

Daily Excelsior, 1 June 2006

Grenade attack on two tourist buses (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, May 31: About three dozen tourists from West Bengal sustained injuries when unidentified terrorists carried out grenade attacks on two tourist buses in Dalgate area in this capital city today. This third successive attack on domestic tourists in the last 10 days has indeed generated considerable unrest among tourists, though none of the bookings had been canceled immediately. With hundreds of buses and light motor vehicles full of tourists reaching here daily---in addition to 10 Delhi-Srinagar flights---over 50,000 tourists are believed to be present in Kashmir valley...

Daily Excelsior, 1 June 2006

5 more bodies recovered from Wullar, toll 23 (Sarwar Kashani)

Handwara/Watlab, May 31: Five more bodies were recovered from the harsh waters of Wullar today taking toll of the dead in boat capsizing tragedy, which occurred on Monday, to 22. Following the recovery of five more bodies, violent protests were witnessed in Watlab and surrounding area and people got berserk attempting to ransack and set ablaze Navy establishments in the Wullar Lake. In the resultant clash between forces and public, two civilians were killed and a Navy personnel was injured as troopers had to use force to quell the angry protestors...

Daily Excelsior, 1 June 2006

LeT commander, civilian killed

Jammu, May 31: A 'district commander' of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was gunned down by Army and police in an encounter in Surankote tehsil of Poonch district this morning while a civilian was killed by the militants by slitting his throat in Chatru area of Doda district last night. Official sources said a joint team of 16 Rashtriya Rifles, Surankote police and Special Operations Group (SOG) was attacked by two militants at Peer Topa in upper reaches of Mastan Dhara in Surankote tehsil...

Daily Excelsior, 1 June 2006

Editorial: Stop them

In the first four months this year 141 persons including a number of security personnel have been killed in the State in 466 incidents of terrorist violence. This does not represent much change in the wicked trend compared to the last year when 746 persons had lost their lives in 1990 similar instances. The post-April 2006 phase has actually been stained with more blood. Following the massacre of 13 persons at Lalon Gala Dhok under the Basantgarh police station in Udampur district the terrorists had gunned down 19 persons in Kulhand village of Doda district in the beginning of May. The two mass murders were undoubtedly tinged with communal overtones...

Greater Kashmir, 1 June 2006

Navy regrets, offers relief

Srinagar: The Indian Navy deeply regrets the incident involving drowning of one teacher and 22 schoolchildren in Wular Lake on Tuesday evening, its spokesman said Wednesday. A detachment of Naval Marine Commandos is deployed at Wular Lake to assist the Army in counter-insurgency operations in the Valley. "Preliminary investigations indicate that a group of teachers and school children, of a private primary school at Handwara, approached the sailors on duty at the post and requested for a boat ride in a BAUT (Boat Assault)," the spokesman said in a statement...

Greater Kashmir, 1 June 2006

Anger and grief in Handwara (Shabir Ibn Yousuf / Naseer Ganai / Ghulam Muhammad)

Watlab/Handwara, May 31: People here are out on streets shouting slogans against troops blaming them for killing of two students and then dubbing them as militants. The residents said the youth were among hundreds of other people who were protesting against the alleged inaction of Navy personnel to save school children drowned in Wullar. Residents at Watlab told Greater Kashmir early in the morning when they rushed to Wullar to pull out remaining bodies of students, Navy didn't allow them and resorted to firing...

Daily Excelsior, 2 June 2006

Terror deals blow to tourism, cancellations begin (Sarwar Kashani)

Srinagar, June 1: As the Valley's biggest economic venture and back bone of its prosperity - the tourism sector, was limping to regain its lost glory, unscrupulous elements armed with explosives time and again discharged their lewd endeavours stabbing in the stomach of Kashmiris and hitting them on their back. The attack on tourists on

Wednesday, which was a third in row since past week, has evoked widespread condemnations and left a big mark of apprehensions on the hopes of people associated with the tourism trade as officials confirmed that tourists have begun to cancel their trips to Kashmir...

Daily Excelsior, 2 June 2006

Advani cautions Govt against going soft on terrorism

New Delhi, June 1: Leader of opposition L K Advani today condemned the attack attempt on the RSS headquarters in Nagpur as he cautioned the Government against any "soft" approach towards terrorism. The senior BJP leader also criticised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his remarks in Srinagar about "zero tolerance" towards Human Rights Violations, saying the phrase should have instead been used against anti-national forces. "The phraseology zero tolerance seems addressed not to the enemy of the country but to those who protect the country," Advani, who emphasised the need for greater intelligence on ISI modules in the country, said...

Daily Excelsior, 2 June 2006

Editorial: Rise as one

Let it not be the lament of tourism authorities alone. They are not quite sure about the response of thousands of tourists after the twin grenade attacks by militants on a section of them at the Dal Gate on Wednesday. The visitors from other states of the country had ignored similar attempts on two vehicles a few days ago. In fact, a large number of them kept turning up even after the terrorist strikes on May 21 and 25. In the second incident four teenagers from Gujarat had the lives snuffed out of them. It was too moving a tragedy. Yet, there was no cancellation of advance bookings. Instead, hundreds of fresh arrivals were being reported every day...

Greater Kashmir, 2 June 2006

3 Militants among 4 killed

Srinagar, June 1: Three militants and a released militant were killed in separate incidents across the Valley since Wednesday evening. Police said two militants were killed in a gunfight with troops and police at Karapora, Pakherpora, Charar-e Sharif area in Budgam district on Thursday. The encounter that started on Wednesday evening when troops launched a search operation in the area ended on Thursday morning. Jaish-e-Muhammad spokesman, identifying the deceased militants as Firdous Ahmad of Bahawalpur Pakistan and Ashiq Hussain alias Mudassir of Pakharpura, claimed that several soldiers were killed in the encounter and many wounded, local news agency CNS said....

Greater Kashmir, 2 June 2006

SMC finds no DoB record of Yasmeena

Srinagar, June 1: Suspense around the birth record of Yasmeena, the minor victim of sexual exploitation, grew thicker Thursday as Srinagar Municipal Corporation officials failed to trace her date of birth and conveyed the same in writing to the CBI team. Informed sources disclosed that a three-member team visited the SMC's Registrar Births and Deaths (RB&D) seeking the 'actual record' but the official regretted that he could not locate girl's name anywhere in the given reference of December 20, 1990...

Daily Excelsior, 3 June 2006

Stability depends on CMP implementation: Mufti

Jammu, June 2: Although he does not foresee any immediate threat to the Government headed by Ghulam Nabi Azad, patron of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and former Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today, however, observed that stability of Congress-PDP coalition depends on implementation of Common Minimum Programme (CMP). In an obvious reference towards reservation shown by some Congress leaders on holding unconditional dialogue with militants, Mufti Sayeed reminded the coalition partner that the present Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, who was then leader of opposition, was instrumental in formulating the CMP..

Daily Excelsior, 3 June 2006

Editorial: Valid protest

It is seldom that the legislators of the Jammu region cut across party lines to take up a common cause. More often than not they are required to adhere to their organisation's discipline. If one looks around one will find that even the issue of regional discrimination is addressed differently. The proposed solutions vary from the creation of a separate state of Jammu to the establishment of a regional council within the administrative and geographical contours of the State. The wider issue that is involved is of political empowerment of the people at grassroots level.

The well-intentioned ideologues of maintaining a united State too have been concerned about the matter...

Greater Kashmir, 3 June 2006

DM protests delay in investigation

Srinagar, June 2: Activists of Dukhtaran-e-Millat marched here on Friday to protest against 'inordinate delay' in investigation into the sexual exploitation of Kashmiri girls. Aasiya Andrabi, chief of the DM, led the burqa-clad women at Regal Chowk, chanting "Give severe punishment to those involved in flesh trade." Aasiya said the accused have spend crores of rupees to save their skin and that the CBI was misleading court by hiding facts. "Shame for CBI for shielding sexual exploiters. Leave our land or be ready for dire consequences...

Greater Kashmir, 3 June 2006

Court says sex probe going slow (Naseer A Ganai)

Srinagar, June 2: Taking note of 'practical difficulties' of CBI in pursuing sexual exploitation case, the High Court on Friday directed the agency director to present in person before the Court on June 6. The Division Bench comprising Justice Hakeem Imtiyaz Hussain and Justice Bashir A Kirmani passed orders in the 'in camera trial' of the case. "We have perused the case dairy produced by the investigating officer of CBI and find the investigation is not going at the desired speed. Investigating officer CBI has expressed certain practical difficulties. And in view of submissions made, the stage of investigation and the new materials which have emerged, we feel it would be appropriate to hear from Director of the CBI about proposed course of future investigation," the Court observed...

Daily Excelsior, 4 June 2006

Kashmir cop arrested in sex racket

Srinagar : The CBI today arrested a senior Jammu and Kashmir Police official in connection with the sex racket in the state, taking the total number of persons nabbed for the scandal to eight, agency sources said. Deputy Superintendent of Police Ashraf Mir, one of 11 persons accused by teenager Yasmeena of raping her, was arrested by CBI soon after he was identified by the girl during two Test Identification Parades (TIPs) here, the sources said. The 15-year-old girl also gave details of the two instances when Mir allegedly raped her, they said...

Daily Excelsior, 4 June 2006

Only few hundred take part in Khir Bhawani festival

Tulmulla, The recent wave of attacks on visitors in Kashmir has dealt a serious blow not only to the tourism industry, but to the religious activities as well. A few hundred Kashmiri Pandits visited the sacred Khir Bhawani temple at Tulmulla in Ganderbal area of Srinagar district today to take part in the annual festival as compared to more than 50,000 devotees last year and one lakh in 2004. An official spokesman said 4000 pilgrims had reported in the festival so far and many more were expected....

Daily Excelsior, 4 June 2006

Combined arms warfare Vs terrorism - Vinod VEDI

The series of killings by terrorists before and during the roundtable conference called by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Jammu and Kashmir and the military exercises conducted by the Indian armed forces to hone combined operations techniques and the concept of "cold start" have together once again drawn attention to the efficacy of conventional warfare when confronted by the asymmetrical method of guerrilla warfare which led to the launch of Operation Parakram, the year-long eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with Pakistan after the terrorist attack on Parliament...

Greater Kashmir, 4 June 2006

Azad discusses formation of pm's working groups

Srinagar, June 3: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday briefed UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Union Home Minister Shiv Raj Patil about the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir . In his meetings with the central leadership, including National Security Advisor MK Narayanan, the chief minister also discussed modalities about the setting up of working groups proposed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at second Round Table Conference...

Greater Kashmir, 4 June 2006

Hizb commander, civilian killed in JK

Srinagar, June 3: Police and troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) today killed Hizb tehsil commander at Bhaderwah

tehsil of district Doda. An Army source and a civilian were killed in two other incidents since yesterday. According to sources, troops on a specific information regarding the presence of a group of heavily armed militants launched an operation in village Thanalla, about 24 kilometers from here last night...

Daily Excelsior, 5 June 2006

Arrest warrant against BSF DIG, advocate in sex scandal

New Delhi: A Srinagar court today issued arrest warrants against former Border Security Force Deputy Inspector General (DIG) K S Padhi and Jammu-based advocate Anil Sethi, son of retired judge and former Chairman of the State Accountability Commission R P Sethi, in the sensational Kashmir sex scandal case. Sources in the Central Bureau of Investigation, which is probing the matter, said here that the warrant was issued by the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Srinagar. The two accused have been evading arrest...

Daily Excelsior, 5 June 2006

Amid tears, KPs, Muslims meet at Khirbhawani (Sarwar Kashani)

Tulmulla (Ganderbal), June 4: It was a psychological, social and communal reunion of the "cultural brotherhood" separated by murky politics. Emotional chords struck and sentiments melt down in the form of tears, rolling from the eyes dreaming about the lost motherland. They were meeting after a whopping gap of time and grievances too. However, in the premises of Mata Khir Bhawani temple they forgot the mutual grievances and everything but to hug each other. It was the reunion of Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits, separated by politics and reunited today by a religious ceremony at Khir Bhawani temple in Tullmulla Ganderbal...

