

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2006

**Court dismisses petition by Army officials in Pathribal killings**

Srinagar, Nov 30: A Sessions Court today dismissed the revision petition filed by five army officials accused of killing five civilians in a fake encounter at Pathribal village of Jammu and Kashmir in March 2000. Dismissing the petition, Additional District and Sessions Judge Gousia U N Nisa Jeelani directed them and the Army to appear before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate M Y Akhoon on December 19, the next date of hearing. The Judge also directed the Chief Judicial Magistrate to give one more opportunity to the Army to decide whether they want to hold court martial proceedings against the accused Army personnel in the Pathribal killings in the wake of Chittisinghpura massacre in March 2000 or let the civil court try them. Defence counsel Anil Bhan said he is not satisfied with the order and will challenge it in the higher court..

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2006

**Hurriyat ready for talks with Centre**

Srinagar, Nov 30: The moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference today made a fresh offer of talks with the Centre and said the concept of self-rule needed to be debated at the peoples level on either side of the Line of Control. We are willing to meet the Indian leadership provided they are willing to do so. There might be some hiccups in the dialogue process but we are hopeful that these would be overcome, former Hurriyat Chairman Abdul Gani Bhat said after a meeting of the executive committee of the amalgam here..In an apparent reference to Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who came up with the self-rule idea, Bhat said self-rule is a concept of political thought that recognises peoples right to be architects and masters of their fate and destiny..

Greater Kashmir, 1 December 2006

**Does land lease really mean sale of Kashmir? (Naseer A Ganai)**

Srinagar, Nov 30: There seems to be no end to the battle between National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party over the issue of leasing out state land to non-state subjects. And Congress, heading the coalition government, is watching from a distance. But the question is what triggered the present crises forcing pro-freedom political parties and the National Conference to oppose the government move to lease out the land. The two orders of the Tourism Department created the row and brought into focus the Land Grants Act of 1960. Zaffar Ahmad Shah, a senior counsel and lawyer of repute, says order 265-TSM (first order) issued by the present government clearly states that the land will be leased out to the state subjects only, and the state subjects will have 50 percent partnership in any joint venture with non-state subjects..

Greater Kashmir, 1 December 2006

**Lt Col among 3 injured**

Srinagar, Nov 30: Three soldiers, including a lieutenant colonel, were injured in an IED explosion in north Kashmir's Varmul district on Thursday. Reports said the IED planted by militants near Khawaja Bagh, Varmul went off when a Gypsy carrying soldiers of 46 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) passed through the area. In the blast, Venkat Kumar, the lieutenant colonel, his guard and driver of the vehicle were injured. They were rushed to a hospital.

After the blast troopers cordoned off the area and conducted searches. Hizbul Mujahideen, in a statement to local news agency CNS, claimed responsibility for the blast..

Daily Excelsior, 1 December 2006

**Editorial: Blow to HM**

From all accounts the killing of Mohammad Ashraf Shah alias Suhail Faisal in an encounter with the Army in Bijbehara in Anantnag district is a serious blow to Hizbul Mujahideen. It cant be called entirely unexpected because the path that HM has chosen cant lead it anywhere. Shah was the Kashmir regions most wanted militant after HMs operational chief in the State. A trained engineer he had perfected the skill of making improved explosive devices with the help of mobile telephones. He was instrumental in carrying out a large number of attacks on security forces and counter-insurgents. He was part of his organisations think-tank. It is a measure of his confidence that he had set up his latest hideout in a house just 50 yards away from that of former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. It turned out to be his graveyard..

Kashmir Times, 1 December 2006

**Editorial: Unscheduled power cuts**

That power situation in the Valley is likely to be bleak as winters get harsher and biting cold makes it unbearable for the people rings alarm bells. With increasing scheduled power cuts in the Valley, it seems, the winters are not going to be very smooth. Unfortunately, as demand for power goes up double than usual, with increasing infrastructure in the Valley, the supply remains much the same. So do the old problems and the old attitudes of people pinning the blame on the authorities and the latter blaming the consumers for failing to judiciously use electricity. Unfortunately, despite installing meters in the Valley, the power scenario has not improved, barring certain areas where electronic meters are functioning well and people have begun to taste the benefits of paying for the amount of power being consumed. However, still unscheduled power cuts become the norm of the day which the authorities easily blame on transmission faults..

Daily Excelsior, 2 December 2006

**Lt Col ends life in Mahore**

JAMMU, Dec 1: A senior Army officer Lt Col Pankaj Jha today committed suicide in his unit at 15 Sector Rashtriya Rifles, headquartered at Mahore in Udhampur district barely few hours after returning from leave from his house in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Lt Col Jha shot himself dead with his service pistol. Official sources said the Army officer reported back to his unit at around 12 noon after availing few days leave for visiting his house in Bhopal. At 2.30 pm, he ended his life. Army personnel including senior officers rushed to the spot. The body was sent for post-mortem. Army have ordered an inquiry into the incident..

Daily Excelsior, 2 December 2006

**WG for comprehensive land lease policy to attract private sector**

JAMMU, Dec 1: Close on the heels of controversy over leasing out land to the outsiders, the Working Group on Economic Reconstruction has expressed its opinion of

formulating a comprehensive land policy to attract private sector in infrastructure development. Talking to the reporters after the meeting, Chairman of the Working Group, Dr C Rangarajan disclosed that it was thoroughly discussed in the meeting that a comprehensive land lease policy was must so as to attract private entrepreneur in the State especially in the tourism sector. When his attention was drawn towards ongoing controversy over land lease issue in Kashmir valley, Dr Rangarajan made it clear that group has just discussed the issue of leasing land to private sector but specific recommendations are yet to be made..

Kashmir Times, 2 December 2006

**Sachar report: J&K has least number of madrassas, students**

NEW DELHI, Dec 1: Justice Sachar Committee which studied the social, economic and educational status of Muslim community in India has observed that Jammu and Kashmir despite being the only Muslim majority state has the least number of madrassas and religious students than other Indian states. While there are 10.35 lakh madrassa students all over country, there are just 2,691 such students in Jammu and Kashmir, which includes 1729 boys and 962 girls. Utter Pradesh, Bihar , Kerala, Assam and West Bengal contribute a large number of madrassa students. In total just four per cent Muslim children study in madrassas all over India breaking the myth that Muslims largely send their children to madrassas. The high level panel which was headed by former Delhi High Court Chief Justice, Justice Rajinder Sachar has, however, glossed over by not incorporating a detailed data from Jammu and Kashmir..

Kashmir Times, 3 December 2006

**PDP accuses NC of sabotaging J&K's interests**

Budgam, Dec 2: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) today said the party is working on a comprehensive political and economic formulation for the permanent settlement of the Kashmir problem, paving the way for long-lasting peace in the region. Addressing a party convention here today, PDP President, Mehbooba Mufti said the most remarkable feature, which has a bearing on its sustainability, of the ongoing resolution process is that for the first time in J&Ks history, the State government has initiated, catalysed and driven the process. From being a passive recipient of bilateral initiatives, the State Government, immediately after the assembly election of October 2002, took the centre-stage to drive the process, she said..

Kashmir Times, 3 December 2006

**Editorial: NEED TO MOVE FORWARD**

From one decade of almost absolute silence on peace in South Asia or peace in Kashmir, both of which are interlinked, in the last half a decade, there has been some positive movement. Barring moments of hawkish approach, even war like situation or skirmishes, that stop peaceniks in their act, at least heads of the state in the two giants of the sub-continent ?India and Pakistan have begun to talk of friendship. On Kashmir, there is a promise to shun the rigid approach and think of imaginative ways to resolve the mess along with other bilateral disputes. This is no small movement. The most significant step in recent past has also been the opening of the deadly Line of Control for movement of people to and fro from the two divided parts of Kashmir under Indian and Pakistani

administration respectively. This indeed is an important step towards peace building. Something indeed is in place. But much of it, however, remains rhetoric..

Daily Excelsior, 3 December 2006

**Opinion: Begin J&K corruption eradication from top ! (Dr. Jitendra Singh)**

It is like the proverbial chicken - egg story accompanied with the ever unanswered question ?Who came first ?. The Government officials blame the businessmen, traders, suppliers and contractors for relentlessly chasing them with bribes to secure out-of-the-way favours or inappropriate monetary profits. The bribers whether businessmen or others accuse the officials in administration of demanding bribes directly or indirectly by deliberately sitting over the office files. Either way, the result is perpetuation of a culture of corruption. The Azad Government in Jammu and Kashmir professes its resolve to root out corruption but, is the Chief Minister too oblivious of the patrons of corruption sitting under his very nose and the loopholes in system that breed nothing but corruption?

Greater Kashmir, 3 December 2006

**Hurriyat seeks China help in Kashmir solution**

Srinagar, Dec 2: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq-led Hurriyat Conference Saturday urged China to play a role in Kashmir resolution. While speaking to a delegate convention of Srinagar district in an uptown locality here, Mirwaiz asserted that world powers like US, UK and China had enough rapport with India and Pakistan to goad both the countries toward resolving Kashmir. China is a regional player, has good relations with India and is long time friend of Pakistan. It is a key power in the region. Beijing has also sought membership in SAARC. A free trade agreement is expected between SAARC countries by 2020. Things are moving. China has also moved a bit, Mirwaiz later told reporters who sought explanation of his reference to China..

Daily Excelsior, 4 December 2006

**Self-rule, autonomy unacceptable: Sajjad Lone**

Srinagar, Dec 3: Claiming that Independence was the only solution, Chairman of People's Conference, Sajjad Ghani Lone has termed the much talked slogans of Self-rule and Autonomy as unacceptable to the people of Kashmir. Self -rule and Autonomy are both fraud, hollow and a deception and nothing short of Independence is acceptable to Kashmiris, Sajjad Lone said, while addressing a public gathering at Acchabal-Anantnag today. He opined that Kashmir was still alive as an issue and needed a solution. The solution, however, doesnt lie with Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) or National Conference ( NC), who have been harping over the slogans of Self-Rule and Autonomy, the Peoples Conference Chairman said..

Daily Excelsior, 4 December 2006

**Editorial: Matter of concern**

Suicide by Lt Col Pankaj Jha in Mahore in Udhampur district will shock many. It is unbelievable that a senior Army officer should have found his life unfit to live. He shot himself with his service pistol within hours of returning to the duty from leave. The first impression is that a domestic problem may have driven him to take the extreme step. The cause of concern is that such happenings have become quite frequent in the elite force

during the current year. These are to be distinguished from fratricidal killings. More than 125 suicides have already taken place in the Army in 2006. Their number is the maximum so far in a calendar year taking the total to about 500 after 2003. Before the latest incident five officers including a gallantry award winner, five junior commissioned officers and 118 jawans are reported to have bid goodbye to the world out of desperation this year..

Greater Kashmir, 4 December 2006

**In JK, only 2 percent disabled get education, 1 percent employment**

Srinagar, Dec 3: Rejecting government claims of providing education and employment to the physically challenged persons in the state in accordance with the set rules, the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) has said that only two percent of the disabled people receive education and one percent of such people are employed. In a research conducted by the Delhi-based NGO fighting for the cause of physically challenged, it said, There are three lakh disabled people in Jammu and Kashmir and two lakh visually impaired who dont receive education and havent been provided employment as enshrined in the law passed by the state government. According to a Valley-based NGO, Humanity Welfare Helpline, the discrimination and marginaliazion of physically challenged people still exists in the society..

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2006

**Pak ready to give up claim on Kashmir: Musharraf**

New Delhi, Dec 4 : Pakistan is prepared to give up its claim on Kashmir, the demand for plebiscite in the region and on implementation of UN resolutions if both countries agree on the four-point solution In an interview with NDTV, Gen Musharraf said self-governance or autonomy did not mean independence and Pakistan is against independence for Kashmir. He said Pakistan was prepared to give up its claim to Kashmir if India and Pakistan agree on the four-point solution (a solution in which boundaries are not changed and India does not have to give up any territory). We will have to. Yes, if this solution comes up, he said when asked if he was prepared to give up claim to Kashmir...We are on the same position as we were since 1948. But we both...I am saying we both ought to be prepared to give up all that we have been saying..

Greater Kashmir, 5 December 2006

**No guidelines for examining mercy petitions: Govt**

New Delhi, Dec 4: Facing a lot of heat from the opposition on the issue of mercy petition of Muhammad Afzal Guru, the government has clarified that no specific guidelines can be framed for examining the clemency pleas. No specific guidelines can be framed for examining the mercy petitions as the power under Article 72 of the Constitution is of the widest amplitude, can contemplate myriad kinds and categories of cases with facts and situations varying from case to case, the Home ministry has explained. The clarification was significant in view of the fact that the opposition has launched a vociferous attack on the government demanding that Afzal, who has been given death penalty by the Supreme Court in the Parliament attack case, be hanged..

