

The Nation, 1 May 2005

### **Is a Kashmir solution near?**

CONTRARY to the common perception both in India and Pakistan, one of President Bush's Special Assistants envisions that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute is at hand. Mr Mike Green's conclusion is based on, as he believes, "softening of the known respective stands [that] is very much visible" though that softening somehow remains invisible in this part of the world, not at least to those directly concerned with the problem. Perhaps, the US shares the Indian conviction that progressive normalisation between the two countries inherent in establishing people-to-people contacts and economic and commercial links would create vested interests in Islamabad to compel it to accept New Delhi's idea of making the LoC a permanent border and forgetting about the rest. The bus link, which Mr Green feels "has really turned the corner" in bilateral relations, is another development that encouraged him to make the optimistic evaluation.

The Hindu, 1 May 2005

### **'Open routes, let the people be united'**

PANJOT (POONCH): The decades-old animosity in this last Indian village towards Pakistan is melting and the thousands of people there are looking forward to the opening of routes along the Line of Control (LoC). This remote village is surrounded by Pakistan on three sides. Not only has the situation on the LoC changed, the public sentiment has also undergone a transition. During Operation Parakaram in 2001-02, in which thousands of soldiers were deployed along the LoC, the sentiment was for an all-out war against Pakistan. Villages in the forward areas were the worst sufferers in the sudden India-Pakistan military flare-up. Explaining the turnaround in local sentiments, says Jasbir Kour, a teacher of Government Primary School: "We have suffered the most in shelling by Pakistan. We want peace given a chance. Let the routes be opened and the people who share the same language and culture be united."

The Tribune, 1 May 2005

### **Mufti woos Bollywood**

Mumbai, April 30: With CBMs between India and Pakistan giving rise to hopes of peace in Kashmir, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed is talking business in Mumbai. In Mumbai the Mufti's mission is to woo Bollywood to Jammu and Kashmir. "Bollywood has failed to project Kashmir to the world," Sayeed rued. What galled him even more was the fact that film makers chose foreign climes like Switzerland over his state. "Not a single producer or director has shot films in Kashmir for a long time", he said.

The Hindu, 1 May 2005

### **Work on Poonch-Rawalakot road begins** (Luv Puri)

MENDLA (LINE OF CONTROL): The civil administration has done an initial survey, days after India and Pakistan decided to open the historic Rawalakot-Poonch road. Revenue officers and officials of the Roads & Building Department from the district were the first to reach the last point along the Line of Control, which is a stone's throw from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). This reporter of The Hindu joined the civil administration team, which assessed the condition of the road. The road, which once connected Poonch city with Rawalakot, was a lifeline for the people on either side of the LoC. Salotri is the last inhabited village along the LoC, 12 km from Poonch town, and beyond it only Army and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel can go. It is a nerve-racking five-km stretch from Salotri to the last Indian post. On this rocky surface only army trucks can ply. The revenue officials, accompanied by an army official, took the hazardous stretch, which runs along the Poonch river, the dividing line between the Indian posts and PoK.

The Tribune, 1 May 2005

### **Mufti allays fears on evacuee property**

Srinagar, April 30: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has asserted that the status of the evacuee property in the state would not be changed in the wake of free movement of people across the LoC. He allayed the "wrong impressions" in this regard and said these were the result of a dis-information campaign. Mufti Sayeed, who was in Kerala yesterday, said there was no cause of concern for the refugees of 1947 as the government would protect the interests of the legitimate holders of the custodian property. He said whoever comes from the other part of the state with an intention to stay here had to do so under the process of law that would take adequate care of the people in legal possession of the evacuee property, an official spokesman said.

The Tribune, 1 May 2005

### **8 killed in J&K**

Srinagar, April 30: Eight persons, including four militants and two security personnel, were killed and six jawans injured in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since last night, official sources said here today. Two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were killed in a fierce gunbattle at Salar in the Pahalgam area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district this morning, a defence spokesman said. Security forces got a tip-off about the movement of the ultras in the Salar area and laid an ambush. On being challenged, the militants opened fire on the security forces which was retaliated, he said.

The Daily Times, 1 May 2005

### **Passengers list for 4th Kashmir bus given to IHK**

MUZAFFARABAD: The deputy commissioner of Muzaffarabad has handed over the passengers' list of the fourth Kashmir bus to his counterpart in Held Kashmir. The fourth Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus will be leaving on May 20. Arrangements have been completed for the third bus departing on May 5. This is the first time that IHK civilian authorities have received the passengers' list. Previously, Indian army personnel used to receive the list from the deputy commissioner of Muzaffarabad.

The Daily Times, 1 May 2005

**The other saffron dream** (Khalid Hasan)

Those who have started saying after the "cricket summit" that the fate of Kashmir has been settled between the two men whose names start with M, will not say so were they to be taken to the hundreds of graves of young Kashmiris who lie in the vast Martyrs' Graveyard in Srinagar. No Kashmiri is going to forget his fallen. All movements for freedom start out as dreams. Most of them fall by the wayside and the world moves on, inexorably, uncaringly forward. The movement for the independent Sikh state of Khalistan may have died for those who speak for the Government of India but not for Simranjit Singh Mann, the firebrand Sikh leader, now in the States on a mission of political revival. There are over half a million Sikhs in North America and, true to form, wherever they live, they retain their traditional vibrancy and good humour.

The Tribune, 2 May 2005

**Mufti's nephew shot at, critically wounded**

Srinagar, May 1: Militants tonight shot at and seriously wounded a nephew of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Syed in Anantnag district, 45km from here, official sources said. The militants opened fire from automatic weapons on Atiqullah, nephew of the Chief Minister, outside his residence at Bijdehera at around 8.30 pm, critically injuring him, the sources said.

The Tribune, 2 May 2005

**APHC leaders soften stance on meeting PM** (M.L. Kak)

Jammu, May 1: The executive committee of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) is scheduled to meet in Srinagar on Monday to decide on a date for its meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The very decision to convene a meeting on finalising a date indicates at APHC leaders having undergone a major change in their attitude as far as the resumption of talks is concerned. When the UPA assumed power at the Centre, APHC leaders had insisted that they would visit Delhi to meet the Prime Minister only if they received a formal invitation. Also, they had wished to meet the Prime Minister prior to their visit to Pakistan. Explaining the reason for the change in their stance, a former APHC chairman, Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, while talking to The Tribune, today said: "We had sought an appointment with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, which was granted when he visited Delhi recently."

The Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2005

**Infiltration, violence in J&K down**

NEW DELHI, May 1: In a major indicator of setback to militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, infiltration has nose-dived to almost zero percent during the last seven months and the number of terrorists in the State is estimated to have dropped by a half to nearly 1,800. Militant violence in the State has also dropped sharply by 34 percent between January and April 15 this year compared to that last year even as the killing of terrorists has gone up significantly, official sources said here today. Infiltration was down by nearly two-third in 2004 as compared to 2003, they said. Since September last year, infiltration is down to almost zero level, the sources said. The terrorists, however, continue to make desperate bids to infiltrate and a number of such attempts have been foiled. The success in curbing infiltration is being attributed to the erection of 20 ft high fence along the 750-km Line of Control (LoC) supplemented by the three-tier security net of army and other forces.

The Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2005

**Govt to act tough on militant funding**

NEW DELHI, May 1: Centre is contemplating taking stricter laws regarding the foreign funding to certain Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which are allegedly indulging in anti-national activities, including funding militant organisations in Jammu and Kashmir and North-East. Highly-placed sources in the Home Ministry said the decision was taken at a meeting in which security agencies highlighted the role of certain NGOs working in the garb of humanitarian groups and the absence of laws to deal with it. Following this, a decision will soon be taken for amendment of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 to ensure that the funds received from abroad are used for the right purpose. The proposal to this effect is likely to be placed before the Union Cabinet soon after which Parliament will be informed, the sources said. Under the new law, Government and public sector banks will now be asked to submit to the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of Home Affairs about any huge transaction or the funds received by any NGO from abroad failing which strict penal action could be initiated against the bank.

The Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2005

**Mufti's nephew succumbs to injuries**

SRINAGAR, May 2: Itiqullah Shah, nephew of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who was seriously injured in a militant attack last night, succumbed to injuries here today. Shah, who was rushed to Srinagar for treatment after militants opened fire at him outside his residence at Bijdehera in Anantnag district, died at the hospital, official sources said. The sources said the Chief Minister, who is in Mumbai, has cancelled all appointments and is rushing back to Srinagar.

The Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2005

**175 militants killed in Kashmir in past 4 months**

SRINAGAR, May 1: As the India and Pakistan peace process moves ahead with both countries encouraging more people to people contact, security forces in Jammu and Kashmir have also intensified their operations against militants, killing 175, including about 40 top commanders during the past four months. The Hizbul Mujahideen which has announced that they would consider any sincere cease-fire offer by the centre was among the militant organisations who suffered most after the "Karvaan-e-Aman" bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad started. The outfit lost about a dozen commanders in encounters with the security forces in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu division.

The Daily Excelsior, 2 May 2005

**2000 ultras still operating: Lt Gen Sharma**

JAMMU, May 1: Despite fall in militancy-related violence and winds of Indo-Pak peace process blowing in Jammu and Kashmir, nearly 2000 armed militants were still operating in the State, a top Army official claimed today. "Despite fall in the militancy violence and peace winds blowing up in J&K, nearly 2000 militants are still operating in the State to keep the pot of militancy boiling," General Officer Commanding (GOC) 16 Corps, Lt Gen Sudhir Sharma said at Nagrota-based headquarters here. Over 1000 militants are operating in Jammu division in south of Pir Panchal ranges and rest in Kashmir areas, he said adding that largest number of ultras belong to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. "The number of the militants in Kashmir and Jammu regions continue to change in view of the pressure from security forces," he said adding Surankote forests (Poonch) tops hard core militancy areas followed by Kishtwar and Gool areas of Doda and Udhampur respectively.

