

Daily Excelsior, 1 March 2006

### **NC MLAs stall Assembly against Handwara killings**

JAMMU, Feb 28: National Conference MLAs today stalled proceedings of the Assembly for over 50 minutes demanding that their adjournment motion on what they called increasing human rights violations particularly the latest Handwara killings be admitted. Speaker Tara Chand had to adjourn the House for about half an hour. Proceedings of the House resumed only after the Speaker made an announcement in the Assembly (after holding talks with the NC leader including Leader of Opposition Abdul Rahim Rather during the adjournment) that the issue of Handwara killings would be discussed in the House for one hour tomorrow. NC MLAs including Mr Rather, Dr Mehboob Beg, Ali Mohd Sagar and Saifullah Mir had moved the adjournment motion in the Assembly demanding that entire business of the House be suspended to discuss the issue of rights violations especially Handwara killings.

The Indian Express, 1 March 2006

### **Two top Hizbul chiefs shot**

Srinagar, February 28: Two top commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen were among three militants killed in separate encounters with the security forces in the Valley today. The troops also recovered huge cache of arms and ammunition from the slain militants. Giving details, Border Security Force spokesman said that its troops achieved a major success during an operation in South Kashmir's Pulwama district and killed two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen. "The troops were searching for militants in Drabgam and Rajpora when they came under fire. In the encounter that ensued, two Hizb militants were killed," he said. The spokesman identified the two slain militants as Ghulam Mohammad Malla, alias Aiyaz of Theran, district commander and Javid Ali Lone of Dangan Shopian, while the third militant is yet to be identified. Four BSF men were also injured in the shootout.

Greater Kashmir, 1 March 2006

### **High Court to cure ailing health sector in JK (NASEER A GANAI)**

Jammu, Feb 28: As if stepping in to retrieve the state's health sector from the morass, J&K High Court Tuesday directed the State government to come up with performance status of hospitals and other health centres registered under Jammu and Kashmir Nursing Home and Clinical Establishment Act 1963. The Division Bench comprising Chief Justice, Justice B.A Khan and Justice Mansoor Ahmad Mir directed the government to close all unregistered nursing homes and private hospitals within a week of the date of notice issued to them by Director Health Service. There is more. The Division Bench has directed the Principal Secretary to Government (Health and Medical Education), Director Health Services (Srinagar, Jammu) to furnish details of doctors (with their attendance sheet) working in government hospitals, dispensaries and public health centres.

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### **Assembly approves Parliamentary system**

JAMMU, Feb 28: The Legislative Assembly today unanimously approved an all party Business Advisory Committee (BAC) report switching over to Parliamentary system in the Assembly by debating grants of only important Ministries and skipping others besides reducing sittings of the budget session from 30 to 20. Three NC MLAs including Ali Mohd Sagar, Dr Mehboob Beg and Ajay Sadhotra objected to skipping of the grants of some "important Ministries". A report of the BAC, which was adopted yesterday, was presented in the House by Deputy Chief Minister, Incharge Law and Parliamentary Affairs Muzaffar Hussain Baig today. The report said it was discussed in the meeting yesterday that there was a practice in the Parliament to discuss grants of only important Ministries having huge budget estimates and grants of other Ministries are clubbed for discussion.

The Indian Express, 1 March 2006

### **Truck carrying 10,000 gunbutts detained**

Jammu, February 28: A truck carrying 10,000 walnut gunbutts was detained by the officials of Forest Protection Force after it received an anonymous complaint. The officials have asked the supplier to produce the required documents on Wednesday. The truck (JK01A-9909) was on its way to Jammu from Anantnag. On Sunday, the truck was stopped at Udhampur by the forest officials. After verifying the documents, the truck was later let off, sources said. Sources said when the truck reached Jammu on Monday, it was again detained by the police for checking and after finding the documents correct, the police let off the truck.

Greater Kashmir, 1 March 2006

### **Arrests spark protests in Varmul**

Srinagar: Police used force on Tuesday to disperse a massive demonstration against the arrest of five persons, including two brothers, in north Kashmir's Varmul district. Reports said police arrested Mudasir Ahmad and Muhammad Yousuf sons of Ghulam Muhammad, Muhammad Rafiq Teli son of Abdul Aziz Teli, Basharat Ahmad Najar son of Ghulam Nabi Najar, and Ghulam Muhammad Ganai son of Khalid Ahmad during raids at Pattan on Monday night. Demanding their immediate release, a large group of people blocked the Srinagar-Varmul highway and shouted slogans against the government. Police beat up the protesters with bamboo sticks when they refused to disperse.

Daily Excelsior, 1 March 2006

### **Roundtable meets ultimate solution: Mufti**

JAMMU, Feb 28: Welcoming the 'bold decision' of Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in calling a roundtable conference on Jammu and Kashmir in the Union Capital recently, People's Democratic Party patron and former Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed today said that such a step, which is the beginning of the process, has provided an opportunity for the ultimate resolution of Kashmir. Holding of roundtable conference on Jammu and Kashmir

and organizing a similar one in future in Srinagar is a giant step in resolution of vexed Kashmir issue and all political parties, their leadership and even separatists should seize this opportunity, Mufti Sayeed said at a press conference here. " It is an opportunity of the century", he remarked.

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### **Assembly condemns Danish cartoon**

JAMMU, Feb 28: The Legislative Assembly today unanimously passed a resolution condemning Danish newspaper and some other Western publications for printing a blasphemous cartoon. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, NC MLA Dr Mehboob Beg said a conspiracy has been hatched at an international level by the Western countries to hurt sentiments of Muslims. He noted that a cartoon published by a Danish newspaper was re-printed by 21 newspapers. "Our country has largest Muslim population next to Indonesia. The House should pass a resolution, as done by Andhra Pradesh Assembly, condemning the act of blasphemy", he said. Transport Minister and veteran Congress leader Mangat Ram Sharma said he on behalf of the House condemned the act. The Government of India had summoned Danish Ambassador and reprimanded him.

Greater Kashmir, 1 March 2006

### **Pak welcomes Bush push for Kashmir peace**

Islamabad: Pakistan has welcomed US President George W Bush's plan to push for a peace agreement on Kashmir when he visits New Delhi and Islamabad this week, the Pak Foreign Office said. FO spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said Bush's approach was welcome and consistent with his recently stated policy. "We do encourage and appreciate the international community's engagement with Pakistan and India on Kashmir," she told reporters at a weekly press briefing. "The US has been, in a way, engaged in this process." Aslam said Bush's speech last week to the Asia Society in Washington "clearly spells out the US policy direction".

Daily Excelsior, 1 March 2006

### **Health employee, 3 militants killed**

Srinagar, Feb 28: Three militants including a top commander of Hizbul Mujahideen militant outfit were killed in separate encounters at Rafiabad Baramulla and Drabgam Pulwama, while as militants shot dead a health department employee in Sopore today. According to sources, a top Hizbul Mujahideen commander was killed in an encounter with personnel of SOG in Hadipora Rafiabad during last night. Sources said that SOG on a tip off laid an ambush over militants in Hadipora Rafiabad during which a militant was intercepted. Sources said that cops asked the militant to stop, however, he refused and opened heavy fire on them, which was returned and in the ensuing gun battle the said militant was shot down. Sources identified the slain militant as Aashiq Hussain Peer, HM district commander of Chakla Baramulla.

Greater Kashmir, 1 March 2006

### **Assembly to debate rights abuse today (RIYAZ MASROOR)**

Srinagar, Feb 28: Maintaining fury over the Handwara killings on the second day of assembly proceedings, opposition National Conference today forced the speaker Tara Chand to announce a one-hour special session during third day proceedings on Wednesday to discuss the issue of rights abuse in J&K. Within 20 minutes of commencing, assembly was halted for a brief spell on the second day today as Opposition members virtually heckled the speaker Tara Chand seeking a full-fledged discussion on human rights violations especially the killing of four teenagers allegedly by troops in Handwara early last week. NC had earlier moved an adjournment motion in which it pleaded that the motion of thanks on governors address be passed only after appending the mention of rights violations and ways to find durable solution to the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people of the state" to it.

Daily Excelsior, 2 March 2006

### **CM orders judicial probe into Handwara killings**

JAMMU, Mar 1: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today ordered a judicial inquiry into February 22 killings of five civilians including three children at Handwara saying Law Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig has been asked to work out modalities of the Inquiry Commission. The announcement came at the fag end of Mr Azad's reply to a special discussion on Handwara killings in the Legislative Assembly which was ordered by Speaker Tara Chand following yesterday's pandemonium in the Assembly by the National Conference members. While ordering a judicial probe in the killings, a demand of the NC for which they had even boycotted Governor's Address to both Houses of the Legislature on February 27, the Chief Minister dispelled the impression that no action had emerged out of the magisterial probes ordered into the killings and that no action has been taken in human rights violations. In his nearly 35 minutes reply, he squarely blamed the militants for introducing gun culture in the Valley and killing innocent civilians.

The Indian Express, 2 March 2006

### **Flu in Pak, J-K border areas on alert (Neeraj Santoshi)**

Jammu, March 1: JAMMU and Kashmir government has intensified vigil in the areas bordering Pakistan, after the neighbouring country reportedly confirmed H5N1 bird flu virus in two of its poultry farms. Talking to The Indian Express, Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, N A Kitchloo confirmed that vigil has been intensified. The security forces have also been told to be vigilant about the developments in the border areas and report any unusual mortality or behaviour of birds, he added. "We are prepared. Our staff is keeping a close watch along the border areas, especially the wetlands which are at present home to thousands of migratory birds," he said. The Pakistan officials have reportedly culled 25,000 birds overnight following the reported confirmation of the H5N1 virus in the

poultry. They have also sent the samples to England for testing.

Daily Excelsior, 2 March 2006

### **NC MLAs stage walk-out**

JAMMU, Mar 1: Opposition National Conference (NC) staged a walkout from the State Assembly today in protest against the statement of Minister of PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Qazi Mohammed Afzal which the Leader of Opposition, Abdul Rahim Rather termed amounted to Breach of Trust. The Minister's statement led to uproar in the House and the Deputy Chief Minister was left with no alternative but to seek apology on behalf of the Government. The Opposition showed total dissatisfaction with the Minister's reply to the question of Mohammed Sharif Niaz of Congress, that Doda district has been continuously ignored in Irrigation and Flood Control works. They put volleys of supplementaries to Minister to corner him.

Greater Kashmir, 2 March 2006

### **Heavy Army presence the cause: NC**

Jammu, Mar 1: National Conference legislators obliquely asserted that the Army presence in the state was primary cause for rights violations as they prodded the coalition government toward ordering judicial probe into Handwara killings during a heated debate in the state assembly Wednesday afternoon. However noted MLA M.Y.Tarigami and legislator from Bandipora constituency, Usman Majid kept insisting on addressing "both sides of the coin." Senior NC leader and MLA Islamabad, Dr. Mehboob Beig while arguing that human rights abuse would not cease until the heavily deployed troops in J&K wielded the "unbridled" powers. "As long as the physical presence of troops who enjoy unbridled powers in the wake of certain laws situation will remain as it is. These draconian laws make soldiers licensed to kill. This adds to the alienation of a bigger section that is outside the fold of electoral process. Those are the ones who are to be approached for talks," Dr. Mehboob said.

The Indian Express, 2 March 2006

### **Mehbooba hails judicial probe into Handwara killings**

Jammu, March 1: Hailing the announcement of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad for ordering judicial inquiry into the Doodipora, Handwara killings, PDP president and MP, Mehbooba Mufti has said that this decision demonstrates the concern, which the coalition government has for the welfare of people. In a statement issued in New Delhi today, Mehbooba Mufti has said that ever since the coalition government took over in November 2002, all-out measures were taken to instill confidence among the people of the state, who had suffered a lot due to militancy. She said it is the outcome of the people-friendly attitude and good governance, which yielded in legitimacy on the government efforts which, she said has proved fruitful in facilitating the atmosphere for Indo-Pak dialogue process.

Daily Excelsior, 2 March 2006

### **Resignation of Niaz accepted**

JAMMU, Mar 1: Speaker Tara Chand today announced in the Assembly that former Power Minister and Congress MLA from Bhandarwah Assembly constituency Mohd Sharief Niaz had resigned from the House. Making a brief statement in the Assembly, the Speaker said he has accepted the resignation of Mr Niaz. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad is likely to contest the Assembly election from Bhandarwah. Mr Azad, who will complete four months in office tomorrow, have to get elected member of the either House in next two months. Already, three Assembly seats are lying vacant in the Kashmir valley including Pattan, Rafiabad and Wagoora. Pattan and Rafiabad had fallen vacant due to resignations of Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari and Dillawar Mir after they resigned from NC to join PDP while Wagoora fell vacant after the killing of former Minister Dr Ghulam Nabi Lone.

Greater Kashmir, 2 March 2006

### **Protests continue**

Srinagar, Mar 1: Valley-wide protests were held Wednesday against the series of blasphemous incidents in some European countries and the recent publication of image of the holy Kabba in a New Delhi based magazine that hurt the sentiments of Muslims. Over a dozen persons were taken into custody and a similar number injured in police action against the protestors, reports here said. Police resorted to lathi charge, hurled tear gas shells and fired live ammunition in air to disperse the mob. Some cops including an official were also hurt in the ding-dong battle.

Greater Kashmir, 2 March 2006

### **JK turns down Centre's advice on poultry ban (M HYDERI)**

Srinagar, Mar 1: Jammu and Kashmir government has rejected a demand of Centre to review the ban on import of poultry products into the state which was imposed following the outbreak of bird flu in many states, and reiterated that the ban would continue till the threat is over.

The Centre had argued that outbreak of Avian influenza is "localized to a few farms in Maharashtra and Gujarat." "Active surveillance has been intensified around the area of infection. Surveillance has been stepped up in all the states of the union," said the Secretary Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of

Agriculture, GoI in a letter No. 50183/2005 LDT (AD) dated February 24 to Chief Secretaries of all the states. "... Imposing restriction on inter-state movement of poultry and poultry products is not necessary. The states are advised to review any such restrictions imposed at their levels," the letter adds. The Jammu and Kashmir government had imposed ban on February 19 on the entry of poultry and eggs from outside the state in the wake of bird flu disease.

Daily Excelsior, 3 March 2006

#### **Karvaan-e-Aman cancelled on Pak request**

SRINAGAR, Mar 2: The "Karvaan-e-Aman (Caravan of Peace)" between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, scheduled for today, was cancelled after Pakistan intimated the authorities here that it was not ready for the crossing due to "some technical problems", officials said. "We were intimated by the Pakistan authorities that there are certain technical problems on their side and as such asked for cancellation of today's service," they said. The officials said the Pakistani authorities informed that there were landslides at various places between Muzaffarabad and Chakothi, the last border point from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The landslides would take some time to clear, the Pakistani officials said. This would have been the first cross-border bus run after Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on February 20, formally inaugurated the re-erected Kaman Aman Setu (peace bridge) along the Line of Control (LoC).

Greater Kashmir, 3 March 2006

#### **1500 militants in JK: DG CRPF**

Srinagar, Mar 2: The Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) J K Sinha Thursday said his troops were prepared to tackle militants "intending to cross into this side in wake of melting of snow on peaks." "I and my soldiers are ready to face the problem that may come up as this is the time when infiltration happens," Sinha, who is on a two-day visit to the Valley, told mediapersons here. He said: "There has been a decrease in the total number of violent incidents with each passing year as the number of militants is not high. The situation in Kashmir seems to be returning towards normalcy and things have started to improve," Sinha said, adding, "the problem in Srinagar could be sorted out easily." He admitted that fighting militancy in Kashmir was a difficult job, but hurriedly added that the experienced and trained CRPF personnel performed their duties in better way after taking complete charge of internal security in Kashmir. "Our personnel are well equipped and well trained and I feel we can handle the situation," Sinha said, adding, "the troopers have served in insurgency ridden Punjab and North East and combating left wing militants."

Daily Excelsior, 3 March 2006

#### **CRPF ready to take on militants' challenge: DG**

SRINAGAR, Mar 2: Observing that the situation in militancy-torn Kashmir valley was limping back to normalcy, CRPF Director General Jyoti Kumar Sinha today said his troops were ready to take on any challenge posed by militants whose ranks are likely to swell in coming days as ultras from across the border might try to sneak into this side. "Snow has started melting on the peaks on Indo-Pak border. Militants from across the border might try to sneak into the Valley to swell the number of ultras. This is the time it (infiltration) happens," Sinha told reporters here. "The situation in Kashmir is coming towards betterment... Looking up. The number of violent incidents are coming down. I personally feel the problem can be sorted out with the support of the people," Sinha said. Sinha, who arrived here to review the security situation ahead of the tourist season, said his troops were prepared to meet any problem posed by militants. "As far as CRPF is concerned, we are a very experienced force serving the nation for a long time," he added.