Kashmir Times, 5 December 2006

**Editorial: Disabled by ritual**

World Disabled Day was observed on Sunday across the state in a ritualistic manner by organizing seminars, cultural functions and holding rallies. Most of the functions, however, concluded with the politicians of varied hues, including senior cabinet ministers mouthing only platitudes. Besides administering a heavy dose of assurances, these functions hardly served any purpose for the population afflicted with disabilities of varied kinds and degrees. This is paradoxical to note that despite having a population of four lakh disabled, the Jammu and Kashmir government does not have any special schools and other basic facilities in place for such a large chunk of its populace. This sorry state of affairs is there in spite of the fact that Social Welfare Department claims to have many schemes for the disabled. Even almost sixty years after the independence, the state has failed to formulate a comprehensive plan for the empowerment of this, so far a neglected lot..

Kashmir Times, 5 December 2006

**Mufti calls on PM: Situation conducive for Kashmir's resolution**

New Delhi, Dec 4: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Patron. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has said the prevailing supportive environment in the sub-continent is offering a window of opportunity for the peaceful and permanent settlement of the Kashmir problem. He urged India and Pakistan to take advantage of the feasible situation to realize the much-cherished dream of peace and prosperity for the region. Sayeed, who arrived in New Delhi Sunday after his month long visit to the United States, called on the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh here this morning to brief him about the visit. In addition to his engagements at the United Nations, where he had gone as the head of the non-official Indian delegation, Sayeed briefed the Prime Minister about the meetings and interactions he had with US think-tanks and Kashmiri groups on the side-lines of his tour..

Greater Kashmir, 5 December 2006

**Editorial: A will to save assets**

Nothing is safe in Kashmir. Everything conceivable is imperiled. The human beings are the most endangered species with many of them being consumed by bombs and bullets on daily basis. Notwithstanding the state being armed with a very powerful wildlife act many a wild animals have become extinct and the number of many other rare and protected species has been dwindling. The poachers both civilians and uniformed continue to play havoc with the wildlife of the state with impunity. The stark naked hills and hillocks which once used to be verdantly green and soothed our eyes and filled our hearts with joy tell a story of human vandalism and government apathy towards their preservations. This environmental vandalism in which both the people and the government have been indulging has not only taken toll of our forests, wildlife but has also destroyed majority of water bodies in Kashmir and endangered very existence of life in this once known heavenly abode..

Daily Excelsior, 5 December 2006

**Jaish cop killer killed in Bandipore**

Srinagar, Dec 4: One of Jaish-e-Mohammad's most wanted militants, who was allegedly responsible for killing over a dozen Police and paramilitary personnel in Kashmir Valley, has been eliminated in a Police-CRPF operation in Bandipore area of north Kashmir today. Elsewhere, security forces have killed two militants of Al-Badar outfit in Sopore where suspected militants have gunned down a young civilian this evening. IGP Kashmir, S M Sahai, told the EXCELSIOR that SOG Bandipore and CRPF 16 Bn laid an ambush over a specific information at Pethkot Chhandaji in Bandipore area of Baramulla district in the wee hours today..Jaish-e-Mohammads top wanted militant, Gulbadeen Khan, alias Mohsin of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, was killed in this gunbattle..

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2006

**Civilian killed, 15 hurt in Baramulla blast**

Srinagar, Dec 5: One civilian got killed and 15 others sustained injuries in a grenade explosion in Baramulla township today. Informed sources told Excelsior that a grenade blast occurred at Azad Gunj chowk in Baramulla town at 1045 hours today. As many as 16 persons sustained splinter injuries. Three persons, who were critically wounded, were rushed to Srinagar and admitted to SKIMS where one of them later succumbed to injuries. He was identified as Munir Ahmed Bhat S/o Abdul Majeed Bhat, Stadium Colony, Baramulla. Two more of the critically injured, namely 40-year-old Habibullah Lone S/o Ghulam Rasool Lone of Nadihal, Rafiabad, and 20-year-old Masooma D/o Ghulam Hassan Wani R/o Khanpora, Baramulla, were reportedly battling for life at the hospital in Srinagar..

Kashmir Times, 6 December 2006

**HRW documents repression in Kashmir (Parwini Zora & Daniel Woreck)**

A recent report by the US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) documents the systematic human rights abuses carried out by the Indian security forces in the state of Jammu and Kashmir with the protection of the Indian government and legal system. HRW conducted research for the report, entitled Everyone Lives in Fear: Patterns of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir, from 2004 to February 2006 in Indian-controlled Kashmir. It was the first time since 1989 that the Indian government had allowed an international human rights body to visit and report on the state. HRW also conducted research in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir in 2005 and 2006. The report provides detailed accounts and interviews implicating the Indian security forces in torture, disappearances, arbitrary detentions and summary executions, which are concealed as encounter killings..

Greater Kashmir, 6 December 2006

**Unilateral concession: UJC**

Srinagar: United Jihad Council, the conglomerate of militant outfits in Kashmir, regretted the statement by president Musharraf terming it an unilateral concession by Pakistan. Kashmiris cant compromise on their right to self-determination. Options like joint control can only be acceptable if they are a stepping stone for right to self-determination, UJC spokesman said in a statement. Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of a

faction of Hurriyat Conference will formally react to the proposal on Thursday in a press conference. However, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chairman of another faction of the Hurriyat, talking to Greater Kashmir, said the concessions by Musharraf are helping the Pakistani administered part of Kashmir, making it more free..

Greater Kashmir, 6 December 2006

**Opinion: No half hearted moves (S.S. Hussain)**

At one juncture of Kashmir history Sheikh Abdullah used to take initiatives and others had to follow him. History has changed Sheikh Abdullahs National Conference degenerated from the position of leadership to the position of a follower. It became obvious from recent endorsement of Syeed Ali Shah Geelan's call for Hartal by National Conference. It was followed by Omer Abdullahs support for the statement of Syed Salahudin relating to ceasefire. It is a welcome step and may be beginning of the end of Awaraghardi for National Conference in which it plunged after joining Indian mainstream politics in 1975 as a result of Indra-Abdullah accord. But mere endorsement of statements of Syed Ali Geelani and Syed Salahudin is not sufficient to remove the blots of treachery and untrustworthiness from track record of National Conference.. In order to create an avenue for its rehabilitation National Conference has to reorient itself for creating a space in Kashmir politics..

Daily Excelsior, 6 December 2006

**Editorial: No time to relax**

A news agency report about a Union Home Ministry paper on internal security situation directly concerns us in this State. It speaks of a nexus between anti-India elements in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohamamd (JeM) in particular are active in this regard. Their location is too well known to merit any elaboration. A third similar force is Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJAI) based in Bangladesh. One of their modus operandi is to recruit Indian youths for training in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir as the occupied territory across the Line of Control is locally known. After schooling in arms and indoctrination they are sent back to this country for sabotage and subversion. The soil of Bangladesh is being misused more of late. This is confirmed by investigations into recent terrorist actions including the blasts in Mumbai in July, serial explosions in Varanasi in March and the sensational attack on the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore last December. Suspects in these instances are stated to have infiltrated from Bangladesh..

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2006

**15 injured in grenade blast**

Srinagar, Dec 6: As many as 13 civilians and two CRPF personnel sustained splinter injuries when suspected militants hurled a hand grenade on a paramilitary unit in Batmaloo area today. Informed sources said that suspected militants hurled a hand grenade in the direction of some CRPF personnel of 164 Bn at General Bus Stand in Batmaloo this afternoon. It exploded close to the apparent target, causing splinter injuries to two CRPF personnel. As the attack was carried out at a crowded public place, as many as 13 civilians sustained injuries. A number of them were evacuated and rushed to different hospitals for medical treatment. They included a retired J&K Police Sub

Inspector, Abdul Qayoom of Uri..

Kashmir Times, 7 December 2006

**Editorial: Musharrafs drastic peace proposal**

Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf deserves more than just applause for his imaginative and innovative proposal on Kashmir that came up during an interview with the NDTV on Monday. He said that he was ready to give up Pakistans claim over Kashmir, if only India was prepared to accept his 4-point formulae. He asserted, more than once, that right now both the countries are where they were in 1948 and that for the sake of peace both of them would have to move from their stated positions so dearly held for so many decades. The four conditions he wants India to accept are (1) not to make any change in the map of J&K, (2) to make the LoC and the international border of J&K state irrelevant, (3) to have staggered demilitarisation and (4) to have autonomy or self-rule in J&K, with a mechanism for joint supervision. Strangely enough, in order to win Indias acceptance of his proposal, Musharraf even appeared prepared to reject the Kashmiris right to self-determination..

Greater Kashmir, 7 December 2006

**Historic Aali Masjid to get facelift**

Srinagar, Dec 6: The state government has undertaken the restoration of 14th century Aali Masjid at Eidgah in downtown Srinagar. The people will offer Eid-u-Azha prayers in the mosque in ending 2007, director Tourism Department Farooq Ahmad Shah told Greater Kashmir. The work, estimated to cost Rs 1.20 crore, has been given to the Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation. Constructed in 1395 by Sultan Ali Shah, the seventh Sultan of Kashmir, the masjid was closed for public during early 90?s and no prayers have been organised since then. According to the historians, during the reign of Ali Shahs father Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) AD, Mir Syed Muhammad Hamdani the son of Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (Shah-e-Hamdan) purchased a large piece of land on the western side of Narwara Srinagar in 1393..

Greater Kashmir, 7 December 2006

**Editorial: Debate is Good**

The concept of demilitarization and self-governance piloted by Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf as a solution to sixty year old problem of Jammu and Kashmir has again attracted headlines in the sub-continent and generated debates in the media and the political circles. Elaborating his formula for the resolution of the Kashmir On Tuesday while talking to a New Delhi based television channel NDTV he called on India to accept his four-point solution to the Kashmir issue that includes demilitarization and self-governance with joint supervision mechanism. In his interview with the television Channel he referred to his proposals of making no change in boundaries of Kashmir; to make borders and the LoC irrelevant, have staggered demilitarization and have autonomy or self-governance for the solution of this long-standing problem as both the countries have to make compromises and give up their respective positions for moving ahead..

Daily Excelsior, 7 December 2006

**Editorial: Role of CBI**

The Central Bureau of Investigations refusal to take over probe in the murder of a cement tycoon and four others at his residence in this city has brought focus on the exact role of the premier investigation agency of the country. One will find that the CBI is perfectly justified in saying no. Its argument that the case is not of national or international importance is not without merit. Although a shocking and sensational matter these killings are something whose mystery needs to be resolved by the State police. It poses a challenge to the local law and order machinery and it cant wish away its responsibility. In retrospect it appears that the State Cabinet had hurried to take the decision to approach the CBI whose negative response most likely has the concurrence of the Union Ministry of Personnel of which it is an important limb. The CBI is described as an elite force playing a major role in preservation of values in public life and in ensuring the health of the national economy..

The Tribune, 7 December 2006

**Musharrafs 4-point formula on Kashmir evokes varied political reactions**

Srinagar, December 6: Latest proposals of Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf to resolve Kashmir issue, have evoked varied reaction among mainstream and separatist political parties in Jammu and Kashmir. General Musharraf in an interview on Tuesday disfavoured independence for Jammu and Kashmir if India accepted his four suggestions which include demilitarisation and self-governance. National Conference President, Omar Abdullah has asked the Centre to come forward with a positive response to the new four-point formula put forward by the Pakistan President. He lamented while Pakistan had extended its hand of friendship through the new suggestions, India rejected it without giving a thought to the new formula on the pattern of the NC autonomy resolution..

Indian Express, 8 December 2006

**NGO helps Kashmiris beat stress**

Srinagar, December 8: International development agency ActionAid has set up the first hotline in Kashmir to help relieve stress after years of nerve-shattering bombings, shootouts and psychological warfare. Health experts say violence involving separatist militants and security forces in the Himalayan region has put Kashmiris traditionally easy-going people under severe strain. Mental health is a big concern in Kashmir, ActionAids Kiran Shaheen told Reuters by telephone from New Delhi. ActionAid has opened a hotline which will help people suffering from different mental disorders due to militancy. Despite a fall in violence, psychiatrists says stress levels are high among Kashmiris and hundreds of thousands of police and soldiers fighting militants in the region, which has been torn by 17 years of insurgency..

