the militant", SSP Rajouri J P Singh said this evening. A diary and a rifle recovered from the militant also carried the name of Pathan, he added.

Daily Excelsior, 18 December 2005

Prepare roadmap with Pak carefully: Committee

NEW DELHI, Dec 17: A Parliamentary Committee has asked Government to prepare the roadmap for improving relations with Pakistan with the "greatest care" and not hasten the pace in an unrealistic manner in view of concerns of the international community over perpetual tension between the two nuclear powers. "Every care should be taken to protect the vital interests of the nation. The fact that the terrorist training camps inside Pakistan's territory are still operating though infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir has come down considerably points to the grave danger inherent in the situation," it said. "The Government of India should not allow itself to be taken by surprise at any stage," the Standing Committee on External Affairs said in its report presented in Parliament. The Committee termed as "praiseworthy" the decisive and bold moves made by the Government over the past five years to improve ties with its neighbours.

Greater Kashmir, 18 December 2005

Geelani leaves for Jeddah

Srinagar: After a wait of nearly five years, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference, left for Hajj pilgrimage on Saturday afternoon. Geelani and his wife Jawahira left for Jeddah. A large number of his supporters were present at the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) from where Geelani left in a special bus for the airport this morning, witnesses told Greater Kashmir. Today 413 pilgrims from different parts of the Valley left in two direct flights to Saudi Arabia, officials said, adding with this a total of 3,600 pilgrims have so far reached Jeddah for the annual pilgrimage. A member of the Saudi Arabia-based World Muslim League, an influential body of Muslims in the world, Geelani had been applying for permission to perform the Holy pilgrimage almost every year since 2000.

Daily Excelsior, 18 December 2005

Annual salary: Rs 1 lakh, Assets: Rs 3 cr (Sanjeev Pargal)

JAMMU, Dec 17: The State Vigilance Organisation (SVO) has detected more assets of two out of six officers whose premises were raided simultaneously by its sleuths on December 7. With fresh revelations during more than a week long investigations, the SVO sleuths have found that Purshotam Singh, Girdawar, Qanango Settlement, Udampur, now attached with the office of Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, had not one but two stone crushers and two excavators. Today, the Vigilance Organisation team came across another stone crusher named Himalayan Stone Crusher at Charai Muttal in Jib Thathi, which was also the property of the Girdawar. Besides another excavator, a digging machine, worth Rs 33 lakh was also found in the list of his assets, official sources, engaged in the investigations, said.

Greater Kashmir, 18 December 2005

RS 29 cr SPENT ON SRINAGAR THIS YEAR

Srinagar, Dec 17: The Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Baig has asked the public representatives and government functionaries to work unitedly for fulfilling the commitments made by the Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad for changing the overall work culture in all units both at political as well as administrative units and curbing corruption. Baig was presiding over District Development Board meeting here today in absence of Chief Minister who could not attend owing to ill health. Baig said this innovative attitude will positively help in mitigating the sufferings and problems of the common people. He instructed the Commissioners, Secretaries and Heads of Departments' to ensure implementation of the orders and directions of the Chief Minister in all the sectors saying that this process will improve the functioning of the administration across the state. Warning the authorities against delaying development works, Baig said that flouting of orders to this effect would be viewed seriously.

Greater Kashmir, 18 December 2005

Vehicle entry: SC heeds to JK's appeal

Jammu: The Supreme Court in a significant judgment has accepted the recommendations of the committee constituted by the Jammu and Kashmir Government regarding entry of vehicles in the capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu respectively, an official spokesman said Saturday. The committee constituted by the state government for regulation and better traffic management recommended entry of all types of vehicles including those listed under essential commodities from 11 am to 2.30 pm to facilitate the movement of the vehicles as well as to ensure the supply of essential and other necessary commodities. The matter regarding extension of the life of the vehicles in Jammu and Kashmir also came under discussion but before pronouncing any directions on the

issue, the Supreme Court deferred the matter and asked for listing the case after vacations.

Daily Excelsior, 18 December 2005

12 injured in relief protests in Uri

Varmul, Dec 17: Over a dozen persons were injured, three of them critically when police fired tear smoke shells and resorted to lathi-charge to disperse people at Boniyar on Saturday who were protesting against government's "unfair distribution" of relief among the quake-affected. Reports said nearly 3,000 people staged protest at Boniyar disrupting traffic on the highway. The protesters alleged that government has failed to provide them any kind of relief. The angry protesters pelted stones on the vehicle of Deputy Commissioner Varmul when he went to the spot to assess the situation. Police retaliated by resting to lathicharge and tear smoke shells. The police action left several persons injured. Condition of three of the injured, Javid Ahmad (Sarpanch), Abdul Hameed and Shafi Sheikh, was reported critical.

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2005

42 killed in stampede

CHENNAI, Dec 18: At least 42 people, including 23 women, were killed and 37 injured today in a stampede at a Corporation School in the city where hundreds had lined up in the wee hours to collect flood relief coupons. The incident occurred when a sudden downpour at 0500 hrs sent over 4,500 people, gathered in front of the school at M G R Nagar, scurrying for cover, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa told reporters here. The crowd broke police cordon and rushed into the building leading to the crush, the Chief Minister, who visited the injured in Government General Hospital, said. The State Government announced an inquiry, to be conducted by a retired High Court Judge, into the stampede, the second incident of its kind in the city in less than two months. Six people were killed and 20 injured in a stampede near a relief camp in North Chennai on November six.

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2005

Lashkar militant among 3 killed

Srinagar, Dec 18: Three militants, including a divisional commander of Lashkar-e-Toiba militant outfit, were killed in a fierce and prolonged encounter at Wuyan, Pampore in south Kashmir while as elsewhere in the Valley, militants hurled a grenade at Public Service Commission office near Municipal Park today without causing any damage. According to sources, a joint party of SOG Pampore and 50 RR today afternoon, after receiving a tip-off, cordoned off a village Wuyan in Pampore. Sources said that the militants who were hiding in a residential house owned by one Mushtaq Ahmed Ganie, opened fire on the troopers ensuing in a fierce gun battle, which ended late this evening. SSP Pampore, while giving the details of the encounter, said that three militants owing allegiance to Lashkar-e-Toiba were gunned down before the operation ended. He claimed that the operation was clean and no damages were caused to forces' side, while adding that the house in which the militants were hiding got damaged.

The Indian Express, 19 December 2005

Govt asked to prepare peace roadmap with care

New Delhi, December 17: A parliamentary committee has asked government to prepare the roadmap for improving relations with Pakistan with the "greatest care" and not hasten the pace in an unrealistic manner in view of concerns of the international community over perpetual tension between the two nuclear powers. "Every care should be taken to protect the vital interests of the nation. The fact that the terrorist training camps inside Pakistan's territory are still operating though infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir has come down considerably points to the grave danger inherent in the situation," it said. "The Government of India should not allow itself to be taken by surprise at any stage," the Standing Committee on External Affairs said in its report presented in Parliament. The committee termed as "praiseworthy" the decisive and bold moves made by the government over the past five years to improve ties with its neighbours. However, it felt that "government should prepare the roadmap for improving its relations with Pakistan with the greatest care.

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2005

Mir introduces Lone's son in politics

SRINAGAR, Dec 18: With an eye on the forthcoming bypoll, former Jammu and Kashmir Minister and estranged Peoples Democratic Party leader Ghulam Hassan Mir today introduced son of assassinated Education Minister Ghulam Nabi Lone, Shoaib Lone to the people of Sangrama, 50 kms from here in Baramulla district. Bypoll in Sangrama Assembly constituency which fell vacant following assassination of Lone in a suicide attack in high security zone of Tulsibagh in the city on October 18 is likely to be held sometime in March-April next year. Introducing Shoaib to the people, Mir said Lone in a brief spell as Minister for Education revolutionized and overhauled the education system in the Valley which had gone astray during last decades. He hoped that Shoaib would fulfil the dreams and aspirations of the people for which his father stood and laid his life. He sought people's support in strengthening the hands of Shoaib so that the legacy of Lone is upheld and carried forward.

The Indian Express, 19 December 2005

Kashmir's ideas man coming (Riyaz Wani)

Srinagar, December 17: The man who is widely seen as being behind the emerging new ideas on the resolution of Kashmir, like demilitarisation and self-rule—Farooq Kathwari—is visiting J&K. He is coming to the state directly from Pakistan where he met President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shoukat Aziz as part of the relief mission for quake-hit Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Though ostensibly also for relief work in Kashmir, Kathwari's visit, possibly on Sunday, is firing speculations in the state. His visit comes at a time when the debate on Kashmir has forcefully veered round the demilitarization and self-governance, with Pakistan and most of Kashmiri leadership playing along whole-heartedly. And Kathwari is the brain behind these ideas. He left Pakistan, where he was accompanied by former US Ambassador to India Frank Wisner, on Friday and is scheduled to meet several politicians in New Delhi before he arrives in Kashmir on Sunday.

