

Daily Excelsior, 1 July 2007

**Situation better in J&K: Home Minister**

Srinagar, June 30: Situation in the State has witnessed a marked improvement, Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil said today but remained non-committal on the issue of troop reduction as demanded by some parties of the State. Patil, who reviewed the security situation of the State with top Army, paramilitary and police officials here, said the Government will take all measures required to restore normalcy in the state. There is marked improvement in the overall situation. We are satisfied on the improvement in the situation, he told reporters, adding the Central and State Governments will take all necessary measures to consolidate the trend.

Greater Kashmir, 1 July 2007

**Protests against fake encounter in Kupwara on day 2**

Srinagar, June 30: The protests against fake encounter continued on second consecutive day in Kupwara Saturday with police resorting to baton charge and firing teargas canisters on protestors demanding judicial probe into alleged staged killings of three youth and a woman on Thursday. A local news agency, KNS said at least 12 persons, including a deputy superintendent of police DSP were injured in clashes between the protesters and policemen in Kupwara. KNS said thousands of people raising pro freedom and anti police slogans took to the roads Saturday morning at Puthshahi Lolab, the native village of the local contractor Irshad Ahmed Bajad, who was one among the killed.

Greater Kashmir, 1 July 2007

**Opinion: Copyrighting Fatwas (A Haque)**

Suicide is assuming alarming proportions in Kashmir. Reports have it that it has become the second most common cause of socially called unnatural death after the one we have through blasts and bullets. In a society like ours where life already receives a severe battering and death is already on the run, losing more lives means getting pushed to a point of extinction. It worries all those who know the value of human life. We are not here to find out the causes responsible for taking this ultimate step to self destruction. The subject has been discussed from all possible dimensions and there is nothing new that one can add. The same frustrations which run out of control leaving a human soul at the dead end of this journey where he finds death the only way to do away with the distress. Here also theories are nothing different. Everyone counts and everyone is asked to play a role to develop a consciousness so that individuals are taught means to meet the toughest challenges of life.

Daily Excelsior, 1 July 2007

**Editorial: Just a mindset?**

Why should a public hearing conducted by ministers or bureaucrats be called a darbar? Does it not smack of the feudal order that is dead and gone? By definition darbar some times spelt as durbar is a rulers court where the formal and informal meetings are held. The word has Persian origin and is stated to have been introduced to India by the Mughals. Royal courts dont exist any more in our part of the world. However, nothing has happened to suggest that the connotation of darbar has changed with the passage of time. It sticks despite our remarkable transition from slavery to democracy. Why don't we

discard it as we have done in the case of several other symbols of both foreign and princely orders? Is it for want of better alternative expressions? It can't be so because we have several linguistic wizards among us to give us suitable suggestions in this behalf.

Kashmir Times, 2 July 2007

**J&K situation: Grim for security agencies, improvement for Patil**

Srinagar, July 1: While union home minister Shivraj Patil felt there was marked improvement in the overall situation in the state, some security agencies tried to paint a grim picture of Jammu and Kashmir during a meeting with him here yesterday. Sources said the senior officers of the security agencies referred to the continuation of infiltration and increase in militant activities. They advocated against troop reduction under these circumstances. Patil remained non-committal on the issue. He said a high level central committee, formed on the directions of prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, and is taking care of the issue and that a decision to this effect would be taken by the centre only after the recommendations of the committee are received. Among the security agencies, army has been publicly opposing reduction in troops.

The Tribune, 2 July 2007

**Parties corner PDP**

Udhampur July 1: Political parties have launched a campaign to corner the Peoples Democratic Party PDP in the Jammu region, on the issue of demilitarisation and citizenship rights to refugees from Pakistan. The PDP has decided to properly educate the common masses. PDPs Jammu face and member of the Rajya Sabha Trilok Singh Bajwa has been on the job of counter-propaganda. Bajwa addressed two meetings in Udhampur today and tried to educate masses that the party's demands were not anti-national. Seeking to allay the apprehension of demilitarisation leading to further eruption of militancy in other peaceful areas, Bajwa said his party had been demanding that troops should be removed from those areas where peace had been established.

Daily Excelsior, 2 July 2007

**Indo-Pak experts discuss local governance**

Islamabad, July 1: Union Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar today said India and Pakistan could benefit from each other's experience in combating the challenges of poverty and unemployment, as delegates from the two countries exchanged views on the system of local governance. Both India and Pakistan are faced with twin monsters of poverty and unemployment and we have to share and get benefits from each other's experience with regard to the measures for coping with these challenges, he told reporters in the first day of a two-day symposium on Panchayati Raj in Lahore. Aiyar, who is in Pakistan heading a 60-member Indian delegation, was of the view that problems of backward and far-flung areas could only be resolved by granting maximum powers to the common people.

Kashmir Times, 2 July 2007

**Editorial: Shielding the culprits**

The Kunan Gujjarpati in Bandipora incidents show that all is not right with the Valley. Both the molestation of a minor girl by army officials and the consequent manhandling of

the soldiers betray the continuum of human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces and the deepening anger of the people against the forces as well as their waning patience. Though the manner in which the people of Kunan chose to punish the guilty soldiers, parading them naked with blackened faces, is not something that augurs well for any civilized society or something within the framework of the law, the action was not just an expression of anger against the alleged molestation of one girl but of the almost two decades long repression that appears to have acquired a legal sanctity..

Greater Kashmir, 2 July 2007

**Editorial: Mufti smells a rat**

Mughal road, a premier enterprise Kashmiris boast of Muslim rule in the state, is again in news, and this time too, for all the bad reasons. Former Chief Minister, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's recent disclosure that the 89 Kilometer roadway that links Jammu Pir Panjal Muslim region with Kashmir Valley was being willfully sabotaged, should not pass off as just a populist rant. After being dodged for decades by successive regimes, either due to administrative inertia or on New Delhi's behest, the project now lies mired in a litigation row. A public interest litigation filed in Supreme Court of India has objected to the project pleading that it would jeopardize the ecology of the region. Earlier, the delay was justified by citing security concerns. Linking two predominantly Muslim regions through this barely two hour all weather journey has remained an emotive issue with the people on both sides of the divide. And, most of the Kashmir and Jammu based political parties have been galvanizing their support base through this issue..

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2007

**Panel on troop cut to meet in Srinagar**

New Delhi, July 2: The second meeting of a panel appointed by the Centre for possible relocation and reconfiguration of troops in militancy hit Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled to be held in Srinagar on July 5. The meeting would be chaired by Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt and is likely to be attended by Lt Gen S K Sekhon, Srinagar based Corps Commander, top brass of CRPF and BSF, State Police Chief Gopal Sharma and a senior official from the Intelligence Bureau. The first meeting of the panel, announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on March 30, was held here on May 23 during which the State Government had opposed any move for altering the security network in the State. State Chief Secretary C Phunsog has been invited as a special representative by the Defence Secretary to the meeting which comes barely three days after Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil visited the State taking stock of the situation..

Indian Express, 3 July 2007

**Woman army captain commits suicide**

Jammu, July 2: In yet another case of stress, a woman army officer on Monday committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan at her official residence in Kunjawani army camp in the outskirts of the city, top defence sources said. Captain Megha Razdan of 113 Engineering Regiment Electrical and Mechanical Engineer committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling fan by a bed sheet around 0730 hours on Monday at the army camp, they said. As her attendance failed to get response from the officer by knocking her door, the authorities broke the door and found the

officer hanging, they said. She was shifted to the hospital where doctors declared her brought dead.

Greater Kashmir, 3 July 2007

### **INFANT KILLED, 20 HURT IN KUPWARA CLASHES**

Kupwara, July 2: An infant died after being hit by a teargas shell minutes after she was born, while 20 persons including 10 cops received injuries in violent protests in Kupwara town on fifth running day against the killing of four persons, including a pregnant woman, allegedly in a fake encounter by Police. Meanwhile, the state government has ordered a magisterial probe into the killings. In the morning, thousands of people took to streets, like the past four days, raising anti India, pro freedom and pro militant slogans. The agitators marched through the streets of the border town, forcing the cops to retreat, leaving behind their vehicles and other paraphernalia. The people damaged at least two police vehicles..

Indian Express, 3 July 2007

### **Opinion: Kashmir at tipping point again? (Muzamil Jaleel)**

Last Tuesday was a tumultuous day in Bandipore, a little valley on the banks of Wular lake in north Kashmir. Two incidents took place here in a matter of a few hours which together may symbolise the beginning of a new paradigm shift in J&K. They signal a renewed phase of violence with the sluggish peace process. Two men from a local Rashtriya Rifles unit barged into a house in a small neighbourhood of Gurjjars in Kunan village. They were in plainclothes and carried a grenade. The family alleged that the two had asked the male members to leave and then attempted to rape their daughter. The family raised an alarm and, within minutes, the entire village encircled the house. The angry villagers overpowered the two army men and started thrashing them. Their faces were then blackened and they were taken in a procession to Bandipore market..

Daily Excelsior, 3 July 2007

### **Kashmir-Karachi-Cairo string pulled with a pleasant note**

Srinagar, July 2: From former Sadre Riyasat, Dr Karan Singh, to today's J&K Governor Lt Gen Retd S K Sinha and from the former Chief Minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, to today's Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, this strife-torn State's political who's who remained spellbound for hours and virtually danced to their tunes when a galaxy of Kashmiri, Pakistani and Egyptian masters of the string staged the beginning of the 3 day Sufi Festival at SKICC here this evening. And, when Mamlukat e khuda dads Nemero uno Fareeda Khanum has to follow Iran e sagirs number one male singer, Abdur Rasheed Hafiz, while evoking encore from the Valleys number one female voice, Shameem Azad, one can only imagine the significance of a cultural event over the banks of the famed Dal Lake.

Kashmir Times, 3 July 2007

### **Editorial: Bloodshed in Kupwara**

The allegations of fake encounters and stage managed killings continue tumbling out like an unending soap opera. Before the whimpers of Bandiporas youth killing in an alleged fake encounter along the Line of Control, and so typically passed off as a case of foiling

infiltration bid, could have died down, anger erupted in Kupwara over killing of three men in yet another fake encounter. A woman, who officials maintain was killed in cross firing, is alleged to have been killed because she was an eye witness. The anger and protests in Kupwara is just one indication of the authenticity of the allegations leveled against the Special Operations Group SOG of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, which has been equally guilty of gross violation of human rights, if not more, as the rest of the security forces enjoying immunity under draconian laws.

Indian Express, 4 July 2007

**Militants in J&K using cell phones to trigger blasts**

Srinagar, July 3: Militant groups operating in the Kashmir valley are increasingly using cell phones to trigger IED blasts while targeting vehicles of security forces and patrol parties, according to security officials. During the past few months police have recovered a huge haul of mobile phones and SIM cards used by militant groups to carry out blasts in the valley. Militants operative in the area use cell phones to trigger IED blasts. In using them they get the time to flee from the place safely, said Deputy Inspector General of Police North Kashmir Range B Srinivas. A blast can be triggered from any part of the world by dialing the cell phone number attached to the IED and a specific code on the device, Srinivas said..

Greater Kashmir, 4 July 2007

**Mufti Manmohan accord on troop cut**

Srinagar, July 3: President Peoples Democratic Party PDP Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday disclosed that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed have reached an agreement over the issue of troop cut in Jammu and Kashmir. The Prime Minister and Mufti Sahib have already reached an agreement over the issue and very soon it would be implemented, a local news agency KNS quoted Mehbooba Mufti as saying. The PDP president said that local Congress leaders have got nothing to do with the accord and his party doesn't find it necessary to react to the statements issued by the Congress leaders..

The Tribune, 4 July 2007

**Opinion: More than meets the eye in Army rape allegation (Lt Gen retd. RS Kadyan)**

On 28 June 2007, the reading public was exposed to the repugnant sight of one of two Army soldiers being paraded naked in the streets of Pati Kunan village in Bandipora J&K, for an alleged rape bid. The accompanying news item, running into several columns in almost all national dailies, gave graphic details of how the two men in civil dress entered a house, ordered the mother of a seventeen year old girl to leave, and tried to molest her. Pati Kunan village is well known for its anti national stance. Even otherwise, it would be prudent to assume that every village in the insurgency affected area would have presence of militants or elements that are inimical, either with the support of locals or despite their opposition..