Indian Express, 8 December 2006

**Valley turmoil a trap for innocents, wrote Bhat (Mir Ehsan)**

Srinagar, Dcember 7 : As the Mehboob Cultural Society staged the concluding play at the theatre festival organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy here today, there

were few in the audience without tears in their eyes. Even for those hardened by the Valleys violence, what was unfolding before them was a tragedy that playwright Amin Bhat could have scarcely imagined. Two days ago, in a grenade blast at Baramulla, Bhat's younger brother was killed while out shopping for groceries. His death, unsung, unexplained (no one knows who carried out the blast), isn't quite unlike what prominent playwright and theatre personality Bhat imagines his protagonists to be heading for in his play Chal (The Trap), that was staged today..

Daily Excelsior, 8 December 2006

### **Mufti for serious thought to Musharraf's proposal**

New Delhi, Dec 7: Ruling alliance partner PDP today suggested that the fresh proposal put forward by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf should be given a serious thought to make a beginning for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. Give serious thought to Musharraf's fresh proposal on Kashmir to make a beginning for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue because the cost of not doing it will be much higher than the cost of doing it, PDP patron and former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said in a statement here after his return from the United States and meeting External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. Mr Sayeed said that time has come for India and Pakistan to work out some form of an institutional arrangement and move forward..

Daily Excelsior, 8 December 2006

### **Editorial: Right approach**

Defence Minister A.K. Antony's decision to appoint a high-level committee to go into the highly sensitive matter of fratricidal killings in the Armed Forces is to be welcomed. It will be a time-bound exercise as the proposed panel is required to complete its job in two months. The fact that Director of Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) will head it is equally reassuring. This shows that care has been taken to acknowledge the reality that there is a man behind every machine which happens to be extremely lethal in this instance. Why should he leave his sense of discipline and go berserk to the extent of taking life of his closest associate? What remedial measures can be taken to prevent the occurrence of these undesirable happenings? One is sure that equipped with these terms of reference the panel will be able to find a lasting solution to what undoubtedly has assumed the dimensions of a serious problem..

Kashmir Times, 8 December 2006

### **Editorial: Poorly paid Anganwari workers**

This is distressing to observe despicable administrative apathy towards Anganwari workers and helpers, who constitute the backbone of three-decade old Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). This is surprising that these grassroot workers, who under this scheme have been assigned the most important job of checking the rate of infant and maternal mortality, are among the most ill-paid categories under ICDS in the state. On the whole, there are 34,850 Anganwari workers and helpers in J&K. This is a paradox that they not just get a pittance despite heavy work load but also form an exception of being not considered as the government employees under ICDS and thus are deprived of all the benefits, which accrue naturally to a government employee. This is noteworthy here that an Anganwari worker receives Rs. 1350 as an honorarium while a helper gets

mere Rs 600 per month and even this meager amount is not often paid..

Daily Excelsior, 9 December 2006

### **Demonstrators clash with police in Pulwama**

Srinagar, Dec 8: Fifteen persons, including seven Police personnel, sustained injuries today in ding-dong clashes as demonstrators clashed with police over a road accident in which two youth had sustained critical injuries. Meanwhile, suspected militants have gunned down a civilian and left a soldier injured in Sopore area. Informed sources said that two youth, namely Gulzar Ahmed Magray S/o Ghulam Nabi Magray and Mohammad Altaf Bhat S/o Abdur Rasheed Bhat R/o Purchhoo, Pulwama, sustained critical injuries when their bicycle was hit by a speeding passenger bus, JK01E-7903, in their residential locality in Pulwama town outskirts this afternoon. Both were rushed to the local District Hospital where doctors referred them to a Srinagar hospital. Dozens of people converged on the road and began shouting slogans against police and authorities. As they enforced a shutdown and resorted to stone pelting on the vehicular traffic, Police reached on the spot to defuse the crisis..

Kashmir Times, 9 December 2006

### **Hurriyat G stages protest against Musharrafs proposal**

Srinagar, Dec 8: The Geelani faction of Hurriyat Conference today took out a protest demonstration led by the chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani. The protestors were raising slogans against the proposal of Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf and its supporters in the valley. The Hurriyat G chairman appealed the people to reject those who extend their support to such a proposal which according to him, is not in the interests of Kashmiris. He said that Kashmiris do not endorse any solution other than the right of self-determination. The protestors were raising slogans Down with self-rule. While addressing a Friday congregation of the people in Chankral Mohalla-Habba Kadal, before taking out the protest demonstration, Geelani appealed the people to unite their efforts and put a brave front against those who want to lead the Kashmiris into a mess by proposing misleading solutions which bear no betterment for Kashmiris..

Greater Kashmir, 9 December 2006

### **Editorial: All is not well**

It is common mans perception but correct. The presence of the government in the State particularly in Kashmir valley is felt with its absence. With the departure of the civil secretariat to the winter capital it seems that authority that is inherent in the divisional administration has also evaporated resulting in a total vacuum. There is nothing like authority at present visible in Kashmir division. With officials playing, the work culture in most of the offices has waned and disorder is rife. It is not so in offices away from the gaze of the top officers but even at district headquarters. Many offices and public institutions at block and tehsil levels remain latched for days together. Common man is worst effected because of lack of responsive administration. Essential commodities are missing from the market. There is total scarcity of domestic liquid petroleum gas LPG, the ration depots are without food grains and sugar..

Kashmir Times, 9 December 2006

**Editorial: Poor communication network**

In this modern age when telecommunication facilities are the bane of the present civilization, it is shocking to know that most areas are either without them or the authorities fail to maintain their availability as weather goes bad. In a state like Jammu and Kashmir where social living conditions are very diverse, most rural and far flung regions are just bereft of the civilization which boasts of new age communication network. Other than this, these facilities go haywire most of the time wherever they exist on selective basis in villages. The slogan of the central government to provide telecom facilities to every panchayat or village with the increasing development in the urban areas appears to have been lost somewhere in the oblivion. Most of the villages which were targeted to be covered under this scheme by the centre are yet to see any such service coming to their doorsteps..

Daily Excelsior, 10 December 2006

**HM div comdr Hekmatyar, another ultra shot dead**

Jammu, Dec 9: Two militants including a divisional commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, an Army jawan and a civilian were killed and two soldiers were injured in two encounters at Gool and Mendhar today. Inspector General of Police, Jammu range, Dr Shesh Pal Vaid told a news conference this evening that Hizbul Mujahideen divisional commander Mohd Sharief alias Hekmatyar son of Kaka Gujjar, a resident of Thuroo, Mahore was gunned down by police in a fierce exchange of gunbattle at Lancha in Gool area of Ramban police district at 1.30 pm today. Dr Vaid described the slain militant as one of the most wanted ultra, who was operating in Gool-Gulabgrah-Mahore belt for last more than 12 years. He was involved in a series of subversive activities including killings, kidnapping, extortions and attacks on security forces, he said..

Daily Excelsior, 10 December 2006

**Zee, ETV stringers caught in sting operation**

Srinagar, Dec 9: In a dramatic operation, Police in Anantnag district have arrested two television reporters, claiming to be working with Zee Kashmir and Enadu TV, for the offence of blackmailing the President of a Sumo Taxi Stand, and recovered from them Rs 90,000 which had been collected by extortion. What has added more drama to the whole story is that the hapless Sumo Stand President did a meticulous sting operation and caught the two stringers on his secret camera when they were demanding more money and benefits from him. SSP Anantnag, Abdul Gani Mir, told the Excelsior that Anantnag Police was surprised to watch a baseless story in a Zee Kashmir news bulletin last fortnight which showed documentary evidence to claim that the local operators of Sheikh Noou-ud-din Noorani (SNDN) Sumo Stand were regularly paying hafta to certain Police officials and politicians..

Greater Kashmir, 10 December 2006

**17 yrs on, Kupwara LoC migrants await justice**

Kupwara , Dec 9: The migrants from Bore Payeen and many adjoining areas of Kupwara district who vacated their houses in 1990 have accused successive governments of not

recognizing their migration and denying them any kind of compensation. The villagers were told by the Army in 1990 to vacate the place. The Army directions caused migration from the areas with people moving to Kupwara and other areas. Now, the villagers of Bore, Bungna, Kenntha Wali, Jungund etc say they have faced worst kind of discrimination. Our houses were dismantled and used for defence purposes. But in lieu of it we were not provided anything by the government, the villagers said, seeking all facilities given to Kashmiri Pandits who migrated from the Valley and settled in Jammu..

Kashmir Times, 10 December 2006

### **HR abuse in Valley rampant despite PMs assurance**

Srinagar, Dec 9: Human rights situation has deteriorated despite the claims by the state government regarding its improvement. Even the incidents of custodial killings and rapes are on the rise despite prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh's assurance of zero tolerance against human rights violations. These observations were made by the speakers at a seminar- Zammer Kay Qaidi- organized by Kashmir high court Bar association here today. Mian Abdul Qayoom presided over, while president of Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmad Shah was the special guest. JKLF chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik, Islamic Students League head Shakeel Ahmad Bakhshi, Dukhtaran-e-Milat chief Syeda Asiya Andrabi, JKLF ( Raj Bagh) patron Javid Ahmad Mir, Hurriyat Conference (G) leader Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai, and APDP president Parveena Ahangar were among those present. Mohammad Yasin Malik said 70 percent of rural areas have been converted into army cantonments..

Daily Excelsior, 10 December 2006

### **Opinion: Inter-regional aspects of Kashmir (M.Y. Tariyami)**

The culturally diverse regions, speaking different languages, professing different faiths and practicing different customs, were brought together into what became known as the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This, no doubt, suited the administrative and colonial interests of the British and their local hangers on. In the case of Kashmir, the British imperialism added a shameful chapter in the world history by receiving cash payment in lieu of the destinies of its living men and women, through the sale deed of Amritsar, for a sum of 75 lac rupees. The infamous deed paved the way for a century-long dynastic and autocratic rule over the toiling people of the state, who were crushed under an unjust social and economic order. Though the people watched these developments helplessly, a silent revolt was brewing up in their hearts..Separation of regions is no solution at all. Those who talk of separation are, in fact, avoiding the real issue, which is: equitable treatment of and equal opportunities for each region to grow according to its own genius..

Daily Excelsior, 10 December 2006

### **18 injured in Pulwama clash**

Srinagar, Dec 9: Police used baton charge, tear smoke and even firing in air to disperse a demonstration which turned unruly with slogans against Power Development Department (PDD) officials over absence of power supply in Kakapora area today. Residents of over a dozen Pulwama villages today took to the streets and blocked Srinagar-Shopian Road with the complaint that PDD had failed to provide electricity to consumers even after extorting fees from them. While staging the demonstration, they shouted slogans against

the coalition government and PDD officials, particularly Chief Engineer Electricity Maintenance Kashmir Kh Nisar Ahmed and PDD officials in Pulwama-Pampore belt..

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2006

**Musharrafs proposal has no importance: Antony**

khari karmara, (LOC, Poonch), Dec 10: Dubbing the much publicized statement of Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf on solution of Kashmir problem as non-serious, Defence Minister, A K Antony today said, his (Musharrafs) proposal did not have any importance as he already had given such statements a number of times earlier. Only verbal statements are not going to solve problems. There should be some concrete and serious written proposal, Mr Antony observed but hastened to add that despite sincere efforts by India to improve relations, Pakistan has still been supporting and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr Antony, who was on his maiden visit to border areas to assess the situation on LoC as Defence Minister, remarked that on the one hand some proposals have been coming while on the other hand Pakistan continued support to terrorism..

Greater Kashmir, 11 December 2006

**Protests, Arrests Mark HR DAY In Valley**

Srinagar, Dec 10: Protests by many pro-freedom groups and mainstream National Conference marked International Human Rights Day in the Valley on Sunday while both the factions of Hurriyat Conference organised seminars where the speakers denounced what they called unabated rights abuses in conflict-ridden Jammu and Kashmir. Witnesses said that hundreds of activists of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front took to the streets from the party headquarters at Maisuma here in the morning, chanting slogans in favour of freedom and against human rights abuses. Led by senior party activists including vice-chairman Bashir Ahmed Bhat, the protesters had covered their mouths with black ribbons. Police swung into action and barricaded the protesters at busy Regal Chowk and pulled 30 JKLF activists into waiting vehicles and shifted them to Kothi Bagh police station, said the witnesses..