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2005

Show flexibility on Kashmir: Shah

KATHUA, Dec 18: President of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmed Shah today said that it was high time to show flexibility to resolve vexed Kashmir problem. He, however, said that withdrawal of troops from both sides of Kashmir will provide an opportunity to further accelerate the on-going process to solve the problem. In an informal chat with media persons after addressing one day convention of intellectuals of Kathua district, Shah endorsed demilitarisation proposal given by different groups. "This step will help in further improving the situation", he said. Shah admitted that keeping in view the changing scenario at international level 'Azadi' has not remained an only option. "When we have initiated dialogue we have to discuss other options also", he pointed out. Although he stressed on the need of discussing all options to evolve a consensus on this issue, Shah asserted that he will oppose any move to divide the State on communal lines.

Greater Kashmir, 19 December 2005

State Cabinet to meet today

Jammu: Major reshuffle in State Police is expected to take place when State Cabinet meets here on Monday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad. Sources said the meeting was being rescheduled keeping in view the ill health of chief minister. However, as the chief minister's health improved today, he asked the chief secretary to convene the cabinet meeting on Monday afternoon itself. Some minor reshuffle in the civil administration is also likely to take place, sources added.

Greater Kashmir, 19 December 2005

3 MILITANTS KILLED IN PAMPORE

Srinagar, Dec 18: Three militants were among four persons killed in separate incidents across the state since Saturday evening, reports on Sunday said. Three militants were killed in a fierce encounter in Pampore on Sunday. The encounter broke out after soldiers of 50 Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operations Group (SOG) of Police launched a cordon and search operation at Wiyan Pampore. When the troops reached the house of Mushtaq Ahmad Ganaie son of Ghulam Muhammad Ganaie, the militants present there refused to surrender and fired upon them, local news agency KPS reported. Troops finally fired mortar shells on the house destroying it completely, the agency said adding three militants of Jaish-e-Muhammad outfit were killed in the incident. However their bodies could not be retrieved till late evening. Unidentified gunmen killed a released militant Ghulam Muhamamd Itoo alias Tipu son of Habibullah at Dandpoora in Varmul district on Sunday. Police said the deceased was a former militant of Al-Jehad outfit.

The Indian Express, 19 December 2005

NGO gives aid to victim of militancy

Jammu, December 17: The president of Jan Adhikar Morcha, Ravi Sethi, has lauded the steps taken by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad for providing good governance to the people. Sethi said this on the sideline of relief distribution function held here today. He said that people have high expectations from Ghulam Nabi Azad. He hoped that finally the peace will return in the state and those who have migrated fearing their lives will also return to their respective homes located in the militancy-infested areas of state. He also distributed financial assistance to one victim of militancy, identified as Lal Shah, who had received bullet injuries on his leg and was wandering to collect financial help of Rs 70,000 as told to him by the doctors to get his leg treated. Shah said that over the period of time, the militants have also grabbed his ancestral land and now he is not able to return to his native village in Doda due to threats from militants.

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2005

Indo-Pak talks on J&K next month

ISLAMABAD, Dec 19: India and Pakistan are expected to resume another round of composite dialogue process to resolve all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, next month, Foreign office spokesperson Tasnim

Aslam said today. She said the two countries have achieved some progress particularly in the context of Confidence Building Measures on Jammu and Kashmir. "There is greater interaction between Kashmiri leaders and a public discourse is taking place on various options for resolution of the dispute," she told reporters here at a weekly briefing. She said the two countries will resume the round of composite dialogue process tentatively next month. About Siachin, she said certain ideas were exchanged during the last meeting between the two sides and hoped they would be able to move further on the issue in the next round of composite dialogue.

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2005

Jaish commander killed

Srinagar, Dec 19: A top commander of Jaish-e-Mohammed militant outfit was killed in an encounter at Lolab Kupwara, north Kashmir today while as in south Kashmir district of Anantnag a fierce encounter was going on between the holed up militants and the troops in which one militant was reportedly killed till last reports came in. According to the sources, a joint party of SOG Kupwara and 19 RR launched an operation in Lalpora village of Lolab Kupwara after being tipped off locally about the presence of militants there. The sources said that the militants hiding there were asked to surrender, however they refused and opened fire on the troops. The fire was returned triggering a fierce encounter during which one militant was killed. The slain militant was identified as Qari Zarar, a top commander of Jaish-e-Mohammed militant outfit.

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2005

NR unlikely to meet target of doubling Jammu-Lakhanpur track (Mohinder Verma)

JAMMU, Dec 19: As only 35 percent work on doubling of Jammu-Lakhanpur railway track has been completed in three and half years, Northern Railways may not meet the target of this 80 kilometre track which has been fixed at mid 2007. Though Northern Railways has now started laying more focus on this track to meet the target and even diverted additional manpower for the same, yet the project is unlikely to be completed within the stipulated period as 65 percent work is required to be completed in remaining one and half year which appears to be herculean job in view of multiple problems coming in the way of carrying out work at pace. Sources in Northern Railways told the EXCELSIOR that the work on the doubling of 200 kilometre Jammu-Jalandhar railway track was started in mid 2002 and main focus continued to elude Jammu-Lakhanpur section till mid 2005 despite the fact that the terrain in Jammu and Kashmir is much more difficult than in Punjab and required special attention.

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2005

Omar raps New Delhi on 'fake' talks, calls Congress 'mistress of mistakes' (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR, Dec 19: Elected as president of Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (NC) for the second consecutive term of three years, Omar Abdullah today asked both, militants as well as security forces, allow peace to return without any more mayhem and bloodshed. Describing his party's support to Ghulam Nabi Azad's coalition Government as conditional, Sheikh Abdullah's grandson berated Congress party as a mistress of mistakes for Kashmir. He complained publicly that Dr Manmohan Singh's Government at the Centre was "completely non-serious" with regard to holding the exercise of talks with the Kashmiri leadership. According to him, the Congress-led coalition Government's Kashmir policy was "nothing but to humiliate Kashmiri leaders in the trap of a dialogue process" which, according to him, had not moved a step forward beyond the courtesy of a cup of tea in the last few years.

Greater Kashmir, 20 December 2005

'Gun won't go unless Kashmir is settled as per wishes of people' (ZULFIKAR MAJID)

Srinagar, Dec 19: Opposition National Conference (NC) Monday said Kashmiris are fed up with the guns of India and Pakistan, urging the leaders of both the countries to listen to the feelings of Kashmiris to settle the issue according to the aspirations of the people. "If Manmohan Singh and Parvez Musharraf claim they want to settle Kashmir issue and have courage to listen, I tell them that people are fed up with the gun of both the countries," NC President Omar Abdullah said addressing party delegates after getting re-elected party president un-opposed second consecutive time at Nawa-i-Subuh office. Echoing the stand of separatist Hurriyat Conference, Omar said unless Kashmir issue isn't settled according to the aspirations of the people, 'gun won't go

Greater Kashmir, 20 December 2005

Pakistan defends OIC K-comment

Islamabad, Dec 19: Pakistan today defended the Organization of Islamic Conference's right to raise and discuss the Kashmir issue. "The OIC is perfectly within its rights to raise and talk about the Kashmir dispute, which is at the center of decades of tense ties between Pakistan and India," Pakistan foreign ministry spokesperson Tasneem Aslam told a weekly press briefing here. She reiterated that Kashmir is on the agenda of the United Nations as well as the OIC. Aslam was commenting on a report about India's reservation on OIC issuing a statement on Kashmir. India had said the Organisation had no right to discuss its "internal matter". "Certainly, OIC has no locus standi to comment on India's internal affairs but as far as OIC's statement on Jammu and Kashmir is

concerned, the organisation is perfectly within its right to raise the issue, talk about it," she said.

Greater Kashmir, 20 December 2005

Doda or Waltengu, govt apathy continues (ARIF HALEEM)

Jammu, Dec 19: When the killer earthquake rocked north Kashmir on Oct 8, the then Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed promised to rebuild devastated world of the victims. But most of the Valleyites took the promise with a pinch of salt. They had strong reasons for it. For, thousands of residents of Doda have been completely left to fend for themselves even 10 months after snow tsunami hit the hilly district, causing colossal loss to property. Mufti, during his visit to Doda had assured the people that his government would provide monetary assistance—Rupees one lakh a family—to the victims. He also had a meeting with district officers and had directed the District Development Commissioner to compile a detailed report of losses so that the affected could be provided assistance without any delay.

The Indian Express, 21 December 2005

Landmine recovered near Indo-Pak border

Jammu, December 20: A major tragedy was averted on Tuesday with the recovery of a landmine by Border Security Force troops near the Indo-Pak border in Samba sector, official sources said. A BSF patrol party came across a live landmine in agriculture fields near the International Border (IB) in Samba forward belt of Jammu district on Monday night, the sources said. The bomb disposal squad immediately recovered and defused the landmine.

