

Daily Excelsior, 1 February 2007

**CM strongly defends forces, attacks militants**

Jammu, Jan 31: After a forceful defence of security forces and police and a scathing attack on militants whom he charged with holding entire Government, administration and public representatives to ransom for last 17 years, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today ordered a judicial inquiry into the killing of a carpenter, Abdul Rehman Paddar of Sumbal, Baramulla and related cases. Replying to a special discussion on human rights violations in the Valley with special reference to the killing of Paddar and other missing persons in the Legislative Assembly this evening, Mr Azad said the Government would have completed inquiry into the case within 8 to 10 days and proceeded against the accused as judicial inquiry was a long drawn process and takes a lot of time. However, keeping in view the concern expressed by members of the House from all sides, the Government is ready to hold a judicial inquiry into the killing of Paddar and related cases, he announced in the House, which was adjourned twice during first sitting in the morning without transacting any business following massive uproar created by National Conference MLAs, who insisted on nothing short of a judicial probe into the killing..

Daily Excelsior, 1 February 2007

**Grenade lobbed on Hurriyat Hqrs**

Srinagar, Jan 31: In the second attack by militants targetting the moderate faction of separatist outfit Hurriyat Conference in three weeks, militants tonight hurled a grenade on the headquarters of the group at Rajbagh locality here. The grenade exploded in the compound, sources said adding a preliminary report said there was no damage to life or property. None of the top Hurriyat leaders was present in the office when the grenade was hurled. The grenade attack comes in the wake of threats from hardline militant outfits for the statement by Hurriyat Conference chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq during his recent tour to Pakistan that separatist violence in Jammu and Kashmir had failed to achieve anything. Tonights incident came hours before the Mirwaiz and his senior party colleagues Abdul Ghani Bhatt and Bilal Lone, who had gone to Pakistan, return to Srinagar from New Delhi. Earlier in the second week of this month, militants had hurled a grenade near the Mirwaizs residence in Nijeem Chowk without causing any damage. Meanwhile, Troops today averted major tragedies when they detected and defused three live grenades and a powerful Improvised Explosive Device IED at different places in the Kashmir valley..

Indian Express, 1 February 2007

**No unilateral flexibility from Pak on Kashmir**

Islamabad, January 31: Pakistan has said any solution to the Kashmir issue should be compatible with its interests. There can be no unilateral flexibility from Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. Kashmir has immense importance for Pakistan, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said. Any solution to the Kashmir issue must be compatible with the interests of Pakistan, he was quoted as saying by the APP news agency. Stressing that resolution of the Kashmir issue would help in accelerating the progress and prosperity in the South Asian region, he said there was a need for evolving out of box solutions. The responsibility of both Indian and Pakistani leadership was to work for peace as durable peace in the region can only be achieved by taking just decisions, the Minister said. Justifying Pakistans proposals on Kashmir, he said Pakistan wants change

of status quo as confrontation and three wars have not proved helpful for the lasting resolution of the problem..

Greater Kashmir, 1 February 2007

**Editorial: Regional discrimination**

The politics in some parts of Jammu district, which must not be mistaken for the politics in the entire Jammu region and not least in the Muslim dominated districts of Doda, Rajouri, and Poonch has essentially thrived on anti-Kashmir rhetoric. And the Saffron brigade has thoroughly colored it in communal colors. Kashmiri rulers have been projected as predatory rulers who have snatched whatever is imagined was due to people in Jammu and Ladakh. According to this skewed perception, the Kashmiris have stowed the Indian treasures in the Valley and haven't allowed anyone else to lay hands on these. The anti-Kashmiri sentiment has trickled down to people now and the vicious propaganda settled as truth in the minds of people. If a political party in Jammu is issueless, the issue of so-called regional discrimination comes handy. Balwant Singh Mankotia the legislator of Panthers Party fetched from the same poisoned well of hate politics when he said in the state Legislative Assembly that Kashmiri employees outnumber others in the secretariat. Had he bothered to check the facts, he would be surprised to know that there are more government employees in central and state departments belonging to the minority community than the majority community..

The Tribune, 1 February 2007

**Jammu migrants to be compensated on a par with Kashmiri Pandits**

Jammu, January 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Government today gave an assurance in the Legislative Council that the migrants uprooted from the Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur border areas of Jammu division would be treated at par with those who migrated from the Kashmir valley in terms of adequate compensation and their re-settlement. The issue was raised in the Upper House by Prof Bhim Singh of the Panthers Party, under Rule 60, who said nearly 20,000 families had been uprooted from the border areas of Poonch, Rajouri, Doda and Udhampur due to the shelling across the Indo-Pak border, but these migrants were being ignored by the state government in terms of adequate compensation. There was a J-K High Court directive, which was also upheld by the Supreme Court, in which the state had been directed to treat all migrants, whether from the borders areas of Jammu division or from the valley at par, but the government has failed to act accordingly, Prof Bhim Singh said, while initiating the discussion in the House. He said there had been mass exodus not only from the valley, but also from the border villages of Jammu division. The government needs to change its policy on migration to do justice with the families uprooted from the border villages in Rajouri, Poonch, Doda and Udhampur..

Greater Kashmir, 1 February 2007

**Opinion: The Birth of Hurriyat and Kashmir Movement (Fayaz Ahmad Mir)**

There was a mushroom growth of militant organizations in early phase of militancy in J & K. It was estimated that more than 100 militant organizations operated in J & K. Although this militant movement sought to achieve the single objective of Liberating Kashmir from the domain of India, but after the endless spiraling of militant groups, these

become arch enemies of one another. The differences occurred when JKLF and its allies propagated the cause of total independence from both India and Pakistan. On the other hand Hizbul Mujahideen and its allies favoured the cause of Kashmiri's accession with Pakistan. The Hizbul Mujahideen and certain other militant outfits like Muslim Janbaz Force, Hizbullah, Tehrik-e-Jehad, Operation Balakote, Al-Umar etc. at one point of time formed a common apex body called United Jihad Council (UJC) in 1990. But since the eruption of militancy in 1989-90, the need of a broad political platform had been felt. This was the necessity of militant outfits also. Somehow no serious effort was made towards its realization in the early years of movement. In terms of progress towards political dialogue, within the valley itself, however signs of consolidation and co-operation were seen..

Daily Excelsior, 2 February 2007

### **Mirwaiz gets massive reception on return from Pak**

SRINAGAR, Feb 1: In his new-found Jihad against the vested interests thriving on the blood of the Kashmiris, moderate separatist leader and Chairman of a faction of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, today resolved to carry forward his efforts of seeking a solution to the vexed Kashmir problem in the Hurriyat's separate dialogue process with New Delhi and Islamabad. Mirwaiz and another Hurriyat stalwart, Bilal Gani Lone, arranged a massive reception of their supporters for themselves when they reached back home after a 10-day-long visit to Pakistan. In an obvious attempt of cutting their arch rival and head of the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, to size, Mirwaiz and Lone appeared to have mobilised their supporters and party activists to form an impressive reception. While the officials maintained that they did not take a count, a spokesman of Mirwaiz Umar's own Awami Action Committee AAC claimed that 828 buses, minibuses and motorcycles were in the rally. Independent circles put the number of such vehicles at over 400 and estimated that 8,000 to 12,000 peoples participated in the reception..

Indian Express, 2 February 2007

### **Protesters pour on J&K streets**

Sumbal, J&K, February 1: Authorities on Thursday exhumed a body said to be that of a carpenter killed in an alleged fake encounter as hundreds of vociferous protesters took to the streets in Sumbal in Baramulla district demanding a CBI probe into the killing. The father of carpenter Abdul Rehman Paddar identified the exhumed body as that of his missing son who was allegedly killed by the Special Operations Group of the local police in a fake gunbattle in December last year. A two-member team of doctors from the Central Forensic Laboratory, Chandigarh, took DNA samples from the the body exhumed from a graveyard at Batmohalla. Soon after the grave was opened and the body taken out, Ghulam Rasool Paddar said it was that of his son who was allegedly dubbed as Pakistani ultra Abu Hafiz by the SOG. Rasool said though his son's clothes had been changed and his face defaced, he identified him by the side look..

Kashmir Times, 2 February 2007

### **Stop murders in custody: HRW (Athar Parvaiz)**

Srinagar, Feb 1: Stating that ordering an investigation is not enough to probe the

custodial killings, Human Rights Watch HRW, the international watchdog for human rights has asked the state government to stop murders in custody and punish not just the inspectors and constables, but the officers in-charge. The HRW added that the Human rights abuses and the failure of justice create despair in the valley and continue to fuel the conflict. A spokesperson of HRW from New York said that the Indian government must thoroughly investigate and prosecute members of the security forces responsible for the extrajudicial execution of a carpenter and two labourers in Jammu and Kashmir. The spokesperson added that the investigation and prosecution must be impartial and transparent for justice to be done. Abdul Rahman Paddar, a carpenter, was reported missing in Srinagar city in December 2006. Police, during routine investigations into his disappearance, traced his mobile phone to an assistant police sub-inspector named Farooq Ahmad. When questioned, Farooq Ahmad admitted that Abdul Rahman had been picked up from Srinagar city by a Ganderbal district police Special Operations squad and killed..

Kashmir Times, 2 February 2007

**Editorial: Action not assertion**

The alleged fake encounter killing of Abdul Rehman Padder, a carpenter from village Larnoo in Kokernag, by Jammu and Kashmir police's Special Operations Group SOG personnel is a reflection of the unchanged scenario on the ground despite a peace process initiated by both India and Pakistan relating to Kashmir. Eleven members of the Special Operation Group of the State Police have been detained, and two officers attached, in this connection, and their interrogation, reportedly, has brought many unpleasant truths to light about the deliberate killing of an innocent individual and the SOGs claim that they had eliminated a dreaded militant from Multan. The case cannot be seen in isolation or simply rejected as a stray one. Not for the only reason that there are fresh reports that the disappearance of another youth Nazir Ahmed Decka is linked to the same SOG men accused of killing Padder. But, also for the fact that it betrays the errant counter insurgency policy at many levels. First is the gross violation of human rights abuse by the security forces including the police. It has become a norm to kill people in alleged encounters and pass them off as foreign militants, who ironically are identified soon after they have been shot dead, with confirmed names, association with militant organizations and complete addresses..

Daily Excelsior, 2 February 2007

**Editorial: Fight this way**

One will admire the courage shown by a Kashmiri Pandit migrant in fighting for his rightful claim. According to a detailed report in this newspaper his valuable property worth 11kanals in the saffron-rich Pampore in the Valley was fraudulently sold by a gang of four. The unscrupulous foursome had clearly taken advantage of his absence from the spot. Living in this city these days the migrant got wind of the foul play and filed a complaint with the police. A thorough probe by the Crime Branch has vindicated his stand. The wicked operation is amazing given its range and depth. The racketeers faked power of attorney in every sense from the paper on which it was written to names and photographers of owners. The buyer has been duped to the extent of Rs 22 lakhs. Our report indicates that this is simply the tip of the iceberg. The same group is said to have committed identical offences elsewhere in the Kashmir region. That two of its members

belong to the National Conference may be a coincidence. It is not uncommon for the dishonest to assume political robes to gain credibility and influence. There is hardly any outfit that is immune from their pernicious presence. What is to be appreciated in the present case is the refusal of the migrant to accept the happening as fait accompli. He has shown those placed in his position how to fight their battles..

The Tribune, 2 February 2007

### **Grenade hurled at APHCs office**

Srinagar, February 1: Suspected militants hurled a grenade at the office of the Hurriyat Conference at Rajbagh here last night ahead of the return of its chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq from Pakistan. The police here said the grenade was hurled from the main road inside the premises of the Hurriyat Conference, which exploded in its lawns at 10:20 pm last night. No one was injured in the explosion. But a parked vehicle was damaged. Damage was also caused to the windowpanes of the building and an adjacent complex. Two underground outfits, the Save Kashmir Movement SKM and hitherto unknown group, the Al-Nifaz, have claimed the responsibility for the attack. Kamran Aslam, a spokesman for the SKM and Abu Baker of the Al-Nifaz spoke to some local newspaper offices owning the responsibility here. This is the second such attack in the past three weeks after the Mirwaiz-led APHC decided to visit Pakistan for talks with President, Pervez Musharraf and other political leaders as part of the dialogue to find solution to the Kashmir problem. A strike called by the hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani and supported by the Hizbul Mujahideen and others in protest against the Indo-Pak-Hurriyat talks was also observed on January 17, the day when Hurriyat leaders left here for Pak visit..

Daily Excelsior, 3 February 2007

### **NC to boycott WG meet, Mehbooba to stay away**

Jammu, Feb 2: Contrary to expectations, National Conference, the main opposition party in the State, today decided to abstain from tomorrow's Working Group meeting on Strengthening of Centre-State Relations while all mainstream political parties including two coalition partners Congress and PDP will attend the meeting but with a different view point. We are not going to attend, NC leader and Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, the lone party representative in the Working Group, headed by Justice Sagir Ahmed, told the Excelsior this evening. There has been no change in the situation on human rights front since we announced boycott of the Working Group meetings. So, we stick to our stand of boycott, he said, adding the situation has rather deteriorated with the killing of Abdul Rehman Paddar and other civilians in fake encounters. On whether the party would miss an opportunity to present its view point before the Working Group, which will submit its report to Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, Mr Rather observed: our view point is known to everybody. We stand for autonomy. Former MLC and NC leader Mohd Yusuf Taing, who has also been extended an invitation to attend the meeting as an intellectual, said he too would stay away he was affiliated with the NC and would go by the party decision..

Daily Excelsior, 3 February 2007

**Believers of violence can't be taken on board: Musharraf**

Rawalpindi, Feb 2: Sending out a strong message to militants, President Pervez Musharraf today said those who believe in violence as the only option to resolve the Kashmir issue cannot be taken on board and both India and Pakistan needed to be steadfast against all obstacles. Addressing a press conference in this Garrison town, the General made it clear that all shades of Kashmiris should be taken on board except those who believe that militancy is the only option to resolve the issue. We cannot take people on board who believe in confrontation and who think that only militancy solves the problem. They cannot be taken on board, they will remain opposed to whatever we do. They will create all obstacles and we have to be steadfast against all that they do, Musharraf said, as he dwelt on the Indo-Pak peace process and expressed satisfaction over its progress. There will be obstacles and we have to be steadfast against all that they militants do, he said adding "that is why I say we should be bold enough. needed to be steadfast against all obstacles. Addressing a press conference in this garrison town, the General made it clear that all shades of Kashmiris should be taken on board except those who believe that militancy is the only option to resolve the issue..

Indian Express, 3 February 2007

**Police exhume another body in J&K**

Srinagar, February 2: A special investigation team SIT of Jammu and Kashmir police, probing cases of missing persons, on Friday exhumed the second body from a graveyard in Ganderbal area even as people shouted slogans and demanded death sentence to those personnel involved in fake encounters. As the SIT headed by Deputy Inspector General of Police Farooq Ahmad reached Saloora village in Ganderbal area, 27 kms from Srinagar, to exhume the body believed to be that of Nazir Ahmad Deki, a resident of Kokernag area in Anantnag district, hundreds of people tried to break the security cordon around the graveyard, official sources said. Deki has been missing since February last year and suspected to be killed in a fake encounter. Dekis wife and brother, who were present at the time of the exhumation, identified the body from the clothes, they said. Forensic experts took samples of the body for DNA testing and later the body was handed over to the relatives..

Kashmir Times, 3 February 2007

**New strategy brings new dangers to Kashmir struggle (Mehreen Zahra-Malik)**

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and the moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference led by him have become the cutting edge of Pakistans new strategy on Kashmir since Islamabad embarked on a peace process with India in January 2004. With reliance on the military options largely out of the window, Syed Ali Geelani, the traditional hardliner and for long Pakistan's pointman, has increasingly been sidelined see Geelanis interview in this issue. The new strategy seems to be working: the four-point solution presented by President Pervez Musharraf in November 2006 has been hailed by analysts at home and abroad, including in India. While New Delhi is still resisting, and not much progress could be made during the January visit to Pakistan by Indias foreign minister, Pranab Mukherjee, it does not appear that India can filibuster on the proposals for very long. The Indian government now says it is waiting for Pakistan to present it the proposals

formally.. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and his coalition allies in the People's Democratic Party have publicly welcomed the stand taken by the moderate Hurriyat leader. The Pro-India National Conference too has expressed its support. However, there are others who disagree with the new strategy..