Daily Times, 4 July 2007

**Opinion: The EU report on Kashmir (Ijaz Hussain)**

The reports comments on the state of affairs in AJK and Northern Areas are particularly worthy of note. It observes that contrary to the Interim Constitution Act of 1974 that provides structures of a self governing State the reality is totally different Last autumn a certain Baroness Emma Nicholson, member of the European Parliament and vice-president of its Committee on Foreign Affairs, suddenly made headlines in the Pakistani media. The reason for her prominence was the report that she had prepared on Kashmir, that Pakistan deemed highly biased and lacking credibility. Upset with this development, the Pakistan government mobilised its diplomats based in Europe and think tanks like the Kashmir Centre in Brussels to get the report rectified. Following its concerted efforts a modified version of the report was submitted, which the European Parliament recently approved with an overwhelming majority..

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2007

**Editorial: New label doesnt sell old bottle**

In the wake of the massive earthquake that had struck both sides of the Line of Control LoC in the State in 2005, a terrorist organisation had put up a least expected human face. Lashkar e Toiba s activists had then virtually taken over Muzaffarabad, the Capital of Azad Kashmir as the Pakistanoccupied territory is locally known. The city was in total ruins. After all, it was the epicentre of the unprecedented tremor. We had also felt the highly disturbing impact of the natures rapid fury in our streets. The LeT leadership had found the situation perfect to send a message that it meant well by the masses in distress. Its cadres from Pakistan had lost no time in rushing with much needed relief. Clearly backed by a beleaguered administration the LeT strove hard to carry out a cosmetic surgery of its besmirched image.

Daily Excelsior, 4 July 2007

**Opinion: Indo Pak peace process (BK Chum)**

How long will the status quo in the Kashmir and India Pakistan s peace process, at present virtually at a standstill, continue? An answer to this question will largely depend on the form the factors which are crucial for bringing the peace process back on the rails, take. Broadly, the major factors are: the state of Kashmirs security environment and its politics, particularly in the context of next years Assembly elections and the deteriorating internal situation in Pakistan and President Pervez Musharraf future over which there is now a question mark. Not even diehard pessimists can deny the fact that terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has been substantially contained bringing a radical improvement in the trouble torn state's security environment.

Daily Excelsior, 5 July 2007

**Defence Secretary two day visit to J&K from today**

New Delhi, July 4: Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt will tomorrow begin a two day tour of several districts in Jammu and Kashmir to assess whether the security situation is conducive to a relocation and reconfiguration of troops in the militancy hit State. Dutt, accompanied by senior officials of Central paramilitary forces and bureaucrats from the Home and Defence Ministries, will visit areas affected by terrorist violence, including Rajouri and Doda in the Jammu region and Kupwara, Baramulla and Awantipura in the Kashmir region. He will hold consultations with Army Commanders in these areas before

chairing a high level meeting of officials in Srinagar on July 6. This meeting, the second in a series, will be attended by Lt Gen S K Sekhon, the Srinagar based Corps Commander, top brass of the CRPF and BSF, State police chief Gopal Sharma and senior officials of the Intelligence Bureau.

Kashmir Times, 5 July 2007

**Fratricide, suicides has security forces worried (RK Khajuria)**

Jammu, July 4: The spurt in fratricidal killings and suicides among armed and paramilitary forces over the past few years in the insurgency hit Jammu and Kashmir has become a matter of grave concern demanding introspection and immediate salvage work by those at the helm of affairs. Though Union Defence Minister AK Antony has already set up a high-powered committee to trace the root cause of the problem and check it but measures initiated so far have proved to be an attempt in vain. The Indian Army alone, which has strength of 1.3 million, lost 455 jawans and officers from 2003 to 2007 with over 60 percent of such incidents happening in Jammu and Kashmir, said official sources. Year 2003 witnessed 93 fratricidal killings and suicides, 2004 recorded 100 such incidents, 2005 saw killings and suicides of 77 jawans and officers and 2006 witnessed a further spurt and resulted into 131 killing and suicides.

Kashmir Times, 5 July 2007

**Editorial: Conflicting claims**

In the last one fortnight a veritable avalanche of the high and the mighty has hit the violent valley. First came the Defence Minister for an on the spot assessment of the security situation in Kashmir, and he left painting a discreetly dismal picture of the present and the immediate future. There was no question, according to him, of even a slow demilitarisation of the state. Then, a few days ago, came the Home Minister, Shivraj Patil himself. As expected, his arrival was preceded by hectic reportings on the alleged Pak sponsored preparations across the LoC for pushing infiltrators into this side. Brig. N.P.S. Hira of the Uri sector told the media that his area is witnessing cross border activities after years of relative quiet. He asserted that 52 mujaheedin training camps were functioning in Pak, while 1500 to 2000 foreign militants and 700-800 locals, mostly of the H.M., are in readiness to cross the LoC. He even named five training camps for the local militants, who are being groomed to sneak into Indian territory at any suitable moment..

The Tribune, 5 July 2007

**Editorial: Soldiers in stress**

EVERY third day a soldier commits suicide and every tenth day another is killed by a colleague running amok. Together the number of soldiers killed in this manner is much more than those killed in counter insurgency operations, even if some allowance is given for the huge size of the Indian Army. It is not yet clear whether Captain Megha Razdan committed suicide, as claimed by some officers, or was done away with, as claimed by her relations. Only a police inquiry will unravel the mystery. Whatever be the truth, stress has been taking a heavy toll on the soldiers. Statistics show that the phenomenon is not peculiar to the Indian Army. Every army faces this problem, the most acute being among the American soldiers deployed in Iraq. The suicide by a rifleman of 14 Rajputana Rifles

two days after the Megha Razdan case hit the headlines shows that the problem has assumed alarming proportions..

Daily Excelsior, 6 July 2007

### **Defence Secy reviews security scenario in J&K**

Jammu, July 5: Defence Secretary, Shekhar Dutt arrived here today on a two day visit of the State and met Army and security officials to assess the feasibility of undertaking troop reduction and relocation & configuration of troops in Jammu and Kashmir as demanded by certain political parties. Mr Dutt after landing in Northern Command Headquarters in Udhampur this morning in a special aircraft, left for some forward locations in Rajouri and Poonch district for holding meetings with top Army and police officials. This is Mr Dutts first visit to the State after he was appointed head of a committee to assess whether security forces could be withdrawn from civilian areas in the militancy hit State. The committee comprises representatives of Defence and Home Ministries and the State Government..

Kashmir Times, 6 July 2007

### **Editorial: Suicides and fragging**

Two alleged suicides by a lady captain in the engineers corp and of a jawan, on two successive days, in the outskirts of Jammu, have come as a shock not only to the army authorities but also to the people at large. Two in two days might have been a shock, but suicides and fragging, i.e. killing of ones colleagues, have become so frequent in the army, in the last few years, that the people have come to accept these as a sad fact of military life. But, the army authorities are naturally perturbed over the worsening situation. In a recent statement before the parliament the defence minister confessed that around 120 army personnel had fallen victims of suicides and fragging in the year 2006, when 559 more had to be boarded out on grounds of mental disorder..

The Hindu, 6 July 2007

### **Jairam's tryst with a different Kashmir (Shujaat Bukhari)**

Srinagar: As the Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Jairam Ramesh, landed here on Tuesday, he was here to keep a promise. The promise to tour Srinagar city, much against the advice of officials who still identify Kashmir as a danger zone, to follow up on the decisions taken in May this year for revitalising the industrial and entrepreneurship sector. Soon enough, the Minister, thrilled to see the new scales that young entrepreneurs were touching, opined that Jammu and Kashmir needed to be treated with a difference. On his second visit here in the last two months, the Minister made it a point to fulfil his promise with those associated with industries and commerce a monthly visit to Jammu and Kashmir to follow up on the decisions he had taken.

Greater Kashmir, 7 July 2007

### **KASHMIR SHUTS DOWN TO PROTEST RIGHTS ABUSE**

Srinagar, July 6: Normal life across the Kashmir Valley came to a standstill on Friday in response to a shutdown called by Hurriyat Conference G chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani to protest against the recent molestation attempt of a young girl by two soldiers at Bandipore and killing of four people, including a pregnant woman, allegedly in a fake

encounter by police in Kupwara. A teenager was killed and at least 11 people injured in clashes between protesters and police in downtown Srinagar. A teenager was killed when police opened fire on protesters in downtown here on Friday. Eyewitnesses told Greater Kashmir that Muntazir Ahmed 17 of Naid Kadal was hit by a bullet fired by policemen.

Kashmir Times, 7 July 2007

**Dialogue only after HR abuse stops: Mirwaiz**

Srinagar, July 6: Stating that Hurriyat wants to see the proper signs of resolution of Kashmir issue in 2007 itself, the chairman of Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today said that India has to begin some observable action on ground with regard to rights violations and troop withdrawal only then his Hurriyat would resume the dialogue with New Delhi which stands suspended over the last several months. This is the first time that Mirwaiz has set such a strict precondition for resuming dialogue with New Delhi. Making an interesting observation, Mirwaiz said that the present Congress led UPA government at New Delhi lacks the promptness and boldness which was displayed by BJP led NDA government in terms of dialogue with the separatists.

The Tribune, 7 July 2007

**Opinion: Division of J&K will harm all communities (Balraj Puri)**

Peoples Conference leader Sajjad Lones proposal for division of J&K state is neither the first nor the only proposal on the subject. However, his latest exposition of it, while addressing a rally on the martyrdom day of his father, Abdul Ghani Lone, on May 22, specially described the resultant state, after its division, as a Muslim state. It would include the Kashmir valley and Muslim majority parts of Jammu and Ladakh regions. Sajjad Lone also complained, in a press conference later, that though the Muslims were the worst sufferers, development work was concentrated in Jammu. The majority population was denied its share in recruitment to government jobs, he said. Still, he may not have been entirely motivated by sentiments of Muslim communalism.

Greater Kashmir, 7 July 2007

**Editorial: Kangan: Only a symptom**

Kangan incident in which an army man killed self as he panicked on being caught tiptoeing with a Kashmiri girl he also shot dead a protestor and wounded two others is only the symptom of a bigger disease. Days before this incident a charged mob in North Kashmirs Bandipora district had paraded naked two sleuths of army intelligence who allegedly had tried to outrage the modesty of a local woman. Few years ago, a young girl in Kupwara district preferred death to losing her chastity when a trooper barged into her house during night. The trooper, reportedly killed by the girl before ending her life, was next morning found dead few paces from the residence of the victim. Such incidents have been happening ever since the army reasserted its control of populated areas following the outbreak of militancy in 1989.

Kashmir Times, 7 July 2007

**Opinion: Some thoughts on Nicholson report on Kashmir (Zafar Khan)**

Baroness Nicholsons report on Kashmir, Present situation and future prospects having

gone through various stages in the European Parliament was finally adopted as an official EU document in May 2007. Now that the report is done and dusted, let us look at what were the real objectives of this report from the outset. Has the report made any tangible contribution in enabling the concerned parties along the road towards a resolution of the conflict? Was the intention of Nicholson report to help resolve the long standing issue of Kashmir in accordance with, the wishes of over 13 million forcibly divided people of Kashmir? A simple answer to the above questions would be an emphatic no! The Nicholson report has done nothing to move the issue along the path to resolution, simply because her approach has reinforced entrenched respective dominant dimensions namely those of India and Pakistan in the conflict.

Daily Excelsior, 8 July 2007

**Editorial: Arms and liquor**

A recent report in this newspaper about special police officers and militants exchanging arms and liquor with each other at a spot in Poonch district gives us many ideas. Our thoughts are not confined to smuggling alone. Of course, it is unacceptable that illegal trade should go on anywhere across the Line of Control or the International Border. That is something for security and intelligence agencies to decisively tackle. How would poets, writers and philosophers have looked at this exercise? Many of them in classic genre are not around. Therefore, their celebrated works dont look at wine and weapons together this phenomenon was virtually nonexistent during their days. Separately, however, they have extensively dealt with both arms and liquor.

Greater Kashmir, 8 July 2007

**Opinion: Changing Ground Situation (M Ashraf)**

These days there is a common refrain from several politicians as well as from some people in authority that there has been a change in the ground situation in Kashmir. Most of them imply that the change has been for the better. However, none of them mentions for whom has the change been for the better? The Indian Government or the Kashmiri people? If one analyses the situation carefully, both seem to have been losers! From the Indian side, the alienation has reached an extreme. This is especially true in regard to security forces. The news papers daily carry numerous stories about excesses by uniformed soldiers and the resultant protests all over the valley as well as in the Muslim majority areas of Jammu. Popular resistance to these excesses which had been somewhat muted earlier, is now growing louder and bolder..