Greater Kashmir, 3 March 2006

#### **Voices for K solution resound in JK House (RIYAZ MASROOR)**

Jammu, Mar 2: State legislature resonated with voices for Kashmir solution during the fourth day proceedings here Thursday. It started with softer comments on Prime Minister's roundtable initiative and traversed across wider dimensions of Kashmir issue with some fresh disclosures about leaders of both sides of the political divide raising many an eyebrow on the floor. Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Beig displayed his constitutional expertise while building a strong case for Khushhal Kashmir and discussed self-rule and autonomy in such a way that both appeared second to J&K's territorial integrity. However, he equally advocated the permanent resolution for Kashmir and with the help of his metaphoric articulation asserted that Pakistani President, General Musharraf had thrown the ball in Indian court. Here is what he and others in the house said on the issue.

Greater Kashmir, 3 March 2006

#### **SELF-RULE, AUTONOMY TWO SIDES OF SAME COIN: DY CM (RIYAZ MASROOR)**

Jammu, Mar 2: Kashmir issue dominated the fourth day proceedings in State Legislature Thursday with Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Beig concluding a lively debate with the assertion, "self-rule and autonomy are two sides of the same coin." Dy CM had moved a resolution in the light of last week's Kashmir roundtable in New Delhi to recognize Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's "sincerity and integrity to resolve this issue according to the aspirations of the people of the state."

Daily Excelsior, 7 March 2006

#### **J&K heads towards privatisation of power (Sanjeev Pargal)**

JAMMU, Mar 6: Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Incharge Finance and Planning didn't impose any fresh taxes nor increased or reduced the existing taxes in his fourth successive zero deficit and revenue surplus budget worth Rs 14,436 crore presented in the Legislative Assembly today. Describing the budget as "reform oriented" saying the Government's basic thrust for next three years would be on reforms after consolidation for

first three years, Mr Baig said the State will have to go for privatisation of power to tackle increasing losses in transmission as well as revenue collection and said the Government was ready for "political fallout" of the decision. He also announced reduction of Government share in Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd (JKBL) by 2.17 per cent from 53.17 per cent to 51 per cent.

Daily Excelsior, 7 March 2006

#### **All 4 candidates withdraw in SMC Mayor election**

SRINAGAR, Mar 6: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) became headless on its first anniversary as all the four candidates withdrew their nominations in a dramatic development three hours before the scheduled timing for the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor today. Minutes before the period of withdrawal of nominations expired at 1100 hours, National Conference's official candidate for the post of Mayor, Abdur Rasheed Pandit, as well as the rebel candidate and outgoing Mayor, Ghulam Mustafa Bhat, withdrew their nominations. This was dramatically followed by NC's candidate for the post of Deputy Mayor, Salman Sagar, as also PDP's Ali Mohammad Khan who was officially described as an "Independent" candidate for he had not supported his papers with an authorisation from the party president. Consequently, Returning Officer and Secretary Municipality cancelled the schedule of the election.

Greater Kashmir, 7 March 2006

#### **Trooper kills 4 colleagues, self**

Srinagar, Mar 6: Five Army men and one civilian were killed while five people were injured in the state since Sunday night. Reports said an Army man killed his four colleagues after a heated exchange of words, and later committed suicide in Miran Sahib area of Jammu on Sunday evening. Naik Satinder Singh of 21 Rajput opened indiscriminate firing on his colleagues with his service rifle killing four of them on spot. Satinder was suffering from mental depression for some time and had an brief altercation with his colleagues before taking the drastic step, reports said. The killed soldiers have been identified as Naik Hans Raj, Naik Omi Singh, Lance Naik Anand Kumar of 21 Rajput and Subedar Major Bhor Singh of 22 Rajput. Army has launched investigation into the incident. Meanwhile, unidentified gunmen shot dead a shopkeeper Ghulam-Mohi-ud-Din Shah son of Najam-ud-Din Shah in Ladhu Pampore (Pulwama district) on Monday afternoon.

Greater Kashmir, 7 March 2006

#### **State revenue: Rs 1900 Cr Power deficit: Rs 2355 Cr (Riyaz Masroor)**

Jammu, Mar 6: Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Beig Monday favored privatization of state's ailing power sector and asserted that radical reforms in power sector would transform the state into a hub of power trading in South Asia. The reforms include setting up of J&K Power Finance Corporation that would fund the monetary proposals mooted by another autonomous body, J&K Power Development Corporation (PDC) with the later to invite public equity in power. While introducing a separate financial management in power sector during his budget presentation in lower house, Dy CM argued that if power deficit were overcome the state would enjoy a total 'fiscal autonomy' to the extent of financing its own independent plan of Rs 3300 Crore, without any special central assistance. Beig, also Finance Minister, informed that the Chief Minister had taken up the handover of Salal and Uri hydel power projects with Center, which he said has referred the case to Prime Minister's task force on J&K.

The Indian Express, 6 March 2006

#### **24 hurt in two grenade blasts**

Srinagar, March 5: In two separate grenade attacks in the Valley, 24 persons including a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer, were injured. A reporter of Radio Kashmir was also injured in the attacks. In the afternoon, 20 persons including two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were injured when militants lobbed a hand grenade towards security forces in Pulwama town, 30 kilometres from Srinagar. Police sources said militants lobbed a hand grenade at a patrol party of the Central Reserve Police Force near the bus terminal in the Pulwama town. The grenade, however, missed the intended target and exploded with a big bang on the roadside. In the explosion, 18 pedestrians were injured. Two CRPF personnel also received splinter injuries in the attack. A reporter of Radio Kashmir's Shahrbeen programme, Ayub Javid, also sustained injuries in the explosion.

The Indian Express, 6 March 2006

#### **Militants kill Army Major, jawan**

Jammu, March 5: Day after the killing of three Pakistani ultras of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit in Sanjot area of Surankote, militants today killed an Army Major and a jawan during an ambush, while a militant was also killed by the security forces. In another incident, one dreaded militant carrying reward, surrendered before the police and security forces. During the encounter, which took place near Behri Laryot village under Gursai police station. The village is adjacent to the Nakkad Sanjot village, where three Pakistani militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit, were killed by the security forces on Saturday. Acting on a tip-off about the presence of militants in Behri Laryot village, troops of 38 RR launched a search operation around 9.30 am. When the security personnel were heading towards the village they were caught unaware by the militants who had laid an ambush on the way, said sources.

Daily Excelsior, 6 March 2006

#### **DP may question Mirwaiz in hawala racket**

NEW DELHI, Mar 5: Delhi Police and security agencies are likely to question Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer farooq in connection with a hawala racket in which a Dubai-based militant was arrested with a huge amount of money allegedly meant for Mirwaiz. During his interrogation, militant Nasir Safi Mir told the cops that the money was meant for Mirwaiz, official sources said. He also spilled beans about huge investments made by the Hurriyat

chairman in Dubai, they said. Mir was arrested from a Posh South Delhi locality in February this year. Some explosives and Rs 55 lakh in cash, which he had collected from a jeweller, who has a business in Dubai, were seized from him, the sources said. Delhi police officials, however, refused to comment on whether Mirwaiz would be questioned. Mir, during his custodial interrogation, claimed the Mirwaiz had allegedly made certain investments in buying shopping spaces in Dubai besides investing in his (Mir's) money exchange business.

Greater Kashmir, 6 March 2006

### **Omar to meet Musharraf**

New Delhi: After refusing to attend Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's roundtable here, several separatists will share the platform with the mainstream political leaders at a three-day international conference on Kashmir in Pakistan beginning Friday. Several separatist leaders, including moderate Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, are scheduled to attend the meet on Kashmir along with National Conference (NC) President Omar Abdullah and a People's Democratic Party (PDP) representative. Former Hurriyat Chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat is already in Pakistan and would attend the meet. The conference has been organised by Pugwash, a European think-tank engaged in finding solution to contentious issues in South Asia, at Islamabad from March 10 to 12. Almost all top separatist leaders had refused to attend the Prime Ministers roundtable on Kashmir here on February 25, citing "lack of preparation by the Centre" as the reason.

Greater Kashmir, 6 March 2006

### **Police beats women, 6 injured**

Srinagar: Six people were wounded on Sunday when police used batons and teargas to disperse a group of women demanding release of a youth arrested by the troops from Batmaloo area of Srinagar. Reports said the women took to the streets at Tengapora, Batamaloo and blocked traffic on the busy Bypass road demanding the release of Javed Ahmad Dar, who was arrested by the troops on Saturday evening. The demonstration turned violent when police asked the protesters to clear the road blockade. This prompted the protesters to indulge in stone-pelting, reports said. Police used batons to restore peace, but failed to disperse the protesters who offered a stiff resistance. Later teargas shells were used to chase away the protesters.

Greater Kashmir, 6 March 2006

### **FM to present budget statement today (ARIF HALEEM)**

Jammu, Mar 5: Power scenario is most likely to dominate budget discussion in state legislature following presentation of budget statement by Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Beig on Monday. The government is understood to present a separate power budget in order to portray a stable financial health of the state, which the government claims has got the highest-ever annual plan of Rs 5698 Crore. The fund includes an exclusive package of Rs. 1300 Cr to meet the power deficit that would cross the whopping 1500 Cr by the end of this fiscal. Rs 230 Cr for the upcoming Baglihar power project will also be separately remitted to state treasury and Rs 848 Cr that would go to various state government departments for executing a section of the projects that fall under Prime Minister's ambitious Rs. 24,000 crores Reconstruction Plan announced in later 2004.

Daily Excelsior, 8 March 2006

### **Kashmir settlement needs sincerity: CM**

Jammu, Mar 7: Winding up the discussion on the resolution regarding roundtable conference in Legislative Council today, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said that persuasion of emotional slogans and beating about the bush, to led astray the people, who have shun the path of confrontation and understood the ground realities, is mere wasting of time. Saying that roundtable conferences are appropriate forums for the leaders of all shades of opinion in Jammu and Kashmir to discuss Kashmir issue and evolve a workable consensus, he said unless peace takes strong roots, the prosperity of the State will remain a distant dream. Conveying his gratitude to Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh for organizing the roundtable conference and providing opportunity to put forth their view point, Mr Azad said that 58 years old chronic Kashmir issue cannot be solved in closed door rooms or in camera at one go but requires open and across the table interaction where all leaders from all political parties, regions and areas having their viewpoint about the issue, could interact.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2006

### **Lashkar ultra surrenders in Doda**

Jammu, March 7: ONE militant of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit surrendered before army and police at Thatri in Doda district on Monday. Meanwhile, troops of Border Security Forces apprehended nine Bangladeshis from Ramgarh sector during the last 24 hours. In yet another incident, security forces recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from different places in Jammu region. The militants who surrendered before the Rashtriya Rifle battalion Commanding Officer and Station House Officer, Thatri on Monday has been identified as Irshad Ahmed alias Abu Talah son of Nazeer Ahmed of Bhargi village of Gandoh tehsil, said defence sources.

Greater Kashmir, 8 March 2006

### **Geelani urges poll boycott**

Srinagar, Mar 7: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference has appealed the people to boycott the forthcoming assembly bye-elections in the state. In a statement here, Geelani said: "Participation in elections would amount to sellout of the sacrifices rendered by the people in the ongoing freedom movement. We appeal to all to boycott the forthcoming by-elections in the state." Geelani described pro-India National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party as the two sides of the same coin." Both unleashed a reign of terror when they were in power. The people were subjected to extreme atrocities at the behest of these political parties. Kashmiris have been always been suppressed by Indian governments in association with the leaders of these

parties," he said. "Whenever they (NC and PDP) lose power they start accusing each other. When Mufti Muhammad Sayeed was Home Minister of India, massacres were perpetrated in Kashmir and when Farooq Abdullah was Chief Minister he ordered elimination of all the arrested youth instead of lodging them in already congested jails," the Hurriyat leader said.

Daily Excelsior, 8 March 2006

#### **LeT commander among four killed in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR, Mar 7 : A top commander of Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was among three militants killed by security forces while a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was detected and defused on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, an official spokesman said. Security forces today averted a major tragedy on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway when they defused a powerful Improvised explosive Device (IED) Militants kidnapped an 11 class student Mashook Ahmad Raina at Kulgam and later chopped off two fingers of his right hand. The student was admitted to hospital, the spokesman said. Official sources said security forces launched a search operation following a tip-off that some militants were holding a meeting at Achabal in south Kashmir district of Anantang. During the operation, militants fired on the search party.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2006

#### **Three ultras killed in separate encounters**

Srinagar, March 7: THREE militants were killed in separate encounters with the security forces since Monday evening in the Valley. Meanwhile, a woman, injured some months ago in Kupwara district, succumbed to her injuries today. A Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant was killed in south Kashmir's Achabal village. Police sources said the soldiers of 7 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) and the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir Police, in a joint operation, cordoned off the Sheikhpura village in Achabal after they received a tip-off about the presence of militants there. As the joint party of the police and the Army were searching for the hiding militants, they came under heavy fire. The Army retaliated, ensuing a fierce gunbattle, which lasted for many hours. A local militant of Pakistan-based LeT was killed.

Daily Excelsior, 8 March 2006

#### **Figures fudged to make budget zero deficit: Rather**

JAMMU, Mar 7: Leader of Opposition and former Finance Minister Abdul Rahim Rather today disputed the claim of Deputy Chief Minister, Incharge Finance Muzaffar Hussain Baig that the budget presented by him yesterday was zero deficit. He said the figures have been fudged to make it a zero deficit budget. Initiating discussion on budget in the Legislative Assembly, he asked: "had the budget been zero deficit, why the Overdrafts of the Government from Jammu and Kashmir Bank have gone up considerably"? Mr Baig had admitted that Overdrafts are increasing by Rs 200 crore every year and were expected to be around Rs 1500 crore this year." The Overdrafts were nearly Rs 800 crore in 2002 (when the NC lost the power).

Daily Excelsior, 9 March 2006

#### **NC targets Qazi Afzal, no business transacted**

JAMMU, Mar 8: Pandemonium prevailed in the Legislative Assembly and Speaker Tara Chand had to adjourn the House for the day without transacting any business barring two questions with a determined National Conference stalling the proceedings demanding constitution of a House Committee to probe over 3100 backdoor appointments and works worth crores executed without tenders by PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Qazi Mohd Afzal. The Speaker first adjourned the House at 11.15 am as all NC MLAs indulged in sloganeering against Mr Afzal and the adjournment continued for about one and a half hour. As it resumed around 12.50 pm, there was no let up in the protests and the Chair adjourned the House till 2.30 pm including the lunch break. As the sitting resumed at about 2.45 pm, heated exchanges again took place between treasury benches and the Opposition with Ghulam Hassan Khan and Javed Mustafa Mir rushing towards well of the House shouting at the NC members. At this stage, Tara Chand adjourned the House for the day.

Daily Excelsior, 9 March 2006

#### **Reality dawned upon me: Hizb comdr (Sarwar Kashani)**

Srinagar, Mar 8: "I surrendered because reality dawned upon me," said the surrendered Hizbul Mujahideen district commander before media today, while explaining his reasons why he deserted his militant outfit and joined "mainstream". Around 20-year-old boy, Shabeer Ahmed Koli of Pulwama had joined militant ranks in 2001 and in a short span of time, he was given charge of entire Pulwama district to conduct militant activities there and command a group of nine other militants in the district. And finally he surrendered before the Army on February 15 this year and led the troopers to bust militant hideouts and recover huge caches of arms and ammunition. And when asked why he surrendered, Sajjad said that it was reality that dawned upon him and made him to take the step, which he, during his brief interaction, described as 'a step towards peace'. Army today produced huge cache of arms and ammunition and nine surrendered militants, including Shabeer alias Majid, a Hizbul Mujahideen district commander, before the media at Badami Bagh Cantonment housing headquarters of 15 Corps.

Daily Excelsior, 9 March 2006

#### **Militant killed, SPO turned Lashkar ultra arrested**

JAMMU, Mar 8: A top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant was killed and his associate, who was a former Special Police Officer (SPO), was arrested in an encounter with police and Army at village Tawai Changa, about 10 kms from Gandoh in Doda district this evening. In another incident, the militants gunned down a Village Defence Committee (VDC) members at Chajru in Mahore tehsil of Reasi police district. Official sources said police and

Army launched a search operation at Tawai Changa at 6 pm today after developing an information that two Lashkar militants had come to the village "on a mission". A contact with the militants was established at 6.30 pm. In the exchange of gun-battle, one militant was gunned down by the security personnel while another was captured alive. Security forces didn't suffer any casualties in the operation. Slain militant has been identified as Nasoor Rehman son of Ghulam Hussain R/o Bisran, KiloTRAN.

