

Daily Excelsior, 1 July 2004

No plan to revoke Armed Forces Act in J&K: Pranab

SRINAGAR, June 30: Asserting that the Centre had no plan to revoke Armed Forces Act in Jammu and Kashmir, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee today said the challenge from militancy in the State had been reduced. "It (challenge of militancy) is a subjective assessment in respect of number of incidents or casualties. At present, it is not as high as it was in the past," Mukherjee, who completed a maiden two-day visit to the State after taking over as Defence Minister told reporters at old airfield before leaving for Delhi. Mukherjee, however, said that in view of the recent incidents of violence, there was no plan to revoke the Armed Forces Act in force in Jammu and Kashmir since early 1990s. "The incidents of violence clearly demonstrate that the militant threat is still there and we never claimed that we have completely eliminated them," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 1 July 2004

**Fierce gun-battles in Rajouri, Poonch
Two ultras, 2 jawans killed**

JAMMU, June 30: Two militants and two soldiers were killed and four security personnel were injured in two separate encounters in the twin border districts today while a civilian was shot dead by the ultras in Mahore last night. Official sources said the troops of 100 Brigade cordoned off village Sam Samad in Thanna Mandi area of Rajouri district last night after getting an information that two top Pakistan militants had taken shelter in the house of a civilian Maqbool Hussain. Troops had to exercise restraint to avert civilian casualties since the area was populated. At about 1.30 am, the Army personnel succeeded in evacuating all local villagers including the family members of Hussain from the houses and shifted them to safer areas. The operation was also joined by local police.

Daily Excelsior, 1 July 2004

Javed Mir resigns from JKLF

SRINAGAR, June 30: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) vice-chairman Javed Ahmad Mir has resigned from the basic membership of the party. "Yes, I have resigned from the party and sent my resignation to Maisuma Headquarters of the JKLF today," he said. However, a JKLF spokesman denied having received the resignation from Mr Mir, who was the supreme commander of the JKLF before it announced unilateral ceasefire in mid nineties. The spokesman said JKLF chairman and other senior leaders had gone to north Kashmir in connection with the signature campaign launched by the party. Mr Mir said he has resigned on health grounds, but informed sources said he put in his papers due to differences with party chairman Yasin Malik over his interview to a national daily in which he has said JKLF was ready to join talks with the Centre on the Kashmir issue provided these are result oriented and meaningful.

Greater Kashmir, 1 July 2004

Editorial: Prevent suicides

The alarming increase in suicide cases has sent a shock wave across the Valley. According to SMHS data, 729 suicide cases were registered last year. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. The number is much higher as most of the cases are not even reported due to social and religious stigma attached to suicides. The experts have given reasons ranging from unemployment to failure in a love affair for this unfortunate trend. Failure to get a match at right time has wreaked havoc with the psychology of many a woman and is one of the major reasons for suicide among females. Similarly, dejection and over expectancy of the parents has forced a number of young people to take the extreme step. There may be many other reasons. If a detailed and in-depth study is undertaken the reasons can be unveiled. But, it is high time when the social engineers must come out and do the needful. The institution of marriage has been corrupted by the people themselves. In the name of tying the eternal

knot people resort to a crude show of ostentation.

Kashmir Images, 1 July 2004

Border fencing almost complete: Pranab Mukherjee

Good fences make good neighbours

Srinagar: Stressing that ceasefire has helped the peace process Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee Wednesday said that fencing along the international border and the line of control (LoC) is almost complete. "The atmosphere has improved since the announcement of the ceasefire last November, but we have reports that certain number of militants are waiting at the launching pads to cross over," Mukherjee told reporters here. He said there would be no reduction in the number of troops guarding the borders in Kashmir.

Kashmir Images, 1 July 2004

Two Army engineers fencing LoC killed

Jammu: In the first attack on army personnel working on a project to fence the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, suspected militants have killed two Army engineers. A group of militants stormed a camp of military engineers in Saujian sector in Poonch district late Tuesday night. Four personnel were critically wounded in the attack. Soldiers later engaged the militants in a gun battle but there were no reports of casualties on militant side. The Army is currently fencing off some 570 km of the 742-km LoC to prevent terrorist incursions from across the military ceasefire line

The Hindu, 1 July 2004

Govt. reviews Charar-e-Sharief project

SRINAGAR, JUNE 30 . The Jammu and Kashmir government today convened a meeting to review the implementation of Charar-e-Sharief development project and asked the authorities to work towards mobilising financial resources for early completion of Rs 20 crore-project aimed at developing gutted town including the Khankah Sharief shrine. The Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Ghulam Hassan Mir, who presided over the meeting,

directed the project authorities to immediately hand over all those assets to line departments which have been completed under the CDP so that these were maintained property, official sources said here. The three-hour meeting also discussed priorities and related parameters of current year's plan, the sources said it was decided that works of essential nature and completion of spill over works would be prioritised in the current year's action plan of CDP. These included construction of shopping complex, completion of motorable roads in the town, common facility centre, development of parks and improvement of roads.

The Tribune, 1 July 2004

2 militants killed in encounter

Srinagar, June 30: At least six persons, including two militants and a jawan, were killed and five others were injured in separate incidents across Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. A major tragedy was averted with the timely detection of an IED from the Khanyar area here this morning. The IED was defused by the bomb disposal squad and no damage was caused. Four civilians and security forces personnel were injured when suspected militants hurled a grenade at the busy Jehangir Chowk here last evening, the police said. Two Pakistan militants of the Jaish-e-Mohammad were killed in an encounter with the security forces at Saim Simat in Rajouri district of Jammu region today. Two AK rifles, six magazines, 200 rounds, two wireless sets and eight hand grenades were seized from the site of encounter.

The Indian Express, 1 July 2004

Clearing track for the J-K train

The gruesome murder of railway engineer Sudhir Kumar Pundir, and his brother Sandeep, is bound to cause a setback to the Government's Rs 6,000-crore dream project to link Jammu and Kashmir to the rest of the country. While the LeT attack may not have disrupted the talks, it has definitely succeeded in affecting work on the prestigious, 350-km rail project. Indian

Railway Construction Company (IRCON)—contractors for Northern Railway for the Qazigund-Baramulla section, where Pundir was working—withdrawed its engineers in protest after his death, demanding security for their personnel.

Greater Kashmir, 2 July 2004

Govt has no money for victims of violence

Srinagar, July 1: Government's claim to support the family members of victims of violence has no takers in Sopur. Six months have passed since the victims in this town and the adjoining villages had received money from tehsil office Sopur. "Every time we visit the office to collect cheques we face familiar words 'government has no funds.' During the last six months we have come here numerous times only to learn that the department has no money for us," says a resident of Dangi-wacha. This is not for the first time that the villagers have been subjected to unending wait. "We have now become used to it. At times we get monthly dues from here only after spending more than that on bus fare," says another aggrieved.

Greater Kashmir, 2 July 2004

Indo-Pak thaw causes rumblings among separatists

Salvation Movement quits Hurriyat (A)

Srinagar, July 1: Post talks, separatist outfits in Srinagar face defection with most of the organizations in tearing hurry to score brownie points. Following the resignation of erstwhile militant commander Javed Ahmad Mir from his parent organization JKLF, Abass Ansari –led Hurriyat Conference received a big jolt today when Kashmir Salvation Movement quit the conglomerate "in the larger interest of the movement." According to the KSM release issued after the executive committee meeting, eighty percent party cadre rallied behind KSM chairman Farooq Mamoosi when he decided to quit the Abass-led grouping. Being a political platform of all released militants KSM makes for a strong human resource for political mobilization.

The Tribune, 2 July 2004

Progress on Kashmir after Foreign Ministers' meet

Islamabad, July 1: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said the recent Foreign Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan "went of well" but the sincerity with which progress will be made on Kashmir and other issues will be known only after the Foreign Ministers' meeting in August. "It will be known more after the Foreign Ministers' meeting. But I am very hopeful," Musharraf said in an interaction with media here yesterday during which he dispelled the impression that he forced former prime minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali to quit. Musharraf, however, said he was satisfied at the progress made so far in the official-level talks.

The Indian Express, 2 July 2004

Patil keeps Hurriyat guessing on Round III talks

NEW DELHI, JULY 1: Home Minister Shivraj Patil today said the ground was being prepared for the third round of talks with the Hurriyat Conference but would not say who would represent the Centre in the dialogue. In the first two rounds, the Centre was represented by then deputy prime minister L.K. Advani. Patil said this time the Centre will be represented at a "level" that is "helpful" to the dialogue process. "The talks will be held at a level that is helpful for both sides," he said, referring to the Hurriyat's demand that the Centre should now be represented by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and not the Home Minister.

The Tribune, 2 July 2004

Kashmir a fulcrum of friendship (B. G. Verghese)

With greater Centre-State and regional autonomy, as may be worked out by India and Pakistan on either side of the LoC, the people of J&K could enjoy a self-determination that guarantees them the best of three worlds. With neither India nor Pakistan formally abandoning its aspirations in and for J&K, the state could become the

fulcrum of a new relationship of friendship and cooperation between them. Borders matter less than relationships across them. A solution in J&K does not lie in territorial or religious division. Transforming relations across the J&K/LoC border offers the best hope of a lasting and just non-territorial settlement that could be a balm to South Asia and an example to the world.

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2004

**MP, MLA escape unhurt
DySP among 6 policemen killed in IED blasts**

JAMMU, July 2: Member Parliament Ch Lal Singh, MLA Kishtwar Ghulam Mohammad Saroori and some Congress leaders escaped unhurt when terrorists attacked their convoy by detonating two Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) at Sangom Bahthi in Doda district this afternoon. However, in the attack six police personnel including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) were killed and two others critically injured. Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Udhampur-Doda range Satvir Gupta told the EXCELSIOR that ultras detonated two remote control IEDs at around 2 pm when the convoy of Member Parliament from Udhampur-Doda constituency Ch Lal Singh, Chairman J&K Social Welfare Advisory Board G M Saroori and some Congress leaders were on their way to Chatroo after addressing public meetings at Thakurai and Mugal Maidan.

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2004

Mughal Road in 3 years: CM

Rajouri, July 2: Underscoring the importance of the Mughal Road for economic uplift of the distantly placed and backward districts of Poonch and Rajouri, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said that the communication link would be ensured soon to extend the development process faster to the area. The Chief Minister was addressing public meetings at Rajouri and Mandi as part of his three-day tour of the remote and far-off places in Udhampur, Doda, Rajouri and Poonch

districts. He was accompanied by the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development, Ghulam Nabi Azad, MPs. Mehbooba Mufti, Ch. Lal Singh, Madan Lal Sharma and his colleagues in the State council of ministry including Mohammad Sharief Niaz, Ajaz Ahmad Khan, Thakur Puran Singh, Dr. Ramesh and legislators, Lal Moahammad Sabir and Moulvi Abdur Rashid.

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2004

Passport Office witnesses nearly 50 percent increase in applications for travel documents

SRINAGAR, July 2: Even as a decision to open Srinagar-Muzaffarabad is yet to be taken, the Passport Office here has witnessed nearly 50 per cent increase in the number of applications for the travel document. Since India and Pakistan started talking about the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, the office has seen the number of applications for the issuance of passports go up by 50 per cent, Regional Passport Officer Srinagar Johns Shilshi told reporters. Shilshi said before the announcement of talks on the opening of the road, his office used to receive above 35 applications per day on an average which went upto 55.

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2004

CM proposes internal air service to promote tourism in J&K

Mandi (POONCH), July 2: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has proposed internal air service in Jammu and Kashmir to promote tourism and said that the matter would be pursued with the union Government. Addressing a public meeting here on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that he would take up with the centre opening of an internal air circuit in the State to connect various important cities of Jammu and Kashmir through air service. He said the State already had full-fledged airports at Srinagar, Jammu and Leh and Kargil had been added to the air map recently. He said the up-gradation of the existing airstrips at Rajouri and Poonch and

construction of a small airport at Kishtwar would create the much-needed internal air circuit for promoting tourism in the State. The Chief Minister said that tourists have shown interest in using air transport to visit famous destinations like Pahalgam and Gulmarg and once there was a complete air circuit available in the State, they would opt for this mode of transport to visit various places where faster communication facilities were absent.

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2004

46000 employment opportunities to be created under PM's employment package: Kundal

SRINAGAR, July 2: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has given Administrative Approval (A A) to the construction of 12 multipurpose sheep extension centres in un-covered remote areas of the Kashmir division to give boost to mutton and wool production in big way. Each centre to cost Rs. 65 lakhs would be set up under Prime Minister's Employment Generation Package in order to provide modern sheep rearing facilities including wool shearing dipping tanks, health cover and genetic improvement under one roof. Administrative approval has also been given to the construction of Rs. 17.56 lakh wool grading centre at Baghi-Alimarda Khan in Srinagar. Decisions to this effect were taken at a high level meeting convened by the Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production, B. R. Kundal to take stock of progress under PM's Employment Generation Package in agriculture and allied sectors. Worth while to mention about 46000 employment opportunities are targetted to be generated in agriculture and allied sectors under PM's employment package by the end of current financial year.

The Indian Express, 3 July 2004

'Without Kashmir, talks would be hit'

ISLAMABAD, JULY 2: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today expressed satisfaction over the ongoing Indo-Pak dialogue but said the process would suffer if there was no progress on the Kashmir issue.

Musharraf also said the progress made so far should pave the way for more positive results. Apprising Republican Senators Don Nickles and Jeff Sessions, Musharraf expressed satisfaction over the progress made so far, an official statement said. He told the US senators that the progress made so far should pave the way for more positive results but the process would suffer if there was no progress on the Kashmir issue, the statement added.

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2004

3 soldiers, 3 militants killed in Bandipore gunbattle

Altaf Paddar among 15 killed in Valley
SRINAGAR, July 3: South Kashmir's noted counter-insurgent, Altaf Paddar, is among 15 persons killed in different incidents of violence across Kashmir valley since last evening. This Capital city was rocked with an IED blast that killed two civilians and left 34 others wounded, near Corporate Headquarters of Jammu & Kashmir Bank, on the high-security Maulana Azad Road today. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that militants today gunned down south Kashmir's most prominent counter-insurgent, Mohammad Altaf Paddar S/o Abdur Rasheed Paddar R/o Shurath outside the Class 10th Examination Centre at Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Kulgam town. Altaf Paddar, who had surrendered before Army after working as a dreaded militant of Hizbul Mujahideen, had played a major role in establishing and expanding the counter-insurgent Ikhwan network in Kulgam area. Sources said that as per the practice of the last two days, Altaf Paddar had reached the Examination Centre alongwith his PSO, Constable Irshad Ahmed of District Police, to help the daughter of his sister-in-law. While the PSO, carrying an automatic Insas, went into the particular room with the copying material, Altaf Paddar stayed outside. Suddenly a local militant of Hizbul Mujahideen and a Pakistani militant of Lashkar-e-Toiba, known as Raju, appeared in the guise of helpers to the examinees. One of them took out a pistol and fired three shots on Altaf's

chest. With critical injuries, he was rushed to a Srinagar hospital. However, he succumbed to injuries at Bijbehara.

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2004

Ultras attack police post

2 Lashkar militants killed in Doda area

JAMMU, July 3: Security forces today eliminated two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants in Doda district while a Special Police Officer (SPO) was killed and two others received injuries when terrorists attacked Police Post Mahrote in Poonch district where security forces also busted a hideout of ultras and recovered large quantity of arms and ammunition. An Official spokesman said that two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants were eliminated by the security forces in Koti area of Doda district this evening. The operation was based on the specific information about the presence of ultras in the area. When the security forces led by Commanding Officer of 8th Rashtriya Rifles Col V.R. Rao were conducting search operation in the area, they were fired upon by the hiding militants and the fire was effectively retaliated by the security forces. Amidst retaliation of the fire the security forces cordoned the area where the militants were hiding and in about one hour long gunbattle both the ultras got killed.

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2004

Stranded Cong Ministers back from Cave Shrine

It was Mufti's deliberate attempt: Yogesh Srinagar, July 3: Two Congress Ministers, who were made to spend last night in sub-zero temperature under open skies at Amarnath Cave Shrine by the 'angry' Chief Minister, have decided to give in writing to All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Sonia Gandhi about the treatment meted out to them at the hands of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. Moreover, one of them is of the saying that Chief Minister had a vendetta against the Congress Ministers and withdrawal of the State helicopter at the Holy Cave was a deliberate attempt and 'bad weather' conditions were later made an excuse. The vengeance, the Congress

Ministers elaborated, was that they had taken a tough stand on this year's Amarnath Yatra and this had annoyed Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed, who was adamant from day one that the Yatra should be for only one month, ignoring religious sanctity involved with this year's pilgrimage.

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2004

Fencing along LoC will be effective deterrent: Mukherjee

NEW DELHI, July 3: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee today said the Government was confident that the anti-infiltration fencing being erected along the Line of Control would prove to be an effective deterrent. He said adequate steps had been taken to safeguard the country against all threats, including nuclear. Downplaying Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's recent vow to carry out more missile tests, Mukherjee said the countries had reached an understanding to inform each other whenever they conducted nuclear or missile tests. "We have taken certain steps, which we can't make public," the Defence Minister said in reply to questions on what countermeasures India had taken.

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2004

Centre does not rule out PM's intervention in talks

NEW DELHI, July 3 : The Centre today did not rule out intervention by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in talks with Hurriyat saying Government would never refuse to talk to its own citizens at any level. "Let the talks resume and assume some shape. Only after that the involvement of the highest post could come into picture," Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil told reporters at a crowded press conference at his residence this evening. "Neither am I saying that the highest office will talk nor denying the possibility," he added. He said one thing was clear that the Centre was serious in solving the problems through negotiations and ground preparations were being done for better talks with the Hurriyat.