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2006

**Opinion: General Musharraf has no alternative (Samuel Baid)**

General Pervez Musharraf dropped a bombshell on December 18, 2003 by declaring that Pakistan would give up its insistence on United Nations resolutions on Kashmir if India, too, showed flexibility in its stand. We have left it (the insistence on UN resolutions) aside, he said. What he was actually saying was that Pakistan was giving up its insistence on plebiscite as recommended by these resolutions. The reaction to General Musharrafs statement was more or less on expected lines. The Opposition said General Musharraf was an unrepresentative President and therefore he had no authority to take his own decision on Kashmir. Mr. Munawar Hasan, who represented Jamaat-e-Islamis view in a BBC discussion, said all Pakistani Governments so far had insisted on the UN resolutions. General Musharrafs statement was a major deviation from that stand. Without Kashmir Pakistan agenda is incomplete, he said. However, the common man in Pakistan called General Musharrafs statement a bold initiative. He favoured Kashmir solution with or without UN resolutions..

Kashmir Times, 11 December 2006

**SOG continues to be terror for civilians (Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal & Arun Kumar Gupta)**

JAMMU, Dec 10: While the only visible change in the functioning of the Special operations Groups (SOG) after the announcement made to disband them and merge them with the Jammu and Kashmir police is that instead of working independently the force now works under district police, the very reason for which the highly politicized announcement of disbanding the force was made - massive allegations of human rights violations against the SOG - continues to be a problem for the civilians in militancy infested areas particularly the Kashmir Valley and Doda. Director General of Police (DGP) Gopal Sharma, however, maintains that this is a thing of the past and that for the last two years no such complaints have been received by his office. Our men are being given special classes on respecting human rights, he maintained, claiming that this has brought about a major change in the functioning of the SOG..

Greater Kashmir, 11 December 2006

**Editorial: Nothing to hide?**

The alleged kidnap and subsequent murder of the Doda Village girl is an incident of a very serious nature that no government could ignore. The incident has left the conscientious citizens of the state shell-shocked. Having occurred at a place where the top brass of the security forces are expected to be more cautious in keeping a check on the deployed troops to avoid any violation, the matter appears grimmer. When such a shameful incident can hit such a place it is sure and certain to instill sense of insecurity among the hapless civilians elsewhere in the state. In the instant case, if reports are to be believed the police authorities have failed to discharge their duties and come to the rescue of the victim and her family. The security forces authorities, who are there to afford security to the people, too have indulged in professional misconduct of worst kind. The state Chief Minister, who has been elected from the district with a thumping majority during the last mid-term poll, has political and social stakes in the district and he can not afford to ignore it..

Daily Excelsior, 11 December 2006

**Soldier shoots youth on World HR Day**

SRINAGAR, Dec 10: While the Valleys separatist politicians organised separate demonstrations in Srinagar on occasion of the World Human Rights Day, a soldier of Rashtriya Rifles fired upon a 22-year-old youth and left him critically injured in Qazigund area of Anantnag district today. Police has arrested the soldier, seized his weapon and registered a case of attempted murder against him. Informed sources told the Excelsior that a soldier of Rashtriya Rifles 36 Bn opened fire on 22-year-old Manzoor Ahmed Wani S/o Mohammad Abdullah Wani R/o Bumthan, Qazigund, at Mirbazar, between Anantnag and Qazigund on Srinagar-Jammu national highway in the forenoon today. Wani sustained gunshot injury in his abdomen. Left critically wounded, he was evacuated, rushed to Srinagar and admitted to SKIMS where doctors performed a surgery on him. He was in the post-operative ICU when reports last came in tonight..

Kashmir Times, 11 December 2006

**Editorial: Denial of civil liberties**

Why is it that in half the cases that police in Delhi or other metropolitan cities claim to have arrested or killed dreaded terrorists involved in some major attack, families of the arrested persons in Jammu and Kashmir contest the claims? Take the case of the recent arrest of two boys at a railway station in Delhi. The families have maintained that the two boys are innocent and had no connection with any militant outfit and were simply visiting Delhi for purpose of business. Certain facts that the families mention generate suspicion about the authenticity of the claims of the police in such cases. Few months ago, the killing of a Valley based youth, a qualified engineer from Channapora was tortured and killed and the family has genuine reasons to believe that he was killed in custody. These two incidents are not incidents in isolation. There are several examples of similar nature..

Daily Excelsior, 12 December 2006

**Another jawan ends life**

Jammu, Dec 11: At a time when suicides and fratricide cases in the Army have become a matter of concern and expose the necessity of finding out remedial measures, another Army jawan allegedly ended his life by hanging himself with a ceiling fan hook at Kaluchak. Police spokesman said that the deceased Army jawan Sarvesh Kumar of 126 Satta Battery, 56 APO was posted as orderly in the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) mess within the premises of Army School at Kaluchak. According to his colleagues, he attended his duty till 5 am when he left the mess on the pretext of attending nature's call. But he didnt turn up for several hours forcing co-jawans to inform senior officers about missing of Sarvesh Kumar..

Kashmir Times, 12 December 2006

**Has use of surrendered ultras as SPOs been a boon for police? (Anuradha Bhasin and Arun Gupta)**

Jammu, Dece 11: Has the policy of recruiting a large chunk of Special Police Officers (SPOs) and liberal use of surrendered ultras in the counter insurgency operations been a bigger bane than a boon for the Jammu and Kashmir police? Even as top brass of the police force denies the use of surrendered militants or recruiting surrendered ultras as SPOs, reliable sources within the department maintain that majority of the SPOs operating as of today are former militants. Sources maintain that even though surrendered militants have been crucial in most of the counter insurgency operations since it helps the police to form a good intelligence network, the policy has also created several problems including the factor of double crossing by surrendered militants, desertion by SPOs, human rights violations, extortions and fake killings which seem to have become a norm..

Greater Kashmir, 12 December 2006

**Editorial: Human Rights again**

Notwithstanding differences in various political parties professing different political ideologies and outlooks there seemed a unity of thought and action amongst them on the international human rights day. All major political forces supporting right to self-determination, total independence, self-governance, autonomy and accession with India showed their concern on increasing human rights violation. The Jammu and Kashmir

Liberation Front took out a protest rally from its party headquarters in Maisuma, Srinagar, carried banners and ply cards against the human rights violation. Taking a departure from its traditional political posture the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference also joined a protest rally against increasing human rights violations in the state. Leaders of this organization accused the Congress led state government of having failed in taming the forces..

Kashmir Times, 12 December 2006

**Editorial: Powerless versus power**

Screaming headlines of police cane-charge on the people in Pulwama protesting against the lack of power supply are a depressing pointer to the pitiable scenario of the failure of the state in providing basic amenities to its citizens. Seems like, the ironies have become the order of day in J&K. At least this is what, one can gauge from this incident wherein the people were just demanding the restoration of electricity which was not supplied to the area for more than one week. One may also discover a mordant angle in the episode that the people demanding power were tackled with power i.e, use of force and the administration, instead of, restoring electric charge in the wires, charged people with canes. Yet this cutting interpretation of contemptible incident also points towards the sordid and sardonic facets of our working democracy, which is described as the government of the people, by the people and for the people..

Kashmir Times, 13 December 2006

**PDP projects self-rule as most viable solution**

New Delhi, Dec 12: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) spelt out the broad contours of its Self-Rule proposal at the meeting of the Working Group on Centre-State relations here today asking India and Pakistan to grab the opportunity and settle the pestering issue before it is too late. The meeting was chaired by the retired Supreme Court judge, Justice Sagir Ahmad. PDP President, Mehbooba Mufti, who represented the party at todays crucial meeting, said the Self-Rule formula offers a comprehensive package for the resolution of the Kashmir issue as it not only addresses the internal dimensions of the problem on both sides of the Line of Control (LOC) but the external dimensions as well with all the concerned parties - India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu & Kashmir having stakes in it. The PDP President said being fully conscious of the shortcomings of exclusive reliance on intra-state solutions, it can be argued that in order to achieve a stable, sustainable and just solution of the J&K issue, a combination of intra-state, inter-state and supra-state measures is necessary..

Greater Kashmir, 13 December 2006

**Early decision on Afzal mercy unlikely**

New Delhi, Dec 12: Home Minister Shivraj Patil indicated in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that the government was unlikely to take a decision on the clemency petitions of Mohammad Afzal Guru, sentenced to death in the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack case. Responding to Leader of Opposition L K Advanis demand for a decision before tomorrow, the anniversary of the attack, Patil said no deadline had been set in such cases earlier. This has never happened earlier...Records show that the government took five years to tackle such matters even in the past, he said, citing the Rajiv Gandhi

assassination case..

Daily Excelsior, 13 December 2006

**Army officials move HC against CBI charge-sheet**

Srinagar, Dec 12: Five Army officers accused of killing five civilians in a fake encounter at Pathribal in March 2000 have filed a review petition before the State High Court to challenge the CBI's chargesheet in the case. We have filed an appeal in the High Court against the order of the Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar, which had accepted the chargesheet filed by the CBI against the Army officers, Defence Counsel Anil Bhan said. Bhan said the case has been listed for hearing tomorrow. The Army, which had been asked by the CJM Srinagar to exercise the option of conducting court martial proceedings or allow the civil court to try the accused, has filed a similar petition before the High Court. The CBI filed a chargesheet on May 11 before CJM M Y Akhoo against Brig Ajay Saxena, Lt Col Brahendra Pratap Singh, Major Saurabh Sharma, Major Amit Saxena and JCO Idrees Khan for allegedly killing five civilians in a fake encounter at Pathribal in the wake of the Chittisinghpura massacre of 35 Sikhs in March 2000..

Greater Kashmir, 13 December 2006

**Editorial: Open other links**

The death of seven Sumo passengers on Srinagar-Jammu highway in an accident on the treacherous Srinagar-Jammu highway is not merely an accident. It shows the government's propensity to risk public lives to stave off the pressure, which is largely an outcome of its own incompetence. The highway remained closed for seven days. Traffic authorities in Srinagar and Jammu, and the officials of Beacon Authorities who maintain the Highway, were comically disjointed over the status of the highway in wake of blockades caused by slides and shooting stones..After clearing most of the slide rubble near the slide prone Panthihal, the traffic authorities sensibly enough allowed only one way traffic of passenger vehicles and goods carriers from Jammu to Srinagar on Monday, for the Kashmir Valley was facing an acute shortage of essential commodities. However, they faltered soon enough by allowing the two-way traffic on Tuesday when the condition of road did not warrant it..

Kashmir Times, 13 December 2006

**VDCs have contributed to ethnic, communal divide in Jammu region (Anuradha Bhasin and Arun Gupta)**

Jammu, December 12: Eleven years after they were created, the village defence committees (VDCs) have proved to be the one of the biggest contributing factors in fragmenting the society in the militancy affected areas of Jammu region. The reason is mainly the inability of the government to democratize the selection process which defeated the very purpose of their creation. While the police officials maintain that only those people who were keen to join the village defence committees were given the membership and arms to defend themselves, the fact remains that this saffronised agenda, which interestingly started during the Congress regime in New Delhi, people were hand-picked on communal and ethnic lines for the creation of the village defence committees. That there were no VDCs created in Kashmir region during the last one decade is itself an indication. Top brass of Jammu and Kashmir police force dismiss the allegations..

Daily Excelsior, 14 December 2006

**Army refuses to participate in inquiry into boys killing**

Srinagar, Dec 13: The Army has refused to participate in the inquiry into a firing incident at Doodhipora in Handwara area of Kupwara district on February 22 this year in which four teenaged boys were allegedly killed by soldiers. Passing the orders, inquiry officer Syed Tariq Ahmed Naqshbandi termed as unfortunate and sad the Armys intention of not participating in the probe. Had the Army taken part in the inquiry, it could have put forward its version regarding the incident. But, having chosen not to do so, the Army has lost an invaluable opportunity of putting forward its defence, he said. Mr Naqshbandi, who is also the District and Sessions Judge, said the inquiry would now go ahead with the recording of evidence of the complainants in support of their statement of facts..

The Hindu, 14 December 2006

**No territorial claims on Kashmir**

Islamabad: Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M. Kasuri on Wednesday reiterated that his country never had any territorial claim over Kashmir. The wars between India and Pakistan over the issue could not become the justification for such a claim, and it was the cumulative experience of years of conflict that led to the search for a settlement, he said. Mr. Kasuri reiterated that Pakistans principled position on Kashmir rested solely on the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Under this, it was the Kashmiris who had to decide their future. Pakistans claim is self-evident. Our legitimacy derives from U.N. Security Council resolutions. There can be no two opinions. Where else is our claim; it is just U.N. Security Council resolutions, he told journalists at an informal interaction here..