Daily Excelsior, 5 June 2006

Editorial: Tension across LoC

It's difficult but life must go on. This old adage has come true in the case of "Azad" Kashmir as the occupied territory across the Line of Control is locally known. Ravaged by unprecedented earthquake in October last year the area is now gearing up for a keen electoral tussle. Elections for the 41-seat "Azad" Kashmir Legislative Assembly have been fixed for July 11. About 2.4 million voters will participate in it. Off and on we have taken note of developments in this regard in these columns...

Greater Kashmir, 5 June 2006

Sexual abuse unites divided Kashmiris (Arif Shafi Wani)

Srinagar, June 4: In the aftermath of recently unearthed sex-scandal in which many girls were allegedly exploited sexually by some politicians, bureaucrats and police officers, people from different walks of society have joined hands and formed an apolitical forum to fight the social evils. "Forum Against Social Evils (FASE)" was formed at a seminar organized by Syeda Aasiya Andrabi here on Sunday which was attended by many religious scholars, academicians, journalists and others.

Greater Kashmir, 5 June 2006

SPO, 2 TA men sexually assault Rajouri teenager (Arif Haleem)

Jammu, June 4: In a gruesome act, trio in uniform who are supposed to protect the honour of civilians allegedly raped a teenager at gunpoint for three consecutive days sending shockwaves among the inhabitants of village Bhatian of Thanamandi. Notwithstanding the May 25th directive of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to security forces in JK to respect the human rights of citizens, three men in uniform on May 27th laid a trap and abducted the teenager girl of Dilwazir, who was in Srinagar in connection with some work, and allegedly raped her for three days...

Daily Excelsior, 6 June 2006

Ex-Minister's kin among 6 Hizb militants held (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, Jun 5: In a major achievement, Police and Army have jointly busted a major militant network with the arrest of six militants of Hizbul Mujahideen, including the nephew of senior PDP leader and former Minister of State for Health Abdul Gaffar Sofi, in south Kashmir. This module of young, indoctrinated militants had conducted an attack on senior National Conference leader, Ali Mohammad Nayak, in Tral and, among other operations, planned to eliminate SSP Syed Ashiq Hussain Bukhari in an IED blast...

Daily Excelsior, 6 June 2006

Autonomy not to weaken J&K's relations with India: Omar

Jammu, June 5: Buoyed by the statement of Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh regarding formation of working groups to discuss greater autonomy for the State, National Conference president Omar Abdullah today stated that political agenda of his party was not to weaken relations between Jammu and Kashmir and India. Omar Abdullah was addressing a function which was organised by Vijay Kumar Lochan, who joined National Conference along with his supporters here today...

Greater Kashmir, 6 June 2006

Anil Sethi, BSF DIG named in sex abuse (Zulfikar Majid)

Srinagar, June 5: Probe into sexual abuse scandal took a new turn Monday when Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar issued non-bailable warrants against a former Additional Advocate General of the state and a DIG of paramilitary BSF for their alleged involvement in the scandal. The warrants were issued to advocate Anil Sethi, son of former chairman of State Accountability Commission Justice (Retd) R P Sethi and BSF DIG K S Padhi after they failed to appear before the CBI for identification parade in front of 15-year-old victim Yasmeena. The two accused have been evading arrest..

Greater Kashmir, 6 June 2006

Azad, Mufti set to annoy colleagues (Riyaz Masroor)

Srinagar, June 5: Strategists in the boardrooms of Congress and PDP are sweating their eyebrows to make choices for the upcoming expansion in Ghulam Nabi Azad's sleek cabinet. The long overdue expansion is said to be a crucial stage for key allies in the five-party coalition government, hence the looming indecision. A 'surgical overhaul' in the state's ministerial structure is learnt to be round the corner and the Chief Minister is understood to have received the all-important 'green signal' from Congress President Sonia Gandhi. However the reshuffle is less likely before June 15, date for Rajya Sabha election to which the filing of nominations closed Monday evening...

Greater Kashmir, 6 June 2006

Sex Trafficking in J&K - Dr. Mirza Ashraf Beg

...The phenomenon of obnoxious sex trafficking in Kashmir seems to have a recent history. Some people argue that it was introduced in the state through the female labor force who come from outside the state and serve mostly to the sex starved security forces living away from their homes. The dens so created are said to have been operating under the umbrella of protection of these agencies. Armed forces in the state were involved in sexual crimes at many places such as Kunan Khoshpora etc; in the recent past...

Greater Kashmir, 6 June 2006

Demilitarization is a safe way out - I - A Patigaroo

With the change in global scenario, following the attack on World Trade Centre, on September 11th, 2001, there has been a positive transformation, in the attitude of world community towards resolution of all burning issues of the world, including the vexed Kashmir problem. USA, which had a bitter experience, of militancy during this attack, realized the magnitude of this problem, which prevails in many parts of the world, including Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir and Iraq. They have identified the places, which are very sensitive from security point of view that could flare up wars on a higher scale in future. One such area naming Kashmir, where slight provocation or miscalculation could result in a nuclear war between and Pakistan...

Daily Excelsior, 7 June 2006

8 infiltrating militants killed in Machhil

Srinagar, June 6: While Police and security forces tonight eliminated a top-wanted "District Commander" of Hizbul Mujahideen in Bijbehara area of Anantnag district, troops have intercepted a thick group of infiltrating militants and killed at least 8 of them near LoC in Machhil sector of Kupwara district. Official sources told the EXCELSIOR that working over a specific information, District Police Anantnag, District Police Kulgam and troops of Sector-1 Rashtriya Rifles launched a cordon-and-search operation at Tulkhan hamlet in Bijbehara area of Anantnag district late this evening...

Daily Excelsior, 7 June 2006

Azad to finalise working group members

Srinagar, June 6: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad returned here after a three-day visit to New Delhi where he had meetings with Union Ministers of Rural Development, Tourism and Home departments and discussed various matters pertaining to these Ministries. Mr. Azad had three rounds of meetings with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan

Singh and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi with regard to setting up of five working groups announced by Prime Minister in two day Round Table Conference held at Srinagar on May 24 and 25...

Greater Kashmir, 7 June 2006

DIG BSF in Court

Srinagar: The Deputy Inspector General of BSF, KS Padhi against whom arrest warrant has been issued and whose bail application was rejected by Supreme Court on Monday, was present in the court premises Tuesday...

Greater Kashmir, 7 June 2006

CBI Director assures fair probe in sex abuse (Naseer A Ganai)

Srinagar, June 6: The CBI Director, Vijay Shanker on Tuesday assured "fair, speedy and effective investigation" into the sexual abuse case. "The Director CBI who was present in person informed about the future course of action and assured fair, speedy and effective investigation," said the Division Bench of High Court comprising Justice Hakeem Imtiyaz Hussain and Justice Bashir Ahmad Kirmani in an order issued after in-camera hearing of the case...

Greater Kashmir, 7 June 2006

Editorial: No gimmicks please

The Peoples Democratic Party leader Mehbooba Mufti Monday caused a stir with her official statement against the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board or SASB accusing the latter of making attempts at preventing the locals of Pahalgam and Kangan from offering services to the pilgrims besides erecting concrete structures on the two Yatra routes. But for the immediate clarification by a spokesman of SASB a great deal of consternation among different sections of the society was saved. The PDP Chief before issuing the hot statement should have tried to verify facts. The impulsive and irresponsible statement has instead of helping her party to redeem its image has done a damage...

Greater Kashmir, 7 June 2006

Demilitarization is a safe way out - II - Nisar A Patigaroo

Young frontline mainstream leaders like Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti are in favour of an early settlement of longstanding Kashmir, advocating full autonomy and self rule respectively. Majority of Kashmiris are in favour of demilitarization, who feel that this would prove to be panacea for their present sufferings which would allow them to live in peace and tranquility, after a period of 17 years of turmoil and mental trauma. The people would get rid of frequent grenade and bomb attacks, which are thrown at security forces, but unfortunately kill their kith and kin, as a result of collateral damage...

Daily Excelsior, 8 June 2006

J&K situation deteriorating day-by-day: Naidu

Jammu, June 7: BJP's week long 'Save-Doda, Save-Nation' campaign was launched here today by former party president M Venkaiah Naidu, who offered himself for court arrest outside Civil Secretariat along with about 3,000 party leaders and workers from Rajasthan, Kerala and Akhnoor in Jammu. Carrying party flags and shouting slogans against State and Centre Government and militants, the "protesters" courted arrest after marching in the City...

Daily Excelsior, 8 June 2006

CBI gets 4-day remand for BSF DIG's detention

Srinagar, June 7: Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) today took a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Border Security Force (BSF), K C Padhi, in its custody and obtained a remand of four days' detention for his identification parade before a purportedly minor girl, Yasmeeena. Calling herself as a victim of sexploitation, allegedly operated and enjoyed by influential politicians and Government officials, Yasmeeena had earlier stated to Police that a number of Police and armed forces officials, including Padhi, had committed on her sexual abuse...

Daily Excelsior, 8 June 2006

Editorial: Lurking threat

A spate of incidents during the last 24 hours shows the multi-dimensional threat of terror lurking across the State. There has been a serious infiltration attempt on the Line of Control in Kupwara's Machhil sector. Huge quantity of arms and ammunition has been captured in Gurez --- again along the LoC. Another big seizure has been made in Kishtwar on this side of the Pir Panjal. The militants have also made their presence felt in the politically-important

Bijbehara area of Anantnag district These events have taken place close on the heels of discovery of a militant module in the Valley leading to the arrest of about 20 suspects, some of them belonging to well-off families. What is the conclusion one can draw from these occurrences? ...

Greater Kashmir, 8 June 2006

Top hizb commander killed

Srinagar, June 7: Police on Wednesday said troops killed a divisional commander and chief coordinator of Hizbul Mujahideen Mushtaq Ahmad Wani alias commander Khalid in an encounter at Tulkhan village of southern Islamabad district on Tuesday night. The Hizb has however said Mushtaq was arrested and then done to death in a fake gunbattle. Police said Mushtaq, who had been active for the past 15 years, was killed when he opened fire on a joint patrol party of troops and police at Tulkhan area on Tuesday night. "In retaliatory fire, Mushtaq was killed," the police said...

Greater Kashmir, 8 June 2006

Geelani arrested in Poonch (SK Afnabi)

Poonch/Srinagar, June 7: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and his faction of Hurriyat Conference was arrested here on Wednesday and shifted to Jammu Central Jail. Police arrested Geelani from a local hotel where he was staying in the morning. He was presented in District Additional Court Poonch where from he was shifted to Jammu. According to police, Geelani, 76, has been detained under section 153 A, 153 B, 120 B in pursuance of three cases (FIR-82/01, FIR 43/01 and FIR No 145/01) lodged in 2001, when he visited Poonch. The court had then issued warrant against Geelani under sector 512 RPC...

Greater Kashmir, 8 June 2006

Editorial: Stakes of CBI

The unearthing of organized sexual exploitation of some innocent and minor girls by some politicians, bureaucrats, top cops and others by media has by and large left Kashmir society shell-shocked. It sent shockwaves all over the state. It has created a worrisome situation for all parents. The impact of the awesome and horrifying stories that have been finding their way into newspapers and television channels has been so heavy that many parents are in a fix whether to allow their children to go even to schools or latch their doors for them and not to allow them move even out of their homes. The situation for Kashmiri girls is becoming same horrifying, when they were not allowed to wash their faces for days together to save them from lascivious eyes of alien soldiers that ruled the state for more than four centuries...