Daily Excelsior, 9 July 2007

**Panel on troop cut to submit report soon**

New Delhi, July 8: The panel set up by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to look into the relocation and reconfiguration of troops in Jammu and Kashmir is likely to favour the immediate withdrawal of troops from orchards and schools or the payment of compensation for such deployment. The panel, headed by Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt, will submit its report to Defence Minister A K Antony soon, official sources said. Dutt, who is retiring on July 31, is expected to favour the relocation of troops from orchards, schools and hospitals with immediate effect or the payment of compensation to people wherever this is not possible for the time being, the sources said. Chief Minister

Ghulam Nabi Azad too has favoured such a course of action. Azad made a strong case to this effect during his meeting with Dutt, who was in Srinagar last week to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir..

Greater Kashmir, 9 July 2007

**DAY 3: ANGER MOUNTS, CLASHES CONTINUE IN DOWNTOWN CITY**

Srinagar, July 8: At least 25 people were injured in clashes between protesters and police in downtown city on third straight day Sunday as anger mounted over the death of a teenager killed in alleged police action on Friday. Reports said scores of youth, raising pro-freedom slogans took to streets in many parts of the old city this morning and pelted stones on police and paramilitary CRPF personnel. The cops, who have been deployed in strength in the area, retaliated with bamboo sticks and teargas canisters. After the police action, youth regrouped around the historic Grand Mosque and engaged the CRPF men in clashes which went on till late evening. At least 25 people, including some cops were injured in the ding dong clashes, reports said. Windowpanes of more than a dozen vehicles were also damaged..

Indian Express, 9 July 2007

**JK: Govt may renew Mohura project (Mir Ehsan)**

MOHURA URI, JULY 8 : At a time when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has asked for generation of 50,000 MW of hydro electricity throughout the country, Indias second oldest power plant Mohura powerhouse near the LoC in Uri is waiting for Central assistance since past 15 years. The JK Government has already lost more than Rs 1200 crore due to closure of this powerhouse. Commissioned in 1902, the powerhouse had a generation capacity of 9 MW of electricity and its 11 km long plume, made of wood, is the countrys oldest existing canal constructed by German Engineers. For five decades, the powerhouse was the only source of electricity in the state. Chief Engineer Generation Masood Dar blames the Centre and state Governments for closure of this prestigious project..

Greater Kashmir, 9 July 2007

**Opinion: Muslim Kashmir: no option at all (MGH Mukhtar)**

Last year, When Sajad Gani Lone got engaged with the Indian establishment for chalking out some solution to the vexed problem of Kashmir, he was not prepared politically and assured the Singh administration at the Prime Ministerial level talks that he shall only come forward in future with a vision document on Kashmir Resolution. He never disclosed the contents of the meeting in the backdrop of why he initially responded to Indian request. He only had his image tarnished. The Government of India was under international pressure to invite the discussions with different political agencies in the state and some political groups acceded to their hidden agenda.

The Tribune, 9 July 2007

**Opinion: Sensitive leadership key to arresting Army suicides (GS Kaura)**

The high level meeting called last week by Defence Minister AK Antony, following the suspected suicide of Captain Megha Razdan of 113 Engineers Regiment, which was also the day another soldier of the Indian Army committed suicide, reflected the urgency and

near panic which has set into the Indian defence establishment over the disturbing trend of rising suicides among soldiers. This was the second time in the last 15 days that the Defence Minister stressed on the need to arrest this trend, which is among the highest in any of the armed forces anywhere in the world. Earlier on June 18, he had to urge the top commanders of the country gathered at New Delhi for the Unified Commanders conference, to take all possible steps to reduce the stress level on our jawans. He emphasised the urgent need for more humane man management.

Daily Excelsior, 10 July 2007

### **20 injured as Omar survives grenade attack in Handwara**

Srinagar, July 9: National Conference president survived a grenade attack today at his rally in Handwara area even as 5 Police and CRPF personnel and 15 civilians sustained injuries in the blast. Meanwhile, nearly 20 Police personnel and 30 civilians sustained injuries in ding dong clashes between Police and demonstrators over the death of a civilian in downtown last week. Informed sources told Excelsior that Omar Abdullah was taking tea inside the fenced orchard of his local party leader Mohammad Iqbal Malla, after concluding his rally at Sopur Naghama, on Baramulla Langet Road, in Handwara area, when a rifle grenade fired by suspected militants exploded about 100 yards from the canopy. As the blast caused panic and left over 20 people, including five CRPF and J&K Police personnel injured, Omar was quickly girdled by his security and escort personnel and rushed to the interior of his hosts house..

Indian Express, 10 July 2007

### **PM defers Jammu visit**

New Delhi:: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has deferred his visit to Jammu after state mourning was declared. He was scheduled to visit Jammu on Tuesday to receive an honorary D Litt degree from the University of Jammu. Preparing for the visit, the Army, paramilitary forces including the National Security Guards NSG and police had put in place a security blanket for the Prime Minister in Jammu, covering the airport, his cavalcade route, the function venue and the Raj Bhawan where he was scheduled to stay. Singh would have been conferred the degree by Chancellor and state Governor S K Sinha in the presence of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and other eminent persons.

Greater Kashmir, 10 July 2007

### **Opinion: Ending alienation in Kashmir I (Dr RK Koul)**

Kashmir has never been under sharp international focus as it is since November to December 1989, when the protagonists of separation from India abducted Rubiya Sayeed, daughter of the then Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's to secure the release of some separatists belonging to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. Along side militancy, Kashmir has emerged as the hot spot in the world with everyone giving solutions to this vexed problem. The Greater Kashmir alone has published on its edit-opinion pages more than 2,000 essays on the genesis of and solution to the Kashmir problem. The most striking aspect of what so far has appeared on this page and several national and international dailies, journals and magazines is that the gross misrule, the culture of graft and extortion, the misdeeds of exploitative bureaucracy and the denial of legitimate expression of the popular will are primarily responsible for promoting the

Pakistani cause in Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 10 July 2007

**Opinion: Women in uniform (Brig. ret'd. SN Sachdeva)**

It was inevitable that a massive dose of gender, and some sensation, would attach itself to Captain Megha Razdan, who found hanging at her official residence in Jammu. It was not inevitable, though not surprising, that the army should shoot itself in the foot by way of response. Stupid too in the context of recent allegations of sexual harassment, mercifully not in this sad case. Much as we might regret the political turn the issue could be taking, the fact is the army invited trouble. Not because one senior officer developed foot and mouth disease, but because what he said reflects the larger reality that women are yet to be accepted as professional equals they remain a novelty, perhaps to be pampered, or viewed as a nuisance, or worse.

Greater Kashmir, 10 July 2007

**Opinion: Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Gujjars of J&K (Dr J Rahi)**

The Gujjars, who live Nomadic life today, have once ruled the entire Northern India . Modern day Gujarat was called GUJAR-RATA or Gujjar Rashtra meaning thereby Kingdom of Gujjars. This was the area where Gujjars flourished and their rule spread over entire Northern India. Gujjar tribe appeared on the horizon of India during 5th century A.D, with the advent of white Huns and they established their rule on northern parts. History revealed that the entire Northern India was ruled by the Ashkani, Panwar, Baruooh Chaweri and Parthar Gujjars. There states of Gujjar kingdoms present a brief account of the Glorious past of Gujjars. Not only this, the immortal remains of Gujjar past tell their stories in the whole central Asia and adjoining areas.

Indian Express, 11 July 2007

**Cong rejects PDP demand for reduction of troops**

Srinagar, July 10: Congress on Tuesday rejected demands for reduction of troops in Jammu and Kashmir, saying withdrawing troops from internal security duty at present will be dangerous. A fear psychosis still prevails and threat perception has not come down, Jammu and Kashmir Congress president Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed said, addressing a party convention at Baramulla, 55 kms from Srinagar. Apparently referring to demands by coalition partner PDP for troop reduction, he said the ground situation in the state was contradictory to it.

Daily Excelsior, 11 July 2007

**HC rejects Army pleas in Pathribal fake gunfight case**

Srinagar, July 10: The State High Court today rejected Army pleas in the Pathribal fake encounter case and held as maintainable a lower courts order in this regard. The Army had filed two appeals in the High Court, challenging a lower courts order directing it to hold court martial proceedings against the accused personnel or let the civil court try them. The Army, through the appeals, had sought a stay on the November 30 order of Additional District and Sessions Judge Gousia Un Nisa Jeelani and also directed to the CBI to withdraw its charge-sheet against the five personnel. Five senior Army personnel have been charged with killing five innocent civilians in a fake encounter at Pathribal in

Anantnag district of south Kashmir on March 25, 2000.

Kashmir Times, 11 July 2007

**SHRC holds Major guilty of raping mother daughter**

Srinagar, July 10: The State Human Rights Commission SHRC in Jammu and Kashmir has held an Army major guilty of raping a woman and her daughter in border district of Kupwara in November 2004 and recommended payment of Rs two lakh as compensation to the victims. A single bench of Habibullah Bhat passed the judgement in the sexual assault case in which Major B Rehman Hussain of 30 Rashtriya Rifles RR was alleged to have raped 30-year-old Aisha Begum and her 10 year old daughter Shabnum Rasheed at Badra Payeen village near Langate in Handwara area of Kupwara district during the intervening night of November 6 to 7 in 2004. The incident had sparked off massive protests in the entire Kashmir valley which continued for several days.

Daily Excelsior, 11 July 2007

**Editorial: Be vigilant**

All sane elements must heave a sigh of relief over the escape of National Conference president Omar Abdullah in a grenade attack in the north Kashmir district of Kupwara on Monday. That the explosive fell well short of the target is a matter of chance. It was fired in the direction of the house of a NC worker who had Mr Abdullah as guest in Handwara after the latter had addressed a public rally. It is unfortunate indeed about a dozen persons including Central Reserve Police Force CRPF jawans and police men were injured in this heinous assault. Admittedly, it is not the first time that the NC chief has had a taste of the militants fire. He has come across worse situations earlier.

Greater Kashmir, 11 July 2007

**Opinion: Ending alienation in Kashmir II (Dr RK Koul)**

This struggle ultimately culminated in the Quit Kashmir Movement in 1946, with the National Conference cadres openly defying the rulers authority, confronting the police at several places, attacking symbols of the government to press for the dethronement of Hari Singh, upsetting all official calculations and demanding the democratically elected peoples government. Order could be restored in Kashmir only after the police and the Army swung into action and Sheikh Abdullah and several other prominent Kashmiri leaders were put behind the bars on the charge of sedition.

Kashmir Times, 11 July 2007

**Editorial: Still more HR abuses**

Close on the heels of the Bandipora molestation and shocking Kupwara killings, have followed the Kangan outrage and the Nowhatta killing, revealing the spiraling graph of human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces. Both the Kangan incident and the Nowhatta one have their own respective peculiarities. In the Kangan case, the army has chosen to justify the act on the ground that the girl in question found with the guilty soldier, who ended his life after killing one civilian and injuring another, had gone out of her own sweet will. Similarly, in the Nowhatta incident, the police claims that the boy was not injured in firing but because of a tear gas shell.

Daily Excelsior, 12 July 2007

**Govt wants to take situation back to 1987-88 level: Azad**

Anantnag, July 11: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today warned against politicizing the issue of demilitarization, saying it did not concern any particular political party but was directly linked with overall security situation of the State. He said even as improvement in the situation was a matter of satisfaction, any wrong step taken at a time when the State was nearing the destination of peace, would take the situation back to 1990. Addressing a one day convention of the ruling Congress here, Mr Azad said the issue of demilitarization should not be made a topic of political debate.

Greater Kashmir, 12 July 2007

**Army saved Kashmir: Azad**

Islamabad, July 11: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Wednesday said if Army had not been in Kashmir incidents like Lal Masjid would have occurred in the Valley too. Addressing a one day convention of the ruling Congress workers here, Azad said, Army presence prevented incidents like Lal Masjid taking place here and safeguarded the interests of people. However, Azad quickly added, Sometimes troopers commit mistakes inadvertently. Recalling his meeting with the Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt last week, the Chief Minister said Dutt didn't put forward any suggestion regarding demilitarization. Instead he told me to analyze the situation and then take a decision about the troop cut.

The Tribune, 12 July 2007

**Authorities to review strategy**

Srinagar, July 11: Series of incidents, which have led to street fights between people and law-enforcing agencies in the valley after a long lull, have made the authorities, especially the Army, review their strategies. Senior Army officials told The Tribune that they suspected a link in the events which had brought people on the road against them. Pressure on the government for de militarisation was being ratcheted up and these mishaps are only an extension to them, an officer claimed. He conceded that they were thinking on these lines largely due to circumstantial evidence.