Greater Kashmir, 3 February 2007

**Editorial: The Piece Process**

About three years back Atal Bihari Vajpayee had extended a warm hand of friendship to Pakistan from the cool climes of Kashmir. The Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf had grasped it with both hands and the much talked about Peace Process had begun in this trouble torn sub-continent. Guns had fallen silent on the ever active Line of Control formerly ceasefire line and there was for the first time a genuine ceasefire on the borders which has held in spite of occasional hiccups. People have again taken cultivation right up to the border after some of the areas were de-mined. Buses started crossing the artificial dividing line almost after half a century even though in a symbolic way with limited passengers. There were many other confidence building measures across the International border. Groups of intellectuals and media persons have been frequenting each other's country quite frequently and meeting in the 5 star atmosphere. For the first time Kashmir's leaders demanding right of self determination were allowed to go across the Line of Control and meet there both the Kashmiri leaders as well as the top leadership of Pakistan. There is no doubt a dramatic change in the attitudes and apparently a strong desire to settle this most vexed problem of South Asia now often referred to, by even the top world leaders as the Nuclear Flash Point. But there is a big catch! The process has not brought any succour to the suffering Kashmiris around whom the whole issue is supposed to revolve. In fact, for them it has become a Piece process making every aspect of life literally go to Pieces..

Daily Excelsior, 3 February 2007

**Editorial: Truth vs hype**

It is high time that we sifted truth from falsehood so far as the role of security forces in the State is concerned. The fact is that they have done a splendid job in restoring order on our turf. It is visible even to a naked eye that they are protecting the majority of politicians and bureaucrats leave alone vital installations. What must be galling for them is that they are guarding even those who criticise them. They can't even complain because as a disciplined force they are expected to carry out their assigned task. Off and on the Hindi feature films have been highlighting their dilemma in this behalf. It is sheer dishonesty on the part of those benefiting from the services of uniformed men to take out misplaced anger against them. Our attention is compelled towards this phenomenon because of hue and cry over the alleged killing of a carpenter by the police in Ganderbal. If it is a fake encounter as has been suspected it must be thoroughly probed. It is a heinous crime. By all means those indulging in it must be severely punished. What can't be accepted, however, is sweeping generalisations that have followed. How does, for instance, it serve the cause of the supposed victim by grumbling that false murders and human rights violations are more a routine than a rare occurrence?

Daily Excelsior, 4 February 2007

**SP, DySP arrested amid exhumation of 3 more civilians bodies**

SRINAGAR, Feb 3: Former Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Hans Raj Parihar, and his Deputy SP, Bahadur Ram, have been formally arrested today with the exhumation of the bodies of three more civilians who had been earlier killed in fake gunbattles and branded as foreign militants by Special Operations Group SOG of Jammu & Kashmir Police and Army in Ganderbal-Sumbal belt of north Kashmir. With today's developments, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and Director General of Police Gopal Sharma have directed the Special Investigation Team SIT of Jammu & Kashmir Police to proceed with the investigation of the five particular missing reports and interrogate anybody identified by the detained SOG personnel. SP Ganderbal and SDPO Ganderbal, who had been removed from duty and attached to the office of IGP Kashmir last week immediately after the custodial killing of carpenter Abdur Rehman Padder of Larnoo, Kokernag, had surfaced last week, were formally arrested by Police today..

Daily Excelsior, 4 February 2007

**Divergent views emerge in WG**

Jammu, Feb 3: Even as representatives of political parties and social organizations presented divergent views on Jammu and Kashmir's relations with the Union, there was consensus among all participants regarding States accession with India. No participant challenged this accession during the meeting of the working group on Centre-State relations which was held under the chairmanship of Justice S Saghir Ahmed. Although all the participants put forth their view points in the meeting, Congress adopted a balanced approach as party favoured discussing all proposals given by different groups. Bharatiya Janta Party BJP, Bahujan Samaj Party BSP, Jammu State Morcha and Panun Kashmir came out openly in support of scraping Article 370. Sources said that divergent views emerged in the meeting between two representatives of Ladakh. Lok Sabha member from Ladakh Thupstan Chhewang demanded United Territory UT status while as his view was contradicted by Social Welfare Minister, Haji Nissar Ali, a representative from Kargil. Haji Nissar said that Thupstan's demand of UT was not acceptable to all people of Ladakh while as Mr.Chewang claimed that being a Member of Parliament from Ladakh he is representing entire region..

Indian Express, 4 February 2007

**PM backs Musharraf remark, right thing to say**

New Delhi, February 3: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today backed Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's statement that those who believed the gun was the only way to solve the Kashmir issue cannot be taken on board in resolving it, calling it the right thing to say. They are saying the right thing. Let us hope, Singh told reporters at a book release in the Capital on Saturday. The book Democracy and Diversity is authored by former diplomat K S Bajpai. Singh said he would undertake a Pakistan visit when he was sure that the outcome would be substantive. I have received an invitation which I have accepted. I am looking forward to the visit. But when I visit I should do some substantive business. I have always been hopeful but there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, the Prime Minister said. When asked whether his visit would take place by this summer, the Prime Minister remained non-committal. Let us see, he said..

Greater Kashmir, 4 February 2007

**A traumatized youth stands bewildered in the middle (Sajjad Bazaz)**

This week we witnessed a huge public rally to welcome Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq after completing his visit to Pakistan. A good section of the Kashmiri youth force was in full swing raising slogans in favour of the stand of Hurriyat vis-a-vis Kashmir dispute. Notably, there is a shift in strategy of this separatist conglomerate where they have diluted their hardliners approach to find a solution to the Kashmir problem. Kashmir conflict has seen the frequent use of Kashmiri youth at the cost of their future. Actually the tremendous fall-out of events on the political front since 1947 has contributed a great deal in making Kashmiri youth disillusioned, annoyed, amazed and last but not the least, aggressive. His soul continues to cry in anguish and rightly at the misuse of power and exploitation of his privileges. The politicians of all hues and shades who came to power never evinced any interest to channelise the energy of the youth in proper direction. The Kashmiri youth stood ignored and the politicians used to get hold of them when they needed them for their politicking and political intrigues. In other words the simplicity of the youth has always been exploited by those at the helm of affairs..

The Hindu, 4 February 2007

**Ganderbal killings (Pravin Swami)**

Srinagar: FIR 133 of December 9, 2006, Police Station Ganderbal: Jammu Kashmir Police Special Operations Group reports that it, with the Central Reserve Police Force, has killed an unidentified Pakistani terrorist, from whom a weapon was recovered. Identified as: Abdul Rahman Paddar. FIR 203 of October 5, 2006, Police Station Sumbal: 13 Rashtriya Rifles reports that it, along with police, laid ambushes, in which a Pakistani Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist identified as Zahid Ali was killed. Identified as: Shaukat Khan FIR 52 of March 14, 2006, Police Station Sumbal: 24 Rashtriya Rifles reports that it, along with the police, killed an unidentified terrorist near Sumbal, from whom a weapon was recovered. Identified as: Ghulam Nabi Wani FIR 25 of March 8, 2006, Police Station Kangan: 24 Rashtriya Rifles reports that it, acting on police information, has killed an unidentified terrorist near Sumbal, from whom a weapon was recovered. Identified as: Ali Mohammad Padroo..

Daily Excelsior, 5 February 2007

**Next 4 months crucial: Mirwaiz**

Srinagar, Feb 4: Prognosticating the next few months to be a watershed for Jammu and Kashmir, Chairman moderate Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today urged India and militants to announce a ceasefire to help build a conducive atmosphere. He asked the militant leadership to announce a time bound cease-fire in the Valley so that a positive atmosphere is built. However, making it clear that no bilateral solution to the issue would be acceptable to the people of the region, he pointed out that they were the principal party to it. Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, after Executive Council and General Council meeting of the amalgam, Mirwaiz Umar said the next two to four months would be very crucial for resolving the issue. We will be visiting Pakistan and Azad Kashmir next month again to take forward the process. He said during the recent 9-day stay of three member Hurriyat delegation himself, Prof Abdul Gani Bhat and Bilal

Gani Lone in Pakistan, they held several meetings with the leadership there. We met the Pakistan President, Prime Minister Showkat Aziz, opposition leaders and leadership in Azad Kashmir, he said, adding they all appreciated our efforts..

Indian Express, 5 February 2007

**Opinion: LoC as Land of Contact (D.Suba Chandran)**

The LoC Line of Control has so far has been primarily perceived as a line dividing the two Kashmirs. In particular, the Indian state has been attempting to convert this LoC into a permanent border, thereby closing its links with the other side for ever. Can this LoC be re-imagined as a Line of Contact? To broaden the scope even further, can the entire region of J&K, including Ladakh, be placed in a larger paradigm and perceived as a land of contact with Tibet in the east, China in the north, Pakistan in the west and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia in the northwest? An aerial look at the J&K region reveals it as a palm with five fingers in all directions. They point to five routes, known for its historical contacts: the Jammu-Sialkot road, including Rawlakot-Poonch; Uri-Muzafarabad; Kargil-Skardu and the famous Mansarovar route. India should exploit this unique geography. One could start with the first finger: the Jammu-Sialkot route. It has great economic potential, especially for the Jammu region, although politically and culturally it may be relatively less relevant. However, the business community including the Jammu Chambers of Commerce and Industry ardently supports the opening of this route..

Kashmir Times, 5 February 2007

**Editorial: Rogues in Khaki**

There can be nothing more shaking in the last seventeen years of turmoil in Jammu and Kashmir than the fresh revelations on fake encounters which point to the criminal nature of counter insurgency operations. While cases of innocents being picked up, killed in custody and then passed off as foreign ultras killed in encounters is already a known story. These fresh cases become significant in many respects. Not only for the scale of protests and widespread condemnation that they have sparked but also for the fact that people are now coming out openly with allegations of custodial killings and villagers who have been pressurized into aiding the security forces in burial of the bodies have begun to question the entire process and identifying the bodies. This indeed is a reflection of the peoples pent up anger and hatred. At the same time, it also reflects peoples resistance against injustice which needs to be channelised in a positive direction. The people at the helm of affairs cannot stop at simple rhetoric of promising zero tolerance to human rights violations by security forces or quoting militancy as an excuse to justifying the terror perpetrated by the security forces. Chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while reiterating commitment to human rights has recently stated that it is impossible to achieve zero tolerance to violations because of the ongoing violence by militants..

Daily Excelsior, 5 February 2007

**Editorial: Lets work as one**

One again hears Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf talking a lot of sense. Few will disagree with his latest assertion last week that those who believe in violence have no role in resolving the Kashmir issue. To quote him: We cannot take people on board who

believe in confrontation and who think that only militancy solves the problem. They cannot be taken on board. They will remain opposed to whatever we do. Clearly he sees them as obstacles and expects both his country and New Delhi to be steadfast against all that they do. He wants both the neighbouring countries to be bold enough in this regard. His proposal is that all shades of Kashmiris should be involved in the exercise except those who refuse to abandon the path of bloodshed. Of course, he is right when he says that the relations between India and Pakistan have never been this good before in our history, and we ought to be happy about that. One will like to share his optimism that this heartening phase will last for good. There cant be any difference either with his opinion that a premature disclosure of behind-the-scene talks between the two neighbours can be counter-productive. It is better to proceed cautiously. The General is apparently wiser about the fractured leadership in the State. For his part he would like to believe that the Hurriyat Conference is representative of Kashmiris..

Greater Kashmir, 5 February 2007

#### **Army orders inquiry into fake encounters**

Srinagar, Feb 4: Defence authorities in Kashmir have ordered an inquiry into fake encounter killings of civilians in the Valley, a Defence spokesman said. He said based on media reports about the alleged involvement of Army and Rashtriya Rifles RR in fake encounters in Ganderbal area, they Army has ordered an inquiry to investigate these killings. He said disciplinary action will be initiated if anyone is found guilty. The order to investigate the fake encounter killings came after Jammu and Kashmir police arrested four police officials, including a Senior Superintendent of Police SSP Hans Raj Parihar and Deputy Superintendent of Police DSP-Operations Ganderbal Bahadur Ram for killing some innocents in fake encounter in Ganderbal area..

Greater Kashmir, 6 February 2007

#### **Pak PM invites Geelani for talks**

Islamabad, Feb 5: Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has invited Chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (G) Syed Ali Shah Geelani to visit Pakistan for a dialogue on the Kashmir issue. Prime Minister Aziz assured Geelani that Pakistan would never abandon the people of Kashmir. The News quoted Aziz as saying here that Pakistan is in constant contact with the Kashmiri leaders across the divide. He said out of box proposals put forward by President Pervez Musharraf like joint management of Kashmir could become a 'solid base for dialogue on the issue. He said Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri is to visit India this month for talks with his Indian counterpart on the composite dialogue progress. Negotiations were also underway from other channels and all these efforts would yield positive results, Aziz said.

Daily Excelsior, 6 February 2007

#### **Azad takes on PDP, NC in Assembly**

JAMMU, Feb 5: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today virtually took on main coalition partner, PDP, in the Assembly reading out figures of human rights violations including custodial deaths, disappearances and allegations of rape during three year tenure of PDP-led coalition Government and about one year rule of the Government headed by him besides six years of NC Government. Rights violations, on which the PDP

had been creating uproar, both inside and outside the House and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti even threatening to withdraw support from the Government, were on an average clearly on much higher side during three years of Mufti Sayeed led Government and six years of Farooq Abdullah's tenure as compared to nearly 15 months rule of Azad Government as per figures read out by Mr Azad in the Assembly in exhaustive 125 minutes reply on debate on the grants of his Ministries.

Greater Kashmir, 6 February 2007

**Perspective: Next CM should be Azad**

The Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad told the upper house during the ongoing budget session that his government's credibility was nonnegotiable. He was speaking over the custodial murder of a Kashmiri carpenter. How to refurbish the state government's credibility when the troops kill innocent people to please their bosses and earn rewards? That was the challenge the Chief Minister seemed throwing up on the assembly floor. The PDP legislator and former minister, Ghulam Hassan Mir made the task for Chief Minister a little easier when he forcefully advocated reviewing of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) on the floor of the assembly.

The Kashmir Times, 6 February 2007

**3 day hunger strike to begin today; Yasin calls for peaceful protests till HR violations end**

VAILOO-KOKERNAG, Feb 5: JKLF Chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik today emphasized on peaceful protests, saying that demonstrations alone, could guarantee the safety of life for innocent civilians. "Believe me, if you won't come out of your homes to demonstrate against these killings, no one would be spared by the so called security forces," said Malik, who was addressing over 20,000 people in his hometown at Vailoo six kilometers away from Kokernag. Malik said that people from across the state have demonstrated their solidarity with the families of those who have been killed in fake encounters. He added that whole Kashmir will observe a complete strike on February 6.

The Kashmir Times, 7 February 2007

**Editorial: Pick and kill policy; Disband SOG, provide teeth to Human Rights Commission**

The Ganderbal killings have provided a new dimension to human rights abuses with more allegations of enforced disappearances and custodial killings of innocent civilians at the hands of the security forces including the J&K Police's Special Operations Group (SOG) pouring out. The entire incident informs the public about the role of the security forces in unleashing a reign of terror. The SOG is part of this institutionalized and state sponsored terror. The killings have once again brought the issue of human rights abuse centre stage and question the manner in which the counter insurgency grid operates, underlining the need for demilitarization of not just the army and para-military forces but also reining in the police force.

Greater Kashmir, 7 February 2007

**Mufti drops bombshell: surrenders security**

New Delhi, Feb 6: Former Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed has picked up the

gauntlet that the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had thrown a day before when he dared the advocates of demilitarization that they should surrender their personal security first if they really stood for demilitarization. Mufti, whose Peoples Democratic Party is a key partner in the Azad-led ruling coalition, Tuesday wrote to the Chief Minister requesting him to withdraw his personal security and that of Ms Mahbooba Mufti, MP, with immediate effect.

Greater Kashmir, 7 February 2007

**Perspective: Do you have a Road Map?**

The trend of making plans and roadmaps on Kashmir is gaining roots every day in and out. Those who formulate these plans are mostly the ones who find an avenue of publicity in publication of these plans. There are others who try to be seen in line with the probable solutions that they perceive or are likely to be accepted by India and Pakistan. Some formulate the plans on behest of institutions associated with different establishments to ascertain the public mood and reactions. A group of politicians have dedicated themselves to the job of welcoming each and every proposal irrespective of their contradictions. Mirwiaz welcomes every Road Map whether it comes from Musharaff or Manmohan Singh...