The Tribune, 2 May 2005

**Soldier, militant killed**

Srinagar, May 1: A soldier and a militant were killed, while four persons, including two brothers and a soldier, were injured in Jammu and Kashmir overnight. The security forces arrested a militant along with one pistol, one magazine and 14 cartridges at Doda. Official sources said troops killed a militant in an encounter at Muqam Bandipora in north Kashmir early this morning. The encounter ensued after an ambush party was attacked by the militants. One AK rifle and other arms and ammunition were seized from the slain militant. Militants shot at and wounded Mashrouf Mehraj, a Class X student at Jamia Baramula last night. He had been hospitalised.

The Tribune, 2 May 2005

**Pak against removing UN observers**

Islamabad, May 1: Pakistan has said it will not agree to a suggestion to dismantle a UN observers' group in both sides of Kashmir until the Kashmir issue is resolved. Reacting to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's reported remarks that he would discuss with the two countries the future of the UN Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan, Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said he would like to see the text of Mr Annan's recent comments. However, Pakistan would not agree to a suggestion to remove the group without the settlement of the Kashmir issue, he was quoted as saying by the local daily 'The News'. The group has deployed 44 observers in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The Daily Times, 2 May 2005

**'Resolving Kashmir issue is vital to India'** (Zulfiqar Ghuman and Irfan Ghauri)

ISLAMABAD: The resolution of the long-standing Kashmir dispute, which has been the wish of the people of Pakistan and Kashmiri, has now become a need for India because of the changing international geo-political scenario, said State Culture and Sports Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani in an exclusive interview with Daily Times. Durrani said a visible change had been witnessed among the Indian politicians and the media during President General Pervez Musharraf's recent visit to India along with a high-powered Pakistani delegation. Even the Indian hawks were in a defensive position, he added. "I had also visited New Delhi with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz last year and followed President Musharraf's Agra summit, but this time I have seen a visible change in Indian attitude," he said. Durrani said that people-to-people contact had played a proactive role in bringing the two countries together and had increased confidence building measures.

The Nation, 3 May 2005

**No pressure for any Kashmir formula** (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Monday declared it would not sign NPT as a non-nuclear state saying that the nuclear capability is indispensable for the country's security. Addressing his weekly Press briefing here, Foreign Office Spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said Islamabad would not join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) without its recognition as nuclear state. He said it has been conveyed to Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi during his recent visit to Islamabad, that Pakistan's nuclear capability is indispensable for its defense. Nonetheless, he said Pakistan shared the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and the Japanese Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction over the steps and measures taken by Islamabad in this regard. Answering a question, Jilani said there is no change in Islamabad's principled position on Kashmir, adding that the core issue must be resolved in accordance with the aspirations of Kashmiris.

Dawn, 3 May 2005

**Islamabad wants UN group to stay in place** (Hasan Akhtar)

ISLAMABAD, May 2: Pakistan has brushed aside the UN secretary-general's suggestion that the United Nations Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) monitoring violations in Jammu and Kashmir might be wound up in view of improving relations between the two countries. Asked to comment on a recent report attributed to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at his weekly press briefing here on Monday, Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said that the UNMOGIP had been mandated by the UN Security Council to monitor violations of the ceasefire line between the two parts of Kashmir. Pakistan believed that the UNMOGIP was performing an extremely useful task in monitoring the LoC and should be allowed to complete its mandate till the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was resolved, he added.

The Tribune, 3 May 2005

**NC locks horns with govt over Resettlement Act**

Srinagar, May 2: The National Conference has adopted an open confrontation with the coalition government over the Resettlement Act that allows rights over the property left behind by those who migrated to the PoK following partition. This follows claims made by some of the visitors who came from Muzaffarabad on April 7, over the property they had left in the

Kashmir valley on their migration to the PoK about six decades ago. The National Conference has also discredited the stand taken by Chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and the Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Mangat Ram Sharma over the implementation of the Act. Talking to mediapersons here today, Mr Abdul Rahim Rather, Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly and former minister described the "confusion" created over the issue as unfortunate saying its implementation was not going to create any problems.

The Tribune, 3 May 2005

#### **Mufti's nephew dead**

Srinagar, May 2: The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister's nephew, Ateequllah Shah, who was fired at and injured by militants at Beijbehara in Anantnag district yesterday, died in the hospital here today. Ateequllah Shah, 58, nephew of the Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, was admitted to SKIMS Hospital here last night, after he received two bullet injuries near his house at Baba Mohalla in Beijbehara town. A contractor by profession, Ateequllah was fired at by some militants in the vicinity of a shrine near his house. He was rushed to the Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), at Soura here, where he died today.

The Tribune, 3 May 2005

#### **Army convoy attacked in Baramula**

Srinagar, May 2: Militants today carried out a grenade attack in a bid to target a convoy of Rashtriya Rifles in Baramula district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Unidentified ultras lobbed a grenade towards Srinagar-bound convoy of Rashtriya Rifles at Chankipora, near Sopore, 55 km from here, on the Srinagar-Bandipora road around 11.30 a.m. they said. However, the grenade missed the target and exploded on the roadside causing no casualty or damage, the officials said, adding the security forces cordoned off the area. No militant outfit has so far claimed responsibility for the incident.

The Tribune, 3 May 2005

#### **Pak clears 20 names for third bus**

Jammu, May 2: Pakistan has cleared a list of 20 persons who will travel by the third bus from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, official sources said today. The is scheduled for May 5. However, only 17 of these are likely to board the bus as three have already cited prior commitments behind dropping the journey, they said. "The Central Government has also cleared the names of 46 persons to travel here from Muzaffarabad, but the list of the exact number has not been sent by Pakistani authorities so far," sources said. The historic bus service was kicked off on April 7 from Srinagar in the backdrop of a militant attack on the tourist reception centre in Srinagar where the passengers had been lodged by the authorities under tight security.

The Tribune, 3 May 2005

#### **SC notices to Centre, J&K on 'evacuee property'**

New Delhi, May 2: Taking cognizance of a petition accusing the Jammu and Kashmir Government of accepting applications from "Kashmiri evacuees" coming by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to claim back their properties in the state, the Supreme Court today issued notices to the Centre and the state government seeking their replies as under what provision this was being done. While stating that no such thing could happen in the state of Jammu and Kashmir as there was at present no law there under which such applications could be entertained, a Bench of Mr Justice N. Santosh Hegde sought replies from the Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir Government by May 12.

The Times of India, 3 May 2005

#### **Mush call propels Hurriyat unity**

NEW DELHI: When General Pervez Musharraf visited New Delhi last month, he invited the Kashmiri separatists to take the historic bus ride to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, but with a rider: that they should all come together, forging unity among the warring factions. The General told the separatists that the "era of militancy and wars is over", and that it is "time for negotiations", Ansari told Indiatimes News Network. With the third bus hardly a week away, and the doves and the hawks still at loggerheads, the separatists are unable to take up the General's invite. Ansari said they are not able to take the invitation now because "we want to go there and meet the Kashmiri leadership with something very concrete" and " inshallah we would have something very concrete soon". He didn't elaborate if it was about unity that he was talking.

The Daily Times, 3 May 2005

#### **India to act against people highlighting abuses in Kashmir (Iftikhar Gilani)**

NEW DELHI: India is planning to counter "over-ground support base of militants" (pro-freedom politicians) by initiating legal action against them as part of a new strategy to counter militancy in Jammu and Kashmir. The Home Affairs Ministry expressed concern at the activities of "over-ground workers" in its annual report while unveiling the strategy to counter violence in the state. The report tabled in the parliament maintained that over-ground workers were highlighting alleged human rights violations and instigating people to demonstrate on trivial grounds to discredit the security forces. Further, these political activists were involved in recruiting young people to join militant ranks and collect funds and provide logistic support to militants, said the report.

The Daily Times, 3 May 2005

#### **Militants kill three in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: Three people were killed and three others were injured because of militant violence in Jammu and Kashmir, police officials said on Monday. Soldiers killed a suspected militant in a pre-dawn gun battle in Turki village, said a police officer said on condition of anonymity. In Gursai village militants attacked a security forces' patrol, killing a soldier, said the officer. The militants escaped after the attack. Srinagar's main hospital administrator Syed Jalal said that Atiqullah Shah, a

close relative of Jammu and Kashmir's chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, died of his injuries at the hospital where he was being treated for gunshot wounds from an attack on Sunday. Shah was shot as he left a mosque after praying in his hometown Bijbehara. He was the third relative of Sayeed to be attacked by suspected militants. In Batnour village, unidentified assailants barged into a villager's home and fired indiscriminately, injuring two brothers, said police. In a separate shootout in Baramulla town, a teenage boy was shot and wounded by unknown gunmen.

Dawn, 3 May 2005

#### **90 killed since launch of bus service: India**

SRINAGAR, May 2: The Indian army said on Monday a campaign to hunt down militants in occupied Kashmir had left 90 freedom seekers dead since the launch of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service last month. A senior official said the campaign was being aided by an extensive network of fences built by India in the past decade to "stop militants crossing from Pakistan". "The militants were killed in nearly 60 clashes with troops across the (occupied) state since the bus launch on April 7," the official said. Four groups have threatened to attack passengers on the bus and disrupt the service in a bid to stall a move by India and Pakistan for a "soft border" along the LoC.

Dawn, 3 May 2005

#### **Geelani against status quo in Kashmir** (Tariq Naqash)

MUZAFFARABAD, May 2: All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani has expressed apprehensions that steps taken by Pakistan indicate that it has agreed to maintaining status quo in Kashmir. "President Pervez Musharraf says the Line of Control will not be accepted as permanent border, but the steps being taken by Islamabad indicate that perhaps it has agreed to (maintain) the present status," Mr Geelani said in a recorded telephonic address to a public meeting in Hattian Bala, some 45 km south of Muzaffarabad, on Monday.