Daily Excelsior, 9 June 2006

Hizb module busted in Kashmir, 12 arrested

Jammu : Police have arrested 12 people, including a relative of a former minister, and busted a group tasked by the Hizbul Mujahideen to carry out grenade attacks in the Kashmir Valley, a police officer said here today. "We have so far arrested 12 people, mostly students, businessmen and auto drivers, who do not have any militant track record in the Kashmir Valley, where they were involved in scores of grenade blasts on the direction of the Hizb," Deputy Inspector General (south Kashmir) Himant Lohia told PTI...

Daily Excelsior, 9 June 2006

Shanta Kumar, hundreds of BJP activist court arrest

Jammu: Former Himachal Chief Minister Shanta Kumar was among 600 BJP activists who courted arrest here today as part of the party's 'Save Doda Campaign'. A march led by Kumar was taken out from the parade ground to mark the launch of the 'Save Doda, Save Nation' satyagrah. The processionists marched through the city roads shouting slogans against the Congress, its president Sonia Gandhi, state Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and the UPA government before converging at Shalimar Chowk where they courted arrest, police said...

Daily Excelsior, 9 June 2006

Azad initiates exercise to set up working groups

Jammu, June 8: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today initiated an exercise to set up five working groups on Jammu and Kashmir as announced by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at the end of two days Round Table Conference in Srinagar on May 25. Mr Azad met former Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti and held detailed discussions with them on formation of working groups...

Greater Kashmir, 9 June 2006

Geelani lodged in Jammu jail (Arif Haleem)

Jammu, June 8: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and his faction of Hurriyat Conference Thursday came down heavily on New Delhi for sabotaging "ongoing freedom struggle" in Kashmir. The detained, ailing 76-year old leader dismissed the notion that he was against talks with India. "I am willing for talks but for that New Delhi has to accept the Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory," Geelani told reporters outside the district jail. Geelani said, "We are not against the dialogue process, but at the same time we won't become part of a futile exercise." ...

Greater Kashmir, 9 June 2006

Ideologies whatever, this is what concerns us all - Syed Aasiyeh Andrabi

"Help one another in righteousness and piety and do not help one another in sin and aggression; take shelter in Allah, for verily Allah is severe in punishment" (5:2) Enough has been said and written about sexually exploited innocent girls. It is time now we do some thing practical for society in general and for these girls in particular, FASE is a first step in this direction. We can join it and convert it into a comprehensive social reformative movement. Recently unearthed sex scandal has shattered every Kashmiri. We remember when last year we started campaign against this menace of prostitution, some of our traditional critics said we are unnecessarily giving publicity to this menace. If it exists, it exists only at micro level, so there is no need to make mountain out of molehill. We at that time too clarified that the prostitution in Kashmir is flourishing very rapidly...

Greater Kashmir, 10 June 2006

Azad, Omar discuss formation of working groups

Srinagar, June 9: Hectic consultations started by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad are on to chalk out the comprehensive agenda of five working groups announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh after conclusion of second roundtable conference held at Srinagar May 24/25. In this regard, Omar Abdullah, president National Conference held a meeting with Azad here on Friday. According to an official spokesman, both the leaders discussed names of various personalities proposed for the nomination as members of five prestigious working groups...

Greater Kashmir, 10 June 2006

Geelani being released today (SK Ajnabi)

Poonch, June 9: Sessions Court Poonch Friday granted bail to chairman Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Syed Ali Shah Geelani on a personal bond of Rs 50,000. The ailing 77-year-old leader would be released on Saturday. Sessions Judge Poonch AK Shan granted bail to Geelani who was arrested by the Poonch Police on Wednesday morning. Two local advocates Taj Hussian Shah and Mehinder Payasa filed bail application on behalf of the separatist leader whereas Qazi Irshad Ahmad son of Abdul Lateef of Hari Marote Surankote gave personal guarantee...

Greater Kashmir, 10 June 2006

Soldier dead, 2 wounded in B'pora fight

Srinagar, June 9: A soldier of 2 Grenadiers was killed and two others injured in an encounter with militants in jungles of Bandipora in north Kashmir's Varmul district on Friday morning. Reports said three soldiers were injured in the three-hour gunfight at Chapra jungles in Aragam. They were airlifted to Badamibagh hospital here where one injured soldier succumbed. Army has launched a combing operation in the jungles. Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad militant outfits have jointly claimed responsibility for the attack, a local news agency CNS said...

Greater Kashmir, 10 June 2006

Editorial: Save the Peace Process

Press reports about the cancellation of Prime Minister's forthcoming goodwill visit to Pakistan seem to give out a very ominous signal. While as on one hand several confidence building measures are being announced and implemented, on the other most of the political issues are getting stalled. There has been no agreement on Siachin glacier. The Sir Creek issue has got prolonged due to a fresh survey to be conducted next winter. The Baghliar problem will get a decision in December only. As regards Kashmir, there has been absolutely no movement forward. The goodwill and bonhomie seems to be of cosmetic nature only. The basic mistrust continues to persist...

Daily Excelsior, 10 June 2006

Anil Sethi, lady cop arrested; SP under interrogation

Srinagar, June 9: Central Bureau of Investigation, which has been investigating the infamous "immoral trafficking and sexual abuse scandal" allegedly involving some influential politicians and Police officials, has finally arrested the former Additional Advocate General Anil Sethi even as an officer of the rank of SSP has been detained for questioning. Meanwhile, a Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, monitoring the CBI investigation, has directed CBI to constitute two special teams to investigate the involvement of the owners and staff of some hotels and guesthouses...

Daily Excelsior, 10 June 2006

Shanta for Mahabharat to resolve Kashmir

Jammu, June 9: While assailing Pakistan for continuing its support to terrorism, former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Shanta Kumar today said that instead of holding dialogue with Pakistan, the country should be ready for a Mahabharat to resolve Kashmir issue once for all. Addressing a public rally at Parade Ground here, prior to leading hundreds of his Party men to court arrest, in connection with Party's "Save-Doda, Save-Nation" campaign, the BJP leader said terrorism has crossed all limits now so there was no alternative except Mahabharat (war)...

Daily Excelsior, 11 June 2006

Massive protests against desecration of mosque in Kupwara (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, June 10: Desecration of a mosque allegedly by troops at Zurhama village today evoked massive protests in Kupwara district as a mob turned violent and Army opened fire, killing a 25-year-old civilian. Twenty-five persons, including 10 Police and Army personnel, sustained injuries in the resultant clashes in which DC and SP of Kupwara had a narrow escape but their guards were wounded and vehicles damaged...

Daily Excelsior, 11 June 2006

Bangaru, others court arrest on Day Four

Jammu, June 10: About 1000 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), activists including a sizeable number of women workers drawn from Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra States along with BJP's Samba district led by Party's former national president, Bangaru Laxman today courted arrest on the fourth day of Satyagraha at Indira Chowk launched by it in connection with 'Save-Doda, Save-Nation' Andolan...

Daily Excelsior, 11 June 2006

Army to monitor security during yatra: Lt Gen Sapru (Gopal Sharma)

Jammu, June 10: General Officer Commanding, 16 Corps Lt Gen T K Sapru has said that Army will monitor the security on the Jammu- Srinagar National Highway and assist the civil administration for the smooth and safe conduct of Shri Amarnath yatra commencing tomorrow. Lt Gen Sapru, who recently took over the charge of this important Corps of the Northern Army Command had an informal chat with the media-persons at the Corps headquarters today. While talking to the Excelsior on Army's preparedness in view of Shri Amarnathji Yatra, the GOC said, " Army has no direct role in the conduct of Shri Amarnath Yatra as such but will be assisting the civil administration, police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) during yatra."...

Daily Excelsior, 11 June 2006

CBI mum over Anil Sethi's 'arrest'

Srinagar, June 10: CBI has maintained total silence with regard to the reported arrest of the former additional Advocate General Anil Sethi. A senior CBI official called this newspaper and insisted that the Jammu-based advocate had not been arrested as yet. When asked would CBI officially deny the arrest, he advised to contact another CBI official in Srinagar...

Greater Kashmir, 11 June 2006

Geelani assaulted (Arif Haleem)

Jammu, June 10: After failing to flame up communal hatred in Jammu, the activists of fundamentalist Hindu party Shiv Sena Saturday made chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Geelani the target of its rage. Reminiscent of the humiliating harassment of late pro-freedom leader Abdul Gani Lone by a local Shiv Sena leader some years ago, the activists of the fundamentalist party Saturday heckled and abused Syed Ali Shah Geelani when he was addressing reporters in Jammu after his release from Jammu district jail after a day long detention...

Greater Kashmir, 11 June 2006

The Way Ahead - Farid Ahmad

...The Conference that was meant for all parties to come forward and express their views to resolve the Kashmir issue, turned out to be a one sided affair of the mainstream parties in attendance. These Round Table Conferences provide a perfect forum for all recognized parties representing the people of the state to come forward and table the views of the people they represent and not the views propagated by some parties across the border having vested interests and do not want the return of normalcy, peace and prosperity in the state. It had everything positive about it but for lack of participation by parties who feel that they are sole representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir...

Greater Kashmir, 12 June 2006

Curfew in Kupwara (Shabir Ibn Yousuf)

Kupwara, June 11: An unannounced curfew was imposed in Kupwara on Sunday, a day after troops opened fire on people protesting against alleged desecration of a mosque, killing one person and injuring many. Since the wee hours police and paramilitary troopers were deployed across the border district that didn't allow the movement of people. The entry points to the district were blocked for traffic. Reports said roads leading to Zirhama village, where the alleged desecration and subsequent firing took place on Saturday, were sealed and no one was allowed to enter or leave...

Greater Kashmir, 12 June 2006

Is our blood cheap? (Zulfikar Majid)

Srinagar, June 11: National Conference president Omar Abdullah came down heavily on New Delhi on Sunday accusing it of adopting double standards with respect to democracy in Kashmir and rest of India. "Nowhere in India people are shot dead during protest rallies. But when 22 children were drowned in Wullar lake and people came on streets, they were fired upon. When people were protesting against desecration of a mosque at Kupwara on Saturday, bullets were showered on them. Is our blood so cheap" Omar said at NC headquarters here on the occasion of death anniversaries of Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, close associate of NC founder Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, and Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Shah...

Greater Kashmir, 12 June 2006

Mehbooba Mufticondemns attack on Syed Geelani

Srinagar: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday condemned attack on Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference by the activists of Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena in Jammu on Saturday. "The act of hooliganism is highly condemnable," she said in a statement here. She said her party has been advocating 'a battle of ideas,' and the 'fascist acts of some activists of the Shiv Sena only vitiated the atmosphere and were detrimental to democracy.' ...

Daily Excelsior, 12 June 2006

Terrorists' new-found soft target - Joginder Singh

Terrorists in Kashmir have put the softest of soft target in their cross-hairs- tourists who have traveled thousands of miles to soak in the beauty of Chinar-lined lakes and snow-capped Pir Panjal- frustrated by the waning local support and huge influx of tourists with the return of normalcy in the state. The objective seems of hurting the state's economy in their quest for getting nation wide publicity. The attacks are also aimed to kill and strangulate Kashmir's economy, its culture and very notion of Kashmiriyat...

Greater Kashmir, 13 June 2006

3 grenades rock Jammu

Jammu, June 12: A bus conductor was killed and 31 people injured, five of them critically, in three grenade explosions in the heart of Jammu city on Monday morning. According to police 'militants' hurled the first grenade at the General Bus Stand in the city around 7:30 am hitting a bus headed for Katra, the base of the Vaishnodevi shrine, followed by two other similar attacks within seconds which hit three other buses. One man was killed on the spot and 31 people were injured, police said, adding that five of the wounded are said to critical. At least six buses were damaged in the attacks...

Greater Kashmir, 13 June 2006

9 Labourers shot dead

Islamabad/Srinagar, June 12: Nine Bihari Muslim labourers were killed and five injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them in south Kashmir district of Islamabad on Monday afternoon. Reports said the assailants appeared at Yaripora, Budroo village and opened indiscriminate fire on a group of labourers from Bihar state who were busy in erecting an electric tower. The gunmen then shot at another group of labourers, also from Bihar, who were working in nearby kiln and paddy fields...