Daily Excelsior, 7 February 2007

**Shutdown in Valley over custodial killings**

Srinagar, Feb 6: With JKLF chief Yasin Malik on a hunger strike, Kashmir valley today observed a near-total shutdown to register its strong protest against custodial killings of innocent civilians by Police and security forces, surfacing one after another, in Ganderbal area. Meanwhile, Police and security forces claimed to have killed two militants in Kulgam area even as a top wanted Hizbul Mujahideen militant has been arrested in a dramatic operation in Handwara. Almost all shops and business establishments, including all branches of Jammu & Kashmir Bank and State bank of India and many government offices, were found locked for the day in this capital city where the separatist JKLF chairman Yasin Malik had called for a shutdown in protest against the human rights abuse committed by officials of Police and security forces.

Daily Excelsior, 8 February 2007

**Over 3,000 travelled along LOC**

Jammu: As many as 3,119 people of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) have travelled via trans-border roads along the Line of Control (LOC) between the two countries till now, the J-K Legislative Council was informed today. Minister in-charge for Home Taj Mohi-ud-din said in a written reply, that as many as 3,119 crossovers of divided family members have travelled between POK and Jammu and Kashmir on permit since April 7, 2005 till now via the trans-LOC roads. Out of these 1,473 Indian nationals and 1,646 POK nationals travelled to Jammu and Kashmir and vice-versa through various routes of LOC opened between J-K and POK by virtue of CBMs between the two countries, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 February 2007

**Uproar over Geelani's Jammu visits**

Jammu: Panthers Party, BJP and JSM MLAs today clashed with former Minister and NC MLA Ali Mohd Sagar in the Assembly for his statement resenting attacks on Hurriyat Conference (hardline) leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani during his visits here. Jammu based MLAs including Jugal Kishore (BJP), Ashwani Sharma (JSM) and Balwant Singh Mankotia (JKNPP) strongly countered Mr Sagar's demand and demanded a ban on Geelani's visit to Jammu charging him with creating disturbances and even "engineering three grenade attacks" at Jammu Bus Stand.

Greater Kashmir, 8 February 2007

**"39 disappearance cases last year"**

Jammu: The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on Wednesday said that it has instituted 39 cases of disappearances from 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006. The SHRC Annual Report for the year 2005-06 tabled by Finance, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Hameed Karra in the upper house today says that it has instituted 39 cases of disappearance; 36 in Kashmir region and 3 in Jammu region from 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006. Srinagar district tops the number of disappeared persons with 11 persons disappearing during the same period, report says. North Kashmir Districts of Varmul and Kupwara figure at second and third place in the list with eight and seven cases of custodial disappearances reported from these districts respectively. In Jammu division, Chief Minister's Home District of Doda tops the list with 2 persons having disappeared during the same period.

Greater Kashmir, 8 February 2007

**Editorial: Be dispassionate**

There may be lot of politics in the five- para- letter written by Peoples Democratic Party patriarch and former Union Home Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed to Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad requesting for withdrawal of security of father-daughter duo that would effect the future relations between the ruling coalition partners. The Peoples Democratic Leader might have accepted the challenge thrown by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad in the legislature when he dared advocates of demilitarization and withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act that they should surrender personal security if they believed that the situation was ripe for demilitarization with the intentions of refurbishing image of his party for furthering its prospectus in the elections which are scheduled to be held during next year.

Daily Excelsior, 9 February 2007

**Editorial: Take notice**

We have to take notice of a resolution passed by the Pakistan National Assembly on Wednesday pledging "continued moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmir cause." It has come against the run of play. The neighbouring country has unfortunately once again exposed itself to the charge of nursing naughty intentions while professing commitment to mutual peace. Indeed, the timing of the motion is bad. It is an indefensible throwback to the 1990s when the Pakistan parliament had adopted a unanimous declaration vowing to finish its country's unfinished agenda of 1947 in

Jammu and Kashmir. Quite naturally our Parliament had struck back then in the same language unambiguously announcing that the liberation of the occupied territory was its Priority No. 1. When the next session of Parliament begins as scheduled in the national capital on February 23 it is only to be expected that it will give a suitable response to the latest development in Islamabad.

Greater Kashmir, 9 February 2007

**Editorial: Prisoners-rights**

Scores of combatants were taken into custody after they suffered a humiliating defeat in the battlefield of Badr. Soon after the Holy Prophet (SAAW) sought counsel from his companions (RA). Umer (RA) the great was in favour of killing the prisoners. However, the Prophet's (SAAW) friend, Abu Bakr (RA) told the Holy Prophet (SAAW) to grant pardon to all of them. The prisoners were released some in lieu of a consideration and most of them without any conditions. A handful of them were told to teach Muslims to win their freedom. Ultimately all of them were released. Nobody was subjected to extra-judicial execution, nobody was killed in a fake encounter, nobody disappeared, nobody was tortured and nobody was stripped or humiliated. Why? Before, migrating to Madinah, the most revered Prophet (SAAW) had received a revelation about prisoners. "And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan and the captive."

Greater Kashmir, 9 February 2007

**Yasin Malik ends 3-day fast against staged killings**

Srinagar, Feb 8: The pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik on Thursday ended his 3-day fast against the killing of Kashmiris in fake encounters and growing human rights violations in the state. A young girl, Bilquees of Rawalpura, whose chemist father Manzoor Ahmed Dar disappeared after his arrest by Army's 35 Rashtriya Rifles on January 16, 2002, offered a glass of juice to Malik to end the hunger strike at 1600 hours. Pledging to continue his struggle, the JKLF chief said he will soon leave for New Delhi where he would mobilise the Indian civil society actors against killing and disappearance of Kashmiris. "The puppet authorities have to explain what happened to 8,000 people who disappeared in custody of police and other agencies," he said, reiterating that he would sit on fast unto death if government fails to stop human rights violations within 45 days.

Daily Excelsior, 10 February 2007

**Pak hasn't given up claim on Kashmir**

New Delhi, Feb 9: Reverting to its old stand, Pakistan today said it has not given up its claim on Jammu and Kashmir and disagreed with India's contention that the state was an integral part of it. Interacting with media here, High Commissioner Shahid Malik said there was no change in Pakistan's stand on Kashmir as was "erroneously" reported by the media when president Pervez Musharraf suggested a four-pronged strategy to resolve the issue. "The media reported Pakistan had given up its claim on Kashmir. We completely disagree with India's position that Kashmir is an integral part of it," he said, referring to Musharraf's interview a few months back wherein he had said Islamabad would give up its claim on Kashmir if New Delhi too did the same.

Greater Kashmir, 10 February 2007

**Editorial: Preserve Icons**

What in broader sense could be called as sense of belonging or in subtler terms as patriotism is alien to majority of Kashmiris? The politicians irrespective of their political beliefs and ideologies, academicians and intellectuals irrespective of their standing and bureaucrats irrespective of their position lack the sense of belonging to their native land. It may be subject matter for research for scholars to find out the causes for lack of commitment towards the native land amongst majority of aborigines dwelling in vales and dales of this land that has waxed kings and emperor's lyrical- there may be some truth in the philosophy that because of centuries of subjugation and suffering under alien rule patriotism has waned from this beautiful race. But what is amazing that despite movement of resurgence now going on for past more than eighty years the sense of belonging and commitment continues to evade from the people of this land. To see Kashmir society transformed in all respects there is need to inculcate patriotism in younger generation and this could be done making them conscious of their glorious past and heroic battles of people of this land have fought against the alien and tyrant rulers during past five thousand years.

Greater Kashmir, 10 February 2007

**Govt to probe HR abuses since 1990**

Jammu, Feb 9: In a significant move, Government today said it will probe all incidents of human rights violation in the State since 1990. "The government will inquire into all cases of human rights violations since 1990," the Chief Minister said in the Legislative Assembly here. The Chief Minister was responding to issue raised by opposition National Conference members who were seeking government reply on discrepancies in figures of government and State Human Rights Commission about custodial deaths and custodial disappearances.

Greater Kashmir, 10 February 2007

**Government passes Roshni Act, terms it landmark law**

Jammu, Feb 9: The Government today passed amendment to Vesting of Ownership Act commonly called Roshni Act giving ownership rights of land to occupants amidst strong opposition from National Conference which described it as "land grabbers law" and its passage "as worst day in legislative history of the state". The bill to amend the Act was moved by the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad when the speaker convened the House after its adjournment during question hour. The NC legislators were not present in the House when the bill was moved, so their amendments were not taken up. The Chief Minister described the law as landmark legislation and said despite being ill he has come to the House just to move the bill himself. "In the morning I chaired a cabinet meet and it was decided that farmers who occupy nearly 17 lakh kanals will have to pay Rs 100 as mutation charge to get ownership of the land," he said. He said Rs 100 was nominal charge and now they get the land for Rs 100. Later the bill was put to discussion with Congress MLA GM Saroori initiating the debate.

Daily Excelsior, 11 February 2007

**Airtel SIM leads police close to Hizb commdr**

Srinagar, Feb 10: Until yesterday, Tanvir Ahmed Zargar of old town Baramulla was like any battalion commander of Hizbul Mujahideen for Police and security forces. A two-month-long Police investigation into the December 27, 2006, IED blast on the highway near Degree College Baramulla, has identified him as the man who triggered off the explosion while using the new-found technology of activating mines with mobile phones in the Valley. Consequently, Police and security forces have launched a manhunt for Zargar who is said to have been behind a series of militant strikes, including another IED blast outside a military formation, around December last. Many of our officials had visited the site of blast, though only a couple of civilians had sustained just minor injuries outside the Degree College. As I reached the spot, somebody picked up a SIM card rather nonchalantly and handed it over to me. I assigned the investigation to a team headed by my SP headquarters, Sheikh Junaid Mehmood..

Indian Express, 11 February 2007

**Searching for missing sons, two families in Kashmir forge a bond (Toufiq Rashi)**

Srinager, February 10: They were two strangers who met at a police camp. Then for months, their paths crossed again and again. They were searching for their disappeared sons, picked up by police and security forces in the same week in 2003. In the waiting rooms where they sat for hours, hoping to get some news on their sons, they became friend. One evening as they left for home after another restless day in their desperate search, they decided to become relatives. Abdul Rehman Paul married his daughter to Noor Mohammad Bhat's son. Today, their 16-month-old granddaughter Tayyaba has become an essential distraction from the mutual pain but the painful search continues. She picks up the pictures of both her uncles and kisses them. Ask her where her mamu maternal uncle whom she has never seen is, she will point to her heart, Bhat says . We bonded in grief and our grief is making the bond stronger. The marriage happened for a simple reason, we didnt want to let go of the support system each one had become for the other, Paul recalls. The incessant talker Paul and the reclusive Bhat do the talking for each other. In fact, it is no longer his son and my son but our missing sons. Their common story began in June 2003..

Greater Kashmir, 11 February 2007

**Opinion: An economic bond can bind us together (Sajjad Bazaz)**

With the onset of armed struggle in the year 1989, when militant outfits were busy in issuing statements coupled with armed resistance challenging J&K State's accession with Union of India, there was a section of separatists who launched an awareness campaign to promote economic self-reliance. Under the banner of Anaj Ogav, Azaadi Pav this section of separatists were stressing people to protect Kashmirs economic potential and simultaneously desist from converting a fertile piece into a barren land for commercial purpose. Since the atmosphere was totally gripped in favour of armed conflict, there were no takers for the campaign and it was shelved. The senior separatist leader who initiated the campaign, even today has firm belief that first and foremost thing is economic independence where Kashmiris have to be self reliant and safeguard resources which can pave way for smooth economic development of the general masses and the State. Even as

armed conflict between separatists and the government armed forces since 1989 has left so many ugly scars on each others faces depicting the grave nature of human rights violations, economic aspects cannot be over looked. Economically speaking, Kashmir's economic potential has always been buried on one pretext or the other..

Daily Excelsior, 11 February 2007

**J&K issue has internal, external dimensions: PDP**

Jammu, Feb 10: Peoples Democratic Party PDP has emphasized that the ongoing Indo-Pak peace process should form a part of a comprehensive, integrated and amicable settlement structure addressing the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking at a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee PAC, the highest decision-making body of PDP, here this morning, party Patron, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said the Jammu and Kashmir issue should not be viewed as a territorial dispute to be resolved by India and Pakistan bilaterally. It is a problem with external and internal dimensions involving India, Pakistan and the people of the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir, he said and pointed out that the external dimensions of the problem involve the stands and stakes of India and Pakistan in the State of Jammu and Kashmir while the internal dimensions relate to the relationship between both parts of Kashmir with their respective mainlands..

Kashmir Times, 12 February 2007

**At least 26 civilians killed branded as foreign ultras (Afsana Rashid)**

Srinagar, Feb 11: Is the phenomenon of killing civilians and branding them as foreign militants widely prevalent in the Valley? And are there mass unidentified graves? Only statistics based on Valley wide verification of the same could throw some light. But figures compiled, based mostly on known cases reported in the media during the last seventeen years, in a document issued by families of missing persons at a press briefing here yesterday reflect that such cases are not really isolated ones. According to compiled figures, there are at least 8 unknown graves at Eidgah graveyard here alone which is an indication of the fact that an authentic survey of graveyards across the Valley may make startling revelations. Out of the 26 documented cases of disappeared persons, killed and branded as foreign militants, whose bodies were exhumed from their graves, in at least 19 of them, it has been established that the claimed foreign ultras were actually local civilians, brutally killed by the security forces. The document released by some victims of missing persons at a press conference of Parents of Disappeared, lists 26 cases, in which innocent civilians were killed, and passed off in official papers as foreign militants killed in encounters..

Daily Excelsior, 12 February 2007

**PDP for revocation of AFSPA, gradual troops reduction**

Jammu, Feb 11: Emphasizing the need for adopting democratic and political means to resolve Kashmir issue Peoples Democratic Party PDP, today said that use of force was no substitute for a policy of engagement and dialogue. Demanding revocation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA and gradual reduction of troops from the State, PDP in one of the resolutions adopted at its Executive Committee meeting here today, urged the Union Government to respond positively to the position taken by the Pakistan

President General Parvez Musharraf against violence. Briefing newsmen about passing of the resolutions, the party leader and former Finance Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Beig, said, As a partner of the Coalition Government in the State, PDP has pursued the goals and objectives set in the Common Minimum Program CMP for finding a peaceful resolution of the problem, rolling back of the draconian laws and pursuing a healing touch policy in its dealings with people,. .Quoting resolution, he added that the meeting resolved to pursue with added dedication its agenda of encouraging the course of dialogue and reconciliation and translating its philosophy of healing touch into concrete measures for the general relief and betterment of the people of State..

Indian Express, 12 February 2007

**Opinion: J&K's bodies of evidence (Pamela Phillipose)**

Events in Jammu and Kashmir are perceived by the rest of the country as if through the wrong end of the telescope. The existing distance between the country and the state always ends up magnified, and crucial developments playing out in the region appear emptied out of their significance. If Nithari, a village in Noida, has today become a byword for evil and institutional culpability, why should the anonymous villages of south Kashmir not hold a similar resonance? Here too, after all, have unfolded stories of the killing of innocent and the searing agony and helplessness of parents who have lost their children. And if the police have failed to prevent a Nithari, they were in places like Ganderbal playing mid-wife to the horror. But while Nithari has made us cringe and cry out loud for institutional reform, Ganderbal leaves us relatively untouched. Does this mean that in Kashmir the arbitrary snuffing out of lives without let or hindrance has over one and a half decades of militancy somehow become normalised? The inevitable collateral damage of insurgency that leaves us untouched? Has the common sense that these are, after all, matters best left to those in charge of protecting the countrys security robbed us of our sense of justice? This all-too-deliberate public apathy has in fact helped to create the climate of impunity that allows private executions and staged encounters to flourish, and they in turn have alienated people further and stoked the fires of militancy..

Kashmir Times, 12 February 2007

**Ganderbal episode- disgraceful disposition of coalition government (Bashie Ahmed)**

The slogans like ushering in an era of peace and tranquility, zero tolerance of human right abuses, healing touch to the festering wounds and making security and law enforcing agencies accountable have proved a hoax as far as the fresh revelations of custodial killings, forced disappearances and fake encounters are concerned. Irrespective of whether the laws in force in the state are lawless to the extent that every abuse by the security agencies has become a law in itself or the political establishment governing the state has literally collapsed as far as the protection of its citizens was concerned, the fact remains that whatever is being perpetrated by the security agencies in the state quoting militancy as an excuse was state sponsored, at least for two reasons. One, the laws like the unconstitutional Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 as amended in 1972, Disturbed Area Act and such other repressive laws have given discretion to security officials for unwarranted arrests, search operations round the clock, destruction of property and collateral damages, empowering firings, thereby leading to human rights abuses, ultimately providing space for custodial disappearances and fake encounters by

the Police and security officials for out of turn promotions, rewards, thereby legitimizing the reign of terror. The protection provided by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, insulates security personnel from action in gross violations, more so, the officials indulging in such crimes are not subject..