The Daily Excelsior, 3 May 2005

#### **Mirwaiz seeks Hizbul leader's support for Hurriyat unity**

ISLAMABAD, May 2: Moderate Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq has sought support of Pakistan-based militant group Hizbul Muzahideen's leader Sayeed Salahuddin, for persuading hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani to agree for a unification of the conglomerate. Pakistan newspaper 'Daily Times' reported that Umer Farooq called up Salahuddin, who is also the chairman of the Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC), a conglomerate of militant groups, and asked him to help unify the Hurriyat factions. Umer Farooq offered the MJC leader a post in the Hurriyat Conference and requested him to persuade Geelani, to agree for a unification. Salahuddin told Umer Farooq that a decision to join the Hurriyat Conference would be taken after consulting the MJC leadership, the newspaper said.

The Daily Excelsior, 3 May 2005

#### **EDITORIAL: Build-up to hope**

It is only in the fitness of things that the work has begun in right earnest on this side of the Line of Control for reopening the road between Poonch and Rawlakot. Revenue officers and officials of the Roads and Building Department of Poonch district have conducted an initial survey of the area. Since this passage has been one of the major infiltration routes it is extensively covered with a large number of landmines. In keeping with the new mood that has gripped the sub-continent these hidden explosive devices have to go and their removal is going to take some time. Anybody familiar with the terrain on either side of the LoC can vouch for at least two permanent features: it is tough and arduous and there is widespread presence of rival armed forces. There are numerous picturesque spots as well in both parts. The people who had come from Muzaffarabad in the first bus on April 7 and visited Mendhar to meet their relatives are learnt to have expressed surprise over the high level of development in the State. They must have noticed differences on other counts as well particularly the one that the freedom of expression has made. However, this is not the occasion to go into details about any aspect of life other than the hope that has been generated by the prospects of the reunification of families divided by circumstances beyond their control at the time of Partition.

The Tribune, 4 May 2005

#### **Two leaders shot dead in Kashmir**

Srinagar, May 3: Just 48 hours before the third run of the "Karvaan-e-Aman" bus to Muzaffarabad, militants struck in a big way in the valley, killing two leaders, attacking a police camp with rockets and injuring 17 persons overnight. The security forces gunned down six heavily armed Pakistani infiltrators, including four foreigners, in Jammu and Kashmir early this morning.

The Tribune, 4 May 2005

#### **No change in evacuee property status: govt**

Srinagar, May 3: The Jammu and Kashmir Government said today that grant of permit for the resettlement in the state under an Act of 1982 was under scrutiny of the Supreme Court but ruled out change in the status of evacuee property so far as its present ownership was concerned. Referring to different views expressed on this issue recently, an official spokesman said the Resettlement Act was passed by the state legislature in 1982. After receiving the assent of the Governor, it was referred to the Supreme Court for its opinion which returned the Act in 2001 without any opinion or remarks. A writ petition was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the Act and the court has stayed operation of the Act in February, 2002, and the stay continues to be in vogue, the spokesman said. The Act, he said, is before the apex court and it would be presumptuous to form an opinion about its validity. He said the Act provides only an enabling mechanism to issue permits to citizens wanting to return to the state from areas under the control of Pakistan for permanent settlement.

The Hindu, 4 May 2005

**Security tightened at Baglihar**

JAMMU: Security at the Baglihar project has been tightened following intercepts that revealed that militants were planning to target it and kidnap foreigners working there, a top police official said here on Tuesday.

The Times of India, 4 May 2005

**Municipal chief, 3 others killed in J&K** (M SALEEM PANDIT)

SRINAGAR: In a daring midday attack, militants assassinated a recently-elected chairman of the municipal council in Pattan on Tuesday and killed three of his security guards. Also in a raging gunbattle near the LoC in Poonch sector, soldiers killed six people who were trying to sneak into Kashmir from Pakistan. As the snows in the mountain passes in the Pir Panjals have melted, attacks in the Valley have gone up and attempts to infiltrate stepped up. Two days ago, militants killed CM Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's nephew.

The Hindu, 4 May 2005

**Congress councillor killed in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: Stepping up their attacks on recently elected members of local bodies, militants on Tuesday shot dead the head of the municipal committee, Pattan, and his two guards. Police sources said militants shot Mohammad Ramzan Mian, a Congress activist who was recently elected chairman of Pattan Municipal Committee, as he came out of his office. Militants fired indiscriminately at his two bodyguards, Riyaz Ahmed and Zahoor Ahmed and a civilian Shabir Ahmed. A police constable, Altaf Ahmed, gave chase to the militants but was shot and critically wounded. While Mr. Mian died on the spot, his guards and the policemen died in the hospital. Shabir Ahmed, who is the president of a local traders association, is in a critical condition. The attacks created panic in the busy Pattan market as people ran helter-skelter to escape the indiscriminate fire.

The Hindu, 4 May 2005

**Bid to enter LoC** (Luv Puri)

MENDHAR: There have been renewed infiltration attempts along the Line of Control in the Mendhar sector, which is causing worry to security agencies. Of the three bids last week, two were foiled, and, in the third, three militants managed to enter Indian territory, police sources told The Hindu. The army thwarted the two attempts in which 10 militants were killed. On Monday night, six militants were killed and a large cache of arms were recovered.

The Hindu, 4 May 2005

**J&K appeals against order on Amarnath yatra**

JAMMU: The State Government has filed an appeal against the Jammu and Kashmir High Court order vesting with the Amarnath Yatra Shrine Board powers to conduct the annual pilgrimage. A single judge on April 15 said the board would be the sole authority to conduct the pilgrimage and the Government had no power to interfere in its functioning. The Additional Advocate-General, Anil Sethi, said the pivotal question was whether the board was competent to perform all pilgrimage functions.

The Hindu, 4 May 2005

**PoK Prime Minister's family awaits reunion**

MENDHAR (NEAR THE LINE OF CONTROL): The significance of the decision by the leaders of India and Pakistan to further soften the Line of Control by opening up fresh routes can be gauged by the enthusiastic mood of the people here. Almost every family, including that of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan, has a relative living on the other side. Mr. Khan belonged to this place before he migrated to the other side in 1947-48. Many believe that it was the pressure exerted on Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf by the political leadership of PoK that paved the way for the opening up of the fresh route along the LoC. All the political leaders of PoK - largely comprising Rajput Muslims - have their relatives in this belt.

The Nation, 4 May 2005

**Just solution of Kashmir to be explored**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz Tuesday said the government strictly believes on women empowerment and a number of steps have been taken to provide them employment openings in all fields. Talking about the Kashmir issue he hoped that a peaceful and just solution of the issue will be explored in result of the ongoing dialogue the two countries. While addressing the inaugural session of Fifth South Asia Regional Ministerial Conference organised by Ministry of Women Development here at Convention Centre, he said that the government has done a lot to ensure gender equality in all fields during the last five years but there is still need to do more in this regard.

The Nation, 4 May 2005

**Forsaking plebiscite**

IT is quite strange that Islamabad should be presenting a formula for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute whose two strands cancel each other out. On the one hand, there is the absolutely justified insistence that ascertaining the wishes of the people is a prerequisite to any settlement, while on the other there is an incomprehensible proposal of adopting means other than the plebiscite to determine the Kashmiris' aspirations. One wonders what better or even equally credible method there could be to find out whether they wish to join Pakistan or India. The argument that a plebiscite, which is a means of granting Kashmiris the right of self-determination, is New Delhi's pet aversion that has forced Islamabad to think of other ways, has to be weighed in the context of its desire to keep holding on to Held Kashmir under any circumstances. And as it is convinced like the rest of the world that a free choice, lying at the root of a UN-sponsored plebiscite, would see a disgraceful end of its illegal occupation, it would not countenance any such suggestion. Pakistan has had enough experience of its strategy of declaring thoroughly rigged and dragooned elections as equivalent to having ascertained the people's wishes about their future. The Western press

and leaders have been acquiescing in this palpable chicanery, talking of India as 'the greatest democracy' and the puppet Held Kashmir Assembly as representative of Kashmiris.

The Times of India, 4 May 2005

#### **Geelani accuses Pak**

ISLAMABAD: Accusing Pakistan of deviating from its stand on the Kashmir issue with India, hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has said "friendly" relations between the two countries could not flourish without the resolution of the problem. In a recorded telephonic address to a public meeting in Hattian Bala, some 45 km south of PoK's capital Muzaffarabad on Monday, he said President Pervez Musharraf "says the Line of Control will not be accepted as permanent border, but the steps being taken by Islamabad indicate that perhaps it has agreed to (maintain) the present status." "Pakistan's Kashmir policy has been changed. Instead of core issue, Kashmir is being treated as one of the several unresolved issues between the two countries," he told the meeting attended by about 2,000 people. Claiming that trade, sports and exchange of delegations with India were against the interests of Pakistan, Geelani said "I am not against friendly relations between India and Pakistan but I want to make the two governments realise that without resolving Kashmir such relations cannot flourish."

The Daily Excelsior, 4 May 2005

#### **Revolving doors**

If an award is instituted for politicians often switching their loyalties there will be many takers in the State. Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari eminently fits into this category. This is not surprising that in his latest move he has parted company with the National Conference. Only the naïve will be astonished by the fact he has done so without formally tendering his resignation from the outfit or even informing the Speaker of the Assembly of which he is a NC member. Evidently these formalities are meant simply for those who suffer from qualms of conscience while moving from one organisation to the other. There is hardly any party that has not received the Moulvi's blessings --- be it the NC, Congress or the Janata Party (the People's Democratic Party is unlucky so far perhaps because it is a comparatively new entrant into the arena). His strength is that he is one of the few leaders to have their own constituency --- among Shias in the Pattan belt along the Srinagar-Baramulla road. Perhaps this knowledge is what encourages him to more often than not force an individual line. This does not mean, however, that he has proved himself to be invincible or the fact that he simultaneously dabbles in politics, religion and business has gone unnoticed by the concerned people.