Greater Kashmir, 13 June 2006

Another Kupwara youth dies in troops firing (Shabir IBN Yousuf)

Trehgam, June 12: Another youth was killed here on Monday when troops opened fire on people who staged protests against the alleged sacrilege of a mosque and killing of a youth by troopers in Zirhama here on Saturday. At least 13 civilians and nine troopers were injured in the clashes. With situation taking an ugly turn curfew has been imposed in entire Kupwara district. All road links leading to the frontier district have been sealed to prevent any civilian movement...

Greater Kashmir, 13 June 2006

CBI records statements

Srinagar: On the instructions of High Court, the CBI recorded statements of many accused people in sexual exploitation case including DIG BSF and a DSP of JK Police. Local news agency CNS quoting sources said two special teams of CBI questioned the accused in Srinagar Central jail in presence of city magistrate. The CBI questioned DIG BSF, KS Padhi and DSP Muhammad Ashraf Mir for several hours and recorded their statements...

Greater Kashmir, 13 June 2006

Editorial: Just think

The tumult in Kupwara that was triggered by an alleged act of sacrilege of a mosque by some security personnel points to disturbing state of affairs which does not augur well for the ongoing efforts at having peace in the subcontinent in general and the Jammu & Kashmir in particular. This is not the only incident of its kind that has made headlines in the media. Even as the dust over the Wullar tragedy and the subsequent incident of the uncalled for firing on the protestors at Watlab near Sopore in which two young men fell to the bullets of security forces was yet to settle came the reports of the Zirhama incident....

Daily Excelsior, 13 June 2006

Yatra suspended indefinitely (Sarwar Kashani)

Srinagar, June 12: Continuing inclement weather conditions forced annual Amarnath yatra to be suspended indefinitely while as around 600 yatris were still stranded near the holy cave of Amarnath shrine, face to face with inhospitable and harsh conditions, though 1400 out of 2000 were brought to Baltal today, some of them by helicopter. Fresh snowfall and heavy rains in the higher reaches led to a considerable drop in temperature besides making tough terrains towards the cave inaccessible, which forced the authorities to suspend the pilgrimage indefinitely...

Daily Excelsior, 13 June 2006

Editorial: Be alert

One can only but take an extremely serious view of the targetted militant activity in the State. There have been three grenade attacks on the general bus stand in this city close on the heels of similar assaults outside the Shalimar Garden in the Summer Capital. A Vaishno Devi-bound bus is among the four vehicles that have been hit at one of the busiest locations in Jammu. By no stretch of imagination can the militants be given any benefit of doubt in this behalf. They may have meant to aim the pilgrims. This is something very much within the realm of possibility and should not be treated lightly...

Daily Excelsior, 14 June 2006

Labourers killer among 6 militants killed

Srinagar, June 13: Six militants including a killer of nine labourers were killed in separate encounters at Pampore, Handwara and Uri today while as militants shot at and injured a BSF trooper in Sopore. A suspected militants slaughtered a youth in Kulgam and snatched arms from the cops guarding the house of Awami League leader in Shopian after attacking them and injuring one cop. Highly placed sources said that two Lashkar-e-Toiba militant commanders were killed in a fierce gunfight at Pampore while as two soldiers also received bullet injuries during

the course of exchange of fire...

Daily Excelsior, 14 June 2006

All stranded pilgrims evacuated from cave

Jammu, June 13: All pilgrims held up at Amarnath cave shrine due to snowfall and landslides were safely brought to Baltal this morning, some of them by track and others by helicopter while pilgrimage to the shrine, which was stopped on June 11 morning, was likely to resume tomorrow morning if weather behaves. A spokesman of Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) said about 250 devotees of Lord Shiva, who were stranded at the shrine, reached Baltal safely by this evening. Old pilgrims and children were airlifted from cave shrine to Baltal while others were shifted by track...

Daily Excelsior, 14 June 2006

Editorial: Kulgam massacre

It is a cause of acute discomfort that nine Nepalese and Bihari labourers have been shot in cold blood in Kulgam in the south of the Valley. They were kidnapped along with a lately-recruited soldier who was son of the soil. All of them were taken to another place where they were subjected to extreme physical torture. The brave man who had donned the uniform but was on leave was beheaded and one of his hands was amputated. The workers, on the other hand, were made to fall in line only to be fired upon at random. They were engaged in the construction of the soldier's house on behalf of a contractor also a local inhabitant..

Greater Kashmir, 14 June 2006

5 militants, civilian killed

Srinagar, June 13: Five militants and a civilian were killed in separate incidents across the state since Monday night. Four soldiers were also injured. Troops killed two militants in an encounter at Gousia Colony, Pampore in Pulwama district on Tuesday. Police said troops launched an operation in the area and holed up the two militants who opened fire on troops to break the cordon. In the ensuing encounter, two Lashker-e-Toiba militants were killed. One soldier was also injured in the incident...

Greater Kashmir, 14 June 2006

CRPF trooper shoots girl, with camera

Srinagar, June 13: The clicking of photographs of a girl by a trooper of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) triggered violent demonstrations in central Kashmir district of Budgam Tuesday. Local news agency KNS said the CRPF trooper began to click photographs of the girl with his mobile phone when she was waiting near the Beerwah bus stand. Immediately after the incident shopkeepers downed their shutters and joined dozens of people who were demanding action against the trooper...

Daily Excelsior, 15 June 2006

Over 4000 pilgrims leave Pahalgam

Jammu, June 14: Pilgrimage to holy shrine of Baba Amarnath resumed today from Pahalgam route after three days of suspension with over 4000 pilgrims leaving Nunwan base camp for the cave. Yatra from shorter Baltal route, however, remained suspended for fourth day today. No yatri was allowed to leave Jammu for Pahalgam or Baltal for third day today. Tomorrow also, yatra will not be allowed from Jammu, SSP Jammu Mukesh Singh said...

Daily Excelsior, 15 June 2006

Lashkar militant killed in Bhadarwah, 4 held

Jammu, June 14: Army and police gunned down an 'area commander' of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant at Jai Ghati in Gandoh and apprehended four activists of the LeT in Panchal area in two separate incidents in Doda district. Official sources said troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles and police launched a search operation at Jai Ghati in Gandoh area early this morning after developing an information that LeT 'area commander' Noor Mohd son of Hakim Din, a resident of Kunthal had taken shelter in the area along with his body-guard...

Daily Excelsior, 15 June 2006

Anil Sethi is now proclaimed accused

Srinagar, June 14: Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Srinagar, which is also designated court for CBI cases, today declared former additional Advocate General, Anil Sethi, as a proclaimed accused. According to the court order, a notification to this effect---calling for Anil Sethi's appearance before court---would be published in

leading newspapers of the country and the State. CBI sources informed that the investigating agency, handling the investigation of the infamous flesh trade scandal, today approached CJM Srinagar, M Y Akhoun, with the petition that the former additional Advocate General be declared as proclaimed accused to facilitate Police to arrest him on sight...

Greater Kashmir, 15 June 2006

"Hurriyat welcome in working groups"

Srinagar, June 14: In continuation to the consultations Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad is having with regard to the formation of five working groups announced by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in Srinagar Round Table Conference, he today had meetings with President National Panthers Party Prof. Bhim Singh and State Secretary CPI(M) M. Y. Tarigami and discussed the issue in detail...

Greater Kashmir, 15 June 2006

Editorial: Salt and Wounds

It was another day of strike across the valley. On Tuesday shops, business establishment in Srinagar and other major towns remained closed in protest against the desecration of a mosque and the Holy Qur'an allegedly by troops in Kupwara. The call for the strike had been given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. This was third strike call during past fortnight in protest against the alleged excesses by the troops and paramilitary forces in Varamul and Kupwara districts...

Greater Kashmir, 16 June 2006

Body parts of 13 Mahore villagers chopped off Mahore,

June 15: A 65-year-old man died and 13 others of Donga Neoch village of Mahore tehsil were wounded when a group of unidentified gunmen chopped off their body parts on Wednesday night. The wounded villagers said that seven to eight gunmen descended on Donga hamlet, about 40 km from Mahore, and asked them to assemble in a field. The gunmen then chopped off different body parts of the villagers...

Greater Kashmir, 16 June 2006

4 killed in JK

Srinagar: Two civilians, a militant and a released militant were killed in separate incidents across the state since Wednesday evening. Police said a Lashker-e-Toiba militant Usman Majid Gazi son of Ghulam Ali Sheikh of Shiva Doda was killed in an encounter with troops at Malai Top Surrando Bala Doda on Wednesday night. Unidentified gunmen shot dead Pervez Ahmad Bhat son of Shabir Ahmad of Larnoo, Kulgam working at Abshar Petrol Pump Kulgam in Islamabad district on Wednesday evening...

Greater Kashmir, 16 June 2006

Hurriyat says no to Azad's offer

Srinagar, June 15: Rejecting outrightly Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's offer to send its representatives to five working groups, the Hurriyat Conference (Mirwaiz faction) Thursday said it was an "administrative matter and had nothing to do with it." "It is an administrative matter. We have nothing to do with it," well-placed sources in the Hurriyat told UNI. They said the formation of the five working groups was a matter between the Centre and the state. Azad had yesterday said the Hurriyat was welcome to send its representatives to the five working groups as announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the second round-table conference here on May 24-25...

Greater Kashmir, 16 June 2006

Environs suffer as conflict continues - Amir Bin Masood

...Most Kashmir observers are acutely aware of the terrible humanitarian consequences of the conflict in J&K. Of the suffering, it has caused to the people of J&K. But unfortunately, only a few are aware of the environmental damage caused by the ongoing conflict in our State. The conflict has already taken a heavy toll on nature. Be it day to day incidents, shelling on borders or Kargil War, each one of them has contributed to severe environmental degradation of our State in one way or the other. The type and extent of the damage to the environment, if not prevented and reversed, will have long-lasting effects for J&K's coming generations...

Daily Excelsior, 16 June 2006

Coalition nominee elected to RS

Srinagar, June 15: Ruling coalition candidate and senior leader of J&K Pradesh Congress Committee, Chowdhary

Mohammad Aslam, was elected as Member of Rajya Sabha defeating National Conference's Mohammad Yusuf Taing with a margin of 33 votes. Election for the seat, which had fallen vacant due to resignation of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad after he became a member of J&K Legislative Assembly in the recent by-elections, was conducted at Legislative Assembly here today...

Daily Excelsior, 16 June 2006

Art 370 root cause of all problems: Joshi

Jammu, June 15: Terming the Special Constitutional position a root cause of present crisis in Jammu and Kashmir State, the senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Union HRD Minister, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi today said that this was the reason that his Party is demanding the abrogation of Article 370...

Daily Excelsior, 16 June 2006

Editorial: A silver lining?

It is a commentary on our times that the mere act of members of the Muslim majority organising and attending the funeral of a Kashmiri Pandit is enough to make news. This is something that has happened in the Indira Nagar locality of Srinagar. According to a newspaper report the Muslim neighbours outnumbered the Pandits in bidding an emotional good-bye to an 81-year old Hindu woman at the Karan Nagar cremation ground of the Summer Capital. In return the bereaved family took care of the sentiments of Muslim mourners...

Greater Kashmir, 17 June 2006

Militants ambush sdpo b'pora

Srinagar, June 16: Two civilians were killed when suspected militants opened fire and lobbed grenades at a police party at Bandipora in Varmul district on Friday, injuring an SDPO and his three guards. Reports said militants attacked the SDPO Fareed Khan's vehicle near Jamia mosque at Bandipora, resulting in injuries to two civilians and three guards. The civilians Muhammad Subhan Dar of Wangam and Nazir Ahmad of Bagh-e-Bandipora succumbed to injuries at hospital..