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2007

**Relocation of security forces have already started: Azad**

Budgam, July 12: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today expressed the hope that temporary setback suffered by the dialogue process between India and Pakistan would be overcome soon and leaders of the two countries will pick up threads where these had been dropped about six months ago. Addressing a day long convention of the Congress party here, Mr Azad said the internal situation of Pakistan for past six months had temporarily halted dialogue between the two countries. He said he was hopeful that situation in Pakistan would improve soon to allow leadership on both sides to resume the dialogue. Although relocation of security forces from Government buildings and orchards had already started there was a need to give it a further push so that security forces arrange on war footing alternate accommodation for themselves, he said..

Daily Excelsior, 13 July 2007

### **Mufti for diplomatic initiatives to solve Kashmir**

Srinagar, July 12: Peoples Democratic Party PDP patron, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said emerging situation in the sub-continent demands determined political and diplomatic initiatives to expand range and substance of peace process for ultimate resolution of Kashmir issue. The fundamental question is how different players respond to the new situation, offering both a challenge and an opportunity for peaceful and comprehensive resolution of this long standing conflict, he said. Addressing a public meeting at Zainakote in Batamaloo here, Mr Sayeed said fast changing equation in the subcontinent offers the countrys leadership, not just a challenge, but also a great opportunity to take some major and real steps towards resolution of Kashmir issue for larger good of the region..

Indian Express, 13 July 2007

### **Not contesting 02 election was a mistake: Farooq**

Srinagar, July 12: National Conference patron Farooq Abdullah on Thursday made a candid admission that it was selfish on his part not to contest the 2002 Assembly polls. The decision was a mistake. It was selfishness on my part, the senior Abdullah, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, said while answering a question whether he was regretting his decision not to participate in the 2002 polls. Seeing his fathers mood, National Conference president Omar Abdullah chipped in by saying that the senior Abdullah's decision not to fight the polls gave an impression that the father son duo were pulling in different direction. This impression was exploited by our opponents during the elections and they benefitted from it, he said.

Greater Kashmir, 13 July 2007

### **Time to grab opportunity, solve Kashmir, Mufti tells GoI**

Srinagar, July 12: Peoples Democratic Party patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed on Thursday said the emerging situation in the sub continent demands determined political and diplomatic initiatives to expand the peace process for the ultimate resolution of the Kashmir issue. The fundamental question is how different players respond to the new situation, offering both a challenge and an opportunity for the peaceful and comprehensive resolution of this longstanding conflict, he said while addressing a public meeting at Zainakote here. Mufti said the fast changing equation in the sub continent offers the Indian leadership, not just a challenge, but also a great opportunity to take some major and real steps towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue for the larger good of the region.

Greater Kashmir, 14 July 2007

### **NOTHING SHORT OF COMPLETE ARMY WITHDRAWAL, SAYS MIRWAIZ**

Srinagar, July 13: Chairman of Hurriyat conference M Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday rejected the proposed relocation of troops and reiterated his demand of complete troop withdrawal from Jammu and Kashmir. People of Kashmir want troops out and not just their relocation, the Mirwaiz said while addressing an impressive gathering at Mazar e Shuhada in downtown here on 76th martyrdom anniversary of 21 martyrs who were gunned down by troops of the Dogra Maharaja on July 13, 1931. While pointing towards the graves of martyrs the Hurriyat chairman said, People who have been in power since

1947 have exploited the sacrifices rendered by them as their mission has still not been accomplished.

Greater Kashmir, 14 July 2007

**Editorial: Unjust approach**

The crushing response Anganwadi workers received from the state for a simple, peaceful protest over genuine demands was not just a reflection of arrogance on part of state authorities it also highlighted a black hole in the coalition governments job policy. The protesting women braved barrages of colored water that made most of them sick, bone crushing batons that swooped indiscriminately on them injuring many and an ill-mannered thrashing by male cops that wounded their modesty. The images of this unabashed action splashed the diverse news media: vernacular press, local cable TV and mobile phones. Conscious sections of the society have wondered what harm those unarmed women protestors would have caused if not halted brutally. At best they would march through the heart of the city airing their problems. At worst, they would hold a dharna in front of the civil secretariat.

Daily Excelsior, 14 July 2007

**Politicians of all hues throng Mazaar e Shuhada**

Srinagar, July 13: With leaders of almost all mainstream and separatist parties thronging the martyrs' graveyard and paying tributes to over a score people killed at Srinagar Central Jail this day in 1931, Kashmir valley today observed a near-total shutdown on separate calls from two factions of the separatist Hurriyat Conference on occasion of the Martyrs Day. While detaining over a dozen demonstrators, Police did not allow some of the separatist leaders, including Syed Ali Shah Geelani, to move out of their places of residence. Apprehensive of some separatist leaders attempts to create trouble over some recent incidents of human rights abuse by Police, authorities had positioned a thick Police and paramilitary bandobust around Mazaar e Shuhada in Naqashband Sahib locality of downtown Srinagar. A thick Police concentration had also dominated vicinity of Srinagar Central Jail where leaders of the Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat Conference wanted to lay foundation stone of a martyrs memorial.

Daily Excelsior, 15 July 2007

**Court reserves order on Armys plea**

Srinagar, July 14: A court here today reserved till July 19 the order on an Army plea seeking directions for withdrawal of chargesheet filed by Special Investigation Team of Police in the case of a civilian who was allegedly killed in a fake encounter last year. Chief Judicial Magistrate Aijaz Ahmad deferred the order as he was yet to receive the High Court orders in a similar plea made by the Army in Pathribal fake encounter killings. Justice Hakeem Imtiyaz Hussain of the High Court on Tuesday dismissed the Armys revision petition, seeking withdrawal of the chargesheet filed by CBI in the Pathribal case on the grounds that the Investigating Agency had not sought prior sanction from the Centre for prosecution of the accused Army officers. The CJM reserved orders in the case of Shoukat Ahmad Kataria today after hearing the arguments of the Army counsel and the State counsel on June 21.

Greater Kashmir, 15 July 2007

**Anganwari workers nurse wounds, grudge against police**

Srinagar, July 14: Bruised and limping, the Anganwari workers and helpers staged demonstrations against Kashmir Police on Saturday, seeking a judicial probe into what they called brute and immoral action by cops to disperse their peaceful demonstration here on Wednesday. Scores of Anganwari workers shouted slogans against police at Lal Chowk, in the heart of this capital city. We had sought permission from police for the demonstration (at Maulana Azad Road) to press for resolution of our longstanding demands, said Haseena Sofi, president of Anganwari Workers and Helpers Association. However, a posse of cops suddenly appeared at the scene and brutally thrashed us. The cops dragged the women and tore their clothes off.

Daily Excelsior, 16 July 2007

**Land, water resources can be used jointly on both sides of LoC: PM**

Jammu, July 15: Wanting to turn the Line of Control into a Line of Peace and convert Jammu and Kashmir into a symbol of Indo Pakistan cooperation, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today said the dialogue with Islamabad would continue despite difficulties and the blackmail of terror. Addressing a special convocation of Jammu University here this afternoon after being conferred with D Lit by Chancellor and Governor Lt Gen Retd S K Sinha, Dr Singh said India remained committed to its resolve to end terrorism and ruled out any division or fresh partition of Jammu and Kashmir. As I have stated earlier, borders cannot be changed, but they can be made irrelevant. There can no be question of divisions or fresh partitions, but the Line of Control can become a Line of Peace with free flow of ideas, goods, services and people, he said. Elaborating on his theory of making Jammu and Kashmir a symbol of Indo Pakistan cooperation, he said the States natural resources could be used for the benefit of the people.

The Hindu, 16 July 2007

**Opinion: Pushing the envelope on peace in Kashmir (S Varadarajan)**

The Prime Ministers Jammu speech takes the logic of cooperative mechanisms one step further, envisaging the shared use of the disputed regions land and water resources across the Line of Control. Just when General Musharrafs domestic difficulties and the continuing scourge of terrorism in the subcontinent had given the impression that the peace process between India and Pakistan was on the back-burner, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has reminded us all of the enormous dividend awaiting the region if the evolving peace formula is allowed to go forward. At the heart of this formula, of course, lies the simple proposition that both General Musharraf and Dr. Singh have independently made.

Kashmir Times, 16 July 2007

**Hurriyat unity: Musharraf's 4-point formula, talks bone of contention**

Srinagar, July 15: Hurriyat Conference G chairman, Syed Ali Shah Geelani has made it clear that unless and until the other faction of the Hurriyat disassociates itself from supporting Musharrafs 4point formula and holding bilateral talks with India, there can be no unity in the Hurriyat factions. Talking to Kashmir Times, Geelani said that he is in favour of strong and united forum among the separatist camp based on principles. There

should be no contradictions in stand. All in one voice should support right to self determination and tripartite talks as the basic principle for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, he said. The ailing leader said, the world body UN acknowledges that Kashmir has to be resolved by granting people of Jammu and Kashmir right to determine their fate.

Daily Excelsior, 16 July 2007

**PM promises KPs' rehabilitation in Valley**

Jagti, July 15: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today promised to rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley from where they were displaced due to the militancy in the early 1990s. Laying the foundation stone of a 4,200 flat township for the community here, he said the Pandits would be taken back to the Kashmir valley and the present township is only a temporary dwelling place for the community to provide them with better living conditions. He said by laying the foundation stone of the township, he has fulfilled his promise of providing better living conditions to the community. I have fulfilled the promise made to you in 2004. Although it was a bit late, but today it was fulfilled by laying foundation stone for your township, Singh, who was accompanied by Union Minister for Water Resources, Prof Saif-ud-Din Soz, Governor Lt. Gen ret'd S K Sinha and Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, said.

Greater Kashmir, 16 July 2007

**Editorial: Insecure Kashmiris**

The subject of Kashmiris being harassed outside state has always been disturbing for all of us. As an example, one case will suffice whose reverberations refuse to die. The mystery shrouding the death of Kashmir's ace Gazal singer Ghulam Nabi Sheikh and subsequent cremation four years ago has remained unsolved regardless of the promises made by the Union Government to unravel it. Late Sheikh was neither a separatist militant nor a politician whose killing would be attributed to an encounter or getting killed in the accidental explosion of an IED device which he was carrying for planting at a particular place. Instead he held a respectable position in a union government organization and enjoyed tremendous popularity as a singer both at home and outside state. He had carved a niche for himself among the music lovers of Jammu and Kashmir and many of his fans refer him as Mehdi Hassan of Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 16 July 2007

**Editorial: Words of cheer and promise**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech at the Jammu University on Sunday has been full of words of cheer and promise. Its merit and strength is that it captures the scenario in the State as it exists. There has been no soaring rhetoric, no beating about the bush. Who will not share his vision that the Line of Control should become the line of peace? Very rightly he is not prepared to yield any space to terrorism as real political power in a democracy comes from the ballot box, not the barrel of a gun. He has taken note of regional tensions in the State. He has indeed lauded Jammu's contribution in maintaining exemplary communal harmony in a tough period. Of course, he has praised the inhabitants of the region for their entrepreneurship. He has unleashed his own vision of Naya Jammu and Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 17 July 2007

**PMs peace talk fails to charm separatists**

Srinagar, July 16: The pro freedom leaders reacted sharply on Monday to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's appeal to them to join roundtable conferences and urged him to prove practically India's desire to settle the Kashmir dispute once and for all. Roundtable conferences are held for discussing internal issues and for photo sessions, said Hurriyat Conference G chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani. India has never been sincere in solving the dispute. Commenting over Singh's Sunday speech in Jammu University in which he said he wanted to transform the Line of Control into a line of peace, Geelani said the people of Kashmir have not rendered sacrifices for rendering the LoC soft. Kashmiris have been fighting for their right to self-determination and will continue to strive for it till they achieve their goal, Geelani told Greater Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 17 July 2007

**BJP worker, daughter shot dead; kin injured**

Jammu, July 16: A BJP activist and his daughter were killed and a Village Defence Committee VDC member's wife was injured when militants attacked their house at village Dallas in Prem Nagar under the jurisdiction of Doda police station. Official sources said two militants attacked the house of Dev Raj, a BJP activist and his brother Mukesh Kumar, a VDC member, who were living jointly at Dallas late last night. BJP worker Dev Raj, 35, took the weapon of his brother and opened firing on the militants, sensing the attack. He resisted the militants' attack till he exhausted all rounds. Sources said Mukesh Kumar also retaliated effectively and it was due to both brothers' counter-attack that the militants' plot of killing was foiled.