Greater Kashmir, 9 March 2006

### **Accept JK as disputed, I'll talk, Syed Geelani tells New Delhi**

Srinagar, Mar 8: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference Wednesday said he would never accept India's invitation for talks unless she accepts Kashmir as a disputed territory. "Even if Indian Prime Minister comes to my home and tells me he wants to talk to me I won't till India accepts Kashmir as disputed territory," Geelani told reporters here. He was reacting to a statement of senior Congress leader Ghulam Rasool Kar. Kar, according to Geelani, had said, "Geelani had recently met me and told that if India invites him properly he will go for the talks." "It is rubbish. History is witness that Kar never talks anything serious," Geelani said. He said he wanted to go to Pakistan to attend a conference organised by Pugwash think-tank but was "denied travel documents by India." "I am accused of being against the peace process which is totally wrong. I want democratic and everlasting solution of Kashmir, but India has never been sincere. I am not optimistic about the outcome of Pugwash meet, but I wanted to participate in it. I wanted to go to Islamabad and meet the Pakistani leadership and people," Geelani said.

The Indian Express, 10 March 2006

### **Finally, General says Kashmir bilateral issue**

New Delhi, March 9: After the US publicly rejected its request for facilitation on the Kashmir problem, Pakistan today changed its decades-old stance, with President Pervez Musharraf saying the issue was a bilateral matter and he did not want it to become multilateral. "We (Pakistan and India) are into a bilateral dialogue. We don't want to make it trilateral or multilateral," he told CNN-IBN in an interview. He was replying to a question regarding US President George Bush's recent remarks that he would not facilitate the Kashmir issue. Bush's comments came after Musharraf told a joint press conference in Islamabad last week that he had requested the US leader to "remain involved for facilitating for resolution of all issues including Kashmir". "Well, I didn't go into the details of the words but certainly when it is facilitate or encourage, I think it is one and the same thing," Musharraf told the TV channel. "He (Bush) can only encourage us or facilitate. I see both of them to mean the same thing," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 10 March 2006

### **NC members grill Govt, stage walk-out**

JAMMU, Mar 9: Noisy scenes were witnessed in the Legislative Council today over the issue of return of migrants to Valley, followed by the walk-out by the opposition National Conference members as the Minister for Transport and Administrative Reforms, Mangat Ram Sharma failed to convince them. The issue generated lot of heat for about 25 minutes and dominated today's proceedings in the Upper House. Not only the opposition members from NC but from PDP and CPI(M) and Congress also grilled the Minister for Transport, who was responding on behalf of the Minister for Revenue to the joint question of Ghulam Nabi Shaheen, Gh Nabi Lone and Bilal Ahmed Khan Lodhi during Question Hour today. They alleged that Government was not serious for the return of Kashmiri migrants to Valley and despite its claim of having registered many families, it has failed to ensure return of even a single family back to Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 10 March 2006

### **Pakistan rejects Indian objection on Bhasha Dam**

Islamabad, Mar 9: Pakistan has rejected the Indian demarche regarding construction of Bhasha Dam. "The dam is being constructed within the water resources management policy of the government of Pakistan," official news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) quoted Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tasneem Aslam as saying. She was commenting on Indian objection that it would infringe on territory claimed by New Delhi and inundate large parts of northern Kashmir. Ms Aslam said disputed status of Kashmir was established by the United Nations Security Council resolutions 38,39,47,51 (1948) and subsequent resolutions by the United Nation's Commission on India and Pakistan.

Daily Excelsior, 10 March 2006

### **J&K to become centre of technical, professional education: Azad**

JAMMU, Mar 9: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that Jammu and Kashmir is all set to make a mark and become a centre of technical and professional education in coming years. Inaugurating the SMVDU College of Sciences today, Mr Azad said that Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) will now quench the academic thirst of youth from all over the country. "Earlier youth from State were going to Delhi. Now people from other parts of the nation will visit the State," Mr Azad said while addressing students of SMVDU after inaugurating the building complex. The Chief Minister said that in the era of knowledge, explosion and technological advancement, the importance of quality technical education has increased manifold particularly in the wake of competition with the advanced countries.

Daily Excelsior, 10 March 2006

### **Six surrender in Uri**

SRINAGAR, Mar 9 : Six militants surrendered along with two pistols, as many magazines and 10 rounds of ammunition at Uri in north Kashmir district of Baramulla. With this a total of 16 ultras have surrendered in the Valley during the last 24 hours. Nine militants surrendered in Srinagar yesterday. Meanwhile, two security

personnel today nearly opened fire on each other after they exchanged heated words over some matter in an inebriated condition, official sources said. They said the two security men Devinder Singh and Sadhu Ram attached with the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations, Baramulla exchanged heated words over some matter when in an inebriated condition. The sources said as the war of words continued, the two police personnel nearly opened fire on each other from their service weapons. However, the two were overpowered by their colleagues and the weapons taken away from them. The sources said the two were later taken into custody.

Daily Excelsior, 11 March 2006

#### **Govt to set up House Committees**

JAMMU, Mar 10: Two days dead-lock in the Legislative Assembly on back-door appointments and execution of works without tenders by PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Qazi Afzal was finally broken at 12 noon today after an adjournment of over one hour with the Government agreeing to set up the House Committees to go into the NC's charges against Mr Afzal and all back-door appointments and works done in violation of codal formalities since 1996. Like the last two days, no work was transacted in the House today for two hours with a free for all situation being observed in the Assembly for some time as NC members shouted slogans in favour of their demand, the Congress and PDP MLAs countered them and four MLAs—two from JKNPP and one each from BJP and JSM—trooping into well of the House displaying hand written posters demanding implementation of Wazir Commission report.

Daily Excelsior, 11 March 2006

#### **Musharraf for roundtable of Kashmir representatives**

ISLAMABAD, Mar 10: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today suggested a round table conference of representatives of both sides of Kashmir either in Srinagar or Muzzafarabad and said he was ready to attend it with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to find a solution to the Kashmir problem. In the first ever meeting with an elected representative from Jammu and Kashmir, Musharraf told National Conference chief Omar Abdullah here that he was more than willing to discuss any idea to find a solution to the Kashmir problem. He said if Singh agreed, he was ready to share a dais with him for a round-table conference with representatives from both sides of Kashmir in their bid to resolve the Kashmir issue, Omar said after a 45-minute meeting. Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mohammed Kasuri was also present during the talks.

Greater Kashmir, 11 March 2006

#### **Geelani ridicules Musharraf statement**

Srinagar, Mar 10: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference has termed Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf's statement that Kashmir is bilateral issue between India and Pakistan as "unrealistic and ridiculous." "Musharraf can't belie the history. Kashmir issue is in United Nations for the last 58 years and 18 resolutions have been passed on the right to self-determination of Kashmiris in the UN," Geelani said in a statement Friday. He said: "Kashmir isn't a border dispute between the two countries but the question of future of 13 million people of J&K. Kashmir is a dispute and it needs to be solved according to the aspirations of the people of the state." Geelani, who according to the statement, was speaking at a public gathering at Shangus village of Islamabad district cautioned the leadership of both the countries to refrain from "enforcing readymade decisions on Kashmiris." He thanked Shiromani Akali Dal president Simranjit Singh Mann for his "factual statement" on Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 11 March 2006

#### **Rs 1 cr spent on separatists' security: CM**

JAMMU, Mar 10: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that an amount of over Rs one crore was spent on the security of ten separatist leaders including Moulvi Umar Farooq, Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Shabir Shah and six other Kashmiri leaders last year. In response to a question of Nizam-ud-Din regarding security cover being provided to the Kashmiri leaders questioning State's accession with Union of India, the Chief Minister informed Upper House that protected persons which include leaders of different political ideologies are provided security on the basis of their individual threat perception. Disclosing names, he said that Kashmiri leaders including Moulvi Umar Farooq, Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Sajjad Ghani Lone, Bilal Ghani Lone, Saleem Geelani, Aga Sayed Hussain Moulvi, Hashim Qureshi and Yaqoob Vakil have been provided security by the Government and during the calendar year 2005, an amount of Rs 1.0087 cr was spent on their security.

Greater Kashmir, 11 March 2006

#### **Musharraf ready to attend roundtable in Srinagar**

Islamabad, Mar 10: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf expressed his readiness to attend a roundtable on Kashmir in Srinagar or New Delhi along with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for finding a solution to the vexed issue. He stated this when delegates at an international conference on Kashmir, which began here this morning, called on the Pakistani leader. Leading intellectuals and experts from India and Pakistan as well as politicians from both sides of Kashmir, are participating in the dialogue with the aim of giving a boost to the India-Pakistan peace process for the resolution of all the issues, including Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 11 March 2006

#### **Govt committed to implement Wazir report**

JAMMU, Mar 10: Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig today announced in the Legislative Assembly that the Government was committed to implement Wazir Commission report and solve the problems of refugees. Making a statement in the Assembly amidst protests by JKNPP, BJP and JSM MLAs, who trooped into well of the

House demanding immediate implementation of the Wazir Commission report and a statement by former Education Minister and JKNPP leader Harshdev Singh that the Government should clear uncertainty on Wazir report, Mr Baig said the implementation of Wazir Commission report was part of the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the coalition Government." I, on behalf of the Government, announce that recommendations of the Wazir Commission will be implemented. They will be implemented within the term of this Government", he assured the House.

Greater Kashmir, 11 March 2006

### **2 soldiers killed**

Jammu: An army soldier was killed when his rifle went off accidentally in Rajouri district, while another soldier committed suicide by hanging himself last night, official sources said today. The soldier identified as Lakishmun Singh of 17 Raj Rifles was on guard duty, when his rifle went off and the bullet pierced his head at Rumlidhar belt in Rajouri district last night, they said. The other Soldier, identified as Kishore Kumar, who had come on leave to his home in Gambir Moghala in Rajouri district, committed suicide by hanging himself early today. The reason behind the suicide was not immediately known, the sources said adding that cases have been registered in both the incidents.

Daily Excelsior, 11 March 2006

### **Gilgit-Baltistan part of J&K: India**

NEW DELHI, Mar 10: India today reaffirmed that the Gilgit-Baltistan region is a part of Jammu and Kashmir State which, on the basis of its accession in 1947, is an intergral part of the country. "We would like to reaffirm that the region of Gilgit-Baltistan is a part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, which, on the basis of its accession in 1947, is an integral part of India," an External Affairs Ministry spokesman said in reply to a question. The spokesman was commenting on reports that some Pakistani missions were circulating a new map of Jammu and Kashmir depicting the so-called Northern Areas of Gilgit-Baltistan as a separate entity and only the rest of the J and K as a State. "We have seen the reports in the Pakistani media," the spokesman said. He said the Pakistan Foreign Office had, however, denied that it had circulated any new map.

Daily Excelsior, 13 March 2006

### **People are my eyes, ears for jihad against corruption: Azad**

Jammu, Mar 12: Violence mongers have polluted the word Jihad by misnaming killing of innocents, looting of property and disrespecting women. This was stated by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while addressing public meetings at Chirala and Hallaran in Thathri area of Doda district today. The Chief Minister said that if by 'Jihad' they mean extortion, plunder, destruction, blazing of educational institutions, hospitals and bridges, they are definitely mistaken and committing crime against teachings of Islam and Allah. Mr. Azad said "to me Jihad stands for endeavouring to wipe out tears from the eyes of poor, uproot the menace of corruption, give justice to every citizen, seek prosperity for all and save mankind from miseries, fear, distress, diseases and exploitation".

The Indian Express, 13 March 2006

### **2 LeT militants killed at Rajouri**

Jammu, March 12: TWO top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants were gunned down by Army and police during a joint operation at Kotli Kalaban in Rajouri district today, while a lady was apprehended by the security forces while moving at Noori Gap near the Line of Control under suspicious circumstances. Giving details, SSP Rajouri, J P Singh, said that on specific information, Romeo Force and state police launched a search operation at Kotli Kalaban near Loharka Top under the jurisdiction of Manjakote police station on Saturday night. As the search parties cordoned a hideout and challenged the militants, the latter opened indiscriminate fire. The fire was effectively retaliated and in the ensuing gunbattle the two top LeT militants were eliminated, he added. The slain militants have been identified as area commander Abu Muzafa Shah, and Abu Marsad. The former was a Pakistani national, the SSP said, adding that the police recovered two AK-56 rifles along with eight magazines, one wireless set and some incriminating documents.

Greater Kashmir, 13 March 2006

### **Geelani rejects Pak proposals on Kashmir**

Srinagar, Mar 12: Rejecting Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's proposals on Kashmir issue, Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference on Sunday said "nothing except United Nation's resolutions would be acceptable for a permanent, peaceful and democratic solution to the problem." But, prior to this both India and Pakistan, he said, should go for demilitarization in two parts of divided Kashmir. "We have decided only one solution and that is implementation of UN resolutions. The 1.3 crore people should be given a chance to decide their fate," Geelani said here at a function on the death anniversary of Dr Ayub Thakur, chairman of London-based World Kashmir Freedom Movement, who died of cancer two years ago. Taking a dig at Gen Musharraf, Geelani said his government had deviated from the country's Kashmir policy.

Daily Excelsior, 13 March 2006

### **New RTI Act seeks to cover HR violations, corruption (Sanjeev Pargal)**

JAMMU, Mar 12: A bill seeking to repeal Right To Information (RTI) Act, 2004 and enactment of a new comprehensive law in Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled for introduction in the Legislative Assembly on March 29. The 26-page comprehensive private member's legislation, which also sought to bring allegations of human rights violations and corruption by security forces within the purview of RTI Act, is being introduced by CPM MLA Mohd Yusuf Tarigami, whose party extends outside support to the coalition Government. Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha has in pursuance of sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section 84 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir

recommended to the Legislative Assembly the introduction and consideration of the bill.

Greater Kashmir, 13 March 2006

### **Yasin meets Musharraf, Aziz**

Islamabad, Mar 12: JKLF chief Muhammad Yasin Malik had detailed one-to-one with Pakistani leadership on the sidelines of International Conference Pugwash on Self Governance. Malik told Greater Kashmir that he had detailed one-to-one with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf after the delegates of Pugwash met Musharraf here on Friday. Malik also met Prime Minister Shoukat Aziz yesterday and discussed issues related to resolution of Jammu and Kashmir issue. He told both the leaders that the wishes and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir are paramount. Malik also endorsed the ongoing peace process measure. Malik was not part of the Pugwash delegation that met Musharraf on Friday. However, he met Musharraf separately in the afternoon.

The Indian Express, 13 March 2006

### **Gilgit, PoK need self-rule not J-K: Rafiq**

Jammu, March 12: GUESS who is the other person to join the debate on self-rule - Rafiq Sadiq - son of Jammu and Kashmir's last Prime Minister and first Chief Minister, G M Sadiq. Rafiq's says self-rule is already there in Jammu and Kashmir. In a bid to generate the debate on the self-rule, the Jammu and Kashmir Sadiq Memorial Committee today organised a seminar, which was attended by several distinguished persons. Talking to ENS, Rafiq Sadiq, Chairman of the Sadiq Memorial Society said, "The self-rule exists already in Jammu and Kashmir. We have a separate constitution, separate flag and all the laws, which are being passed by Parliament, are not applicable in the state." He added, "It is instead the areas of Gilgit and POK, which need to be given the self-rule."

Daily Excelsior, 13 March 2006

### **Salahuddin's arrest significant: Omar**

ISLAMABAD, Mar 12: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah today described as "significant" reports of Pakistan's crackdown on Kashmir-based militant groups like Hizbul Mujahideen and its leader Syed Salahuddin and said time has come for India to mull withdrawal of troops from areas considered safe in Jammu and Kashmir to further the peace process. Abdullah said he believed the reports in the media that Salahuddin had been detained "was significant." "Assuming that reports about UJC (United Jihad Council) are correct, no independent verification, that itself is a significant step. Whatever be the reason for UJC to protest the Government of Pakistan, to contemplate a step like this is in itself significant. "But even if we presume that the reports are not correct, the people and the President (Musharraf) talked about the need for a negotiated settlement," he said on the sidelines of the conference on Kashmir organised by London-based NGO Pugwash.