Greater Kashmir, 17 June 2006

NC protests rights abuses

Srinagar, June 16: Dozens of National Conference (NC) activists led by party chief Omar Abdullah on Friday staged a demonstration here in protest against human rights violations by troops in the Valley. The NC activists gathered in front of Civil Secretariat in the morning and staged a sit-in against what they called increase in human rights abuses and killing of innocent people, including tourists and labourers, in the Valley in recent past. The party legislators, including leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly Abdur Rahim Rather, joined Abdullah...

Greater Kashmir, 17 June 2006

Duggal swears by PM's "zero tolerance"

Srinagar: Reiterating the pledge made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the second roundtable conference in Srinagar, the union home secretary V K Duggal on Friday said the PM was 'absolutely clear' regarding zero tolerance of human rights abuses in the Valley. "As far as human rights is concerned, the Prime Minister was clear, and if any individual was found guilty of casualness, legal action will be initiated against those guys," Duggal told mediemen here while reacting to Kupwara incident where troops opened fire on the civilian protestors killing two students...

Greater Kashmir, 17 June 2006

Editorial: Bias untold

Annual plan for the Srinagar district around which the entire discourse of 'Kashmiriyat' is being weaved has been fixed at the dismal Rupees 67.57 crore. The plan, even if put together with the Chief Minister's 'generous' top-up assistance of Rs 15 crore, remains far behind Jammu's primary district plan, which is pegged at Rs 94.45 crore. Add to this CM's special assistance of Rs 11 cr and the annual plan for Jammu district fattens up to Rs 105.45 cr. Not only Jammu, Srinagar has been gravely discriminated against Udhampur as well...

Daily Excelsior, 17 June 2006

Sonia, Pranab to flag off Poonch-Rawalakot bus (Sanjeev Pargal)

Jammu, June 16: UPA chairperson and Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee will flag off Poonch-Rawalakot bus service in Poonch on June 20. Mrs Gandhi and Mr Mukherjee's consent for flag

off ceremony "the first bus link between two parts of the State in Jammu region" was received today by the Government, official sources told the Excelsior. They will be accompanied by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and Army chief Gen J J Singh....

Daily Excelsior, 17 June 2006

Duggal hopes Amarnath yatra will be peaceful

Srinagar, June 16 : The Centre today termed as "unpardonable" the recent attacks on innocent civilians in the Kashmir valley and asserted that full-fledged counter-insurgency operations will continue to keep the militants at bay. Addressing a news conference here, Union Home Secretary V K Duggal, who was here to monitor Amarnath Yatra related security arrangements, said as per the statistics available, the overall level of militancy this year was less than compared to 2005. However, he said the Kashmir valley has witnessed an escalation of violence in the recent past...

Daily Excelsior, 17 June 2006

Editorial: Bereft of sincerity

If ever an award is instituted for making announcements without conviction it ought to go to the leadership of "Azad" Kashmir as the occupied territory is locally known. More than a year ago its "Prime Minister" Sikandar Hayat Khan had dropped a clear hint that nobody would be debarred from contesting the elections in the region. He had said that his government was contemplating removing a clause in the existing law that debarred those from contesting polls who did not swear by Jammu and Kashmir's integration with Pakistan. Apparently he had bitten more than he could chew. Nothing of the sort has happened...

Greater Kashmir, 18 June 2006

Former renegade chief shot dead in Bandipora

Srinagar, June 17: A former 'supreme commander' of pro-government outfit Ikhwan was gunned down in Bandipora town of north Kashmir's Varmul district on Saturday afternoon. Elsewhere in the state, two militants and a civilian were killed since Friday night. According to GK's Bandipora reporter, Azim Jan, unidentified assailants fired indiscriminately at Ghulam Ahmad Hurra alias Gangeen of Naidkhai at the main chowk, killing him instantly. A cart driver Habibullah Dar was injured in the shootout...

Greater Kashmir, 18 June 2006

Azad calls on PM, DM

New Delhi, June 17: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday called on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Union Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee. He had 80 minutes deliberation with Prime Minister and one hour long meeting with Defence Minister, an official spokesman said. Chief Minister briefed Prime Minister about formation of five working groups and also told him about the details of consultation, he had with the leaders of Peoples Democratic Party, National Conference, National Panther Party, CPI (M), BJP and others...

Greater Kashmir, 18 June 2006

Fearing public wrath, Kupwara DDB meet now in Srinagar (Shabir Ibn Yousuf)

Kupwara, June 17: Fearing public rage over the recent killing of civilian protesters by troops, authorities have changed the venue of annual District Development Board meeting from the district headquarters Kupwara to Srinagar. Police sources said the venue was changed following intelligence inputs that people would again take to streets as the anger against the killing of two students is yet to subside and also against Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's justifying the firing on the protesters...

Daily Excelsior, 18 June 2006

Tourist, labourers' killing worked out

Srinagar, June 17: Police have arrested 10 militants involved in the recent car bombings and grenade attacks, including two on tourists, in the Valley and claimed that three Hizbul Mujahideen militants were linked with the killing of nine non-Kashmiri labourers in Anantnag district early this week. Seven militants, involved in the car-bombings and grenade attacks, have been arrested in Srinagar and Budgam district while three others were arrested from Kulgam area of Anantnag, Director General of Police Gopal Sharma told reporters here...

Daily Excelsior, 18 June 2006

Yatra resumes from Pahalgam, Baltal

Jammu, June 17: After a day's suspension, pilgrimage to holy Amarnath shrine again resumed today from both Baltal and Pahalgam routes even as weather was still cloudy on both tracks and it was raining intermittently. A spokesman of Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) said 5317 pilgrims left Baltal base camp this morning from shorter 16 km route of the pilgrimage after considerable improvement in weather condition...

Greater Kashmir, 19 June 2006

2 militants killed in JK

Srinagar: Two militants were killed in separate encounters across the state since Saturday evening. Police said a militant was killed in an encounter in north Kashmir's Varmul district on Sunday. The encounter broke out after troops launched a cordon and search operation at Banday Balla Chandoosa, police said. The militant present there refused to surrender and fired upon the troops, triggering a fierce encounter, police said. In the ensuing gunfight the militants identified as Abdul Rashid Pandit son of Ghulam Muhammad of Goshbugh was killed...

Greater Kashmir, 19 June 2006

Do what you said: Mufti to Manmohan

Srinagar: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed has said Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's pledge regarding zero tolerance for human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir should fast translate at the ground to build and consolidate peoples trust and faith in the system. He said as a fundamental input to the peace process, Prime Minister's commitment need to be followed up with action and a practical policy. Sayeed has urged the Prime Minister to ensure that his assurance to curb human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir is strictly adhered to and nobody is allowed to go against this commitment...

Greater Kashmir, 19 June 2006

Shivalingam at Amarnath is artificial: Mahant Giri

Srinagar, June 18: Mahant Deependra Giri, the custodian of holy mace of Lord Shiva, today expressed serious concern over the "artificial and chemically-made ice Shivalingam" at the Amarnath cave shrine this year and demanded a judicial commission to probe this important religious matter. "If found to be true that Himlingam has been raised manually or mechanically as reported by a section of the media, to me it appears to be an act of sacrilege hurting the sentiments and feelings of devotees," he said in a statement here...

Greater Kashmir, 19 June 2006

23 killed in Ramban accident

Banihal, June 18: At least 23 passengers died and 23 others were wounded when a bus carrying 56 laborers skidded off the road and fell into 350 foot deep gorge near Battery Cheshma on Jammu Srinagar Highway in wee hours today. While 16 of the passengers died on the spot, seven of them succumbed to injuries on way to Sub-district hospital Ramban. A bus bearing (JKO2P-5325) traveling from Jammu to Srinagar with 56 passengers, mainly labourers, on board fell into a deep gorge near Battery Cheshma, about 7 kilometers from Ramban...

Greater Kashmir, 19 June 2006

The reverse effect -I S S Bijral

Evil evil all around. But we add a very horrible dimension to it by only talking about its nature and galvanizing it through media. Read it in a distressing letter 'our daughters are helpless victims, guard their innocence' (GK 13th May, 2006). As son of the soil and a proud police officer I was deeply disturbed after reading article 'Flesh Trade in Kashmir the facts & folklore' (Greater Kashmir 10th May, 2006). Let's not hold our own women responsible for what has happened. Let's give them the honor they deserve...

Daily Excelsior, 19 June 2006

Coalition adopting casual approach on important issues: Omar

Jammu, June 18: Launching a scathing attack on coalition for adopting "casual approach" in delivering governance to the people, National Conference president and Lok Sabha Member from Srinagar, Omar Abdullah today expressed surprise that instead of decentralising power, important portfolios have been allotted to some individual Ministers which led to total confusion and consolidation of the power in the hands of few persons...

Daily Excelsior, 19 June 2006

Editorial: A soldier's suicide

...Yet, it compels serious attention to the need for plugging loopholes in the existing dispensation. This has to be

done in a way that does not dilute the chain of command so vital for a uniformed organisation. A suggestion has been mooted that the women should no more be recruited in the Army. This will be a remedy worse than the disease. Endeavour should instead be to create an environment in which every person feels fully involved...

Daily Excelsior, 20 June 2006

India, Pak to write new chapter of friendship today (Dinesh Manhotra)

Chakan da Bagh (LoC), June 19: Initiating one more step in the direction of further strengthening heart to heart relations on two sides of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, India and Pakistan are all set to launch second Karvan-e-Aman bus service tomorrow. After Uri-Muzaffarabad road, this time the bus of peace will roll on 47 kilometer long Poonch-Rawalakot trans-border road joining two parts of Jammu and Kashmir...

Daily Excelsior, 20 June 2006

12,800 pilgrims leave for Amarnath shrine

Jammu, June 19: Unfazed by controversy generated by some quarters over the issue of Ice Lingam, over 12,800 pilgrims today left three base camps for pilgrimage of holy Amarnath shrine as weather considerably improved on both Pahalgam and Baltal tracks. While 4303 pilgrims left Nunwan base camp in Pahalgam this morning for the pilgrimage, another 500 were allowed to proceed for the cave shrine in the afternoon, DIG Anantnag-Pulwama range, Hemant Kumar Lohia said...

Greater Kashmir, 20 June 2006

2 militants, civilian killed in State

Srinagar, June 19: Six persons, including a trooper and a policeman, were injured when suspected militant lobbed a grenade at Kishtwar Bus Stand in Doda district of Jammu on Monday. Meanwhile, two militants and a civilian were killed in separate incidents across the state. Police said troops killed a militant in an encounter near railway track Hanjiveer Pattan in Varmul district on Sunday night. Local residents however alleged the militant was killed in a fake encounter...

Greater Kashmir, 20 June 2006

Editorial: Dirty dangerous games

Even as the elections to the State Assembly are due somewhere in 2008 some Congress leaders have started raising the bogey of Wazir Commission Report once again. The party had raised it during the last elections and romped home with a sizeable number of seats from Jammu-Kathua region. It wants to exploit the sentiment of its electorate again. By now it must have dawned on the electorate as to how difficult it is to get the Commission's report implemented regardless of the ruling party's commitment...

Greater Kashmir, 20 June 2006

The reverse effect -II - S S Bijral

Terming of the sex scandal, by the educated class a well thought out policy instrument of the government to win peace by converting Kashmiri's into physical and mental wrecks is startling not for an iota of truth in it, but because of being a sheer figment of imagination. To quote of Frank Whitmore "The biggest difficulty with mankind is that our knowledge has increased so much faster than our wisdom", for the so called educated to find a way out of their imagination...

Daily Excelsior, 21 June 2006

Ex-Ministers Mir, Mattoo arrested by CBI (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, June 20: Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which has been investigating the infamous "Srinagar sex scandal" since May 11 last, has finally arrested two high-profile mainstream politicians--former Minister of State for Roads & Buildings and Congress party's MLA from Dooru Ghulam Ahmed Mir and former MoS Industries and sitting independent MLA from Habbakadal Raman Mattoo. Both the detained politicians had functioned as Ministers in Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's Government from November 2002 to November 2005. CBI has simultaneously intensified efforts to arrest the former Additional Advocate General of J&K State, Anil Sethi, whose properties in Jammu are likely to be attached in the next 24 hours...