Kashmir Times, 17 July 2007

**Editorial: Ludicrous statements**

Recent statements of the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad criticizing those bureaucrats and state government employees who are either indulged in corrupt practices, making mockery of, what it is being stated as work culture or have failed to utilize the development funds within the stipulated period, remind one of a proverbial adage: Bad workman quarrels with his tools. If a person holding the reins of power finds faults in the working of his subordinates and holds them responsible for the poor performance of the government, the hint is too obvious that the person concerned is simply rummaging around for a scapegoat. This is a simple fact based on rational perception that the bureaucrats and the government employees play truant only when they find a congenial atmosphere for the same with no check from any quarters.

Indian Express, 17 July 2007

**Joined by an idea**

PM's J&K proposal, so different from Pakistani ideas of pooling sovereignties, deserves support. Paradigm shifts in diplomacy occur when statesmen successfully reframe a complex issue. The boldness of Manmohan Singh's speech at the University of Jammu on Sunday lay in leveraging a simple word, joint. In suggesting the joint development of the land and water resources of J&K for the benefit of all people living across the dividing line, the PM has expanded on the methodology for a pragmatic settlement of the bitter

dispute with Pakistan. Any mention of the word joint in relation to J&K is bound to raise the hackles of certain varieties of nationalists and large sections of the conservative security establishment. After all, the term joint management has been a taboo in our national discourse on Kashmir for so long. It has been associated with the unacceptable notion of shared sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan.

Dawn, 17 July 2007

**Editorial: Singhs new vision**

THOUGHTS expressed by Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh during his recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir leave one with hope for a final settlement of the dispute which has plagued Pakistan India relations since independence. In his speech at a Jammu university, Dr Singh emphasised on making the Line of Control irrelevant for the people living on either side of it: he spoke of free movement of people, goods and services across the LoC, and of sharing the resources of the disputed state with all the people inhabiting it. This, the Indian leader said, was achievable once peace returned to the restive state under Indian control. He also expressed the hope that those Kashmiri leaders who have so far stayed away from New Delhis ongoing dialogue initiative would join the effort for finding a solution to the Kashmir problem.

Daily Excelsior, 18 July 2007

**Khuda appointed DGP, Sharma CMs Security Adviser**

Srinagar, July 17: Government today appointed Kuldeep Khuda as the new Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police in place of Gopal Sharma, who has been appointed as Chief Ministers Security Adviser. Government has also reorganised Kashmir Administrative Service KAS with the creation of a large number of posts at all the four levels so as to remove stagnation and generate better prospects of promotion. A meeting of the State Cabinet, which was presided over by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, sanctioned promotion of the 1974 batch IPS officer and Additional DG CID, Kuldeep Khuda, to the rank of DGP. With this elevation, Khuda was appointed as the new Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police..

Greater Kashmir, 18 July 2007

**PDP hails PMs statement, wants fresh initiatives**

Srinagar, July 17: The Political Affairs Committee PAC of the Peoples Democratic Party PDP has hailed Prime Minister Manmohan Singhs statement on improving relations with Pakistan and resolving the problems of Jammu and Kashmir through a comprehensive mechanism. The Prime Ministers statement is a significant and positive move towards consolidation of the peace and confidence building process, the PAC which met here Tuesday under the chairmanship of PDP patron, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed observed, according to a party spokesman. The spokesman said the meeting reiterated that the peace process was an irreversible historical development as it is the only option to resolve mutual differences, improve the security environment and ensure the welfare and happiness of the people.

Kashmir Times, 18 July 2007

**Playing With Fire In Kashmir (MS Malik)**

The politics of demilitarisation or redeployment is getting murkier by the day. Everybody who is anybody out there in New Delhi would like to come all the way here to 'assess' the situation but not reveal its immediate purpose. This ostrich like approach towards a sensitive issue is generating cynicism at the popular level. Recent incidents at Bandipore and Kangan, coming on the heels of potentially fiery controversy over the army's sadbhavna campaign in Kashmir, forcing the people to resort to vigilante sort of justice against erring security personnel, are dangerous portents.

Kashmir Times, 18 July 2007

**Editorial: Hope or illusion**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's hope, expressed during his speech on the occasion of the award of D. Litt degree on him by the Jammu University that the present Line of Control, dividing Jammu and Kashmir, would one day turn into a Line of Peace is indeed a highly sentimental journey into a wishful thinking any reference to which touches the chord of hope in every human heart. The Prime Minister has talked of making this artificial line as irrelevant which in other words means that he wants it to be converted into a permanent border between India and Pakistan thus making the de facto division of Jammu and Kashmir into two parts, one under India and the other under Pakistani control, de jure as well. No doubt the people of Kashmir are yearning for peace and would like peace to return to the troubled state.

Daily Excelsior, 18 July 2007

**Edwina influenced Nehru on Kashmir**

New Delhi, July 17: Lord Mountbatten used his wife Edwina, who shared a deep emotional love with Jawaharlal Nehru, to influence India's first Prime Minister to refer the Kashmir issue to the United Nations, according to the last Viceroy's daughter. That is true and he did use her like that. But he certainly wasn't going to throw her, he didn't say to her go become the Prime Minister's lover because I need you to intercede. It was a by-product of this deep affection, Lady Pamela Hicks said in an interview to Karan Thapar in his programme Devils Advocate to be aired on CNN IBN. She was replying to a query on whether Lord Mountbatten used the Edwina Nehru relationship to influence him in the handling of the Kashmir issue.

Daily Excelsior, 19 July 2007

**Inquiry Committee indicts Srinagar police**

Jammu, July 18: A Fact Finding Report of an Inquiry Committee has severely indicted district Srinagar administration, mainly police, for serious lapses in last year's attack on Congress rally in which Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had a providential escape and the then IGP Srinagar K Rajendera was seriously injured while several persons were killed and injured. The Inquiry Committee headed by Financial Commissioner Home B R Kundal and assisted by IGP Raja Aijaz Ali, earlier posted in Home Department and presently IGP Traffic, J&K, has submitted its report to the State Government. When contacted, Mr Kundal confirmed that the inquiry report has been completed by him but refused to divulge any details. Raja Aijaz Ali, who had assisted the Financial Commissioner Home in the inquiry, when approached, also refused to comment on the findings.

Daily Excelsior, 19 July 2007

**Geelani asks Pak military leadership to step down**

Srinagar, July 18: With almost all of mainstream as well as separatist politicians continuing to be deaf and dumb to the Lal Masjid episode and its consequences for over a fortnight, Valleys first voluntary reaction to the bloody operation has come from none other than the Chairman of the hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference today. In his one-page statement, grief stricken Syed Ali Shah Geelani has asked the military leadership in Islamabad to step down and clear the way for an Islamic democratic dispensation. According to them, Lal Masjid and its violent aftermath were threatening to create a situation that would be worse than the fall of Dhaka. Expressing his anguish over the extremely serious situation in Pakistan, Geelani said in the statement that the spate of violent incidents was a cause of concern not only for those in Pakistan but also for the entire Muslim world.

Kashmir Times, 19 July 2007

**Editorial: Brutal police action**

The failure of the law enforcing agencies in abiding by the law and its spirit is best indicated by its intolerance towards peaceful protests as was amply demonstrated in the brutal action Jammu and Kashmir police resorted to against the Education Volunteer teachers in Srinagar on Monday. The manner in which a peaceful rally was attacked, both men and women beaten up and over 40 arrested, simply for seeking regularization of their jobs and better salaries, betrays not just a brutal mind set but also a fascist one. The fact that this is not the only case of its kind also reflects that there is a deliberate design to scuttle all democratic voices of dissent in which police plays a role in the fore front.

Greater Kashmir, 19 July 2007

**Editorial: Peace without lines**

During the recently held convocation for conferring of an honorary doctorate on him by the University of Jammu, the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared that the Line of Control LoC should be converted into a Line of Peace. Dr. Manmohan Singh is reputed to be a Gentleman Prime Minister. His sentiments appear to be sincere and honest but the way he very innocently speaks about various issues makes one think that he is either not fully aware of the ground situation or is too naive. Converting an imaginary line into a line of peace goes against the very sentiment of making borders irrelevant as propounded by his rival from the other side of the border and endorsed by him.

Daily Excelsior, 19 July 2007

**Editorial: Challenge in hills**

The murder of two relatives of a member of a village defence committee VDC in a village in Doda district early this week once again underlines the challenge that we face in our hilly areas. Clearly the terrorists lie in waiting. They continue with their double evil objectives of removing hindrances in their way and creating a communal divide. On both the counts they have failed. There is no chance either that they will ever succeed. Pakistan's action in Lal Masjid and Bangladeshs drive against fundamentalists leave no doubt that there is greater awareness in the sub continent about the common enemy. It

appears to be just a matter of time when all members of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation SAARC join hands to implement their resolve to rid their entire territory of the scourge of terrorism.

Daily Excelsior, 20 July 2007

**Truth behind Army Officers death will be found: Antony**

New Delhi, July 19: All efforts will be made to establish the truth behind the death of woman Army Officer Megha Razdan, who was found hanging in an Army Camp near Jammu last month, Defence Minister A K Antony said today. We are very particular that the truth should prevail in the investigation into the case, Antony told reporters on the sidelines of a naval function here. Antony, who will embark on a two day visit to the Kashmir valley on July 27, said the parents of the young Captain met him yesterday and told him that they did not believe she had committed suicide. I share their grief at the untimely death of their loved one.

Kashmir Times, 20 July 2007

**Human Rights abuse: From Punjab to Kashmir I**

From Nagaland to Punjab and from Andhra Pradesh to Kashmir, from the early 1950s to the year 2003, spanning almost the entire time and space comprising independent India, there have been reports of the security forces, including the army, forcing local people to act as shields and to actively participate in anti terrorist operations. These reports have been consistently denied by the authorities who have routinely give out other reasons, such as caught in the cross fire, aiding abetting terrorists, etc, to explain away civilian casualties. This is an account of two such cases, one from Kashmir and the other from Punjab. In both cases, the army and the Punjab police, respectively, categorically denied the allegation against them, claiming that the villagers were killed in the cross fire between the terrorists and the security forces. Since neither incident was the object of an authoritative fact finding, the truth will never be known.

Daily Excelsior, 20 July 2007

**Editorial: Har Har Mahadev**

Let the militant attack on the Baltal base camp of the Amarnath pilgrimage early this week not create a scare. It is not something that was entirely unexpected. Terrorists are around is only too well known. Their wicked intentions are also not a secret. They are operating in the name of a religion much to the chagrin of the majority of its peace loving followers. Their aim is to communally divide the State and the country. It is precisely because of them that security precautions are taken in advance. The experience has shown that the best of safety measures show chinks when faced with a sudden assault especially by determined suicide squads. The most protected leaders have become victims in the least anticipated circumstances. Whatever that may be there has to be no laxity on this count. Pre-emptive steps have to be strengthened. There can't be two opinions about this.

Daily Excelsior, 21 July 2007

**Blasting Govt is OK but politicians, media should also assert against Friday fatwa masters: Azad**

Srinagar, July 20: Even as the Opposition National Conference NC today disrupted proceedings and created pandemonium in both Houses of Legislature over the alleged human rights violations by Police and security forces, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad claimed that not a single incident of rape, forced disappearance or custodial killing had occurred in Jammu & Kashmir in the last seven months. He said that those blasting the Government on such incidents were welcomed but asked why politicians and media had failed to assert against the separatist politicians and militants who had committed the worst possible human rights abuse by imposing over 1,300 shutdowns in Kashmir in the last 18 years of turmoil. Legislative Assembly as well as Legislative Council witnessed scenes of mayhem and uproar as NC legislators pushed motions of adjournment while alleging that Police and armed forces had been continuously indulging in abuse of human rights all over the State.

Greater Kashmir, 21 July 2007

### **Mirwaiz links peace with troop reduction**

Srinagar, July 20: Commenting on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent statement on rendering Line of Control meaningless and promotion of peace in the region, the Hurriyat Conference M chairman Mirwaiz Omar Farooq has said Kashmiri people had been from the day one pleading for such a peaceful solution of Kashmir dispute that would lead to political stability and prosperity in the region. But it is only possible when there is substantial reduction in army concentration in the region. Seven lakh troops are operating in Jammu and Kashmir. There should be a gradual reduction in the number of troops and complete demilitarization in cities, towns and public places, said Mirwaiz while addressing a Friday prayer meeting at Bazaar Masjid Gulmarg.