The Tribune, 12 February 2007

**Editorial: Rights and wrongs in J&K**

The J and K Chief Ministers statement in the State Assembly that his government will investigate all incidents of human rights violations since 1990, when terrorism started, has not come a day too soon and is welcome. In the absence of a free and fair mechanism to punish the guilty, such incidents are not only providing grist to the rumour mill, they are also alienating the people, as the current furore over the death of innocent citizens in fake encounters proves. There have been enquiries in some cases, but these have been wishy-washy at best. Official agencies tend to be generally in a denial mode. Supervisors and colleagues of those found to be violating human rights tend to help them get off the hook somehow rather than seeing the wrong they do to the society. That is why the public has lost faith in the sincerity of successive governments and takes recourse to violent protests at every provocation. The investigation in human rights violations must be swift and totally impartial. Only if the guilty are handed down exemplary punishment in the shortest possible time can the confidence of the people in the state be restored. What has to be established is that the security forces are by and large upright and ever ready to weed out the few rotten eggs that they have. Papering over the excesses makes it appear as if innocent citizens are being targeted for no fault of theirs by the authorities who are supposed to provide them protection..

Daily Excelsior, 12 February 2007

**Separatist groups hold demonstrations**

Srinagar, Feb 11: Kashmir valley today observed a shutdown on 23rd death anniversary of the separatist JKLF leader Maqbool Bhat, who had been hanged to death in Delhi's Tihar Jail on this day in 1984. Two factions of JKLF as also two factions of the separatist Hurriyat Conference had called for total shutdown in Jammu and Kashmir as has been the practice since the eruption of secessionist insurgency in 1990. While Chairman of a faction of the JKLF, Yasin Malik, was not reportedly well in the wake of his three-day-long hunger strike against the abuse of human rights by the forces in uniform, his key associates staged a demonstration at Maisuma in uptown. Shouting slogans, the 100-odd demonstrators carried placards, demanding custody of the JKLF leader's mortal remains. The JKLF demonstration began a march towards the Srinagar headquarters of UNMOGIP at Sonwar, where they wanted to pass on a memorandum to the UN Secretary General. However, Police swooped on them, dispersed the demonstrators and detained some of them for rest of the day. A JKLF spokesman alleged that some of his organisations activists, including Ghulam Rasool Dar Iddi, sustained injuries..

Indian Express, 13 February 2007

**J&K can plug into more power as neutral expert clears Baglihar dam (Sonu Jain)**

New Delhi, February 12: Curtains came down today on a 16-year-old Indo-Pak dispute over the 450 MW Baglihar dam proposed on the Chenab river by India. Swiss Neutral

Expert Raymond Lafitte, appointed by the World Bank to consider Pakistans objections to the project, has upheld India's design of the dam with minor modifications. Among other changes, Pakistan had been pressing for the height to be reduced Lafitte has given it a 1.5-m reduction. On the other hand, he agreed with India's insistence on gated spillways, that is, outlets at the bottom of dam to flush the silt out. Pakistan had objected arguing that these were not permitted in the 1960 Indus Water Treaty and would give India undue leverage to flood the Punjab plains. But Lafitte rejected this saying that current technology not available in 1960 would ensure proper use of the water without this risk. The reduction of the height will, however, have no impact on power generation capacity of the 450 MW project, Water Resources Minister Saifuddin Soz said welcoming the verdict. The modifications will only marginally add to the costs. Much to New Delhs relief, the award, in which most of Pakistans objections were rejected, will deeply influence all future interpretations of the treaty between the two countries, Soz said soon after Lafitte gave his report to the two governments in Bern, Switzerland..

Kashmir Times, 13 February 2007

### **Editorial: Unheard voices**

The human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir has been grim for the last nearly two decades. It has been a known fact despite the virtual silence of the government, rather patronage to agencies who perpetrate human rights violations and often provoke violence. The present situation arising out of the stemming discontent, fear, insecurity and trauma as reflected in massive protests on the issue of human rights demonstrates the waning patience of the people and is a cause of grave concern. Of greater concern is the virtual silence of the Centre over the issue, even as the last ten days have been marked Valley wide protests and campaigns for end to human rights abuse at the hands of security forces and demand for probing all such complaints in an unbiased manner. These are rational demands by any standards and could have been better responded to by a regime that stands committed to civilized and democratic governance. Barring the state government's announcement to probe the Ganderbal fake killings, which sparked off valley wide protests, word is still awaited from New Delhi, especially as the prime minister had last summer assured zero tolerance to human rights violations by security forces. The virtual silence of the Centre at this juncture amounts to non seriousness..

Greater Kashmir, 13 February 2007

### **FAKE ENCOUNTERS PROBE IN ADVANCE STAGE**

Srinagar, Feb 12: The investigation into the killings of civilians in fake encounters by the Special Operation Group of police and other security agencies has reached an advanced stage, top government sources told Greater Kashmir on Monday. They said the DNA report of five civilians whose bodies were exhumed recently, would be received shortly from the Central Forensic Laboratory Chandigarh. In the next 10 days chargesheet will be filed against the accused SOG officials in one of the cases of fake encounters, the sources said. One of the Army battalions involved in the fake encounters is now cooperating with the investigating team. But other involved battalions are reluctant to cooperate, hampering the investigation, they added. Another roadblock before the investigating team is the babus of BSNL who are yet to provide call details of the victims and the accused cops mobile phones..

Daily Excelsior, 13 February 2007

**Editorial: FICN racket**

The discovery of a fake currency manufacturing unit in Rajouri district last weekend reveals the range and depth of wicked operation. By now there is hardly any district in the State that has escaped from the evil. In the latest incident the police has arrested four persons and recovered bogus notes worth Rs 40000. Two printing machines and two computers along with their accessories have also been seized. The other relevant details are not yet known. How long has this dirty business been going on in the border district? How many people are actually involved? How much counterfeit money has already been pumped into the market? From this city to faraway Kupwara in the extreme north of the Valley identical undercover processes have been brought to light from time to time. Evidently the easy availability of computers and its multiple uses have given unscrupulous persons some ideas to make a fast buck. One does not need large paraphernalia. One will always be amazed, however, that they should be able to develop expertise enough to scan the original to near perfection. Understandably they find it handy to exploit higher denomination notes to their advantage. The circulation of fake Indian currency notes FICN has been a big issue in the State for rather too long. It is not for nothing that Pakistans intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence ISI, has been exposed to the charge of having introduced it to sabotage our internal economy..

Indian Express, 13 February 2007

**Involve Kashmiri Pandits in peace process: PDP**

Jammu, February 12: Terming Kashmiri Pandits as integral component of the state's identity, the Peoples Democratic Party PDP called for their involvement in the ongoing process of peace, reconstruction and reconciliation. PDP has noted with sorrow the plight of displaced Kashmiri Pandits and wishes that the community be made a partner in the ongoing process of peace, reconstruction and reconciliation, said a statement after the partys general council meeting here under the chairmanship of patron Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. PDP has also requested the state and central governments to work towards creating circumstances in which Kashmiri Pandits can return to their birthplace safely and with dignity, it said. Ratifying the resolution passed by the PDP executive committee yesterday, the general council demanded a compensatory mechanism for losses suffered by the state due to Indus Water Treaty and implementation of a comprehensive rehabilitation package for victims of violence.

Indian Express, 14 February 2007

**Baglihar report a win-win for India, Pak: Azad**

Jammu, February 13: Terming the World Bank Baglihar report as a win-win situation for both India and Pakistan, J-K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Tuesday said the first phase of the 450 mw power project will be completed by December end after reducing the dam height. We welcome that the recommendations of the World Bank neutral expert Richard Lafitte who has cleared our state-owned project. It is a win-win state for India and Pakistan too, Azad told a rally at the Chanderkote-based project site in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir. Azad, who flew to the Baglihar project site to take part in celebrations organised by workers of project and people of Ramban, said ...the

recommended height of the dam would be reduced and project would be completed by December end this year. Observing that it was a battle that Jammu and Kashmir and India won without defeating Pakistan, he said, our project is safe and J-K State would soon be a hydro-electricity producer in the country after Baglihar project is commissioned..

Daily Excelsior, 14 February 2007

**Mufti for Cabinet resolution on withdrawal of troops, AFSPA**

Jammu, Feb 13: Virtually in a mood of confrontation with Congress, its main coalition partner in the Government, the Peoples Democratic Party PDP today hardened its stand for withdrawal of troops and Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA from Jammu and Kashmir with former Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed declaring that PDPs Ministers have been asked to get a Cabinet recommendation for the Government of India on troops reduction and AFSPA withdrawal. Let it be known that we are very serious about it. It is our Government and our Cabinet. This is not only the agenda of PDP but the coalition Government. Since there was no 1990 like situation, the Cabinet should recommend to the Government the withdrawal of troops and AFSPA, Mr Sayeed told a press conference at the end of PDPs Political Affairs Committee PAC, General Council and Working Committee meetings that lasted three days. The State Government will have to recommend to the Centre the withdrawal of troops and AFSPA. This could turn out to be a stepping stone for resolution of problem, he said in a veiled warning. He said the Cabinet should recommend to the Centre for gradual withdrawal of troops and AFSPA from the State.

Greater Kashmir, 14 February 2007

**Opinion: Eye-opener (Ehsan Bukhari)**

The recent uncovering of the fake encounters at the hands of the men in uniform has exposed the uglier face of human rights violations in the trouble-torn state of Jammu and Kashmir. On one hand, a lot is being said to prevent the human rights violations across the globe, however, the killing of innocent civilians by dubbing them as terrorists, nullifies the tall claims made by the advocates of human rights. Such incidence of grave human rights violation reminds us about the very evolution of humankind. As says the poet. Dard dil ke waste paida kiya insaan ko Warna itaat kai liye kuch kam na thay karo byaan The above verse has a clear message about the motivation behind the supreme creation human beings. To be humane, promote brotherhood for one world state, create a peaceful atmosphere, should have been the characteristics of a human being. The fake encounters have put a big question mark on fairness of the forces present in Kashmir. The so-called security forces have lost the moral and ethical sense. The situation turns grave when people at the helm of affairs turn into the violators. The killing of an innocent carpenter from Kokernag and others after labeling them as foreign militants is an eye opener. The coverage of such news, of the grave human rights violations, by our esteemed newspaper Greater Kashmir needs appreciation. This expos has opened a debate over the fate of thousands of disappeared Kashmiris, who went missing since 1989.

The Hindu, 14 February 2007

**Editorial: Breakthrough on Baglihar?**

The World Bank-appointed neutral expert, Raymond Lafitte, appears to have done a reasonably fair job of resolving the dispute over the 450 Megawatt-Baglihar project since both India and Pakistan have welcomed his report. Islamabad has reason to be satisfied since the expert has upheld three of its four objections in respect of the dams design. India will have to reduce the freeboard the height of the dam above the maximum storage line to 3 metres from the 4.5 metres set in the original design; peg the pondage at 32.58 million cubic metres instead of the desired 37.5 mcm; and raise the level of the power intake turbines that control the run-off by 3 metres. These modifications are not as drastic as Pakistan would have liked. But Islamabad is apparently contemplating further action under the terms of the Indus Waters Treaty only in respect of the expert's determination that the gated spillway could remain at the level of 808 metres. India will have to incur additional cost in carrying out these changes. However, New Delhi would be more than pleased at the neutral experts endorsement of the underlying principle that it can use the waters of the three western rivers the Indus, the Jhelum, and the Chenab so long as their natural flows are not impeded. The Treaty does permit India to use the flows in these rivers for power generation, domestic and non-consumptive purposes but several projects it has drawn up have been stalled on account of Pakistans objections..

Greater Kashmir, 14 February 2007

**For police, polio-stricken youth can cross mountains of LoC**

Srinagar, Feb 13: In the wake of recent expose of fake encounter killings, a family from southern Islamabad district is dead sure their son who went missing 17 years ago, lies buried in some graveyard. Police rubbed salt into the familys wounds by claiming that the youth, crippled by polio, had crossed the tough terrain of the Line of Control for arms training. The victim Farooq Ahmad Rather son of Assadullah Rather of Chandpora, Bijbehara was disabled since his birth. But that did not dampen his spirit to pursue education. A student of B Sc 2nd year in Degree College Islamabad, Farooq, according to his family, was picked up by unidentified security agency when he was on way to the college on November 3, 1990. He was 20 then. The search His family rushed to the local Police Station for lodging an FIR, which the officials refused. The family approached then Senior Superintendent of Police Islamabad. He too expressed helplessness. For 12 years, the Rathers searched for Farooq's whereabouts in police stations, security camps, interrogations centers and jails in the state, but in vain. Finally in 2002, they knocked the doors of the State Human Rights Commission..

Daily Excelsior, 15 February 2007

**De-militarisation possible only if cross border terror ends: CM**

Jammu, Feb 14: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today maintained that demilitarization was only possible from Jammu and Kashmir if Pakistan stopped cross border terrorism, closed its training camps for militants and its Inter Service Intelligence ISI stopped hawala funding for terrorists. Replying to a discussion in Legislative Council on the important developments that have taken place to bring peace and reconciliation in J&K State, the Chief Minister said I need cooperation and support from Gen. Musharraf in this regard. Mr Azad said he is much more concerned about withdrawal of troops

deployed for internal security than Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. But that is possible and has relevance only if aiding and abetting of terrorism from across the border is stopped, he added. Mr Azad made it clear that when the terrorism ends and there will be no hurling of grenades, the security forces will automatically go back to barracks. He said for different people, demilitarization means different things. And so for as removal of troops from borders, no General will ask any country in this regard..

Daily Excelsior, 15 February 2007

### **Rajouri youth killed in police custody**

Rajouri, Feb 14: A youth was killed in custody of police station, Rajouri last night sparking off protests from the villagers of Chaprian near Jawahar Nagar, who pelted stones on District Hospital, Rajouri causing damage to official vehicles including an ambulance. Police had to use teargas and lathicharge to disperse mob which turned violent at District Hospital and Gujjar Chowk. SHO Rajouri Inspector Showkat Ahmed Malik and Havildar Gian Singh have been placed under suspension and a magisterial inquiry ordered into the custodial killing of Showkat Ali son of Mohd Latief, a resident of Chaprian, SSP Rajouri, Farooq Khan said Post-mortem of 26 year old Showkat Ali was conducted by a Board of Doctors at District Hospital here to ascertain reasons behind the killing. Report of post-mortem was awaited. Official sources said Showkat Ali was picked up by a team of Rajouri police station from his house around 8.30 pm for questioning in connection with a theft in the house of Mohd Aslam of same village. Local people claimed that Showkat, who was a conductor, had no past record in police. His family and neighbours pleaded with police that he shouldnt be taken to police station in the night and assured that they will produce him to police station tomorrow morning. Police, however, didnt agree and shifted the youth to police station..

Kashmir Times, 15 February 2007

### **Killed army officers' families seek probe**

Jammu, Feb 14: The government decision to order judicial probe into the killing of Abdul Rehman Padroo in a fake encounter allegedly by the police, if on the one hand has made the state to witness a spree of skeletons tumbling out of the cupboards of police and security forces, on the other hand it has also renewed the hopes of many a despondent to get justice, at last. Enthused by this decision of the government, the Saviours of Human Rights of Armed Forces Personnel SHRAF has requested the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to refer the cases of four civilian porters in a fake encounter in Lolab and the killing of Captain Sumit Kohli of 18 RR in Kupwara and Lieutenant Rajesh Pandey of 2nd JAK Rifles in Rajouri under mysterious circumstances to the same Judicial Commission of Inquiry for holding detailed investigations. In a communique to the Chief Minister, the members of SHRAF, who proclaim themselves as the Protectors of Human and Legal Rights of Armed Forces Personnel, Ex-Servicemen and their families, have also urged the Chief Minister to associate the families of the deceased with the investigations so that the truth comes to surface and guilty are punished. SHRAF will be happy to render any possible help in bringing the culprits to book, if associated with Inquiry Commission..