The Hindu, 4 July 2004

Militants step up violence in Jammu and Kashmir

SRINAGAR, JULY 3. At least two persons were killed and 52 injured in the stepped-up violence triggered by militants in Srinagar city and Anantnag town today. The condition of many of the injured was stated to be critical. Militants detonated an explosive-laden handcart on a main road in the heart of the city in the Dalgate area around 9.15 a.m. killing the two and injuring 29 persons, including two schoolchildren, five college girls and three women. Aimed at striking at the security force vehicles, which frequent the area, the handcart was brought by militants to the spot in the garb of fruit-sellers.

Daily Excelsior, 5 July 2004

Army to finish terrorism in J&K militarily: Vij

NEW DELHI, July 4: Army is "hell bent" on finishing militancy in Jammu and Kashmir militarily, Army Chief General N C Vij said today declaring that though infiltration had witnessed a spurt recently, the force's kill ratio had also gone up. "We are poised to give death blows to militants," Vij said asserting that this could pave the way for a smoother holding of political dialogue with separatist forces. There was a three-tier counter infiltration measure in place now, Vij said adding the Army's kill ratio of militants attempting to cross the Line of Control, had gone up considerably. Citing figures to illustrate that infiltration was still on, the Army Chief, speaking on the sidelines of a reception to this year's military awardees, said in the month of June and the first week of July, the Army had foiled 12 infiltration attempts across the LoC killing 31 militants.

Daily Excelsior, 5 July 2004

Hurriyat, Centre talks heading for derailment

NEW DELHI, July 4: Uncertainty appeared to hang over the process of talks between Hurriyat Conference and the Congress-led UPA Government at the Centre as the separatist amalgam leadership is unlikely to

agree with the Centre's view that the dialogue would be carried forward by officials and held within the framework of Indian constitution. Hurriyat sources said while a meeting of the amalgam's executive was scheduled to be held within next three days, it was unlikely that talks would be held with the Centre until the Government spelt out its policies guiding the talks. The sources said the Hurriyat had come forward for talks only after the previous BJP-led NDA Government had made it clear that talks would be held at an appropriate level and would be "Kashmir centric" in nature.

Daily Excelsior, 5 July 2004

Intrusion bid fails in Sunderbani

Militant, jawan killed; 2 hurt

JAMMU, July 4: Army today foiled an infiltration attempt on Line of Control (LoC) in Sunderbani sector killing one militant and was searching for others while an Army jawan was washed away in flooded Manawar Tawi during the gun-battle and another soldier was seriously injured. Official sources said a civilian Rakesh Kumar spotted movement of three militants, who had just crossed the LoC and were heading towards village Kamala on the western side of Manawar Tawi in Jongwa area of Sunderbani sector, falling under the jurisdiction of Khour police station, in early hours of this morning. The troops swung into action after observing movement of the militants and opened firing on the intruding militants.

Daily Excelsior, 5 July 2004

What satisfies Pak won't satisfy Kashmiris: JKLF

NEW DELHI, July 4: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) today said that Pakistan has no right to speak on behalf of Kashmiris, who are neither constitutionally nor legally a part of Pakistan. The statement of JKLF came in response to the claim of Pakistan foreign office spokesman Masood Khan, who said during a press conference here that 'whatever satisfies Islamabad, will satisfy Kashmiris.' Flaying this statement, senior JKLF leader Shabir Chaudhury said

in a statement that "what satisfies Islamabad, does not satisfy even their own people in Sindh, Balochistan or Frontier, how can it satisfy Kashmiris who are neither constitutionally or legally a part of Pakistan."

Kashmir Images, 5 July 2004

Pakistan reaches Gulmarg

Picnickers throng to have a glimpse of 'special guests'

Gulmarg: As the peace moves, between India and Pakistan, are gaining momentum, the distance between the two nations through Kashmir too seems to be shrinking faster. For the first time in the history of partition, 15 scouts from Pakistan and Pak Administered Kashmir today landed up in Gulmarg to participate in SAARC National Integration Scouts and Guides camp organised by Bharat Scouts and Guides. Amused guests from across the LoC praised peace initiative and stressed on the both the nations to carry on with the peace process. Pakistani boys echoing each other's sentiments and wishes implored for more peaceful relations between two nations and hoped that the leaderships across the border would rise above the regional politics to settle all the disputes between them.

The Pakistani delegation led by Zahoor-ul-Hassan today reached in the meadows of Gulmarg where one and all greeted them amidst proper security and other arrangements. Even the nature greeted the guests with bountifulness and showered a little drizzle that made the day in the meadows of Gulmarg even more fabulous and wonderful. And after the drizzle the sunshine symbolised the warmth of Kashmiri hospitality and rainbows sung in the full swing while welcoming the most cherished guests of the day. Carrying a message of peace, the scouts and guides from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Bhutan and also from various states of India had a merry today in the land of beauty and love and for the locals who had come to Gulmarg for a recreation felt more than eager to have the darshan of guests from Pakistan. And for the

heroes of the day the visit 'bisected' their life into two parts one before the visit and other after stepping on the land, which they said, "is more beautiful than expressed in words by the poets."

Greater Kashmir, 5 July 2004

Chaotic roads: See who is responsible

Srinagar, Jul 4: Life in Srinagar is choked. Roads and the traffic play their own bit. Imagine the hullabaloo by the Traffic, Revenue, R&B and UEE departments during the six months of Darbar in Srinagar, putting their "think tanks" on table with the blissfully ignorant ministers and discuss plans of regulating traffic. Predictably, it is always a zero sum exercise. Result: enormous wastage in time and petrol, surely decreasing our SDP. A survey done by Greater Kashmir says it is more of the basics that are swept under the carpet than multi-crore project concepts.

The Indian Express, 5 July 2004

Cong's latest in J-K: CM left our ministers to die

SRINAGAR, JULY 4: Trying to encash the controversy over the duration of the Amarnath Yatra, the Congress, in its latest bid to unsettle Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, has given it a bizarre twist: two of its ministers have openly accused the CM of endangering their lives and are refusing to attend office. The Yatra din is now a major political issue in the state, threatening to split the ruling coalition on communal lines. And the state BJP, VHP have been quick to move in, turning the heat on the Mufti government. First, four senior Congress ministers Raman Bhalla, Yogesh Sawhney, Jugal Kishore and Ramesh Sharma resigned in protest when Mufti rejected the Amarnath Shrine Board's demand to extend the pilgrimage by a month. Deputy CM Mangat Ram Sharma too criticised the government decision.

The Tribune, 5 July 2004

India to raise issue of China-held Kashmir

New Delhi, July 4: India would definitely bring up the issue of China-held Kashmir during its talks with Pakistan, as and when a formal discussion takes place on Jammu and Kashmir from territory point of view, sources said today. The issue of China-held Kashmir was not discussed during the June 27-28 Foreign Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan here because the territory issue did not come up at all. Pakistan and China concluded a boundary "agreement" in 1963. The "agreement" was meant to "formally delimit and demarcate the boundary between China's Sinkiang and the other contiguous areas, the defence of which is under the actual control of Pakistan".

The Tribune, 5 July 2004

Six militants among 9 killed in J&K

Srinagar, July 4: Six militants and a security force personnel were among nine persons killed in militancy related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since last night, an official spokesman said here today. Two unidentified militants were killed during a cordon-cum-search operation in Kulgam area of Anantnag district, a defence spokesman said. Security forces also foiled an infiltration bid along the Indo-Pak border killing a Pakistani militant in a gunfight which also left a security personnel dead at Khour, 30 km from Jammu, official spokesman said.

The Times of India, 5 July 2004

Govt confident LoC fencing, will put brake on infiltration

NEW DELHI: The government is confident that the multi-tiered fencing of 580 km of the volatile 778-km-long Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, which has just been completed, will prove an effective deterrent against infiltration. "It will have the desired impact on infiltration and exfiltration," said defence minister Pranab Mukherjee on Saturday, on the sidelines of a function to release a film on the life of the late Mahavir Chakra awardee Brig Mohammed Usman. The minister downplayed Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf's recent vow to carry out "big" missile tests. "Our countries have

reached an agreement to inform each other of missile tests in advance." On whether India had taken some counter-measures, he said, "We have taken certain steps, which we can't make public." Countering Pakistan's objections to the fencing work, Mukherjee said it was not a "military activity" and was designed purely to stop ingress of militants from across the border. The fence stretches from the Chenab basin to the Gurez sector, with 300 km north of the Pir Panjal range and another 280 km south of it is being fenced.

The Hindu, 6 July 2004

105-year-old school in Srinagar burnt down

SRINAGAR JULY 5. The Islamia School, Srinagar's oldest educational institution run by the Anjuman-e-Nustratul Islam, a socio-religious organisation headed by the influential Mirwaiz family, was gutted in a devastating fire on Sunday night. The incident sparked strong protest in downtown Srinagar and the Mirwaiz family alleged that it was not an accident but a "conspiracy to destroy history." Reports said that the fire broke out late last night in the upper storey of the 105-year-old building and before the fire tenders could reach the spot, the entire complex comprising three buildings with 28 rooms and two halls was reduced to a rubble. The wooden complex continued to retain the status of a heritage building even though it was reconstructed after it was destroyed in 1952. Shahid-ul-Islam, an aide of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, said the two-storey complex was destroyed because it was set on fire. "It is just not an accident. Petrol has been sprinkled over all the three buildings of the complex. All the three buildings catching fire at the same time is just not a chance," he said.

The Tribune, 6 July 2004

Five militants among 8 killed in J&K

Srinagar, July 5: Four militants, including two top commanders, and a soldier were among six persons killed and six others were wounded while two militants were nabbed in Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24

hours. Security forces, on a tipoff, cordoned off Devsar Kokernag village in Anantnag district early this morning to nab the militants. When the security forces were about to storm a house, they came under heavy fire from militants. The fire was returned and in the exchange, two HUI commander were killed. Two AK rifles, one pistol, one magazine, 42 rounds, one wireless set and two pouches were recovered from the slain militants, who were wanted in several militancy related incidents.

The Tribune, 6 July 2004

Vohra meets Patil on J&K talks

New Delhi, July 5: The Centre's interlocutor on Jammu and Kashmir, Mr N.N. Vohra, today met Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and discussed the roadmap for the next round of talks with the Hurriyat Conference. Sources said besides Mr Patil and Mr Vohra, the meeting was attended by National Security Adviser J.N. Dixit, Adviser to Prime Minister M.K. Narayanan, Secretary (RAW) C.D. Sahay and Intelligence Bureau chief K.P. Singh. The meeting discussed security situation in the valley, especially the recent spurt in the activities of militants. The sources said a final decision on the dates of Centre-Hurriyat meeting was likely to be taken after the meeting of the executive committee of the amalgam later this week. Leaders of the Hurriyat Conference, led by Maulvi Abbas Ansari, were likely to meet in Srinagar on Wednesday to decide their stance on parleys with the government.

Greater Kashmir, 6 July 2004

Historic Islamia School gutted

Mystery shrouds fire; 106-year old institution razed to ash within an hour

Srinagar Jul 5: Islamia School, the oldest Muslim institution at Rajouri Kadal here was gutted in a devastating fire Sunday night. The fire incident reported to have 'erupted under mysterious circumstances' triggered off violent protests across the city as Awami Action Committee, the patron organisation of the 106-year old institution, sees a 'conspiracy behind the act of arson'.

Eyewitnesses present at the spot told Greater Kashmir that flames were seen rising from the three interconnected buildings of the school at around 230 hours Sunday night. The residents of the area said the mysterious thing about the fire was that three buildings caught fire simultaneously and were gutted in less than an hour. Rohit Thapa, watchman of the School, recalls that during the night two Kashmiri speaking youth forced their entry into the school premises when the fire was raging. "When I tried to stop them, I was beaten," he says. Thapa is not sure whether the youth were the culprits or part of rescuers.

Greater Kashmir, 6 July 2004

Umar calls for strike

Srinagar, July 5: Dismissing the Police version about the School fire incident as a 'blatant lie', Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today called for a general strike on Tuesday saying his party Awami Action Committee knew who was behind the "assault on the sacred Mirwaiz legacy." "I believe it is the handiwork of the same forces who eliminated my Uncle Moulvi Mushtaq. We know them closely and shall expose them shortly," Umar told Greater Kashmir over phone. Some unidentified gunmen, he added, had barged into the school premises on May 29 during late hours after they had shot at Moulvi Mushtaq and tied the staff but somehow they could not execute the plan that night. "A FIR about the incident was registered in police station the next day," he said. Meanwhile AAC has condemned the incident in severe terms and held it as the "national tragedy" for Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 6 July 2004

SKIMS doctors also threaten strike

'Armyman or militant, patient is patient'
Srinagar, July 5: Junior Doctors Association (JDA) of Government Medical College associated hospitals has threatened that JDA Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences will also join the ongoing strike from Tuesday if their colleague Dr. Akram Bijli, arrested by police a few days ago, was not released by 10 am Tuesday. JDA will also

go on hunger strike, the association has added. Describing the charges filed by police against Dr. Akram as "fabricated", President, JDA, Nisarul Hassan, said it was the duty of a doctor to treat any patient irrespective of his deeds. "Whether a patient is chief minister Mufti Sayed himself, armyman or a militant, a patient is patient for us," Hassan asserted, adding the arrest of the innocent doctor was a "barbaric and brutal" act of police.

Daily Excelsior, 6 July 2004

Two civilians killed, 5 jawans injured

3 more militants shot dead in Sunderbani
JAMMU, July 5: Army today killed three infiltrators, who had been holed-up across Manawar Tawi in Jongwa area in Sunderbani sector since yesterday morning, taking death toll in the gun-battle to five while four other Army jawans were injured. Troops were hunting a lone surviving militant of the group. In other incidents, a civilian was killed and an Army jawan was seriously injured in an IED blast, triggered by the militants, at village Dundhak in Surankote tehsil in Poonch district this morning while another civilian was shot dead by the ultras in Doda last night. Official sources said the troops, who had launched a massive search operation across Manawar Tawi under the jurisdiction of Khour police station yesterday morning after a civilian had observed movement of a group of five militants, came across three militants hiding in a forest area this evening.

Daily Excelsior, 6 July 2004

Parkash Utsav of Guru Hargobind Singhji celebrated

Sikh Sangat demands constitution of Minority Commission in J&K

JAMMU, July 5: District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Jammu (DGPC) has demanded constitution of Minority Commission in the State as well as proper re-habilitation of the refugees of the 1947. Sikh Sangat unanimously passed a resolution in a function organised at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Tahli Sahib at Talab Tillo in connection with the

celebrations of the Parkash Utsav of sixth Guru Shri Hargobind Sahib Ji Maharaja. Similar resolution was passed in another function which was at Gurdwara Digiana Ashram under the Sarprasti of Mahant Manjeet Singhji of Shiromani Dera Nangali Sahib. "The Sikhs are the microscopic majority in the State and they are being ignored by their fundamental rights in every sphere of life. We demand constitution of Minority Commission in the State as such one of the community, which is in minority in the rest of the country, is in majority in our State, is taking all benefits from this Commission", the resolution demanded, adding, "majority of the Sikhs, who are migrants from PoK in 1947, should be involved in the peace process and be involved in discussion with N N Vohra".

Daily Excelsior, 6 July 2004

746 yatrīs enrolled on first day; Registration for Amarnath pilgrims begins

JAMMU, July 5: The registration for Amarnath yatrīs has started from today at 88 registration counters opened by Jammu and Kashmir Bank throughout the country. Though the authorities of J&K Bank have decided to open the registration onwards 3 pm to 6 pm every day except Saturdays when it will held from 1 pm to 4 pm, there was a beeline of yatrīs including a sizeable number of Sadhus at the Exhibition Ground Registration Centre, here waiting for their turn from early in the morning. According to J&K Bank 746 pilgrims were registered at Jammu Counter today.

Kashmir Images, 6 July 2004

At Gulmarg, Pakistani scout sings Kashmiri song

Gulmarg, July 5- Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has called upon the youth of the sub-continent to pull down the walls of hatred and build a neighbourhood of peace, amity and friendship. He said the region has witnessed lot of acrimony and animosity in the past leading to furtherance of distances between the people. Mufti Sayeed was addressing the concluding

function of the 5-day SAARC National Integration Scouts and Guides Camp held for the first time here this morning. As many as 733 scouts and guides from Pakistan, Bangla Desh, Bhutan and different states of the country participated in the camp organised by the Bharat Scouts and Guides. The largest domestic contingent of 153 was from the host state of Jammu and Kashmir while the biggest foreign contingent of 15 members came from Pakistan. The male and female number of participating scouts and guides was 459 and 274, respectively.

Kashmir Images, 7 July 2004

**Killing of 120-yr-old sparks protests
Infiltration bids foiled: 15 militants, two troopers killed**

Srinagar: Fifteen militants and two troopers were killed in different militancy related incidents Six militants and a trooper were killed in an encounter in Machil sector of Kupwara district. Sources said that troops of 21 Kamoun noticed suspicious movement in Machil sector yesterday and asked the militants, who probably had infiltrated from the other side of LoC, to surrender. The militants opened fire resulting into an encounter. Six militants and a trooper were killed during the encounter. The identity of the killed militants is yet to be ascertained. Three militants were killed in a separate encounter in which one trooper too got killed in the same district. Sources said that an encounter took place between militants and troops at Lassiwat Haihama, Kupwara. Three militants and a trooper were killed in the encounter. The trooper was identified as Rajinder Shekhar. Security forces foiled another infiltration bid in Khor sector of Jammu region killing five militants.