Daily Times, 21 July 2007

### **Kashmir borders along Line of Control may be softened: Indian official**

Washington: The present boundaries in Kashmir, claims one of India's point men on Kashmir, will remain, there being an increasing recognition for settling the issue on that basis and making the borders soft to permit trade and tourism. Wajahat Habibullah, an Indian civil servant who served for over two decades in Kashmir and is currently engaged as a back channel negotiator in promoting Indian government efforts to resolve the issue on the basis of a softened status quo, said in an online interview to CounterCurrents.org earlier this month that the preferred term today for the Line of Control is present boundaries. He explained, Within the framework of the constitutions of India and Pakistan, the people of the state will try and bring maximum self government that is achievable within these systems. These principles need to be discussed and not become the bases for killing each other. Therefore, there is a general retreat from the idea of using violence.

Kashmir Times, 21 July 2007

### **Human Rights abuse: From Punjab to Kashmir II**

Case 2 Report by Ram Narayan Kumar and Amrik Singh, human rights activists. Police version: Based upon the affidavit filed before the NHRC by Ashok Bath, Superintendent of Police Detective, Tarn Taran. On 8.6.92 the police received information that Surjit Singh Behla s/o Tarlok Singh Jat, r/o Behla and Madan Singh Maddi Sukhdev Singh

Chota Behla son of Santokh Singh r/o Behla, self-styled Deputy Chief and Lieutenant General of Bhindranwala Tiger Force of Khalistan (BTFK), a sikh militant outfit was holding a meeting with other terrorists and planning to commit a major terrorist crime. A police party with officers of 91/Bn and 102 Bn CRPF cordoned the village Behla. When the police were searching the first floor of the house of Manjinder Singh Behla the terrorists, who were hiding inside the house, opened fire and killed HC Jarnail Singh and LC Harjit Singh 4160/TT..

Kashmir Times, 21 July 2007

**Opinion: People's army or occupation force (Firdous Syed)**

In a bizarre incident on June 26, two army men of 57 Rashtriya Rifles RR were caught by the outraged people when they had barged into a villager's home and attempted to rape his 17 year old girl in Gujjarpati Kunan Bandipore, some 55 kms from Srinagar. After being beaten to pulp by the local people and paraded naked in the town, police somehow managed to secure the rouge army personnel from the people after violent clashes with public that left more than 30 people injured. On June 27, the Sub Divisional Police Officer SDPO Bandipore said the two army men have been arrested and a case (with FIR no. 122/07 for attempt to rape registered against them and added that they will be produced in court of law. Couple of days later, in a bid to dilute the case against its troopers, 57 RR unit of the Army, registered a counterFIR in Police Station Bandipore against the protestors who had caught and manhandled the troopers.

Daily Excelsior, 21 July 2007

**Opinion: Indo Pak dialogue (ML Kotru)**

...My concern is the speed with which the Indian Government, under pressure from coalition partner in Kashmir, the Peoples Democratic Party is willing to bend to motivated pressures from the mainstream parties in the State. Assassination attempts on him notwithstanding, even the young Farooq Abdullah doesnt want to be left behind in the clamour for a quick resolution of the Kashmir problem. He has found many elements in Gen. Musharraf's reported peace plan as acceptable, at least the ones that provide a basis for settlement. And one hears as many lovey, dovey voices emanating from New Delhi as there are Ministers in Manmohan Singh's cabinet. And one of the two voices that rankles most, apart from Manmohan Singh's homilies, is that of Home Minister Patil.

Daily Excelsior, 22 July 2007

**Mufti expects positive action**

Srinagar, July 21: The Peoples Democratic Party PDP today said it was expecting a positive action from the Centre on its demand for reduction of troops and review of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in the State. I am optimistic of some forward movement on these crucial issues in the coming days, PDP patron and former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said addressing a workers meeting here. He disclosed that he has received a communication from Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on Friday reiterating his commitment to the understanding arrived at and the mechanism devised for the purpose in March this year. The Prime Ministers letter was in response to Mufti's request stating the urgency and necessity for reduction of troops and revocation of

AFSPA.

Dawn, 22 July 2007

**Violence wont affect Pakistan India talks**

Toronto, July 21: The Azad Kashmir prime minister has said the recent wave of bomb attacks in Islamabad and the NWFP has not derailed the Pakistan India peace process. Talking to Dawn here on Saturday, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, who is currently on a visit to Canada, also refuted the claim of some observers that the Kashmir issue had taken a back seat because of the violence in Pakistan. On the contrary, some positive events are taking place on Kashmir front. For instance, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his recent statement said that the Line of Control could become a line of peace with a freer flow of ideas, goods, services and people, he said.

Kashmir Times, 23 July 2007

**Positive economic changes must be facilitated across Kashmir: Mehbooba**

Colombo, July 22 : Peoples Democratic Party PDP President, Mehbooba Mufti has stressed the need for putting into action some tangible confidence building measures in Jammu and Kashmir that would adequately match the fast changing ground situation and the public mood. The fast changing equations in the State and the sub continent necessitate the urgency of some firm intermediary political and economic measures that would positively impact the situation and pave the wave for the ultimate peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue, she said. Speaking at the inaugural session of the two day Pugwash Conference on Kashmir here today, Mehbooba said implementation of the recommendations of the Working Groups on Kashmir could mark the beginning of the confidence building process with far reaching positive impact on the overall situation in the State.

Greater Kashmir, 23 July 2007

**Visible change in Indias Kashmir stance**

Luton, July 22: Pakistans Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Tahir Iqbal has said the recent statement of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh indicated change in the thought process of New Delhi. The Minister was addressing a one day councilors convention organized by the London-based Justice Foundation Kashmir Centre at the Town Hall on Saturday. The theme of the convention was The Challenge of Peace in Kashmir and the role of British Kashmiri Diaspora. Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan Abdul Basit was also present on the occasion while members of the Kashmir Council Hamid Pothi and Syed Raza Naqvi and Nawaz Gardezi, advisor to the President of Pakistan administered Kashmir were also present. The Federal Minister explained the background of the ongoing peace process and its importance for the whole of South Asia.

Daily Excelsior, 23 July 2007

**Editorial: Dont spare them**

After Baltal it is Pahalgam. In less than a week the terrorists have swung from one end of the Amarnath pilgrimage to the other to make their ugly presence felt. They have targeted pilgrims to the holy cave. They have followed up their dastardly attack at the Baltal base camp by throwing grenade at a community kitchen in Pahalgam which is the major and

traditional launching pad of the yatra. One person was killed and more than a dozen injured in their first assault. At least ten persons have been wounded in their latest violent bid. One can feel their agony. Pahalgam unlike Baltal is a globally famous hill resort also. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was exposed to greater panic following the explosion. The devotees and tourists alike ran helter-skelter for cover. What a shame it is for all of us in this State? It is evident that some religious bigots and perpetrators of murder and mayhem among us are out to soil our reputation for secularism.

The Hindu, 23 July 2007

**Opinion: For a feasible solution in J&K (VRK Iyer)**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent suggestion that the Line of Control could become a Line of Peace deserves to be followed up in order to end 60 years of violence. Jammu and Kashmir in its entirety is legally a part of India. Its last Maharaja, exercising his sovereign authority, duly executed an Instrument of Accession, and Justice MC Mahajan, the Prime Minister of the State he later became the Chief Justice of India in a valid manner presented it to the President of India. It is also true that some investigative raconteurs challenge his simplistic version.

Kashmir Times, 23 July 2007

**Editorial: Rumbblings of a frustrated mind**

By resorting to hooliganism on the floor of the state legislative council on Friday, a handful of National Conference legislators joined by the maverick politician Bhim Singh have not only betrayed their deep sense of frustration but have also brought disrepute to the House. Bhim Singh has always enjoyed a reputation of staging such action packed dramas to be noticed but when leaders of the oldest and one of the largest parties of the state resort to such tactics, it can only reflect the growing stagnation and frustration. Yet, in a typical case of pot calling the kettle black, the NC legislators next day tried to give a totally partisan and one sided version of the story at the press conference by stating that they were evicted out of the house and the doors locked for merely asking for a discussion on human rights violations.

Daily Excelsior, 24 July 2007

**Troop cut panel meets today to finalise report**

New Delhi, July 23: The panel set up by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to look into the relocation of troops in Jammu and Kashmir will meet here tomorrow ahead of giving final touches to the report to be submitted to Defence Minister A K Antony. The panel, headed by Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt, is likely to favour immediate withdrawal of troops from orchards and schools or payment of compensation for such deployment as demanded by State Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, reports PTI. Dutt, who is retiring on July 31, will submit his report to the Defence Minister before demitting office, official sources said. The meeting will be attended among others by senior officials of Home and Defence Ministries and Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Kuldeep Khoda.

Indian Express, 24 July 2007

**Army jawan killed, another injured in J&K**

Srinagar, July 23: One jawan was killed and another injured when militants opened fire

on a patrolling party of Rashtriya Rifles in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir. The troops were at Marhama village of Bijbehara when unidentified militants, hiding in an orchard, opened fire on them late last night, official sources said on Monday. Ramesh Kumar was killed and another jawan was injured in the ensuing gunbattle. However, the militants fled the scene taking advantage of darkness.

Greater Kashmir, 24 July 2007

**Opinion: A PM and a CM (Naseer Ganai)**

CM and his speech This month when Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh came to Jammu, he talked about turning the Line of Control into line of peace. However, the Chief Minister of the State Ghulam Nabi Azad had different views. Instead of welcoming the statement of the PM, he said that there would be no Demilitarization. But people should not lose heart his utterances of the chief minister. The Chief Ministers do not account too much in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is New Delhi policy, which carries more weight, and if New Delhi is serious about making LoC as line of peace, then it will happen whether Azad speaks in favour of it or against it. However, Azad might be the only head of State government who so brazenly cited crimes, including rapes and molestation committed by individuals, and compared them with that of the human rights violations including incidents molestation committed by troops.

The Hindu, 25 July 2007

**Panel finalises report on troop reduction in J&K**

New Delhi: The committee appointed by the Prime Minister to examine the possibility of relocating troops in Jammu and Kashmir finalised its recommendations on Tuesday. The committee, headed by Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt, will submit its recommendations to Defence Minister A K Antony. The Minister is scheduled to visit Kashmir later this week for an on the spot assessment of the situation. The panel is part of a mechanism set up by the Centre to examine some of the problematic aspects of the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Besides the Dutt panel, the mechanism comprises a review committee that will review the application of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in different areas of the State and a high power committee, headed by the Defence Minister, to take decisions on the recommendations made by the expert panel and the review committee.

Daily Excelsior, 25 July 2007

**Militants be encouraged to join peace process: Mehbooba**

Srinagar, July 24: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti today said separatist groups and militants must recognise the fast-changing equations in the sub continent and get involved in the peace process for an amicable settlement of the long festering Kashmir issue. Speaking at the concluding session of the Pugwash conference on Kashmir at Sri Lankan capital Colombo, she urged India to take fresh initiatives to involve various shades of opinion in the dialogue process for ensuring lasting peace in the region in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people. It was an appropriate time to focus on the resolution of the Kashmir problem in a more meaningful way by adding substance to the peace process, Ms Mufti said. The gun wielding youth must also recognise the merit of peaceful means in the global context and come forward to join the

peace process and present a non violent agenda for the resolution of the vexed Kashmir problem, she added.

Greater Kashmir, 25 July 2007

### **Kupwara minors rape murder mystery solved**

Langate Kupwara, July 24: Police have solved the rape and murder mystery of a teenage girl of Langate after it arrested four people including two non locals who have confessed to their crime. Police said it rounded up 16 suspects out of which four Azhar Ahmad Mir alias Billa so Ghulam Muhammad of Shallopura Mukhdom Mohalla Langate, Muhammad Sadiq Mir alias Saada Choor s/o Abdur Rehman of Bunpora Langate, Jehangir alias Jehangir Bihari s/o Siraj Din Rio District Maida West Bengal, and Suresh Kumar alias Suresh Moochi so Sultan Ram Rio district Junjnu Rajasthan. They admitted their crime. Tabinda Nabi, 14, of Batpora was slaughtered after she was raped on Friday. Her body was recovered from an orchard in Langate, sparking massive protests for the past four days. The residents have had gave an ultimatum to non-locals to vacate the area.