Greater Kashmir, 13 March 2006

### **ON MC PLATFORM, OMAR ADMITS SHEIKH'S MISTAKES (ARSHAD HUSSAIN KALOO)**

After almost 80 years, a historic meeting took place here as leaders of Muslim Conference and National Conference on Sunday shared a platform and were unanimous in demanding immediate resolution of Kashmir issue according to wishes and aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir. Both the parties pledged to work together till final resolution of Kashmir issue. Viewed as unprecedented development that is going to shape future dynamics in new Kashmir dispensation, the meeting saw leaders like Sardar Qayyum Khan, Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan and other Muslim Conference leaders receiving Omar Abdullah with warmth and patiently listened to his views. Omar conceded that mistakes done in the past should be accepted and never repeated again for better future of the people.

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2006

### **Wakf Board bunglings rock Assembly**

JAMMU, Mar 13: All National Conference MLAs today staged a walk-out in the Legislative Assembly after uproarious scenes for more than 10 minutes in protest against what they called the "collapse of Wakf Board". As soon as Minister Incharge Haj and Auqaf Peerzada Mohd Sayeed finished his brief one paragraph reply to a Call Attention Notice given by NC MLA Ali Mohd Sagar, Mr Sagar and Mian Altaf were on their feet and were soon joined by all other NC members, present in the House, numbering 15. Mr Sagar said former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah has recently pointed out that Rs 5.5 crore worth fixed deposits with the Wakf Board have been utilised while 125 back-door appointments have been made in the Board.

The Indian Express, 14 March 2006

### **Musharraf cracks down on J-K militants (MUZAMIL JALEEL)**

SRINAGAR, MARCH 13: As General Pervez Musharraf discussed a possible solution to the Kashmir problem with National Conference leader Omar Abdullah in Islamabad last Friday, Pakistani authorities silently cracked down on Kashmiri militant groups, including Hizbul Mujahideen, telling them in clear terms to restrict their presence only to Muzaffarabad. Ever since the action, the United Jihad Council, an amalgam of Pak-based militant groups led by Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin, has been protesting Musharraf's Kashmir policy, accusing him of doing a "U-turn on the pattern of the Taliban in Afghanistan". Omar Abdullah, who became the first top mainstream Kashmiri politician to visit Pakistan in more than three decades, received a warm official welcome. He not only had a meeting with President Musharraf but was accorded a special reception by the PoK leadership.

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2006

### **Man hanged to death; arms, explosives recovered**

Srinagar, Mar 13: Unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants, today hanged a man to death after abducting him while as a trooper was injured in a shootout in Handwara. According to sources, unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants, hanged one Imtiyaz Ahmed Bhat, son of late Abdul Ahad of Ganderbal to death after he

was abducted on March 11. Militant outfit Hizbul Mujahideen has reportedly owned the killing alleging that Imtiyaz was an Army informer. It's worth mentioning here that Imtiyaz's father Abdul Ahad was killed in a similar way by suspected militants last year. Militants laid an ambush over a search party of 30 RR near Kralgund Handwara injuring a trooper, sources said. A cordon was laid around the area and searches were conducted to nab the suspected attackers. However, no arrests were reported. Meanwhile, huge cache of arms, ammunition and explosives was recovered by police and army in a joint search operation in Kangan, sources claimed.

Greater Kashmir, 14 March 2006

#### **Double shift from April 15**

Srinagar, Mar 13: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Monday directed the divisional administration, Kashmir to gear up all men and machinery to work in two shifts on various identified schemes from April 15 this year. And in view of Eid-i-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) during next month, the macadamization work on Dalgate to Hazratbal road would start on April 12. According to an official spokesman, Azad advised the Divisional Commissioner to immediately convene meeting of all the officers to chalk out double shift work strategy so that earmarked funds are properly utilized for massive development in the Valley. He said the vision of "Khushal Kashmir" can be achieved by serious, devoted and dedicated work culture.

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2006

#### **Jora hints at harsh steps**

JAMMU, Mar 13: Power Minister Nawang Rigzin Jora said today that some harsh measures were required to enforce reforms on electricity front and reiterated the Government proposal for privatisation of power. Replying to discussion on the grants of Power Ministry, which were passed by the Assembly this evening, Mr Jora assured the House as well as the people that interests of both Government as well as consumers will be watched while going for privatisation. "Harsh steps are required to enforce reforms and re-structuring of power sector to bring the Department back on rails. Keeping this in view, a separate budget has been presented for power", he said pointing out that J&K has become first State in the country to present a separate budget.

Greater Kashmir, 14 March 2006

#### **Join UJC protests, Geelani asks supporters**

Srinagar: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference on Monday reiterated his support to ongoing protests of United Jihad Council against Pakistan government, and asked his supporters in Muzaffarabad to actively participate in demonstrations organised by the UJC, an alliance of militant groups. "We support UJC's decision and offer full support to them. We order our supporters at base camp to participate in the peaceful demonstrations of UJC," a spokesman of the Hurriyat quoted Geelani as saying in an extraordinary meeting held here. "The UJC has played an important role in the freedom movement of Kashmir and the sacrifices of each organisation in the amalgam is exemplary," the spokesman said in a statement. "The sacrifices offered by the Kashmiris demand that common people and Mujahideen should get united and take the struggle to its logical conclusion," the statement said.

Daily Excelsior, 14 March 2006

#### **Resolution passed amid heated arguments**

JAMMU, Mar 13: Heated arguments took place between a National Conference and a BJP MLA in the Assembly today while the House was debating a resolution condemning recent blasts at Varanasi including the one at Sankat Mochan temple. The resolution was unanimously passed by the House. Participating in brief discussion on the resolution, moved by Housing and Urban Development Minister and PDP leader Tariq Hamid Qarra in the absence of the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister (who were not present in the House), NC leader Ali Mohd Sagar condemned the blasts but, without naming the BJP, charged the party with trying to play politics over the blast incidents. "The blasts are being politicised."

Greater Kashmir, 15 March 2006

#### **MILITANT KILLED IN SUMBAL**

Srinagar, Mar 14: One militant was killed in an encounter with troops in north Kashmir's Varmul district on Monday evening. Police said troops of 13 Rashtriya Rifles killed the militant belonging to Lashker-e-Toiba outfit in Doodwan Saderkot village of Sumbal tehsil. The militant, police said, was killed when the troops came under fire from the militants hiding in the area, and in the retaliatory action Zulfkar Ahmad alias Shahbaz of Muzaffarabad (Pakistani Kashmir) was killed. Troops claimed recovery of an AK rifle and some ammunition from the encounter site. Police said an encounter took place between militants and troops at Dhoke village of Doda district. However, militants escaped from the spot, police said, claiming recovery of one AK rifle and some ammunition from the encounter site.

Greater Kashmir, 15 March 2006

#### **Bomb hoax at Airport**

Srinagar, Mar 14: Panic gripped Srinagar Airport on Tuesday when an "unidentified object" was spotted in a bathroom in the building. Reports said when a civilian entered the bathroom, he raised an alarm on spotting the object. The troops guarding the airport—one of the highly sanitised airports in the world—immediately cordoned off the place. Later, the "unidentified object" was found to be a wireless set left by a trooper. As the operation was on, the trooper arrived and informed the search party that he had forgotten his set in the loo. Security men refused to handover the set to the trooper saying it had created panic in the complex. On the intervention of the Airport authorities the wireless set was returned to him, reports added.

Greater Kashmir, 15 March 2006

### **Omar says Musharraf honest, Islamabad impressive (RIYAZ MASROOR)**

Jammu, Mar 14: Back from Islamabad conclave, Omar Abdullah seems impressed by two things: Clarity of General Musharraf and layout of the Pakistan's capital city Islamabad. He's busy winding up engagements in Parliament because National Conference has planned an elaborate reception for him in Kashmir. Talking to Greater Kashmir Tuesday Omar who heads over seven decades old National Conference, said that he found Musharraf an "honest and straightforward" person who doesn't say ten things before coming to the point. Did the General know of NC's autonomy beforehand? "No he didn't know about it in advance. He asked many questions about the proposal which I readily answered." Omar sounded more vocal on his previous demand in which he used to insist that Musharraf's ideas about Kashmir solution should be responded. "He's the one whom we can bank on. He is turning Pakistan's traditional Kashmir policy on its head to seek an amicable solution so that India did not feel hurt. If we don't respond now, we'll end up repenting the mistake later."

Greater Kashmir, 16 March 2006

### **Police fired on us: quake victims (Altaf Baba)**

Varmul, Mar 15: Over a dozen persons were injured here on Wednesday when police used force to disperse victims of October 8 earthquake who were protesting against denial of relief by the government. Hundreds of slogan-shouting quake victims took to streets at Delina, about 8 km from here, and blocked Varmul-Srinagar highway. They alleged that authorities failed to provide them adequate compensation for reconstruction of their houses damaged in the devastating quake. As the agitators refused to disperse, police used batons, teargas canisters and later fired bullets to disperse them, injuring over a dozen people, witnesses told Greater Kashmir. Syed Tasaduq, who received a bullet injury, said: "We were holding a peaceful demonstration to attract the attention of higher authorities. But all of a sudden police came and used force without any provocation." Another injured Basharat Ahmad Peer said, "Police entered into houses and thrashed the inmates there." If police says they fired in air "how did we receive bullet injuries?" Basharat asked. The other injured have been identified as Riyaz Ahmad Bhat, Ali Muhammad Wani, Abdul Majeed Dar, Javed Ahmad Peer, Aashiq Ahmad Lone and Rifat Bashir. Rifat who received head injury was shifted to Srinagar.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **MLAs walk-out after disrupting proceedings**

JAMMU, Mar 15: The Opposition National Conference (NC) supported by BJP, National Panthers Party (NPP) and MLA Bishnah, Ashwani Sharma disrupted the proceedings of State Assembly for 10 minutes this morning to protest against the non-presence of Ministers in the House. Later the majority of NC members and BJP's Jugal Kishore Sharma staged a walkout on the issue. The trouble started soon after the Speaker Tara Chand listed the first question of Mohammed Yasin Shah for the day's business. The Opposition members stood up from their seats to protest against the non-presence of Ministers in the House during the Question Hour. At that time barring Minister of PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Qazi Mohammed Afzal no other Minister was present in the House. Raising the issue, Leader of Opposition, Ali Mohammed Sagar, said that there is no Minister present in the House. He was supported by his Party colleague Sharief -u-Din Shariq and Qafil-u-Rehman who also stood up from their seats to raise the issue.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **2 militants killed in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR, Mar 15: Divisional Commander of the militant outfit Jaish-Mohammad and his associate were killed in an encounter with the troops at Chandhara Pampore during the last night. According sources, two militants including a district commander of the militant outfit Jasih-e-Mohammed were killed in an encounter with the troops at Chandhara Pampore in south Kashmir in an encounter during the preceding night. Sources said that troopers of 50 RR on a tip-off about the presence of militants cordoned off the Chandhara village on Tuesday evening and started search operations. Sources said that the militants holed up inside the house of one Firdous Ahmed Rather opened fire on the troopers, which was returned triggering a gunfight.

Greater Kashmir, 16 March 2006

### **Lifestyle of J&K Ministers (ARIF HALEEM)**

Jammu, Mar 15: A whopping Rs 179 cr is incurred annually on various comforts of VIPs including former and sitting ministers and other privileged persons. Government stated the figures in Upper House while responding to opposition query during question hour. Chairman Legislative Council asked the concerned ministry to come out with a detailed report about the issue. While replying to the query raised by the National Conference MLC Sakina Itto, Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed, minister for youth services disclosed that the ex-ministers and present ministers had incurred an expenditure of Rs 27.00 lacs on telephone bills during the current year. He further informed the house that an amount of Rs 31.00 lacs has been spent on the furnishing of residence of ministers and ex-ministers, (Rs 7.00 lacs at Jammu and Rs 24.00 lacs at Srinagar).

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **1000 micro hydel electric projects for J&K: Baig**

JAMMU, Mar 15: Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig today said that an action plan has been finalised for the construction of 1000 Micro Hydel Electric Projects by the Army in the State under Rs 24,000 crore Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan. Replying to a question of Ashok Kumar Sharma in the Upper House today, the Deputy Chief Minister said that out of 1000 Micro Hydel Electric Projects finalised by the Army, 300 have been taken up under Operation Sadhbhavana, 265 under Border Area Development Programme (BADP) and 435 under Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources. He added that 100 projects are to be constructed in Ladakh,

550 in Kashmir and 350 in Jammu. Out of 350 in Jammu division, 100 are under Operation Sadhbhawana, 60 under BADP and 190 MNES. In Kashmir Division, 150 will be constructed under Operation Sadhbhawana, 197 under BADP and 203 under MNES.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **Malik's signature campaign in PoK**

Srinagar, Mar 15: Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Yasin Malik launched his party's signature campaign in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). On the first day of the campaign, Malik collected 15,000 signatures in Kotli town of PoK, a spokesman of the JKLF said in a statement. Later speaking at a public gathering in Kotli, Malik said, "fighting for independence and national and religious identity is not a sin." "Militants and ideological forces aren't being involved in finding peaceful solution of Kashmir issue," he said. Malik apprised the people about his US and UK trips and his meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "I made it clear at every forum that Kashmiris are the basic party in the dispute and without their participation no solution would come," Malik, according to the statement, said.

Daily Excelsior, 18 March 2006

### **Kashmir heading towards solution: Mirwaiz**

Srinagar, Mar 17: Expressing satisfaction over the visit of mainstream party leaders to Pakistan on the sidelines of Pugwash Conference, All Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today said it was a positive development that even mainstream party leaders were pressing for peaceful and ever-lasting resolution of the Kashmir issue. Addressing a gathering at historical Jamia Masjid today, the Mirwaiz observed that the Kashmir problem was heading towards a solution and "lots of developments are underway these days to resolve the 57-year-old tangle." "Presently breakthroughs in solving the Kashmir issue are underway and it's a matter of satisfaction," he said. Apparently referring to mainstream party leaders' travel to Pakistan and their meetings with Pakistan leaders, Mirwaiz said, "It is matter of satisfaction that even pro-India parties are now terming the Kashmir issue as unresolved and are urging for durable and peaceful resolution of the issue."

Daily Excelsior, 18 March 2006

### **Ruling, Oppn MLAs join hands to highlight corruption**

JAMMU, Mar 17: Not satisfied with, what they called, 'casual and generalised' reply of Abdul Aziz Zarger, all MLAs of National Conference today staged a walk-out from the Assembly when Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives was responding to the queries of the members while winding up debate for the grants of his ministry. Setting aside their political affiliations, opposition as well as some members of ruling Congress joined hands to raise the issue of Rs 300 crore scam in the JAKFED which was described by the members as 'scandal of the century'. Much heat was generated in the House over this scam as members crossed party lines in demanding action against those who were involved in pocketing public money.

Greater Kashmir, 18 March 2006

### **Pak links Kashmir with Siachen**

Islamabad, Mar 17: Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri has said it will be easier for India and Pakistan to move forward on the Kashmir issue if progress is achieved on Sir Creek and Siachen issues. However, he criticised the slow progress on Pakistan-India dialogue on the settlement of the Kashmir issue. "If we set Kashmir aside, even slightest progress cannot be achieved with regard to solution of minor issues of the Sir Creek and the Siachen. Supporters of peace in this region are greatly disappointed by this slow-moving talks," Kasuri said in an interview to a local television channel. He said President Pervez Musharraf wanted to seek a solution to the simmering Kashmir issue, which should be acceptable to all stakeholders.

The Indian Express, 18 March 2006

### **Pugwash aftershocks keep on rattling separatists (Riyaz Wani)**

Srinagar, March 17: A WEEK after the Pugwash conference in Islamabad, where Omar Abdullah had a close-door 45-minute meeting with President Musharraf, the aftershocks are still being felt in the separatist landscape of the Valley. In signs of a widening divergence between the Pakistani establishment and the separatists here, Hurriyat hawk Syed Ali Shah Geelani today called for the indigenisation of the Kashmir struggle. This came simultaneously with the statement of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today, who called upon mainstream leaders to join the separatist ranks, if their pro-Kashmir solution talk in Pakistan is taken seriously. Kashmir now needs an indigenous separatist struggle, which is independent of Pakistan control, Geelani told The Indian Express in his first-ever advocacy of such a decisive break-up with Pakistan. I know, it will be a long-term struggle, but there can be no short-cuts for the people's struggle, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 18 March 2006

### **4 top Jaish militants shot dead in Rajouri**

JAMMU, Mar 17: In a major success, Army and police today gunned down four foreign mercenaries of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfit including a 'district commander' in an encounter at village Morian Chatru in Ghambir Mugalan area of Manjakote police station in Rajouri district. A large quantity of arms and ammunition including four AK rifles were recovered from the scene of encounter. DIG Rajouri-Poonch range V K Singh said a joint team of police and 38 Rashtriya Rifles of Romeo Force cordoned off village Morian Chatru in Ghambir Mugalan area last night after developing an information that four top Jaish militants, all foreign mercenaries, had taken shelter in

the house of a tailor, Mohd Iqbal. A cordon was maintained throughout the night to ensure that the militants didn't manage to slip out of the house taking cover of darkness.