The Daily Excelsior, 4 May 2005

#### **Utterly senseless**

This is extremely sad that a handful of militants still prowling this State are not learning any meaningful lesson from the ongoing peace process in the sub-continent. Somehow they are determined to derail it. Their threats to convert the Muzaffarabad-bound bus into a "coffin" and their targetted killings give enough proof of their evil intent. Nothing else can explain the senseless and shocking murder of Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's nephew in their hometown of Bijbehara in Anantnag district (prima facie it appears he has been hit simply because of his close relations with a VVIP whose peace agenda is causing disquiet in the militant camp). This is one more in line with the terror machine's attempts to spread scare. It does not seem to be relevant any more that the Mufti's nephew was repeatedly shot at while he was coming out after offering prayers at a mosque. Leave alone the fringes of places of worship the militants have never hesitated to convert their sacred interiors into gory theatres of their wicked actions. Such a vicious approach on the part of the militants leaves only one option that those who don't want to leave their violent ways are given an exemplary message. Why are they not behaving despite their wire-pullers from across the Line of Control clearly signalling that those creating hurdles in the passage of peace would not be tolerated?

The Daily Excelsior, 4 May 2005

#### **Kashmir no longer a 'Core issue'** (J N Raina)

When Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf came to India on the pretext of watching a cricket match, he made a touching but significant remark: "Phir wohi dil nahi laya hoon... main naya dil laya hoon" (I have not come with the same heart. I have come here with a new heart). Analytically, it makes great sense. It sounds meaningful and gives an indication that Musharraf's heart has undergone metamorphosis. He frankly admitted the heart he had exhibited at Agra some four years ago, is not the same. Then it was 'bruised'. Then there was 'hatred'; and tension prevailed. Intrinsically, one can safely argue that Musharraf had then behaved 'arrogantly'. He would swagger at the Agra summit. But now one can easily conclude with some exactness that there is a metamorphic change in his heart. And it is not a sudden change. After all, he has a human heart, with a General's tinge. He is witness to 911. December 2002 terrorist attack on Indian Parliament, and the subsequent nearly year-long eye-ball-to-eye-ball confrontation on the LoC and the international borders, followed by two successive attempts on his life, might have vastly contributed to the change-of-heart.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2005

#### **Two girls killed, 16 injured in blast at marriage party**

JAMMU: In a major success, Rajouri-Poonch police today eliminated four foreign mercenaries in two fierce gun-battles at Mendhar and Surankote. A civilian was also killed in one of the encounter. Killing of four mercenaries including a "district commander" of Hizbul Mujahideen Abu Mussa Khan came within two days of the liquidation of six militants including four foreign mercenaries in Balnoi, Mendhar sector. In another incident, two girls were killed and 16 others, mostly women, were injured in a blast in the marriage function at the house of a Village Defence Committee (VDC) member Dhani Ram at Lower Matta, about 18 kms from Reasi at 9.30 pm last night. The operation, which was launched on a specific information developed by SSP Rajouri J P Singh, continued for two hours in which two dreaded foreign mercenaries of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit were eliminated. A civilian was also caught in the cross-firing and got killed. Police or security forces didn't suffer any casualties in

the operation, Mr Singh said.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2005

#### **Hizb confirms death of 14 militants in Bandipore**

SRINAGAR: With senior Police and Army officials continuously tight-lipped, Hizbul Mujahideen today confirmed the death of fourteen of its militants in the 50-hour-long gunbattle at Lawaypora in Bandipore area of Baramulla district. Meanwhile, three more militants, three civilians and a soldier have died in different incidents of violence in Kashmir valley since last evening whereas four civilians have been left wounded in a grenade blast in Sopore town. Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman Junaid-ul-Islam told the local newsagency KNS this evening over telephone that fourteen Kashmiri militants of his organisation got killed in Army's operation at Lawaypora in Bandipore area. He said that the slain militants included a number of "battalion commanders" and "company commanders" of the organisation. Official sources said that the particulars of the militants identified by Hizbul Mujahideen were being verified.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2005

#### **41 passengers arrive from PoK, 37 leave for Muzaffarabad**

SRINAGAR: A total of 37 passengers crossed over to Muzaffarabad from the Kaman Post on board the third "Karvaan-e-Aman (Caravan of Peace)" today as 41 people from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) arrived here amid unprecedented security cover. The two specially-designed 19-seater Ashok Leyland Stag buses of the Jammu and Kashmir State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) carried 25 fresh and 12 returnee passengers who had come on the previous two vehicles and went back to Muzaffarabad after visiting their relatives in Kashmir, Poonch and Rajouri districts, an official spokesman said. Of the 25 passengers, 11 are from the Jammu province while 14 belong to the Kashmir region, he added. The authorities had deliberately kept the names and addresses of the passengers, their place of stay in Srinagar and the starting point of the bus as top secret on security grounds in view of the escalation of violence since the launch of the cross border service on April 7.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2005

#### **Javed Mir joins Geelani's Hurriyat**

SRINAGAR: Amid hectic parleys on forging unity among the warring separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir, firebrand leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today received a shot in the arm when former militant commander and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Forum chief Javed Ahmad Mir formally joined the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference. Mr Geelani immediately nominated Mr Mir, who before forming his own group was the vice-chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) led by Yasin Malik, to the executive council, also known as Majlis-e-Shoura. "I have joined the Hurriyat Conference led by Mr Geelani to strengthen the unification process," Mr Mir said after his joining the hardline amalgam faction.

The Daily Excelsior, 6 May 2005

#### **Include Kashmiris in talks: Sajjad**

SRINAGAR: Peoples Conference chairman Sajjad Lone has urged both India and Pakistan to include the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the ongoing peace talks between India and Pakistan to make it more meaningful and result-oriented. "People have sacrificed their lives for the Kashmir cause and talks without them will prove futile," Mr Lone told a public gathering at Handwara in border district of Kupwara yesterday. He also called upon the people to strengthen his party so that it could voice their concerns.

The Daily Times, 6 May 2005

#### **Kashmir bus on third run** (Associated Foreign Press)

MUZAFFARABAD: Buses arrived in Muzaffarabad and Srinagar on Thursday on the third run of a bus service linking the divided Kashmir. Two buses left Srinagar in held Kashmir and another two left Muzaffarabad in Azad Kashmir, headed for the Line of Control (LoC) amid tight security. The historic route was launched on April 7 and is intended to promote peace in the troubled region, which is claimed in full by both Pakistan and India. The latest bus trip comes against a backdrop of rising violence in held Kashmir, where tens of thousands of people have died since the eruption in 1989 of an uprising against Indian rule. The route was checked before Thursday's service and Indian police and army soldiers manned the entire 118-kilometre stretch of road between Srinagar and Kaman Post on the LoC.

The Tribune, 5 May 2005

#### **Lobbying on for unity in APHC** (M. L. Kak)

Jammu, May 4: Separatist leaders Shabir Ahmed Shah and Mohammad Yasin Malik had a discussion with Syed Ali Shah Geelani and APHC Chairman Molvi Umar Farooq for exploring the possibility of bringing about a reconciliation among them. President of the Kashmir Bar Association Mian Abdul Qayoom also participated in the discussion. Mr Shah said today, "I am still hopeful of bringing the two faction close. But no proposal for forming a coordination committee has been debated with the two leaders yet." "We conveyed to the heads of the two factions that divided we fall and if we are unite we can claim to represent the people of Kashmir." He said the talks would continue and "it is premature on my part if I see that the possibilities of unification have brightened."

The Tribune, 5 May 2005

#### **4 militants killed in Baramula**

Srinagar, May 4: Four militants were killed in a fierce gunbattle with security forces in the Bandipora area of Baramula district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said today. Following specific information about the presence of militants in the Khaiyar forest area of Bandipora, security forces laid a cordon and challenged the militants last night, the sources said here. The militants, who were hiding in some residential houses, opened heavy fire on the search parties and in the ensuing

encounter, which ended this afternoon, four militants were killed and five houses damaged. The bodies of the militants, along with four AK assault rifles, were recovered from the debris of the houses.

The Tribune, 5 May 2005

### **Third bus leaves for Muzaffarabad today**

Srinagar, May 4: Amid unprecedented security arrangements, particularly after the escalation of violence since its inaugural run on April 7, the next "Karvaan-e-Aman" with about 20 Muzaffarabad-bound passengers on board will roll out from here to the Kaman Post tomorrow. The state government is leaving nothing to chance as far as the security of the passengers is concerned and has deliberately kept secret the place where they have been lodged and also from where the bus will start after four militant groups - Al Nasireen, Al Arifeen, Save Kashmir Movement and Farzandan-e-Millat - threatened to turn the peace vehicle into a "coffin". The militant outfits have repeatedly warned the passengers against boarding the bus.

The Tribune, 5 May 2005

### **J and K Cong leaders seek package from PM**

New Delhi, May 4: Congress leaders from Jammu and Kashmir, including a few ministers of the coalition government, today met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to seek a package for the displaced people and for better employment opportunities in the state. The Congress leaders briefed the Prime Minister about the functioning of the Mufti Mohammed Sayeed government. They urged the Prime Minister to strictly adhere to the 2002 accord on sharing of power according to which the post of Chief Minister has to come to the Congress after six months.

The Hindu, 5 May 2005

### **Efforts on to unite Hurriyat factions** (Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: Efforts to unite the various factions of the Hurriyat gained momentum with Syed Ali Geelani constituting a five-member committee to further discussions. Those associated with the process say that a meeting between Mr. Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq of another faction may take place in the near future but the broad contours of the discussion on unity may not change. The moderates are keen to offer militants a berth in their executive council.