Daily Excelsior, 21 June 2006

Sonia flags off Poonch-Rawalakot bus service (Dinesh Manhotra)

Chakan-Da-Bagh, June 20: The 'invisible line of sorrow'- which has kept thousands of souls away from their family

members and relatives for the last 58 years, today turned into a 'road of happiness' for these divided families as this link is going to end their long separation. Flagging off Poonch-Rawalakot bus service from this border post by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson, Sonia Gandhi along with Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad and former Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, said that the service has rekindled a ray of hope among those divided families who, for the last 58 years, have been desiring to meet their relations one day...

Daily Excelsior, 21 June 2006

Talks within purview of Indian Constitution: Sonia

Poonch, June 20: Reiterating Central Government resolve to hold dialogue with different sections of the society to solve vexed problems, chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Sonia Gandhi today said talks and not violence, is the solution of any issue. Addressing a rally at this border town after flagging off the bus service between Poonch and Rawalakot at Chakan-Da-Bagh, Mrs Gandhi, while inviting all groups to participate in dialogue process, however, made it clear that talks for solution of Kashmir problem will be held within the purview of Indian constitution...

Daily Excelsior, 21 June 2006

Editorial: Hidden 'enemies'

It is seldom that two events take place almost simultaneously pointing to hidden wars and enemies plaguing the social order at large. In the running encounter between the militants and counter-insurgents the latter have again scored a hit in the Kashmir region. A former "chief commander" of Ikhwan Muslimoon has been killed in Sumbal in the north of the Valley. Sumbal was the bastion of Mohammad Yusuf Parray alias Kuka Parray who after parting company with Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) had taken out on the armed militant outfit with vengeance...

Greater Kashmir, 21 June 2006

(S)ex ministers in CBI net (Naseer A Ganai)

Srinagar, June 20: The CBI on Tuesday arrested two former state ministers and sitting legislators in connection with the sexual exploitation of minor Kashmiri girls. The CBI DIG, PK Singh told reporters after three-hour 'in camera' trial of the case in High Court here that Ghulam Ahmed Mir, a senior state Congress leader and a former Minister of State for Roads and Buildings, was arrested from New Delhi this morning. He said Raman Mattoo, a senior Peoples Democratic Forum (PDF) leader and a former Minister of State for Industries and Commerce, was arrested from his residence at posh Gupkar here...

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Daily Excelsior, 22 June 2006

Hizb "Distt Commdr", civilian killed

Srinagar, June 21: Five Amarnathji pilgrims from Rajasthan sustained splinter injuries when militants lobbed a grenade on their carriage at Ganderbal, on Srinagar-Leh Highway today. Meanwhile, Police and security forces have killed a "District Commander" of Hizbul Mujahideen and suspected militants have gunned down an activist of CPI (M) in Kulgam area of south Kashmir. SP Ganderbal, Hans Raj Parihar, told the EXCELSIOR that militants in ambush fired a rifle grenade on a pilgrims bus, RJ19T-5367, ahead of Beehama Chowk in Ganderbal on Srinagar-Sonmarg-Leh highway at 1315 hours. It pierced into the bus and landed in the gangway but a pilgrim lifted the grenade and threw it quickly to the less occupied front portion...

Daily Excelsior, 22 June 2006

Mir flown to Srinagar; DB assigns 2 more cases to CBI (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, June 21: Even as the detained Congress MLA and former Minister Ghulam Ahmed Mir was carried to Srinagar and handed over to the CBI team investigating the infamous "flesh trade scandal", a Division Bench (DB)

of Jammu and Kashmir High Court today assigned two more cases of similar nature to the premier Central agency. Meanwhile, J&K Government is constituting a Special Sessions Court for speedy trial of the matters relating to immoral trafficking and sexual abuse...

Daily Excelsior, 22 June 2006

Editorial: Courting peace

How can a brother aid a terrorist to kill another brother on this side of the Line of Control-" This is a perfectly legitimate query that a passenger in the first Poonch-Rawalakot bus has on his lips. He is among 30 persons who have boarded the vehicle flagged off by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson Sonia Gandhi at Chakan-da-bagh on the Line of Control on Tuesday. He is itching to raise the question during his inter-action with relatives and friends on the other side. Surely he will have many illusions made and shattered at the same time. There are many who have undertaken the journey to "Azad" Kashmir (as the occupied territory is locally known) before him through other channels...

Greater Kashmir, 22 June 2006

Anil Sethi surrenders (Arif Haleem)

Jammu, June 21: Former state Additional Advocate General Anil Kumar Sethi, one of the prime accused in the sexual exploitation of young girls, surrendered before a Jammu court Wednesday. Sethi was absconding for past two weeks and was declared a proclaimed offender by a court in Srinagar. The Central Bureau of Investigation had announced a reward of Rs 2 lakhs for information leading to his arrest. Sethi turned up before the First Class Judicial Magistrate Amit Sharma here at 3:50 PM in presence of his relatives and some lawyers...

Greater Kashmir, 22 June 2006

Editorial: Beyond cosmetic moves

It is a step forward. True, the traffic of people between two parts of Kashmir vivisected by an artificial line after the reopening of the Jhelum-Valley Road has been very slow. True, the number of the people who crossed the LoC to meet their relatives during past one year has not touched even four figures. True, people's hopes that with opening of this road a brother would meet a brother, a sister would meet a sister, a son would meet his father, and a daughter would meet her mother without hassles were belied. The hope that Kashmiris would move in their own territory without restrictions after the opening of this road has proved just an illusion...

Daily Excelsior, 23 June 2006

2 killed, 15 devotees injured in grenade attack on mystic

Srinagar, June 22: Two of his devotees got killed and 15 others sustained splinter injuries when suspected militants carried out a broad daylight grenade attack on the revered mystic, Ahad Sahib, at his residence in Sopore today. Informed sources in north Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that someone from the main road lobbed a hand grenade on the courtyard of Sopore's most revered mystic, 75-year-old Ahad Sahib, in Noorbagh locality of the apple town at 1345 hours today. Even as the real target had a providential escape, the grenade exploded causing splinter injuries to 17 of his devotees...

Daily Excelsior, 23 June 2006

NSA, Army chief's surprise visit to Srinagar

New Delhi, June 22: Concerned at the continued increase of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, the Centre has asked police, paramilitary forces and the Army to get their act together and make concerted efforts to counter militant groups in the State. Chairing a high-level meeting in Srinagar yesterday, National Security Advisor M K Narayanan, who made a surprise visit to the Valley, asked all the security agencies to ensure synergy among themselves with the one-point agenda of "hitting" at the militants, official sources said. Narayanan was accompanied by the Army chief, Gen J J Singh, and Intelligence Bureau Director E S L Narisimhan...

Daily Excelsior, 23 June 2006

Editorial: Dastardly attempt

Photographs of a batch of Amarnath pilgrims shakily looking out of the shattered window panes of their bus have disturbed many. The innocent passengers' state of mind is comprehensible after having narrowly survived a grenade attack. Some of them escaped with injuries. The explosive fell near the door of their vehicle. They were on their way back from Baltal to Srinagar after having paid obeisance at the sacred cave. It is unfortunate that their joy over completing a long-cherished journey has been tempered with a cruel act. Fears have always existed about the safe

and smooth conduct of the pilgrimage...

Daily Excelsior, 23 June 2006

Editorial: Pangs of rebirth

It is easier said than to rebuild a region ravaged by a natural calamity. This is evident from the example of "Azad" Kashmir as the occupied territory across the Line of Control is locally known. Lest it should create a misleading impression there is something that needs to be clarified. There is no lack of will on the part of either the Pakistan Government or international donors including India to facilitate an early reconstruction of the earthquake-affected area. Instead there have been practical difficulties some of which sound strange. A piquant situation had arisen, for instance, even as philanthropists from across the globe rushed to Muzaffarabad and its vicinity in the wake of the October 8 tragedy...

Greater Kashmir, 23 June 2006

Infiltration hasn't stopped: Army chief (Shabir Ibn Yousuf)

Teetwal, June 22: A day after media exulted over opening of Poonch-Rawalakote bus as another milestone in Indo-Pak relations, Army chief General JJ Singh Thursday said there was no decline in infiltration of militants and training camps for militants still existed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. "There is no decline in infiltration. It is going on and our jawans are countering it. Many infiltration attempts by militants were foiled by our troops," General Singh told reporters after inaugurating Model Village in Teetwal...

Greater Kashmir, 23 June 2006

The Resentment and the Rebellion - HilaL Ahmad

Before rebellion comes resentment. Prolonged suppression of a being or a nation generates resentment inside the mind of an oppressed being or the collective consciousness of a nation. When a being or a nation can take no more it begins to say 'no, it can't go on for ever' 'we have been tolerating it for long'. The 18-year long struggle of Kashmiris for political rights has seen hundreds of small, violent rebellions against the armed forces that are controlling the dynamics of the situation and also the private lives of people by their massive presence, mainly in the rural areas of the Valley and Muslim dominated districts of Jammu...

Daily Excelsior, 24 June 2006

Two militants, cop killed

Srinagar, June 23: Two militants and a cop were killed, while as 12 persons, including six civilians and five CRPF personnel, were injured in separate incidents of violence across the Valley since Thursday evening. According to details 10 persons, including five CRPF personnel and four civilians were injured in a grenade attack near cremation ground in Batamaloo, Srinagar while as two unidentified militants were killed in separate encounters in Budgam and Pampore in Khrew today while as a cop was shot dead in broad daylight in Lal Chowk...

Daily Excelsior, 24 June 2006

Another day light grenade attack in Doda, 7 injured

Jammu, June 23: Even as police today said it have arrested three persons involved in throwing a grenade, the militants struck again at Bus Stand in the heart of Doda town in broad day light and lobbed a grenade on CRPF personnel taking tea in a shop injuring three of them and four civilians. Today's blast was second in Doda district in less than a week. On Sunday evening also, the militants had lobbed a grenade towards a CRPF bunker in Kishtwar tehsil injuring five persons including two para-military personnel and three civilians...

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Daily Excelsior, 24 June 2006

CJM refers bail applications of 'sex racket' accused to HC

Srinagar, June 23: Even as CBI today failed to produce its first challan in the infamous "Srinagar sex scandal" in

absence of the case diaries not released by High Court, activists of radical women's organisation Dukhtaraan-e-Millat clashed with an advocate in the court premises and forced him to drop the defence of a Police official allegedly involved in the flesh trade. Meanwhile, a Division Bench (DB) of High Court directed CBI to concentrate on the hotels and guesthouses allegedly used during alleged sexual abuse of certain identified women...

Daily Excelsior, 24 June 2006

Editorial: Why is it so?

Why have the establishments in "Azad" Kashmir and Pakistan reacted in low key to the reopening of the Poonch-Rawalakot road? The reason is clear sooner than expected. It turns out that the governments in Muzaffarabad (the Capital of "Azad" Kashmir which is the local name of the occupied territory) and Islamabad don't view the bus service across the Line of Control as more than a ritual. It does not exactly fit into their diehard thinking. As is only too well known they make a difference between such confidence-building measures (CBMs) and "conflict" resolution. "Azad" Kashmir Prime Minister Sikandar Hayat Khan has summed up their feelings with his statement: "India must not think it can win over the people of Kashmir with a bus service or a truck service. These cannot solve the problem of Kashmir. This bus service is not the manzil (destination). The manzil is azadi (freedom)."...

Greater Kashmir, 24 June 2006

'Lingam' controversy hits yatra (M Hyderi)

Srinagar, June 23: The ongoing "artificial Lingam" controversy has reportedly affected the yatri traffic to Amarnath cave. Sources said in the wake of the controversy the rush of yatris has slashed down to nearly half compared to last year's pilgrimage. Last year, officials said, the average number of yatris who trekked to the cave from Pahalgam route was nearly 4,000 a day, while this year the number stands below 2000. On Friday, they said only a thousand odd yatris arrived in Pahalgam. The hotel occupancy has also gone down this year...