Greater Kashmir, 14 December 2006

**Afzal files curative petition**

New Delhi, Dec 13: Muhammad Afzal Guru, facing death sentence in the Parliament attack case, has approached the Supreme Court by way of curative petition, seeking to set aside the Court judgement dated August 4, 2005, upholding the death sentence awarded to him by the trial court. The main ground for challenging the Supreme Court judgement taken by the petitioner is that he was not provided with the counsel of his choice at the state expenses and hence, the trial, the conviction and the sentence awarded to him stand vitiated. The petitioner has pleaded that the denial of counsel of his choice to defend him has violated his Fundamental Rights under Article 21 and 22(1) read with Article 39-A of the Constitution of India leading to gross miscarriage of justice, warranting serious reconsideration by the Court..

Daily Excelsior, 14 December 2006

**Azad, Duggal review security situation**

New Delhi, Dec 13: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today reviewed the security situation in the strife-torn state at a high-level meeting here with senior Government officials led by Union Home Secretary V K Duggal. An official said the meeting deliberated upon issues of logistic support to the Central Para Military Forces operating in the State, strengthening of the Jammu and Kashmir police and coordination and sharing of intelligence. There was consensus that the security situation has improved in

the state with the violence level coming down progressively, he said. Installation of high power Transmitters by Prasar Bharti, the progress of the construction of two room tenements in Jammu and enhancement of cash and ration for Kashmiri migrants were also discussed at the meeting. Top officials from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, Railways and Information and Broadcasting attended the meeting..

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2006

**Al-Badr teenage module busted, 8 arrested**

Srinagar, Dec 14: Claiming to have solved a shootout and saved a number of civilians from being killed, Police in Budgam district have arrested eight teenagers who had allegedly taken contract killings from the militant outfit, Al-Badr Mujahideen, at the rate of Rs 30,000 each. Investigating how a private telecommunication company had provided a set of eight SIM cards to the militant organisation, Police have launched manhunt for a top Pakistani commander, Bilal Afghani alias Chhotta Bilal, in Beerwah-Narbal belt of Central Kashmir. Highly placed official sources revealed to the Excelsior that Police Station Magam arrested eight teenagers, some of them school and college students, for their alleged involvement in the attempted murder of 28-year-old Maimoona of Chak Kawoosa village on December 10th..

Kashmir Times, 15 December 2006

**Full security to Pandits returning to Valley: Patil**

New Delhi: Reiterating full security to Kashmiri Pandits willing to return to the Kashmir valley, Home Minister Shivraj Patil on Thursday invited those whose properties have been acquired by the government to file applications if they have not yet been compensated. Responding to a call-attention in the Lok Sabha by BJP deputy leader Vijay Kumar Malhotra, he also promised to provide employment to every needy Pandit refugee in Jammu and Kashmir or in other states. He also justified sanction of Rs 20 crores for construction of 200 two-room flats in the valley for the returnees, pointing out that the government expects them to move in their own houses and these flats were only meant for temporary accommodation until the deserted houses become livable. Patil pointed out that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had sanctioned special funds for bigger accommodations to the Pandits living in relief camps in Jammu and Delhi and that the monthly assistance to each family has been also increased from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000..

Kashmir Times, 15 December 2006

**Demilitarisation may end up converting J&K into Police state (Anuradha Bhasin and Arun Gupta)**

Jammu, Dec 14: Forced by several security compulsions and international pressure for de-militarisation, the Centre may finally begin the exercise of cutting down troops from Jammu and Kashmir. However, de-militarisation may not actually take place with state police gradually taking over the charge. The strength of the police force is likely to be doubled under the scheme of things. The massive pace at which Jammu and Kashmir police set up is increasing in terms of manpower and arming of men who are working with the police department rings alarm bells. Jammu and Kashmir police would soon have an additional five battalions, recruitment process for which has already begun. The five battalions are a part of the long term proposal of doubling the police force in the state

in a bid to replace the army and other para-military forces gradually by the local police..

Greater Kashmir, 15 December 2006

**Editorial: Human Rights (ZAHIR-U-DIN)**

The World Human Rights Day was observed across the globe on December 10. Several functions were held in the Valley as well. Human rights activists believe that the concept of human rights took birth sixty years ago when the universal declaration of human rights was framed and adapted. However, the declaration did not create some thing new. If one goes through the last sermon of the most revered Prophet (SAAW), he comes to know about the similarities in the sermon and the declaration. Notwithstanding this, Islam and the Muslims are being perceived a threat to peace and harmony. Little do people (some Muslims as well) know that Islam is the religion of peace. Islam preaches universal brotherhood and urges Muslims (contrary to the belief in West) to respect, protect and preserve life in whatever form it exists. That Islam stands for peace and hates bloodshed stands proved by the life and teachings of the most revered Prophet (SAAW)..

The Hindu, 15 December 2006

**Opinion: Kashmir: how Pakistanis view the shift (Nirupama Subramanian)**

PAKISTANS sudden demolition job of its six-decade-old rhetoric on Kashmir has unleashed many kinds of reactions within the country. But all are shot through with the same sense that a historic and unanticipated shift on the issue has taken place, and that Islamabad now wants Pakistanis to think of Kashmir in a way different from what they have been doing all these years. Of course, the hardest hit are the believers who are shocked and feel betrayed that Pakistan could ever say it never had a territorial claim on Kashmir. Brought up on a strict diet of two-nation theory fed to successive generations from all official platforms including school textbooks, they view Kashmir as the unfinished agenda of Partition, when, according to what they have learnt, Pakistan was cleaved out of the Muslim-majority areas of India because Islam and Hinduism could not co-exist in the same nation..

Daily Excelsior, 15 December 2006

**China occupying 38,000 sq kms in J&K**

New Delhi, Dec 14: China continued to be in illegal occupation of approximately 38,000 square kms in Jammu and Kashmir, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee informed the Rajya Sabha today. In a written reply, he said in addition, under the so-called Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 square kms of Indian territory in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to China. Besides, the External Affairs Minister said China illegally claims approximately 90,000 square kms of territory in the Eastern sector. In the Middle sector, China claims about 2,000 square kms. To another question, Mukherjee said Pakistan has not agreed to Indias proposal on opening Munabao-Khokhrapar rail sector for trade. On an average about 10-12 freight trains run between the two countries in a month through existing Attari-Wagah rail link. Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed said India is contemplating on issuing multi-entry visa for five years for foreign tourists and traders..

Daily Excelsior, 16 December 2006

**Villagers hack militant to death in Mendhar**

Jammu, Dec 15: Taking cudgels against militants, local people of village Chandiyal in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district hacked to death an Al-Badr militant of Pakistan after he along with his associate kidnapped a young girl from her house. The second militant, however, gunned down the girl before fleeing from the spot. In other incidents, Doda police gunned down two Hizbul Mujahideen militants this evening at Thanala, Bhadarwah while two Bangladeshi exfiltrators were gunned down by Border Security Force (BSF) when they were trying to exfiltrate to Pakistan through fencing in Arnia sector. IGP Jammu Dr Shesh Pal Vaid said a Pakistani militant Ishtiyaq of Al Badr was killed by the villagers at Chandiyal last night. This was an encouraging sign and a clear indication that people were coming forwards boldly against the militants, he added. Official reports said two militants entered into the house of Mohd Misri at village Chandiyal in Sangiot area under the jurisdiction of Gursai police station in Mendhar tehsil last night and kidnapped his young daughter Gulshan Bano..

Indian Express, 16 December 2006

**Opinion: Generally talkative (Husain Haqqani)**

PAKISTAN government spokespersons have made it clear that General Pervez Musharraf was not making a unilateral offer when he told NDTV that Pakistan would give up its claim on Kashmir if India, too, agreed to self-governance in the region. An interview to an Indian TV channel would have been the wrong venue for announcing the most significant shift in Pakistani foreign policy in 58 years. Moreover, Pakistan does not have a claim on Jammu & Kashmir that can be unilaterally given up by a Pakistani ruler. Since 2001, Musharraf has misspoken? far too many times. He has given divergent and confusing statements about where Osama bin Laden might be after becoming the toast of the international circuit as the man who might deliver Osama bin Laden to the US after September 11, 2001. A book can be compiled on Musharraf?s contradictory statements on domestic issues..

Greater Kashmir, 16 December 2006

**Opinion: A Welcome Awakening (M. Ashraf)**

For the first time in 17 years of the rejuvenated freedom struggle, almost all the parties leading it joined together to protest the proposed leasing of land in Gulmarg. A most welcome awakening to other pivotal and decisive long term aspects of Kashmir, the land. Kashmir has two facets, the land and the people. No doubt the most important aspect is the very survival of the people in the first instance but the other facet is equally important. Even if we survive the physical oppression, we may go under by the collateral destruction of our land. We need something more to crystallize the otherwise abstract concept of Azadi. However, in the recent upheaval the issue being agitated was not very clear but rather totally confusing. It was like climbing the wrong tree. The hype raised seemed out of proportion and misplaced. As was pointed out by some of the members of the Kashmir Bar Association, the land was proposed to be auctioned only to permanent residents of the state..

Kashmir Times, 16 December 2006

### **1500 years of Gujjar identity and politics (Javaid Rahi)**

In the Himalayan regions, Gujjar is considered an important and historical tribe. This tribe has ruled over many princely states in northern India for hundred of years and left their imprints in the Himalayan ranges and inscribed them in such a way that they could not be destroyed even after thousand of years. The legacy of Gujjars is as old as their identity. Famous scholar Mohammed Yusuf Teing writes about Gujjars in his research thesis: Gujjar Shinakhat Ka Safar as; At some point of time, Gujjar was an educated, prosperous and dignified community. Their reference is not restricted to the books of Indian, Persian, Arabic and Chinese historian but are talked of as to belonging from Gurjistan to Central India. To trace the origin of Gujjar we have to interpret the word Gujjar. Till now the word Gujjar has been interpreted in a number of ways. First perspective has been forwarded by Prof. Abdul Gani Shashi after detailed study of Arabic and Persian history..

Kashmir Times, 16 December 2006

### **No election card! no accomodation for Kashmiris in Delhi**

New Delhi, Dec 15: An identity card is supposed to be the best possible proof of a person and if he is asked to produce documents other than this he is bound to scratch his head in disgust. This may sound strange to the people living in other parts of the globe, but when it comes to Kashmiris visiting New Delhi it turns out to be a stark reality. The hotel or the guest house owners in the capital city of the country would ask for identification proof other than the identity card issued in favour of them by their organization or department. They do not buy the claim that identity card is the ultimate proof of the identity of a particular person. Just a few days back this correspondent paid a visit to New Delhi and wanted to book a room. The manager of a particular hotel asked him to come out with either the driving license or election identity card. When this correspondent showed him the card issued by his organization the hotel manager asked him to come out with some other proof of identification..

Indian Express, 17 December 2006

### **India missed chance to resolve Kashmir in '72'**

New Delhi, December 16: Senior BJP leader L K Advani maintained that India had lost an opportunity to resolve the Kashmir issue in the wake of the surrender of more than 90,000 Pakistani troops in the 1971 Bangladesh war. It was the biggest surrender since World War II. Had the Indian government of the day used this advantage properly in summit talks with Pakistan in Shimla in 1972, the Kashmir issue could have been solved once and for all, the former Deputy Prime Minister said in a statement marking the 35th anniversary of the creation of Bangladesh. Sadly, India frittered away a historic opportunity, he added..

The Hindu, 17 December 2006

### **No room for complacency in Jammu and Kashmir: Antony**

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister A.K. Antony on Saturday said that despite a reduction in incidents of violence and infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir there was no room for complacency. Even now Pakistan is giving arms support to terrorists. Unless Pakistan

takes the decision to stop supporting terrorists, we have to remain on alert. However, the situation today is slightly better, Mr. Antony told newsmen after leading the nation in paying homage to fallen soldiers on Vijay Diwas, the day Indian armed forces won the war against the Pakistani forces in 1971 and forced the largest-ever surrender after World War II. Mr. Antony said that of late the number of insurgency-related incidents and the rate of infiltration had gone down..

Daily Excelsior, 17 December 2006

### **76 securitymen punished for rights violations: Lt Gen Sekhon**

SRINAGAR, Dec 16: The Human Rights (HR) record of the security forces is second to none as clear instructions have been issued to all the field officers that no violations would be tolerated, a senior Army officer has said. Talking to reporters here today on the occasion of Vijay Diwas, GOC 15 corps Lt General A S Sekhon said 76 security personnel have been punished for exceeding their limits during the counter insurgency operations. He said the HR record of the Indian security forces was much better in comparison to several other countries who are also facing similar situation and it is second to none. Without naming Pakistan, he said, Army in our neighbourhood used helicopters and heavy arms against their own people in Baluchistan..