The Indian Express, 21 December 2005

Separatists to take part in dialogue with Delhi (Riyaz Wani)

Srinagar, December 20: IN the ongoing dialogue with JK separatists, New Delhi seems to look beyond Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. A process, sources said, has been set in motion to get on board other major separatists, like Yaseen Malik, Shabir Shah and Sajad Gani Lone. "The Prime Minister has said his doors were open for anybody. So all are welcome," Congress Member Parliament and behind-the-scenes facilitator of the Kashmir talks Saif-u-Din Soz told The Indian Express. Shabir Shah, president of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Liberation Party, on the other hand, expressed his willingness to consider seriously a formal offer for dialogue from New Delhi. "I cannot respond to the feelers from New Delhi. If a formal invite comes along, I can consider it," Shabir Shah told The Indian Express. Shah was the first major separatist leader from Kashmir to bite the dialogue bait from New Delhi, but the lack of follow-up action forced him to pull out of it.

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2005

SPO, Hizb militant killed

Srinagar, Dec 20: A Special Police Officer (SPO) and a Hizbul Mujahideen militant were among two persons killed and three BSF troopers were wounded in separate incidents across the state since Monday. The death toll in the encounter at Khawaja Mir Ali Malak Nag area of Islamabad has reached two with the killing of a Special Police Officer (SPO) on Tuesday. The gunfight between militants and troops started on Monday and ended on Tuesday afternoon. According to CNS the dead policeman has been identified as Muhammad Yousuf (Belt No. 534). Six soldiers and two SPOs according to the news agency were also wounded in the gunfight. An unidentified militant was also killed in the gun-battle on Monday night. In the encounter, according to KNS 18 residential houses suffered damages and the house of Ghulam Ahmad Waghay son of Muhammad Sultan Waghay was completely destroyed.

The Indian Express, 21 December 2005

Azadi from India, Pakistan not viable, says Omar

Talking to mediaperson at Jammu Airport on his arrival from Srinagar this noon, junior Abdullah said he also met founder of Kashmir Study Group Farooq Kathwari in Srinagar and told him that ideas of "self-rule" and "self-governance" were not viable and only solution to the Kashmir imbroglio was autonomy, which the National Conference was demanding. "It is good that the world has realised that complete independence from India and Pakistan for Jammu and Kashmir was not viable. That is where our solution of internal autonomy fits in," said junior Abdullah, who was yesterday re-elected president of the National Conference. He said the issue of Kashmir has not remained the internal matter of India. "Kabhi koi to kabhi koi Kashmir kee baat karne laga hai. Halanki hamari party ko koi bhee thopa gaya ya bahari fesla manjoor nahin hoga," said Omar.

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2005

Where did relief money for Waltengu victims go? (ZULFIKAR MAJID)

Waltengu (Qazi- gund), Dec 20: Siting in a small tent and braving sub-zero temperature, Khatoon Bi, 35, is worried how to survive this harsh winter. Khatoon a widow with two minor children lost her husband, the only breadwinner in the family when snow tsunami hit Waltengu Nar this February. Since her husband's death, the

responsibility of two kids lies on Khatoon's shoulders. "When storm hit Waltengu, sympathies of people from government to separatists were with us. Now we have hope on only Almighty Allah as rest of the people have forgotten us so quickly," Khatoon said. Khatoon feels that politicians go to the affected people only to score political points. She says last year from Mufti Muhammad Sayeed to Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Shabir Ahmad Shah everybody came to them and promised of full support. ?Geelani sahib gave me Rs 300 when he visited Waltengu. Shabir Ahmad Shah gave a quilt and mattress to us while Mufti Sahib promised sky is the limit,? Khatoon said.

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2005

Musharraf for more contact across LoC

Islamabad, Dec 20: Showing further move on confidence building measures (CBM) with India, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has called for more people-to-people contact among Kashmiris on both the sides of the Line of Control (LoC). Talking to United Nations Foundation Chairman Ted Turner, who called on him with other board members of the Foundation here last evening, the President said the October 8 earthquake has provided an opportunity for building further links among the Kashmiris on both the sides of the LoC, which should not be missed. Pakistan had conveyed proposals to India in this regard, which, he hoped, would be reciprocated. The two countries have already opened five crossing points on the de facto border and allowed human traffic to enable post-quake interaction among Kashmiris on either side of the LoC. Turner expressed appreciation of the President's policy of initiating a peace process with India.

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2005

Mirwaiz leaving for Lahore on Dec 26 (SHOWKAT A MOTTA)

Jammu, Dec 20: Accusing Indian government of sabotaging their visit to Pakistan-administered Kashmir to express solidarity with the quake-hit people in other Kashmir, leaders of Hurriyat Conference (Mirwaiz faction) have now decided to travel on passports instead of permits. At least 21 activists and leaders of the conglomerate, including its chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, had applied for permits to travel through fortnightly Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. They were scheduled to undertake the journey with truckloads of relief material for the quake survivors in the second week of December. (The) authorities had promised to respond within 10 days, Mirwaiz said. But even after a month of our submitting the applications there has been no response from them.?

Daily Excelsior, 22 December 2005

3 militants surrender in Baramulla

SRINAGAR, Dec. 21: A top commander of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) militant outfit was killed in a brief encounter at Soura in Srinagar outskirts today while as police recovered a decomposed body of an abducted police constable nearly two months of his abduction. Defence sources claimed that three Pakistan-trained militants of lesser known Al-Fateh Force outfit surrendered in Baramulla today. According to sources, a joint party of SOG Srinagar and 118 Battalion CRPF, after receiving a tip-off cordoned off the Iqbal Colony area of Soura Srinagar outskirts on Wednesday to flush out hiding militants from there. Sources said that while cops were busy carrying out search operations, a militant attempted to escape from the spot and opened fire on the police search party.

Daily Excelsior, 22 December 2005

Govt orders probe, axe may fall on senior officers (Gopal Sharma)

JAMMU, Dec 21: The Government has ordered an inquiry into the shifting of at least 23 officers in the Forest Department thrice in just a short span of four to ten months besides sending some of the officers back to their previous places of postings who were shifted after overstay of not less than 20 long years. Forest Commissioner, Najmus Saquib said that an inquiry has been initiated into the whole matter. He said it has been done in sheer violation of the standing rules of the GAD and the fresh directives of the Government. ??They can not do it. Even on humanitarian grounds the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests or the Chief Conservator of Forests are required to take prior permission from the Government. But in these orders they did not bother to inform Minister concerned or even the Commissioner," Mr Saquib maintained. Responding to a question, a visibly annoyed Commissioner said a sincere effort was recently made by previous Minister by shifting nearly 110 overstaying officers. Some of them even had a stint of more than 20 years at one place.

Greater Kashmir, 22 December 2005

Tarigami moots proposal to convert J&K into federation

Srinagar, Dec 21: Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and MLA M Y Tarigami has said that despite having provisions for the adult franchise, the separation of powers, checks and balances in the constitution of the state, it remains unitary in its essential characteristics. "Ultimately, the virtual power is exercised by a solitary authority. This is bound to breed apprehensions of discrimination real or perceived. This, often, leads to inter-regional as also to intra-regional conflicts, which has the potential to frustrate even the final solution of Kashmir issue,"

Tarigami said in a statement. He suggested that the remedy lies in the empowerment of people by making the state a true federation with devolution of power (both political and allocation of resources) at the regional, the district, the bloc and the panchayat/ward level, based on democratic representation at each tier.

Daily Excelsior, 22 December 2005

J&K already enjoying self-governance: Baig

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: Amid demands for "self-rule" in his State, Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig today asserted that the State already enjoyed "self-governance" and that its quantum was a matter of discussion. The senior PDP leader said his party was in favour of giving political space to separatist elements, like Hurriyat Conference, and was even ready to go for mid-term elections if the secessionists joined the electoral arena. Talking to a select group of reporters here, Baig observed that development in the militancy-hit J and K was directly linked to improvement in Indo-Pak relations and that reconstruction in the State could gain speed along with the progress in the ongoing peace process. "Under Article 370, we have an independent constitution and flag for the State. When we, elected members, take oath, it is self-governance," he said.

Greater Kashmir, 22 December 2005

"Autonomy a dead slogan, Kashmir a live issue" (SHOWKAT A MOTTA)

Jammu, Dec 21: National Conference may have reopened its traditional and worn out autonomy file, but after Valley, it's receiving a cold response in this winter capital of the state. The Jammuites believe NC was trying to demonstrate relevance of a "dead idea" at a time when new ideas on Kashmir resolution were being dished out every other day from Srinagar, Islamabad or Washington. "The NC has been largely marginalized in the changing scenario," said Abhishek Wazir, a law student at Jammu University. "Autonomy is a dead slogan while Kashmir is a live issue." The Hindu hardline outfits like BJP, Jammu Mukti Morcha and the RSS-led State Morcha are understandably opposed to the grant of greater autonomy to the state. For them, Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which accords special status to Jammu and Kashmir remains "the mother of all ills" plaguing the conflict-ridden state.