Greater Kashmir, 15 February 2007

**Dr Farooq terms Muftis withdrawal call vote bank politics (Arif Haleem)**

Jammu, Feb 14: Former chief minister and National Conference patron Dr Farooq Abdullah Wednesday described the Peoples Democratic Partys PDP demand of withdrawal of troops as mere slogan and part of vote bank politics to befool people. If they PDP are so sincere about the withdrawal of troops, why they failed to moot any such proposal during their tenure, Dr Abdullah told a private TV network He said Kashmiris know what kind of politics Muftis were upto. When I say Kashmiris, I mean people of Jammu and Kashmir and they know elections are near and this is preparation time, he said. About his partys election preparation, he said no General will say how prepared his troops are but every General will say they are prepared. The former Chief Minister said though his party too favors demilitarization but terrorism has not completely ended. There is change in situation and I know when our party took over, what we have gone through. We have given sacrifices, many of our leaders have died, he said. He said when the situation improves completely, troops should be withdrawn..

Kashmir Times, 15 February 2007

**Editorial: The Baglihar settlement**

Now that the arbitrators verdict has been announced and accepted by both India and Pakistan it may be claimed with a fair degree of confidence that the Baglihar project will be commissioned by the end of this year. Since the inception of this project in 1990 it had faced more turbulence from Pak opposition than from the turbulent water it aims to control. Although work on it had continued Islamabad had always opposed its construction on the ground that it amounted to a violation of the Indus Water Treaty of 1960. Matters ultimately came to a head when, in 2005, Pakistan sought the intervention of the World Bank, the third party in the Indus Water Treaty, who appointed the renowned Swiss hydro-engineer, Raymond Lafitte, as the neutral arbitrator and whose decision would be final. After paying a couple of visits to the dam site in Doda district, and studying the construction design and the arguments of both the parties he has finally handed down his verdict at Borne on the 11th. He has, more or less, upheld India's contention and has found nothing violative of the oft-quoted Indus Water Treaty in the design and construction of this dam. However, he has suggested that the height of the dam should be reduced by 1.5 metres and that the parapeted wall around the crest should be raised by 1.2 metres, and the power-intake source by another three meters. These restrictions will mean a reduction in the water storage capacity by 5.5 million cubic meters, from 37.5 to 32 million cubic metres..

The Tribune, 15 February 2007

**Police starts compiling data of missing persons (E. Fazli)**

Srinagar, February 14: After the recent expose of fake encounters in Kashmir, the police has initiated compiling data of the missing persons across the valley in the past 17 years. They include those killed in encounters jailed in different detention centres, or those who had crossed to the other side of LoC for training in arms but did not return to the valley. Official sources here confirmed the process has started and district superintendents of police concerned asked to supervise it. All SHOs have been directed to submit the report about circumstances of missing persons in their areas, sources here said. However, the

compiling of data in this regard may take some time more. Another phenomenon has come to fore after the unearthing of fake encounters. The police for the first time here today published photograph of an unidentified person buried at Kellar in Pulwama district of south Kashmir. Circumstances he had been killed in, have not been given, the police has sought people's help to identify him and inform the police concerned at Pulwama. Many other cases of missing persons allegedly after they were picked up by security forces in the past 17 years, has also come to fore recently. Emboldened by events after fake encounters expose, demonstrations took place in the recent days in different parts of Srinagar seeking whereabouts of several missing persons..

Kashmir Times, 16 February 2007

**HRW expresses skepticism over judicial probe (Athar Parvaiz)**

Srinaga, Feb 15: The USA-based international human rights watchdog, Human Rights Watch HRW has welcomed the judicial inquiries into the alleged fake encounter killings in Kashmir but has expressed its skepticism given the government track record. We hope that the Indian government will surprise us with speedy and credible investigation, HRW has said adding the government must launch a credible and independent investigation into all disappearances and fake encounters in the state since 1989 when the conflict began. The rights watchdog has further said that India has signed a new United Nations treaty to combat forced disappearances only last week, February 6. We welcome judicial inquiries into encounter killings, but given the government's track record, there is reason to be skeptical a spokesperson of HRW quoted Brad Adams, Asia Director at Human Rights Watch as saying. We hope the Indian government will surprise us with a speedy and credible investigation., Adams has remarked in New York on Thursday..

Daily Excelsior, 16 February 2007

**Editorial: Social or anti-social**

More often facts are stranger than fiction. The reason is simple. Nobody ever imagines that the people can deliberately stoop low enough to perpetrate a fraud or pull off a miracle from nothing. In this instance, we have come across the least expected criminal state of mind in public welfare schemes. Of all the arms of the Government the Social Welfare Department has been caught in the act of committing irregularities. Its officials have made about 350 appointments mostly in this district, Anantnag and Baramulla which they were not empowered to do. This was moreover done in such casual manner that when the Department decided to retract its steps 43 persons obtained stay from the Supreme Court. Skeletons are not rattling in these pigeonholes alone. Anganwari centres have been set up at places which are non-existent especially in the Banihal constituency. On the other hand, 57 locations which were approved for the purpose a decade ago have not been given the benefit so far. Anganwari centres are supposed to work as creches and playschools for poor children in rural areas. These are designed to provide coverage to the age-group from one to six years. Besides, their aim is to look after pregnant women or mothers of weak children by giving them health education and ration including milk powder, sugar and cereal. The reality is sickening and may cause upheaval in our stomachs..

The Tribune, 16 February 2007

### **Separatists invited to meet Kasuri in Delhi**

Srinagar, February 15: Senior separatist Kashmiri leaders have been invited for separate meetings with the visiting Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Khursheed Mahmood Kasuri, in the Union Capital next week. The move is being considered as a bid to forge unity among different groups. They include the leaders of both factions of the Hurriyat Conference, hardline chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani and moderate Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, JKLF chairman Mohammad Yaseen Malik and Shabir Ahmad Shah of the Democratic Freedom Party DFP. The JKLF chairman is already in the Union Capital after his three-day-long hunger strike here in protest against the human rights violations at the hands of the police and the security forces in Kashmir. Accepting the invitation, Mr Geelani today said his party's stand on the resolution of the Kashmir issue was clear and it would be put forth before the visiting Foreign Minister of Pakistan. He reiterated his stand on the resolution of Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir by granting them the right of self-determination under the UN resolutions..

Kashmir Times, 16 February 2007

### **Editorial: Evading demilitarization issue**

After dropping the bomb shell of asking leaders to withdraw their personnel security as a prerequisite to considering the demand for demilitarization and finally cutting a sorry figure, chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has now looked towards Pakistan for taking the first step. Speaking on the floor of the state legislative council, the chief minister has maintained that if demilitarization has to be considered, the first step has to come from Pakistan which should take action against militant groups and stop pumping in money to militants through hawala transactions. While Pakistan's pro-active policy against militant groups operating from Pakistan is indeed an important step for easing tensions and demilitarizing Jammu and Kashmir, there are several other steps India can take towards the same without waiting for Pakistan to make the first move. Infact, demilitarization is one of the suggestions mooted by Pakistan president General Pervez Musharraf to pave way for a solution and the country has off late made attempts to rein in some groups, if not all, operating within its territory. It is the New Delhi's response that is awaited. The chief minister must realise that he cannot get away from the task of taking up the matter with the Centre by simply resorting to one excuse after another to justify the enormous presence of troops in Jammu and Kashmir, which is quite disproportionate to the population of the state..

Daily Excelsior, 16 February 2007

### **Musharraf seeks West, Chinas help to solve Kashmir issue**

ISLAMABAD, Feb 15: Kashmir issue is ripe for resolution, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said as he sought a proactive role from the West and China for its settlement. While the confidence-building measures are going on well, never before have Indo-Pak relations been so good for conflict resolution. We are moving forward towards conflict resolution. Kashmir is ripe for resolution, the General said addressing a conference titled Voices from Asia: towards a process for cooperation and security? here yesterday Musharraf said he was reasonably optimistic and hopeful that there would be forward movement on Sir Creek, Siachen Glacier and Kashmir issue. The West and

China should play a proactive role in finding peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue. It has to be settled for durable peace in the region, he said..

Indian Express, 17 February 2007

### **Srinagar shut over Israeli dig near al-Aqsa**

Srinagar, February 16: A strike called by separatist militants to protest against Israeli excavations near Islam's third holiest shrine in Jerusalem closed most shops and businesses in Kashmir's main city on Friday. Traffic was thin and most streets in Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, were deserted in response to the call by Islamist militants. We appeal to Kashmiri Muslims to protest against the nefarious designs of Israel, Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, a hardline militant group, said in a statement. Al-Badr, another militant group, backed the call. Scores of Muslims shouting, al-Aqsa mosque is crying ... down with Israel took to streets of Srinagar and also burnt Israeli flags..

Greater Kashmir, 17 February 2007

### **GEELANI PRAISES MUSHARRAF'S FLEXIBILITY**

Jammu, Feb 16: The chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference G Syed Ali Shah Geelani today said though Pakistan president Musharaff has shown flexibility on the Kashmir issue, India has not responded the way it should. Pakistan has always shown flexibility on the issue. But India's indifferent and unrealistic attitude is the only bottleneck in the resolution of the six decade-old Kashmir dispute, he said addressing Friday congregation at Malik Market in Narwal on the outskirts of Jammu city. They India never showed flexibility on the issue. They are still rigid on the unrealistic stand on Kashmir issue. Tomorrow, they India. are to hold talks with Pakistan and today they reiterate their stand that Kashmir is integral part of India and the boundaries cannot be changed. However, he rejected the proposals of self rule, joint control, soft borders, greater autonomy mooted by various political parties for the resolution of vexed Kashmir issue. Geelani described right to self determination as the best solution to the Kashmir dispute..

The Tribune, 17 February 2007

### **Terrorists use SIMs issued to Armymen**

Jammu, February 16: The detection of over 100 mobile phone SIM cards, which have been issued by a private cellular company to terrorists on fake documents of Army officials, has once again put the security forces on tenterhooks. The racket was unearthed following the recent explosion carried out with a mobile phone in the Kashmir valley. The SIM card of the mobile phone was reportedly issued to an Army official. The intelligence agencies are learnt to have detected around 100 mobile phones of Airtel that were allegedly issued to terrorists on fake documents of Army personnel. The documents were prepared by dealers of the company in the Sopore area. The security agencies have asked the mobile companies not to appoint dealers for SIM card without the permission of the state CID. Sources said several phones, for which SIM cards were issued on the basis of fake documents, had been disconnected. The security agencies were unable to find the users of these SIM cards as these were pre-paid connections. However, five persons, who were involved in the verification of the applicants, had been detained..

Greater Kashmir, 17 February 2007

**Editorial: Zero Tolerance or Zero Accountability**

Prime Ministers declaration of Zero Tolerance for human rights violations in Kashmir seems to have completely lost the impact it had created in the media at the time of his visit to the valley. Even at that time the declaration had appeared hypocritical as the visit had virtually imprisoned the entire population of the Srinagar city. In fact, the Prime Minister confessed about the inconvenience caused to tourists due to very strict and harsh security measures enforced during the visit. He cut short the visit to give some relief to the tourists. Unfortunately, he failed to mention the suffering his visit had caused to the local people especially the residents of Srinagar in the vicinity of the convention centre where his programmes were held. The recent disclosures about the fake encounters and the revenge killings of innocent civilians after actual encounters have totally negated the so called Zero Tolerance. The main cause of these happenings is the Zero Accountability of security forces ensured by the unbridled powers conferred on them by the notorious legislation called the Jammu & Kashmir Armed Forces Special Powers Act. In normal situation the security forces have to maintain an account of every bullet fired any where in their area of operation.

Kashmir Times, 17 February 2007

**HR organisations should speak out : APHC A**

Srinaga, Feb 16: The Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference has expressed its anger against what it has called the silence of the human rights organizations over the human rights violations in the Kashmir. A spokesman of Hurriyat said that senior leader and former chairman of Hurriyat Conference Moulana Abbas Ansari made this statement today while addressing a public rally in Srinagar. It is an irony that peace talks are going on one hand, but on the other hand Kashmiris are being killed like animals, Moulana Abbas has said and has expressed his concern over what he has called the silence of human rights organizations about the unfortunate happenings in Kashmir. He said that Kashmiris have been demanding the right of self-determination which has been endorsed by the entire world community..

Daily Excelsior, 18 February 2007

**Mob ransacks PP, torches vehicles after custodial death**

Jammu, Feb 17: Police fired several rounds in the air to disperse villagers who were protesting against killing of a youth- picked up by the police for questioning this morning and died allegedly due to severe beating by the cops in the custody at Mandal Phalian police post under the jurisdiction of Satwari Police Station. Enraged over, what they called 'cold blooded murder' of an innocent youth- Tarsem Lal son of Khazan Chand, inhabitants of Makwal, Mandal Phalian and other villagers of Tawi Island, torched a police vehicle, a bike and completely ransacked newly constructed building of Makwal Police Post which was scheduled to be inaugurated very soon. SDPO Shiv Kumar Chouhan, SHO Satwari Arvind Kotwal and Chowki officer Deepak Sharma were also injured in the attack. Situation was pacified only when SSP Jammu Mukesh Singh and Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Hardesh Kumar Singh rushed to the spot and announced suspension of the Chowki Officer, Deepak Sharma and Head Constable Mehmood. He

also announced a compensation of Rs one lakh for the family of the deceased youth besides a routine magisterial inquiry..

Greater Kashmir, 18 February 2007

### **MUFTI ON OFFENSIVE**

Srinagar, Feb 17: Debate around demilitarization of J&K peaked Saturday with Peoples Democratic Party PDP shooting a formal letter, second within a fortnight, to Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad stressing action towards revocation of hated laws and withdrawal of troops. The party has asked Azad to hold a special cabinet meeting so that the issues of troop withdrawal and revocation of stringent laws are discussed threadbare. In response, senior Congress Minister Taj Mohiuddin who used to speak for Azad in the legislature says the situation was not conducive for withdrawal of troops and revocation of various stringent laws. However he said the government would discuss the issue once the Chief Minister is back who is busy campaigning for Congress in Utaranchal. PDPs political affairs committee meeting, which met in Jammu on Saturday evening, authorized its legislative party leader and Minister Abdul Aziz Zargar to take up the issue with Azad. Zargar later wrote to the Chief Minister. In his letter Zargar has sought government action over the aforementioned issues arguing that both withdrawal of troops and revocation of black laws were enshrined in the common minimum program the coalition partners had agreed upon in 2002.

Greater Kashmir, 18 February 2007

### **Trans-LoC trade gets Pak support**

Srinagar, Feb 17: More than a year after India and Pakistan agreed to start truck service on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, the trans-LoC trade is yet to take off. There is however a flickering hope from the across the line of control. The president Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry here has received a communication from his counterpart in Pakistan administered Kashmir PaK revealing that government of Pakistan has given nod to 28 members of Pakistan administered Kashmir KCCI to their proposed visit to Srinagar and Jammu. Twenty eight members of PaK KCCI have got the no objection from the government of Pakistan. They are looking forward for their visit in the first week of March, 2007, said a senior member of KCCI here. However, the member said the chamber is not sure about the nod to the prospective delegation from the government of India and state government. Earlier, the KCCI here had urged the government for allowing the exchange of mutual visits by the trade delegations from J&K and PaK prior to actually starting the trade. Those visits would have certainly helped the traders to ascertain the trans-LoC trade prospects, said former president KCCI, Rouf Ahmad Punjabi.

Kashmir Times, 18 February 2007

### **Editorial: POLITICKING OVER DEMILITARIZATION (Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal)**

One of the most deserving issues facing the world today, in the post 9/11 scenario, is of protecting human rights, especially of the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the society and beginning a process of demilitarization to ease the tensions around the globe. Kashmir is just one small dot on this globe and so when a campaign is built up by

commoners, human rights activists and even politicians cutting across party lines, ideologies and affiliations, in favour of human rights and demilitarization, one could have hoped that this small place that once showed beacon of light to rest of the continent could do so to the world. Unfortunately, instead of grounding politics of Kashmir on the issue of human rights, the issue of human rights becomes a tool in the hands of manipulating politicians to use for dirty politics. Not very long ago, when the words peace process and dialogue were first introduced by politicians of the land, peace came to be seen in a negative light and often associated as a terminology induced by agencies from India and Pakistan. The reasons did not simply stem from the cynicism of the people in Kashmir. After all, cynicism too owes its genesis to something else..Demilitarisation cannot be confused with a solution. It is simply a confidence building measure, nonetheless an important one that can actually pave way for several things - ceasefire from both sides, dialogue and people's participation and ultimately a final solution..