The Indian Express, 5 May 2005

### **Soldiering on in the Valley** (AJAI SHUKLA)

By now any Indian media consumer must believe that the bus to Muzaffarabad, described by Mufti Mohammad Saeed as New Delhi's best-ever gift to Kashmir, and General Musharraf's visit to Kotla maidan, together signal a glorious new dawn in Kashmir. But the handshakes and the hosannas only divert attention from India's real problem in Jammu and Kashmir: that most Kashmiri people are not on board the dialogue being carried out over their heads between New Delhi and Islamabad. Amid the optimism, the Hurriyat Conference has been the dissenting voice, pointing out how little say Kashmiris have in these decisions about their future. India and Pakistan have grown closer, but the Kashmiri watches from afar, alienated as ever. Living in the cold shadow of a stifling military presence, Kashmiris can cross the Line of Control to Muzaffarabad, but nipping down to the market remains a daily ordeal.

The Times of India, 5 May 2005

### **Army to de-mine peace road in J&K**

HAIJPEER: With India and Pakistan having agreed to give a new route to the caravan of peace following Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, Indian army faces the onerous task of de-mining Poonch-Rawalkot road, where no civilian has treaded in nearly six decades, and make it operational in six months. Zig zagging through the famous Hajipeer mountain ranges, the 29 km LoC road is seeded with hundreds of anti-personel and anti-tank mines on both sides due to Indo-Pak confrontation and infiltration of militants, 16 corps commander, Lt Gen Sudhir Sharma said. "It is the road less travelled. To be precise, this LoC road has not been travelled by any civilian for the last 34 years and was closed for traffic in 1947 after the partition of the region," army officials said.

The Daily Excelsior, 5 May 2005

### **Difficult leaders**

What should one make out of leaders of the pro-Pakistan Muslim Conference particularly those who are governing the occupied territory of the State locally known as "Azad" Kashmir? They never tire of proffering advice to all and one about how they should conduct themselves in the discharge of their duties to the people of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir as it had existed in 1947. Yet, when it comes to their own conduct they adopt either an Ostrich-like approach or duck themselves to play safe. For instance, take the latest advice of "Azad" Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan. Although a leader in his right and the worthy son of a worthy father, the Sardar would not have been in power but for the blessings of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. Therefore, it is really a thin camouflage when he goes on to question Gen Musharraf's much-publicised "seven-region" formula, rules out any solution beyond the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and defends those opposing the resumption of the bus service between Muzaffarabad, his seat of power, and Srinagar. He wants that Pakistan should return the Northern Areas of Gilgit and Baltistan for administration to his government and, if that was not possible the people of these territories should at least be given their legal and constitutional rights which, according to him, their counterparts in "Azad" Kashmir enjoy.

The Daily Excelsior, 5 May 2005

### **Bhim warns Govt against restoring property rights to PoK visitors**

JAMMU, May 4: Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) supremo and member of the Legislative Council today assured that he will oppose any attempt to dislocate thousands of people who have been living in Evacuee Properties since 1947. Prof Singh vowed to oppose any move to restore property rights to those residents of Pakistan who want to visit Jammu

and Kashmir to meet their relations. Addressing party workers, who were gathered at Jammu Railway Station to felicitate him for his victory in Supreme Court on Resettlement Act, Prof Singh said that it was hightime to educate the people about nefarious designs of some elements. "We welcome all those who wants to visit Jammu and Kashmir through Muzaffarabad Road to meet their relatives here but will not allow any move to restore property rights to them", he said and warned the State Government from acceding to the request from certain visitors from PoK laying claim over ancestral property.

The Daily Excelsior, 5 May 2005

#### **JAC to launch big movement, seeks abolition of EP Act**

JAMMU, May 4: Demanding immediate abolition of EP Act and closure of EP department, the newly formed Joint Action Committee (JAC) of the Evacuee Property occupants has geared up for a big movement. In a large meeting of the EP occupants held near Sheikh Amin's Kothi at Jullaka Mohalla here today, the speakers appealed the people not to be carried away by the mischevious statements and moves of the politicians who are trying to confuse the things to draw political mileage out of this issue. They pointed out that for restoration of property no Resettlement Act is required. Had it been so not even a single EP house would have been restored but the fact remains that a major part of the Evacuee Property has been misappropriated by EP department by way of restoration to fake owners. Plenty of such cases are pending in Vigilance department and courts.

The Daily Excelsior, 5 May 2005

#### **18 militants believed dead in Bandipore**

SRINAGAR, May 4: In a major operation, troops have been fighting a freshly infiltrated group of 18 militants at Lawaypora village in Bandipore since last evening. As exclusively reported in this newspaper, four of the holed up militants had got killed in the first round of the gunbattle. Today's reports said that as many as 14 heavily armed militants were still holed up. While a number of them were believed to have died in fierce exchange of gunfire with the armed forces today, a few more were reportedly still fighting the troops. Even as none of the senior Police officials responded to queries, informed sources told the Excelsior that security forces launched the major operation last evening after receiving specific information regarding the presence of 18 militants at three different houses in Lawaypora. According to the tip off, eight militants were present at one hideout, seven at another and three more at the third hideout. Troops of 81-Brigade, comprising different units of RR 14th Bn, RR 57th Bn, 2-Grenadiers, 4-Paras and SOG Bandipore, laid siege to the village last evening. As they zeroed in on the house of one Ghulam Mohammad Malik, some militants opened fire. Troops eliminated four militants when they destroyed the target house in the fierce gunbattle.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2005

#### **Army gets 10 bodies in Bandipore, looking for 8 more**

SRINAGAR: A day after Hizbul Mujahideen admitted that 14 of its militants had got killed in the gunbattle at Lawaypora Khayar in Bandipore, Army today said that it had recovered 10 bodies of militants. It revealed that search was on for eight more bodies of the militants killed. Defence sources today said that 10 bodies had been recovered from the debris and the rubble of two more destroyed houses was yet to be cleared. These sources said that six AK-56 rifles, three pistols, one rocket-launcher, two UBGLs and two wireless sets had been recovered till this evening. Meanwhile, sources said that another gunbattle commenced between militants and security forces at Pazipora in Trehgam-Vilgam belt of Kupwara district this evening. Details of casualties if any were not available immediately.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2005

#### **Narrow escape for two Ministers, MLA in Doda**

JAMMU: Two Ministers and a MLA has a narrow escape when police defused a powerful five kg RDX filled IED at Bhagwa, about 18 kms from Doda, this afternoon an hour before their arrival to address a public meeting. In another incident, three BSF officers were injured in a powerful mine blast at Dugran Post in Khet area of Mandi sector in Poonch district this evening. Official sources said the IED was very powerful and could have caused extended damage had it not been detected on time. Troops of Rashtriya Rifle and Counter Insurgency Force launched a search operation at Lapri in Budhan area of Gool and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Recoveries include two AK rifles, four AK magazines, one binocular, one Pak radio set, one Pika gun spare barrel, one Russian RPG rocket, IED boxes, Indian and Chinese grenades and Pakistan made anti personnel mines.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2005

#### **Satellite City in Srinagar planned** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: A small town on the outskirts of Srinagar is planned to be developed as a satellite city to ease the load on the infrastructure of Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital. As per the plan, which is at conceptual stage, the place called Parihaspura towards north of Srinagar, is to be developed into a city, Task Force member Haseeb Drabu said. He said the proposal had been discussed once and considerable work was needed for its implementation. The need for such a proposal has been felt as the congestion in Srinagar is increasing rapidly.

The Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2005

#### **UN bans LeT** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Pakistan-based Lashker-e-Toiba, which is among the outfits responsible for terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, has been banned by the United Nations for its links with Al-Qaeda. The organisation, along with its shadow outfits, has been banned under UN Resolution 1267 under which all states are obliged to freeze the assets, prevent their entry into or transit through their territories. The resolution also asks the member countries to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale and transfer of arms and military equipments with the entitites belonging to the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda

organisation. Lashker-e-Toiba was put on the list on May two this year with all its aliases, including Al-Mansoorian, a shadow outfit which has nowadays been active in Jammu and Kashmir. Almost all Lashker members are Pakistani from Madrassas across Pakistan and Afghan war veterans, the report said. The UN has already banned Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and Jaish-e-Mohammed in October 2001.

The Hindu, 8 May 2005

#### **Major, among 7 killed**

SRINAGAR: An Army Major and a Congress leader were among seven persons killed in the Kashmir valley overnight, official sources said on Saturday.

The Hindu, 8 May 2005

#### **"PoK refugees won't be dispossessed of land"**

JAMMU: Seeking to end the controversy over the Resettlement Act, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Saturday said the refugees from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir would not be dispossessed of their land or property allotted to them. "Nobody from across the border has claimed property in the State and reports of Firida Gani from Muzaffarabad claiming her 'ancestral property' are untrue. Even if one presumes that somebody from that side would claim rights over property in the State, he/she would have to first establish credentials as a citizen of India and the Union Home Ministry alone would verify such a claim," he told presspersons here. The issue sparked off a political controversy with political parties and social organisations taking to the streets to protest against any attempt to implement the Act that paved the way for the return of migrants to PoK and re-claim their property in the State.

The Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2005

#### **Maj among 2 soldiers, 3 militants killed**

SRINAGAR: While two Army personnel, three militants and a Congress party activist died in different militancy related incidents across Kashmir valley since last evening, Trehgam area in Kupwara district turned violent over the death of a student during a military operation. Not far away from Trehgam, another gunbattle took place between militants and security forces at Pazipora village in Vilgam-Trehgam belt of Kupwara district last night. A Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen spokesman told mediapersons over telephone that the gunbattle at Pazipora took place last night when eight of the organisation's militants were passing through that area. He claimed that six troopers got killed and a Major was left critically wounded. Officials, however, maintained that one Major and two militants had got killed. They said that two soldiers sustained minor injuries in the encounter.

The Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2005

#### **Poonch-Rawalakot road to take 3 months: Lt Gen Prasad**

JAMMU: It would take maximum three months period to the Indian Army to make Poonch-Rawalakot road ready for plying of yet another cross border bus between India and Pakistan. Indicating towards the completion of work on Uri-Muzaffarabad road particularly Kaman Bridge (now renamed as Aman Setu) in record time, Lt Gen Prasad said "on Poonch-Rawalakot Road, we may face less difficulties as compared to Uri-Muzaffarabad". To a question about rise in militancy related incidents especially after the opening of Uri-Muzaffarabad road, Lt Gen Hari Prasad said the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan seem to have frustrated the terrorists a lot and made them to feel isolated in the emerging situation. Regarding number of terrorists waiting across the border to sneak into this side, he said it is difficult to tell their number but said "let them come. We are ready to take them on".

The Daily Times, 8 May 2005

#### **Militants hang Congress official in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants abducted a ruling party official in held Kashmir and hanged him from an electricity pole on Saturday, police said. Local Congress party official Abdul Rahim, 65, was killed in the northern district of Baramulla. No group claimed the killing. The Congress party is part of the state's ruling coalition. No militant group claimed the killing but militants often target pro-India political workers in the region, where an insurgency against New Delhi's rule has killed tens of thousands of people since 1989. Meanwhile, suspected militants triggered an explosion on a key highway, killing a soldier. Three other people were killed in separate gunbattles, police said. Meanwhile, soldiers killed a suspected militant during a shootout on Saturday in Gofbala village north of Srinagar, a police officer said on condition of anonymity.

The Daily Times, 8 May 2005

#### **Kashmir issue can't linger on forever**

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that there was a growing realisation in India and the international community that the long-standing Kashmir dispute must be resolved permanently for lasting peace and progress in South Asia... the president said that the previous accords between Pakistan and India had failed to bring about peace because they did not address the underlying cause of the tension. He said that in the changed international environment, the world had realised that coercive diplomacy could not lead to a durable settlement of lingering disputes including Kashmir. The president said that the international community viewed Kashmir as a flashpoint in the post-2002 stand-off between Pakistan and India and felt that a peaceful resolution to the problem was imperative. Referring to the peace process between the two countries, Musharraf said Pakistan believed that confidence building measures and the composite dialogue should move in tandem.

The Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2005

#### **Civilian kidnapped, killed in Doda**

JAMMU: A villager was kidnapped and killed by ultras in Doda district while security forces smashed three militant hideouts in Rajouri and Udhampur districts. Security forces busted a militant hideout in Chingus area of Rajouri district yesterday afternoon and hauled an IED weighing 5 kg, 1040 rounds of AK ammunition and 13 UBGL grenades in the operation. In another hideout in Deda area of Gool, security forces recovered eight AK magazines and 86 AK rounds, 21 Insas magazines, 11 Insas rounds and five hand grenades. They also smashed a hideout at Bakiwal area of the district and found an AK 56 rifle, an AK 47 rifle with four magazines and 89 rounds, 187 rounds of Pika ammunition, a wireless set and a binocular.

The Daily Excelsior, 8 May 2005

#### **Unity efforts at crucial stage**

SRINAGAR: People's Conference chairman Sajjad Gani Lone has called upon both India and Pakistan to initiate dialogue with the Hurriyat Conference and other separatist groups which will help resolve the vexed Kashmir issue in a peaceful and amicable manner. Addressing a party meeting in Kupwara, he said talks without the participation of people of Jammu and Kashmir would not serve any purpose. Mr Lone said the inclusion of the separatist groups in the ongoing peace talks between India and Pakistan would make the dialogue more meaningful and result-oriented. Meanwhile, senior Hurriyat leader Nayeem Khan has said that the unification process between different warring separatist groups has reached a crucial stage and the people will soon witness "egos merging rather than clashing". Mr Khan said the division in the Hurriyat ranks was not irreversible and the difference of opinion had already been overcome.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2005

#### **Girl killed in police firing**

SRINAGAR: A 9-year-old girl was killed in police firing during a clash of civilians at Dardpora, near the District headquarters. Even as angry mobs continued their protest and refused to bury the dead body, Deputy Commissioner has immediately ordered a magisterial inquiry into the Police firing. As the residents of Dardpora today gathered and began laying barbed-wire fencing around the village graveyard, the residents of Razwen assembled and resisted the move. This triggered off a clash between the two hostile groups. Residents of Razwen resorted to heavy stone, smashing the doors and windows of over a dozen houses. A 9-year-old girl, namely Aasi D/o Ali Mohammad Dar R/o Razwen was killed in the firing. Even as five persons were reported injured in the clash between the two groups, nobody was wounded in the firing. Meanwhile, a 12-year-old girl Yasmeen died on the spot today and her father and sister were seriously injured in an explosion that rocked Kuligam-Lalpura in Kupwara district, 100 kms from here, official sources said.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2005

#### **Hurriyat meet today to discuss unity**

SRINAGAR: The Mirwaiz Omar Farooq-led Hurriyat has called a meeting of its executive council tomorrow to discuss the outcome of talks held to forge unity among the warring separatist groups and also to chalk out its future strategy vis-a-vis the proposed dialogue with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the visit of amalgam leaders to Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Hurriyat sources said that besides the executive council, the members of the general council and the working committee has been asked to attend the crucial meeting. They said the meeting would mainly focus on the ongoing unification process and the efforts by various groups to bring the divided separatists on a common platform. The 'neutral' leadership met both Hurriyat hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Hurriyat (moderate) chairman Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and deliberated on the emerging scenario regarding the reunion of different constituents of the erstwhile all parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

The Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2005

#### **Rs 3 lakh, 3 rifles seized in Kathua**

JAMMU: Police have recovered Rs three lakh Indian currency and three rifles during two separate operations in Kathua district. Official sources said police recovered Rs three lakh Indian currency, one pistol and one wireless set during a search operation in Lohai area of Billawar tehsil in Kathua district last night. Some suspects have been detained in connection with the recoveries but no arrests have been made. Further investigations in the case are being conducted. In another search operation in Ramnagar village of Kathua, police recovered two Insas rifles, one AK rifle, five AK magazines, 15 grenades and one wireless set.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2005

#### **400 militants waiting across to sneak into J&K: BSF**

SRINAGAR: Around 400 militants, 50 per cent of them foreigners, are waiting across the border to sneak into this side during this summer, a senior Border Security Force (BSF) Officer said. We have definite intelligence information that around 400 trained militants are waiting at launch pads near the line of control (LoC) to infiltrate into this side, BSF Intelligence Chief in Kashmir K Srinivasan said. He said 50 per cent of them are foreigners, mostly from different cities of Pakistan. In reply to a question he said there are about 2500 militants, including Kashmiris in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) who have been trained to handle different types of weapons in the training camps there. He said the snow had melted on almost all infiltration routes and sneaking into this side has become much easier now. Mr Srinivasan said security forces have already been put on high alert to foil any infiltration attempt.

The Daily Excelsior, 9 May 2005

#### **Car lifters gang linked with ultras, bureaucrats unearthed**

JAMMU: Police have unearthed a gang of car lifters, which had connections with Kashmir militants and State bureaucrats, and had so far disposed of more than 60 cars in the State after lifting them from various North Indian States. Eighteen cars have been recovered from them and police was expecting their number to go upto 30 by this month with the investigations still in progress. Five car lifters, four from Kashmir valley and one from New Delhi, have been arrested by Udhampur police and more

arrests were in the offing. Raids are being conducted by the police parties in different parts of the State to apprehend the accused. Of over 60 cars sold by the gangsters in the State, some of them were also reported to have landed in hands of the anti-national elements, interrogation of the gangsters revealed.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

**Pak asks Hurriyat factions to unite** (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan today asked the moderate and the hardline factions of the Hurriyat Conference to unite as solution to the Kashmir issue was "nearer than ever before". Referring to differences over the peace process between moderate faction led by Mirwaz Umer Farooq and hardline faction by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, he said their disagreements were 'peripheral'. Jilani also dismissed as a "disinformation campaign" the reports that over 400 militants waited along Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to cross into Jammu and Kashmir. On Baglihar Hydro Project, Jilani said Pakistan has sent its opinion to the World Bank on the three international experts forwarded by the Bank to two countries to arbitrate on the issue.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

**Man kidnapped, slaughtered in Sopore**

SRINAGAR: Unidentified assailants have killed a civilian in Sopore and left another youth injured in a shootout in Budgam last evening. Sources said that late last evening unidentified persons, suspected to be militants, barged into the residence of one Manzoor Ahmed Wani S/o Abdul Ahad Wani at Garend Khurd and opened indiscriminate gunfire on him. He was left critically wounded. Militants today fired a couple of rifle grenades towards a BSF formation at Gole Market Karan Nagar in the capital city. Two grenades exploded but failed to cause any damage.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

**Mufti Govt failed on all fronts: Omar**

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) chief Omar Abdullah today blamed the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Government in Jammu and Kashmir for "deteriorating law and order situation in the State". He said the people are living in terrified conditions as the PDP-led coalition Government has failed to provide them a secured atmosphere. The economic condition is also deteriorating with every passing day. The NC chief said normalcy cannot be restored in the State unless the bloodshed is stopped. He alleged the custodial killings during the present Government have increased and "broken all the records of human rights abuses". Mr Abdullah said the PDP-Congress coalition Government has failed on all fronts and described the promises made by the ruling alliance to the people as "white lies".

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

**Govt eroding SASB, SMVDSB autonomous character : Farooq**

JAMMU: Giving a strict warning to Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed against, what he alleged, interfering with the religious affairs of Hindus, former Chief Minister and patron of National Conference, Dr Farooq Abdullah today said that such interferences will give wrong impression across the country. Launching a scathing attack on coalition regime for interfering with the functioning of Shri Amar Nath Shrine Board (SASB), Dr Abdullah reminded that his Government had constituted this Board for smooth conduct of annual Amarnath Yatra. While appreciating steps taken by the India and Pakistan for restoring peace in the sub-continent, Dr Abdullah said that peace was not possible until and unless wiping out militancy from the State. Former Chief Minister asked the Union Government not to succumb before Pakistan on the issue of Baglihar and Sawalakote power projects. "These projects are life lines of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Union Government must convince Pakistani authorities that we are not going to stop water so there is no reason to raise objections over construction of these projects".