Daily Excelsior, 22 December 2005

Azad for development works in 2 shifts during summer

Jammu, Dec 21: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today presided over the meeting of legislators of coalition partners. The meeting was attended by all alliance parties including Congress, PDP, CPI(M), PDF, National Panther Party and associate members of Congress party. In his address, Mr Azad appreciated work done by the coalition Government during last three years led by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. He said that during last three years efforts were made and right steps taken for implementation of the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). A new agenda laid down for next three years was discussed in the meeting and it was unanimously pledged that corruption will be fought at all levels with full force. "The coalition partners will work with determination for bringing change in work culture and ensuring good governance to the people," the meeting resolved.

The Indian Express, 22 December 2005

Azad not happy with coalition partners (Rakesh Rocky)

Jammu, December 21: FIFTY days after taking over the reins of strife-torn J-K, Ghulam Nabi Azad today indicated that he was not getting the "expected cooperation" from the coalition partners to implement his three-point agenda of eradication of corruption, good governance and development. According to sources, Azad, at his first meeting with the coalition legislature party at his residence here today, said he alone could not change the things in the state. He said he came to the state with an aim to provide good governance to the people. However, Azad indicated that he needed more cooperation from the coalition partners in this regard. The meeting, which was not attended by former chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, JKNPP chief Bhim Singh and former minister Harsh Dev Singh, did not discuss the agenda of the forthcoming special session of the legislature.

The Indian Express, 22 December 2005

Hurriyat doves to fly to Pak (Tiyaz Wani)

Srinagar, December 21: HURRIYAT doves have decided to board flight to Pakistan after tiring of the wait for the official permit to go through Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road to visit the earthquake-hit. The Chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, is scheduled to leave Srinagar for New Delhi on December 25 along with some other Hurriyat leaders and will be on their way to Islamabad on the following day. The amalgam will meet on Thursday to select the leaders who will accompany Mirwaiz. "We can't wait any longer. It is already too late. With official permit to travel through J&K being delayed, we have no choice but to go by air," said the Hurriyat spokesman Shahid-ul-Islam. "We have collected a huge quantity of relief material which is winter-specific."

The Indian Express, 23 December 2005

No one will be allowed to sabotage peace: CM

Jammu, December 22: CHIEF Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has said that while his Government is firm in doing its best to help in carrying forward the dialogue process, it would not allow militancy to sabotage peace and tranquility by indulging in barbaric acts of violence against politicians and civilians. The Chief Minister made this assertion after Speaker Tara Chand moved obituary references in the Assembly today to mourn the death of thousands who lost their lives in the October 8 devastating earthquake and pay homage to the Centre Leaders and State Legislators who passed away since the last session of the Assembly. While referring to the killing of former minister GN Lone by militants recently, Azad shared the concern expressed by members regarding the security of politicians and others, and said many such incidents have taken place in the past and legislators and ministers have fallen prey to violence by militants.

The Indian Express, 23 December 2005

Bandh in Kathua town complete

Kathua, December 22: THE bandh call given by JKNPP in support of their demands of implementation of Wazir Commission report and delimitation report evoked a good response. It was a complete bandh in the town, all the shops and business establishments were closed and vehicular traffic remained off the road. The JKNPP workers assembled at Mukherji Chowk under the leadership of district president Ravinder Pathania amidst raising pro-party and anti-government slogans and moved in the town to ensure complete bandh. Then they moved towards the national highway and blocked it for half an hour. Tehsildar Mohinder Sharma and DSP Khalil Poswal urged them to lift the blockade, when protesters refused, they were arrested and moved to district police lines. According to SSP Johnny William, they were arrested only to maintain law and order and to open the NH. He said they were later released.

The Indian Express, 23 December 2005

Relief officials told to improve working at migrant camps

Jammu, December 22: THE Jammu and Kashmir Government has directed relief officials of the migrant camps to ensure that the other departments working in the migrant camps perform their job satisfactorily. Officials said that the direction had been passed to strengthen the co-ordination between the different departments. The direction has also come in the wake of the fact that the migrants complain of the lack of facilities at the different camps. Official sources said that at a recent meeting the camp commandants and the zonal officers had been asked to ensure that the different departments working in the migrant camps should be made to perform their job satisfactorily. The camp commandants and the zonal officers have been asked to ensure that proper health care, electricity, sanitation and water facilities are provided to the camp inmates.

Daily Excelsior, 23 December 2005

Lone's killing a political conspiracy: Mir

JAMMU, Dec 22: Maintaining heat on the party, dissident PDP leader and former Minister Ghulam Hassan Mir said today the killing of former Minister of State for Education and PDP MLA Dr Ghulam Nabi Lone appeared to be the result of a 'political rivalry'. He admitted that he and Dr Lone were representing the voice of dissent within the PDP Legislature group as well as the party. Speaking in the Assembly after seeking special permission from Speaker Tara Chand during obituary reference on opening day of a brief special session and later talking to reporters outside, Mr Mir said a tussle was going on among the people of Kreeri and Wagoora for obtaining tehsil status. The PDP had given the name of Peer Mohd Hussain to pay tributes on the obituary reference in which only one member of a party is allowed to speak. The Speaker said he was allowing Mr Mir to speak after receiving a request from him.

Daily Excelsior, 23 December 2005

Bandh observed in Jammu, NH blocked

JAMMU, Dec 22: A bandh was observed in Jammu on the call given by Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) and supported by several political parties in protest against the non-implementation of Wazir Commission report and non-constitution of Delimitation Commission. There was spontaneous response to the bandh call at most of the places while in some areas, the activists of JKNPP and other parties supporting it, were seen enforcing the bandh. The National Highway was also blocked at several places but for a very short-period due to the intervention by the police. Due to the bandh, the normal life was thrown out of gears with passenger vehicles remaining off the roads. People were seen covering the distance on foot to reach their respective destinations. The attendance in the Government offices as well as educational institutions was also thin due to non-availability of passenger vehicles.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2005

Sumo blown up at Old Airport camp

SRINAGAR, Dec 23: Militants today managed to blow up a Tata Sumo vehicle at the main entrance of Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry (JAKLI) headquarters near the Old Airport here but the explosion failed to cause any

material damage to the targetted formation. Meanwhile, at least six militants—including a "district commander" of Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami (HUJI)—and two soldiers of Army have died in different militancy-related incidents in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources told the Excelsior that a powerful blast occurred in Tata-Sumo vehicle, bearing registration No: JK02A-1597, at the main entrance of JAKLI headquarters near Technical Area of Srinagar Airport at 1145 hours. The vehicle was blown into pieces. It was sheer good luck of the men around that none of them was killed or injured. Sources said that the driver of the blown up vehicle had got down and was busy in registering his entry at the guarded check-point when the explosion took place.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2005

Govt to file review petition

JAMMU, Dec 23: Keeping in view the relief given by the Supreme Court on regulation of traffic in Jammu and Srinagar cities, the State Government will file a review petition in the High Court in this regard. This was announced by Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Baig in the Legislative Assembly during Zero Hour. Virtually miffed over remarks of Leader of Opposition Abdul Rahim Rather who has chided that the State Government has been 'sleeping' even after directions of the Supreme Court, the Deputy Chief Minister stated that Government was very much aware of the issue. "Application has already been prepared and review petition will be filed very soon", he said and informed the House that as soon as the acting Chief Justice will constitute Bench for this case, the Government will file the petition.

The Indian Express, 24 December 2005

JKLF's rival faction joins hands with senior leaders (Muzaffar Raina)

Srinagar, December 23: IN a major setback to the J-K Liberation Front, led by Mohammad Yaseen Malik, the leadership of its rival faction has joined hands with other senior front leaders, both present and former, and has staked claim to the reins of the party. The rival faction said the idea behind joining hands was to "remodel JKLF", a premier separatist group seeking "complete independence" from India. This faction of the JKLF has blamed the leadership headed by Malik of not enforcing the constitution of the Front drafted in June 2001 in New York. The constitution had proposed various policy matters. "The attitude was adopted wilfully to enforce an authoritarian regime in the organisation," said leader of the Front faction, Saleem Nanhaji, at a press conference here.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2005

Supply to J&K snapped

JAMMU, Dec 23: Power supply to the entire Jammu and Kashmir remained snapped for more than four hours in the morning due to power tripping from Northern Grid today. Sources in the Power Development Department (PDD) said that power supply to the entire State from Northern Grid got snapped at around 7.12 am and remained off till 11 am and added that there was no electricity even in the vital installations like Army and hospitals during this period. The supply to Jammu and Kashmir came down to zero from normal position of 750 Mega Watts, the sources disclosed and said that soon after the tripping of the power supply from Northern Grid, the Power Development Department tried to get power from Salal Project for the vital installations but disturbances continued to prevail for more than four hours in the entire State.