Kashmir Times, 25 July 2007

### **Editorial: When to start withdrawal?**

A couple of days ago the IGP of Kashmir only confirmed the general impression when he claimed that there had been around 40 percent reduction in the level of militancy related violence in the valley since the beginning of the bloody path eighteen years ago. The IGP is no politician to play to the gallery, and must have spoken on the basis of the reality on the ground. What he has now said must have been known to the higher authorities much earlier. But, how have they reacted to this piece of real good news, so far? Common sense suggests that if more troops are inducted to fight growing violence then many of them should be withdrawn as and when the level of violence falls. Besides, for the last few months, not only the PDP but also many others in Kashmir and the rest of India are demanding a slow demilitarisation of the valley. They all are asserting that the level of violence has definitely fallen, and that if peace has returned in parts then it should be recognised by withdrawing forces, who are no longer needed to face the reduced level of challenge.

Kashmir Times, 26 July 2007

### **Panel on troop reduction gives nod**

New Delhi, July 25: An expert panel headed by Defence Secretary Shekhar Dutt is understood to have recommended pullout of 20,000 army troops from Jammu and Kashmir, though it may not bring any relief to the Kashmiris pressing for their withdrawals from the civilian areas. The troops identified for the pullout are among those that were deployed in the state during the Operation Parakaram in 2001, according to the sources privy to the panels last meeting held here Tuesday night to finalise its recommendations to be submitted to the Prime Ministers Office and the Defence Minister. They said the panel has, on the other hand, agreed with the Armys demand not to withdraw or dilute the troops engaged in the counter militancy operations. The troops that are sought to be redeployed elsewhere are not engaged in these operations and are actually without any work since after the government decided to roll back the Operation Parakaram after heightened tension on the borders over the months.

Greater Kashmir, 26 July 2007

**Hurriyat seeks EUs pro active role in resolving Kashmir**

Islamabad, July 25: A three member delegation of Hurriyat Conference M, Pakistan chapter, led by its convener, Syed Yousuf Naseem called on the head of the European Commission delegation, Jan De Kok here in capital city Islamabad on Wednesday. The APHC leaders briefed the EU diplomat about the present political situation prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir. During the meeting wide range of issues came under the discussion particularly the ongoing dialogue process between the two bordering nuclear states India and Pakistan, the stepped up human rights violations in the state and Baroness Emma Nicholson's draft report on Kashmir. The Hurriyat leaders said that despite the ongoing peace talks there was no let up in the human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tribune, 26 July 2007

**Opinion: Inadequate response to Army suicides and fratricide (Lt Col retd CS Dhillon)**

The Defence Ministry has issued a manual to prevent incidents of suicides and fratricide among the troops deployed in insurgency affected areas of the country. The manual emphasises humane treatment to troops. The officer cadre has been advised to close the gap between officers and men. It also says that jawans have to be given due respect. One wonders as to why and since when the jawan has stopped earning the respect of his superiors. And why have officers been found wanting in the basic pre requisites of man management, which is one of the hallmarks of officers training? Many veterans will agree that there are many factors which are causing dwindling morale among the soldiers. The ministry's study seems to have failed to go deeply into each and every reason and instead adopted a bit of a fire-fighting exercise.

Kashmir Times, 26 July 2007

**Bangergund killings: Accused RR men roam freely, cops sleep over probe**

Bangergund 25 July: Two years after the shocking Bangergund killings, justice is awaited by the family of the victims. Neither the probe has seen light of the day nor the police has yet challaned any case against 6 Rashtriya Rifles RR accused of the killing. Three children were killed in this village 90 Kms from summer capital during a marriage ceremony between July 24, 25, 2005. The younger brother of the bridegroom was injured and he was treated at Army hospital. A probe was ordered by the then chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and Deputy Inspector General of Police Baramulla was asked to supervise the probe. But since then neither the probe report has been made public nor the police has challaned the case. The police has stuck to the traditional excuse: Army is not responding.

Kashmir Times, 26 July 2007

**Editorial: A raw deal**

Despicable apathy on the part of state government towards those Kashmiri Pandit families, which stayed back in the Valley against the tides of time, is, indeed, ironical. In the backdrop of this criminal willful neglect on the part of state towards those KP

families, the lofty claims of the government about the return and rehabilitation of those who migrated outside Kashmir with dignity simply sound absurd. Notwithstanding its conceited statements, this contemptible attitude in fact betrays the lack of sensitivity on the part of government visavis the plight of those members of the minority community who chose not to leave the Valley against all odds. Sagacity demanded that the government should have shown more precision, care and due attention towards those dauntless members of the community and ensured foolproof security for their life and property besides taking care of their other needs including means of livelihood.

Greater Kashmir, 26 July 2007

**Opinion: Why this dichotomy? (H Zainagiri)**

Calling for public demonstrations and observing hartals and bandhs, as two decade long turmoil explains, has had a visceral relationship with the Kashmir leadership that claims to represent Aazadi sentiments of the subjugated people and strut around as true inheritors of martyrs . Whether it is 15th August, 26th January or 27 October when Indian troops landed in Kashmir or, unleashing of atrocities by Indian Security Forces on innocent Kashmiris, these leaders use this weapon to register moral victory on Delhi. So does happen when they the forces are found guilty of outraging the modesty of women or committing sacrileges of religious places when encounter between them and militants, hold up in mosques and shrines, takes place. A mere one step intrusion by forces is sufficient a provocation to evoke violent demonstrations. This sensitivity is not region confined. Anything blasphemous, whether from Salman Rushdie or from Danish Cartoonist, unfolds a volcano of rage here.

Daily Excelsior, 27 July 2007

**Hurriyat to launch political, diplomatic campaign on Kashmir**

Srinagar, July 26: The moderate Hurriyat Conference, led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, today decided to launch a sustained campaign at both political and diplomatic levels to seek a peaceful and permanent solution to the long festering Kashmir issue. In a statement here, a Hurriyat spokesman said the Mirwaiz summoned a special session of the executive committee, the highest decision making body of the separatist conglomerate, and senior leaders of the general council, at the amalgam headquarters here to discuss the present political situation in the State. The meeting, attended by the Mirwaiz, Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat, Maulana Abbas Ansari, Fazal Haq Qureshi, Aga Syed Hassan Al Mosavi Al Safavi and Khalil Ahmed Khalil among others, decided to launch the campaign in Jammu and Kashmir and outside soon, he added.

The Tribune, 27 July 2007

**Army vacates schools in valley**

Dras, July 26: The Army today drew from the militancy operations a demand for which was put forward by the Peoples Democratic Party, a coalition partner in the government in Jammu & Kashmir. Lt Gen HS Panag, GOC in C, Northern Command said our human rights record was much better in respect of insurgency drive anywhere else, the General said on the sidelines of eighth anniversary of Armys victory in Kargil war. He dismissed allegations lakhs of Army personnel had been deployed in Kashmir, causing inconvenience to the local population. We have no more than 80,000 troops deployed for

counter-insurgency operations in J&K and rest of the force was on the border defending it and checking infiltration from across the border, he said.

The News, 27 July 2007

**US congressman for early resolution of Kashmir dispute**

Washington: US congressmen on Thursday urged a fair and early settlement to the lingering Kashmir dispute, while taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people as diplomats, politicians and experts attending a conference pushed for substantive progress towards its resolution in the interest of lasting peace in South Asia. The tension over Kashmir needs to be resolved sooner rather than later, stated Congressman Joe Pitts from Pennsylvania, while arguing for an end to the human suffering, particularly that of children as well as to close the opportunity of violence from any side. The participants from Kashmir and Pakistan also voiced support for starting demilitarization of the Indian occupied Kashmir as a way forward and underlined the need for progress beyond confidence building measures between Pakistan and India.

Greater Kashmir, 27 July 2007

**Opinion: Division on religious lines (Balraj Puri)**

Peoples Conference leader Sajad Lones proposal for division of J&K state is neither the first nor the only proposal on the subject. However, his latest exposition of it, while addressing a rally on the martyrdom day of his father, Abdul Ghani Lone, on May 22, specially described the resultant state, after its division, as Muslim state. It would include Kashmir valley, Muslim majority parts of Jammu and of Ladakh regions. Sajad also complained, in a press conference later that though the Muslims were the worst sufferers, development work was concentrated in Jammu. The majority population was denied its share in recruitment to government jobs he said. Still it may not conclusively prove that he was entirely motivated by sentiments of Muslim communalism. For in the same press conference he declared Kashmir Pandits to be an integral part of Kashmiri identity.

Greater Kashmir, 27 July 2007

**Opinion: Kashmiris will have to do it themselves (MF Rehmani)**

Since 1990, It is no unusual a practice to hold peace conferences on Jammu and Kashmir, every now and then in different metropolitan cities of the world, especially America, Europe and Pakistan to invite selected politicians and academicians to grace the occasion and to deliver some sermons on peace in Jammu and Kashmir. In the past 17 years of developments in Jammu and Kashmir a number of such conferences were organized by Kashmiri groups in USA, UK, Europe and Pakistan. India, although a party to the dispute of Kashmir did not allow any such exercise on her soil, because of its unwavering stand on the question of Kashmir's so called accession to India. Therefore, in the beginning Nepal at the behest of India did not permit American think tank Pugwash to convene Intra Kashmir dialogue in Katmandu. It took Pugwash enough of time to convince India about its peace intentions and then only, Nepal allowed Pugwash to host a Kashmir conference of both parts of Jammu and Kashmir on its soil.

Daily Excelsior, 27 July 2007

**Editorial: Say no to it**

It is unfortunate that yet another incident of a soldier killing an officer has occurred in the Army deployed in the State. This time the victim has been a Major. Only a few months ago a Lieutenant Colonel had been similarly eliminated. According to newspaper reports the latest occurrence is the sixth such case in the Army this year. It took place in the Gurez sector which ironically has been thrown upon to tourists only recently. The soldier is said to have locked his colleagues in a room declaring them hostages. He then shot Maj P Alexander. Why did he lose his mental equilibrium is not clear. Actually the reason does not seem to be much relevant: it can be one of those which are familiar like the denial of leave or domestic tensions or perceived unreasonable behaviour of the boss. What is of utmost concern is that there is a problem and it has to be decisively tackled. Looked from the angle of the Army's fabled discipline and hierarchical order it is a matter of gross rowdiness on the part of the soldier.

Daily Excelsior, 28 July 2007

**Peace welcome but eternal vigilance must: Antony**

Kaman Post, July 27: The Army should maintain its vigil and not lower its guard despite the continuing peace along the Line of Control LoC, Defence Minister A K Antony said today. On his maiden visit to this forward area, Mr Antony said, I am happy that the border is peaceful for the past three years and I hope it remains peaceful. However, peace does not mean there would be any lowering of the guard. On the one hand, I want peace to continue but on the other, I also want eternal vigilance to continue. He said I still want peace to prevail despite the occasional infiltration attempts from across the border. Antony refused to comment on the controversial issue of relocating or reconfiguring troops engaged in counter insurgency operations in the Kashmir valley.

Daily Times, 28 July 2007

**Kashmir Conference inaugurated in Washington**

Lahore: Congressman Joseph Pitts and Congresswoman Clarke inaugurated the seventh International Kashmir Peace Conference under the auspices of Kashmir American Council KAC Kashmir Center, Washington, and the Association of Humanitarian Lawyers at Capitol Hill, KAC said in a press statement on Friday. In his opening remarks, Congressman Pitts expressed hope that the Kashmir conflict would be resolved to the satisfaction of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, it said. Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai said that a durable solution to the Kashmir problem demanded flexibility, sacrifice and concessions not only from the people of Kashmir but from India and Pakistan as well.

Kashmir Times, 28 July 2007

**Editorial: Army's weakness within**

Three days ago an army jawan shot dead his Major near Baramulla, while a day later a CRPF personnel tried to commit suicide at Srinagar. Hardly a month has passed since a lady Captain and then a young jawan committed suicide in army barracks near Jammu. In fact, suicides and fragging have now become so common that one usually does not take note of these incidents unless there is a furore over it. Army authorities, however, are seriously concerned over the increasing incidence of such incidents. In the year 2006, leaving apart a few officers, like Capt Mehta and Lt Sushmita Chakravarty, more than 120 members of other ranks did commit suicide, while around a dozen officers, both

commissioned and junior commissioned, were killed by their subordinates following heated arguments, usually over sanction of leaves. Both are the symptoms of serious emotional disorder, however temporary, that provokes one to behave irrationally without the slightest of restraint.

Daily Excelsior, 28 July 2007

### **SC clears Mughal road project: CM**

Jammu, July 27: The apex court has vacated stay on construction of 89 km long Mughal road which will connect Poonch with Shopian in Kashmir. This important announcement was made by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while addressing a one day convention of Congress Party for Jammu Province at Abhinav Theatre this afternoon. A high powered committee, constituted by the Supreme Court, has submitted its report giving clearance to the project. On the basis of report, the Supreme Court has vacated the stay on construction of Mughal road project, which will connect Rajouri and Poonch districts directly to Kashmir, Mr Azad announced amidst cheers from leaders and delegates of the two border districts.