Kashmir Images, 7 July 2004

'Kashmiri leaders acting like errand boys'

PC lambasts nuclear neighbours as source of violence

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Pakistan as “politically offensive and tantamounting to humiliation of the people of Kashmir”. The group has declared Pakistan foreign office spokesman Masood Khan’s statement “any solution satisfying Pakistan automatically satisfies Kashmiris” as “more offensive” and blamed both India and Pakistan as “sources of violence”. In a statement today, a spokesman of the PC said that the Working Committee of the party met under the chairmanship of Sajad Gani Lone to discuss the present political scenario in the State and Indo-Pak secretary level talks. The spokesman welcomed the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan. “Dialogue is the only way out and the two countries need to take forward the process. The credibility of the dialogue needs to be strengthened by making it an inclusive process. Exclusive participation of two parties may erode the credibility and the feasibility of the dialogue process as a mode of conflict resolution,” he said.

Kashmir Images, 7 July 2004

Islamia School blaze: Strike shuts Srinagar, other towns, CM orders probe

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Kashmir Images, 7 July 2004

Editorial: The flame game

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Daily Exceslior, 7 July 2004

Pak spokesman's remarks a challenge to every Kashmiri: Nazir Gilani

SRINAGAR, July 6: Chairman of London-based Jammu & Kashmir Council for Human Rights (JKCHR), Dr Syed Nazir Gilani, who is also heading International Kashmir Alliance (IKA), has strongly objected to the Pakistan government spokesman's remarks that Pakistan's choice would be necessarily acceptable to the people of Jammu & Kashmir. He has expressed serious concern over the tendency of taking the political aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir for granted. At an exhaustive interaction with the Kashmir intelligentsia here, Dr Syed Nazir Gilani welcomed the commencement of talks between India and Pakistan but made it clear that taking the people of Jammu & Kashmir for granted could prove disastrous for the two neighbouring countries. Dr Gilani, who is currently on a 10-day visit in the Valley, explained that in all jurisprudential references, Jammu & Kashmir would mean the undivided state, which had its territories in Jammu, Kashmir Valley, Ladakh, 'Azad Kashmir' and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Daily Excelsior, 7 July 2004

Next 4 months crucial for infiltration: Vij
NEW DELHI, July 6: The Army Chief Gen N C Vij today said the infiltration from across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir has "almost doubled" since may and observed that next four months would be "crucial" to watch whether the trend continued to be on the upswing. The success rate of Army after putting in place a three tier counter-infiltration measures in place had gone up to 80 to 90 per cent, he said. The Army Chief said while last year months of June and July had witnessed only eight attempts, this year for the whole month of June and the first week of July 13 attempts had already been foiled by security forces killing 31 militants.

Greater Kashmir, 7 July 2004

Hizb concerned

Muzaffarabad, July 6: Kashmir's dominant fighter group Hizbul Mujahideen has

condemned the fencing of the Line of Control, calling upon the international community to take notice of the "dangerous Indian designs" behind the move. "India says it is fencing the LoC to stop the alleged infiltration but practically it's not the real reason. They have some other dangerous hidden motives," Salim Hashmi, spokesman for the group told this correspondent here on Tuesday. "India is trying its best to convert the bloody line into permanent border (between the two South Asian neighbours) and fencing may be part of such ugly attempts," he said. "But it should be clear to everyone that the Mujahideen will not let any such attempt succeed and we have proved it many a time in the past."

Greater Kashmir, 7 July 2004

Pak scouts 'conquer' Gulmarg

Gulmarg, July 6: Pakistani scouts may never have had such a warm welcome in any other SAARC country. Soon after their arrival, the 15 member contingent found itself amidst a highly excited crowd of local people who rushed to shake their hands, hugged and kissed them. Emotions ran high with men and women of all ages, who had come to picnic straightway, headed towards the camp site to catch a glimpse of guests from across the border. This was despite the fact that organisers had restricted the entry. "My son I can't believe my eyes that you are here," said an elderly lady while kissing the scouts and praying for their well being. Families after families visited the much-sought out Pakistani camp, which was easily distinguishable from the rest as they had hoisted the Pakistani flag in front of their camping zone.

Greater Kashmir, 7 July 2004

Editorial: History in flames

The tragedy has struck us once again. This time with a difference. Tragedy that swept away our heritage with it. The gutting of the historic Islamia School in a mysterious fire has left all aghast as one more of their prized possessions has been razed to rubble. The tragic incident, that turned one of the richest libraries of the valley in to ashes when

Islamia College became the target of the ire of the mysterious hands, had evoked widespread condemnation. It was hoped that there would be no repeat of such ugly incidents. But as our fate had it, we lost several priceless pieces of our rich heritage in the shape of books and manuscripts housed in the Jamia Madeenat-ul-Uloom at Hazratbal in another incident. And now we are again in a state of shock as another of our heritage sites has been destroyed with some of the sacred manuscripts and a treasure of books going up in flames. Every conscientious citizen of the Valley in particular and the state in general is today feeling the pain at the colossal loss. The news as it came like the proverbial bolt from blue to the people raised their passions and they came out on streets to give vent to their deeply hurt feelings. The school is credited with turning out some of the brilliant doctors, scholars, educationists who made very significant contribution to the development of the Kashmiri society. The visionary whom history will always remember as the 'Sir Syed of Kashmir' started it at a time when Kashmiri Muslims were reeling under tyranny. They lacked education and could have no voice of their own. The late Moulana Rasool Shah (RA) braving all odds launched the school in 1899 when the valley was passing through its darkest phase of its history. The devout Muslims of the time lent him all the moral and material support to realize his dream. Education was then within the reach of the children of only elite of the society. The launch of the school enabled the poorest of the poor children to receive education and become useful citizens. The institution did its bit in shaping the society. The school has gutted at a time when it was in the stages of transition to be one of the best public schools of the valley. The number of electronic gadgets and computers destroyed in the fire points to the intentions the school management had in improving its infrastructure to enable its students to compete. We may be able to reconstruct the buildings and put in place new infrastructure, but we can not have back our

prized manuscripts those got up in to smoke. The incident is a grim reminder to the custodians of our heritage that they need to take all steps to secure and safeguard the remaining pieces of heritage. Given the situation there is urgent need for all such institutions charged with the responsibility of looking after our heritage can no more afford to be complacent about the safety of relics of our history. We have lost much and cannot afford to lose more

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It is a matter of joy that a 15-strong contingent of scouts and guides from Pakistan has taken part in the just-concluded five-day South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) camp held in Gulmarg. The young visitors from the neighbouring country have thus constituted a delegation that has been officially received for the first time in this State at least in the recent years. Perhaps there could not have been a better backdrop for such handshake than the globally famous meadow of flowers that is sure to have given Pakistan's scouts and guides positive ideas for strengthening the mutual ties between the two countries having a common past, heritage and history. A new generation has grown up in both India and Pakistan that wants to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of progress and development. Luckily it is free from the hangover of the past acrimony and animosity and is evidently willing to cooperate in the joint search for peace and harmony in the sub-continent helped, of course, in the process by the happily changed perceptions of ruling political dispensations in both the nations. The passions of these generations are sport, adventure and computers that are a welcome shift from the feuding guns and tanks seen during the last five decades and the contentious talk of nuclear warheads lately. Nothing has underlined this reality more than the well-fought cricket series between the two countries: the global community has applauded the bonhomie displayed by the supporters of rival teams across the cricket

stadiums in Pakistan. It is easier to demolish the barriers in the minds of the youth in particular if they are no geographical hurdles between them. More inter-action should be made possible between the students on either side by the relaxation of visa regime, among other such measures. That would hasten the restoration of strong bonds with beneficial results for everybody. In this context the presence of people belonging to the minority segment of Pakistan in the Sindhu darshan festival in Leh in their personal capacity last month should be hailed as a major step in the right direction.

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2 MPs oppose border fencing in J&K

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Daily Excelsior, 8 July 2004

Geelani says let them join us

Ansari steps down for unity moves

SRINAGAR, July 7: In a significant development, Moulana Abbas Ansari, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference, today stepped down as the conglomerate head while asking founder chairman of undivided Hurriyat Mirwaiz Omar Farooq to "re-launch" unification move among the separatist camp. The separatist conglomerate announced that it would continue "talks with India and Pakistan" for the lasting solution to the Kashmir issue. After a crucial Executive Council meeting at Rajbagh headquarters here today, a spokesman of Hurriyat Conference in a statement said that Moulana Abbas Ansari stepped down as the party's chairman "in the greater interest of unity" and invited Mirwaiz Omar Farooq to assert for forging unity among the separatist conglomerate. The spokesman pointed out that Hurriyat had emerged as a sole voice of

the people of Kashmir. "But unfortunately at a very important juncture and deciding phase this forum broke up," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 July 2004

'Forward movement in J&K situation'

SRINAGAR, July 7: Governor Lt Gen SK Sinha today said that there has been a definite forward movement in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir notwithstanding isolated incidents of violence of which there has been a spurt lately. Interacting with media persons after inaugurating Raj Bhavan website here this afternoon, the Governor said that whenever situation shows signs of improvement or the process of dialogue starts, elements inimical to peace step up violence and attack IED explosions and grenades. In this context he referred to an attack on a Srinagar hotel in August last at the time of the Inter State Conference of Chief Ministers presided over by the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. General Sinha said that with snow melting, attempts of infiltration are being made from across the border. Now that the fencing along the border is near completion, there should be a definite check, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 July 2004

3 militants shot dead, Pak ultra captured

JAMMU, July 7: Three militants including two infiltrators were killed while a Pakistani militant was captured alive by the security forces in the separate encounters in Jammu region today. In two mine blasts, a teen-age boy was killed and four others were injured. Official sources said the Army and police personnel, who were maintaining a strict vigil in Kalsian area in Sabjian sector of Poonch district after yesterday's infiltration attempt in which one militant was killed, intercepted a group of three more militants this morning. A heavy exchange of gun-fighting took place between the two sides for about one and a half hour in which one militant was killed and another was captured alive by the security forces. A hunt was on to eliminate the third militant who managed to escape during the cross-firing, the sources said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 July 2004

**Lt Col shot dead by jawan
4 civilians killed in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR, July 7: Four civilians including a ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) activist were killed in separate militancy related incidents across the Kashmir valley since last night, a police spokesman said today. This apart, an Army jawan shot dead Lt Colonel over some altercation before committing suicide. Militants shot dead PDP worker Saifuddin Khan outside his residence in village Sagam in Kokernag area of south Kashmir Anantnag district last night, the spokesman said. He said Khan had joined the ruling PDP after retiring as Head Constable from the State Police.

The Hindu, 8 July 2004

Overhaul J&K Govt.: Congress

SRINAGAR, JULY 7. Disappointed with the functioning of the State Government, of which it is a major partner, the Jammu & Kashmir unit of the Congress has demanded a complete overhaul of the Administration, particularly the police. It has announced plans to launch an agitation in case the Government fails to come to the expectations of the people. The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) senior vice-president, Abdul Gani Vakil, told media persons here that in spite of the Congress-led Central Government giving priority to the Jammu and Kashmir, all was not well in the State. Taking dig at the Administration, he said the police network had lost grip over the situation and there was a spurt in violent incidents. "There is no cohesion in the policy of the government," he said, adding that the Government had maintained silence over the most sensitive issues relating to law and order in past few days. He cited the example of Shia-Sunni clashes in Watergam village of Baramulla which has been under curfew for last seven days. Mr Vakil said the Administration was completely defunct and no attention was being paid towards people's problems.

The Indian Express, 8 July 2004

**Hurriyat says we miss NDA, PDP doubts
Cong motives**

SRINAGAR, JULY 7: Despite the pleasant buzz of Indo-Pak bonhomie, disturbing noises are getting louder in the Valley—in three distinct strains. One: A question mark hangs over the Centre's Kashmir dialogue, with key Hurriyat interlocutor Maulvi Abbas Ansari stepping down as its chief today telling The Indian Express that the UPA government is "insincere" in contrast to its predecessor, the NDA. Two: The Congress, which leads the UPA at the Centre, is being accused by its partner, the PDP, of playing local politics, openly attacking Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. Says PDP chief Mehbooba: "They (Congress) politicise every issue. They remind you every time that you are a Muslim-majority state in a Hindu-dominated country." And, three: PDP leaders allege that Governor Lt. Gen (rtd) S K Sinha is "interfering" in day-to-day governance, a charge Raj Bhavan denies.

The Indian Express, 8 July 2004

'Militants watching Amarnath pilgrims'

JOGWAN: The Army has recovered 18 devices used for making improvised explosive devices from five militants who were killed in the Kamala and Jhir Pail area near the LoC recently. The recovery in Khour sector is an indicator that militants will try to target pilgrims and security personnel, said Army officers. Incidentally, this is the first time in several months that the Army has seized such a large number of explosives in Jammu and Kashmir. SP S. Samuel said there is every possibility that these IEDs were meant to target Amarnath pilgrims. Keeping in view the militants' new strategy of planting IED on poles, the senior officers have asked the road opening party (ROP) to be more alert.

The Tribune, 8 July 2004

**Yasin appears in POTA court, cases
adjourned**

Jammu, July 7: A POTA court hearing six cases, including that of the kidnapping of Rubia Sayeed, daughter of Chief Minister

Mufti Mohd. Sayeed, today adjourned all of them since none of the accused except Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chief Yasin Malik appeared before the court. While Malik appeared before the court, the other accused in the case, Mustaq Ahmed Dar and Shamina, failed to appear. The Presiding Officer of the POTA court adjourned the case as police failed to produce Dar from Central Jail, Kot Bhalwal, Jammu, whereas Shamima, who is on bail, has filed an application for exemption from personal appearance on health ground.

The Tribune, 8 July 2004

Governor sees improvement in situation
Srinagar, July 7: The Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Lieut-Gen S.K. Sinha, today said there has been a definite forward movement in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir notwithstanding, isolated incidents of violence of which there has been a spurt lately. Replying questions from mediapersons after inaugurating Raj Bhavan website here today, the Governor said whenever there were signs of improvement in situation or the process of dialogue started, elements inimical to peace stepped up violence and resorted to IED explosions and grenade attacks. The Governor said with snow melting, attempts of infiltration were being made from across the border. Now that the fencing along the border was near completion, there should be a definite check, he added. He held that last December ceasefire on the border was holding and cross-border shelling stopped. However, violence in hinterland continued, he added. Despite this the situation was changing and there had been a marked improvement in the past two years, he added.

Hindustan Times, 8 July 2004

Kashmir on the cusp (Anand K. Sahay)
Where does the current situation leave separatist politics as represented by the Hurriyat factions? And how should the UPA government respond to the ground reality in a way that a new direction may be given to Kashmir politics? The extremist/separatist politicians thrown up since the 1989-90

period are widely seen as having lost their shine. They have not been replaced by a new, more credible set. As such, the Hurriyat carries little clout with the people. It carries even less influence with the militants. On the contrary, it is obliged to do their bidding because they have the guns.... Given the outlook, the pragmatic way forward for the Manmohan Singh government may be to express benign concern as far as Hurriyat goes. At the same time, it should make earnest efforts to try and open up the political space for groups and elements that still shy away from mainstream public life. Such a venture calls for broad engagement of the entire political class with Kashmir polity and free spirit.

Greater Kashmir, 9 July 2004

Army captain, 6 militants killed in JK
Srinagar, July 8 An army captain and six militants were killed and four persons, including two soldiers and a policeman were wounded in different incidents across the state since Wednesday. Three Kashmiri militants and an army captain were today killed and two soldiers wounded in a fierce gunfight at Bandipora on Thursday, police said. Working on a tip off about the presence of militants in forests of village Gundpora Rampora in Bandipora area of Varmul district, the troops of 10 Para Unit zeroed in on a militant hideout. However, the militants retaliated with a burst of fire killing captain of the unit S Malik and wounding two soldiers, official sources said.

Greater Kashmir, 9 July 2004

Hurriyat chairmanship is non-issue: Geelani
Srinagar: Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani, today said the chairmanship of Hurriyat Conference was never an issue that led to the formation of faction led by him. Geelani said differences cropped in the conglomerate when Abbas led Hurriyat didn't take part in the boycott campaign during 2002 assembly elections and when no disciplinary action was taken against 'one of the constituents who fielded candidates in the polls'. "Instead Moulana Abbas gave

clean chit to the constituent and began talks with Jethmalani. Later they cancelled meeting of the general council and in utter disregard of Hurriyat constitution started a dialogue with India," Geelani said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 July 2004

Provisions increased for border fencing

NEW DELHI, July 8: The Government has increased the budgetary provisions for erection of fences along the Indo-Bangla and Indo-Pak border even as a sharp cut has been seen in allocation of funds for home guards and payments to the State. The budgetary provisions made for Union Home Ministry this year, the Government has doubled the non-plan funds for erection of barbed wire fencing and construction of roads along the Indo-Bangla border from Rs 201.68 to Rs 441.08 crore. This move was proposed to check the illegal immigration from the eastern neighbour. Similarly, there was a marginal increase in border works at the Indo-Pak border from Rs 130.06 crore to Rs 196.75 crore so that the inflow of arms and ammunition from across the border was checked.