Daily Excelsior, 24 December 2005

Infiltration down: Gen Singh

INDORE, Dec 23: Chief of Army Staff Gen Joginder Jaswant Singh today credited a decline in infiltration to the "keen vigil" by his officers and men. "Though infiltration attempts are still taking place, success has been achieved in effectively checking them," he told reporters at the valedictory function of the third National Combat Forces Shooting competition at the Infantry School in the nearby Military Headquarters of War (MHOW). The General said several infiltrators were shot dead over the past few days. When asked whether the ongoing attempts to improve Indo-Pak relations would affect deployment in any manner whatsoever, the top officer said, "the Army is ever alert and we wish to assure citizens that the men in uniform are ready for any eventuality." Regarding an initiative for establishing a Tribunal to tackle Army cases, Gen Singh said he welcomed the move. On a question about the objective behind encouraging marksmanship, he said, "the Army's bread is the gun and the bullet.

Greater Kashmir, 24 December 2005

28-HOUR SOPUR GUNBATTLE ENDS

Srinagar, Dec 23: Seven militants were killed in separate incidents across the State since Thursday evening, police and reports Friday said while militants detonated a car bomb at the highly fortified Old Airport at Rangreth here. Two militants were killed in the 28-hour Sopur encounter on Friday evening. The overnight encounter in Sopur started again on Friday morning when the soldiers of 22 RR and 112 battalion of BSF restarted an operation at Sopur to neutralize the militants who were holed up in the Horticulture Complex. After the militants refused to surrender, the troops fired mortar shells on the building destroying it completely. Presuming that militants were dead under the debris of the gutted building, the troops searched for bodies of militants.

Daily Excelsior, 25 December 2005

6 PoK residents to return via Poonch LOC point tomorrow

JAMMU : Six residents of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) are scheduled to return via Mendhar-Tatapani along the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir when the crossing point opens tomorrow. The Mendhar-Tatapani crossing point along the LoC would re-open tomorrow as per the agreement between India and Pakistan, top official sources said here. Six PoK residents, including Raja Abdul Qayoom, cousin of PoK Prime Minister Sikender Hayat Khan, would cross the LoC to return to their homes and hearths after staying with their relatives for over 15 days, the sources said here. (PTI)

Daily Excelsior, 25 December 2005

Two HM commanders surrender in Bhaderwah

JAMMU, Dec 24: Two top militants of Hizbul Mujahideen including a 'divisional commander' and a 'section commander' today surrendered before Army and police along with a large quantity of arms and ammunition including a wireless set which had direct communication with Pakistan installations in Bhaderwah tehsil of Doda district. They have been identified as Farooq Ahmed Sheikh alias Wasim alias Sakib alias Khalid (radio code D-2) son of Abdul Rashid Sheikh, a 'divisional commander' of Hizbul Mujahideen and a resident of Basti and Abdul Mohd Hafiz Bhat alias Hekmatyar son of Bashir Ahmed Bhat, a 'section commander' of the outfit and a resident of Thanala, Bhaderwah. Addressing a joint press conference here today, DIG Udampur-Doda range Satvir Gupta, Brigade Commander Delta Force J S Jagdev and SSP Doda Prithvi Raj Manhas said troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles and police launched a search operation in Basti area of Bhaderwah in wee hours of this morning after developing an information that Farooq Ahmed Sheikh, who was an active militant since 1991, along with his associate was moving towards Bhaderwah along with a large quantity of arms and ammunition to step-up subversive activities in Doda district.

Daily Excelsior, 25 December 2005

Intruder shot dead in Khour

JAMMU, Dec 24: An infiltrator was gunned down by security forces in an encounter in Khour sector today while a hide-out of the militants was destroyed at Taryath in Kalakote tehsil of Rajouri district. Official sources said security forces killed an unidentified intruder in Khour sector this morning. No recoveries were made from his possession. The intruder was killed when he refused to halt on being intercepted by the security personnel. Meanwhile, security forces and police, in a joint operation at Taryath in Kalakote tehsil of Rajouri district, destroyed a hide-out of the militants and recovered one wireless set, 13 AK rounds, four packets of explosives and eight detonators. No arrests were made from the hide-out.

Greater Kashmir, 25 December 2005

Militant killed in Jammu

Srinagar: One militant was killed in an encounter in Khour sector of Jammu on Saturday, police said. Troops claimed recovery of an AK rifle, six magazines, 154 rounds of ammunition and a wireless set during an encounter at Banwat in Poonch district on Saturday. One militant was killed in the encounter on Friday night. Army claimed recovery of two AK rifles, six magazines, 156 rounds of ammunition, a UBGL rifle and six UBGL grenades, 13 hand grenades from the possession of two slain militants who were killed in an encounter at Boniyar Uri on Friday. Police said two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit surrendered at Bhaderwah at Doda on Saturday.

Greater Kashmir, 25 December 2005

COURT SEEKS DETAILS OF DETAINEES (NASEER A GANAI)

Srinagar, Dec 24: In a significant development, the State High Court on Thursday sought details of detainees lodged in different jails and directed the Financial Commissioner Home, Director General of Police (DGP) and Additional Director Prisons to file detailed affidavit stating whether they have complied with Court directions passed in the Jaleel Andrabi vs State case. The directions have been passed by a Single Bench of Justice Nirmal Singh on a writ petition filed by the High Court Bar Association (HCBA) through its secretary Ajaz Bedar. The petition stated that the HCBA constituted teams last year for visiting jails of Jammu and Kashmir and outside so that legal aid and assistance is provided to the detainees and the under trials. The report, which was prepared by the teams and submitted to the HCBA, stated that the detainees were deprived of the basic facilities of life and were made to languish in jails without trial.

Daily Excelsior, 25 December 2005

Fake currency worth Rs 45,000 recovered, one arrested

JAMMU, Dec 24: Police today arrested a shopkeeper and recovered counterfeit currency worth Rs 45,000 from his possession in R S Pura. Police sources said that some days back R S Pura police received information from sources that one Thoru Ram, son of Blaki Ram was dealing in fake currency business for the past quite sometime. On this, a team headed by SHO R S Pura Police Station Kuldeep Khajuria started keeping a strict

watch on the activities of Thoru Ram. Today, on a specific information, SHO intercepted Thoru Ram while he was moving in the main bazar of the town and subjected him to checking during which police recovered Rs 45,000 worth fake currency in the denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 100 from his possession.

Greater Kashmir, 25 December 2005

Bandipora protests killing of militants

Bandipora: Thousands of people attended the funeral of the slain militants who were killed in a fierce encounter with troops here on Friday. Shouting pro-freedom and anti-India slogans the people took the bodies of the militants in a procession to the graveyard for burial. Meanwhile, a complete shutdown was observed in the town against the killings of the militants. Two houses were completely gutted in the mortar shelling by troops during the encounter. The houses belonged to Muhammad Ashraf Khan and Badru Khan. The slain militants were identified Abdul Hamid Dar alias Qazi Osama of Bandipora and a Pakistani militant Shaheen.

Greater Kashmir, 25 December 2005

Spurt in arrests, 13 held in Valley

Srinagar, Dec 24: Troops arrested 13 persons in different raids across the Valley since Friday evening. Local news agency the UNS on Saturday reported that soldiers of 3 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) arrested Ghulam Muhammad son of Ali Muhammad, Abdul Rashid son of Abdul Ghaffar, Muhammad Qasim son of Abdul Aziz, Bashir Ahmad Malla son of Ghulam Malla, Moulvi Ahmad son of Makeem Ahmad and Ghulam Rasool Khan son of Majeed Khan during a cordon and search operation at Khaleen Gojra Pahalgam on Saturday. People staged massive demonstrations against the arrests and demanded their immediate release. Troops arrested Javeed Ahmad Shah son of Ali Muhammad during a raid in Shopian in Pulwama district on Saturday. Special Operations Group (SOG) of police arrested Ghulam Ahmad Bhat son of Ali Muhammad Bhat of Zainapora Shopian on Saturday. Meanwhile, soldiers of paramilitary CRPF arrested general secretary of Tehreek Hurriyat Farooq Ahmad at Ganderbal on Saturday, the agency said.

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2005

Allotment of Govt accommodation a major scandal in J&K: Azad

JAMMU, Dec 27: Describing the allotment of Government accommodation in the State as a 'major scandal' in J&K, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that an inquiry would be conducted into the whole system. Speaking in the State Legislative Council during 'Question Hour' here today, Mr Azad said, "the allotment of the Government accommodation in J&K is a major scandal along with the Security Related Expenditures (SRE) misuse during past about 16 years and there is a need to address to the problem immediately. "I will bulldoze this illegal allotment system personally. I will also look into it and enquire soon," he assured the House of elders. In a written reply to a question of MLC Bilal Lodhi, the Chief Minister said 96 people have been allotted accommodation other than serving Government officers, sitting Legislators and Ministers.