Greater Kashmir, 24 June 2006

A meaningless exercise of meeting and parting - Ghulam Nabi Hagroo

The Round Table Conference (RTC) held at Srinagar on 24th and 25th of May, 2006 has ended without the participation of whom they call 'secessionists' of J&K with what results? I need not comment. The so-called secessionists do not call themselves so because it is a degradation of their name and stand. But all the same the pro-government media, according to its volition belittles them by dubbing them 'secessionists'. Dr. Manmohan Singh is the Prime Minister of the whole country and so his role should definitely be, at least a bit, different from that of the leader of a political party of India. It is expected of him to take note of the views of the 'secessionists' of J&K...

Daily Excelsior, 25 June 2006

Pattan protests over killing of a Class 12th student in shootout

Srinagar, June 24: Even as the killing of a student in 'crossfiring' evoked massive protest in Pattan and three of the demonstrators got injured in another shootout, Police and security forces today claimed to have eliminated two of the most wanted commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen in Pulwama. Meanwhile, one civilian got killed and 10 others sustained injuries when suspected militants lobbed a hand grenade towards a CRPF bunker at Dashnami Akhara in the crowded Budshah Chowk in this capital city today...

Daily Excelsior, 25 June 2006

Militant surrenders, RDX seized

JAMMU, June 24: Army and police today seized 52 kg RDX from Deedni forests in Marmat area while a major tragedy was averted when security forces detected and defused a powerful IED in a passenger bus, which was on way from Kishtwar to Doda this afternoon. A Hizbul Mujahideen 'commander' surrendered before security forces in Ramban. A day after a grenade attack in Doda town, troops of 10 Rashtriya Rifles and Doda police seized 52 kg explosive material from a hide-out of the militants at Deedni forest area near Marmat under the jurisdiction of Doda police station this morning, SSP Doda Manohar Singh said...

Daily Excelsior, 25 June 2006

CBI files first chargesheet in 'sex scam' (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, June 24: Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) today filed its first chargesheet in the infamous "Srinagar sex scandal" against nine persons including DIG of BSF, K C Padhi, DySP of J&K Police, Mohammad Ashraf Mir, and J&K's former additional Advocate General, Anil Sethi, in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Srinagar. All the accused will face charges of rape during a trial likely to be conducted in-camera in a special

Sessions Court. With today's development, all the accused, with the addition of Anil Sethi, have been remanded to judicial custody till July 7 next and Police remand for the detention of two former Ministers Ghulam Ahmed Mir and Raman Mattoo has been extended to June 27...

Indian Express, 25 June 2006

2 killed in BSF firing, villagers attack police post

Srinagar, June 24: Two persons, including a woman, were killed when security forces opened fire on the villagers in Phalalan on the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway this afternoon. The irate protestors later tried to set Pattan police station on fire. This morning, when the cavalcade of DIG CRPF was passing by the highway near Phalalan, the patrol escorting the officer opened fire resulting in the killing of a Class XII student Farooq Ahmad and a woman Misra Bano...

Daily Excelsior, 25 June 2006

Demilitarisation final solution: Musharraf

Islamabad, June 24: After his plethora of proposals on Kashmir over the last two years, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf now says that "demilitarisation" is his "final resolution" of the dispute. "I have proposed demilitarisation as a ... Final resolution. Demilitarise Kashmir, give self governance to people of Kashmir with a joint management arrangement on top. This is an idea I am proposing," Musharraf said in a programme on CNBC TV last night. "We could debate and modify the idea but we have to come up with an idea of final settlement of the dispute to the acceptance of India, Pakistan and people of Kashmir. It is for people of Kashmir now to generate the kind of ideas and pressure on the Indian Government on some form of a resolution," he said...

Daily Excelsior, 26 June 2006

Five militants, soldier killed in 4 operations

Srinagar, June 25: Even as suspected militants have gunned down a Jammu & Kashmir Police personnel in Dadsar village of Tral and a soldier of Rashtriya Rifles has died in a gunbattle in Kulgam, Police and security forces have killed five militants in four separate operations in Kashmir valley since last evening. Meanwhile, two civilians, who had got injured in a blast in Sopore and in a shootout in Pattan, have succumbed to injuries at hospital...

Daily Excelsior, 26 June 2006

5 top militants surrender

Jammu, June 25: Dealing a blow to their respective outfits, five top terrorists, including two each of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Harkut-ul-Jehadi Islami (HUJI) laid down their arms before the security forces in Doda district. This apart, a hide-out was also busted and four civilians were rounded up by the security forces in connection with the killing of a civilian and chopping off ears, nose and tongue of two others in Dunga, Gulabgarh area of Mahore tehsil on June 14. An official spokesman said that four militants - two each of HM and HUJI outfits surrendered before Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Doda, Commander 9 Sector of Rashtriya Rifles, Commanding Officer of 148th Battalion of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and SP Kishtwar at Kishtwar today...

Daily Excelsior, 26 June 2006

Azad briefs Cabinet about Pak hand behind terror activities

Jammu, June 25: The recent escalation in the militant activities and the affects on tourism sector and Amarnath Yatra were discussed at length during the State Cabinet meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad at Srinagar late yesterday evening. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that while referring to the steps initiated by the administration in defeating the designs of the saboteurs, Mr Azad told his Cabinet colleagues that the intelligence reports suggested that Pakistan and its agencies were definitely behind the recent militant activities to flare-up the tension in the Valley...

Daily Excelsior, 26 June 2006

Editorial: Attack on dervish

...The area across the Pir Panjal was considerably stripped of its secular image in 1990 with the mass exodus of the Pandits. In sharp contrast the Jammu region made amends for its gross misdemeanour more than five decades ago. It became an oasis of tranquility. It carefully avoided a tit-for-tat approach and provided succour to the needy. Till today it has kept its cool and balance in the face of extreme provocations. If at all any uneasy questions arise at this juncture these are about the state of affairs in the Valley. How long will it continue to bleed? That the political

leaderships of varied hues and all sections of society have condemned a grenade attack on a revered dervish in the apple-rich Sopore's Noorbagh locality is to be appreciated...

Daily Excelsior, 26 June 2006

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Daily Excelsior, 26 June 2006

The death of innocent visitors - Prof. P. L. Bakhshi

How difficult and heartchurning it is to see the violent death of own child in front of you and still you are unable to do anything positive. What wrong had an eight-year-old boy Fanal Hamant Zariwala done to thick skinned militants of the valley which he had come to visit and enjoy along with thousands of other visitors- who in the process flip the economy of the Kashmiris. In the bargain the youngster got his neck pierced by a splinter of the lobbed grenade resulting him to bleed to death. The only answer can be - he is Indian. He was on a tourist bus full of Gujarati tourists alongwith his family on this fateful morning of May 25, 2006 in Kashmir - an integral part of Indian Union, when an explosive grenade was tossed inside jam-packed bus by militants near Zakoora...

Daily Excelsior, 27 June 2006

Officials were spotted in Sabeena's net in 2002, politicians in 2004 (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR, June 26: Whether former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed had hushed up Sabeena's 'sex racket' in 2004 or not is a matter of investigation but the involvement of his Ministers, first spotted by CID of J&K Police, had been established, rather alarmingly. Days before then IGP Kashmir, K Rajendra Kumar, was informed and asked to proceed against the racket, then intelligence chief, Dr Ashok Bhan, had personally informed the Chief Minister that National Conference (NC) had been planning to bring down his coalition government with a 'Tehelka-type' sting operation. According to highly-placed authoritative sources, Chief Minister had learned through CID and some of his political sources that Omar Abdullah's party had approached two premier Hindi news channels with the "contract" of filming Mufti's Ministers 'in action'...

Daily Excelsior, 27 June 2006

Two killed in Bandipore; HM militant surrenders

Srinagar, June 26: Unidentified gunmen killed two persons including a kin of a former MLC in Bandipore today while as a militant, injured in Kulgam gunfight the other day was put in police custody in SMHS hospital Srinagar. Well informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that an injured militant of Hizbul Mujahideen Javed Ahmed Dar, alias Shabeer, of Mohanpora Kulgam, was today taken into police custody from SMHS hospital Srinagar after police received a tip off that the said militant has been admitted into ENT ward of the hospital. Javed was injured during a gunfight in Kulgam the other day...

Daily Excelsior, 27 June 2006

Editorial: Matter of concern

The concern expressed at the highest level about step-up in violence and infiltration in the State has not come too early. National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan has chaired a top-level meeting in the Summer Capital recently to ensure that the Army, para-military forces and police get their act together. Indeed, it is a serious matter that selected killings, attacks on tourists and efforts to foment communal violence have gone up in the recent times. Lately there has been a grenade attack for the first time on a revered dervish of the Kashmir region. One incident thus is as grave as the other. Synergy of operations in such scenario can't be over-emphasised...

Greater Kashmir, 27 June 2006

CBI submits status report on sex abuse case

Srinagar, June 26: The CBI on Monday submitted to the Jammu and Kashmir High Court a status report indicating the progress made in the investigations into the sexual exploitation case. The report was submitted in a sealed cover

to a division bench, comprising Justice Bashir Ahmed Kirmani and Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain, by Assistant Solicitor General of India and CBI counsel Shabir A Naik. The CBI will again submit a status report on June 28 and the High Court would hear the sex racket case on June 30. Earlier on June 23, the High Court had taken strong notice of the allegations that some highly-placed people in politics, police and administration are hindering the investigations into the sex racket case and directed the CBI to seek their immediate transfer from their present positions...

Greater Kashmir, 27 June 2006

Rethink dialogue policy: Geelani tells Pak

Srinagar, June 26: Pro-freedom leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today attacked Islamabad for its dialogue policy with India, saying continuation of such a process tantamount to "applying salt on the wounds of innocent Kashmiris". Addressing a news conference here, Geelani asked the Pakistani leadership to "rethink and reconsider" their policy of dialogue process with India. "I want to tell the Pakistani leadership in clear terms that you started a dialogue process with India in January 2004 and have repeatedly admitted that there is no progress vis-a-vis the resolution of the Kashmir issue," he added...

Greater Kashmir, 27 June 2006

Editorial: Beyond Expediency

It was another incident of gruesome killings. The killing of mother son duo at Palhalan in North Kashmir which evoked public protest and provoked people to come in the streets is one of many incidents. There have more heinous crimes in the state during past sixteen years. Some killings were carried out to instill fear in the minds of people and some were to prevent people from raising their voices against the committing of crimes against humanity. One could believe that crimes against humanity that were perpetrated by some men in uniform was a result of individualistic aberration or an expression of sadism...

Greater Kashmir, 27 June 2006

Guard human rights - Arifat Jan

The J&K State Human Rights Commission was established in 1997. Past 16 years of militancy have made the people of the valley suffer so badly. As the Kashmir issue was more highlighted by International Community, International Human Rights Organizations made human rights in J&K as a vital issue. Various security laws that are still operated in J&K resulted in different forms of human rights violations like disappearances, custodial killings, fake encounters, rapes and molestations etc. In 1996 an announcement was made by National Conference government that a permanent human rights commission is to be established under the statute of the state legislature under the Protection of Human Rights Act NO.XV Of 1997 in order to protect and promote civil and democratic rights of the people of the state...

Indian Express, 28 June 2006

Pak, local ultras locked in a clash of ideology in jail

Jammu, June 27: Five jail inmates were injured inside the high security Kotbhalwal Central Jail here on Monday night, after the militants from Pakistan and Kashmir clashed with each other to establish their supremacy inside the jail. The clash was also triggered by the refusal of some Kashmiri militants to take note of the lectures on jihad being delivered inside the jail by the Pakistani militants, sources said. The ground for the 'battle' was prepared when Pakistani militants lodged inside the jail elected Rahil Hashmi as their leader, while Kashmiri militants elected Mohammad Altaf as their leader, thus clearly refusing to accept the supremacy of Hashmi and Fateh-ul-Rehman, both from Pakistan, sources added...