Kashmir Times, 19 February 2007

### **Proposal outlines architecture for amicable, final Kashmir settlement**

Jammu, Feb 18: Peoples Democratic Party PDP on Saturday finalized the self-rule draft which was approved by its Political Affairs Committee PAC at a special meeting. Chaired by the party patron, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, the PAC meeting held threadbare discussions over all the aspects of the self-rule proposal and later adopted it unanimously as the most viable solution of the problems of Jammu & Kashmir. Senior PDP leader, Muzaffar Hussain Baig, who is the Chairman of the Self-rule Drafting Committee, briefed the meeting about various aspects of the distinctive proposal offering a comprehensive set of suggestions for the permanent settlement of the Kashmir issue. Self rule, Baig said is a multidimensional resolution package taking care of not only the external and internal dimensions but the geographical dimensions of the problem as well. He said the self rule offers a multilayer solution involving constitutional, political, social, trade and economic aspects of the problem with stress on political and economic empowerment of the state's people and not its government. He said it also extends to other part of Kashmir accommodating the real aspirations of the people, in all the regions of the State, upto the maximum..

Daily Excelsior, 19 February 2007

### **Interpol seeks JKP help to quiz Sallahuddin**

New Delhi, Feb 18: The disappearance of a Scottish tourist in the Kashmir valley 26 years ago has come to haunt Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Sallahuddin, with Interpol seeking the assistance of Jammu and Kashmir Police to question him in connection with the matter. Police, while reopening the case, have informed Interpol that Sallahuddin is in Pakistan and sought the help of the world police organisation to extradite him, highly placed sources in the State Government said. Allison Modowell went missing in 1981, when she and another tourist from Scotland went trekking in the Sonamarg hills in north Jammu and Kashmir. After initial investigations by the State police, the matter was closed after some time as she could not be traced, the sources said. The case was reopened recently when police received a communication from Interpol in London, seeking their assistance in interrogating Sallahuddin, who was described by the world police body as an Indian citizen. The move by Interpol's London unit was based on a

telephonic interview by Sallahuddin in 2000, in which he claimed responsibilities for several terrorist acts, the sources said. The missing woman's family has claimed that Sallahuddin, while giving the interview, used certain words that not only had a Scottish accent but were often used by Allison, the sources said.

Kashmir Times, 19 February 2007

**Editorial: More custodial killings**

The custodial killing of an eighteen year old youth from Phallain Mandal at Makwal Police Post, after he was picked up for questioning on Friday night from his house over fluid charges, is indeed shocking. It is not a case in isolation but is a symptom of a larger malaise in the functioning of the police force. While several allegations about custodial killings, pointing an accusing finger at the police's special operation group SOG, in the armed conflict entrenched area are piling up, two non-conflict related killings in the last one week one from Rajouri and the fresh one from Makwal reveal there is a serious problem in the manner that the police functions. Though the police force throughout the country has become notorious for its corrupt and brutal elements, in Jammu and Kashmir, the problem is far deep-rooted because of the armed conflict which has enabled the administration to give a free hand to the police and legitimise the ruthlessness of the police personnel, like the other security forces, under the garb of counter insurgency operations and protecting the integrity and security of the country. The police personnel have thus become a law unto themselves whose acts of omission and commission cannot be questioned and who have been given absolute powers but know nothing about their responsibility. This is rather dangerous for any democratic society where police is the most visible form of governance..

Indian Express, 19 February 2007

**Opinion: All set on the western front (C RajaMohan)**

The stage for Hamlet is all set. But would the Prince of Denmark step on to it? The props could not get any better. India and Pakistan are barely a few months away from celebrating the 60th year of independence. And the one issue that bedevilled bilateral relations over the last six decades, Jammu and Kashmir, appears tantalisingly close to a settlement. It is now up to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to either seize the moment or risk letting go of an opportunity that comes but rarely in the history of nations.. The solution under discussion for J&K has five broad elements: no change in territorial disposition in J&K, autonomy/self-governance to both Indian and Pakistani controlled parts of the state, open borders, a cross-border consultative mechanism among the Kashmiris, and finally force reductions coupled to an end to cross-terrorism. What are being negotiated, it is learnt, are the second order issues. To be sure, the devil is always in the detail. And much ground needs to be covered on converting agreed ideas into mutually acceptable definitions..

Greater Kashmir, 19 February 2007

**Opinion: Whos doing what' (Suhail-Ul-Islam)**

Everytime the newspaper hawker drops the newspaper inside the premises of our house, my illiterate mother brings that to me and asks: Check whether any recent development regarding the solution of Kashmir dispute is mentioned about in the newspaper. See,

where the Dialogue Proces reached. Has the government made any announcement regarding the divided families on both sides of the border. And so on. My heart sinks. Such questions from her almost scare the daylights out of me. What a hapless person like me can only do is to answer her in positive. Yes, something good is going to happen in the near future, is the one and only reply I give to my mother always. I wonder for how long I shall be able to convince my mother by such answer. Like us, thousands of divided families on both sides of LoC experience such happenings. In reality, to me, the solution of Kashmir dispute has been reduced to an illusion. In both the countries Pakistan and India, hatred has replaced love that binds all human beings together. This is the reality that everyone will come to know about, sooner or later, as it can't be concealed under fake friendly relations between the two countries for so long. It seems that peace, that our politicians and the defense spokesmen often talk of, is not practicable here. The two governments are in reality after each other. Peace treaties are treated worse than the paper they are signed on even before the ink has dried up..

Greater Kashmir, 20 February 2007

### **Blasts trigger severe condemnation in Valley**

Srinagar, Feb 19: Political and militant organisations in the Valley have strongly condemned the blasts on the Attari-bound Samjhauta Express. The United Jihad Council UJC, an amalgam of militant outfits, expressed deep anguish and sorrow over the blast terming it as worst form of terrorism. In a statement here, a UJC spokesman said, The only purpose of such terror activities is to create tension between India and Pakistan. Such act can only be the handiwork of Indian agencies or the Hindu fundamentalists to sabotage the ongoing Indo-Pak peace process. The spokesman termed the claims of some Indian officials about involvement of Kashmiri militant outfits in the blast as misleading propaganda. The Jihadi outfits dont believe in killing innocent people. Mujahideen are fighting occupational forces in Kashmir and their target are Indian troopers and not civilians. Expressing deep shock and grief over the train blasts, Chief Minister Jammu and Kashmir Ghulam Nabi Azad has in strong words, condemned the act describing it as inhuman and most barbaric and added that killing of innocent must be condemned by all in unequivocal terms. Terming the horrific attack as one of the most barbaric acts of terror, PDP Patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed said the perpetrators are the worst enemies of humanity, who have absolutely no respect for human lives..

Daily Excelsior, 20 February 2007

### **Editorial: Avoidable tension**

Prima facie it appears that the tension at the outskirts of this city last week-end in the wake of the alleged custodial killing of a young person under the Satwari police station was totally avoidable. First, the incident itself appears to have no justification. It is unimaginable that the police should pick up a young person from outside his house and drive him into the police station just like that. He was not an absconder. Secondly, it defies imagination that he should have been found unconscious within hours without being subjected to torture by the men in uniform in whose custody he all along was. Why was he not taken to the hospital? Thirdly, the family of the young man could have been treated sympathetically instead of being ordered about to take care of his health. How could it be expected to react without finding the facts? It was only after reaching the local

police post that it had found the youth lying in an unconscious condition. The first reaction of family members could have only been of shock. Their worst fears were confirmed when he was declared almost brought dead to the hospital. That eventually he passed away was a tragic but not an entirely unexpected climax to what evidently is a story of the police highhandedness right under the nose of the State administration. One can't support violence. But how does one expect relatives and their friends to respond when they are faced with such an uncomfortable scenario'

The Hindu, 20 February 2007

**Opinion: Keep the peace process on track (Siddharth Varadarajan)**

IN TERMS of the choice of both target and timing, it is not difficult to surmise that Sunday night's bomb blast on board the link train of the Samjhauta Express was aimed primarily at stopping the peace process between India and Pakistan. As the indigent, divided families who travel on it every week know so well, the time the train takes to run from Delhi to Lahore can hardly be justified by the laws of locomotion or the dictates of cartography. And yet, that journey is a symbol of the civilised neighbourliness ordinary Indians and Pakistanis so desperately yearn for, a hint of what the future might bring if only the understanding and compromise its name connotes were allowed to run to its final destination..At the same time, the overall scale of cross-border violence and infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir has fallen, though the scale and audacity of terrorist strikes elsewhere in India has gone up. In assessing its general policy to Pakistan, India knows there is no viable military option or compellance strategy to deal with this problem. The massive military mobilisation during Operation Parakram proved conclusively that India has no option other than diplomacy in dealing with Pakistan..

Kashmir Times, 20 February 2007

**Survey on HR abuse: victims feel time ripe for justice, truth**

Srinagar, Feb 19: Irrespective of common experience of human rights abuse by various ethnic, linguistic, religious and political groups, each group considers itself as the real victim and sometimes the only victims. Besides, deep sense of mistrust has led to the othering process, of blaming each other and of parallel and contradictory histories they thrive on. Years of conflict have affected the lives of most of the people in the region of the Jammu and Kashmir. Key findings from the survey conducted in Kashmir by International Center for Transitional Justice reveal that different ethnic, linguistic, religious and political groups experience human rights abuses at the hands of the Indian security forces, intelligence agencies and police as well as militant organizations/armed groups operating in the region. Different groups are aware of the violations suffered by each other, reflected the survey. The Kashmiri Muslims, it said, were aware that there were targeted killings of the Pandits by the militants in the early 1990s. Similarly, the Pandits of the Jammu region were aware that the Indian security forces committed excesses on the Kashmiris. Irrespective of this common experience of abuse, the survey showed that the groups considered themselves as the real victims and sometimes the only victims..

Greater Kashmir, 20 February 2007

**Opinion: As Kashmir bleeds, the solution is nowhere in sight (Arshid Ahmad)**

Again human rights violations, disappearances, and ultimately the exhumation of bodies of innocent civilians have stunned the conscience keepers besides the common man on whom the sword of fear hangs over. This is not the first time or the aberration in the last 17 years when such inhuman and savage acts have come to occur. Some victims are fortunate in the sense that they catch the attention of media, political leaders and general public, but others mostly the inhabitants of the countryside are eclipsed into oblivion and no one bothers about their rights. Human rights abuses, disappearances, custodial killings are no new phenomena and it has become a matter of routine and their recurrence is predictable and normal. Frequently human right abuses occur regularly in the conflict zones and fighting factions, both state and non state affairs resort to third degree torture methods. What a stark misery is it that in all this innocent civilian is the victim. Life loses its value as bloodshed has become the starkest reality we have come to grapple with. Human rights groups are there to help stop abuses. Have they done anything substantial which can be called a contribution in arresting these violations..

Kashmir Times, 20 February 2007

**Opinion: Baglihar verdict: New Pandoras Box (A.H Talib)**

The decision of the World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert NE, Richard Laffite, on the Baglihar Power Project BPP last week has generated intense debate. Even as the common man on the street remains confused and ill-informed as ever before about the goings-on, some guys in government like our Ladakhi Power Minister and the construction lobby of the Baglihar Power Project BPP are grinning and busy patting their own backs. Officials and politicians in New Delhi having been associated with negotiations on the water issue with Islamabad are partying over champagne. After the initial sense of victory, establishment in Pakistan is furious and is back to its drawing boards weighing options on taking their battle for Indus waters to new fronts. J&K Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad, after visiting the BPP site termed the decision of the World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert NE as a win-win verdict for all. But is it really a win-win situation for India, Pakistan and Jammu & Kashmir? Does our State have something to cheer about? From an initial cost of Rs 3595 crore in 1998 to Rs 4140 crore in 2002, the BPP would now cost us Rs 5000 crore in 2006. There is every possibility that it will end up at Rs 6000 crore when the costs of the changes suggested by the NE are implemented..

Indian Express, 21 February 2007

**Kashmiri separatist leaders to meet Kasuri**

New Delhi, February 20: Separatists from Jammu and Kashmir would be meeting the visiting Pakistan Foreign Minister Khursheed Mahmood Kasuri, who arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday for talks with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. During his stay, Kasuri has called for separate meeting with hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, JKLF Chief Yaseen Malik and other separatist leaders, sources in the separatist camps said. The meeting is seen by Kashmir watchers as a move by Pakistan to forge unity among all the separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 21 February 2007

**Govt took historical, revolutionary steps beyond CMP: Azad**

Jammu, Feb 20: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that the Government is fast moving ahead with its ambitious programmes to usher the State towards prosperity and strengthen the pillars of peace. It has not been able only to fulfill all its major promises made through manifesto of the Congress and also documented in CMP but has gone beyond the same after realizing response of the people, their confidence and increasing faith in the Government, Mr Azad said while addressing Pradesh Congress Committee Executive of Jammu province this evening. The Chief Minister said that creation of eight new districts, three sub-divisions and 12 tehsils was not made on any recommendation of any commission or demand of any political party but keeping in mind that creation of these districts will accelerate pace of development in all nooks and corners of the State. He said that similarly, another historical step has been taken in the shape of new Roshni legislation vesting free ownership rights of 16.60 lakh kanals of State land to poor farmers with the aim to boost agriculture economy of the State..

Greater Kashmir, 21 February 2007

### **Mukharji to play referee between Cong, PDP**

Srinagar, Feb 20: Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, supremo of the key ally in the Congress-led ruling coalition Peoples Democratic Party, has finally managed to wrench Congress high commands attention over his latest demand for troop reduction and removal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA. Top Congress sources in New Delhi disclosed that India's Foreign Minister Pranab Kumar Mukharji called Mufti on Tuesday morning and invited him to a formal discussion over his latest demands. PDP sources said Mufti showed a cool response to the invite. However a Delhi-based Kashmiri Pandit, an old Congress hand, is persuading him for the meeting. The invitation, sourced said followed a special session of Congress bigwigs associated with Kashmir affairs. On Monday evening the Kashmir Committee a subsidiary within the All India Congress Committee met in the capital on Monday and authorized the Foreign Minister Pranab Kumar Mukharji to hold one-on-one with the former Union Home Minister and Peoples Democratic Party supremo Mufti Muhammad Sayeed over his demands, which he has already presented before Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. Despite his preoccupation with his Pakistani counterpart Khursheed Kasuris due arrival, Mukharji called up Mufti on Tuesday morning and sought his presence in Delhi to discuss the latest touchy issues..

Greater Kashmir, 21 February 2007

### **Opinion: Creative approaches on Kashmir -II (Dr. H Nayeem)**

..A solution - that is acceptable to both India and Pakistan is a semantic as well as a logical absurdity or at best tautological of the fixed positions given the things as they are though I must hasten to add that president General Musharraf has been able to move away along with the majority of Pakistanis from the frozen embrace of the past and has made a paradigmatic shift from dispute-centric to people-centric approach. He has publicly declared that it is primarily the satisfaction and aspirations of Kashmiris which is of paramount importance and has not used his Pakistan first refrain to tighten his claim on Kashmir. India continues to live in the tight and frozen embrace of the ossified and fossilized position of the past and nothing short of her continued grip on Kashmir is acceptable to her. In fact she is using novel ways of tightening her grip on Kashmir

through the railway project underway and recent land lease decision in favour of non-Kashmiris through the state government and the proposal of Army General to make residential quarters in the state for army to fight against their emotional insecurity. This move is designed to concretize the occupation in the valley and shrink the space for natives at the territorial level. And at the peoples level Kashmiris voice is being punctured, fragmented by over-emphasis on sectarianism, party politics, regionalism and by other co-opting divisive, suppressive, marginalizing stratagems to create a monumental confusion of mutually contradictory blizzard of view points..

Kashmir Times, 21 February 2007

### **Beig seeks troops reduction, withdrawal of AFSPA**

Jammu, Feb 20: Peoples Democratic Party PDP has asked the political leadership of the country and the state to support its demand for troop reduction and withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA in Jammu & Kashmir, as, it would be the most appropriate people-centric Confidence Building Measure, to consolidate the reconciliation process. The improved security scenario has to be complemented by substantial action that builds the peoples confidence and moves to change the ground situation, senior PDP leader, Muzaffar Hussain Beig said in a discussion telecast on a local TV network Monday evening. He said instead of unnecessarily raising hue and cry over PDPs demand, all the political parties, both at the national and the state level, must take the same on its merits so that a cohesive right message is conveyed at this crucial moment. Beig said as emphasized by PDP in its letter on February 17 2007, the Chief Minister should, in the right spirit of the coalition, convene a special meeting of the state cabinet to discuss the three demands raised by the party including phased reduction of troops, revocation of AFSPA and vacation of agricultural, orchard land and government and private buildings by the armed forces..