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2005

Need to do much more than Wazir Commission: CM

JAMMU, Dec 27: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that there was need to do much more than the recommendations of the Wazir Commission Report and give it yet another thought and review it further to address to the grievances of many areas. Replying to the joint question of Prof Bhim Singh, Nizam-ud-Din and Bilal Lodhi in the Upper House today, Mr Azad while giving new twist to the issue said that Wazir Commission Report recommendations came in early eighties. With a long long passage of time, the perceptions have changed, population has increased in many areas and there is need to review it and give a yet another thought over the recommendations. In fact, there is need to do much more than the recommendations of the Wazir Commission Report. Justifying his point, Mr Azad said that district Doda has vast area followed by district Udhampur.

The Indian Express, 28 December 2005

Jammu and Kashmir gets record tourists in 2005

Srinagar, December 27: A record number of tourists visited Kashmir this year, reassured by moves to bring peace to the region, officials said on Tuesday. Last year, over 376,729 tourists visited Kashmir, once Asia's top tourist destination with its verdant meadows, snow-capped mountains, pine forests and blue lakes dotted with houseboats. "More than 610,320 tourists visited this year. It's an all-time high since the militancy started," Salim Baig, director-general of the Tourism department said. "The security situation in the state has drastically changed and Kashmir is opening up," he said. Violence has eased in Kashmir after India and Pakistan launched new moves to make peace two years ago. "Being the bulwark of the state economy, tourism development will be the focus and massive tourist infrastructure will be created during the next two years," J&K's Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said on Sunday.

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2005

Govt announces measures to overcome power shortage

JAMMU, Dec 27: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today announced a series of measures to overcome electricity shortage in the State including operationalisation of Pampore gas turbine. He also declared the Government's determination to come down heavily on misuse of power by the consumers especially usage of heaters for cooking from January 1 giving Executive Engineers powers to take help of police to seal the heaters. Making a suo moto statement in the Legislative Assembly this afternoon, he said Pampore gas turbine unit is being made operational from tomorrow. It will generate 75 mw electricity per day. "Though this is the costliest mode of power generation costing electricity at Rs 7 per unit, we had to take this measure as a last resort as the State was suffering from acute power shortage in general and Kashmir valley in particular", he added. The Finance Department has kept Rs 5 crore at the disposal of Power Development Department (PDD) for purchase of diesel to run the gas turbine, Mr Azad said.

The Indian Express, 28 December 2005

J-K to set up body to tackle disasters (Ishfaq Naseem)

Jammu, December 27: JOLTED by the October 8 earthquake, the Jammu and Kashmir Government today announced the setting up of a Disaster Management Authority within a few days. Speaking in the Assembly, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said this authority will be constituted through an executive order. The authority will be represented by different departments for a coordinated response to disasters. State Chief Secretary Vijay Bakaya said, "We have not decided who will head the authority and whether it will have statutory powers." The authority is expected to work for chalking out the strategy to minimise losses during disasters. "It will work out the strategies to take steps to minimise the damage at the time of snowfall and avalanches. It will also have to play a big role in the smooth conduct of yatras. It will meet before the winter sets in or before the yatra starts to take some measures in advance for minimising losses," said officials.

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2005

Convert Kashmir into free trade zone: Mufti

LUCKNOW, Dec 27: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today proposed converting both sides of Kashmir into a free visa and trade zone and said he has already taken up the issue with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Talking to reporters here, he said the opening of borders between Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) into a free trade and visa zone would help both the countries better their relations. Terming economic freedom the biggest tool in improving the situation in Kashmir, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader said such a move would foster better relations between the two countries. "Like in Europe, where people can move freely between various countries of the region, those from either sides of Kashmir should be given a chance to move freely. As people travelling on the Muzaffarabad bus on either sides of the LoC need a permit, the same principle can be applied on trucks carrying goods," he said.

The Indian Express, 28 December 2005

Peace not possible without Kashmiri Hindus: Farooq

The former chief minister was addressing a gathering of Kashmiri Hindus at a function at Abhinav Theatre to mark the 16th martyrdom anniversary of Pandit Prem Nath Bhat, an advocate who was shot dead by militants in 1989. Farooq Abdullah said it was high time the Kashmir Hindu community and Kashmiri Muslims got united. It was also time for various groups within the Kashmiri Hindus to get united, failing which there would be no solution to their problems, he said. Calling upon Kashmiri Hindus to forget the wounds inflicted on them in the last 15 years of militancy in the Valley, Abdullah said this was the only way they can return to their homes. One day, Kashmiris will make a comeback to the Valley, he said. Saying that he was at the fag end of his life and could not solve their problems, Abdullah said the Kashmiri Hindus alone had to evolve ways to find a solution. He said even if the Kashmir imbroglio is resolved and peace is achieved between India and Pakistan, the people of Kashmir would not be able to live without PoK.

Greater Kashmir, 28 December 2005

Shifting of quake-hit kids to Pune challenged (NISSAR BHAT)

Srinagar, Dec 27: The State High Court Tuesday directed the state to furnish the credentials of Non Government Organizations (NGOs) who have taken quake-hit Kashmiri children to Pune. The directions were issued by the Division Bench comprising Chief Justice, Justice B.A Khan and Justice Bashir Ahmad Kirmani on Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the High Court Bar Association (HCBA) and some local and outside-state NGOs. The central government has also been named party in the case. Pleading the case, HCBA described sending of children outside the state as "smuggling and crime" and questioned the motive of the state behind the step which HCBA termed as "malafide and politically motivated." "Why only children from Kashmir are being taken outside. In Latur, the government of Maharashtra didn't allow to send their children anywhere after the quake. After Tsunami, the Government of Tamil Nadu opposed any such move. And here children were taken 3000 kms away. It is the conspiracy and those who are involved in this should be held accountable," the HCBA lawyers argued.

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2005

4 HUJI militants surrender

RAJOURI/JAMMU, Dec 28: Four militants of Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) outfit today surrendered before Army in Keri sector in this district soon after their infiltration from across the Line of Control (LoC). Official sources identified them as Mohd Abbas son of Ghulam Mohd and Mohd Ramzan son of Abdul Gani, both residents of Kishtwar, Mohd Tariq son of Abdul Hamid and Mohd Issaq son of Abdul Gaffar, both residents of Banihal. They handed over four pistols with four magazines, three Sansui mobile sets, one wireless set and 20 pistol rounds at the time of surrender. The militants belonged to HUJI outfit. Security forces and police recovered one IED weighing five kg fitted in a pressure cooker, three gelatin sticks, two detonators and 500 grams explosives during a search operation at Masti Bagrah in Chinyas area of Gandoh in Doda district last night. One wireless set, one IED, one detonator, three AK magazines and 119 rounds were recovered from Sekli Gali in Ramsu area of Ramban tehsil.

Greater Kashmir, 29 December 2005

Troops use civilians as shield: Sagar

Jammu, Dec 28: Senior National Conference leader and MLA, Ali Muhammad Sagar Wednesday accused troops of using civilians as human shields during anti-militancy operations. Speaking during Zero Hour in Assembly here, Sagar referred to recent gunbattle at Bemina where many houses were razed to ground in alleged mortar shelling by the troops to fight out a lone holed-up militant. Sagar read to House Tuesday's issue of Greater Kashmir, which carried a report on alleged loot and disproportionate use of power by the troops. "Troops have used civilians as human shields," Sagar said. "Is this your normalcy?" he shouted as he waved a copy of GK. Blaming state government and troops for the plight of people rendered homeless in Bemina, Sagar demanded shelter for them. "They should be provided temporary shelter because government and troops are responsible for their misery," he said. On this, the Deputy Speaker Muhammad Akbar Lone directed the government to come out with a statement on the issue "as it pertains to human lives."

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2005

Azad warns against bunglings in quake relief

JAMMU, Dec 28: Candidly admitting that there was some mismanagement at the initial stage while distributing relief in the earthquake affected areas, Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad today warned that he will not tolerate any bunglings or corruption in relief and rehabilitation operations. Reiterating Government's commitment to rehabilitate all affected families as early as possible, the Chief Minister informed that a reconstruction plan of Rs 1342 crore has been sent to the Union Government for approval. Winding up the debate on Motion on earthquake in the Legislative Assembly, Mr Azad warned his Ministers against adopting any 'pick and choose' policy in rehabilitation operations. "Relief material should reach to genuine and deserving people", he said and warned that there should be no 'Bander-Bant'.