Greater Kashmir, 28 July 2007

### **Opinion: Revisiting the Partition (Dr GM Wani)**

History of partition is beginning to factor into the agendas of political leaders and academics in a big way. The politics surrounding LK Advanis visit to Pakistan and the issue of joint celebration of 1857 by both India and Pakistan are a case in point. There is so much of popular upsurge that one is prompted to revisit the partition and narrate it with candour. But before embarking on such a venture, it may be necessary to rescue the story of partition from the ideological idioms and clutches of political parties. Partition story needs to move beyond the commanding heights of secular and religious nationalism. By discarding the ideological baggage of political parties, one can begin to unravel the culpability of the great men of Indias colonial past. Doubtless political leaders like Nehru, Patel and Jinnah were anxious to protect their own versions of Nationalism. The question is: did they ever try to understand what these nationalisms might mean to people living on both sides of the border.

Daily Excelsior, 28 July 2007

### **Editorial: Weapons of death**

What is the most awesome about weapons employed by the militants to inflict death and destruction in the State is the figures of their collective impact. The total picture is just mind boggling. According to just released official statistics more than 10000 people have lost their lives in 15397 incidents of improvised explosive device IED and mine explosions between January 1990 and December 31, 2006. As many as 2009 Army personnel, 307 para military and 197 police men have been killed in these happenings. An overwhelming number of 21372 of them have been injured. Between 1991 and 1999 there was a steady increase in casualties every year because of these two remote controlled killers: 1096 in 1996, 1258 in 1997, 1613 in 1998 and 2075 in 1999. During last year they together accounted for 107 fatalities. Over 3800 blasts were triggered on the Jammu Baramulla national highway eliminating 2147 persons, 35 per cent of them members of the security forces

Daily Excelsior, 29 July 2007

**No slackness in security apparatus: Antony**

Srinagar, July 28: In the backdrop of demands for reducing troops in the State, Defence Minister A K Antony today said any slackness in the security apparatus could prove detrimental to the improving situation in the militancy hit State. Wrapping up a two day visit to the State, Antony said peace had by and large been established in Kashmir but at the same time further improvement is required. If we slacken our effort, it will be very bad or in fact very, very bad, he told reporters here. Things are improving but we have to ensure that it continues. While saying so, I will like to make a statement of fact that violence is also continuing and infiltration is also continuing occasionally..

The Tribune, 29 July 2007

**VHP wants Centre to act tough**

Jammu, July 28: The ultimatum of separatists and militants to migrant labourers to quit the Kashmir valley in seven days has sparked a strong reaction here with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad VHP asking the Centre and the state government to foil the diktat. The Hizbul Mujahedin and some separatist leaders have asked labourers from Bihar, UP, Orissa and other states to leave the valley in seven days. Migrant labourers have already started fleeing the Kashmir valley and bus loads of them have been reaching here since yesterday. The diktat has followed the rape and murder of a girl in the Langate area of the valley. These outfits have accused the migrant labourers of indulging in objectionable activities. The police has already booked four persons, including two locals, for involvement in the crime.

Daily Excelsior, 29 July 2007

**Revoke AFSPA, withdraw troops: Mufti to Centre**

Srinagar, July 28: Reiterating his demand of troops reduction and revocation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act AFSPA, Peoples Democratic Party PDP patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said a radical change of approach to consolidate the normalisation process would help to bring complete peace and stability in the State. Addressing the PDPs foundation day function here today, he said the continued political uncertainty and exploitative politics has crippled the State economically, socially and morally leading to a trail of tragedies and agonies. Unless we take some genuine steps to come out of the present mess and handle the problem with wisdom and tact, our future generations would only curse us, as it is they who will continue to pay the price for our follies, he said.

Greater Kashmir, 29 July 2007

**Opinion: Making RTCs meaningful (Sajad Bazaz)**

Target must not be internal peace, but resolution of the dispute. A few weeks back, Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh during his visit to Jammu appealed to all separatist groups to participate in the next round table conference RTC, which according to him has emerged as an effective platform for addressing all the concerns of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He urged the separatists to recognize the historic significance and the transparent sincerity of the roundtable process.. However, he emphasized that borders

cannot be changed but they can be made irrelevant.. Let GoI also understand this fact that the Round Table Conferences have failed to evolve a better understanding of the issues and problems that affect the lives of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 29 July 2007

**Inclusion of Kashmiris must to settle Kashmir: Attique**

Islamabad, July 28: The Prime Minister of Pakistan administered Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan while reiterating his support to the ongoing dialogue process between Pakistan and India has made it clear that Kashmiris participation in the talks process was essential to resolve the dispute amicably to the satisfaction of all the concerned parties. Khan made these remarks during a round table discussion on the concluding day of seventh International Kashmir Peace Conference held at the Capitol Hill in Washington. Besides offering job opportunities to professionals hailing from other side of ceasefire line, the Pak premier also offered to provide electricity and gas to Indian controlled part of Kashmir. This sharing of resources would be a grand confidence building measure, and will help in restoration of trust and confidence, he maintained.

Daily Excelsior, 30 July 2007

**6 killed, 20 injured in years 1st attack on tourists**

Srinagar, July 29: Half a dozen peoples, including 5 women, were killed and 20 injured when a mysterious blast occurred in a tourist bus from Gujarat on the main road outside the world famous Shalimar Garden here this afternoon. With Police describing it as a bomb blast and the shopkeepers insisting that it was an accidental crash of the vehicle's air conditioning AC system, there were absolutely no signs of panic among hundreds of tourists who were enjoying the Sunday outing and shuttling between different Mughal Gardens at the time of the explosion and thereafter. One militant and a soldier have meanwhile got killed in two separate incidents of violence in Kashmir valley today.

Kashmir Times, 30 July 2007

**Geelani re elected Tehreek e Hurriyat chairman**

Srinagar, July 29: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who was today re elected chairman of Tehreek e Hurriyat TeH for three years, alleged that a conspiracy has been hatched up to settle the non state subjects in Kashmir. Elections for the chairmans post were held at TeH office at Haiderpora. Geelani obtained 534 votes, while the other candidate for the post, Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai obtained 41 votes. A 20 member Majlis Shoura was also elected. Geelani founded TeH three years back and at that time he was unanimously elected the chairman. Later addressing the party workers, Geelani stated that he continues to stick to his stand that non state subjects with criminal back ground must leave Kashmir..

Greater Kashmir, 30 July 2007

**Anti-troops demos rock Pattan**

Varmul, July 29: At least six people were injured when police lobbed teargas canisters and resorted to aerial firing to disperse many hundred people who raised protests in Pattan Sunday against what they termed as a reign of terror unleashed by the troops. According to the protesters, soldiers of 29 Rashtriya Rifles cordoned off Mandyar Pattan

this morning and launched searches. Soldiers barged into our houses and beat us up without any provocation, the protesters said, adding, They ransacked our houses and harassed us for more than two hours..

Greater Kashmir, 30 July 2007

**Editorial: Time to introspect**

As a spontaneous reaction to the Handwara incident some quarters in the Valley started issuing edicts that could have far reaching consequences for the already battered Kashmiris. The reaction was neither measured nor well thought out. Apparently it was not a collective decision of any groupings or a party. Mercifully these quarters were quick to make amends thereby saving the situation for the Kashmiris. Let us hope that the enemies of Kashmir do not exploit the situation and drag the issue too far. Had not the police acted fast and unmasked the criminals involved in the heinous crime, the situation could have taken an ugly turn. As a corollary to the incident some quarters raised the issue of the non local labour force outnumbering the local one.

Daily Excelsior, 30 July 2007

**Editorial: Fill the vacuum**

It is unacceptable that the State Commission for Women should be virtually defunct. It has been headless since 2002 when Ms Girija Dhar resigned as the chairperson. It is supposed to have two part time members. Both the previous nominees, Prof Rita Jitendra and Ms Fareeda Munir, have finished their tenures long ago. As a result there is total vacuum. Some bureaucrats are trying to run the show. A report in this newspaper recently has pointed out that their word does not carry weight. Very rightly the judiciary does not take cognizance of what they say.

The Tribune, 30 July 2007

**Parties laud SC decision on Mughal Road**

Srinagar, July 29: The Supreme Court judgement paving the way for the construction of the Mughal Road connecting the Kashmir valley with Rajouri and Poonch districts of the Jammu region has been welcomed by leaders of different political parties in the state. Those who have hailed the decision are leaders of the Congress, the PDP, the CPM and the opposition National Conference. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, reacting to the judgment that came on Friday, said it was a welcome verdict that would give a major push to the governments efforts in completing the road linking the two provinces of Kashmir and Jammu.

Daily Excelsior, 31 July 2007

**LeT chief condemns Valley blasts**

Srinagar, July 30: Lashkar e Toiba chief Qari Abdul Wahid Kashmiri has described the recent grenade blasts in Srinagar and Pahalgam as inhuman and criminal acts and said that killing an innocent, Muslim or non Muslim, was strongly forbidden in Islam. In a statement today, Lashkar Chief condemned the recent grenade attacks on pilgrims and tourists and claimed that these could never be the handiwork of a warrior of Islam. He said that the Jihad in Kashmir was strictly in accordance with tenets and regulations of the religion of Islam which had strongly forbidden killing of innocent civilians, be they

Muslims or non Muslims. He said that such activities could be the handiwork of agencies to defame the militants. He said that the militants Jihad was strictly against the Indian armed forces and it would continue under any circumstances.

Daily Excelsior, 31 July 2007

**After security, ultras pose risk of spreading diseases**

Jammu, July 30: Authorities in high security Kot Bhalwal and other jails across the State were faced with a unique problem. Besides keeping a hawk's eye on activities of dreaded militants lodged in the Prisons, who had gone on a rampage in Kot Bhalwal jail in December last year before being set right, the authorities were forced to incur funds worth several lakhs on the militants including Afghans and Pakistanis, who were suffering with diseases like cancer, psychiatric and diabetes. According to official sources, an Afghani, Ghulam Mohd son of Mohd Hashim, a resident of Kabul, Afghanistan, presently detained in Kot Bhalwal jail under Public Safety Act, has developed deadly cancer. A minimum amount of Rs 30,000 is being spent on his treatment every week including radio therapy and drugs etc, they said.

Greater Kashmir, 31 July 2007

**Opinion: Resolving the Dispute (Prof. NA Shawl)**

One of the challenging propositions in Kashmir is how peace can be won and the aspirations of the people of the state be realised is of utmost importance in any process of conflict resolution. And it would not be out of place to emphasise that a preconceived mindset can be a major obstacle and a deterrent in any forward movement. A process, which does not recognise the multidimensional factors operative on the ground, can be a time wasting exercise. The Round Table Working Group on Kashmir, London. The search for innovative models and fresh options brought me in contact with David Ervine at a London conference where he was on a panel discussing explorative ways of responding to the 07 07 terrorist events in London and whether to engage with those involved in terrorist activities. From this encounter he was invited to the Justice Foundations second international peace conference where he shared his experience and knowledge about the Irish peace process..

Kashmir Times, 31 July 2007

**Opinion: Troops withdrawal, eyes or no eyes (Nousheen FA)**

Ultimately Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his PDP proved its mettle and exhibited that in the Congress dominated central political arena PDP leadership possesses more mass than Azad and his congress loyalists. Alas! Ghulam Nabi Azad and his selected courtiers like Abdul Gani Vakil despite making much noise in rejecting PDPs demand for troops cut were knocked out by its party leadership, made to eat a humble pie and bite the dust. Notwithstanding categorical rejection by the Congress Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir with regard to troops reduction voiced by PDP, central leadership from the day first did not side with Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad who challenged the PDP leadership to surrender security cover if they insisted the situation was ripe for troops reduction..

The Tribune, 31 July 2007

**Editorial: Killings at Shalimar**

Defence Minister A K Antony declared in Srinagar on Saturday that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was fast improving. The next day terrorists proved him wrong by triggering a bomb blast in a tourist bus near Shalimar Gardens on the banks of Dal Lake, killing six people and injuring many. It is surprising how the minister made this sweeping statement when already an exodus of non Kashmiri workers from the valley is on following a threat issued by the Hizbul Mujahideen. The apparent provocation for the terrorist outfits ire against the migrant workers is the rape and murder of a class VIII student. Terrorists suspect the non Kashmiris of being police informers.