Daily Excelsior, 22 February 2007

### **Separatists to meet Kasuri today**

New Delhi, Feb 21: Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri will meet Kashmiri separatists, including hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, here tomorrow in a series of meetings. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, whose India itinerary was revised yesterday, was earlier scheduled to hold discussions with the separatists on February 23. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq-led moderate Hurriyat delegation, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front JKLF chief Yasin Malik, and Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Patrys Shabir Ahmed Shah, besides Mr Geelani will call on Mr Kasuri. Sources said Mr Kasuri, who is on an official three-day visit, will ask the warring secessionists to forge unity and present a united stand on Kashmir. If the separatists come together on one platform it will be easy for Pakistan to negotiate with India on Kashmir, they said. Recently, the divide between the two factions of the Hurriyat deepened further with Mirwaiz Farooq supporting Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's four-point Kashmir formula and Mr Geelani opposing it..

Greater Kashmir, 22 February 2007

### **Ganderbal police was in league with SOG'**

Srinagar, Feb 21: The Special Investigation Team of police probing the fake encounter

killings of many civilians has found that the Ganderbal police had not investigated claims of Special Operations Group of Police and Army, which described the slain men as militants who died in encounters, before registering FIRs. During investigation we found that police in Ganderbal, Kangan, and Ajas had carried investigations into the so-called encounters in most inept way and gross display of incompetence and non-professionalism, a police officer probing the case told Greater Kashmir on Wednesday. The concerned Station House Officers SHOs and officer incharge of Ajas police post had registered the FIRs without ascertaining the facts and relied on the word of the SOG men and Army that the killed persons were militants and that arms and ammunition was recovered from them, he said. Action under rules is being initiated against the guilty..

Greater Kashmir, 22 February 2007

**Opinion: What after grave crimes' (Naseer A Ganai)**

Finally grave crimes of New Delhi in Kashmir came to fore with people outside J&K baffled over what is happening in Kashmir. News organizations say that all those killed in encounters were not militants or hard core Islamist terrorist Jihadis. Of course they were ordinary people having no extraordinary stories. But when these ordinary people were arrested, they were being made extra-ordinary by State when it projected them Islamist Jihadis. The consequences of State propaganda is there for everyone to see. Padder, Yaqoob Mir are two examples, there might be hundreds others in graves, rivers and lakes of Kashmir. The killing of civilians in encounters and then their projection as foreign militants is not indictment of any person or an agency. But it is indictment of New Delhi which has justified everything in Jammu and Kashmir in the name of cross border terrorism and abetment to terrorism from across the border. It is verdict against those Delhi based journalists, intellectuals who always toed States line when it comes to Kashmir. That too in the name of national interests. It is verdict against those who haunted those who wrote objectively on Kashmir accusing them of being agents, anti-nationals and Pakistani stooges..

Kashmir Times, 22 February 2007

**Pandits in Valley: Victims of miserable living conditions, govt apathy (Shabir Dhar)**

Srinagar, Feb 21: At a time when the state government has failed to take serious steps in bringing back the displaced Kashmiri Pandits, many members of this community who continued to stay in valley in the last 17 years are at the verge of leaving Kashmir in a bid to settle outside. Courtesy: not any security threat, but the official apathy, miserable plight and the pathetic living conditions which according to them, compels them to think so. Our condition is worse than animals. The government is little interested in paying any attention to us, said Roop Krishen Raina, a resident of Akura hamlet, who along with his family, lives in Mattan. Roop Krishan and his family shifted from the village Akura village to Mattan town in Anantang in March 2003 following the massacre of 24 pandits by unknown gunmen at Nadimarg in Shopian. Since then a two-room shack makes Roops house in the town. The house, in fact, is a cavern where the inmates have to stoop down to enter the main door. The family comprises of six members father, mother, wife and two children. The family is using one room as kitchen. The other room is used as their drawing, guest and bed room at the same time. An open field outside their house is their bathroom as well as toilet..

Indian Express, 22 February 2007

**JeM had sent threat letter on Feb 7**

The Indian Express has in its possession the threat letter, written in Hindi, addressed to the station manager of the Old Delhi railway station. The letter clearly mentions that terrorist outfits were waiting to strike at the Old Delhi railway station and other possible targets after February 15. Senior officials told The Indian Express that the inland letter card, which arrived at the railway station via post on the February 7, was addressed to Arun Shukla, the station master. The writer, who claimed to be writing on behalf of Jaish e Mohammed, warned against execution of Mohammed Afzal and demanded his release as early as possible. The sender of the mail threatened that if Afzal was not released by the February 15, a number bomb blasts would follow. Besides railway stations, the letter mentioned the Golden Temple at Amritsar and the Vaishno Devi temple as possible targets of attack..

Daily Excelsior, 23 February 2007

**CJM summons Brig in fake encounters**

Srinagar, Feb 22: While Central Forensic Laboratory Chandigarh report of DNA testing today confirmed that Special Operations Group SOG and Rashtriya Rifles RR had killed two of the south Kashmir missing civilians as foreign militants, Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar CJM summoned Commander of 3-Sector RR, Brigadier Jehangir Anklesaria, for his personal appearance and statement in the infamous Ganderbal fake encounters. DIG Central Kashmir, Farooq Ahmed, who is heading a Special Investigation Team SIT of J&K Police on the Ganderbal fake encounters, told the Excelsior that he received two DNA testing reports from CFSL Chandigarh today. He said that one of the reports has confirmed that the body exhumed at a grave in Sumbal area earlier this month was that of the missing civilian, Abdur Rehman Paddar of Larnoo Kokernag, and not that of a foreign militant Abu Hafiz. As the Kokernag carpenter had disappeared mysteriously in Batmaloo area of Srinagar last year, the Sumbal unit of SOG Ganderbal and RR 13 Bn had handed over a bullet-riddled body to the villagers and claimed that it was that of a Pakistani militant Abu Hafiz. The militant, according to SOG and Army, had got killed in an encounter with security forces. As directed by Police and Army, people of two Sumbal villages had buried the body..

Daily Excelsior, 23 February 2007

**Mirwaiz, Shah meet Kasuri**

New Delhi, Feb 22: India and Pakistan should not allow incidents like Samjhauta Express blasts to disrupt the ongoing talks and both the countries should institutionalise and take forward the ongoing peace process in the larger interest of their people, the moderate Hurriyat Conference said today. Delhi and Islamabad must institutionalise and consolidate peace process so that people-centric CBMs are taken and the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir improves, moderate Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq told reporters after an almost two-hour-meeting with Pakistan Foreign Minister Khursheed Mahmood Kasuri here at the Pakistan High Commission. The peace process must be taken forward and Hurriyat supports both India and Pakistan for this initiative, Mr Farooq said. He reiterated the demand of inclusion of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the peace

process, saying it is a consultative process and people have to be a part of it. The Mirwaiz was leading a delegation comprising Maulana Abbas Ansari, Bilal Lone and Aga Syed Hassan at the meeting with Mr Kasuri, who was here on a three-day official visit to co-chair the revived India-Pakistan Joint Commission Meeting JCM and hold talks with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on carrying forward the peace process. Sources said Mr Kasuri, who was accompanied by senior Pakistani officials, asked the warring secessionists to forge unity to present a united stand on Kashmir..

The Tribune, 23 February 2007

### **PDPs demand for special Cabinet meeting turned down**

Jammu, February 22: The ruling Congress has rejected the demand of its coalition partner- Peoples Democratic Party PDP for a special meeting of the Cabinet to discuss the issue of pullout of armed forces from Kashmir and repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA. Rejection of the demand reportedly came after a meeting of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and PCC chief Peerzada Sayeed with the Congress president Sonia Gandhi and other central leaders at Delhi on Tuesday. Health Minister Mangat Ram Sharma, who was also present reportedly at these meetings, said today the Congress was not in a position to oblige patron of the PDP Mufti Sayeed on the issue. Mr Sharma said the Congress was a national party and had to keep several aspects in mind. He said the Mufti might be invited to Delhi by the Congress high command or some senior ministers to discuss the issue. However, there was no question of convening a special meeting of the cabinet here..

Greater Kashmir, 23 February 2007

### **Malik on hunger strike in Delhi**

New Delhi, Feb 22: As Yasin Malik led families of missing people from Jammu and Kashmir on a day-long hunger strike here today against alleged human rights violations in the state, Kashmiri Pandit youth launched a counter agitation against the JKLF chief, demanding his arrest and retrial' for sedition. Sixty family members of the missing people, mostly women who arrived here on Monday from Srinagar, participated in the strike. Carrying pictures of their missing kin, the families demanded constitution of a time-bound commission of inquiry to investigate their complaints. The hunger strike, held at Jantar Mantar, was part of the three- day public support mobilisation campaign, organised by the Kashmir Solidarity Committee KSC. The Pandit youth, under the banner of Roots in Kashmir, held the demonstration just across the road where the JKLF chief was staging his hunger strike. The youth said their demonstration was aimed at highlighting the human rights violations by militants in the state. The Kashmir Solidarity Committee as part of its campaign had organised sit-in, public hearings and demonstrations in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and other venues in the capital over the past three days..

Greater Kashmir, 23 February 2007

### **Opinion: Delusions sound good (Riyaz Masroor)**

In Kashmir politics, Sajad Lone is just a tot. If he is today reckoned a player on the Kashmirs murky political theater part of the credit goes to Syed Ali Shah Geelani a veteran voice of Kashmir resistance who took his name to places during an ideological

row that later descended into a bitter wrangle. Long before, this 40-year-old soft-spoken realist, he likes to be called rather than a separatist or mainstreamer, had endeared himself to the Indian media by an emotional outburst against Pakistans premier secret agency, ISI. This happened soon after his father and a known Kashmiri politician, A G Lone was assassinated in 2002. Sajad later retracted the remark. The patchy treatment he is getting now in Indias English press, perhaps, indicates Sajads transition from an outright antagonist of armed resistance to the one who believes that violence enjoys social sanctity. With no political past to offer, Sajads present largely owes to his father's assassination followed by his controversial flick against Pakistan and a head-on collision with the towering pro-freedom leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani. So far, his past and present could be summed up in less than a paragraph: Son of an ace politician and the one who dared to argue with Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who still remains the formidable icon of resistance..

Daily Excelsior, 24 February 2007

**Leave Kashmiris alone: Geelani**

New Delhi, Feb 23: Hardline Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has conveyed to Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri that Islamabad was taking hasty steps for ushering peace in the region and should keep off from Kashmir issue if it could not support the separatists. During his two-hour meeting with Kasuri here last evening, Geelani, who has accused Pakistan of taking a U-Turn on Kashmir, told the minister that the policy of Islamabad was indicative enough that it had agreed to New Delhis stand on Jammu and Kashmir. Criticizing Islamabad for coming out often with different plans and roadmaps on Kashmir issue, Geelani, who had left the Pakistan High Commission in a huff last night, asked Kasuri why he had not raked up the issue of fake encounters and repeal of black laws with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. Flaying Islamabads policy of taking hasty steps, Geelani said in a statement that the present stand of Pakistan was creating chaos and confusion among various groups in Kashmir. If Pakistan cannot support the way it has been since 1947 and if there are some compulsions in doing so, leave us alone, Geelani said..

Indian Express, 24 February 2007

**Opinion: Go on, seize the peace (Michael Krepon)**

The attack on the Samjhauta Express underlines that the higher one climbs toward the summit of peace-making, the more daunting the challenges. But leaders on both sides must remain steadfast..An agreement in principle on the key elements of a Kashmir settlement has never been this close at hand, which is why the Samjhauta Express was torched. Whenever uncharacteristic progress is achieved in a longstanding dispute, leaders can either seize the moment or duck for cover. Mirwaiz Umer Farooq demonstrated great personal courage when he travelled to Pakistan and called on militants to lay down their arms. Other political leaders, with far less to lose, have tried to apply the brakes, seeking refuge behind public opinion, which they claim is not yet ready for a settlement. If true leadership constituted following public opinion, we could all choose our leaders in the lottery. In retrospect, two key shifts have brought India and Pakistan within sight of a Kashmir settlement. The first was the tacit decision by leaders in Pakistan and India to frame the Kashmir issue in human terms, rather than as a

religious or territorial dispute..

Kashmir Times, 24 February 2007

**Cong mulls PDPs demand for demilitarisation (Iftikar Gilani)**

New Delhi, Feb 23: Congress high command is still weighing the option of acceding to the demands of its ally People's Democratic Party PDP to withdraw the Armed Forces Special Powers Act APSPA and begin a phased withdrawal of security forces. A senior Congress leader here on Friday denied that his party had outrightly rejected the PDPs demands, but made it clear that withdrawal of troops was linked to larger canvas including reciprocity from Pakistan. We understand that our ally the PDP has to fight it out for votes and support with the National Conference NC, which is also making similar demands, said the leader. We sympathize with them, he added. Congress party had deputed External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee to discuss the issue with the PDP leaders. The issue has snowballed into a major controversy between the alliance partners in Jammu and Kashmir, having potential of destabilizing the government of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. But, if Congress leaders in the national capital are to be believed, they say the issue has been sorted out despite Chief Minister complaining at a recent meeting that PDP was becoming unbearable..

Greater Kashmir, 24 February 2007

**Emmas report on JK her personal opinion, says EU MP (Hilal Ahmad)**

Srinagar, Feb 23: Baroness Emma Nicholson, the special rapporteur of European Union on Kashmir, stirred a diplomatic storm with her skewed report on Pakistani and Indian engagements on the conflict-ridden state. Her report on Kashmir situation was leaked to the press even before the European Parliament had discussed it. The Pakistani establishment and Kashmiri people and their leadership was angry. Now, the EU is trying to salvage its credibility from the wreckage called by Nicholsons report. Richard Howitt, the vice-president of EU Parliaments human rights sub-committee, was in the Valley for the past few days. He says Nicholson's report is her personal opinion and doesnt reflect the EUs viewpoint on Kashmir. It was drafted by one person. It does not reflect the ground realities, he said here Friday. Nicholsons report had got quite a beating on the contention that its contrary to what the situation in the state tells. How can you say it does not reflect the ground situation' the GK asked Howitt. He replied that after many consultations with international organizations and government sources we can say that her report is not totally fair, accurate or non partisan..

Daily Excelsior, 24 February 2007

**Editorial: Funding terror**

Is there any surprise in the report that a militant has obtained a mobile telephone connection in the name of an elusive Army jawan' Is there anything new in the revelation that terrorist activities have been funded by affluent people in foreign countries' In fact, the latest disclosures in this newspaper about the inmates in the Kot Bhalwal jail misusing cellular phones to contact their sources abroad are links in a long chain. It is no more a secret that terrorism has been a big business in the State. From jihadis and their patrons to freedom fighters living in self-exile many have financed it. The local benefaction has also been available at one point in time. Either it was extracted under

duress or extended as protection money. Hawala conduits too have been found handy for the purpose. Now and then one keeps reading reports about couriers carrying huge amounts of cash from one end to the other. Quite a few of them have been held at airports and railway stations. On one occasion the Union Government had indeed publicised the enormous hawala receipts of almost every top secessionist leader. Income-tax notices were also slapped on separatists..

Daily Excelsior, 25 February 2007

**Mavias Cell exposes LeT, HMPPR sleeper cells**

Jammu, Feb 24: In a major success, Rajouri police today managed to extract details on a large scale about sleeper cells of Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen Pir Panjal Regiment operating in twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch besides network of the two outfits spread across Pakistan occupied Kashmir PoK and Kashmir Valley from huge data retrieved from two mobile telephones recovered from the possession of two militants commanders, who were gunned down by Army and police at Hasblot and Raina Mohalla in Thanna Mandi area of Rajouri district. Two mobile telephones 94196-87884 and 94199-72186 Nokia 6600 and 31 were recovered from the possession of Shahid Rasool alias Abu Mavia of Faisalabad and Khalid alias Abu Umar, both Pakistanis and commanders of HMPPR. Mavia was operating in different areas of the State for last five years and had recently been designated as co-ordinator for LeT and HMPPR outfits, a high ranking post given only to experienced commanders. Official sources said after Abu Mavia was killed yesterday afternoon, police received a call on his Cellphone from Muzaffarabad, capital city of PoK at 2.20 pm from number 058-66063266..

The Tribune, 25 February 2007

**15 more police battalions sought**

Jammu, February 24: While the raising of four police battalions is yet to be completed, the state government has sent a proposal to the Centre seeking sanction for raising 15 new battalions for strengthening the police grid in Jammu and Kashmir. Official sources said here today that the recruitment process for the four police battalions would be completed shortly but in the meantime they have requested the Centre for sanctioning the raising of 15 new battalions during the next five years. A senior police officer of the rank of DIG said at present the police strength is over 75,000, excluding 25,000 SPOs and VDC members. The strength of the police force in the state was 30,000 in 1990 when militancy took roots..