Daily Excelsior, 9 July 2004

Capt, 3 ultras killed in Bandipore

SRINAGAR, July 8 :Three militants and an Army Officer were killed and two ultras arrested in separate operations in Kashmir where ultras shot dead a civilian and targeted the house of a senior Government official since last night. Three militants of Al-Fateh Force were shot dead in a fierce gunbattle during search operations at village Gundipora in Bandipora area of Baramulla district in north Kashmir this morning, the spokesman said. An Army captain, S S Malik was also killed and two jawans injured during the operation, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 9 July 2004

Mufti visits proposed CFC site for cricket bat manufacturers

Bijbihara, July 8: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today visited the two proposed sites, Sethar and Halmul in Bijbihira for construction of a common

facility centre for manufacturers of cricket bats. Situated on the National Highway, the sites have been proposed by local people of the two areas out of which one location would be selected for the construction. The villages are known for manufacture of cricket bats and referred to as sports villages. The Chief Minister was accompanied by Minister of State for Home, Abdur Rehman Veeri, Minister of State for Industries and Commerce, Raman Mattoo, Director Industries, Chief Engineer, R & B, District Development Commissioner, Anantnag and Special Secretary to Chief Minister. Addressing the gathering assembled at the two sites, the Chief Minister asked the people of the two villages to decide between themselves the location so that the CFC is constructed at the earliest. He said that the Rs. 4 crore project also envisages, marketing facility, seasoning plant and a parking place and would be run by the Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association.

Daily Excelsior, 9 July 2004

DDB Poonch approves Rs 42.48 cr plan outlay

POONCH, July 8: The Annual action plan of Poonch district has been fixed at over Rs.42.48 crores during the current financial year. This allocation is about Rs.11 crore more than the allocation made for the district during last financial year. The annual action plan was approved at the District Development Board meeting held here today. The Minister for Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Taj Mohi-ud-Din who is also the chairman of the Board presided. The meeting was apprised that of the total approved action plan Rs.5.34 lakhs will be spent on Agriculture sector and 50926 hectares of area of the district would be brought under high yielding varieties programme, 3144 quintals seeds and 5160 metric tonnes fertilizers would be distributed among the farmers. Under Horticulture sector over Rs.10.20 lakhs would be spent to bring 70 hectares, additional area under dry and fresh fruit cultivation. Rs.12.05 lakhs have been allocated for Animal Husbandry

for providing 1.30 lakh dosings to animals against various contagious and non-contagious diseases.

Daily Excelsior, 9 July 2004

Mehbooba releases Rs 50 lakh for development works

Srinagar July 8: Member of Parliament and President Peoples' Democratic Party, Mehbooba Mufti has released Rs 50 lakh from her Member Parliament Local Area Development Fund (MPLAD) for development works in Anantnag, Devsar and Shangus constituencies. She has also released another Rs. 7 lakh for acquisition of land for construction of a hospital at Shangus. Mufti made this announcement during her extensive tour of the Shangus constituency where she met with local people and inquired about their problems. She was accompanied by MLA, Shangus, Peer Mohammad Hussain.

The Hindu, 9 July 2004

Mirwaiz refuses to take over as interim chief

SRINAGAR, JULY 8. A day after the All Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman, Moulana Abbas Ansari, stepped down and appointed Mirwaiz Umar Farooq as the interim chairman, the Mirwaiz refused to accept the position but said he would push forward the unity efforts between the two factions. The Mirwaiz, who is also the founder-chairman of the Hurriyat, said here that he would not take over as interim chairman. "There has been some misunderstanding. ... I will not function as interim chairman of the Hurriyat," he said confirming that he had been asked to renew the reconciliatory efforts with those members of the executive committee who had stayed away since the split in the Hurriyat Conference last year. "My responsibility would be to talk to all the members of the erstwhile undivided Hurriyat so that the constitutional shape of the body is restored," the Mirwaiz said adding, "There will be no interim chairman of the Hurriyat. Fresh elections would be

held once the executive council takes its original shape."

The Hindu, 9 July 2004

Rider on NOC for private institutes

SRINAGAR, JULY 8. The Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Education Harsh Dev Singh yesterday said no new No Objection Certificates (NOC) would be issued to private educational institutes in the state unless they made satisfactory infrastructure available in their premises. "No Objection Certificate to the existing private colleges might be suspended, if satisfactory infrastructure like academic buildings, hostels for students and sanitary facilities are not made available in these institutes before the start of the new academic session," Mr Singh said. He said the government has received hundreds of fresh applications for issuances of NOC, which would be screened by teams appointed by the Universities of Kashmir and Jammu. The teams would assess the feasibility, essential requirements and infrastructure in these institutes and then submit a report to the government.

The Tribune, 9 July 2004

Ansari's move may not unite separatist

Jammu, July 8: Will Molvi Abbas Ansari's stepping down as the chairman of the APHC lead to unity among various separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir? If the stance adopted by the rival factions of the APHC is any indication unity among the separatists seems difficult in near future. In fact Molvi Abbas Ansari had announced on May 21 that he was prepared to step down as the chairman of the conglomerate if that was going to bring about reconciliation among the separatist groups. At that time he had stated that he would wait for a month and for all this time there was no response from his rivals, especially Syed Ali Shah Geelani. By implementing his commitment the Molvi has played the trump card. According to a senior APHC leader, Prof Abdul Geni Bhat, "Our rivals have no other alternative but to respond to our gesture."

The Tribune, 9 July 2004

Dialogue on Kashmir (Balraj Puri)

Two parallel international conferences on the Kashmir issue organised in London and Birmingham recently by the organisations based in that country provided an opportunity to know their latest thinking on the subject as also those who attended them from both sides of the LoC.... Both conferences opposed the division of the state on religious or ethnic grounds. In fact, the religious factor was downplayed in the discussion on Kashmir. However, the Kashmiri Pandits' right to return to their homes with full security was conceded. However, those who pleaded for a unified state did not spell out its status vis-a-vis India and Pakistan. On the whole, there was a greater emphasis on starting a process than on achieving final goals. What was more important was that participants became aware of the viewpoints other than their own and of the aspirations of all communities. The atmosphere of cordiality added to the usefulness of the conferences. Thus, there is need for initiating internal dialogue, at least on the Indian side, among the different regions, communities and viewpoints. For nobody can claim to represent all the diversities of the state. A culture for dialogue and respect for dissent and diversity are necessary for finding a permanent solution to the Kashmir problem.

The Hindu, 10 July 2004

Mixed reaction to package for Jammu & Kashmir

JAMMU, JULY 9. The reaction to the special package to Jammu and Kashmir announced by the Union Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, while presenting the Union Budget for 2004-05 on Thursday, has been mixed. The Law, Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Muzaffar Hussien Baig, said: "There is nothing new because it was the previous National Democratic Alliance Government that had approved this allocation" The Deputy Chief Minister and senior Congress leader, Mangat Ram Sharma, welcomed the budget and said that what the Congress had promised in the

Common Minimum Programme (CMP) was reflected in the budget.

The Hindu, 10 July 2004

J&K to implement Agriculture Marketing Act

SRINAGAR, JULY 9. Jammu and Kashmir has decided to implement the Agriculture Marketing Act with quality control as one of its critical features. Maintaining that the agriculture was the mainstay of the state's economy, state agriculture minister Abdul Aziz Zarger said nearly 75 per cent people in the state are directly or indirectly related to agriculture. The minister said in order to boost the industry the Horticulture Planning and Marketing Department had introduced various new schemes including the "Market Intervention Scheme" for apples during the year 2003-04. The aim of the scheme is to improve quality and grading of the fruit so that best quality fruit can be procured and exported to outside markets. Growers would be provided marketing facilities for their off-grade fruit, the minister said.

Hindustan Times, 10 July 2004

5 terrorists, a jawan killed in J&K encounter

Jammu, July 10: Five terrorists, including an area commander of Pakistan-based Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT), and a security jawan were killed and four injured in an encounter in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir where troops also foiled an attempt by terrorists to storm an Army camp since Friday evening, official sources said. Four exfiltrating terrorists were killed in Chaktroo area of Mandi sector during an encounter which started around noon on Friday and continued till evening, the sources said, adding one of the terrorists after receiving bullet wounds had fallen into a stream and died. Three jawans, a special police officer and one civilian were injured in the encounter. One jawan later succumbed to his injuries, while the condition of civilian Manzoor Ahmed was stated to be critical, the sources said.

The Tribune, 10 July 2004

Coalition govt in J&K under strain

Srinagar, July 9: The coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir is beset with differences though major partners have been trying to keep the flock together. Major opposition party, the National Conference, has intensified its criticism of the government. National Conference president Omar Abdullah said here on Wednesday that the state was "passing through turbulent times and so needs a serious, honest and performing government". It is the largest party in the State Assembly with 28 members in the 87-member House, while the two major coalition partners, the Congress with 20 and Mufti Sayeed's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with 16 members and other constituents has run the government for more than 22 months.

The Tribune, 10 July 2004

Geelani barred from entering Kupwara

Srinagar, July 9: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Chairman of the breakaway group of Hurriyat Conference, was prevented by the police from entering Handwara town of Kupwara district today, where he was to protest against the alleged excesses by the security forces. The police fired in the air and resorted to a lathi charge when angry demonstrators were protesting against the police action preventing Mr Geelani and over 10 of his supporters from entering the town on the occasion of Friday prayers. The police swung into action at Walipora, near Handwara, holding Mr Geelani and his supporters. Mr Geelani, who has been expressing concern over the alleged excesses by the security forces in the Kashmir valley, was also concerned about the alleged molestation of a girl by the security forces.

The Tribune, 10 July 2004

Army jawan killed in explosion

Jammu, July 9: An Army jawan was killed in an accidental explosion in Poonch town while security forces detected and defused two mines in RS Pura and Hiranagar sectors of Jammu division, official sources said today. Sepoy K.D. Bhonsle was killed when

an explosive device went off during the shifting of store in Poonch town last Wednesday, they said adding there was no other damage caused due to the explosion. Border Security Force troops had detected a mine in Nanga village in Hiranagar sector yesterday which was later defused by the Army.

Daily Excelsior, 10 July 2004

Process suspended as Mirwaiz wants to rope in 'more groups and individuals'

SRINAGAR, July 9: While the Union Home Minister Shiv Raj Patil is persuading Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to apply a bit of the Congress colourant to Delhi-Hurriyat dialogue, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today said that the proposed third round of the peace process would take place only after the "unification of separatist parties". It has put the whole process of talks on the backburner. Chairman of the Awami Action Committee (AAC) Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who also happens to be the founder chairman of the separatist conglomerate Hurriyat Conference, said that his first and the foremost priority would be to involve more groups and individuals with the dialogue process. He explained to the EXCELSIOR that the Hurriyat chairman Maulvi Abbas Ansari's resignation had exposed him to the challenging task of the "reunification" of the seven-member Hurriyat Executive Council. He said that in the phase one, he would be meeting the constituents broken away from the Hurriyat Executive Council. In phase two, he would establish a liaison with "individuals and groups who have not been with the Hurriyat".

Daily Excelsior, 10 July 2004

3 militants killed in Poonch, civilian hurt

JAMMU, July 9: Security forces today gunned down three militants including a Pakistani and two locals of Surankote in an encounter at village Chakthroo in Mandi sector in Poonch district while a civilian was injured when he tried to escape from the custody of Army in Kandi area of Budhal in Rajouri district. Official sources said a joint

team of Army and police observed movement of three militants near Kalani bridge in Chakthroo area of Mandi sector last mid-night when they were reportedly shifting their hideout. Sources said the militants started fleeing towards a forest area after they spotted the security personnel. In the process, one of the militants drowned in a flooded nullah at Chakthroo while two others were trapped.

The Tribune, 11 July 2004

Protests against torture of student

Srinagar, July 10: For the second consecutive day, protest demonstrations were held at Handwara in north Kashmir today against the alleged torture of a girl student and use of force, in which at least 30 protesting students were injured yesterday. The police fired in the air, lobbed teargas shells and resorted to a cane charge to disperse the demonstrators. Similar demonstrations were held at Kupwara, about 20 km away. Senior police and civil officers visited the spot. Students of the local college and two higher secondary schools joined the protesters. Peoples Conference chairman Sajjad Lone visited Handwara today, condemned the police action and joined the demonstrators. He condemned the teargassing and use of force against the students at Kupwara.

The Tribune, 11 July 2004

Geelani claims his faction is real Hurriyat
Srinagar, July 10: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of the breakaway group of the separatist Hurriyat Conference said today that his was the “real”. He ruled out any possibility of talks with the Abbas-led faction. Moulvi Abbas Ansari had stepped down from chairmanship on Wednesday and asked Mirwaiz Umar Farooq to resume the reconciliatory and unity efforts. Talking to mediapersons at his Hyderpora residence here today, Mr Geelani said the stepping down of Mr Abbas Ansari from the chairmanship was an internal matter of the group, which had already violated the Hurriyat constitution. Mr Geelani, considered to be a hardliner, has been

opposed to the Centre-Hurriyat talks led by Moulvi Abbas Ansari.

The Hindu, 11 July 2004

10 militants killed in J&K

JAMMU, JULY 10. Ten militants were killed today in three separate encounters in Jammu and Kashmir. Nine of them belonged to the Lashkar-e-Taiba. Acting on information about the presence of six militants in Mandi Nala of Poonch district two days ago, an ambush was laid, sources said. In the ensuing encounter that ended this evening, the six, belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba, were killed near the ambush site. Three LeT militants were killed this afternoon at Ghundi area of Poonch district. Three AK rifles, nine AK magazines, eight hand grenades and two radio sets were recovered.

The Indian Express, 11 July 2004

Lashkar Latest: MBA, a cop, govt staff

NEW DELHI, JULY 10: An MBA from a high-profile family in Srinagar, a state police constable, an electrician deputed to the Chief Minister’s residence, a minister’s driver — they were all allegedly part of the Lashkar-e-Toiba “module” busted by the Jammu and Kashmir police last week. The police had killed two Pakistani operatives of the module and arrested 18 — unfolding local support to militants. The involvement of educated youths from well-to-do families with the militant network has become a major cause of concern for the intelligence agencies. “The locals are not just operating on the peripheries. They are intimately involved with the operations — providing safe houses, driving militants for fidayeen attacks, supplying weapons and undertaking recce missions,” said a Home Ministry official.

Daily Excelsior, 11 July 2004

Baig regrets Centre’s raw deal in budget allocation

BARAMULLA, July 10: Finance Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Baig has expressed his dismay over the raw deal to Jammu and Kashmir at the hands of the Centre in the

just announced Union Budget and allocation of the funds to this border State. "We have been conveyed, to our dismay, that the Union Finance Ministry is considering to make rupees 1250 -Cr Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan, Rs 630-Cr Baghliar assistance and Rs 300 Cr assistance for J&K Bank overdraft, a part of the normal plan of the State, leaving meagre Rs 770 Cr outside the plan", Mr Baig said while addressing a public meeting here today. The Finance Minister said that no commitment has been made on the special assistance of rupees 1150-Cr which the State used to get from the previous Government at the Centre. " If the Union Finance Ministry goes ahead with such a decision, it would not only stall the developmental process in the State, but would throw Jammu and Kashmir into a big financial crisis which would be difficult to tide over", Mr Baig said, adding that the "State Government has decided to take up the matter at the highest political level in New Delhi to make them understand the sensitivity of Kashmir issue and the need for tackling it with care and compassion".

Daily Excelsior, 11 July 2004

Offensive against militants in Poonch, Kathua

7 ultras, 2 jawans among 11 killed

JAMMU, July 10: In stepped-up search operations, police and Army today killed seven militants—six in the border district of Poonch and one in Bani area of Kathua district—and foiled an attempt by two fidayeens to sneak into the Brigade Headquarters in Poonch. Two Army jawans and two civilians including a woman were also killed while five security personnel were injured. With three militants killed in Poonch only last night, a total of nine militants have been eliminated by the Army and police in the district during last two days.

Daily Excelsior, 11 July 2004

DIG appointed inquiry officer; DySP, SI attached in Handwara case

JAMMU, July 10: The Government today ordered an inquiry into the alleged torture of

a girl student in Handwara area of Kupwara district allegedly by the police. Pending inquiry, a DySP and a Sub Inspector have been attached. DIG Baramulla-Kupwara range Ashok Gupta will hold the inquiry, official sources said, adding DySP Altaf Khan and SI Tanveer have been attached by the Government. Following the orders of inquiry and attachments of the two police officers, the people and several Associations called off their agitation late this evening.

The Indian Express, 12 July 2004

Kashmiri Pandits tell story of exile

New Delhi, July 12: The Panun Kashmir Movement, an organisation of Kashmiri Pandits, today released what they claim is an exhaustive compilation of documents relating to the displacement of the nearly 3 lakh Kashmiri Hindus. Compiled by a team of five researchers over two years, Kashmir Documentation — Pandits in Exile comprises a documents relating to the migration of Kashmiri Pandits over the last 15 years. The document starts from a 1985 resolution passed by a Kashmiri-Pandit youth organisation warning of "possible largescale migration" of Pandits from the Valley. It incorporates political resolutions, letters, memoranda, and personal accounts of the community about the loss of their homeland and the "indifference of the state and Central government" towards the issue.

The Tribune, 12 July 2004

Cong activists in touch with NC

Jammu, July 11: Certain Congress activists are in touch with the National Conference (NC) as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of Mufti Sayeed has launched an attack on the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre. Not only the PDP, but Congress leaders also have not spared any opportunity to ridicule Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed and other leaders of his party. Relations between the Mufti and the Congress started souring particularly following the introduction of the daughters' Bill that created embarrassed the latter throughout the country. However, relations between the PDP and the Congress may deteriorate with Finance Minister,

Muzaffar Hussain Beig, publicly ridiculing the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre for not extending liberal grants to J&K.