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

**Abbas derails Hurriyat unification process**

SRINAGAR: The unity efforts by the Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Omar Farooq received a serious jolt today when amalgam's former chairman Maulana Abbas Ansari virtually ruled out any unification with hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani, saying those having "divergent views can never come together". Asked if they (moderates) had differences with Mr Geelani, the former Hurriyat chairman said, "of course yes. Mr Geelani says talks with India are futile and instead should be held with Pakistan. We are for talks with everyone - both India and Pakistan. There are differences on basic issues. How can we unite?" The executive council will meet again tomorrow to give a final shape to the unification process besides taking a decision on host of other issues, he added. They said the meeting focused mainly on the ongoing unification process and the efforts by various groups to bring the divided separatists on a common platform. Although the moderates are keen on a complete merger of both the factions and roping in other separatist outfits, the hardline faction led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani wants to form a coordination committee to put up a united platform but wants to maintain the individual identity.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

**Gun should stop when dialogue is on: Mufti**

Srinagar: Describing the normalisation process in Jammu and Kashmir as gaining momentum, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said there is no room for gun in the emerging situation... the Chief Minister reiterated that there is no option to peace and those who are still holding the gun should give it a chance. He asserted that people are overwhelmingly supportive of the improvement in the situation. He said a good atmosphere has been created in the State following the end of rancour and animosity between our country and Pakistan and the two agreeing to resolve all issues through dialogue and discourse. Rejecting violence as a means to put one's point of view across, the Chief Minister said this approach has only brought misery and pain to our people. He said innocent and poor persons are killed. Soft targets are eliminated who have nothing to do with politics.

The Daily Excelsior, 10 May 2005

### **3 civilians shot dead outside Mosque in Doda**

JAMMU: Three civilians were killed as a group of militants opened firing on the people coming out of a Mosque after evening prayers at village Chakka, about three kms from Bhaderwah in Doda district late this evening. In other incidents, Army and police gunned down four militants of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit in three encounters in Doda district overnight while the Village Defence Committee (VDC) members thwarted an attempt to kill a Nambardar at Kandi in Rajouri district. Meanwhile, Army and police launched a search operation in Ludna area near Udhyapur in Doda district late last night after being tipped off by the people regarding presence of two militants in the area. The Army personnel singled out hideout of the militants, laid a cordon around it and asked the militants to surrender. However, the militants opened heavy firing on the troops, who retaliated. Hideout of the militants was destroyed in the operation, the sources said. Recoveries made from their possession included one AK rifle with three magazines and 58 rounds, one pistol with one round, six hand grenades and one radio set.

The Daily Times, 10 May 2005

### **New capital being considered for occupied Kashmir**

NEW DELHI: Occupied Jammu and Kashmir may soon have a new capital. Parihaspura, a small historic town about 20 km from Srinagar, is to be developed as a satellite city to ease the load on the infrastructure of the summer capital. The plan to shift the capital is being prepared by a special task force, recently formed by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh to oversee the development of the state. The need for such a proposal has been felt as the congestion in Srinagar is increasing rapidly. Parihaspura was the capital of the illustrious Kashmiri conqueror Emperor Lalitaditya, who lived in the eighth century.

The Daily Times, 10 May 2005

### **4 die in Kashmir**

JAMMU: The Indian Army launched three separate attacks on suspected militant hideouts in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday and killed four guerrillas, said army spokesman Lt Col DK Badola. Two suspected militants were killed by soldiers during a gun battle in a village 160 kilometres from Jammu, said Badola, adding that the army killed two other suspected insurgents in separate attacks on hideouts in a nearby forested area. No army casualties were reported, he said.

The Indian Express, 10 May 2005

### **Indo-Pak friendship only if militancy ends: Farooq**

Jammu: FORMER chief minister and National Conference patron Farooq Abdullah today stressed the need that before the friendship militancy should end in Jammu and Kashmir. Abdullah said that he was not against the friendship between India and Pakistan but it was also important that first militancy should end. Yeh militancy dosti mein khalal dal sakti hai. He said that whenever there have been talks for the friendship it has taken lives of prominent leaders. Former J&K chief minister said that he wants that India and Pakistan should become friends but it is also important that first militancy should end in the state. He asked the central government to make it clear to the Pakistan that India will not stop giving water to that country and also that work on Baglihar and Savlakote power projects will not be stopped. He said it is not possible that state should go back on these projects.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2005

### **Separatist leader released**

SRINAGAR: A separatist leader was released from Delhi's Tihar jail after five years, official sources said here today. Sources said a Peoples League leader and former commander of Al-Jehad Muneer Ahmad was sentenced to five years jail by a Delhi Court for his alleged involvement in the militancy. They said Muneer was released on May six from the Tihar jail after completing the jail term. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA) court, Jammu, also quashed the detention of Muneer under TADA after the Jammu and Kashmir Police failed to produce challan for four and a half years against him.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2005

### **Pak stall at Kashmir trade fair**

SRINAGAR: The Pakistani stall is a star attraction at the first ever International Trade Fair held here as it is for the first time since 1947 that goods from the neighbouring country are available in Kashmir, but the exhibitors complain of poor sales. The other problem faced by Mr Pushkarna is that many visitors don't believe that the products are really from Pakistan. "Yes, the products do resemble those made from Rajasthani marble...But these are genuinely from Pakistan and definitely costlier than the Indian ware," he said. The 12-day fair with more than 80 stalls was thrown open at the Polo Grounds here by State Congress president and Jammu and Kashmir Rural Development Minister Peerzada Mohommad Sayeed on May 6. The exhibitors expect that the State Government will extend the date keeping in view the huge number of visitors.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2005

### **Civilian killed, 2 ultras surrender in Doda**

JAMMU: Another civilian was killed by the militants in Chakka area of Bhaderwah tehsil in Doda district today taking death toll since last evening to four. A bandh was observed in Bhaderwah today in protest against the killings. In another incident, two Hizbul Mujahideen militants surrendered before security forces in Doda today. A bandh was today observed in Bhaderwah in protest against the killings of civilians in firing by the militants last evening. All shops and business establishments remained closed in the town but no untoward incident was reported. Police parties led by SP Bhaderwah Ashok Sharma, joined by security forces, continued searches in Chakka and surrounding areas to apprehend the militants involved in the killings. Sources said police was working on different theories in the killings but no specific clue has been achieved so far. Security

forces today arrested six Myanmar nationals when they were trying to exfiltrate to Pakistan from Nanga post in Ramgarh sector.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2005

#### **Mufti calls for end to violence**

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today appealed gun-wielding youth to stop spilling blood of innocents and give peace a chance even as he asked people to guard the gains of reconciliation process in Jammu and Kashmir... the Chief Minister said despite discernable change in the situation some innocent people are still getting killed. He asked those who indulge in these killings to consider the fact that the killed ones are their own people. He also asked the separatist leadership to prevail upon the gunmen and persuade them to renounce violence. He as well asked them to take the offer of the Prime Minister for an unconditional dialogue in the pursuit of an honourable solution to Kashmir problem. The Chief Minister said in an atmosphere where dialogue and discourse is available to address problems, gun should fall silent.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2005

#### **Mirwaiz offers to step down**

SRINAGAR: Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today offered to step down from the post after 15-day unity talks with hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani failed to make any headway. The Mirwaiz, flanked by other three Hurriyat executive council members, said he was ready to disband the present structure of the amalgam so that the groups which had left the conglomerate return to its fold. The announcement comes a day after Pakistan asked the warring factions of the Hurriyat Conference to expedite the unity efforts as "a solution to the Kashmir issue was nearer than ever before". However, he made a fresh appeal to the hardline faction to soften its stand and launch renewed efforts to restore the status of the erstwhile Hurriyat Conference. Hurriyat sources said that the talks to bring together warring Hurriyat groups failed over Mr Geelani's decision to form his own committee without consulting the moderates.

The Daily Excelsior, 11 May 2005

#### **No mental reservation about talks with Hurriyat: PM**

ON BOARD THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPECIAL AIRCRAFT: Asserting that he did not have any "mental reservations" about talks with the Hurriyat Conference or any other group in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today said he had often said he was willing to hold talks with the separatist amalgam or anyone else provided they shun violence. "There is no mental reservation...I have repeatedly said I am willing to talk to the Hurriyat or anyone else if they want." He, however, said the groups would have to shun violence.

The Indian Express, 11 May 2005

#### **Army busts transit camp, 2 other hideouts**

Poonch: A militant transit camp - carved inside a cave-like structure to accommodate 20 militants at a time - was among the three hideouts busted by troops of 9 Bihar during a search operation in Harhi Mutha area of Poonch sector today. Sources said during the process, troops busted three militant hideouts. One of these was carved inside a cave-like structure and was used as a transit camp by infiltrators. The hideout could accommodate 20 militants at a time and was nicely furnished with blankets and other bedding material. It also had a satellite phone facility so that militants after sneaking in from across the LoC could establish contact with their henchmen sitting across the border and discuss their future course of action. Recently a group of Jaish-e-Mohammad militants is said to have stayed there.

The Indian Express, 11 May 2005

#### **Help get rid of gun: CM to separatist leaders**

Srinagar: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today asked the separatist leadership to prevail upon gun-wielding youths and persuade them to shun violence. He also appealed to the gun-wielding youths to stop killing innocent people and give peace a chance. The CM urged the people to guard the gains of the reconciliation process in Jammu and Kashmir. Mufti also asked the separatist leaders to take the Prime Minister's offer for an unconditional dialogue in the pursuit of an honourable solution to the Kashmir problem. He said Jammu and Kashmir is passing through a significant phase of history when the wishes of the people are being given due consideration. He said the process of dialogue between India and Pakistan has reduced tension and brought happiness to the people of the state.