Daily Excelsior, 28 June 2006

Over 1.38 lakh pilgrims pay obeisance at Amarnath

Jammu: Over 1.38 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas since the pilgrimage started on June 10. About 138,132 pilgrims have paid obeisance at the shrine this year, a spokesman of Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) told PTI today. As many as 132,389 pilgrims have visited the shrine from both routes of Baltal and Phalgam till June 26, he said. There were still 10,000 to 15,000 yatris trekking towards the shrine from both the routes, he said, adding most of the pilgrims have returned to their native places after paying obeisance. The spokesman said there were 12 deaths among the pilgrims due to various illnesses while trekking to the shrine located at an altitude of 3,880 meters...

Daily Excelsior, 28 June 2006

4 civilians among 7 killed in Valley

Srinagar, June 27: Four civilians, one militant, an SPO and a Territorial Army trooper were among seven persons killed in separate militancy related incidents in Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours. Police sources said that unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants, fired indiscriminately at three friends in Nowpora in Bandipore north Kashmir last night at around 2200 hours killing Mohammad Iqbal Khan on the spot and critically injuring two other friends identified as Mohammad Shafi Malla and Manzoor Ahmad Wani of Khanyar Srinagar. The injured were quickly rushed to SKIMS Soura where Manzoor later succumbed while condition of Malla was stated to be critical...

Greater Kashmir, 28 June 2006

'Sex ministers' get 14-day judicial remand

Srinagar, June 27: The Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar on Tuesday sent former ministers and sitting legislators Ghulam Ahmed Mir and Raman Mattoo, arrested by the CBI in connection with the sexual exploitation of teenage Kashmiri girls, to 14-day judicial remand. Mir and Mattoo were produced before the CJM Muhammad Yousuf Akhoun at his residence here this morning, reports said. The CJM remanded them in judicial custody for 14 days, and they were shifted to Central Jail Srinagar. Mir, a former Minister of State for Roads and Buildings and a Congress legislator from Dooru in southern Islamabad district, was arrested by the CBI from Kashmir House at Chanakyapuri in New Delhi on June 20...

Greater Kashmir, 28 June 2006

Editorial: So far so good

Assigning the right job to right person is the secret of success of the world's best administrators. The present state government headed by Ghulam Nabi Azad has just taken a step towards improving the administration by reassigning jobs to some local officers. Given the constraints he has one could not expect him to change the whole complexion of his administration in one go. So far the impression with the man in street about the state administrative apparatus was that it is just a replica of Bihar or UP administration where local talent is condemned to decay in cells. In fact the very complexion of the state bureaucracy that was slowly but steadily deprived of the local element has been one of the sources of alienation...

Greater Kashmir, 28 June 2006

The importance of being a minister-I - Prof. Ismail Aashna

...A serious and sincere evaluation of their performance who have functioned as ministers in successive Kashmir cabinets will exhibit how diligently and honestly they have utilized the resources kept at their disposal by society, for realizing the dreams of their families. . The evaluation reports might prove beneficial if studied and followed sincerely by the new incumbents in the sense that these reports can show them the secret ways and means to unearth the mines of silver and gold, to smile and smile and yet be villains, to look like flowers and be like serpents behind them etc. Through these reports they can discover the gorgeous styles that were adopted by their predecessors to please their subjects in light of the knowledge that Kashmiries equipped with a sharp sense of aesthetics have never liked their rulers...

Daily Excelsior, 29 June 2006

Concern over increase in infiltration

New Delhi, June 28: Concerned at a marginal increase in infiltration from Pakistan, the Government today said "remedial measures", including synchronisation between various security forces, would soon be put in place as concerted efforts continued to usher in permanent peace in Jammu and Kashmir. A high-level meeting chaired here by the Army Chief, Gen J J Singh, also took serious note of the terror infrastructure still "intact" across the Line of Control (LoC). "Infiltration is slightly higher this year as compared to last year," Home Secretary Vinod Kumar Duggal told reporters on emerging from the 90-minute meeting attended by heads of almost all Central paramilitary forces and intelligence agencies...

Daily Excelsior, 29 June 2006

CBI submits report in sex racket

Srinagar, June 28: The CBI today submitted its second status report in three days on its investigation of the sex racket in Jammu and Kashmir to the High Court, which is monitoring the probe. "We submitted the second status report to the court as per the directions passed by the division bench last Friday. On Monday, we submitted a status

report regarding the progress of investigations," Assistant Solicitor General of India and CBI counsel S A Naik told PTI. Naik declined to comment on the contents of the report, saying all reports submitted to the Court are confidential. The Division Bench comprising Justices Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain and B A Kirmani had directed the CBI to file status reports on Monday and Wednesday and listed the case for hearing on June 30...

Daily Excelsior, 29 June 2006

Pak passports, Nepal visa stamp, PIA ticket has substituted LoC (Sarwar Kashani)

Srinagar, June 28: With LoC being tightened to check infiltration, the militants still find their way to reach Kashmir meticulously though after acquiring "proper" passports, visa and other documents as Pakistan nationals and travel all the way from Karachi to Kathmandu then Gorakhpur (India) and finally to the Valley to carry out their activities. These startling revelations that the Nepal route was serving safe haven for the militants from Pakistan were made by two surrendered militants Manzoor Ahmed Lone of Trehgam and Nazir Ahmed Lone of Rismigund, who were produced before the media today at Badami Bagh Cantonment here. The duo had surrendered soon after arriving in Srinagar...

Daily Excelsior, 29 June 2006

Editorial: Hurriyat's salvo

It has taken time for the reality to sink in that the moderate Hurriyat Conference has indeed criticised Hizbul Mujahideen. The Mirwaiz Moulvi Umar Farooq-led secessionist conglomeration had kept silent for too long. Its stoic attitude had created an impression as if it wanted to ignore the repeated barbs thrown on it by the dreaded militant outfit. Therefore, its sudden outburst shows that its patience is eventually giving up. This is too obvious despite a low-key reaction confined just to one media organisation. It is for the first time that a Hurriyat spokesperson has hit back to tell HM: "We have been keeping quiet in the interest of the unity of the nation. You should not force us to break our silence." He has "warned" Hizbul "against challenging the dialogue process and seeking a peaceful solution to the Kashmir problem." ...

Greater Kashmir, 29 June 2006

Government has been misled: SASB

Srinagar, June 28: The Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) today denied media reports suggesting that permanent structures have been raised at Baltal or a road is being laid from Rangamoh to Domel enroute the cave shrine. According to reports, Forest Minister Abdul Hamid Karra had taken objection to the construction of permanent structures by the SASB. "The Minister seems to have been misled and not briefed about the facts," a board spokesperson said. He pointed out that the Board has only constructed pre-fabricated shelters on nuts and bolts which could be removed when required...

Greater Kashmir, 29 June 2006

Editorial: FASE has a role

Exploitation of some girls by some people at top in politics, bureaucracy, police and security forces sent shockwaves all over the state. What was more shocking was that these abominable acts were being carried out in a systematic way under full protection of the men in power. It would be naïve to believe that government was not aware about these acts; reports that percolated down from the echelons of power did sufficiently suggest that the former Chief Minister was fully aware about some of ministers and bureaucrats duping the innocent girls with promise of jobs and exploiting them. If there would not have been a tacit approval for such obnoxious and abhorrent acts, the government would have acted on the surfacing of the first report some two years back and not allowed the menace to gain cancerous dimensions...

Greater Kashmir, 29 June 2006

The importance of being a minister-II - Prof. Ismail Aashna

No sooner a person is favored by fortune in becoming a minister than he experiences a sudden transformation of fortune. It is not that others start looking at him from a renewed point of view but his own attitude towards his own personality also undergoes a sea change. I remember a friend who after having lived through the agonizing years of militancy joined Farooq Abdullah's Cabinet. Believe me, I did not trust my own eyes when I first met him in his chamber at the civil secretariat Jammu. I discovered him sitting meticulously dressed in a graceful chair like a groom surrounded by so many wedding guests...

Daily Excelsior, 30 June 2006

Iqbal Khanday arrested in 'sex scam' (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, June 29: One of Jammu & Kashmir state's most influential bureaucrats and a senior officer of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Mohammad Iqbal Khanday, has been arrested by CBI today for his alleged involvement in the infamous 'Srinagar sex scandal'. CBI has also arrested PROs of two detained former Ministers, Ghulam Ahmed Mir and Raman Mattoo, besides a hotel owner and two of his employees. Having already arrested over a dozen persons---including two former Ministers, a DIG of BSF, a DySP of J&K Police and a former Additional Advocate General of the State---CBI today arrested Principal Secretary to Government, Planning Department, Iqbal Khanday...

Daily Excelsior, 30 June 2006

Army rules out induction of fresh troops in J&K

New Delhi, June 29: The Army today ruled out induction of fresh troops in Jammu and Kashmir but said re-deployment of forces will be carried out on the basis of intelligence inputs to counter infiltration and combat terrorism. "There is no requirement of extra troops. We have enough troops under the Northern Command. It is just a question of positioning them, re-deploying them and making them more dynamic to check infiltration and deal with terrorism," Army Chief Gen. J J Singh said after a function to honour two mountaineering expeditions which scaled Himalayan peaks. Asked if there was any move to step up troop presence along the Line of Control in J&K, he said "there is no such move. Counter infiltration strategy is a three-tier one and we have to spring some surprises for them (militants)"...

Daily Excelsior, 30 June 2006

HM cadre kills HUJI militant

Jammu, June 29: A Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) militant was gunned down by the Hizbul Mujahideen cadre in inter group rivalry at village Haidar in Kishtwar tehsil of Doda district last night. SSP Doda Manohar Singh said body of the HUJI militant identified as Nazeer Hussain Dugi alias Basharat son of Abdul Rehman R/o Bhalna, Keshwan, was recovered from village Haidar, about eight kms from Kishtwar last night. Nazeer was an active militant of HUJI outfit and was reported to have been killed by Hizbul Mujahideen militants. Weapon of Nazeer Hussain was taken away by fleeing Hizbul militants. Security forces and police recovered 30 kg black colored explosive and four detonators during a search operation at Dubri in Mahore area of Reasi police district.

Greater Kashmir, 30 June 2006

Governor orders probe into Shivlingam controversy (Arshad Me?raj)

Srinagar, June 29: Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, who is also the chairman of Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) has ordered a probe by a retired High Court judge into the 'tampering' of the 'Shivlingam' in Amarnath cave. According to Raj Bhawan sources, Sinha, after consulting Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad ordered the probe on Thursday. The enquiry would be conducted by Justice (Retd) K K Gupta who would submit his report to the board in a month. The investigation follows recommendations after preliminary enquiry report by the SASB Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Arun Kumar who had been ordered by the chairman to hold probe on June 7 into the complaints received from several quarters and as reported by press of piling snow on the 'lingam.' ...

Greater Kashmir, 30 June 2006

Communal harmony in Kashmir - I - Yasar Muhammad Baba

...The mutual respect and tolerance for one another's religion and way of life was not confined to the rulers and their courtiers only. It was a common characteristic of the people in general and was amply reflected in their way of life. This explains the closely knit social and cultural life of the Kashmiris, Hindus and Muslims both. It also explains the phenomenon of temples nestling by the side of mosques and Muslim shrines flanking the sides of hill dedicated to Hindu gods and goddesses. Or, what is equally heartening, members of the two communities owing allegiance to each other's saints and sagas. This we can still find Hindu Muslims calling 'Lal Ded', as Lalleshwari 'Lallamoj' or 'Mother Lalla' and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali the patron saint of Kashmir as 'Nund Rish', Sahajanunda, Alamdar-I-Kashmir and Sheikh-ul-Alam who is also the founder of the order of Rishis in Kashmir...