Greater Kashmir, 18 March 2006

#### **Geelani detained near Mirgund**

Srinagar: Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference was on Friday taken into custody along with his four associates when they were on way to Varmul district. Local news agency KNS said Geelani and his associates were taken into custody by the police near Mirgund on Srinagar-Varmul highway. Geelani was scheduled to address a Friday gathering at Masjid Batul-Mukaram Varmul. The other arrested are Malik Noor Fayaz, Muhammad Ashraf Laya, Azad Ahmad and Bilal Ahmad. A Hurriyat spokesperson while condemning the arrests told the KNS, On one hand New Delhi is saying prisoners would be released and on the other the arrest spree in the Valley goes unabated.

Daily Excelsior, 18 March 2006

#### **4 top Jaish militants shot dead in Rajouri**

JAMMU, Mar 17: In a major success, Army and police today gunned down four foreign mercenaries of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfit including a 'district commander' in an encounter at village Morian Chatru in Ghambir Mugalan area of Manjakote police station in Rajouri district. A large quantity of arms and ammunition including four AK rifles were recovered from the scene of encounter. DIG Rajouri-Poonch range V K Singh said a joint team of police and 38 Rashtriya Rifles of Romeo Force cordoned off village Morian Chatru in Ghambir Mugalan area last night after developing an information that four top Jaish militants, all foreign mercenaries, had taken shelter in the house of a tailor, Mohd Iqbal. A cordon was maintained throughout the night to ensure that the militants didn't manage to slip out of the house taking cover of darkness.

The Indian Express, 20 March 2006

#### **'I may backtrack if India remains mum'**

Jammu, March 18: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said he may consider 'taking steps backward' if India does not respond to his self-rule and demilitarisation proposals on Kashmir. He however told Kashmiri leaders that they should 'once and for all' give up their independence proposition as it was 'not durable and no time should be wasted on such futile exercises'. Panthers Party chief Bhim Singh said on Saturday that 'Musharraf complained India was not responding to the proposals that he had been repeatedly been making to New Delhi. He said if India does not respond, he may consider taking steps backward'.

Daily Excelsior, 20 March 2006

#### **HM militant held in Doda**

JAMMU, Mar 19: A militant of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit was arrested during a joint search operation by police and troops of 11 Rashtriya Rifles at Deharan in Marwah area of Doda district. He has been identified as Sayed Ullah alias Khandari son of Qadir Gujjar, a resident of Ballana Sigoli in Chatru area. From his possession, Army and police recovered one AK-56 rifle with one magazine and 25 rounds. A couple of militants reportedly managed to escape during the encounter, the sources said, adding a search operation has been launched to apprehend them. An Over Ground Worker of the militants was arrested by security forces at Malar in Kishtwar area of Doda district last night. He has been identified as Mohd Amir Kumhar, a resident of Navapachi. One diary with names of some persons and radio frequency was recovered from him. Security forces have handed over the accused to Kishtwar police station for questioning.

The Indian Express, 20 March 2006

#### **4 hurt in blast, Hizb claims responsibility**

Srinagar, March 18: A CAR bomb today exploded in the Rawalpura area in the outskirts of Srinagar. It was triggered off when an Army convoy was passing by. Four persons including three army personnel and a civilian were injured in the blast. Hizbul Mujahideen has claimed the responsibility for the blast. This morning, militants managed to park a car at Rawalpura near the Old Airport road. Eyewitnesses said as the army convoy was passing through the area at around 9.15 am, the car exploded causing damage to one of the buses of the convoy. The remains of the car in which the bomb was placed were scattered all over the road. "I was on my way to Lal Chowk from my home. As I reached near the Rawalpura Chowk. I heard a big explosion and the pieces of the car were scattered over a vast area," said Ishtiaq Ahmad, a resident of Rawalpura.

Daily Excelsior, 20 March 2006

#### **Mehbooba reiterates self-rule demand**

RAJOURI, Mar 19: Advocating self-rule for resolution of Kashmir issue, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti today claimed that proposal would integrate all parts of State with provision for preserving their complete cultural identities and accommodate all regional aspirations. Addressing public meetings at Thanamandi and Darshal, she said that trade routes between two parts of Kashmir would boost economy of the State. Stating that economic emancipation is imperative for taking chronic issues of unemployment and backwardness, PDP president called for complete rights over river waters of the State. She said that industrialisation of the State without power was not possible and for securing this right for the betterment of people was vital part of PDP manifesto.

Greater Kashmir, 20 March 2006

#### **BSF man killed, 3 injured in Sopur**

Srinagar, Mar 19: A paramilitary Border Security Force trooper was killed and three more were injured when

suspected militants fired a rifle grenade on a BSF picket in north Kashmir's Varmul district Sunday. Reports said the militants fired rifle grenade on 133 battalion BSF near State Bank of India's branch in Sopur town, injuring four troopers. They were removed to hospital here where one of them succumbed to his injuries. The dead BSF man was identified as constable Jadeja. The injured troopers identified as SK Mishra, RK Jha and Tirat Raj were admitted to SMHS hospital here. GK Correspondent for Sopur, Ghulam Muhammad said the militants flung another grenade towards a force picket near erstwhile Kapra cinema hall. However, it missed the target and exploded on the roadside without causing any damage. Panic gripped the entire Sopur town after the incidents and people ran away for safety.

Daily Excelsior, 20 March 2006

#### **Surrender policy effective in J&K**

NEW DELHI, Mar 19: As many as 197 militants have surrendered in Jammu and Kashmir in 2005 in the wake of the State Government announcing a new policy to woo them into the mainstream, the Union Home Ministry has said. Under the new policy of the J and K Government announced on January 31, 2004, a surrendered militant will get a monthly stipend of Rs 2000 for a period of three years after surrender. This is in addition to immediate grant of Rs 1.50 lakh to be kept in the shape of FDR in a bank in the name of the surrenderee which can be withdrawn after three years, subject to good behaviour. Incentives are also being given for surrendered weapons as per prescribed rates and vocational training for self employment to those who desire to undergo such training.

Daily Excelsior, 20 March 2006

#### **Musharraf rebuffs independence of Kashmir: Omar Abdullah**

SRINAGAR, Mar 19: Asking India to keep up the pace with Pakistan President General Musharraf to solve the Kashmir issue, National Conference president Omar Abdullah today said that New Delhi should come out of the box to solve the Kashmir issue durably as per the wishes of the people. In his first ever public address today after his Pakistan visit, the NC president and Parliament member, Omar Abdullah spoke at length about his maiden visit to Pakistan describing General Musharraf as "straight forward, accommodative, and open minded." "I found Musharraf, during my one-on-one with him very straight forward. He listened to me with open mind and was very accommodative of NC autonomy model." Omar Abdullah claimed. He said that Musharraf has openly rebuffed the independence (of Kashmir) option and there were no doubts about it.

Daily Excelsior, 21 March 2006

#### **PM to visit Srinagar in May**

NEW DELHI, Mar 20: Promising to talk to everyone for resolving the Kashmir issue, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said he would be going to Srinagar in May for holding a dialogue with parties. "We are willing to talk to everybody and listen to every section of public opinion," he told reporters after the investiture ceremony in which eminent persons were conferred the country's prestigious Padma awards. The Prime Minister said the next roundtable conference with leaders of Jammu and Kashmir would be held in May. "I have already said we will have another round of talks. I will be going personally," Singh said adding "this is a continuous process."

Daily Excelsior, 21 March 2006

#### **Two ultras killed in Poonch**

POONCH, Mar 20: Troops of Krishna Ghati Garrison today eliminated two top militants in an encounter at Balnoi on the Line of Control (LoC) in Mendhar tehsil of this district. The militants were trying to infiltrate into the Indian territory. Two AK rifles, five magazines, five grenades, 37 rounds, Rs 500 Pak currency, Rs 400 Indian currency, one Alinco radio set and one Thuraiya satellite phone were recovered from the slain militants, whose identity has not been established so far. An Army jawan sustained minor injuries in the operation. A civilian Naseeb Singh son of Pritivi Singh R/o Naneera, Kalakote was shot dead by the militants at Koladab forest area in Rajouri district when he had gone for hunting along with 12 others.

Daily Excelsior, 21 March 2006

#### **Azad skeptical on Kashmiris' return**

JAMMU, Mar 20: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said the Government will have to verify whether the Kashmiris, who have reportedly expressed their willingness to return from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), have undergone change of hearts or were trying to play mischief. "We will have to see whether the Kashmiris' decision to return is a well-thought conspiracy or they have reformed themselves", Mr Azad said in his 83 minutes reply on the grants of Home and GAD, held by him, in the Legislative Assembly. The grants were unanimously approved by the House as all members withdrew their cut motions. "Yeh Change Dil Se Aayi Hai Ya Dimaag Se (whether this change has come from the heart or from the brain)", he said, adding "if the change has come from the heart then it is good but if it has come from the brain it could be a conspiracy". Mr Azad cautioned that the Kashmiris' wish to return could be part of a strategy. "They could come and kill our people", he observed. At the same time, he asserted, if the Kashmiris have developed a change, a thought can be given to their demand.

Greater Kashmir, 21 March 2006

#### **2 militants, civilian killed in State**

Srinagar, Mar 20: Two militants and a civilian were killed in separate incidents across the state since Sunday evening while a woman was injured in a shootout between troops and militants in Shalimar area on outskirts of Srinagar on Monday afternoon. GK Kupwara correspondent Shabir Ibn Yousuf reported that two Hizbul

Mujahideen militants were killed in an encounter with troops of 4 Para and 30 Rashtriya Rifles at Shahnagri village of Handwara, Kupwara on Sunday night. The encounter broke after the troops cordoned off the village and started house-to-house searches. Militants tried to break the cordon and fired on troops and in retaliatory firing two militants, Farooq Ahmad Chopan of Sadargund and Shabir Ahmad Rather of Qaziabad were killed.

Greater Kashmir, 21 March 2006

### **Hurriyat calls for poll boycott**

Srinagar: Hurriyat Conference led by Umar Farooq has urged the people to boycott coming assembly bye-elections. "India is trying to fool the world community by these so-called elections. People should boycott the elections to strengthen the freedom movement," a spokesman said. The spokesman termed National Security Advisor R K Narayan's statement that LoC should be converted into permanent border as "far from historical reality." He said the world community has accepted that the state is disputed, and UN resolutions are proof of that. People of the state will never accept LoC as permanent border.

Greater Kashmir, 21 March 2006

### **5 held for car blasts**

Srinagar, Mar 20: Troops of the 52 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) and Special Operation Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir police Monday said they smashed a Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) module responsible for causing car bomb blasts in the city. Five HM militants were arrested when they were preparing an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at Batmaloo area of the city, a defence spokesman said. He said, based on a specific information troops of 52 RR and SOG launched a targeted operation in Batmaloo area of the uptown early this morning.

The Indian Express, 21 March 2006

### **Pak rights body comes to the rescue of Indian prisoner**

Jammu, March 20: Their smiles say it all. The family of Swaran Lal, who has been languishing in Kot-Lakhpur Jail of Pakistan after completing his 10-year sentence in 2003, is finally looking forward to his homecoming. The family has been on cloud nine ever since it received a letter from Human Rights Commission of Pakistan regarding his release. They had almost lost all hope of meeting him in this life after hearing the case of Sarabjit Singh of Punjab, but the letter from Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, dated March 2, has rekindled their hopes. The letter addressed to Shama Devi, mother of Swaran Lal, has assured the family that Human Rights Commission of Pakistan through its Vulnerable Prisoners Project will do its best to ensure early release and repatriation of Swaran Lal. "We have already made appeals to Pakistani Ministry of Interior and Indian High Commission, Islamabad, in this regard," read the letter.

The Indian Express, 21 March 2006

### **Two ultras killed**

Srinagar, March 20: Security forces killed two militants in Krishna Ghati area and claimed to have foiled an infiltration bid from across the Line of Control today. During an hour long encounter, an army jawan also sustained splinter injuries. The slain militants are yet to be identified, sources said, adding that the troops also seized from the spot two AK rifles, Rs 4,000 Indian currency, Rs 500 Pak currency and a Thuraya satellite set.

Daily Excelsior, 22 March 2006

### **Gujjars played a vital role in 1947: Azad**

JAMMU, Mar 21: Acknowledging their role as true patriots, the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that brave Gujjar community has not only fought against imperialism and autocratic rule, but established its distinguished position under the patronage of great community leaders by taking right decisions at the right moment. "The Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir played a vital role in 1947 in joining their lot with free, secular, independent and democratic India", said Mr Azad recalled while addressing a mammoth gathering of Gujjar leaders and representatives at a one day conference organized in memory of Ch Ghulam Hussain Lassanvi here today. On this occasion, the respectable saint of Gujjar community Baba Mian Bashir Ahmed, former Speaker of Legislative Assembly and son of Ch. Ghulam Hussain Lassanvi Ch. Mohammad Aslam, several legislators and prominent representatives of the community participated in the conference. Mr. Azad expressed his happiness that Gujjar and Jat communities have come up on a joint platform, which will prove very beneficial for development of these two communities.

Daily Excelsior, 22 March 2006

### **Tarigami favours genuine federalism to resolve Kashmir**

JAMMU, Mar 21: Demanding restoration of maximum autonomy in the State under article 370 of the Constitution, CPI-M leader and MLA Kulgam, Mohammed Yasuf Tarigami today mooted the idea of converting Jammu and Kashmir into a 'genuine federalism' to meet aspirations of all regional and sub-regional identities. Addressing a press conference, Mr Tarigami, who attended much publicised PUGWASH conference at Pakistan, called upon Union Government to restore all constitutional powers to the State under article 370. "Besides restoring constitutional powers to the State, regional autonomy should be granted to Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh", he suggested, adding, "furthermore there should be devolution of powers on the pattern of Kargil and Leh". "We can satisfy the aspirations and wishes of all regions and sub-regions only by trickling down power at grass root level",

he advocated and opined that no solution was viable and ever-lasting without addressing to the aspirations of all regions.

Greater Kashmir, 22 March 2006

#### **4 militants killed in State**

Srinagar, Mar 21: Four militants were killed in separate encounters with troops across the state since Monday night, police said. Police said a Jaish-e-Muhammad militant was killed in an encounter with troops of 14 Rashtriya Rifles at Gujjerpati Arhgam in Bandipora on Monday night. The gunfight broke out after militants fired on a patrol party of troops and in the retaliatory action, police said, Muhammad Ishaq Chechi son of Muhammad Shafi was killed. Police claimed recovery of some arms and ammunition from the encounter site. Meanwhile, a Hizbul Mujahideen militant was killed in an encounter with troops of 44 RR at Keller Pulwama on Tuesday morning, police said. Police said encounter broke after troops cordoned off Keller and started house to house searches. Militants tried to break the cordon and in the ensuing gunbattle police said, Muhammad Rafiq Paswal was killed. Police claimed recovery of one AK rifle and some ammunition from the encounter site.

The Indian Expresses, 22 March 2006

#### **Jammu-Srinagar highway reopened**

Srinagar, March 21: The Srinagar-Jammu national highway was today opened for traffic after remaining closed due to landslides triggered by incessant rains at several places, official sources said. The 300-km long highway was opened to traffic this morning after the Border Roads Organisation removed all hurdles from the road, a traffic department spokesman told PTI. To begin with, stranded vehicles carrying passengers and essential commodities are being allowed to move to their destinations, he said. However, no fresh vehicles are allowed to ply on the highway from either side of the road, he said. The highway had been closed to traffic yesterday after landslides triggered by incessant rains blocked it at Nashri, 145 kms from here, leading to hundreds of vehicles being stranded on the arterial road linking Kashmir to the rest of the country.

Daily Excelsior, 22 March 2006

#### **HuM, HM commanders killed**

Srinagar, Mar 21: Security Forces claimed to have eliminated two top commanders of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant outfits in separate encounters at Bandipore and Pulwama early this morning. According to official spokesman, a joint party of SOG and troopers of 14 RR launched a joint operation at Bandipora in north Kashmir early today, after they were tipped off about the presence of militants there. Sources said that when forces zeroed on in the house where militants were suspected to be hiding, the militants opened indiscriminate fire on them. The fire was returned and in the ensuing fierce gunfight, the HuM commander, identified as Ishfaq Ahmad alias Gujjar was gunned down. Ishfaq, sources said was among the most wanted militant and active in north Kashmir for the last seven years.