The Tribune, 12 July 2004

Lashkar activists being motivated to escalate violence: report

Jammu, July 11: Mohd Azam of Kunya village in Poonch district was the only bread-earner for the family after his father, working in the Public Health Engineering, had been kidnapped by militants and later killed last year on the charge of cooperating with the security forces. Azam was working as a special police officer on a monthly salary of Rs 1,500. He recently had been appointed in the PHE. A group of militants barged into his house last night and abducted him. He was dragged outside the village where he was killed. The police said the killing of Mohd Azam was part of the plan of rebels who have been directed to eliminate police informers and security personnel.

The Hindu, 12 July 2004

35 injured in Anantnag grenade blast

SRINAGAR, JULY 10. Ahead of the Amarnath yatra which is scheduled to begin on July 15, militants lobbed a grenade in the south Kashmir district of Anantnag today injuring 35 persons. Reports said the injured included six women and two children. Militants hurled the explosive on a police patrol at Mattan Chowk in Anantnag. It missed the target and exploded at the bus stand. The injured have been admitted to the Anantnag sub-district hospital and three critically injured persons, including a woman, were later brought to Srinagar.

The Times of India, 12 July 2004

Kashmir's first flyover to be inaugurated

JAMMU: Kashmir's first flyover will be inaugurated on July 13 in Srinagar giving the city much needed respite from traffic congestion, minister for roads and buildings Gulam Ahmed Mir said. "The first-ever flyover in Kashmir valley in Srinagar

summer capital is in the final stage of its completion. It will be inaugurated on Martyrs' Day, July 13 this year," Mir said. Nearly Rs 6.50 crore out of the total estimated cost of Rs 16.32 crore for the two-phased project has been spent. A project for construction of an additional flyover at Jammu is being formulated, he said adding that flyover at Srinagar has been completed in a record period of one year.

The Tribune, 12 July 2004

Need for unity (Editorial)

Only a united Hurriyat will be able to present before the country what it actually wants. It will then be easier for the government too to deal with the forces constituting the conglomerate. It will be unfortunate if the Hurriyat leadership crisis delays the third round of talks with the Centre, to be held later this month, but this should not cause much worry. Most of the Hurriyat leaders stand for dialogue except for a few like Mr Geelani. One hopes the anti-dialogue leaders too will change their stance in the interest of peace in the valley.

Greater Kashmir, 12 July 2004

9 militants, 2 soldiers killed in Jk

Srinagar, July 11: Twelve persons including nine militants and two soldiers were killed in various incidents across the state since Saturday evening. Three militants and a soldier were killed in an encounter at Gund Fatehpora Islamabad on Saturday. According to an official communiqué, three militants Abu Saifullah, Abu Sajjad and Abu Abrar of Pakistan were killed by troops during a fierce encounter. One soldier was also killed in the gun battle. Militants last night fired upon the residence of PDP activist Muhammad Yasin Malik son of Assad Malik of Khur Batpora Kulgam, which was retaliated by the police personnel posted there. The encounter resulted in injuries to constable Bashir Ahmad. The militants also snatched one SLR and some rounds from the police personnel.

Greater Kashmir, 12 July 2004

Rights comm figures blast govt claims

'Highest rights abuses in 7 years'

Srinagar, July 11: Belying the tall claims of the PDP-led coalition of having minimized the human rights violations in the state, this year the State Human Rights Commission has come up with figures showing highest number of human rights violation cases in last seven years. A report issued by the SHRC reveals 672 human rights violation cases recorded from April 2003 to June this year, which is the highest since the commission came into being in 1997. However, the actual cases are believed to be higher than recorded by SHRC as the commission only records the cases that are reported to it. Nevertheless, the statistics assume much significance owing to the fact that the commission is a government controlled body.

Daily Excelsior, 12 July 2004

3 militants, employee among six killed

JAMMU, July 11: Three militants, a woman and a Government employee were among six persons killed in separate incidents across the Jammu region since last night. Official sources said a police party led by SSP Rajouri S A Mujtaba launched a search operation at Morian under the jurisdiction of Manjakote police station in Rajouri district this morning after getting an information that three militants had taken shelter in the village. After a brief exchange of firing with police, the militants abandoned their hideout at Morian and moved towards Jamola forests. The police party chased the militants and again engaged them in the gun-battle with the help of security forces.

Daily Excelsior, 12 July 2004

Foreign mercenaries still infiltrating: Maj Gen Jaswal

AKHNOOR, July 11: Foreign terrorists are still infiltrating into this side of the Line of Control (LoC) despite the fact that most of the border areas including the LoC have been fenced. General Officer Commanding (GOC) of an Infantry Division located in forward area of Akhnoor and parts of Sunderbani, Maj Gen B S Jaswal during an informal chat with the visiting media-

persons disclosed that out of the five terrorists killed recently by troops in the upper reaches of Jogwan and Battal across river Manawar, three were believed to be foreigners. He said though no concrete evidence was available, yet it was established from their physical appearance and the diaries and other material in their possession that they were foreigners. He claimed that almost entire stretch of the LoC falling in his area of operation under 10 Division, has been fenced. There are some areas and nullahs which have remained unplugged but there is sufficient force to check the infiltration and exfiltration. It is not easy to cross the LoC but the ultras who come on suicide mission, can do any damn thing at the cost of their lives. Moreover, despite innumerable hurdles they manage to slip into this side taking advantage of ground position, weather and even the support of Pak troops, he elaborated.

Daily Excelsior, 12 July 2004

Pak Punjab biggest Centre for 'jehadi' recruitment

NEW DELHI, July 11: In a disturbing development, Pakistan's Punjab province bordering India has emerged as the biggest recruitment centre for 'Jehadis' in the country and Sindh is being rapidly converted into another major source for fighters. More than 50 per cent of 'jehadis' in Pakistan come from Punjab province alone. Around 8,000 of them have been killed so far fighting security forces in Jammu and Kashmir while another 4,000 have died in Afghanistan, according to a leading think-tank. Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Toiba has 29 recruitment centres in Punjab, Jaish-e-Mohammad nine and other outfits active in Kashmir, excluding Hizbul Mujahideen, 14 centres, strategic foresight group says in its recent publication 'Pakistan's provinces'. The sectarian group Sipah-e-Sahaba also has 16 offices all over the province out of 28 in the entire country.

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2004

3 militants killed; 5 students wounded in Bypass encounter

SRINAGAR, July 12: Even as a student was killed and 30 others left wounded in a grenade explosion in Handwara town today, at least five students and four soldiers sustained injuries when militants ambushed a convoy of security forces in Hyderpora-Tengpora on the National Highway Bypass. Meanwhile, security forces claimed to have killed at least three militants in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources in north Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that unidentified persons lobbed a hand grenade on a picket of Rashtriya Rifles 21 Bn near Veterinary Complex in Handwara town at 1230 hours today. It exploded close to the targeted formation, killing a Class 11th student, Irshad Ahmed Sheikh. He was a resident of Khoipora, Rajwarh. Sources said that 30 others—all civilians—sustained injuries. While over a dozen of the injured were treated at District Hospital Handwara, eleven persons with critical injuries were referred to different hospitals in Srinagar.

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2004

SHRC demands more teeth, amendments in Act

JAMMU, July 12: State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has asked the Government to arm the Commission with more powers and also make certain amendments in the Act during the forthcoming Assembly Session so as to bring it at par with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The Commission has also sought more powers to make it completely autonomous body so that people could get prompt justice in cases of human rights violations. Disclosing this, Chairman of SHRC, Justice (Retd) AM Mir, in a conversation with the EXCELSIOR said that he has written to the State Law Ministry to make the Commission an autonomous body and empower it with same powers as the court of law enjoyed to deal strongly with the violations of human rights.

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2004

Mirwaiz confident of re-uniting Hurriyat

SRINAGAR, July 12: Senior Hurriyat Conference (HC), leader Mirwaiz Moulvi

Umar Farooq today appealed to all separatist leaders to desist from giving any statements which will affect the unity effort. Speaking at a function on the eve of Martyrs Day to be celebrated tomorrow, Mirwaiz said he was confident of reuniting the HC as other senior separatist leaders have extended their full cooperation. "This time we will succeed in our efforts to bridge the gap and bring all separatists together so that the mission of martyrs could be taken to its logical end", said Mirwaiz.

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2004

Another Govt official held for militant links

JAMMU, July 12: Few days after the arrest of a Deputy Commissioner, Doda official for his militant connections, police have arrested yet another Government official and his associate "for actively working for the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit". Meanwhile, DC Doda official, Zakir Hussain, has been placed under suspension. Police have also prepared a case for his detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA). His questioning has, however, revealed an important piece of information that he was actually an employee of the Medical Department but had been attached to the DC Doda office under the mysterious circumstances. Official sources told the Excelsior that two more militants were apprehended by the police in Doda yesterday after their names surfaced during the interrogation of Zakir Hussain, a Senior Assistant in Planning Section of DC Doda, who was arrested on June 20 "for being an active militant" working for the LeT and the Hizbul Mujahideen outfits.

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2004

Hurriyat (Geelani) begins direct attacks on Mufti

SRINAGAR, July 12: The separatist amalgamation headed by the estranged Hurriyat leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, has finally begun its direct attacks on the Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his government in the state. Hurriyat (Geelani) has been hitting security forces and New Delhi while avoiding direct attacks on Mufti

Sayeed who spent huge amounts of State exchequer on Mr Geelani's treatment, release from jail and return to home last year. A hard-hitting statement, issued from head office of Hurriyat (G), today alleged that inhuman conditions had forced the detenus at Kot Bhalwal Jail to go for indefinite hunger strike. It asserted that "deliberate attempts" to put away the detenus from court sittings were "high handedness of Police" and "contempt of Court".

The Hindu, 13 July 2004

Pundir murder investigation exposes protection racket

SRINAGAR, JULY 12. For the past several months, Indian taxpayers may have been subsidising the activities of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir. Investigations into last month's murder of the Indian Railways Construction Company (IRCON) engineer, Sudhir Kumar Pundir, and his brother, Sanjay Pundir, are starting to point towards the existence of a shadowy protection racket, fed by a secret slush fund run by IRCON's local subcontractors to allow work on the strategic Srinagar-Jammu line to proceed unimpeded. Jammu and Kashmir police investigators told The Hindu that the murder of the Pundir brothers was preceded by at least a dozen protection payments, ranging from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 5 lakhs, over the last six months.

The Tribune, 13 July 2004

Patil, Vohra discuss Kashmir

New Delhi, July 12: Amid reports that the third round of talks between the Centre and the Hurriyat might get delayed, Home Minister Shivraj Patil today held a crucial meeting with Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir N N Vohra and discussed on the latest situation in the Valley. The meeting assumes great significance in the wake of resignation of Maulana Abbas Ansari as the Hurriyat Chairperson and the possible delay in the next round of talks due to differences within the conglomerate. The meeting held at the North Block office of the Home Minister lasted an hour and was also

attended by National Security Advisor J N Dixit, Home Secretary Dharendra Singh, Advisor, Security in the Prime Minister's Office M K Narayanan and Director designate of the Intelligence Bureau Ajit Doval.

The Tribune, 13 July 2004

Student among 14 killed in J&K

Srinagar, July 12: At least 14 persons, including 13 militants, three of them infiltrators, were killed and more than 30 others injured in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. A student was killed and 20 others, including two policemen, were injured when militants hurled a grenade in the main chowk of Handwara town of Kupwara district this afternoon. The student of Class XII killed in the explosion was identified as Irshad Ahamd Sheikh. Five schoolchildren and three security force jawans were injured when militants fired four rifle grenades towards an Army convoy at the Tengpora by-pass on the outskirts of Srinagar this morning. A school bus carrying students from a school in the Pattan area of Baramula district was caught in the attack by militants as the Army convoy was moving on the bypass, reports said. Three infiltrators were killed in an encounter with the Army near the LoC in the Machil sector of Kupwara district last night, while another was apprehended. All of them are believed to be Pakistani nationals.

The Tribune, 13 July 2004

Third round of Delhi-APHC talks may be delayed

Jammu, July 12: Third round of talks between the Government of India and the (APHC) Hurriyat Conference likely to be delayed following Maulvi Abbas Ansari's stepping down as APHC Chairman and Maulvi Umer Farooq refusing to head the conglomerate. The former BJP-led NDA government had planned another round of talks with the APHC(Abbas) in June. With the installation of the UPA Government the APHC was under the impression that talks would be held in current month. With whom

to hold a dialogue? This question is worrying the Union Home Ministry following failure of the separatists to come under one umbrella.

The Indian Express, 13 July 2004

Govt may release prisoners before talks with Hurriyat

NEW DELHI, JULY 12: In an attempt to get the Hurriyat Conference leaders talking, the government is in favour of releasing some political detainees before the third round of dialogue. Sources said this was discussed at a high-level meeting chaired by Home Minister Shivraj Patil to review the Kashmir situation today. Concerned over the reluctance of the Hurriyat Conference to come forward for the next round of peace process, senior government officials considered the release of some more detainees languishing in jails without charge of any heinous crime. The NDA government had already released a number of prisoners as was demanded by the Hurriyat leaders. The process came to a virtual halt after the Congress-led UPA said it wanted to review the progress made in first two rounds.

The Times of India, 13 July 2004

Involve Geelani in talks: Mufti

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and National Conference president Omar Abdullah have asked the Union government to initiate an unconditional dialogue with hardline separatist Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani to arrest violence in the Valley. The on-going dialogue process between the Centre and the Hurriyat Conference ran into rough weather following the resignation of Hurriyat's moderate faction chairman Moulvi Abbas Ansari last Thursday. Ansari had stated that he took this step for unity among different factions of the Hurriyat, including the one headed by Geelani. However, Geelani has turned down the unity offer. Mufti told TNN that the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government should talk to Geelani. Mufti reiterated his stand of involving all separatist groups and militants in talks for resolving

the Kashmir problem. He said the talks should be held without any pre-condition.

The Times of India, 13 July 2004

Separatists asked to toe pro-Pak line

NEW DELHI: An intelligence report with the home ministry on the recent terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the goings-on in the separatist Hurriyat Conference indicates that Pakistan is bent on converting the "struggle" in Kashmir into a "pro-Pak" movement or one seeking "merger" with it. The report also says that Pakistan wants the separatist leaders to unite and accept the leadership of the pro-Pak Syed Ali Shah Geelani, but to no avail. According to the report, the resignation of Hurriyat chairman Moulvi Abbas Ansari on July 7 and his handing over charge to Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, which was preceded by systematic terrorist violence, were messages from across the border to the separatists to toe the pro-Pak agenda.

Greater Kashmir, 14 July 2004

7 killed, 14 injured in JK

Srinagar, July 13: Seven persons were killed and 14 others injured in various incidents across the State since Monday evening. Three labourers were killed when unidentified gunmen fired upon the Beacon camp at Nalthi sector Baderwah on Tuesday. One labourer was also injured in the attack. Three persons were killed and twelve others injured when an improvised explosive device went off at Old Nishat on Monday evening. Reports said the IED which exploded in a load carrier blew up to smithereens three persons and injured 12 Nepali laborers. The injured persons were later shifted to hospital where the condition of some of them is said to be critical. One of those killed was identified as Sajad Ahmad Bhat son of Ghulam Muhammad Bhat of Mahmoodabad, Dooru Islamabad.

Greater Kashmir, 14 July 2004

Editorial: Figures speak

During the past 21 months the Mufti led government tried its best to make the outside world believe that a window of opportunity had opened with the installation of the

coalition government and that the abuse of human rights had declined. The government issued as many as four statements to counter the report of the Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) wherein it had been stated that as many as 120 people disappeared after arrest in Mufti's regime. The government while rejecting the APDP report (in total) as ridiculous said the persons shown as disappeared by the APDP had joined militancy. Although the APDP accepted that a few persons had joined militancy and some had returned home but the relatives of the victims, by and large, did not digest the government version. They solicited affidavits stating that their wards were arrested and subjected to enforced disappearance. The state human rights commission (SHRC) which, is a government-controlled body, however, vindicated the report of the APDP.

The SHRC report released recently says that the commission recorded highest number of complaints this year. The commission recorded 672 cases of human rights violations from April 2003 to June this year which is the highest since the SHRC came into being in 1997. The commission recorded 29 cases of extra-judicial executions, 82 disappearances and 3 rapes. The figures of the SHRC closely match with the figures of the APDP. The figures mock at Mufti Muhammad Sayed and his so-called healing touch policy rather philosophy.

Daily Excelsior, 14 July 2004

'Politician-militant link is a natural phase. It'll end like in Assam'
Indian forces have best HR record in entire world: Governor

SRINAGAR, July 13: Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha advocates stringent action against the "black sheep" in Indian security forces. He, however, believes that India's military and paramilitary forces have the best human rights record in the whole world. In an exclusive interview with the EXCELSIOR, Governor S K Sinha asserted that, while fighting militancy, Indian troops had observed human rights in Jammu &

Kashmir better than any country's security forces would have maintained anywhere in the world. Asked why sections of security forces had been violating human rights and creating alienation among the common masses, Gen Sinha said that troops were gaining an edge over the militants "only with the support of common masses". He said that security forces as well as other organs of the Government had been taking action over the credible complaints received against units or individuals of the armed forces.

Daily Excelsior, 14 July 2004

3 Beacon labourers shot dead, one hurt

JAMMU, July 13: Three labourers of the Beacon were killed and another seriously injured in a militant attack at Gul Danda Dhar in Nalthi area, about 25 kms from Bhaderwah in Doda district this afternoon. Six other labourers were released by the militants after holding them hostage for a brief period. Official sources said four militants appeared at Gul Danda Dhar where 10 labourers of GREF's 221 RCC unit were engaged in the construction of Bhaderwah-Bani-Basohli road, the work on which had been revived only three years back after being abandoned for several years due to militancy, at 1 pm. The militants, who were armed with sophisticated weapons, kidnapped all 10 labourers and took them to a nearby isolated area where they separated seven local labourers. The militants then rained bullets on four other labourers.