Indian Express, 25 February 2007

**Opinion: Terror without a face (Tavleen Singh)**

Every time there is a new act of terrorism on Indian soil I find myself asking the same questions. Who are these guys? Why do we not know their names and faces? Are we sure that the suspects picked up after the event are the right ones?..I rarely agree with Arundhati Roy on anything, but concede that where Mohammad Afzal's alleged guilt is concerned, there is more than a shadow of doubt. If we know for sure that he was a small cog in the conspiracy, why is it we know so little about the five dead terrorists? Which city did they come from? Where did they go to school? What has happened to their families?..The recently exhumed bodies in Kashmir confirm that the situation there has

been equally bad. Hundreds of innocent people have been killed as terrorists, thousands have disappeared and we still have no answers. We know almost nothing about the group that kidnapped and killed those foreign tourists nearly 15 years ago. We do not even know where the bodies were buried..

Daily Excelsior, 26 February 2007

### **Mehbooba reiterates stand on troops reduction, AFSPA**

Srinagar, Feb 25: Toughening its stand ahead of a scheduled meeting with the Congress high command, the PDP today said its demand for reduction of troops and revocation of AFSPA will be the most credible action to have a positive impact on the fast changing ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir. To mark the beginning for getting out of the messy static situation we are in for the past 17 years, only such tangible measures would make a difference to the life in Kashmir and provide a visible breakthrough on the ground, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti told a workers' convention at the party headquarters here. She said her party's demand for troops reduction and withdrawal of AFSPA is vital to level the ground for the real and substantial forward movement in the ongoing peace process. These measures should not be viewed in isolation, as unless practical initiatives are taken to address the situation on the ground, the confidence building measures will have no meaning for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are the worst victims of the conflict. Mehbooba, a Lok Sabha MP, is scheduled to meet External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee next week, party sources said. PDP is sharing power with Congress in the State since November 2, 2002..

Kashmir Times, 26 February 2007

### **Where grief gives birth to shared strength**

Jammu, Feb 25: Pain is a shared emotion. At least one is convinced after meeting the 28-year old Tasleema Daka carrying her 14-months old son and 70-year old Ghulam Rasool Padroo. Both are shell-shocked yet still wear a weird smile on their faces. The duo is still trying to reconcile with a devastating truth, which was unearthed recently and shook everyone, whose son, father, brother or husband has gone missing during the last 18 years in the Valley, which is presently witnessing a spree of skeletons tumbling out in the form of kill list awards. Presently stranded for the last two days at Jammu along with 55 other kith and kin of disappear, on their way back to Valley, they had gone to New Delhi under the aegis of Association of the Parents of the Disappeared Persons APDP, to seek an audience with justice through democratic means of protests. The moving thread, which binds the duo, passed through Ganderbal and Kangan graveyards from where the bodies of 35-year old Nazir Ahmed Daka, the husband of Tasleema and 35-year old Abdul Rehman Padroo, the son of Ghulam Rasool were exhumed on February 2, 2007 after shocking disclosures by one STF jawan Farooq Ahmed Padroo..

Daily Excelsior, 26 February 2007

### **Editorial: Temple thefts**

A report about thieves having struck at three temples in Udhampur town at the same time last week is bound to cause concern. The resultant resentment among the local people is also understandable. Why the crooks have stolen only gold ornaments leaving donation boxes untouched is not difficult to comprehend. Invariably they are always in a hurry. In

any event they find it more profitable to make good their escape with smaller but more precious articles. They risk being caught if they take a longer time struggling to break open cash chests. Prime facie it seems that they have applied the same strategy in the shrines as they would in any home or office. How much their booty is exactly has not been mentioned. More than anything else, however, what hurts the faithful is the defilement of holy places where they pay obeisance every day. It is usual sight to see thousands of devotees across the State walking up to their places of worship mostly in mornings with prayers on their lips. Naturally they have been in for a surprise in Udhampur when they were face to face all of a sudden with idols shorn of their adornments. These incidents come in a category completely different from the happenings in which terrorists are involved. In comparison they may actually appear to be somewhat insignificant occurrences..

Greater Kashmir, 26 February 2007

### **Geelani seeks EU role in JK resolution**

Srinagar, Feb 25: Chairman of Hurriyat ConferencG Syed Ali Shah Geelani on Sunday appealed the European Parliament to play its role in the resolution of Kashmir issue. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is explosive, Geelani, according to a Hurriyat spokesman, told the EU Parliament member Richard Howitt at a meeting in India International Centre, New Delhi. The people of Kashmir are facing the worst kind of state terrorism. Geelani said, The troops are busy in genocide of Kashmiris; they are using harassment of women as a war weapon. We are not against talks as projected by India, but if government of India will accept the disputed status of Kashmir, withdraw its troops, repeal black laws and release the detainees, we are willing to hold dialogue..

Kashmir Times, 26 February 2007

### **Editorial: Coalitions predicament**

The ruling coalition in Jammu and Kashmir comprising various groups, lacking common perception and approach, was never a cohesive or homogeneous team. On all counts it was a marriage of convenience for the sake of power. From the very beginning the coalition partners were speaking with different voices and on a number of occasions two major coalition partners-Congress and PDP-appeared to be on a collision course. It goes to the credit of Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, an astute politician as he is, that he managed to sort out contradictions keeping the coalition of such heterogeneous elements intact. But with the PDP raising the ante on its demands for gradual demilitarization, revocation of the Draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA, vacation of buildings, and land including institutions like schools, and stadia occupied by the security forces without paying any compensation and rent to the owners and putting an end to human rights abuses the coalition presently headed by Ghulam Nabi Azad is facing a serious crisis. The coalition faces a threat if the issues which have divided the two major partners are not resolved amicably. What fueled the crisis was the unwise statement of the chief minister liking the question of personal security of publicmen and others with the demand for demilitarization, with Mufti and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti surrendering their personal security. Concerned over these developments the Congress High Command stepped in to defuse the crisis..

Kashmir Times, 27 February 2007

**FIRs galore against security forces in enforced disappearances but action elusive (S. Basharat)**

Srinagar, Feb 26: The prompt enquiry in the fake encounters case of Ganderbal and arrest of police personnel including an SSP may have revived hopes of many families who have been suffering the trauma of missing relatives for the last one and a half decade.

However, action remains elusive in the cases that have been pending for the last several years. The list is endless and as yet the government has not spelt out a mechanism to begin fresh investigations in cases where FIRs stand registered against security personnel. One such FIR stands registered at police station Kupwara dated January 23, 1994, which states, Bashir Ahmad Reshi son of Mohammad Abdullah Reshi a resident of Khumbryal-Lolab in district Kupwara was a shopkeeper General Store. On September 9, 1990 at about 1100 hours, a party of BSF 132 Battalion camped at Zangli-Kupwara raided the shop and apprehended Reshi..The person is allegedly killed by BSF personnel. The body could not be traced. The relatives approached the police station Kupwara for lodging the report..

Daily Excelsior, 27 February 2007

**Centre cant dismiss our demand like autonomy: Mehbooba**

Srinagar, Feb 26: Demanding demilitarisation in Jammu and Kashmir, Peoples Democratic Party today said troops reduction and revocation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act were the need of the hour in keeping with the changing ground situation in the State. The ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir had changed enough over the past four years which warranted reduction of Army and other security force personnel and revocation of the special powers given to them, PDP President Mehbooba Mufti told reporters here. She said there was no need to maintain such a large presence of security forces in the State to contain the remaining militants, whose numbers vary from 1,500 to 2,000. Asked about the partys course of action if their demand was not met, the Lok Sabha MP from Anantnag said the Centre cannot summarily dismiss this demand like it did with the autonomy resolution passed by the State Legislature in 2000. This is what the situation of the State requires. Army is normally called out in emergency or in case of communal riots and their success is measured by how soon they go back to their barracks. The time has now come for them to go back to the barracks, Mehbooba said..

Indian Express, 27 February 2007

**Opinion: Tragedy as marker of change (Rahul K Bhonsle)**

Three s are regarded as the founts of terrorism: ideology, infrastructure and state ineptitude. Of these the first I of ideology is regarded as fundamental to its spread. Kashmir is the leitmotif for terrorism in the subcontinent, which is supplanted by related factors of disunity..The Samjhauta Express has been a beacon of detente in Indo-Pakistan amity. Unlike many Indian trains it does not run to its full capacity, yet it is an extremely popular mode of travel for common people. The target was thus carefully selected to create ripples of discontent on both sides of the border. Fortunately this was assiduously avoided. Havana seems to have marked a new phase. Apart from a few acrimonious voices, the Pakistani hierarchy is demonstrating greater keenness to resolve Kashmir on mutually agreeable terms. By targeting the Samjhauta Express, the strategic message sent

out by militants to both Pervez Musharraf and Manmohan Singh is that a compromise not on their terms would not be acceptable. By firmly spurning the call for recrimination, the first I of ideology has been reasonably suborned.

Kashmir Times, 27 February 2007

**Editorial: License to kill**

In the face of increasing allegations about police role in fake surrenders, encounters and custodial killings, both in the militancy affected and otherwise peaceful areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the government has a serious task cut out for itself. There needs to be some serious introspection about the manner in which the police conducts itself and the manner in which police personnel deem themselves to be above law. The fake encounter killings at Ganderbal have already opened a pandoras box with people from all over the Valley and other militancy affected areas of the state coming out with shocking stories of atrocities at the hands of security forces, particularly the Special Operation Group of the police force. The ruthlessness of the SOG, which enjoys complete patronage of the political elements at the top in operating in the most unlawful manner at liberty, has already added to the notoriety of the police force. The unlimited powers and benefits given to the SOG in the name of fighting insurgency, without any system of accountability, has made it a terror force, perpetrating atrocities on the innocent civilians and not only getting away with it but also getting rewarded for the wrong, unlawful and terrorizing acts..

The Tribune, 27 February 2007

**Opinion: Talk to moderates for peace in Kashmir (Firdous Syed)**

The present avatar of the Indo-Pak peace talks is almost three years old, and it has completed three rounds of the composite dialogue process. There has hardly been any progress on contentious issues, including the one concerning Jammu and Kashmir. However, the continuation of the peace process, despite certain impediments and roadblocks, is an achievement in itself. The process witnessed a number of CBMs, most important being the ceasefire along the Line of Control since November 2003, which has brought great relief for the population residing on both sides of the LOC. Trans-LOC travel beginning with the bus services between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad on April 7, 2005, and the Poonch-Rawlakot service on June 20, 2006, is seen as a great stride forward. But until Feb 2007, only 3119 people have been able to travel, or have walked across the LoC, at the five designated points. Even as the ceasefire along the LoC continues to be in place, it was never extended to the mainland of Jammu and Kashmir. There has been no let up in violence resulting in continued death and destruction involving common masses, although the intensity of the violence is less today as indicated by the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, S.K. Sinha, Three people got killed daily in 2006 in comparison to nine in 1993..

Kashmir Times, 28 February 2007

**Time ripe for forces to return to barracks: Mehbooba**

New Delhi/Jammu, Feb 27: Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti this evening met the Minister for External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee and averred that the time was ripe to send back the armed forces to barracks so as to restore the confidence of

people in Indian democratic process. Mehbooba reiterated that the situation in J&K has improved considerably and that was reflective in Municipal elections and by-elections held after that, wherein the people participated in a large number expressing their confidence in the democratic process. While talking to KTNS, Mehbooba averred that in the meeting she pointed out that there was great improvement in the situation since 90, when the forces were called. Now when the peace process is going on and the people have rejected gun and are feeling safe under Indian democratic process. PDP feels that the time has come for the withdrawal of forces. Even going by the official figures, which claim that there are only 1500-2000 militants operating in the state, this is not rational to keep such a large number of forces to take on them, PDP president put forth this point before Pranab..

Greater Kashmir, 28 February 2007

### **EP debates Emmas biased Kashmir report**

Brussels, Feb 27: A controversial European Parliament draft report on Kashmir came under strong fire during a debate at the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee on Monday evening. The report remains a patronizing, insulting piece of work of the colonial days of divide and rule are over, thundered British MEP Sajjad Karim. The committee debated 16 compromise amendments to the 15 page draft report on Kashmir prepared by another British MEP Emma Nicholson but came to no conclusion. The draft report was due to be adopted by the committee on 30 January, but postponed after a record 450 amendments were tabled. Nicholson said she has been working with shadow rapporteurs from other political groups on the compromise proposals to the report, Kashmir: Present situation and future prospects. Nicholson pleaded with the MEPs not to overturn the work that has been done, but in an angry reaction she suggested that the amendment proposals have come straight from Islamabad. Another British MEP, James Elles, criticized the report as unbalanced and biased and called for the establishment of a drafting committee to prepare the report. Elles, who heads the All Party Group for Kashmir in the EP queried as to why the rapporteur failed to produce the report on the conflict resolution of Kashmir..

Kashmir Times, 28 February 2007

### **Opinion: Let Azad and Attique meet and talk (A.G Noorani)**

..Azad would render a historic service if he invites Ahmed Khan to Srinagar for talks on both sets of proposals. Far from impairing the current parleys on joint mechanism, it will buttress it. The talks are at a political level and aim at a final solution. The CM's venture will be purely administrative, inspired by humanitarian considerations, for alleviation of a harsh situation in the interim, pending a solution. The two leaders would consult on administrative measures which each would take on his side of the LoC. The top leaders would resolve the political and legal issues on the basis of their agreement that the LoC must be made irrelevant. True, J&K and PAK do not recognise each other formally. But if the United States and China can hold talks for years at Warsaw without according recognition to each other, it is absurd to suggest that two Kashmiris cannot meet within the State itself and discuss how best to provide relief to the people..

The Tribune, 28 February 2007

### **Separatists talk of meaningful dialogue**

Srinagar, February 27: Describing Pakistan President Parvez Musharraf's four-point formula on self-rule as a first step towards resolving the Kashmir issue, United Jihad Council UJC chief Syed Salahuddin has said that it was, however, not a solution in itself. He held that an ultimate and lasting solution was possible only through the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, adding that separatists were in favour of meaningful tripartite talks. This is being regarded as a significant move from the known stand of hardliners and was hailed by the Awami Action Committee AAC of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the main constituent of the separatist Hurriyat Conference here today. AAC general secretary G.M. Bhat said here that President Musharraf's proposals based on facts were a first step towards the resolution of Kashmir issue. Umar Farooq returned here yesterday from New Delhi after meeting Pakistan foreign minister Khursheed Mahmood Kasoori and some other ambassadors there. Bhat hailed the recent statements of Pakistan based chief of the UJC and supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Syed Salahuddin and Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed..

Greater Kashmir, 28 February 2007

### **Government to airlift stranded passengers**

Jammu, Feb 27: Keeping in view continuous blockage of the Srinagar-Jammu highway and apprehension of the road remaining blocked for few more days, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad took up the matter about stranded passengers with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on telephone on Tuesday evening. He talked to the Prime Minister and requested to him that free air service may be provided to all stranded passengers from Jammu to Srinagar and vice-versa. According to an official spokesman, the Prime Minister immediately agreed and issued orders for two days free air service on February 28 and March 1 through special Army airplanes to stranded passengers both from Jammu to Srinagar and vice-versa. The free special air service will resume from Wednesday at 11 am..

Greater Kashmir, 28 February 2007

### **Opinion: Hall of shame-II (H. Zainagiree)**

What about draconian laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA and Disturbed Areas Act DAA, PDP and the NC are demanding revocation of? One needs to remember both these laws were invoked in 1990 when Mufti Sayed was the Union Home Minister and Jag Mohan, the fanatic killer, was the governor of this state. And wait. It was in 1996, soon after NC came to power; these black laws were extended to valley and then on August 2001 to three Muslim populated districts Doda, Ragouri and Poonch. These laws give impunity to armed forces from legal action. Under the AFSPA a cop can shoot to death any person on mere suspicion. Had the NC thought otherwise, these acts would have got lapsed and met their own death. But that was not for which Farooq was groomed and propped up. He was decoupled of his conscience. His was a body to gyrate to the tune of his masters. Mufti rule too did nothing different on this account. He too would have extended these laws to the state. We would have done the same, then deputy chief minister Muzafar Hussein Beigh droned in the assembly on August 2, 2006. So, this pro-Indian class, after getting insulated against the sensitivities and sentiments of the people, are tasked to provide the democratic face to otherwise military rule in Kashmir. Till such dreaded laws remain in force here, it is illusion, a farce to call it a democracy..