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2005

Heated exchanges on Wazir Commission

JAMMU, Dec 28: The State Assembly today witnessed heated exchanges among the members of National Panthers Party (NPP), Congress, PDP and National Conference with lone Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Jugal Kishore Sharma staging a walkout in protest against the Government's 'diluted stand' on implementation of Wazir Commission report. The trouble started as soon as the House assembled for the day's business in the morning and Balwant Singh Mankotia of NPP stood up from his seat and sought the attention of the Speaker on Wazir Commission report in the light of yesterday's statement of Chief Minister in Upper House. Though the Speaker, Tara Chand did not allow Mankotia to raise the issue and he pointed towards G M Jan of NC to speak on motion on earthquake, Mankotia continued with his arguments .

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2005

Ministry reduction bill tabled in House

JAMMU, Dec 28: As reported exclusively by the Excelsior in its today's edition, the State Government today introduced a bill in the Legislative Assembly seeking to restrict strength of the Council of Ministry to 20 per cent of total membership of both House of the Legislature. The bill, seeking to amend Section 36 and 38 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, was introduced in the Assembly by Deputy Chief Minister, Incharge Law & Parliamentary Affairs and Finance Muzaffar Hussain Baig. The Constitutional amendment, which required two-third majority for approval, will be taken up for discussion in the Assembly tomorrow. The Assembly session, which was scheduled to adjourn sine die today, was extended by a day by Speaker Tara Chand on a resolution moved by Mr Baig to facilitate passing of the bill. The amendment provides that total number of Ministers including the Chief Minister shall not exceed 20 per cent of total membership of the State Legislature (both Lower and Upper Houses). Combined strength of both Houses is 123 (89 Assembly, 87 elected plus two nominated and 34 Council).

Greater Kashmir, 29 December 2005

Peace activist of Kashmiri origin abducted in Iraq (SHOWKAT A MOTTA)

Jammu, Dec 28: A 32-year-old peace activist of Kashmiri origin is missing in Iraq after his abduction by an armed insurgent group last month. Harmeet Singh Sooden, a Canadian citizen who had been residing in Auckland, New Zealand for the past few years was kidnapped along with three more activists by suspected insurgents on November 26 in Baghdad. "We came to know about Harmeet's abduction through our contacts abroad," a spokesman of Srinagar-based NGO, Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) said. Residents of north Kashmir's Varmul district, the Soodens migrated to Canada more than three decades ago and established their own business. Harmeet's old grandparents however still live in Muslim-majority Varmul where their house suffered partial damage in October 8 quake.

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2005

Top comdr among 3 militants killed

SRINAGAR, Dec 28: Three militants, including a top Jaish-e-Mohammed commander were killed in an encounter at Khrew Pampore in south Kashmir during last night while as a residential house was also gutted during the exchange of fire. Security forces averted two major tragedies in Anantnag and Srinagar by detecting two IEDs in vehicles on the roadside. According to defence sources, troopers of 50 RR on a tip-off cordoned off the Khrew area on Tuesday evening to flush out the militants hiding in the area. The cordon was later restricted to a residential house of one Mohammed Akbar Bhat, where the militants were hiding, they said adding that the militants attempted to break the cordon and sneak. "While security forces restricted them, the militants hurled grenades and opened fire on the troops, triggering a fierce encounter," defence sources said. They said that the encounter continued till 0100 hours Wednesday before three militants were killed and the residential house of Bhat was razed to rubble. Sources said that the slain militants included deputy divisional commander of Jaish-e-Mohammed, Qari Suhail and two of his accomplices Afaq and Danish.

Greater Kashmir, 29 December 2005

NC to support ministry reduction bill

Jammu, Dec 28: National Conference, Jammu and Kashmir's largest opposition party is likely to extend complete and unconditional support to Ghulam Nabi Azad-led Congress government in passing of an extraordinary bill aimed at reducing strength of the council of ministry and amendments to Anti-Defection law in Legislative Assembly here on Thursday. According to official sources, the government, after consultation with the NC legislators, has decided to downsize the council of ministry to 20 percent of total strength of both Houses, including Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chairman and Deputy Chairman. The ministry reduction bill was introduced in the Assembly Wednesday during its ongoing special session which has been called to deliberate on destruction caused by October 8 quake. The law minister also introduced the Anti-Defection bill aimed at preventing defections of legislators from the parties. To pass the legislations the government extended the Assembly session by a day so that discussion could be held on it.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2005

Corruption, political interference affecting governance: Azad

JAMMU, Dec 29: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has said that corruption and political interference were the major diseases, affecting the administrative and the justice delivery system and creating hurdles in providing good governance to the people in the State. While concluding the discussion on the issue of unwanted interference in governance, development and administration, the Chief Minister said today in the Legislative Council that transparency, efficiency, accountability, commitment are the important ingredients for delivering good governance to the public. But unfortunately interference by the Ministers, MLAs, MLCs and other political activists has spoiled the system of delivering good governance. Referring to the role of legislators/ Parliamentarians, Mr Azad said their specific role has been well defined by the Constitution but unfortunately, they have confined their role to interfering in transfers, promotions, appointments and other allied works. They are the most powerful persons as they frame rules in the Parliament and Legislatures which the judges of Supreme Court or the High Court can not do.

The Indian Express, 30 December 2005

From now on, it will be a bullet for bullet: Azad (Rakesh Rocky)

Jammu, December 29: Rejecting his predecessor Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's policy of Goli se nahin boli se (talks in reply to bullet), Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today made it clear that militants will get bullet in reply to their bullets from now onwards. Announcing this in State Assembly here, Azad said that "Jo maarne (militant) ke liye aaya hai vo marne ke liye bhee taiyar rahe" (those who are coming to kill should also be prepared to die). Declared a war against militants, Azad said militants should not expect justice from the government. "Jo logon ko marke ke liye aa rahe hein unhen sarkar se insaaf kee tabbokko nahin karni chahiye," he said. The Chief Minister also declared on the occasion that security forces will not be allowed to use commoners as human shields in

future.

Greater Kashmir, 30 December 2005

Police books protester for 'attempted murder' (M HYDERI)

Srinagar, Dec 29: A day after the residents of Awantipora pitched voice against the alleged atrocities by army and police in the area, their mouth was gagged Thursday when police detained one of the injured protestors and filed serious charges against him. The detainee, Muhammad Amin Malla, in his late 40s on Wednesday participated in the protests held in the Awantipora chowk, when his son Aijaz Ahmed was beaten ruthlessly and left in a half dead condition allegedly by troops of 42 RR. Amin was himself also injured during the protests and received head injuries. Today Amin was detained under serious charges including attempt to murder, police said. The incident has left the locals in a shocked state as they find it difficult to express their feelings.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2005

Entire House supports legislation

JAMMU, Dec 29: A bill to amend Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) giving powers to the State Vigilance Organisation (SVO) to seize or attach properties of corrupt officers was unanimously passed in the Legislative Assembly today in amended form with Deputy Chief Minister, Incharge Finance, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Muzaffar Hussain Baig declaring that there will be no politicking in drive against corruption. He announced that he would resign from the Ministry the day Opposition leaders would allege with their conscience that Mr Baig is corrupt. Some amendments of NC MLA Saifullah Mir were incorporated in the bill. Hailing the support of Opposition to amendment in the PCA, Mr Baig said the Government would drive against corruption from its own house. He admitted that political will was required for implementation of the law.

The Indian Express, 30 December 2005

Back channel diplomacy on to resolve J&K: Musharraf

Islamabad, December 29: President Pervez Musharraf on Thursday claimed that India and Pakistan were currently discussing through back channel diplomacy 'ideas' like self-governance and demilitarisation to resolve the Kashmir issue and they would be brought to the front channel if concrete progress was made. Confidence Building Measures have been moving ahead and Pakistan for its part has tried to speed up the process of dispute resolution as well, he said in an interaction with media at the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors at Lahore. Musharraf said the Hurriyat leadership in Jammu and Kashmir supports demilitarisation and self-governance proposals mooted by him as ideas to resolve the Kashmir issue. He said Pakistan has presented a number of ideas on Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2005

Mufti favours discussing every proposal for resolving Kashmir

JAMMU, Dec 29: Reiterating his stand that there is no immediate ready-made solution to vexed Kashmir problem, former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today opined that all options mooted by different groups should thoroughly be discussed before arriving at a consensus. In an informal chat with media persons, Mr Sayeed, who first time attended Assembly session today, observed that it was appropriate time to initiate concrete efforts to resolve the conflict in this sub-continent. He was of the opinion that present 'conducive atmosphere' was the best opportunity of the century to resolve Kashmir which was 'bone of contention' between India and Pakistan for the last so many years. When his attention was drawn towards idea of 'Self-Rule' mooted by some groups for resolving Kashmir, the Mufti said that every proposal should be discussed.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2005