Daily Excelsior, 14 July 2004

Foreigners' domination made locals to surrender

8 militants call it a day

RAMBAN, July 13: Fed up with the constant domination, dictates and brutalities on the local people by foreign mercenaries on the name of so called jihad, a group of eight militants, including a district commander of Tehrik-ul-Mujahideen (TuM) for Chenab Division of Doda, surrendered before 11 Rashtriya Rifles Sector Commander Brig I Arumy Raj and Deputy Inspector General of Police Doda-Udhampur

Range Satvir Gupta at Chanderkot here today. The surrendering ceremony followed by the reunion of the ultras with their families witnessed a touching scene. Their parents and brothers were so emotional that they embraced their dear ones with the hope that they will never go back to the world of bloodshed, destruction and plunder. The aged mothers of a few of them appeared to be over joyed, having glimpse of their sons after a long time. They seemed to be very anxious to meet their sons when they were brought before the army and police officers alongwith their weapons for surrender ceremony.

Daily Excelsior, 14 July 2004

KPs observe 'Martyrs' Day' as Black Day
JAMMU, July 13: To express their anger against what they termed the atrocities committed on community from time to time the Kashmiri Pandits observed the Martyrs' Day as the Black Day today. In this connection different functions were organised by different KP factions at various places here. The different KP organisations which observed the Martyr's Day as Black Day include Jammu and Kashmir Vichar Manch (JKVM), Panun Kashmir Movement (PKM) and All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (ASKPC). While the JKVM and PKM organised open public meetings and seminars the ASKPC held a scooter rally to UNO Office to protest against the onslaught of fundamentalist forces being faced by the community.

Daily Excelsior, 14 July 2004

Gupta objects to observance of Martyrs' Day
JAMMU, July 13: Strongly objecting to the observance of July 13 as Martyrs' Day, former Union Minister and senior BJP leader Prof Chaman Lal Gupta said the day cannot be termed as National Day because this was linked with highly painful incidents of communal frenzy and barbarities by misled elements under the banner of Muslim Conference. In a statement here Prof Gupta said that if this could be a national day, how Pakistan and other fundamental forces

would have joined hands to observe this chorus. He said that the sad events were outcome of the nefarious designs of the foreign rulers in India who had their own problems especially after the Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir, had strongly pleaded for the independence of India at Round Table Conference in 1930, wherein he had pointed out that all communities including Muslims and Hindus were living in harmony in his State.

Kashmir Times, 14 July 2004

India has forcibly occupied J&K: Farooq
SRINAGAR, July 13 : Former chief minister and the patron of National Conference (NC), Dr Farooq Abdullah today dropped a bomb shell by saying that India has forcibly occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He was addressing a public gathering at the Martyrs Graveyard at Khawaja Bazar here. "The government of India has illegally taken over control of the whole state. Let me tell you that neither India nor Pakistan can help us at this time when everybody in the state is living under a sense of insecurity", said Dr Abdullah. He asked the people to become self reliant so that they are able to come out of the present situation. The patron of NC accused the government of India of causing a divide among the party. He added that the separatist organizations like the Hurriyat Conference and other small groups were divided at the behest of the directions from the central government.

Kashmir Images, 14 July 2004

Amid bitter politics, relatives of martyrs distribute sweet sharbat
Srinagar: Whole nation today rose to salute the innocent martyrs of Kashmir who laid down their lives, seventy four years down the history. While politicians time and again heightened their political edifices on the graves of these martyrs, some common people familiar or secluded with the history too did an honor to the martyred heroes of Kashmir by one way or the other. While some of them visited the martyrs' graveyard at Naqashband Sahib (Khwaja Bazar) many others (most of them relatives of the

martyrs) venerated them traditionally by offering a traditional drink (Gan Sharbat) to the neighbors.

Kashmir Images, 14 July 2004

Handwara observes shut down as blast toll mounts to three

Handwara, July 13: For the grief struck people of Handwara, the historical martyr's day doesn't make much sense and rightly so. This town has witnessed spiraling violence related incidents in the last week. And to add to their woes, a grenade blast claimed a life besides wounding 19 others on Monday. The town observed a complete shutdown in lieu of the grenade explosion on Monday in which the death toll has mounted to three with two more injured succumbing to injuries today. Life was paralysed in the town and adjoining areas, the roads wore a deserted look and people preferred to remain indoors.

The Hindu, 14 July 2004

Deputy Chief Minister escapes grenade attack in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, JULY 13. The Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister, Mangat Ram Sharma, today escaped unhurt in a grenade attack by militants. Six people, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police, were injured. The Kashmir Freedom Force, a little-known outfit, has owned the responsibility for the attack. Despite tight security on the eve of Martyr's Day, the militants hurled a grenade at Mr. Sharma's cavalcade when he came out of the Pradesh Congress office. He was about to go for the inauguration of the first flyover in the City by the Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. "It missed his vehicle, fell on the road and exploded, resulting in injuries to the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Haseeb Mughal, a Sub-Inspector and four civilians," a police spokesman said.

The Hindu, 14 July 2004

Srinagar gets its first flyover

SRINAGAR, JULY 13. The first flyover in Srinagar was inaugurated today by the Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. Mr. Sayeed had laid the foundation stone last

year and set a target of one year for the completion of the project, executed by the Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation. He dedicated the flyover to the people on Martyrs Day, observed in memory of those killed by the forces of then Dogra ruler on July 13, 1931. Mr. Sayeed, the Deputy Chief Minister, Mangat Ram Sharma, and the Roads and Buildings Minister, Ghulam Ahmed Mir, praised the construction corporation for carrying out a "commendable job." The project was started in May 1997 but abandoned by the then National Conference Government.

The Hindu, 14 July 2004

Talks will continue, says Mufti

SRINAGAR, JULY 13. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, today assured the separatists that there was no change in the policy of the Central Government on a dialogue with Pakistan and the State people. In a bid to ensure that the third round of talks between the moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and New Delhi is not derailed, Mr. Sayeed said the dialogue process would be carried forward and all groups should respond positively to the Centre's offer. "There is national consensus on the reconciliation and normalisation process and the new UPA Government at the Centre is committed to taking forward the process." He was speaking after opening a flyover here.

The Hindu, 14 July 2004

Security tightened for Amarnath pilgrims

JAMMU, JULY 13. Security for Amarnath pilgrims has been tightened as inputs have been received that militants may try to disrupt the 45-day-long yatra, a top Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) official said. The first batch of yatris will leave Jammu tomorrow under the tightest-ever security blanket. Addressing a press conference here today, the Inspector General (Operations), Central Reserve Police Force, C. Balasubramanian, said: "The first convoy of Amarnath yatra will leave Jammu tomorrow and last batch of yatris will leave on August

28 through Chandanwari route and on August 29, the yatis will leave for the cave via Baltal route. The last day of darshan shall be on August 30." He said 32 companies each of CRPF and BSF have been deployed in connection with the yatra. The CRPF men have been deployed at strategic points and at 20 lodging centres. To a question, the IGP said that while 10 CRPF companies were in the Jammu region, 22 were in the Kashmir valley. A total of 27 BSF companies had been deployed in the valley and five in the Jammu region.

Hindustan Times, 14 July 2004

Spurt in violence reflect terrorists' frustration: J&K Governor

Srinagar, July 14: The desire of the people of Jammu and Kashmir for peace has brought about the marked reduction in terrorism in the region, Governor Lt Gen (ret'd) SK Sinha said on Tuesday. "The recent spurt in violence in the Valley reflect the sheer frustration of the terrorists," the Governor told the visiting Canadian High Commissioner in India, Lucie Edwards.

The Tribune, 14 July 2004

Eight terrorists surrender; girl's ear chopped off

Jammu, July 13: Terrorists chopped off the ears and nose of a girl in the Doda district last night to take revenge from her brother who had surrendered before the troops last month. The girl, Mariam Begum, was kidnapped along with her 60-year-old father, Mohammad Ibrahim, from Mehad Dhar in Doda while they were grazing their cattle. Later, the security forces rescued Ibrahim, while Mariam was found badly injured. The terrorists accused her of motivating her brother to surrender. Meanwhile, eight hardcore terrorists, including the district commander of the Tehrik-ul-Mujhideen, Mohammad Salim Khan, today surrendered before the Army and the police at Chanderkot in Doda district. These include six ultras belonging to the Tehrik and two of the Hizbul Mujahideen. This is the second major surrender in Doda after April 17 when

22 terrorists laid down their arms in the district.

The Indian Express, 14 July 2004

Kashmir peace talks unlikely before end-August

Srinagar, July 13: Separatists in Kashmir are unlikely to hold talks with the government at least until the end of August, pushing back New Delhi's plan for discussions this month on the insurrection. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Kashmir's chief cleric and the interim chief of the separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference, said late on Monday that the group would assess the progress of India-Pakistan peace moves at the end of August. "Personally, I'd say yes," he said when asked if Hurriyat planned to wait until that time to agree to resume the talks with New Delhi, which were being held parallel to the India-Pakistan peace process launched last year.

The Tribune, 15 July 2004

Pak support hastens Maulvi Farooq's unity move

Jammu, July 14: Encouraged by the support lent by the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Mr Masood Khan, and occupied Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Sikendar Hayat Khan to the move to unite separatists in Kashmir, the Chairman of the Awami Action Committee and a senior APHC leader, Maulvi Umar Farooq, has established contact with the heads of the JKLF, the Democratic Freedom Party, the Peoples' League and the Jamat-e-Islami. The formal meeting between Maulvi Umar Farooq and those belonging to the Itihadi Force was slated for yesterday but was postponed the grenade attack on the Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Mangat Ram Sharma's motorcade. Maulvi Umar Farooq had initiated unity moves four months ago but had to give up when Syed Ali Shah Geelani and other hardliners opposed joining hands with the leaders of the APHC (Abbas).

The Tribune, 15 July 2004

Five killed in Kashmir valley

Srinagar, July 14: At least five persons were killed in separate incidents in the Kashmir

valley since yesterday, while the security forces handed over six boys to their parents in Pulwama after they had been apprehended in north Kashmir for exfiltration. The police here said that the security forces handed over six boys to their parents at Shopian in Pulwama district today. They had been apprehended in the Bandipore area of Baramulla district on Sunday last when they were reportedly on the way to Pakistan for getting arms training. Unidentified militants shot dead 50-year-old Abdul Rahman Hajam, a member of the local Auqaf at Waidumdoora, Kakernag, in Anantnag district today. A driver, Abdul Rashid Wani of Nehnipora, Rajwar (Handwara), was shot dead by some unidentified gunmen in the house of Mohammad Akbar Sheikh at Kakroosa in Kupwara district of north Kashmir last night. A nurse of the Health Department, Ms Shahzada, wife of Abdul Rahman Mir, was shot dead when unidentified militants entered their house at Munpapai in Budgam district late last evening.

The Tribune, 15 July 2004

Talks with Hurriyat by July-end

New Delhi, July 14; The Centre today announced that Home Minister Shivraj Patil would hold talks with the Hurriyat Conference later this month or in early August as part of its commitment to carry forward the dialogue process in Jammu and Kashmir. The Home Ministry, in a statement, said the initiative had been taken to settle a fresh date for talks at the Home Minister's level in late July or early August in consultation with the Hurriyat leadership. The statement referred to the Home Minister's announcement about the government's commitment to continue and carry forward the dialogue process in the state and said the recent incidents in the valley had caused serious concern and apprehension in the Hurriyat Conference.

The Hindu, 16 July 2004

Two killed in grenade attack in Poonch

JAMMU, JULY 15. Militants threw a grenade at the front gate of a police station in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir at

10.45 a.m. today. The grenade fell in the nearby area, killing a civilian, Sandeep Singh, and an ex-serviceman, Abdul Khaliq. A Special Police Officer, Vikas Sharma, was injured and he was airlifted to the Government Medical College in Jammu.

The Tribune, 16 July 2004

Mufti checks security at base camps

Srinagar, July 15: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has asked security personnel to be extra vigilant to ensure foolproof security during the ongoing Amarnath yatra that was flagged off in Jammu yesterday. With the arrival of the second batch of 2,591 pilgrims at Pahalgam today, the total number of yatrīs during the first two days has gone up to 3,972. Today's batch of pilgrims who left Jammu included 1,488 men, 317 women, 61 children and 725 sadhus. The first batch of 1,381 yatrīs, who arrived from Jammu in Pahalgam last evening, left for the holy cave this morning. They will be trekking 48 km. in the upper reaches of Pahalgam to have darshan of the ice lingam of Lord Shiva on Saturday morning.

The Tribune, 16 July 2004

Militants attack DC office in Anantnag

Srinagar, July 15: Militants today carried out a grenade attack on the office of Deputy Commissioner of Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir injuring five civilians, official sources said. Militants lobbed the grenade targeting the Deputy Commissioner's office in Anantnag district, 55 km from here, at around 1410 hours, the sources said. The grenade missed the intended target and exploded injuring five persons. No militant outfit has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Tribune, 16 July 2004

20 Bangladeshis nabbed while sneaking into PoK

Jammu, July 15: Security forces have foiled infiltration and exfiltration bids and arrested a Pakistani boy and 20 Bangladeshi nationals along to Indo-Pak border in Jammu since last night, official sources said

here today. The security forces guarding the Line of Control (LoC) at Simbal border outpost (BOP) in Jammu district, observed some movement early today, they said. The troops saw a group of people moving towards LoC in a bid to cross over to Pakistan, the sources said, adding that the troops challenged them and arrested 19 persons. All of them belonged to Bangladesh. However, nothing incriminating was recovered from them, the sources said.

The Tribune, 16 July 2004

Ammunition with poison head seized at militant hideout

Jammu, July 15: Security forces have seized AK ammunition with poison head for the first time in militancy-infested Jammu and Kashmir. Thirtysix rounds of AK ammunition were seized during search operations at a militant hideout in the Chakri forests in Mandi-Loran area of Poonch district yesterday, a defence spokesman said, adding that a huge quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives was seized during the search. Earlier, security forces had seized explosive greeting cards.

The Tribune, 17 July 2004

People's League chief, 17 others held

Srinagar, July 16: People's League chairman and former executive member of undivided Hurriyat Conference Sheikh Abdul Aziz and his 17 associates were taken into preventive custody as the Jammu and Kashmir police foiled their attempt to submit a memorandum to the United Nations Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) here today. Aziz, also a senior leader of Itehaadi (unity) Force, and his associates assembled at the Kashmir Motor Drivers Association bus stand in Lal Chowk and started marching, carrying banners alleging human rights violations, towards the local office of the UNMOGIP at Sonawar in violation of the prohibitory orders, official sources said. They were stopped by the police near the Central Telegraph Office on the exchange road and asked to disperse, the sources said.

The Tribune, 17 July 2004

Enterprising villagers produce power

Poonch, July 16: Being the launching pad for Pakistan-sponsored terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, Hillkaka, near here, hit the headlines a few months ago when concrete bunkers of militants were detected in the area by the troops. But now the place is in focus again as the local people with the help of the Army have for the first time generated electricity by upgrading the traditional water mills in the area. Barsada and Kulai villages, which were targetted by terrorists, now have electricity of their own as some enterprising residents adopted the technology transferred to them. The Army engineers have helped the water mill owners by fabricating steel turbines for them and replacing the traditional wooden ones.

The Tribune, 19 July 2004

Bomb-making facility unearthed

Jammu, July 18: Army troops have unearthed a major bomb manufacturing facility and recovered a large quantity of explosive material in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said here today. Acting on intelligence inputs, troops launched a search operation in Ralyar Ridge in the Gulabgarh belt of Udhampur district last evening, they said. During the search operation the hideout was unearthed which had improvised explosive device manufacturing facility, they said, adding it was for the first time that such a big manufacturing facility of terrorists had been found in Jammu Division. Fourteen kg of explosives, three big rechargeable batteries, two battery chargers, three solar plates and one solar lamp, were recovered.

Hindustan Times, 19 July 2004

Fake encounter charge hits BSF

New Delhi, July 19: Even before the issue of fake killings in Siachen could die down, an allegation that a BSF commandant in Kashmir was involved in a similar fake encounter has sent shock waves across the establishment. A BSF constable, Subhash Rathore of 42 Battalion, has alleged that

commandant Narendra Singh gunned down a Kashmiri youth and labelled him a Pakistani terrorist. Rathore also alleged that Singh then tried to claim the President's Gallantry Medal for the "fake encounter" and even got a senior officer to recommend his name. BSF director general Ajai Raj Sharma has ordered a court of inquiry (COI) against the commandant, after shunting him out of Jammu and Kashmir to Mizoram.

Hindustan Times, 19 July 2004

IAF to assist Army in operations against militants

Jammu, July 19: The Indian Air Force (IAF) is all set to participate in counter-insurgency operations with the Army to flush out terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir. The exercise has already started in the Pir Panjal Range, where a number of terrorist hideouts exist. According to sources, the IAF pilots have been trained to target hideouts with guns mounted on small aircraft, so the task of infantry troops is made easier. Mi-70s were used for the first time in Operation Sarpvishay – launched on April 21, 2003 – during which Army troops eliminated about 65 terrorists and busted 119 hideouts in the Pir Panjal Range. "There were only five Army casualties due to the participation of the IAF. And now, the Air Force is going to participate in a big way," the sources said.