Daily Excelsior, 22 March 2006

#### **MPs for carrying forward peace initiative in J&K**

NEW DELHI, Mar 21 : Asking the Government to carry forward its initiative to restore normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, members in the Lok Sabha today said national interest should be protected at all cost. Initiating a discussion on the outcome of the round-table conference on Kashmir held in February, Lal Singh (Cong) said Pakistan had no role to play in these efforts. "Who is Pakistan to speak to us. They want to capture the State," he said adding the presence of military, army and para-military forces should continue. Taking a swipe at parties in J&K supporting Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's statement of self-rule in the State, Singh said "is there self-rule in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir?" He demanded that voting rights should be given to all refugees who migrated to Jammu and Kashmir during partition. "They are uneducated, unemployed and not getting any facilities," the member said. BJP's Avinash Rai Khanna supported the demand and said refugees should be given right to vote.

Daily Excelsior, 23 March 2006

#### **Free land offered for setting up hospitals**

JAMMU, Mar 22: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today virtually extended an open invitation to private sector to set up their hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir for which the Government was ready to provide land free of cost or concessional rates. "We are unable to raise infrastructure in the Government hospitals. It is beyond the Government's capacity to invest huge funds in the health sector. The pace with which we are spending funds, it wouldn't be possible for us to strengthen District Hospitals even during next 15 to 20 years", Mr Azad said in his one hour reply on the grants of Health & Medical Education and Education Departments in the Legislative Assembly. "Demands in the health sector are more while funds are less. We will sit with the Opposition leaders after the budget session and take a decision on calling more private players in the health sector especially in Jammu and Srinagar", he told the House.

Greater Kashmir, 23 March 2006

#### **2 Killed in State**

Srinagar, Mar 22: Two persons were killed in separate incidents while a trooper was injured in an encounter in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Reports said police recovered body of Wali Muhammad Khan son Lal Khan at

Trinba Kokernag in Islamabad district on Wednesday. Wali was abducted by unidentified gunmen a few days back, reports said. Police has registered a case. Meanwhile, a civilian Abdul Ahad Ganie died in frontier district of Kupwara after a long illness. He was injured when troops fired on a protest rally at Qalamabad Handwara three years back. Two other persons were also injured in the incident.

Greater Kashmir, 23 March 2006

#### **Gujarat encounter killings rock House** (Arif Haleem)

Jammu, Mar 22: The killing of two students of Shopian who were killed in a 'fake' encounter recently in Gujarat rocked the lower house of Legislative Assembly with the members of National Conference and People Democratic Party (PDP) demanding inquiry into the matter. As the question hour in the Lower House started this morning the PDP MLA Ghulam Hassan Khan demanded inquiry into the killing of two Shopian students who were killed in a 'fake encounter' in Gujarat few days back. "Two innocent Kashmiri youths have been killed by the Gujarat government in custody and government is reacting like a mute spectator," Khan said adding that these two youths have been brutally killed in the custody and there are no reports that they are involved in any kind of militancy related incident.

Greater Kashmir, 23 March 2006

#### **40 detainees to be released**

Jammu, Mar 22: The Joint Review Committee constituted by the Government scrutinizing all cases of PSA detainees has recommended the immediate release of 40 persons. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in his address at the Round Table on Jammu and Kashmir had given an assurance that all current cases of detention would be scrutinized to see whether it is possible to release all detainees against whom there are no serious cases and the process would be completed before the end of March. In pursuance of the assurances given by the Prime Minister at the Round Table, the Joint Review Committee met here today to review the cases of 403 persons under detention in various jails of the State.

The Indian Express, 23 March 2006

#### **Pandits in Valley fighting for shelter, jobs** (Wasim Khalid )

Badgam, March 22: It is an irony of sorts. While the government is speeding up its efforts to bring Pandits back to the Valley, those staying there, braving violence, are without a decent roof on their heads and respectable jobs in their hands. After the Wandhama incident, in which 23 Pandits were killed by unknown gunmen, the Pandits living in the villages in the periphery of Badgam were given shelter in the main town. These villages include Sheilpura, Lalgam, Dangarpora, Sangrampora, Ramhama, Palpora and Hushroo.

The Indian Express, 23 March 2006

#### **Implement Wazir report by May 4 or face agitation, threaten Panthers**

Jammu, March 22: Giving an ultimatum to the state government over the delay in implementing the Wazir Commission report, Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) Chairman Bhim Singh today warned that if the state government failed to implement the report by May 4, the party would launch an agitation in the Jammu region. Addressing the party leaders and activists on the occasion of the 24th birth anniversary celebrations of the party at a special function organised at Parade Ground here today, Bhim Singh alleged that the government was not sincere over the issue and had wishy-washy approach over its implementation.

Greater Kashmir, 24 March 2006

#### **NC SEEKS QAZI'S HEAD** (ARIF HALEEM)

Jammu, Mar 23: The assembly was adjourned for the day after uproarious trading of accusations between the opposition National Conference and the treasury benches over the issue of backdoor appointments in Public Health Engineering (PHE) department. As proceeding of the Lower House (LH) started this morning, the Opposition cornered the coalition government on the statement made by Qazi Muhammad Afzal, the minister for PHE, regarding the cancellation of all backdoor appointments made by the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department since 2002. The opposition forced the speaker to adjourn the house even as he attempted to resume the business in afternoon session.

Greater Kashmir, 24 March 2006

#### **Geelani says mainstream forces can't be ignored**

Srinagar, Mar 23: Senior separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani Thursday acknowledged the importance of mainstream leaders saying they could not be ignored despite their 'negative' role in past. However Geelani reiterated that plebiscite as enshrined in UN resolutions was the only option to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Speaking during a seminar organized by Hurriyat Conference led by him, Geelani said, "There are elements like NC, PDP, Congress and Mr. Tarigami. National Conference helped India enslave the people of J&K and Congress betrayed us by reneging on promises made in highest international bodies. There is PDP also which ruled the state for three years and recently handed over power to Congress under an agreement. But the fact is they are there and they exist. NC has 28 members in Assembly. Congress is also working. These elements could not be ignored."

Greater Kashmir, 24 March 2006

#### **Drug abuse rampant in Valley: Study** (ZULFIKAR MAJID)

Srinagar, Mar 23: Tens of thousands of people in Kashmir Valley are involved in different drug abuse, a survey recently carried by a local de-addiction center says. The center interviewed cross section of people through a questionnaire and the calculations were made on the basis of that. About 3,000 people were interviewed. The survey was carried by Hindustan National Social Society (HNSS), Valley's only de-addiction center last year where it was found ten per cent people in Kashmir consume different kind of drugs, which range from medicinal opioids to brown sugar and cannabis. The survey was carried in different educational institutions and the areas believed to be vulnerable to the drug addiction. It was revealed in the survey that chemists supply drugs to 55% of the addicts followed by 37% by drug peddlers and 8% by liquor shops. It was observed in the survey that 17 percent people in the age group of 12-20 years are consuming drugs while 22 percent people in the age group of 21-35 years are addicts. The highest number of addicts 61 percent (chronic drug abusers) are of above the age of 36 years.

Daily Excelsior, 24 March 2006

#### **Elders grill Yasin; Dar announces House Committee**

JAMMU, Mar 23: State Legislative Council witnessed an uproar and noisy scenes over the issue of allotment of EP land and flats to the favourites in Jammu and Srinagar cities forcing chairman Abdul Rashid Dar to intervene and announce the House Committee under the chairmanship of Prof Bhim Singh to conduct thorough probe into the allegations. Former Minister for Revenue and sitting Minister for Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Hakim Mohd Yasin had to face the wrath of the Opposition National Conference members and also from the PDP and a few from Congress over the allotment of land scam in the Department of Custodian. They were very harsh today on the minister and grilled him for nearly 27 minutes, amidst allegations and counter allegations. The minister and senior officers of the Custodian department are already facing allegations of 60 backdoor appointments of some blue eyed people in the Department and the Chairman A R Dar has already announced a House Committee to probe the allegations.

The Indian Express, 24 March 2006

#### **LeT ultra killed, huge cache of arms recovered**

Srinagar, March 23: A Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) militant, allegedly involved in the recent explosion at Sopore that killed a paramilitary personnel, was arrested and a huge cache of arms and explosives including nine kg of RDX were recovered in Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesman said today. On a tip off, Army arrested LeT militant Ashan-ul-Haq alias Tahir, a resident of Noorbagh village, from Sopore area of Baramulla district today, the spokesman said. He said militant confessed to hurling grenades on February 14 and 27 in Sopore, firing on Rashtriya Rifles headquarters and grenade attack on BSF post on March 19 which left a BSF jawan dead and over 25 people including six BSF personnel, injured. The search of his house led to the recovery of one remote controlled IED, two anti-personnel mines, four hand grenades and 16 AK rounds, the spokesman said.

Indian Express 25 March 2006

#### **PM calls for unthinkable, Mirwaiz for unilateral truce (Riyaz Wani)**

Srinagar, March 24: HOURS after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called for "thinking the unthinkable" over Indo-Pak ties while flagging off the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus, Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq today offered to get the militants to agree to a truce if New Delhi announces unilateral ceasefire. For the hawk Syed Ali Shah Geelani who commands the support of the militant groups, the development has only brought Pakistan and India closer, leaving out Kashmir, the source of the conflict. "If New Delhi declares unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir, Hurriyat will try and prevail on the militants to follow suit," Mirwaiz told the media shortly before he left for Pakistan to attend the Conference of World Social Forum in Karachi. He called for a "bold initiative" and "out-of-box" thinking on Kashmir and assured a constructive role from Hurriyat. "A ceasefire in Kashmir will be a natural corollary to the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus link between India and Pakistan and will further build confidence".

Greater Kashmir, 25 March 2006

#### **'India-Pakistan working to resolve Kashmir'**

Srinagar, Mar 24: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) president Omar Abdullah today said that India and Pakistan have realised their past mistake and the heads of both the countries were now working to find a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue. "Kashmir is a political issue which cannot be resolved by money or providing electricity to people," he said. "However, the NC would continue to support the restoration of 1953 position and greater autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir for lasting peace in the sub-continent, he added. Addressing the first public meeting at Sallar in Phalagam area of south Kashmir after his return from Pakistan where he met President Parvez Musharraf, Abdullah, said realising their past mistakes, the heads of India and Pakistan have decided to find a lasting solution to the issue which has brought death and destruction in the state.

Greater Kashmir, 25 March 2006

#### **Mixed reaction in Kashmir (M Hyderi)**

Srinagar, Mar 24: Mixed reactions have poured in from various pro-India and pro-freedom political parties over Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's offer of a treaty of "peace, security and friendship" to Pakistan. While two of the key pro-freedom leaders Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Sayed Ali Shah Geelani hold different views over the statement, pro-India parties in general have welcomed the Prime Minister's proposal. Mirwaiz said that if roads

were being opened for the people of India and Pakistan, the same should be applied for Kashmiris. He said the hurdles in this way should be removed so that Kashmiris on two sides meet each other. For solution to Kashmir issue, he said, the aspirations of Kashmiris should be taken into consideration. On the other hand Sayed Ali Geelani doesn't find "sincerity" in Singh's statement. He terms the proposal of treaty as 'turning down' of the bone of contention -the Kashmir dispute. "Never at all we find sincerity. We have 57 years of experience that Indian government was never sincere for a permanent and peaceful solution to Kashmir dispute," Geelani told Greater Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 25 March 2006

#### **Soldiers besiege village, people block traffic, woman dies** (Shabir Ibn Yousuf)

Kupwara, Mar 24: The standoff between army soldiers, who besieged a village in Kupwara after a firing incident, and the villagers who were demanded lifting of the siege, led to the death of a pregnant woman who couldn't make it to the hospital in time. Police though terming the protest of the villagers as genuine has filed a case against them on charges of blocking the traffic leading to the death of the woman. Witnesses said on Wednesday evening suspected militants fired at a patrol party of 2 Sikh battalion in Shumriyal wounding a soldier. In retaliation, the soldiers cordoned off the village and launched search operation. People who were returning to the village after work staged protest demonstration and blocked Khumriyal bridge leading to the village and demanded that troops should lift the siege.

Daily Excelsior, 25 March 2006

#### **Appropriation bill passed in Assembly**

Jammu, Mar 24: The Legislative Assembly today passed Appropriation (Finance) Bill as Deputy Chief Minister, Incharge Finance Muzaffar Hussain Baig announced that salary, allowances and pension of the Ministers and legislators will be hiked substantially before next session of the Legislature. The Finance Bill, moved by Mr Baig, was passed unanimously by the House. Replying to debate on the bill, the Finance Minister observed: "we expect from a MLA to work round-the-clock, be honest and even serve tea and food to the visitors. In my opinion, even Rs one lakh salary for a MLA will be less". Amidst thumping of desks by almost all the MLAs, Mr Baig declared that the Government will announce a substantial hike in salary and allowances and pension of the legislators and Ministers, through an ordinance, before next session of the Assembly. "We will do it and defend our decision as well", he said.

Daily Excelsior, 26 March 2006

#### **Azad to file nomination papers from Baderwah on Apr 5**

Jammu : Having decided to contest the bypolls for getting elected to Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad will file his nomination papers from Baderwah constituency in Doda district on April 5. "Azad, who is contesting by-elections from Baderwah seat in Doda district, will file nomination papers on April 5," Congress leader and former State Power Minister Mohammad Sharief Niaz told reporters here today. Naiz, who vacated Baderwah assembly seat for his cousin Azad, said election to the constituency would be held on April 24 while notification would be issued on March 31. Azad, who is not a member of the State Legislature, would have to get elected to either the Upper or Lower House within six months from the time he became the Chief Minister.

Daily Excelsior, 26 March 2006

#### **Ultras ambush army convoy, two killed**

Srinagar, Lashker-e-Toiba militants today attacked an army convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway killing a jawan and wounding six while one of the ultras was killed in the return fire. Heavily-armed militants hurled grenades and fired indiscriminately at the convoy, on way to Jammu, near Drangbal-Pampore, some 14 kms from here, at around 0915 hours, a Defence spokesman said. A jawan was killed and six were wounded in the attack, he said adding the army men returned the fire in which an ultra was killed. The injured were admitted to an army hospital nearby, the spokesman said. A caller identifying himself as a spokesman of the Pak-backed LeT telephoned a local news agency claiming responsibility for the attack. The attack came a day after a joint meeting of police and security forces here last evening on combating subversive elements. (PTI)

Daily Excelsior, 26 March 2006

#### **15 detainees walk to freedom from jails** (Mohinder Verma)

Jammu, Mar 25: After being bailed out by the trial courts following revocation of Public Safety Act (PSA) on the directions of Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, 15 detainees today walked to freedom with dreams of better future in their eyes and transformed mind. They were among the 40 detainees cleared by the screening committee of the Union Home Ministry for release. All these detainees have not been facing any serious charges which was the ground for the decision about their release. The remaining 25 detainees will also be able to see the world outside the four walls of prison once again within next couple of days as the process of completing their trial has been expedited following the directives of the Central Government. While eight detainees were released from the Central Jail at Kot Bhalwal in the outskirts of Jammu city, six walked to freedom from District Jail at Kathua and one from Udhampur Jail.

Daily Excelsior, 26 March 2006

#### **Youth killed, ZEO's car blasted by ultras**

Jammu Mar 25: A youth was killed by the militants at Sangiot in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district last night while three civilians were kidnapped and released by the ultras at Kheransoo in Rajouri district. In another incident, a Maruti car of a Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Poonch was damaged in a blast at Iqbal Nagar, Surankote. The explosion appeared to have been set off by the militants. SSP Poonch S D Singh said the Maruti car bearing No.

8736 JK02AB, belonging to Mst Zaib-ul-Nisa wife of Altaf Hussain, who was posted as Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Poonch was damaged in the blast outside her house at Iqbal Nagar, Surankote last night. She was a resident of Lasagna, Surankote but was presently putting up at Iqbal Nagar due to security perception. He said either a grenade was thrown on the car or an explosive device was planted near it which was blasted with a remote control. A shop of Mohd Razzaq, which was also in vicinity of the ZEO's house, was also damaged in the blast. A police party rushed to the site of explosion for investigations. Searches were also conducted in the area but no arrests were made.