Assembly passes Anti-Defection, Ministry reduction bill

JAMMU, Dec 29: The Legislative Assembly today approved a Constitutional amendment bill unanimously with more than two-third majority curbing defections from a political party and restricting strength of the Ministry to 20 per cent of total strength of both Houses of Legislature. Intervening in debate on the bill, which was supported by all political parties, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad clarified that even in Parliament the legislation has been passed that strength of the Ministry would be 15 per cent of Lower House for Parliament and large States. For smaller states, a provision has been kept that they could have a maximum of 12 Ministers. For smaller States like Goa, Pondicherry, Arunachal and Sikkim where the Assemblies comprised 30 or 40 MLAs, 12 Ministers mean 30 per cent of the strength of their House. The provision of 15 per cent is not uniform, he asserted. All MLAs of all political parties including National Conference, present in the House, stood up from their seats and supported the bill as asked by Speaker Tara Chand. Two-third majority i. e. a total of 58 MLAs were required to vote for the bill to get it through.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2005

4 travel to PoK on peace bus

SRINAGAR, Dec 29: Four persons today travelled to Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad peace caravan, which brought back 12 passengers on the second trip since resumption of the bus service after the October 8 quake. Three of the passengers were returning home to PoK while the fourth was a Kashmiri, who boarded the bus at Baramulla and was going across to meet his relatives, officials said here. On its return journey, the bus brought 12 passengers from PoK, including four residents of the State, they said. The State Road Transport Corporation 'Kaarvan-e-Aman' left for Kaman post, the crossing point along the Line of Control amid tight security arrangements. The earthquake had damaged Aman bridge connecting the Kashmir valley with PoK and rendered the road link unworthy for traffic movement, forcing temporary suspension of the bus service, they said.

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2005

Militant killed in Lolab

Srinagar, Dec 29: One militant was killed in an encounter with the Army at Chandigam, Lolab while as an auto rickshaw driver suffered injuries in a grenade attack at Nalabal, Nowshera in Srinagar last night. According to sources, an unidentified militant was killed in an encounter with the troopers of 9 Para unit of the Army in Chandigam Lolab. Sources said that a cordon was laid around the said house following a tip off during which militant opened the fire which was returned and in the ensuing gun fight, a foreign militant was killed whose identity could not be ascertained. Army later carried house to house search operations but no arrests were made, the sources said. Army has also claimed recovering arms and ammunition from the encounter site.

The Indian Express, 31 December 2005

Security forces recover arms, ammunition

Jammu, December 30: During different search operation conducted at Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur, the security forces recovered a cache of arms and ammunition. Acting on specific information, the security forces launched a search operation and recovered arms kept in a gunny bag at general area Lakharwali in Thanamandi of Raouri district. The recoveries include one AK-56 rifle, four AK magazines, 70 round of AK ammunition, two detonators and two radio set antennas. In another operation today, the army recovered huge haul from a natural cave at general area of Salwa Mendhar in Poonch district. The recoveries included one AK-56 rifle, three AK magazines, 215 rounds of AK ammunition, one .30 pistol, one pistol magazine and five rounds of pistol ammunition.

Greater Kashmir, 31 December 2005

6 detained

Srinagar, Dec 30: Troops have detained six persons during various raids in Valley. According to UNS, troops of 53 RR during a raid at Chak Bati Moran Pulwama detained Manzoor Ahmad Batti son of Sharief-ud-Din. In another incident, troops of 50 RR in Pampore arrested Muhammad Akram Bhat son of Mirza Bhat during a raid. On December 27, three militants were killed in an encounter, in which the house of Muhammad Akram Bhat suffered damage. Meanwhile, the troops in Ishber Nishat have detained Muzaffar Ahmad Wani son of Khazar Muhammad Wani and Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh son of Muhammad Ramzan. The residents of Handwara, according to the news agency held protests against the detention of two persons including an Imam. The troops of 21 RR, according to UNS have detained Farooq Ahmad Yatoo son of Ali Muhammad of Chogul Handwara and Imam of mosque Naseem Ahmad of UP presently living in Handwara.

Daily Excelsior, 31 December 2005

Azad leaves for New Delhi

JAMMU, Dec 30: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said he was optimistic that ties between India and Pakistan will be further cemented in the coming year. Speaking to a private channel here, he said even problems of complex nature could be solved through a dialogue. "The new year would provide further opportunities for the two countries to make progress on Confidence Building Measures and improving relations," Mr Azad added. He also conveyed new year greetings to people of the State, hoping the year ahead would be a harbinger of peace and prosperity for the State and country. The Chief Minister later flew to New Delhi to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and other leaders to apprise them of relief and rehabilitation measures taken by his Government for quake victims, official sources said. Sources said Mr Azad would also inform the Central leadership about decisions taken by the State legislature during the special session convened to discuss relief and rehabilitation measures for the survivors of the October 8 killer quake.

Greater Kashmir, 31 December 2005

Road maps no match for sacrifices: Geelani

Srinagar, Dec 30: Chairman of a faction of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Syed Ali Shah Geelani while addressing a seminar in Madina, Saudi Arabia, has said the road maps presented regarding Kashmir issue were not in conformity with the sacrifices made by Kashmiris. Kashmiris during the ongoing freedom struggle,

according to Geelani "haven't only sacrificed five lakh people, but have also made sacrifices on their honour and dignity." "Not only Pakistan provides us moral, political and diplomatic support, its people have also sacrificed their loved ones for us," Geelani who was addressing the participants there said, party spokesman said in a statement. The sacrifices, according to the Hurriyat chairman indicate that the stand of Kashmiris and Pakistan on the issue should be same. "When the action plan of Kashmiris and Pakistan will be same, the stubborn attitude of the government of India will break," Geelani further added.

Daily Excelsior, 31 December 2005

Body recovered from Budgam

Srinagar, Dec 30: While police claimed to have recovered a body of an unidentified woman, security forces in separate incidents averted two tragedies by diffusing an IED and a live grenade at Sopore and Pulwama respectively. According to sources, a body of an unidentified woman was recovered from Khan Sahib, Budgam in central Kashmir on Friday morning. Though the cause of her death was not known, police suspected that she might have died of severe cold. Police, in Pulwama, recovered a live grenade kept near the Bus stand on Friday afternoon. Sources said that following the discovery of the grenade, the entire area was sealed and special bomb squad was called, later to defuse it. In Sopore, north Kashmir troopers of 22 RR, on a tip off about an IED, surrounded a graveyard in the town early this morning. Sources said that the troopers were accompanied by anti-bomb squad, who discovered a powerful IED there. The IED was later neutralized.

Greater Kashmir, 31 December 2005

Soldier dies in Sonwar

Srinagar, Dec 30: A soldier of paramilitary CRPF was killed when his service rifle accidentally went off at high security Sonwar on Friday. Constable M K Tiwari of 60 batallion CRPF camped at Hotel Palace died on the spot. Suspected militants attacked troops in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Friday. Local news agency the CNS said suspected militants hurled a grenade on the soldiers of 55 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) at Pulwama market. However, the grenade did not explode. Soon after, troops fired indiscriminately in air causing panic in the area, the agency said. Police recovered body of a woman at Khanpora Budgam on Friday. Her identity could not be established immediately. An Improvised Explosive Devise (IED) was detonated in Sopur on Friday. Soldiers of 22 RR raided a graveyard near the army camp and recovered an IED, which was later detonated by the bomb disposal squad. In Bandipora, an IED exploded on the road. However, no casualties was reported in the incident, the UNS said.

Greater Kashmir, 31 December 2005

Mirwaiz wants power!

Srinagar, Dec 30: Ahead of his second trip to Pakistan as part of solidarity visit after October 8 earthquake, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Friday scotched New Delhi's claims of pumping in huge money for J&K development. He also criticized the state government for projecting a fake power crisis in the state saying the crisis was being used as a political tool against the 'occupied people' of Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the Friday congregation at historic Jamia Masjid here, Mirwaiz lamented over the perpetual power crisis that he said had been adding to the people's woes for past half century. Taking a break from the conventional rhetoric about Kashmir issue, Mirwaiz chose to focus on some of the basic issues confronting the people of the state. People of Jammu and Kashmir have been rendering huge sacrifices and throughout the sustained repression they have badly been used as political commodities.

Daily Excelsior, 31 December 2005

4 LeT activists arrested

HYDERABAD, Dec 30: The City Police today held four persons suspected to be Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) activists. Police sources said investigation was on to ascertain whether they were involved in the sensational terrorist attack on the Indian Institute of Science (IIS), Bangalore on December 28. The four " LeT activists" were being questioned at an undisclosed place, the sources said. They were picked up during intensified patrolling in connection with the coming Indian Science Congress (ISC) here in which Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President A P J Abdul Kalam are scheduled to participate apart from a number of top scientists. Security in the city has been beefed up following the attack on the premier science institution in Bangalore, in which a professor of IIT, Delhi, M C Puri was killed. A high alert was sounded in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad after the attack. (UNI)