The Indian Express, 19 July 2004

'ISI puts pressure on J-K hardliners to rope in moderates'

NEW DELHI, JULY 18: As the fate of Centre-Hurriyat talks remained uncertain, Pakistan's ISI has adopted a two-pronged strategy of exerting more pressure on hardliners to expand their base by roping in moderates and using militant groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) to terrorise pro-dialogue leaders from holding any parleys with New Delhi. The pressure on pro-Pakistan leader and head of the breakaway Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Geelani was evident when he, on his return to Srinagar from Delhi, dashed a letter to Amir-e-Jamaat Nazir Ahmed Kashiani saying his outfit should be termed as a

political wing of Jamaat, for which a committee has been formed, sources said. Geelani was directed to expand his base and become more acceptable, they said.

The Hindu, 19 July 2004

Peace on the guillotine, again (Praveen Swami)

Worst of all, the political ground on which the peace process is premised threatens to turn into quicksand. With terrorist groups increasingly dominating southern Kashmir, particularly at night, large crowds of villagers have started appearing at the last rites of slain terrorists, a phenomenon not seen since the early 1990s. Gatherings of up to 2,000 villagers have been recorded during the burials of terrorists of Pakistani origin, something unheard of until early this year. In one recent incident in Kulgam, villagers were shipped in by bus to protest an Army siege of a local mosque, in an effort to rescue two terrorists trapped inside. Major political parties have been unable to respond, for reasons not dissimilar to those of the Hurriyat centrists.

Hindustan Times, 20 July 2004

Terrorists kill 5 members of family in J&K

Jammu, July 20: A retired Army personnel and four members of his family, including a three-year-old child and two women, were on Tuesday killed by LeT terrorists in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. Abdul Gani, his wife Gul Begum, son Muzaffar Hussain, daughter Azma Begum and the infant were shot dead by the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists in their house in Gursanwala village in the district, official sources said. The terrorists beat the family members before killing them and later escaped, the sources said

The Hindu, 20 July 2004

Mangat Ram Sharma escapes another attempt

SRINAGAR, JULY 19. For the second time in a week, the Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister, Mangat Ram Sharma, today survived an assassination bid along with two

of his colleagues when militants hurled a grenade. The incident took place at a public meeting at Kapran-Dooru in Anantnag district. Four persons were killed and 30, including senior officials, injured in the attack. The seriously wounded have been airlifted here. Eyewitnesses told The Hindu that Mr. Sharma, who addressed a public meeting in Kapran village, 110 km from Srinagar, was distributing scholarship to students when a grenade was thrown. ``It exploded in front of the podium and left several people in a pool of blood.'

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

Army, police step up checking in Poonch, Rajouri

Jammu, July 19: The Army and the police have stepped up checking of civilians in the border villages of Poonch and Rajouri as part of an anti-infiltration plan. Official sources said the soldiers and the constables were regularly checking identification cards given to bona fide citizens of the twin border districts. According to the sources, door-to-door searches have been ordered in Poonch town following reports that a group of Fidayeens had sneaked into the town for carrying out strikes security convoys, camps and government installations. A senior police officer said checking identity cards in the villages which fell close to the LoC had been ordered after the level of infiltration went up in Poonch and Rajouri in recent weeks. He said with the killing of five infiltrators on the Poonch border on Saturday, more than 35 infiltrators had been eliminated by the troops in the district during the past 10 days.

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

Army camp attacked in north Kashmir

Baramulla, July 19: Armed militants targeted a security forces camp at Shokbaba Bandipora in north Kashmir late last night, damaging six houses nearby. Official sources said militants fired grenades and opened fire on the camp. However, most of the grenades missed the target and exploded near the houses adjoining the camp. No one was injured in the incident, they said. A

massive hunt has been launched to nab the militants responsible for the attack

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

2 Hizbul militants killed in encounter

Srinagar, July 19: Two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were shot dead by security forces in an encounter in the Kulgam area of Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir, defence sources said here today. The militants, identified as Mohammad Amin Padder and Shabbir Ahmad Parray, were shot dead by the Army at Arigam village in south Kashmir late last night, sources said. Two AK rifles, seven magazines, 185 rounds, one UBGL, 14 UBGL grenades, one hand grenade and a radio set were recovered from their possession, they added

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

New terror tactics in J&K

Jammu, July 19: Changing their strategy of high-risk actions against the security forces the terrorists have resorted to grenade attacks on civilians in Jammu and Kashmir. There has been 80 per cent increase in grenade attacks, in which 35 civilians have been killed and 526 injured, in the past six months. A total number of 118 grenade attacks were reported during the period. These attacks have left people dead, injured and maimed. There has been a steady increase in the number of grenade attacks this year with nine in January to 29 in April and 40 in May. Counter terrorist operations by security forces with the active cooperation of general public has led to the change of modus operandi of terrorists. Grenade attacks are considered as a low cost and low risk option which convey that terrorists are still active in the region.

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

Omar for immediate ceasefire

Srinagar, July 19: National Conference President and former Union Minister Omar Abdullah has urged the leaders of India and Pakistan to initiate immediate measures for ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir to end the bloodshed in the state. Addressing various public meetings in Central Kashmir district of Budgam today, Mr Omar Abdullah also

sought an unconditional involvement of the representatives of Kashmiris on either side in the peace talks. This, he said, would help in restoration of peace in the trouble-torn state where the people had suffered a lot over the past 14 years of militancy.

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

Row over 'ignoring' Jammu in tourism supplement

Jammu, July 19: A government-sponsored advertisement describing Kashmir as the principal region of Jammu and Kashmir and the Jammu and Ladakh areas as two supplementary units has created a ripple with various organisations describing it as an "anti-Jammu mindset" of the Mufti-led PDP-Congress coalition government. The "distortion" of facts has been made in an eight-page supplement on tourism that has been sponsored by the state government in an English daily. Besides, the "fact file" published along with a set of pictures has described Srinagar as the capital and omitted Jammu as the winter capital of the state.

The Tribune, 20 July 2004

Lawyers observe fast in Kashmir

Srinagar, July 19: Nearly 60 members of the Kashmir Bar Association today observed a symbolic fast outside the Sadar Court to draw the attention of the world human rights organisations to the plight of detainees from Jammu and Kashmir in jails within and outside the state. "We are staging the symbolic fast to express solidarity with detainees lodged in different jails, especially at Kotbalwal in Jammu, and to bring to the notice of world bodies including the UN, the OIC, the European Union and other peace loving countries, human rights violations in the state," a Kashmir Bar Association spokesman told reporters. He said the detainees were not being produced in courts where they could know the reasons for their detention.

Hindustan Times, 21 July 2004

'Soften Hurriyat with foreign trips'

New Delhi, July 21: The Manmohan Singh government has drawn up a detailed strategy

to deal with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and a novel approach —proposed by the Home Ministry — is to allow Hurriyat leaders to visit a foreign country where they can be "looked after well and softened". The soften-them-up tack and a slew of other strategies prepared by the Home Ministry in concert with intelligence agencies were discussed in a July 15 meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) ahead of the foreign secretary and foreign minister-level talks between India and Pakistan. The Hindustan Times has accessed the strategy paper which was put up with the note for the CCS which is headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The Hindu, 21 July 2004

Summer adventure at Gulmarg

SRINAGAR, JULY 20 . Encouraged by the rush of tourists, the Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to boost adventure tourism in Gulmarg. With the inauguration of several assets at picturesque Gulmarg, summer adventure activities for tourists and adventure lovers gain momentum, minister for Tourism, Housing and Urban Development Ghulam Hassan Mir said. Mr Mir inaugurated a fish pond for anglers and a shopping complex as a part of base camp for mountaineers and adventure sports at Kongdoori. The two facilities have been completed at a cost of Rs 18 lakhs by the Gulmarg Development Authority.

The Tribune, 21 July 2004

5 of family massacred in Rajouri

Jammu, July 20: A retired soldier and four members of his family, including a three-year-old child and two women, were shot dead by terrorists of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit in Rajouri district today. The terrorists entered the house of the retired Army personnel, Abdul Gani, in Gurshanwala village and killed his wife Gul Begum, son Muzaffar Hussain, daughter Azma and the infant. The terrorists tortured the family members before killing them.

The Tribune, 21 July 2004

Cong Ministers protest against 'inadequate' security

Jammu, July 20: The ministers belonging to the Congress party in the Mufti-led coalition government have protested against poor security cover provided to them by the Jammu and Kashmir government and have urged the Chief Minister to take action in this matter. Their protest has come following second militant attack on Deputy Chief Minister, Mangat Ram Sharma, in the Kashmir valley. Two ministers were injured in the attack, while a chief engineer and private secretary of a minister were among the five persons killed in the attack. The Congress party has taken serious note of the security lapse at the function in which Mr Sharma, Mr Sharief Niaz, Power Minister and Mr G.A. Mir, PWD Minister, all of the Congress, were participating.

The Tribune, 21 July 2004

Chances of unity between APHC factions recede

Jammu, July 20: With the setting up of party headquarters at Raj Bagh in Srinagar Syed Ali Shah Geelani has slammed doors of reconciliation with the rival faction of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). This development has prompted the APHC, faction led by Moulvi Abbas Ansari, to increase efforts to woo those belonging to the Itihadi Force comprising the JKLF, the Democratic Freedom Party, the Peoples' League and the Jamait-e-Islami. It wants to project itself as the largest conglomerate of separatist groups to make Delhi resume talks with it. For this Maulvi Umer Farooq, Kashmir Mirwaiz and senior APHC leader, had several sittings with various leaders of the Itihadi Force.

The Indian Express, 21 July 2004

Bollywood plans to present its mirror to Valley

NEW DELHI, JULY 20: The last time Bollywood touched down in the Valley was when former J-K chief minister Farooq Abdullah proposed a toast to the stars four years ago to launch Doordarshan's Kashmir channel. The Information and Broadcasting

Ministry is now hoping to create the right mood there again, this time with a festival of Indian films in Srinagar, as proposed by secretary Navin Chawla. Come October, the J-K capital will host a bevy of Bollywood stars, who will be flown in for the festival. Though the dates are yet to be finalised, sources said it will mainly showcase popular films shot and produced in Srinagar. Also being planned is a sufiana treat for the listeners. Modalities are being worked out, and the Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF) has been asked to conduct a study on organising the festival annually, sources added.

Hindustan Times, 22 July 2004

Hurriyat can't be 'softened' so easily: Mirwaiz

Jammu, July 22: Mirwaiz Umer Farooq dismissed a proposed strategy of the Government of India to "soften" Hurriyat Conference leaders by "looking after them well" in a foreign country and denounced it as an "act of madness, if it is correct". "I don't think any right thinking government would ever embark on such a childish way of doing things. It is ridiculous," he told HT when asked about his reaction to the government's proposed strategy on dealing with the secessionist conglomerate. "It is ludicrous to even imagine that any amount of hospitality or comforts would make us change our minds... Those devising such strategies and hoping for results appear to have gone mentally bankrupt," he said.

The Hindu, 22 July 2004

J&K plans to revolutionise villages with highest ever Central aid

SRINAGAR, JULY 21 . With the State Rural Development Department (RDD) here getting its highest ever Central assistance, the Jammu and Kashmir Government is planning to revolutionise the sector and get the rural areas tuned to state-of-the-art facilities in the coming year. Each block in the state will have a model village. The Rural Development Department, which has a significant role in development of the countryside, is working on revolutionising

the work structure with a plenty of funds in hand. According to the RDD Secretary, Basharat Ahmed Dhar, as compared to just Rs 47.27 crores in 2002-03, the State has received Rs 142.36 crores in 2003-04 besides Rs 108 crores have been received for wage employment and establishment of durable assets in rural areas. "This is a substantial increase in the central share of all schemes we implement," he adds. The State government has also supplemented these schemes by granting Rs. 10 crores as its share.

The Hindu, 23 July 2004

Gujarat police seek custody of three Lashkar militants

SRINAGAR, JULY 22. The Gujarat police have sought the custody of three jailed Lashkar-e-Taiba militants who were part of a 20-member module busted by the Jammu and Kashmir police here recently. The three are reported to have links with another Kashmir-based LeT militant, Babbar, who was killed during an abortive bid on the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, last month. A team, led by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad, Mohammad Amin, visited Srinagar and held discussions with the police officials responsible for the crackdown. The team was granted access to the interrogation reports of the detained militants.

Hindustan Times, 23 July 2004

CBM can follow only after resolving K-issue: Musharraf

Islamabad, July 23: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said there can be no headway in the confidence building measures to improve ties with India without the resolution of the Kashmir issue. "While we are working both on dialogue and CBMs with India, Kashmir is the main dispute, which must be resolved. Until there is a progress towards its resolution, there can be no headway on CBMs or other issues," he said addressing army officers at the concluding ceremony of the army war games 'Sabit Qadam-III' on Thursday night. Musharraf's comments come ahead of his

scheduled meeting with the Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh on Friday.

Hindustan Times, 23 July 2004

Powerful explosion in Jammu and Kashmir

Srinagar, July 23: A powerful IED explosion rocked Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday afternoon but no one was injured, official sources said. The IED fitted in a pressure cooker exploded at Zandwan on Budgam-Arizal road in Beerwah area of the district, 40 Kms from Srinagar, around 12.50 pm, but no onehe sources said.

Hindustan Times, 23 July 2004

J&K is a tripartite issue, says EU

Jammu, July 23: The European Union believes that Jammu and Kashmir is a tripartite issue involving India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir, a sort of endorsement of a long-held view of Kashmiri separatists. A delegation of the EU Parliament visited both Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir recently and has listed the Kashmir dispute as an issue that requires a solution involving all three parties. It has circulated a report of its seven recommendation to the media. While this is the broad consensus of the international community, it is contrary to the widely held position of the Government of India that internal problem.

The Tribune, 23 July 2004

PDP worker among six killed

Srinagar, July 22: A worker of the PDP and two militants were among six persons killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday, while the security forces recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition during searches. The police here said the militants shot Hilal Ahmad Khan, a PDP activist, at Chhatergul, Achchabal in Anantnag district last evening. A jawan of the ITBP was killed when that militants detonated an IED at Reshipora, Pattan on the Srinagar-Baramula highway in Baramula district this afternoon. The militants shot Gulzar Ahmad Malik, an SPO, at Pinglan in Pulwama district yesterday.

The Tribune, 23 July 2004

Maize stands tall, despite orders

Jammu, July 22: Farmers in the border belt of Poonch and Rajouri have yet to reap maize crop, which has posed a serious threat to the safety of security personnel. In fact, the district authorities and Army field commanders had issued instructions to the farmers to clear the fields of maize crop, which otherwise could be used as hideouts by militants. Last year, militants hiding in a maize field close to the road in the Krishnaghati area had opened fire on an Army convoy in which one soldier was killed and 11 were wounded. The attack had damaged several Army vehicles. During a meeting between the Army and the civil authorities in Poonch, it had been decided to discourage farmers from growing maize in roadside fields and in areas close to the LoC. Security experts had suggested this step because the tall maize crop could help infiltrators in sneaking into the Indian territory from across the border.

The Tribune, 24 July 2004

NC divided over Farooq's merger proposal

Jammu, July 23: There are sharp differences among leaders of the National Conference (NC) over the invitation of Dr Farooq Abdullah to his brother-in-law, Mr G.M. Shah, to return to the party fold by amalgamating his Awami National Conference (ANC) with the NC. A section of the NC was against the move as it has not forgotten the bitter experience of early 1980s when Mr Shah overnight toppled the government of Dr Abdullah. It also feels that the merger will not benefit Dr Abdullah politically as Mr Shah had virtually lost ground in the valley. He would rather become a liability because of his controversial statements pertaining to militancy in J&K.

The Tribune, 24 July 2004

5 LeT militants killed in encounter

Srinagar, July 23: Five militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba were killed in a fierce encounter in

the Lolab area of Kupwara district yesterday in which several houses were also gutted. Elsewhere, three persons, including two militants, were killed in separate incidents in the Kashmir valley since yesterday. The police said that five militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba were killed in an encounter with the security forces at Tikipora in the Lolab area of Kupwara district. Eight residential houses and other structures were also gutted in the exchange of fire between the militants and the security forces. Four AK rifles, 12 magazines, one UMG and one pistol were recovered from the site of encounter. The encounter ensued when the security forces acting on a specific information about the presence of militants cordoned off the area. The troops were fired upon by the hiding militants, leading to the encounter.

The Hindu, 27 July 2004

Mufti for early talks with Hurriyat

NEW DELHI, JULY 26. Favouring an early revival of talks between the Centre and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, today said that there was no other alternative to solve the Kashmir problem. Talking to newsmen outside South Block after a meeting with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, Mr. Sayeed said that the peace process would continue, notwithstanding the hiccups.

The Hindu, 27 July 2004

Geelani delays formation of new party

SRINAGAR, JULY 26. Syed Ali Geelani, head of hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference, has again postponed his plans to launch a new party. Renewed efforts not only within the Hurriyat but also his parent organisation 'Jammat-e-Islami' are said to be the reason for his latest move. At the last minute, Mr. Geelani cancelled a scheduled press conference here today. Though no reason was given, sources told The Hindu that last-ditch efforts were on to prevent him from forming a new party, for which he has chosen the name of "Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Kashmir" (Freedom Movement of Kashmir).