Greater Kashmir, 17 December 2006

### **JuM commander among 5 killed**

Srinagar, Dec 16: A commander of Jamait-ul-Mujahideen outfit and a woman were among five people killed in different incidents across the state since Friday evening, police and reports said on Saturday. Police said two unidentified militants were killed in a fierce encounter with the troops near Balnol Mankote in Jammu's Poonch district on Friday night when they tried to infiltrate into this side from across the LoC. Unidentified gunmen barged into the house of Muhammad Anwar at Patoli Draj, Budhal in Jammu's Rajouri district on Friday night and resorted to indiscriminate firing, killing his daughter Parveena Akther and guest Liyaqat Ali s/o Muhammad Ali, the police said. Police said that a district commander of JuM identified as Manzoor Ahmed alias Mudasir s/o Mubarak Shah of Sildhar Mahore was killed in a gunbattle with the soldiers at Basan Arnas in Jammu's Udhampur district last night..

Daily Excelsior, 18 December 2006

### **Kot Bhalwal jail was hotel for some ultras**

JAMMU, Dec 17: Though being a high security and sensitive jail for housing 343 detenues, majority of them hardcore militants including 41 foreign mercenaries, Kot Bhalwal jail was functioning not less than a hotel for some top militants. The fact came to light during a massive crackdown inside the jail by police and jail security staff today during which 36 persons including 21 detainees and 15 cops were injured. Wall to wall carpets in special rooms of four barracks, a poultry farm, large number of coolers, colour television sets, gas cylinders and several other luxurious items were found inside the jail barracks during searches after the operation was over this evening. The items were in addition to recovery of iron rods, sticks, knives, photographs of digging tunnels from jail, two more SIM cards, a large quantity of incriminating literature of Hizbul Mujahideen and Al Mansoorian and Pakistani flags from the jail, official sources told the Excelsior..

Greater Kashmir, 18 December 2006

**Hartal today: Hurriyat (G), DM**

Srinagar, Dec 17: Hurriyat Conference (G) and Dukhtaran-e-Millat have strongly condemned the police action against detainees in Jammu's Kot Bhalwal jail on Sunday and called for a strike in the state on Monday. Claiming that three detainees were killed in the police firing in the jail when they were demanding permission to offer Fajr prayers, Ghulam Nabi Sumji, general secretary of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat told reporters during a joint press conference with Dukhtaran-e-Millat chairperson Asiya Andrabi here that situation in jails is worse than Guantanamo Bay (jail of Cuba run by the US). Since Salim Mirza took over as Superintendent of Kot Bhalwal jail, detainees have been stopped from offering prayers and harassed on fake charges of possessing mobile phones. We won't tolerate this inhuman treatment to the detainees. This is a serious situation and people should not act as mute spectators, Sumji said, calling for the statewide shutdown on Monday. He said a Hurriyat delegation will soon visit the jail to ascertain the plight of the detainees..

Greater Kashmir, 18 December 2006

**600 Kashmiris jailed under PSA till August**

Srinagar, Dec 17: In first seven months of 2006, the state government has jailed 600 Kashmiri men and women under the draconian Public Safety Act under which a person can be sentenced to two years imprisonment without trial. Up to the August this year, nearly 600 persons have been booked under the PSA. All these are the new cases, a top government official told Greater Kashmir, requesting his name should not be quoted. He said the number is higher than 600 if we add the arrests and detentions under PSA after August 2006. On December 2005, senior additional advocate General Muhammad Amin Rathore had informed the Court that 4500 under trails were regularly produced before the courts. It was first time that the state acknowledged there were 4500 detainees lodged in various jails..

The Hindu, 18 December 2006

**Mufti appeals to Musharraf (Shujaat Bukhari)**

SRINAGAR: Hailing the peace process as the best bet for a solution to the Kashmir issue, the former Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Sunday appealed to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to persuade the militants to shun violence and sit for talks. Mr. Sayeed, who has just returned after leading a non-official delegation to the United Nations, said, If the peace process is on, there is no need for guns. Asking militants to lay down arms, he appealed to General Musharraf to use his good office to end militancy. If the gun is silenced, it will be a great relief to the people who suffer and are caught in the crossfire. It will also reduce the need to deploy security forces, he said.

Kashmir Times, 18 December 2006

**Indian government must deepen democracy in J&K: Report**

NEW DELHI, Dec 17 : Describing Tamil Nadu as an example of successful democratic integration, an UK-based Minority Rights Group International has criticised the Indian government for its failure to replicate it in other conflict-prone states like Jammu and

Kashmir. The Indian government did evolve institutional and ameliorative strategies to address the problems, but these were vitiated by the compulsions of competitive policies, the report by Maya Chadda stated. One broad conclusion is that while democracy can be a solution to ethnic conflicts, it can also be a source of problems. The answer to this paradox is to deepen democracy further. The process of deepening worked reasonably well in Tamil Nadu. Although, Tamil Nadu is by no means an ideal case of good governance, it is nevertheless a good case, within the Indian context, of conflict prevention via protection of minorities..

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2006

### **30 inmates launch fast unto death**

Jammu, Dec 18: After ding-dong battle inside high-security Kot Bhalwal prison yesterday in which nearly 60 jail inmates and 15 cops were injured in day-long clashes, a four-member team of International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) led Fredrick Baudry had to return empty-handed after being stopped by the jail authorities to meet the detenues. Apart from this around 30 detenues kept in a separate cell have proceeded on fast-unto-death in protest against excesses, said official sources, adding most of the inmates did not attend jail attendance this morning and relatives too had to return without seeing their members lodged in the jail. Sources said, following yesterdays incident in the prison, a four-member team of International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) led Fredrick Baudry arrived this morning at around 10 AM to meet the detenues but jail authorities did not allow it to perform its job..

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2006

### **Another jawan ends life**

Doda, Dec 18: The suicides by the Army personnel deployed in the State continue unabated as yet another jawan became victim of his own bullet fired from his service rifle in Kishtwar area of the district. According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Doda, Manohar Singh, an Army jawan Gurvinder Singh of 11 Rashtriya Rifles was posted in an Army establishment at Bhanderkote area of Kishtwar and today he shot himself with his service rifle during guard duty. The jawan reportedly placed the rifle under his chin and fired which led to his instant dead. On hearing the gun shots, the co-jawans immediately rushed to the spot and shifted him to hospital where he was pronounced as brought dead..

Greater Kashmir, 19 December 2006

### **I will dissolve Assembly**

Jammu, Dec 18: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today threatened to dissolve the State assembly following a heated exchange with minister for Finance & Planning, Tariq Hameed Karra, when the latter objected to some government decisions in the cabinet meeting which, he said, were taken without the consent of the cabinet. To register his protest, Karra left the meeting midway. The cabinet witnessed a verbal brawl between the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress ministers when they resorted to blame-game over some issues. Reliable sources told Greater Kashmir that as soon as the cabinet met this morning, Agriculture Minister Abdul Aziz Zargar and Finance Minister Tariq Hamid Karra objected to a circular issued by the General Administration Department

(GAD) directing all the Commissioner/Secretaries to seek the Chief Minister's consent before sanctioning any additional funds..

Daily Excelsior, 19 December 2006

**Editorial: Dont spare rod**

The proverb spare the rod, spoil the child has come true in the case of inmates of the Kot Bhalwal jail at the outskirts of this city. It is clear that lenient approach adopted towards them has not worked. Instead, it has boomeranged. Tension in the high-security prison has been brewing for quite some months now. Indeed, only on Sunday we had reported in this newspaper disturbing goings-on in the rogues gallery. More than 300 militants lodged inside 40 of them foreign mercenaries had refused to go into the lock-up on Friday night. On the surface it appears that they were angry about a series of measures taken to curb unauthorised use of mobile telephones by them. They resented restoration of discipline and questioning by intelligence agencies in connection with smuggling of cell phones and SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) cards. They were also upset over certain restrictions that were imposed as a natural corollary to their undesirable activities. For instance, people with dubious antecedents were denied access to them..

Greater Kashmir, 19 December 2006

**Editorial: Unfortunate!**

One step forward and ten steps backward, this is how Indo-Pak relations could at best be described. The two South Asian countries have failed to mend their fences. Saturday Pakistan imposed restrictions on the movement of Indian diplomats in Islamabad in retaliation to earlier similar action by India. Even as the two countries have ostensibly been engaged in a dialogue process to sort out differences and find solutions to the contentious issues for almost two years now, the two continue to nurse suspicion and mistrust against each other. No doubt the two have been maintaining the ceasefire on the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir, that has brought some reprieve to the people inhabiting areas adjoining the bloody line, yet there is hardly any noticeable warmth visible in their relations and the two sides continue to engage in a propaganda war. Then there are forces within the two countries that are active to sabotage the peace process. These forces have their own axe to grind..

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2006

**WG on strengthening relations meet**

Jammu, Dec 19: Working group on strengthening relations across LoC met here today under the chairmanship of M. K. Rasgotra and deliberated upon issues pertaining to the subject threadbare. The participants explained their viewpoints and put forth suggestions with regard to strengthening the relations across LoC and creating palatable and conducive atmosphere for people to people contacts, visits of people across LoC and facilitating other allied aspects intending to strengthen the relations and create peace. The members who participated in today's deliberations included Finance Minister Tariq Hameed Qarra, Social Welfare Minister Haji Nissar Ali, Ashok Khajuria, Ghulam Nabi Malik, Abdul Gani Vakil, Mohammad Yousus Bhat and Qazi Mehboob Ilahi..

Greater Kashmir, 20 December 2006

### **Coalition Cracks Visible**

Jammu, Dec 19: The Peoples Democratic Party seems undeterred by threat of chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad that he would dissolve the state assembly. The minister for Finance & Planning Tariq Hameed Karra Tuesday said that only chief minister cannot decide on dissolution of the state legislative assembly. Karra said Peoples Democratic Party is ready to face elections at any time. Karra was addressing media persons here today after he Monday walked out of the cabinet meeting in which PDP and Congress legislators had a spat over some cabinet decisions. Chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had threatened to dissolve the assembly. Stating that some bureaucrats and Congress members were misguiding the chief minister, Karra said in a democratic setup every one has a right to project his viewpoint at appropriate forum. Difference of opinion is the essence of democracy and such differences are even visible in United Progressive Alliance (UPA), he said..

Kashmir Times, 20 December 2006

### **Editorial: A DIVIDED COALITION**

There is nothing surprising about the clash between the Congress and PDP ministers during the cabinet meeting on Monday of the hotch-potch coalition government with the chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad threatening to dissolve the assembly, followed by a walkout by the Finance and Law Minister Tariq Hameed Quarra belonging to PDP. It is not the first time that such a situation has arisen during the cabinet meeting. In fact such rumblings are witnessed in almost every cabinet meeting with the ministers belonging to different groups presenting divergent views not only on issues and policy matters under discussion but also on the postings, transfers and promotion of the bureaucrats. The present coalition with the Congress and PDP as major partners is more a marriage of convenience for sharing power than a combination based on shared ideology and programme. Such rumblings and difference of opinion are inherent in any such coalition..

Greater Kashmir, 20 December 2006

### **Editorial: Ready for solution?**

The efforts to resolve Kashmir still remain essentially bilateral in nature. From the flurry of statements by Indian, Pakistani, pro-Indian Kashmiri politicians, and some separatist leaders, and overt and back channel developments at the diplomatic front it seems that only the formalities and minor differences are being worked out, the larger plan has been drawn out. Former Chief Minister and India's home minister during the early years of political struggle in Kashmir, Mufti Muhammad Sayed has explicitly said that the two countries have drawn up the plan. In spite of the fervent appeals by most of the separatist groups seeking involvement of Kashmiris in any dialogue on Kashmir, the dialogue process is bilateral making any solution incomplete, fraught with the dangers and pitfalls of past accords and agreements. However, the most important thing at this point is how the political forces are orienting themselves towards an imminent solution, which is likely going to be a hodge-podge of autonomy, eased borders, and economic activity with international guarantees..

Indian Express, 20 December 2006

**Pak unhappy over EU report on Kashmir**

Islamabad, December 19: Pakistan has expressed its disappointment over a recent European Union report on Kashmir that termed a proposed plebiscite there as 'out of step with reality and criticised Islamabad's handling of the situation in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told a visiting EU Parliament delegation headed by Neena Gill yesterday that Islamabad was disappointed with the EU Foreign Relations Committee report titled Kashmir, present situation and future prospects, prepared by British Member of European Parliament Baroness Emma Nicholson. Aziz told the delegation that Pakistan was keen to settle all disputes with India including Kashmir peacefully, apprising them of President Pervez Musharraf's proposals on the vexed issue, The News reported..