Greater Kashmir, 26 March 2006

### **2 Militants Killed in Kupwara**

Srinagar, Mar 25: Two militants were killed and one trooper injured in an encounter in north Kashmir's frontier district of Kupwara on Saturday. Police said troops of 21 Rashtriya Rifles and police raided house of Abdul Ahad Lone in Bhat mohalla Harpora in Handwara. Militants hiding in the house started firing on troops and in the retaliatory action, police said, two militants were killed. The identity of the slain militants wasn't ascertained immediately. The house of Lone was destroyed with mortar shells. A constable Hardeep Singh was injured in the incident. Meanwhile, police said, an explosion took place in front of house of Zaib-ul-Nisa, Zonal Educational Officer Poonch at Surankot on Friday night in which her Maruti car was partially damaged.

Greater Kashmir, 26 March 2006

### **NC ready to discuss self-rule**

Jammu, Mar 25: National Conference (NC) is ready to discuss the self-rule and demilitarization proposal of Pakistan President General Musharraf apart from Autonomy. Senior National Conference leader Mian Altaf Ahmed said this while briefing media persons at Jammu after returning from the second international peace conference held at London which was arranged by a UK based organization (Justice Foundation of Kashmir). The conference was held from 15th March. Altaf said that during the two days Conference the Kashmir issue and the proposals put forward to resolve it by different sections were discussed in detail. "The Kashmir issue was discussed threadbare, all the proposals including the proposal of self-rule and demilitarization," he further said that People Democratic Party's (PDP) self-rule was not discussed in the conference

Daily Excelsior, 27 march 2006

### **Seat sharing will be smooth sailing: Mufti**

Srinagar, Mar 26: Dispelling, what he said "the media speculations" about the possible rift in coalition during upcoming by elections, former Chief Minister and patron Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mufti Mohammed Sayeed sought to assure, today, that the arrangements for fighting by-elections would be a smooth sailing for the coalition partners. In an informal chat with media at his residence in Gupkar Srinagar, Mufti Sayeed said that the relationship of the coalition partners was strong enough to fell apart for the seat sharing. "The coalition Government (in J&K) has been a historical example. We aren't bonded by unprocessed fibers, we'll set the issue of seat sharing smoothly and with complete understanding with the Congress," Mufti said, adding "all your (media) calculations are wrong in this regard and I assure you there will be no snags (in coalition) during by elections." He, however, sought to mention that it was understood to the PDP and Congress coalition that while former has the stronghold in the Valley, the latter enjoys popularity in Jammu. Without elaborating if this meant an indication that Congress should concede Valley seats of Sangrama, Pattan and Rafiabab constituencies to PDP, Mufti said that he wasn't authorized enough to state further on the issue as, he said, "It is a party matter and party president can alone talk on this issue."

?Daily Excelsior, 27 march 2006

### **Top Lashkar militant killed**

Jammu, Mar 26: A top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant was gunned down by Doda police and troops of 10 Rashtriya Rifles at Thanot, Bhagwa under the jurisdiction of Doda police station tonight. Slain militant has been identified as Shabir Ahmed alias Omar son of Hablal R/o Praneel Sajan near Doda. He was 'tehsil commander' of the outfit, official sources said. Recoveries made from the scene of encounter included one AK rifle, two magazines, one UBGL, five grenades and one Chinese grenades. He was operating in Doda district since 2001. Army or police didn't suffer any casualties in the operation. Police party in the operation was supervised by SP Doda (Operations) Varinder Sharma.

Greater Kashmir, 27 March 2006

### **Gunbattle on Highway**

Srinagar, Mar 26: A soldier and a militant were killed and seven soldiers wounded in when militants fired at a convoy of troops on Srinagar-Jammu highway in Pampore area of Pulwama district Sunday morning. Elsewhere a civilian was killed in Poonch district of Jammu division. Witnesses said two to three militants who had laid an ambush near Punjab National Bank at Drangbal Pampore lobbed grenades on an Army convoy and fired on the vehicles. One of the militants after hurling grenades ran towards a lane where troops of 50 Rashtriya Rifles cornered him, the reports said. However, the besieged militant fired on the troops in which Naik Mohan Lal was killed and six other soldiers injured. A CRPF trooper of 141 Battalion was also injured in the encounter. The militant was also killed in the retaliatory firing. However, two of his associates managed to escape from the scene. ?Police identified the deceased militant as Abu Abdullah of Lashker-e-Toiba from other Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 27 March 2006

### **Mufti plays cool on Kashmir's political racecourse (Riyaz Masroor)**

Srinagar, Mar 26: From being the champion of state's integration with Indian Union to the forerunner of self-rule, former Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Syed appears to have completed the full circle of his political career. Yet he seems reluctant to wind up his long innings even as the ouster from power in November last has turned out to be a great predicament for him. As the patriarch of an infant regional political force, Mufti has set out to consolidate the 'big win' he is said to have secured from the battle of ideas he had waged in 2002 after assuming power in the state. During an informal chat, first after he handed over baton to Congress, with newsmen in his picturesque FAIR VIEW residence in the midst of luxuriant Zabarwan hills, Mufti obliquely spelt out his party agenda for the second roundtable on Kashmir due here ending May.

Greater Kashmir, 27 March 2006

#### **9 more detainees released**

Jammu, Mar 26: The Jammu and Kashmir government today released nine more detainees, who were detained under J&K Public Safety Act (PSA) 1978, taking the total number of such prisoners to 17. Earlier, the government released eight detainees from Kotbalwal jail, as recommended by the high-powered committee of Union Home Ministry to release 40 detainees, who are not facing any serious charges, as a goodwill gesture. The remaining 23 would be released within a few days. The total number of such prisoners is 403. Eight of them were released from the Kathua district jail and one from Udhampur district jail. The detainees, to be released, were selected from Kotbalwal jail, Udhampur jail and Ambphalla district jail where the only woman detainee was lodged.

Indian Express, 27 March 2006

#### **NC and PDP join the Gen's self-rule chorus (Muzaffar Raina)**

Srinagar, March 26: J-K's two major mainstream political parties - National Conference and People's Democratic Party - appear to be vying with one another to rally behind Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's proposal of self-rule for Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control. Former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said self-rule is an ideal solution to the Kashmir issue. Mufti's daughter and People's Democratic Party President Mehbooba Mufti had created a flutter across the state when she openly spoke in support of the self-rule, triggering opposition from a section of her own party. The former CM Sayeed today not only supported the self-rule proposal at a press conference here but even suggested a conference of academicians of J-K's Universities at Kashmir and Jammu to evolve consensus on this issue.

Daily Excelsior, 28 March 2006

#### **Azad hopes separatists will come forward for dialogue**

New Delhi Mar 27: Hoping that separatist groups would come forward for the second roundtable conference, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and discussed the peace moves initiated by New Delhi in the state. During the meeting, which lasted one hour, the two leaders felt that it was high and appropriate time to talk to all leaders, representing different shades of opinion. "Both the leaders hoped that this time all separatist leaders, organisations, belonging to different shades of ideology, will sit together to evolve a consensus," an official spokesman said in a statement here. It was felt that people in general have a great desire that all their leaders should sit together and find out an amicable solution to the problem, the spokesman said, adding this would also be helpful in accelerating economic growth and prosperity of the State. The second roundtable conference is being held in Srinagar in May. The first round was held on February 25 this year.

Daily Excelsior, 28 March 2006

#### **Four militants among five killed in Valley**

Srinagar, Mar 27: Five persons, including four militants were killed in separate incidents of violence across the Valley since Sunday evening, while a village head (nambardar) was shot at and injured by suspected militants. Security Forces claimed to have arrested four suspected militants belonging to Lashkar-e-Toiba militant outfit. According to sources two militants were killed in an encounter at Lachh Mawar forests in Handwara while as in another incident in the same district, troopers killed LeT commander. A divisional commander was killed in an encounter in Sogam. Suspected militants shot dead a Territorial Army man in Qazigund today. Defense spokesman Colonel VK Batra said that troopers belonging to 4 Para laid an ambush over militants in Lachh Mawar in Handwara during which a group of militants was intercepted.

Daily Excelsior, 28 March 2006

#### **Govt to take up refugees' issue with Centre: Mangat**

Jammu, Mar 27: Minister of Transport, Mangat Ram Sharma today assured the the State Assembly that the issue of West Pakistan refugees will be taken up with the Central Government for its settlement. Sharing the concern of members, regarding the plight of West Pak refugees of 1947, the Minister said "we will take a decision after consultation with Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad. He said the issue is very complicated as the West Pakistan refugees putting up in Jammu religion have not been given any compensation. These refugees can't take part in Assembly elections though they participate in Parliamentary elections. They are not also in a position to get the employment in the State, he added. The Minister admitted that these refugees whose population is from 60,000 to 70,000 have been deprived of their rights till date. He said to grant them the citizenship rights like other State subjects, the Government has to amend the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and for it the cooperation of entire House is needed.

Daily Excelsior, 28 March 2006

#### **Editorial: Across LoC**

It is interesting that any political party in "Azad" Kashmir (as the Pakistan-occupied territory is locally known)

should be resisting the extension of a Pakistani organisation into the region. For, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Ms Benazir Bhutto already has a chapter in Muzaffarabad. Actually it has also headed the elected government in the past and is the main opposition at present. However, this is not the solitary reason why one is amused every time the Muslim Conference looks askance at the entry of "non-State" entities. As it only too well known, the MC is a homespun party (it owes its origin to Sheikh Abdullah but has never shared his perception of secularism) and is in power... It is a murky fact that the MC owes its existence, survival and promotion to its written support to Pakistan in the wake of the State's accession to India. It has pledged itself to working for the complete integration of J&K with the neighbouring country... The MC or the PPP are in reality two sides of the same coin. For its part the PPP has described Kashmir as a matter of "life and death". Its "Kashmiris" leaders have stated that they are "fighting for a stable Pakistan" and they will "fight till the last to achieve their sacred mission". There is a possibility that the MC is worried that its base may be seriously eroded because it has little different to offer.... The faction of the PML supporting Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf too is reported to be keen on having a unit. What is more revealing is that the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an opposition Islamic alliance of political-religious parties of Pakistan, has similar designs. Ever since its formation as a coalition it has been eyeing "Azad" Kashmir. None of these parties promises to revive the pre-1947 composite culture of "Azad" Kashmir. Instead, they want to hasten its fall into an abyss. What a pity!

Greater Kashmir, 28 March 2006

#### **5 soldiers killed, 13 injured**

Poonch: At least five soldiers were killed and 13 others injured, three of them critically, in a road accident in border district of Poonch this morning. Official sources said that the army vehicle on its way from Mandi to Poonch met with the accident just a few kilometers from Poonch. Details of the accident revealed that the vehicle skid off the road and fell into a 150 deep gorge near Mandi. Reports said that five army men died on the spot while 13 were injured. "Condition of the three injured personnel is critical," army spokesman said. He said that the army personnel were immediately shifted to a nearby army hospital where doctors declared four of them brought dead. "The critically injured jawans are being airlifted to Command Hospital," he added.

Indian Express, 28 March 2006

#### **IED blast rocks road to airport**

Srinagar, March 27: MILITANTS today detonated a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on the busy Airport Road when the cavalcade of Deputy Inspector General (DIG), central Kashmir, passed by. The union minister and senior Congress leader Prof Saif-ud-din Soz had also taken the same route a few minutes earlier. "Militants detonated an IED at 6.45 on the airport road," said Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Budgam, Afad-ul-Mujtaba. "It was hidden beneath the soil on the road divider," he said. The SSP, however, rejected the news reports that the attack was targeting the vehicle of Union Minister Saif-ud-Din Soz. "It was not an attack on Soz," he said. "The minister's convoy had passed by almost half-an-hour ago." Soz also denied that the attack was aimed at him. "It was not an attack on me," he said. "I was already home when the blast occurred". The DIG, Kashmir's cavalcade was also passing by the area when the blast occurred. "He (DIG) was only minutes away from the blast site," said a senior police officer.

Daily Excelsior, 29 March 2006

#### **Efforts afoot to make Srinagar meet qualitative: CM**

Jammu, Mar 28: Extending invitation to all particularly 'annoyed groups and individuals' for participation in the next round-table conference on Kashmir to be chaired by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at Srinagar in May, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that efforts are afoot to make conference qualitative not quantitative. While winding up discussion in the Upper House on recent development regarding peace process including the first ever interaction of mainstream political leaders of the State with their counterparts of Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in Islamabad recently, Mr Azad said that without the participation of all shades of opinion any conference on Kashmir cannot be complete and he even expressed these views in the first round-table conference in New Delhi which was not attended by certain groups. "I had also stated that the first conference would become purposeful only when the annoyed groups or individuals participate in the second conference", the Chief Minister said and hoped that everybody would participate in the forth-coming Srinagar conference.

Daily Excelsior, 29 March 2006

#### **Governor opposes self rule, de-militarization**

Jammu, Mar 28: Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd) S K Sinha today said that solution of Kashmir problem lies in economics superseding politics in importance, as appears to be happening in the European Union. Inaugurating national seminar on "Building Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Challenges and Opportunities" organised by the Centre for Strategic Regional Studies, University of Jammu here this morning, the Governor envisioned Line of Control to be the line of peace, friendship and commerce. "Let people on both sides enjoy economic prosperity and let Kashmiriyat bloom within Kashmir", he added. The Governor said that Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf has been advocating LoC to be made irrelevant to allow free movement across it, adding that India too has been proposing that LoC be made irrelevant by converting it to line of peace and friendship, without altering national boundaries. In his 70-minute address, General Sinha elaborately dwelt on challenges, present scenario, opportunities and possible solutions to the Kashmir problem. He made a mention of much touted self-rule and demilitarization and gave his personal views on these concepts.

Daily Excelsior, 29 March 2006

#### **SOG inflicts major blow to Hizb**

Srinagar, Mar 28: In a major offensive against insurgency in south Kashmir, SOG Pulwama today busted a powerful network of Hizbul Mujahideen and arrested a top Hizb commander, along with his seven over ground associates besides huge cache of arms and ammunition, dumped to carry out major strikes in Kashmir was also claimed to have been seized. Meanwhile in a grenade attack in Srinagar six persons, including three CRPF personnel were injured and two militants were killed in Kupwara. Sources said that Muzaffar Ahmed Bhat, self styled Battalion Commander, alias Saaqib and a resident of Damhal Hanjipora was arrested yesterday. Claiming the arrest of HM commander as a "major breakthrough" in anti insurgency operations in South Kashmir, the sources said that during last year, around 100 active militants have been rendered "out of action". With this, Sources said, during last year of anti insurgency operations, nearly 50 percent of active militants present in south Kashmir have been deactivated. Sources said that the 100 militants, including top commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen have either been killed or arrested since June 2005, after militants triggered a powerful car blast killing dozens and injuring nearly forty persons. According to sources, there were around 60 militants presently in south Kashmir, which included 20 foreigners as well. In the meantime, DIG South Kashmir, Sheikh Owais Ahmed briefed the press about the arrest of HM Commander as recoveries thereof.