The Tribune, 27 July 2004

Terrorists kill 3 of family

Jammu, July 26: Three persons of a family were killed by terrorists in Daraj village of Rajouri district today. According to reports, terrorists barged into the house of Mohd Shafi and killed him along with his daughter and son. Besides him, those killed have been identified as Taj Mohd (son) and Zarina (daughter). Security forces have launched a hunt for those involved in the killing. Barkat Bi, wife of Mohd Shafi, was critically injured. A police constable, Rattan Singh, lost his life in an encounter with terrorists at Bhaderwah. A Pakistan terrorist, Tasief, alias Abumaz, was killed by security forces in the Bharathi area of Doda district.

The Indian Express, 27 July 2004

Hizbul to adopt new guerrilla tactics against Indian troops

ISLAMABAD, JULY 26: Pakistan-based militant group Hizbul Mujahideen has said that it is adopting new style guerrilla tactics and latest technology to inflict more casualties on Indian troops in J-K. "We have adopted a new style of guerrilla war in the Valley and are using the latest technology to fight the Indian Army," Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin told a select group of reporters yesterday, the Daily Times reported. This was the first interaction of the Hizbul leader with the media after the Pakistan government claimed to have imposed restrictions on different militant groups. Claiming that militancy in Kashmir has entered a new phase, he said the fencing along the LoC will not deter his militants from crossing over.

The Times of India, 27 July 2004

J&K seeks spl package to meet developmental needs

NEW DELHI: Jammu and Kashmir Government on Monday sought a special package from the Centre to address developmental and administrative needs of the state as it projected a plan outlay for current fiscal at Rs 3,100 crore. Taking lead over other Congress and UPA partner states,

Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today presented his case for special dispensation with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh bypassing the procedure of finalising state plan outlay at a formal meeting with the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission.

The Indian Express, 27 July 2004

Kashmir can't be solved this way (Kuldip Nayar)

Nations, like individuals, look ugly when they break the rules. It was for the nth time that Pakistan raised Kashmir at the recent SAARC foreign ministers's conference in Islamabad. The rule is that no bilateral issue will be raised at such meetings. The violation not only exasperated India but also other members of the SAARC. Pakistan's obvious purpose was to focus attention on Kashmir, something which it has been trying to do for quite some time. In reality, it wants India to accept Kashmir as a disputed territory. I have not been able to make out why Islamabad continues to be so obsessed about Kashmir. New Delhi cannot agree to Kashmir being declared a disputed territory for many reasons.

The Hindu, 28 July 2004

5 SPOs killed

POONCH (JAMMU), JULY 27. Five Special Police Officers were killed and three injured by militants who attacked their houses at Gundi in the Faislabad area of Surankot district of Poonch district.

The Hindu, 28 July 2004

"Peace process on track in Jammu and Kashmir"

NEW DELHI, JULY 27. Maintaining that the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir was on track, the Union Home Ministry today reiterated that steps were being taken to decide on a fresh date for talks at the Home Minister's level in early August in consultation with the Hurriyat leadership. The Ministry's clarification came in the wake of recent reports in a section of the press regarding some important discussions

and decisions taken in the Union Cabinet meeting relating to Jammu and Kashmir.

The Hindu, 28 July 2004

No end to troubles of Kargil refugees

DEVIPUR (AKHNOOR), JULY 27. As the country celebrated Vijay Diwas on Monday, marking the recapture of the Kargil heights from Pakistan army, there seems no end to the travails of thousands of people uprooted from their homes along the Akhnoor frontier in Jammu and Kashmir five years ago. Thousands of people migrated from the forward areas of Akhnoor sector near the Line of Control during the Kargil conflict as troops on both sides exchanged heavy fire leading to displacement of population. Over 50,000 people along with their cattle migrated from the forward tehsils of this area situated near the Line of Control to the interior areas. The migrants started living in makeshift tents in Devipur area along the Jammu-Poonch National Highway and were left to fend for themselves. They tried to return to their villages a number of times but the tension returned after the terrorists attack on Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001. Later Pakistan army resorted to heavy shelling in forward areas that destroyed most of the houses.

Hindustan Times, 28 July 2004

Hurriyat ties talks to Pakistan visit

Jammu, July 28: The all Parties Hurriyat Conference has said it will resume talks with the Centre provided it is allowed to visit Pakistan. The condition is an apparent bid to keep Pakistan in good humour and woo back pro-Pakistan groups into its fold. Reiterating its no to the dialogue process, the conglomerate has raked up the same demand that botched attempts to initiate talks in 2000. This insistence had led to the withdrawal of ceasefire in May 2001. The proposed visit to Pakistan will make a strong statement about Pakistan's importance and this in turn will keep militant pressure off pro-dialogue forces, Hurriyat sources said.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2004

India's disappointment on J&K unwarranted: Pak

Islamabad, July 27: Pakistan on Tuesday insisted on resolution of the Kashmir issue within a timeframe and termed as "unwarranted" India's "disappointment" over certain remarks by Islamabad after last week's meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh. "This kind of disappointment or this kind of comment on what we have issued is unwarranted. But at the same time let me reiterate what President has spoken. He talked about simultaneity in the progress of all issues particularly about central issue of Jammu and Kashmir. He talked about a reasonable timeframe," Pakistan foreign office spokesman Massod Khan told reporters here replying to a question.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2004

J-K may probe into killing of two "militants" by Army

BRINEL (QAZIGUND), JULY 27: As soon as a medic opened the laces of the first body bag, a group of men began wailing, shattering the tense graveyard calm in this remote hamlet deep in south Kashmir. Ghulam Mohammad Nayak (23) was immediately identified by his family and neighbours, who had travelled nearly 30 miles to claim his body that lay buried anonymously with that of his neighbour Abdul Rashid Kuttay (30). "This is my child. They have killed him," shouts Nayak's step-father Habibullah Nayak. "He has a little daughter and a pregnant wife waiting for him at home. What was his crime? Please tell me why did they kill him"

The Tribune, 28 July 2004

Terrorist strikes act of desperation

Jammu, July 27: The recent gruesome terrorist strikes and killing of innocent persons in Poonch and Rajouri are an indicator to desperation among terrorists. Security personnel point out that such actions of terrorists indicate frustration as their supply lines have been cut and they have been losing support of local villagers. The local population has now started to

come forward with information on the hideouts of terrorists. On June 26, terrorists stormed into a remote village in Thiali Katha in the Surankot area of Poonch, killing 12 innocent villagers and grievously wounding 18 others. The killed included a woman and five children. Further, the ordeal of Mariyam Begum, a girl from Doda, reflects the barbarism the terrorists have unfolded in the valley. For 27 days, the girl remained under their confinement and raped repeatedly by terrorists before being rescued by the police on July 10 after a raid on the hideout. During her confinement, militants used to beat her with rifle butts and sticks.

Hindustan Times, 28 July 2004

PDP demands Rs 700 crore aid for J&K
Srinagar, July 28: Welcoming Centre's assurance to grant a package to meet development and administrative expenses of Jammu and Kashmir, ruling PDP on Wednesday appealed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to consider providing Rs 700 crore to the state. "I appeal to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to consider providing Rs 700 crore to finance power deficit and additional finance required for merging the 50 per cent DA of the basic pay of the state government employees as was done for the employees of the central government," PDP President and MP Mehbooba Mufti said in Srinagar. Mehbooba said the Centre should further announce packages to the state to help the state's youth.

The Statesman, 28 July 2004

Rough tactics Playing politics with Kashmir bus ride (Editorial)

India ought to realise that it has hit upon one of Islamabad's weak spots. Should commerce between both sides flower, Kashmiris and Pakistanis will realize that Jammu and Kashmir is not as badly governed as Islamabad would have it; indeed it compares favourably with PoK in many respects. Pakistani media have the capacity to be independent, and Delhi ought to freely allow Pakistani press and TV personnel to come into Jammu and Kashmir

and see for themselves. When Islamabad says it wants Kashmiris to participate in the peace process it means on its own terms. As a corollary, it should insist on opening the bus route and not allow Islamabad to scuttle this on any pretext. It ought to, therefore, ignore Islamabad's attempts to needle it and, if necessary, appoint non-J&K officials to negotiate on the issue.

The Hindu, 29 July 2004

First militant strike at Dal Lake

SRINAGAR, JULY 28. In the first-ever attack on security forces at the famous Dal Lake here, two militants of a suicide squad of the Al-Mansoorien outfit were gunned down in the 11-hour-long battle, which started last evening. Five Central Reserve Police Force personnel, including a Sub-Inspector, were also killed in the fierce encounter, which rattled the whole area. The militants, dressed in civilian clothes, barged into the 56th Battalion camp of the CRPF located in a hotel in a small island in the Dal around 8.40 p.m. and started firing indiscriminately. "We were caught unawares," said a CRPF jawan, who was mourning the death of his colleagues. The militants killed two sentries on the spot and injured another, trying to escape on a motorboat. As the news spread, senior officials of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the CRPF rushed to the spot with reinforcements. In the night-long gunfight which followed, the militants were gunned down in what the Inspector-General of Police, K. Rajindra, said was a "highly surgical and precise operation."

The Hindu, 29 July 2004

Panel to work out special package for J&K

SRINAGAR, JULY 28 . The Central Government will shortly set up a high-power committee to work out an economic and employment package for Jammu and Kashmir. It has also approved the State's Annual Plan at Rs 3,100 crores with an increase of Rs 600 crores over last year's plan and agreed to provide Rs 300 crores for the merger of Dearness Allowance (DA)

with salary of State Government employees. Official sources here said that the decision to constitute the high-power committee was taken at a meeting between the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and the J&K Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who is currently in New Delhi. Finance Minister Muzaffar Hussain Beig and State's Economic Adviser Haseeb Drabu have accompanied him. The committee, sources said, is likely to be headed by the Prime Minister himself and will look into the long pending demands of the State Government, which is worried over the ailing economic condition of the State and increasing unemployment.

The Hindu, 29 July 2004

Border villages caught between two fences

SHAHPUR(POONCH), JULY 28. Villagers in Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir are facing a peculiar situation as they would be caught between two tiers of fencing being erected to plug infiltration. Fencing along the Line of Control started a year ago and is almost complete in this belt. This summer, it has been seen that even though fences have been erected, the infiltration has continued unabated. At some places, fences have come up at a distance of one to three km inside the Line of Control. For instance, Sekhlu area of Poonch district, 4 km from the Line of Control, has been bifurcated with the coming of fencing operations. The fence posed an obstacle for the villagers in the area for carrying on with their day-to-day activities even several kilometres inside the Line of Control.

The Tribune, 29 July 2004

Terrorist outfits using boys for infiltration

Jammu, July 28: Pakistan-based terrorist outfits are using young boys as guinea pigs by making them infiltrate into Indian territory to find loopholes in the security arrangements. The security forces during the past few days have arrested a number of infiltrators and eliminated the militant groups that had entered various border

villages carrying a good quantity of remote-control explosive devices and grenades. At least seven Pakistani nationals have been arrested during the current month at different places along the international border in Jammu district where they infiltrated from Pakistan. They were in the age group of 15 to 25 years. They have been sent to the joint interrogation centre of the BSF, state police and other central intelligence agencies.

Hindustan Times, 29 July 2004

Pak leader flays Pervez on Kashmir

New Delhi, July 28: Pakistan's Awami National Party (ANP) on Wednesday criticised President Pervez Musharraf for his statement that there should be simultaneous progress within a "time-frame" on all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. "The two countries have seen hostilities for 57 years. They will not go away in a year. If Musharraf has any time-frame he should propose it," ANP chief Asfandiyar Wali Khan said here after meeting PM Manmohan Singh. The grandson of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Frontier Gandhi), Asfandiyar Wali said his party felt that "there cannot be and should not be an time-frame for the resolution of disputes between the two countries".

The Tribune, 30 July 2004

Govt willing to hold talks with Hurriyat: PM

New Delhi, July 29: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said efforts were on to secure the release of three Indian hostages in Iraq and that the UPA government was "willing" to hold talks with all shades of public opinion, including the Hurriyat Conference, in Jammu and Kashmir. "All-out efforts are on and I am hopeful that they will succeed," Dr Singh told newsmen replying to a question on the hostage crisis before embarking on his three-day visit to Bangkok to participate in the BIMST-EC summit. On the continuation of the dialogue process with the Hurriyat Conference initiated by the previous NDA government, the Prime Minister said: "We have

repeatedly said we are willing to talk to all groups, various shades of public opinion in Jammu and Kashmir."

The Tribune, 30 July 2004

J&K gets 5,250 cr grants

Jammu, July 29: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed has every reason to smile as the Centre has dished out a bonanza of grants of Rs 5,250 crore for the terrorist-hit state. Besides the plan allocation of Rs 3,100 crore, other grants amounting the Rs 2,150 crore have principally been approved by the Centre. There are indications that the Centre may consider setting up a high-powered committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister to provide an economic package to J and K. This is being considered as a big leap forward by J and K in receiving funds from the Centre. The last year's plan allocation was Rs 2,500 crore. The stepped up Central grants are expected to help the Mufti government take up various development projects as his hands were tied earlier because of a serious financial crunch.

The Tribune, 30 July 2004

Militants appealed not to target tourist spots

Srinagar, July 29: The recent suicide attack on a hotel housing security forces in the Dal Lake area, the main centre of tourist activity here, killing seven persons, including militants and CRPF men, has hardly affected the flow of tourists. Those associated with tourism have in a save tourism appeal urged militants not to choose the area for such activities and protect tourism in the valley. This was the first such attack by militants in the area, where tourists have been pouring in to enjoy staying in houseboats and hotels. Tourists staying in houseboats and hotels near the trouble spot felt scared while the encounter was going on. For many, it was a nightmarish experience, but by the next dawn, they felt relieved and decided not to change their programme of staying in the valley.

The Tribune, 30 July 2004

3 militants, 2 civilians killed in Jammu

Jammu, July 29: In separate incidents, security forces killed three militants, while militants gunned down two civilians in Jammu last night. Security forces gunned down three Lashkar-e-Toiba militants. Militants killed two civilians in Poonch and Udhampur districts. Two LeT militants, including its district commander, were killed by security forces in Phagla forest belt of Poonch district after an encounter between the two sides, sources said. The recoveries from the spot included two AK rifles, 16 magazines, four UBGL grenades, a grenade-thrower, three hand grenades, 900 cartridges, a wireless set and 200 IED among other things, they said.

Hindustan Times, 30 July 2004

5 J&K Independents align with Congress

Delhi/Srinagar, July 29: The battle for numbers between the Congress and PDP took an interesting turn on Thursday with five Independent MLAs throwing their lot behind the Congress. The MLAs, including three ministers of state, became associate members of the Congress to circumvent the anti-defection law, in the presence of party leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and Ambika Soni. The Congress' strength in the 86-member House has now gone up to 24. The MLAs Abdul Majid Wani, Thakur Puran Singh and Aijaz Ahmed Khan (all MoS), Maulvi Abdul Rashid and Manohar Lal Sharma are from Jammu.

The Indian Express, 30 July 2004

MHA's J-K wing to be "progress oriented"

NEW DELHI, JULY 29: The Jammu and Kashmir Department in the Ministry of Home Affairs is likely to get a makeover to finetune it with the "developmental agenda" of J-K Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. An assurance to this effect was given by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Sayeed during their recent meeting here. Sayeed told reporters that he had proposed that the department, which was merely helping JK recover its huge Security Related Expenditure (SRE)

from the Centre, be made more “development-oriented” The SRE is the amount incurred on fighting terrorism and includes ex-gratia compensation for the victims of violence.

The Times of India, 30 July 2004

Kashmir Roadmap: Congress in Danger of Losing its Way (Balraj Puri)

The Congress-led UPA government has certain advantages over its political predecessor in dealing with the situation in J&K state. Since the Congress, unlike the BJP, not only has a presence in Kashmir valley but also other Muslim-majority parts of the state, it can provide a far better link between the Muslims of the state and the people elsewhere in the country. The party has a similar advantage vis-a-vis other regional Valley-based political outfits, since it exists in all parts of the state and can thus be a fit instrument of emotional integration between its three regions. However, the UPA government has somehow failed to press home its obvious advantages. Instead, it has managed to further strain its state-level coalition with the PDP. While the Congress is competing with the BJP in catering to the populist sentiment in Jammu, the PDP is competing with the National Conference in the Valley. Two recent instances show how the coalition partners are divided along regional lines. First, a PDP minister supported the public protest against the decision of the State Public Service Commission to reduce the share of the Valley in state administrative services. Second, Congress ministers resigned in opposition to the reduction of the period of Amarnath yatra from two months to one.

Hindustan Times, 31 July 2004

NC to introduce J&K women’s bill in original form

Jammu, July 31: The National Conference will introduce the Permanent Resident (Disqualification) Bill which deprives women who marry non-Kashmiris of their citizenship rights in its original form in the assembly session beginning next month. The first Bill introduced in March by the

government has already lapsed. The necessity to introduce the Bill in its original form has arisen because the Mufti Muhammad Sayeed government has undermined the sanctity of the legislation by allowing it to lapse, and now we suspect the government wants to dilute the provisions of the Bill. This won’t be allowed, an NC sources said.

The Tribune, 31 July 2004

PDF disturbed over defections

Jammu, July 30: The Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and the Panthers Party are perturbed over the five Independent MLAs, three of them ministers, joining the Congress and have described this as a violation of the anti-defection law. The PDF, which was constituted by the Independents following the Assembly elections, was a partner in the Mufti-led coalition government. The PDF members are worried as the Congress and the PDP while trying to consolidate their position are trying to woo their members. The ministers who joined the Congress yesterday are Mr Majid Wani, Mr Aizaz Ahmed Khan and Mr Puran Singh. The two MLAs who also joined the party are Mr Manohar Lal Sharma and Maulvi Abdul Rashid.