Daily Excelsior, 20 December 2006

**Another jawan commits suicide**

Srinagar, Dec 19 : Army today seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including 21 kg of deadly explosives and hand grenades, in the Central Kashmir district of Badgam. A defence spokesman said troops, on a specific information, launched a search operation at Parhas village in Badgam district early this morning. During the search, he said one of the Army columns struck upon war-like stores hidden in a gunny bag. The spokesman said the bag contained 20 kg black colour explosive powder, 700 gm red and 300 gm white colour explosive powder besides two AK magazines, eight AK ammunition rounds, seven pistol ammunition rounds and five hand grenades..

Kashmir Times, 21 December 2006

**Mufti asks militants to join dialogue process**

Jammu, Dec 20: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) patron, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said prospects of peace in Kashmir have brightened up as the ground realities are rapidly and strongly changing for good. He said the determination and wisdom with which the leadership of India and Pakistan is working towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue have generated new hope among the people of the state and they are expecting a positive outcome. Speaking at a function organized in connection with the fifth death anniversary of former minister, Manohar Nath Kaul alias Mankak here this morning, Mufti said not only J&K, the fate of whole sub-continent is hanging in balance as it has now developed huge stakes in the ongoing peace process. It has to tread a tedious path as there are suspicions on both sides, he said but asserted that the culmination of the process has to be in the larger interest of the people of the region..

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2006

**CONG-PDP FISSURES DEEPEN**

Jammu, Dec 20: Fissures within the coalition partners People Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress came to the fore again when Minister for Finance & Planning Tariq Hameed Karra boycotted the cabinet meeting held here Wednesday morning. Earlier, on Monday Karra had left the cabinet meeting midway following an altercation with the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad over the issuance of a circular regarding release of

additionalities. Karra attributes his absence from today's cabinet meeting to some pressing official engagements. I was committed with some official engagements this morning and couldn't attend the meeting, Karra told Greater Kashmir. However, according to reliable sources, Karra is demanding revocation of the circular recently issued by the Chief Ministers office to all the Commissioner/Secretaries asking them not to release any additional funds without the prior approval of the Chief Minister. Issuance of the circular infuriated the Finance Minister, who sees it an attempt by the Chief Minister's office to brow-beat him..

Kashmir Times, 21 December 2006

### **25 kg Heroin seized in RS Pura, Pak smuggler arrested**

Jammu, Dec 20: In a major catch, Border Security Force (BSF) personnel last night arrested a Pakistani trans-border smuggler along with 25 kg of heroin, worth Rs 25 crores in the international market from Devi Garh area on the International Border (IB) in RS Pura sector. Talking to the media persons at the Battalion Headquarter of 52 BSF, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) BSF Jammu Frontier GS Virk said that acting on a tip off, Jawans of 52 BSF battalion laid special nakas ahead of the fence at BoP Budhwar last night. They trapped the smuggler soon after he entered the Indian Territory from Budhwar area the bordering tehsil of R S Pura sector near international border last night and recovered 25 packets of contraband from his possession..

Daily Excelsior, 21 December 2006

### **Editorial: Debating Ladakh**

Of late there have been a number of suggestions for the empowerment of the people of Ladakh. The influential Islamia School of Kargil has sought the status of a separate administrative division for the region on the lines of Kashmir and Jammu divisions. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has proposed that the two districts namely Leh and Kargil constituting Ladakh should elect one member each for the Lok Sabha instead of one as at present. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has mooted the idea of a special position for Ladakh in view of its unique ethnic and geographical identity. It can be argued that there is nothing new in any of these schemes. One formula or the other has been floated from time to time. In fact, the people of Leh in particular have been agitating for a Union Territory dispensation for more than five decades now. The Ladakh Union Territory Front, (LUTF), spearheading the demand, is in total control of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (Leh)..

Greater Kashmir, 21 December 2006

### **Opinion: Self Rule (HILAL AHMAD)**

A Professor of Political Sciences recently remarked at a seminar that the most tragic aspect of Indian rule in Kashmir and the freedom-seeking Northeastern states of India was inaccessibility of people in these rebellious regions to rest of the world. Like Kashmir, the Northeastern states have become tight enclosures after they came under Indian dominion. When Kashmir was free, its people had access to China, Central Asia, and Middle East. And hence the Western world too. Even today this is true of Pakistani Kashmir: you will find more Mirpuris in Bradford and Gulf States than in Mirpur..This confinement for a long period of time has disastrously altered social, economic, and

political fabric of Kashmir and Northeastern regions. How Kashmir and Northeastern states regain the snapped ties in their earlier shape with the world would depend largely on their political future. However, some ideas have been thrown on the political scene to economically integrate two Kashmirs on the premise that in the age of Globalisation, borders and enclosed regions are irrelevant. Former chief minister and PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayed is the torchbearer of the idea from Kashmir under his self-rule concept..

Kashmir Times, 21 December 2006

**Opinion: Pakistan's new stance on Kashmir (MB Naqvi)**

President Pervez Musharraf in his interview to NDTV on December 5 has given the ultimate concession to India. It is a clean break from Pakistans 59 year old stand. True, Pakistan withdrawing the UN-supervised plebiscite demand is conditional on India showing flexibility and as such is tentative: for the sake of further the argument. But once the President says he can resile from the old stance, any prospect of a plebiscite ever happening has disappeared. What is implied has however the merit of being realistic - peacemaking with India, on largely the basis of what Indians insist on, is unavoidable. Indians insist that Kashmir has acceded to India and that is that. The rest of the world has to live with the reality of Kashmir Valley being an integral part of India. Indias Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh used the deft formulation: lets make the borders irrelevant; they will be there alright but would not matter in the daily lives of the Kashmiri citizens of the two countries..

Daily Excelsior, 22 December 2006

**Mufti praises Cong high command for bold initiatives**

Jammu, Dec 21: Amidst reports of differences between coalition partners, former Chief Minister and patron of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Mufti Mohammed Sayed today showered all praise on Congress high command for its all out support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and made it clear that peace initiatives taken up in the State were not possible without cooperation of the Union Government. Addressing public meeting at Satwari, the former Chief Minister, in his 50 minute speech, seized all opportunities to praise Congress high command but did not utter even a single word in favour of State Congress leaders. In his well calculated speech, Mufti Sayed gave all credit to Congress high command for initiating bold steps to improve situation in Kashmir in particular and sub-continent in general..

Kashmir Times, 22 December 2006

**Malafide intentions of Indian agencies not cause of J&K violence: Arundhati**

New Delhi, Dec 21: Tracing root-cause of violence in Jammu and Kashmir to malafide intentions of Indian agencies willfully immune to deal with the real issue, Booker prize winner Arundhati Roy and lyricist Javed Akhtar felt that under the garb of Indian democracy injustice and atrocities are being perpetrated on the people of the state. Roy and Akhtar aired their views during a two-day convention organised by Citizens for Justice and Peace here on human rights and the rule of law; mob terror, state terror and bomb terror in which prominent personalities from Karnataka, Orissa, Chhatisgarh, Malegaon and Nagpur participated. The Booker prize winner observed that Armed Forces

Special Powers Act, in vogue in Jammu and Kashmir, gives the power to kill some one merely on the grounds of suspicion. Expressing concern over HR violations in Jammu and Kashmir, she said that since violence engulfed the state 45000 to 78000 people have been killed in Kashmir while around 10,000 have disappeared. Indian agencies are funding Islamic radical groups for their own purpose. They do not want to deal with real protest, she said..

Kashmir Times, 22 December 2006

**Editorial: Message from Amritsar**

Happily, Prime Minister Manmohan Singhs vision of close and friendly relations between India and Pakistan, outlined by him at a public function in the holy city of Amritsar renews hopes for a new era in the troubled region with the two countries resolving all their outstanding problems peacefully and through a process of dialogue with open and determined minds. That Manmohan Singh devoted major part of his speech to the relations between the two countries, emphasising on mutual trust and fresh approach, underlines his earnestness in carrying forward the ongoing peace process to a successful end. These were not just off-the-cuff remarks of the Prime Minister. The fact that he was speaking from a prepared text makes it obvious that what the Prime Minister said was well thought-out opinion and approach of his government on India-Pakistan relationship. Reaching out to Pakistan with his vision of Indo-Pakistan ties, Manmohan Singh said that he was sure that we can overcome all hurdles in our path and realize a treaty of peace, security and friendship..

Dawn, 22 December 2006

**Opinion: Not without a consensus (Mahdi Masud)**

PRESIDENT Musharraf's Kashmir policy, although well intentioned, is open to serious question. While the government correctly maintains that the past half a century has not yielded the desired objective in Kashmir, this is a valid justification only for eschewing resort to any military means, but not for climbing down to a diplomatic and political surrender. Unless the government has second thoughts, we seem to be reaching a point where the status quo may well be accepted, with only inconsequential, face-saving changes. This will amount to foregoing the historic sacrifices of the Kashmiris, their inalienable right of self-determination buttressed by the international legality of UN resolutions, and Pakistans own concerns about the security of its territory and water resources left in Indian hands..

The Nation, 22 December 2006

**Opinion: Need for realism on Kashmir (Dr. Ijaz Ahsan)**

From Pakistans point of view, Kashmir is a hard nut to crack. In some respects, Kashmir is a problem like East Pakistan, only in reverse. In either case the population was against the central government, with a sympathetic neighbour. The question I have often asked myself is: if we are so capable, why dont we do as the Indians did with East Pakistan? They did not wait for 60 years for UN resolutions. They attacked East Pakistan, conquered it, and gave it the Bengalis. Why dont we do that? Dear reader, we dont do that because we cant! In fact we tried twice..There was no threat to Amritsar or Ferozepur! Just consider: we attacked Kashmir, and saved Lahore and Sialkot. What an

achievement! And that was also possible because of the spirit of sacrifice of our men, and especially of our officers. We should have learnt a lesson. But no Sir! In Kargil we again attacked the lifeline of the northern Indian Army in Kashmir. This time India did not even attack; it just threatened. And we flew to America, had the US president's office specially opened up on their independence day, and offered to withdraw our men. All this should surely make it clear to us that we cannot snatch Kashmir from the Indians as they took Bangladesh from us..

IndiaN Express, 23 December 2006

### **India ready for any form of warfare in J&K'**

Bangalore, December 23: India is preparing for any type of battle, including conventional or nuclear warfare, in Jammu and Kashmir as part of its defence strategy, the Air Force Chief S P Tyagi said. Touching on the changing nature of warfare, Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi pointed out that the Kargil conflict of 1999 was confined to a sector in Jammu and Kashmir. What we are planning today is battle, something on the lines of Kargil, a battle that may actually be fought all over Jammu and Kashmir, a battle that may be fought over the Line of Control--what the Pakistanis call the working boundary--a battle which may be fought all over...entire international border conventional or nuclear warfare, he said..

Greater Kashmir, 25 December 2006

### **A village of 30 houses encounters trail of destruction**

Behrampora (Pattan), Dec 25: A three-day fierce gunfight between militants and soldiers in this small hamlet, 35 km north of Srinagar, came to an end on Monday, leaving behind a trail of destruction, besides death of six persons. One has had to pass through two highly fortified Army camps to reach the village, nearly five km from the Varmul-Srinagar highway. Army had surrounded the beautiful village full of apple orchards, and mediapersons were strictly told to stay away. On Monday afternoon, hundreds of soldiers, assisted by the personnel of Special Operations Group (SOG) of Police were busy clearing the debris of at least 10 houses' the village comprises 30 houses' razed to ground in the heavy mortar shelling by the troops..

Greater Kashmir, 25 December 2006

### **Editorial: Alarm bells**

The increase in the incidence of crimes like day-light robberies, burglaries, thefts, pick-pocketing etc points to the unemployment and lax policing. During past almost seventeen years of turmoil it appears that the J&K Police has forgotten to do its basic job. And the crime rate has increased many fold and the things have come to such a pass that ordinary people don't find themselves safe even in the confines of the four walls of their houses. Several criminals have organized themselves into gangs and have been preying on the hapless people with impunity. The bands of criminals have been more active in rural areas as also in the peripheries of cities and towns. Many of such criminals pose as militants to overawe their victims and then indulge in loot, plunder and extortion. There are reports that some renegades taking advantage of their proximity to the security agencies have made the life near impossible for their victims..