Daily Excelsior, 29 March 2006

#### **Editorial: The effort must continue**

Sarla Handoo

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's reiteration at Am-ritsar on Friday, March 24 that India is open to finding out a practical solution to the Kashmir issue may be viewed as one of those statements often proclaimed by political leadership in India and Pakistan. But it would be unwise to write it off at first glance. That is because Kashmir issue has acquired complexities, which can be untangled only through consistent and persistent efforts on both sides of the fence. The latest Pugwash Conference held in Islamabad recently, unfortunately failed to achieve a consensus on the issues involved...The Pugwash Conference debated at length General Musharraf's 'out of box'proposal of demilitarization, self-governance and joint management of the Himalayan region. The outcome, sadly, was less than satisfactory. This is because the proposals are too vague to enable anyone to respond... As against this, the areas of the state now under Pakistani occupation have yet to see any democratic process. Despite a Government in Pakistan occupied Kashmir it is still ruled by a Minister for Kashmir affairs from Islamabad. The Northern areas do not have even a puppet Legislative Assembly. In this situation it is too premature to talk about the idea of joint management of the areas... The earlier Pugwash conference held in May 2005 in Srinagar suggested internal cease-fire, withdrawal of troops and inclusion of the people of Kashmir in the Indo Pak talks. On the face of it the ideas are excellent. An internal cease-fire can stop violence and pave the way for a negotiated solution. But is internal cease-fire possible unless infiltration from across the Line of Control (LOC) stops. Is it possible to hold ceasefire unless the militant groups are interested in doing so? ... Undisputedly, that should be the goal for both India and Pakistan. How to achieve it, however, continues to be a million dollar question... The differences among the Kashmiri leaders are on the form in which the process of resolution should move... India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir have a long haul ahead to reach a spot from where they can speak with an amount of certainty to tackle the Kashmir issue. At the same time history has provided the leadership a golden opportunity to sort out an intractable issue. If they do it, they will be remembered in the annals of history as achievers. If they don't, they will still be remembered but in a different way. (Syndicate Features)

Indian Express 29 March 2006

#### **Huge haul of arms from Pulwama**

Pulwama, March 28: The Jammu and Kashmir police have seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition from south Kashmir's Pulwama district. The arms were recovered from a militant hideout. Deputy Inspector General of Police, South Kashmir, Sheikh Owais said the huge cache of arms was recovered after the police arrested a militant commander of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Recently, Pulwama police had arrested Muzaffar Ahmed Bhat, alias Saqib, who was the battalion commander of the outfit in Pulwama. His sustained integration led to the arms haul, Owais told reporters here today. The recovery included AK 47 rifles, UBGL, grenades, AK magazines and hundreds of rounds of AK ammunition. Owais said this haul showed how desperate the militants are to strike in the Valley. A defence spokesman said the heavy quantity of arms and ammunition was unearthed in a joint operation by STF, 55 RR and 44 RR. Meanwhile, three CRPF jawans were injured when militants tossed a hand grenade towards a security patrol at Raniwari in Srinagar this afternoon. Militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Greater Kashmir 29 March 2006

#### **6 injured in Grenade blast**

Srinagar, Mar 28: Six person, including three paramilitary CRPF personnel were injured in a grenade attack in Rainawari area of Srinagar on Tuesday. Elsewhere in the state a woman was injured in Varmul when troops fired on her. A soldier was injured in a misfire incident while a trooper was injured in Rajouri sector in a landmine explosion. Reports said suspected militants lobbed a grenade at a CRPF vehicle at Khatidarwaza Rainwari which exploded at the spot injuring three CRPF personnel and three civilians. Two of the injured CRPF men of 122 Battalion have been identified as head constable Veer Chand Chauhan and constable Amol Kaswe. Jaish-e-Muhammad militant spokesperson Abu Qudama in a telephonic statement to local news agency KNS claimed the responsibility of the attack. "Three soldiers were killed while four were injured in the attack," the spokesperson claimed. Meanwhile, a woman Nusrat Akhter, daughter of Mukhtar Ahmad was injured in Ajas area

of Varmul district on Monday night when troops of 13 Rashtriya Rifles fired on her when 'she was moving in suspicious circumstances'. A CRPF trooper of 122 Battalion DS Pal was injured in Khanyar when rifle of his colleague Bihari Lal went off accidentally. Meanwhile, a soldier of 13 Sikh Regiment was injured in a landmine explosion on Line of Control in Rajouri sector on Monday evening.

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#### **Soz urges APHC to attend**

Srinagar, Mar 28: In the run up to second Kashmir roundtable, which is scheduled here April end, both New Delhi and Srinagar are witnessing hectic political activity. Union Water Resources Minister Professor Saifuddin Soz's stormy visit to Valley on Monday and at the same time Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's meeting with Prime Minister in New Delhi marked the beginning of formal 'ground work' for the crucial event. Addressing his party workers in Kupwara Town Square, Soz said, "Kashmir issue has to be resolved and if Hurriyat Conference still stands by its perception of resolving the issue through peaceful negotiated settlement the APHC leaders must attend the second roundtable." However, Soz denied his links with the Sayed Ali Shah Geelani-led Hurriyat Conference and denied any communication between the Central government and Geelani. "We are not in touch with them," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 30 March 2006

#### **36 bills introduced, six go to Select Committee in 40 minutes (Sanjeev Pargal)**

Jammu, Mar 29: In an unprecedented action, the Government today allowed introduction of 36 private members' bills including the one which proposed reduction of the term of State's Legislative Assembly from six years to five years and three bills seeking amendments in Shri Mata Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Ji Shrine Acts and sent six other bills to the Select Committee for consideration and reporting to the House in next session. Entire Legislative business including introduction of 36 private members' bill and sending six others to the Select Committee, as proposed by Transport Minister Mangat Ram Sharma on behalf of Law Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, was carried out in just 40 minutes in the absence of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, who also holds Law portfolio. Six National Conference MLAs later staged a walk-out in the House alleging that sanctity of the House is being destroyed by rushing through the business. They charged the Government with being "non-serious" on legislations of "very important nature" saying the members were not being even allowed to explain their bills. NC MLA Ali Mohd Sagar, who led the walk-out, shouted 'no' when Speaker Tara Chand put the proposal of Mangat Ram Sharma for referring the bills of even his party colleague Saifullah Mir to the Select Committee.

Daily Excelsior, 30 March 2006

#### **Need to bid farewell to violence: Azad**

Jammu, Mar 29: Convergence of bold initiatives and practical ideas propounded by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf on making borders irrelevant without effecting territorial integrity of both countries have potential to institutionalize peace and bid farewell to violence and confrontationist approach forever. This was stated by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad while addressing valedictory session of two-day national seminar on Building Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Challenges and Opportunities, organized by Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies, Jammu University, here today. The Chief Minister said that we need to think about such issues as joint management of various resources and consultative institutions, be it in agriculture, forestry, environment, tourism, water and power resources, in order to strengthen these ideas. He said important international developments such as economic and technological globalization, international trade and necessities for attracting more and more investment have brought home the point among people especially youth in both countries to engage each other. It is imperative to make seeking of economic gains and improve standards of living key societal and national objectives in this scenario, he added. Mr. Azad congratulated Jammu University and its Vice Chancellor Prof. Amitabh Mattoo for organizing such an educative interaction on an important subject and called for holding a similar interaction in Srinagar before next roundtable conference being held in the summer capital in May.

Daily Excelsior, 30 March 2006

#### **4 Cong members cease to be MLAs: Mehboob**

Jammu, Mar 29: NC MLA Dr Mehboob Beg today said four Congress MLAs, who had served as chairmen or vice chairmen of the Corporations and Boards, have ceased to be members of the Assembly as per the legal position as they have held the office of profit. "The Constitution is clearly defined. The MLA, who has enjoyed office of profit 'irrespective of the fact that he has drawn the salary or not' ceased to be a member of this House", Dr Beg said raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Assembly. "Don't allow them to speak in the House", Dr Beg said interrupting Congress MLA Girdhari Lal, who said all four MLAs have resigned on their own. Dr Beg said he had elicited opinion of legal experts, who were unanimous that even if a MLA has held office of profit without charging the finances, they fall in the category of office of profit. He said the MLAs shall follow their leader (Sonia Gandhi) and resign. The four Congress MLAs - Mohd Shaffi Bhat, Haji Abdul Rashid, Girdhari Lal and GM Saroori? are reported to have resigned but there was no word from the Government that whether their resignation has been accepted or not.

Daily Excelsior, 30 March 2006

#### **Ultra killed, Maj hurt, 2 surrender**

Jammu, Mar 29: Army and police today gunned down a militant and apprehended another while two ultras surrendered in Poonch. An Army Major was injured in a mine blast. SSP Doda Prithvi Raj Manhas said a top

Hizbul Mujahideen militant (code named Ghazanavi) was gunned down by Army, CRPF and police in an encounter at Pasar in Navapachi area of Marwah in Doda district this morning. His associate - Bashir Ahmed Rather alias Moin Khan son of Abdul Rahim Rather R/o Dema, Navapachi was arrested. Two AK rifles and three magazines were recovered from the slain and apprehended militants. Police recovered a 5 kg IED from a matador No. 0752/JK06 at Galudi on Kishtwar-Bunjwa road in Doda this afternoon. Driver and conductor of matador besides two other suspects have been detained for questioning. Two Hizbul Mujahideen militants surrendered before officers of 13 Sikh at Bhimber Gali in Poonch today. They have been identified as Javed, 20, son of Alamdin R/o Niali, Thanna Mandi and Abdul Hamid, 19, son of Abdul Hafiz R/o Sikdar, Mahore. They handed over one AK rifle, two magazines, 30 rounds, six Chinese grenades, one pistol with one magazines and five rounds and one I Com radio set at the time of surrender. Major Pratap Singh was injured in a landmine blast near LoC at Bahadur Post in Poonch. He has been hospitalised.

Greater Kashmir, 30 March 2006

#### **China has role in K solution: Mirwaiz**

Karachi, Mar 29: Chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has suggested that China should play a role in resolving the Kashmir dispute and hinted at a separate parliament for a united Jammu and Kashmir by 2010. According to him, Beijing needed to be involved because it had control over a large chunk of the state's territory. "The APHC is preparing a roadmap of 2020 for the resolution of (Kashmir issue) in which we will also recommend the inclusion of China as a party," the Mirwaiz said at the final round of the series of discussions on Kashmir at the World Social Forum (WSF) at the KMC Sports Complex, here on Tuesday. At the workshop on Kashmir, he told WSF that besides India, Pakistan and Kashmiri leadership, China should also be considered as a party in resolving the Kashmir issue. Inclusion of China, he said, is necessary because "it occupies a large part of the Jammu and Kashmir. Forces of globalisation could not be ignored in this issue." He said that Kashmiris were the weakest party in this dispute while India and Pakistan, who dispute the state's ownership, were nuclear powers. "Kashmir is a huge tragedy and the very relations between Pakistan and India depend on the solution of this issue. These two countries have to decide in which direction this issue should proceed."

Daily Excelsior, 31 March 2006

#### **Situation in Kashmir to change within three years: Azad**

Jammu, Mar 30: Ruling out a separate Homeland for Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley, Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad urged the protagonists of the demand to consider entire Kashmir their land and not be disheartened to remain 'confined to a small piece of land'. Mr Azad who was the chief guest at the Navreh function organized by Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, (KPS) at its Headquarters at Ambphalla this evening, said the militancy is a temporary phase in Kashmir and situation will fast return to normal within two to three years in the State paving a way for all those who have migrated from the Valley to return to their homes and hearths. Mr Azad said being the MoS of Home way back in eighties he had rejected the separate homeland demand of the Hindus from Punjab who migrated due to militancy from that state to Delhi and wanted to rehabilitate there permanently. "At that time I had told them that from Kashmir to Kanyakumari entire India is your's and you can't be confined to a particular portion, same is my word for those who demand separate homeland in Kashmir today, he added." The Chief Minister, however said, it took 12 years in restoration of peace in Punjab while Kashmir is in turmoil for last 16 years now. Maintaining that Kashmir is incomplete without Pandits, he said every thing including land, water and rivers are there except you. But he expressed the hope that return of peace is not a distant dream in Valley as the talks are taking place at a good pace, he said, adding in the recently organized roundtable conference at Delhi Kashmiri Pandits were also given a due representation. "The change in the situation can be gauged from the fact that the next round of roundtable conference is being held in Kashmir valley after one and a half month which no body could have dreamed four years back", he said.

Daily Excelsior, 31 March 2006

#### **Omar for amnesty to Kashmiri youths wanting to return**

Jammu, Mar 30: National Conference president Omar Abdullah today said the Kashmiri youths, who want to return to their homes from Pakistan, should be given a general amnesty as "they have realised their mistakes". "Just like the elders forgive their kin for mistakes, the Government should forgive the Kashmiri youths and facilitate their return to their houses in Kashmir", Mr Abdullah said while talking to the Excelsior on telephone from New Delhi after breakfast meeting with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. He said during his visit to Islamabad in Pakistan to attend Pugwash conference, he met about 20 Kashmiri youths who expressed their desire to return to their houses. He disclosed that NC MP from Baramulla G N Shaheen, who had also gone to attend the conference, met 200 to 300 such youths who pleaded for initiating steps to allow them to return. Asked about the Prime Minister's response to his demand, the NC president said Dr Singh listened to him patiently. Referring to the defeat of CPM leader Mohd Yusuf Tarigami's resolution in the Legislative Assembly the other day on urging the Centre Government to take steps to facilitate Kashmiri youths' return from Pakistan, Omar Abdullah said: "the PDP's vote against the resolution, leading to its fall, has exposed them". Asserting that passing of the resolution was not a legal binding on the Centre as autonomy resolution passed with two-third majority was also rejected by the Centre, he said this should have sent a positive message to the Centre that the Assembly was also concerned about return of the Kashmiri youths.

Daily Excelsior, 31 March 2006

#### **Editorial: Point to ponder**

It is good that Communist Party of India (Marxist) member Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami has drawn attention to an important issue in the Assembly. Through a resolution he has sought the return of hundreds of young persons who have been lured across the Line of Control in the name of jihad or freedom. Quite a few of them are itching to come back home. Anybody who has met them either in Muzaffarabad or Pakistan can vouch for this. It is, however, something that is easier said than achieved... Broadly, there are three categories of people including a sizable chunk of young men from the Valley especially who are in Muzaffarabad and its vicinity. One group consists of hardcore militants and their ideologues who are absolutely clear in their perceptions (they will undertake a trip back only in pursuit of their agenda). The other is of migrants who have crossed over from border areas to escape firing by armies of the two countries. The third is of the persons who have been bewitched by a mistaken notion and find themselves in trouble these days.... By all means they should be permitted to resume their relations with the land of their birth. However, it would be unwise to let it happen without going through certain procedural formalities... First of all, those wanting to reenter this part of the State have to clearly express their intent. Pakistan too has to indicate to the Union Government that it wants to facilitate their movement. In any case there has to be a close scrutiny in order to verify their antecedents. It is of their own accord that they have gone to "Azad" Kashmir (as the occupied territory is locally known)... No one guilty of a heinous offence or sabotaging peace in the State directly or indirectly can have the luxury of moving around at free will...At the same time it is utterly ridiculous to say that pro-Pakistan forces are encouraging the comeback proposal. It is the wish of all sane persons in the sub-continent that divided families must reunite and ordinary masses should be made to feel comfortable to the maximum possible extent. All that is required to achieve this laudable objective is to proceed in a systematic manner... What is significant is that in this task they don't need the help of their own government or the one on the other side of the LoC. The only role they have to perform is to lead from the front. Will they show the courage of conviction?

Greater Kashmir, 31 March 2006

### **Rs 3300 cr for state to curb militancy**

Jammu, Mar 30: The Centre has been reimbursing security related expenditure (SRE) incurred by the J&K Government since 1989 in its fight against militancy. A sum of Rs 3,366.947 crore has already been released to J&K government during the period 1989-90 to 2004-05, an official statement said here. For the financial year 2005-06, the revised budget provision under the head SRE was Rs.159 crore and Rs.140 crore under the head relief and rehabilitation. Moreover, a sum of Rs.17.28 crore had also been released to the Government of Himachal Pradesh during the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05 for meeting the security related expenditure in its efforts to control/contain spill over of militancy related activities from J&K State to Himachal Pradesh. During the current financial year the State of Himachal Pradesh was sanctioned an amount of Rs.3 crore for this purpose. During the year 2005, 1,990 militancy related incidents occurred as compared to 2,565 incidents during the year 2004. 557 civilians were killed in the year 2005 as compared to 707 in the Year 2004. The number of security force personnel killed in the year 2005 was 189 compared to 281 in 2004. 917 militants were killed in the year 2005 compared to 976 in the year 2004. The operations of the troops over the last few months of Year 2005 achieved notable success including neutralization of a large number of senior commanders of all major terrorist outfits.

Greater Kashmir, 31 March 2006

### **3 militants, folk singer killed in JK**

Srinagar, Mar 30: Three militants and a civilian were killed while an army major was injured in the state since Wednesday evening, police and reports said. Elsewhere three civilians including two brothers were injured in separate incidents. Police said a militant of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit was killed in an encounter at Wadi Kalipora, Shopian in Pulwama district on Thursday morning. The 'gunfight' broke out after troops of 42 and 62 Rashtriya Rifles started search operations in the area. Police claimed troops killed Bashir Ahmad Malla son of Abdul Khaliq of Harmain Shopian in the encounter. However, local news agency KNS quoting locals said Bashir had surrendered on Wednesday before troops of 44 RR and was later killed in a fake gunfight. Meanwhile, police said a militant was killed in an encounter at Nawapachi, Marwah in Doda district on Wednesday evening. Police identified the killed militant as Muhammad Ishaq Kohli alias Gaznavi of Hizbul Mujahideen. Another militant was arrested in injured condition after the encounter; police claimed two AK rifles and some ammunition was recovered from the encounter site.

Greater Kashmir, 31 March 2006

### **Mirwaiz meets Aziz**

Srinagar: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the Chairman All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) led by him today met Pakistan Prime Minister Showkat Aziz. APHC spokesman said that Mirwaiz hailed talks between India and Pakistan but stated that dialogue process should reflect on ground. He called for demilitarization and said demilitarization would be biggest CMB. Meanwhile, Mirwaiz will address a Friday congregation in Shah Faisal Mosque on March 31.

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