Daily Excelsior, 26 December 2006

### **KPs reject Musharraf's formula on Kashmir**

NEW DELHI, Dec 25: Kashmiri Pandits today rejected Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's four-point formula on Kashmir and said the latest indications emanating from the ongoing Indo-Pak composite dialogue process were confusing. A resolution adopted after a day-long conference, organised by the Kashmiri Samiti, the apex body of Kashmiri Pandits, said it was not very clear what prompted Gen Musharraf to come out with this out of box formula but it was clear that the Government of India was willing to discuss it. Without going into the merits and demerits of the formula, the Government of India was willing to clutch any straw that Pakistan offered without understanding how this formula would fit into the spectrum of Indian claims..

Daily Excelsior, 26 December 2006

### **Bhandari shot dead in Doda**

JAMMU, Dec 25: An Awami League activist and contractor, Mohan Lal Bhandari was shot dead by militants at Chingam in Chatru area of Doda district this evening. SSP Doda Manohar Singh said the militants opened firing on Bhandari, a resident of Padarkot, Kishtwar, from Chingam forests where he had gone to supervise work on a contract he had taken. Bhandari, about 40, was hit by a volley of shots and died on spot. Mr Singh said Bhandari had been allotted three PSOs, one by the Security wing and two by the district police. As the area where he was shot dead was a far off village, it couldnt be ascertained as to how many PSOs were accompanying him..

Kashmir Times, 26 December 2006

### **Editorial: Surrender dramas**

It may simply be more than just a coincidence that almost every time, the security forces claim to project the success of managing surrenders by youth who have picked up guns, there is a controversy surrounding it. On Saturday when the army organized a mega show what it called 'homecoming ceremony' for the surrendered ultras and invited media persons to publicize the event, it did not turn out to be all that simple an event. The manner in which the army and the police spokespersons doled out conflicting statements itself puts a question mark on the credibility of such surrender dramas. While the army on Saturday claimed that ten militants who infiltrated from across the borders along with families of two of them laid down their arms, the police countered the claim maintaining that only seven militants had surrendered..

Daily Excelsior, 26 December 2006

### **Salahuddin' Who'**

If Muzaffarabad-based Hizbul Mujahideen supremo Syed Salahuddin is a worried man these days he can't be blamed. The leaders like him are bound to be marginalised if New Delhi and Islamabad stick to the course they have chosen for mutual welfare. Already they are alarmed by the Pakistan spokespersons assertion disowning her countrys claim to Jammu and Kashmir. It is but natural for them to feel that their sojourn in Azad Kashmir, as the Pakistan-occupied territory is locally known, is short lived. That is plausibly the reason why he has told a television channel that Pakistan would not hand him over to India. Is it a measure of his confidence or nervousness'

Kashmir Times, 27 December 2006

**J&K police seeks extradition of Major settled in Canada**

Srinagar, Dec 26: The Jammu and Kashmir Police has sought the help of the CBI to seek the extradition of Major Avtar Singh allegedly involved in the killing of the lawyer and human rights activist Jalil Ahmad Andrabi. The major has settled down in Canada. This has been disclosed by zonal police headquarter in its status report about the production of accused before the court of chief judicial magistrate (CJM) Budgam. The status report was submitted three days back. The matter is being taken up by IGP crime and railways with the CBI

Kashmir Times, 27 December 2006

**Column: Kashmir sans two-nation theory (Kuldip Nayar)**

I was at Lahore when President General Pervez Musharraf's proposal on Kashmir was carried by the Pakistan media. His remark that they never had any territorial claim on Kashmir was a jolt for religious and political parties, although most of the civil society was indifferent. What the proposal meant was that the K-word in Pakistan never stood for Kashmir, nor did the argument that it was the unresolved agenda of partition. (Pakistan Foreign Office confirmed that "Pakistan does not claim Kashmir.") Musharraf's formulation was a bolt from the blue because both the points had dominated the discussions in Pakistan practically from the time it came into existence. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, described Kashmir as a "jugular vein." Yet, Musharraf cannot be faulted because he has, contrary to general impression, retrieved the two-nation theory in its original form, that is, Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations..

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2006

**Govt sets up high level committee for action**

JAMMU, Dec 27: The Government has set up a high level Committee to act against Government officers/officials against whom action has been recommended by the State Vigilance Organisation (SVO) after holding inquiry. The Committee is headed by Chief Secretary C Phunsog and comprised Principal Secretary General Administration Department (GAD) Khurshid Ganai and Vigilance Commissioner Dr Ashok Bhan...

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2006

**Editorial: President Musharraf and Kashmir dispute**

Now a days the print and electronic media is buzzing with the four point formula put forth by President Musharraf to solve the J&K dispute. Before deliberating on this formula in detail, it is worthwhile to mention that both India and Pakistan have been declaring to make the border between the two parts of the State irrelevant as much as possible to ensure easy travel and trade between the two sides of the State. One very important condition precedent to implement this important component of the new approach is being ignored or missed by both the parties. Border between the two parts cannot be made irrelevant unless the border between the two parts is properly delineated and made permanent...

Daily Excelsior, 28 December 2006

**Civilian killed, 12 others injured in firing, stoning**

JAMMU, Dec 27: A civilian was killed and over a dozen others including two Special Police Officers (SPOs) were injured as police opened firing on a violent mob of villagers which repeatedly tried to set Marwah police station on fire in protest against alleged custodial killing of a civilian at village Darerna in Marwah area of Doda district today. Police, however, said that the civilian was not killed in custody as he had already escaped police custody three days back after his arrest'

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2006

**Declare ceasefire in J&K: Mirwaiz**

SRINAGAR, Dec 29: Asking the Centre to declare a ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference today said it was ready for talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh but the dialogue should be held on the "basis of equality". He said "communicators", who were conveying messages between Hurriyat and the Centre over the resumption of peace talks, were active behind the scene. The last round of talks between Hurriyat and Singh were held in May this year'

Daily Excelsior, 29 December 2006

**Editorial: A joke indeed**

Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front leader Amanullah Khan's assertion that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was in favour of an independent Jammu and Kashmir is a cruel joke. It is a travesty of history. According to a New Delhi newspaper, Mr. Khan has contended that the founder of Pakistan had never opposed the option of a Kashmir independent of India and Pakistan. He has challenged his critics to produce evidence to the effect that Jinnah had described J&K as the jugular vein of Pakistan before his death on September 11, 1948. According to the JKLF leader, "as President of the All-India Muslim League the Quaid (Jinnah) declared in his policy statements of June 17, July 11 and July 30, 1947 that the Indian princely states had every right to declare independence in addition to their right to join India or Pakistan."..

Greater Kashmir, 29 December 2006

**'Atrocities on Kashmiris continue'**

SRINAGAR, Dec 28: Hurriyat Conference (G) has expressed anguish over the alleged atrocities committed by the soldiers in Aglar Pulwama, Aloosa Bandipore and Hajan areas of the Valley. In a statement, a Hurriyat spokesman said, 'Claims of (Chief Minister) Ghulam Nabi Azad about restoration of peace are hoax. A reign of terror unleashed by the troopers has exposed the civil administration and proved who's ruling the state.'..

Greater Kashmir, 29 December 2006

**Azad sees Roshni for farmers**

JAMMU, Dec 28: Implementation of renewed and amended Roshni scheme would be another revolutionary and historic step in the history of Jammu and Kashmir after Land to Tillers Act of 1950, said Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while addressing a media conference here on Thursday. Giving details and explaining various provisions and

features of the amendments being incorporated in J&K State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act 2001 through a bill which was approved by the Cabinet in the meeting held Thursday, Azad said that the highest beneficiaries would be the farming community'

Kashmir Times, 30 December 2006

**Opinion: From RTCs to Musharraf's formula no space for Kashmiris (Athar Parvaiz)**

Srinagar, Dec 29: It would be more appropriate to begin with the end as regards any positive political developments - which are yet to unfold - about the resolution of Kashmir issue during the course of year 2006. At its fag end, the outgoing year saw Government of India responding to proposals from President Pervez Musharraf in an extraordinary manner going by the history of summery rejections India and Pakistan have been sharing over the years. But the striking reality that a common Kashmiri still finds himself nowhere in the peace process, continues to gnaw at the peace process even as another year passed by. Though the hardliners spearhead by Geelani faction of Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Shah Geelani are of the view that whatever Musharraf has proposed by way of his four-point formula, is all in the interest of government of India, the Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference extends it full support to the General. There is hardly any change these two factions brought about in their outlook in the year which is about to depart. Same is true for the other two separatist organizations, JKLF and Democratic Freedom Party DFP..

Daily Excelsior, 30 December 2006

**Another CRPF jawan ends life**

Srinagar, Dec 29: One more jawan of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) committed the suicide here today despite introducing a 24-hour help-line for security personnel posted in the State to help them overcome their problem. Official sources said a CRPF jawan R Choudhary shot himself dead with his service weapon at Humhama this morning. Police have registered a case in this regard. Choudhary was the second CRPF jawan who took the extreme step during the past one week..

Kashmir Times, 30 December 2006

**Out of sight, out of mind: tale of a neglected quake hit village on LoC (Shabir Dar)**

Uroosa (URI), Dec 29: With nature in its purest form, no road or any civic amenity, the tin shed dwellers here are in their traditional mould. It is Uroosa, the last village of Uri towards the Line of Control LoC. This village on LoC is beautiful in every respect, but non-availability of basic civic amenities, courtesy last years earthquake, the village has been transformed into a place of sighs and despair. And the 400 inhabitants of this hamlet live amid deprivation of everything from pure drinking water to proper power supply, from pacca road to hospital. The village has suffered negligence of authorities. Now it seems that the villagers here live merely on the grace of almighty. The village being close to the epicenter of last years earthquake, suffered great loss of both life as well as infrastructure. Almost every house here crumbled to ground and more than a dozen people of this village lost their life, said Mohammad Fareed Sheikh, the village sarpanch..

Greater Kashmir, 31 December 2006

**2006: year of change and changelessness-II**

Srinagar, Dec 30: The year 2006 saw judiciary's active involvement in public affairs. The Court intervened to rescue, health sector, traffic and education departments from morass in which they have sunk. This year the Court also quashed detentions of over 250 persons booked under Public Safety Act, and ordered the release a girl, detained under this notorious law, in a courtroom. However, the State continued with booking people in PSA, and booked nearly 600 people were jailed under provisions of PSA in six months. From Srinagar alone 100 persons were booked under the PSA this year. ..Jihad against Corruption Though the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad repeatedly says he has no slogans to exploit people of Jammu and Kashmir, his slogans of the year were eradication of corruption and Khushal Kashmir. With chief minister on its back of course with his slogans, the Vigilance Organization was proactive in 2006 registering 84 cases against 92 officials. In these cases, sources said, loss of over Rs 10 crores was caused to the State exchequer..

Greater Kashmir, 31 December 2006

**Opinion: Guns for Degrees (ARJIMAND HUSSAIN TALIB)**

Our State is all set to earn yet another dubious distinction: being a land with the highest civilian to police ratio. This distinction would come even as we continue to be celebrated throughout the world for our merit of being the highest militarized land on planet earth! As the government has finally given a green signal to raising five new battalions of police, the worst of the fears seem to have come true. When the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, last year announced the so-called job package for Jammu & Kashmir by raising five new India Reserve Police (IRP) battalions affording employment to about 5,000 local youth in five years, it was not difficult to discern what direction we were heading in. All these developments bring to fore and underline the confusion and lack of direction that our governments in power face. On the one hand, people in power talk of peace, making private sector an engine of growth, set economic growth goals of 8 per cent which we anyway know is nothing but a fig leaf and on the other the hand what is being done in reality contradicts every stated word..

Indian Express, 31 December 2006

**First time, you can board a railway train in the Kashmir Valley (Toufiq Rashid)**

Srinagar, December 30: Come spring and, for the first time, a railway train will chug across the breathtaking terrain in Kashmir. Work on 40 km of the 120-km stretch of the Qazigund-Baramulla railway line has been completed and come March 2007, the first train will start plying around 20 km on either side of Srinagar, from Pulwama to Budgam. Although this will be just a 30-minute journey, at 100 km/hr, it will cut the present road travel time by a third. This is only the first phase but we want to start the train as it will be a big morale-booster to both the people and the thousands of workers who have toiled on the railway link day and night, said R V Anand, General Manager, Iacon International Limited, a Government of India undertaking which is constructing the railway link in the Valley. The first coach has arrived in Srinagar and four more will follow. They will be here as soon as the highway becomes feasible for transportation of the coaches, said Anand..