The Hindu, 11 May 2005

#### **3 shot outside mosque in Kashmir**

JAMMU: Three civilians, including the brother of a former militant, were shot dead as they were coming out of a mosque in Doda district on Monday. Police said a group of militants opened fire on those coming out of the mosque after prayers. While Shabir Ahmed (30) died on the spot, Asif Iqbal, 20 and Riaz Ahmed, 40, were died in hospital of their injuries. Bhaderwah Ashok Sharma, Superintendent of Police, said a search operation had been launched to nab the militants. Shabir Ahmed was the brother of Akhter Hussain, a top militant of al- Jihad who surrendered to security forces. Militants killed him and his father, Bashir Ahmed, in 1998.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2005

#### **Hurriyat base shrinking: Omar (Press Trust of India)**

NEW DELHI: The Hurriyat Conference had an "enormous stake" in the Indo-Pak peace process but its base was "shrinking rapidly" and getting replaced by mainstream political parties, National Conference president Omar Abdullah today said. "The base of the Hurriyat is shrinking rapidly. It is getting replaced by mainstream political parties like National Conference and PDP", he said. The reunification of the Hurriyat Conference does not seem possible, he added. Observing that India and

Pakistan were displaying an element of "maturity" on the Kashmir issue, Omar Abdullah said "the signs were pointing in the right direction" for a favourable resolution of the problem. Terming the resumption of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service as a "huge step forward", Abdullah, however, said it was "not enough" and more needed to be done in terms of restoring links between the two sides.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2005

**Infiltration in J&K down: Patil** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Home Minister Shivraj Patil today said infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir had declined by 61 per cent after completion of fencing work on the border with Pakistan. Infiltration had declined by 61 per cent in the State, he said. Patil said a double-row fencing is being erected along Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangla borders to prevent trans-border movement of terrorists, infiltrators and other criminals. There is also round-the-clock surveillance of the border through patrolling, laying of nakas and deployment of observation posts all along the border, the minister said. Besides upgradation of intelligence network, the Government has also inducted surveillance and night vision devices, he said.

The Daily Excelsior, 12 May 2005

**Excise official killed, ETO among 50 injured**

SRINAGAR: Two days after Kashmir Police had been alerted about the possibility of a major car blast in Srinagar city, militants today triggered off a massive explosion which left an official of the State Excise Department dead and 50 others wounded in uptown Jawahar Nagar. Over a dozen vehicles and about 40 shops, bank branches and residential houses were damaged in the blast. Hizbul Mujahideen, Al-Nasireen and J&K Islamic Front have claimed responsibility in their separate statements. The intensity of the blast was so enormous that it had created a 2-ft deep crater on the road, completely ripped apart the panels of the chainlink fencing around a cemetery, uprooted electric poles and tree-guards and caused extensive damage to four vehicles across the 4-lane road. This kind of an explosion has rocked the capital city of Srinagar for the first time in the last five years. Unlike a number of car bomb blasts in the last five years, today's explosion was not a suicide attack. In their separate statements to two local news agencies, Hizbul Mujahideen, Al-Nasireen and J&K Islamic Front have claimed responsibility of today's blast. KNS and CNS said that Al-Nasireen was the first to come up with its claim over telephone.

The Daily Times, 12 May 2005

**Kashmiris' participation in dialogue process:** (By Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: As the peace process moves forward, India and Pakistan have come up with proposals to resolve Kashmir. Pakistan had asked India to accept the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) as the representative of the Kashmiri people in the dialogue process while India had asked Pakistan to accept Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, as the representative of the Kashmiri people, sources said. Sources said efforts were underway to unite both APHC factions and both sides were likely to meet soon to discuss plans for unification. India also emphasised that dialogue on Kashmir would include the status of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and the Northern Areas, sources said, adding that President Musharraf, before leaving for New Delhi, had discussed the Indian proposals with the AJK political leadership.

The Indian Express, 12 May 2005

**Blast in Kashmir kills two, 35 wounded** (Reuters)

Srinagar: A crude bomb planted by terrorists ripped through a vehicle in the heart of Jammu and Kashmir's main city of Srinagar on Wednesday, killing two people and wounding 35 others. Wednesday's blast was the deadliest attack by terrorists in Srinagar since the two countries launched a cross-border bus service across the region early last month, seen as a key step in the peace process. One of those killed was a policeman. "The bomb was intended to target a police vehicle. Three police vehicles were damaged and seven policemen were injured," a police officer said. Half a dozen vehicles and several houses and shops were damaged in the blast in Jawahar Nagar, a residential area. The attack came as India and Pakistan agreed in principle on Wednesday to start a new bus service between Amritsar and Nankana Sahib in eastern Pakistan.

The Indian Express, 12 May 2005

**Infiltration bid foiled, 3 ultras; 2 Armymen killed**

Srinagar: ARMY today foiled an infiltration attempt in Kupwara sector and killed three militants. Four persons, including two Army personnel, were also killed in separate incidents of violence across the Valley. Police said during a routine patrol in Shamsabari region in Kupwara, near the Line of Control, an Army patrol spotted some militants. A spokesman said the troops asked them to lay down their arms, but they started firing, leading to an encounter in which three unidentified militants were killed. Two rifles, one pistol, 84 rounds of ammunition and 27 hand grenades were recovered from the possession of slain militants, besides Indian currency worth Rs 4,800 and some Pakistani currency. Security forces today claimed to have recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition in Bremer village in Achabal. The recoveries included an IED, two timers, 100 rounds of ammunition, 500 grams of explosives. Seven blankets and 70 kgs of foodgrains.

The Indian Express, 12 May 2005

**State to achieve 100 per cent electrification by 2007-08: Niaz**

Jammu: EMPHASISING the need for accelerating the process of regularisation of illegal power connections so as to improve and modernise the power scenario in Jammu and Kashmir, Minister for Power Mohd Sharief Niaz today said that every possible effort would be made to achieve 100 per cent electrification target in the state by 2007-08. He said the basic objective of conducting the meeting was to ensure that the people of Jammu division do not face any inconvenience with regard to unscheduled power cuts during summer months. He said the government is committed for equitable development of all the three regions of the state and as part of this, due consideration would be given in solving electricity-related problems of Ladakh and Jammu especially when the senior officers move to Srinagar in connection with the annual durbar move.

The Indian Express, 12 May 2005

**Mufti condemns blast, calls for end to violence**

Srinagar: CHIEF Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has condemned the mine blast at Jawahar Nagar, here today, in which one person was killed and several others injured. He said incidents like this cause great pain and agony to common people besides innocents losing their lives... the Chief Minister said spilling of blood is highly condemnable and no civil society can accept this. He said those who are indulging in such activity are undermining the peoples urge for peace and normalcy. The Chief Minister said over the years the incidents of violence have taken a heavy toll of human life in the state and it is time the killings should stop.

The Indian Express, 12 May 2005

**'Blast no way to hamper tourist influx in Valley'**

Srinagar: TODAY'S car bomb blast at Jawahar Nagar which left two dead and scores of civilians injured is in no way going to hamper influx of tourist in Kashmir. Officials say this year tourist arrival is expected to cross the the eight lakh figure achieved last year, including those who came for the Amarnath Yatra. The car bomb blast evoked mixed reactions, especially from quarters related to the tourism industry. Most among related to tourist trade feel that the blast won't effect the tourism industry but they apprehended that some tourists may definitely feel insecure after the blast. The DG Tourism is also confident that the blast wont effect the tourist inflow in any manner.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 May 2005

**Ration, explosives haul in Poonch**

JAMMU: Poonch police today destroyed a hideout of the militants and recovered a large quantity of ration and explosive material in Surankote tehsil while nine Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended by security forces in Hiranagar sector. Recoveries made from the hideout at Turanzam, Bahram Gala in Surankote include 30 kg rice, 10 kg atta, eight kg sugar, 15 kg potatoes, 20 kg pulses, two kg spices, Lipton tea, one Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL), five UBGL grenades, three RPG rockets, one IED timer and a packet of medicines. Two AK magazines, 32 rounds and 16 Pika ammunition were recovered from a hideout at Suranthal, Samhot in Poonch while three kg explosive and 81 AK rounds were seized by security forces from Treru in Keri area of Rajouri. Security forces arrested nine Bangladeshi nationals from KK area in Manihar village of Hiranagar sector today. They were trying to exfiltrate to Pakistan

The Daily Excelsior, 13 May 2005

**25 kg charas seized in City, 3 held**

JAMMU: Tightening noose around the drug-smugglers operating in the Jammu city, Police seized 25 kilograms of charas and arrested three persons including a notorious contraband smuggler. During interrogation, the smugglers revealed that the charas was brought from Anantnag to Jammu by Farooq Ahmed and subsequently shifted in this truck for further sale. Farooq Ahmed is a notorious charas smuggler, a police spokesman said and added that he has been in this business for the past quite sometime and only he was being chosen to smuggle charas and other contraband from Kashmir valley to Jammu for successfully smuggling the contraband for several times.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 May 2005

**Power scenario all set for total transformation: Mufti**

SARTANGAL (BHADERWAH): Confident that power sector holds the key to rapid economic development of the State, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today unfolded his Government's massive hydel power generation programme in the State saying the potential would be exploited to the maximum. He said 11 mega and micro projects including 9 in the State sector are under different stages of completion with a total installed capacity of over 1000 MW while equal number of projects estimated to generate about 4000 MW have been prioritised. In addition to power generation, the Chief Minister said due attention is being paid to the renovation of the existing power projects and up-gradation of the transmission system.

The Daily Excelsior, 13 May 2005

**2 women killed, 60 injured in Lalchowk blast**

SRINAGAR: A day after causing havoc with a car bomb explosion at Jawahar Nagar, suspected militants have struck on Border Security Force (BSF) with a hand grenade at the main entrance of Tyndale Biscoe School in the crowded marketplace of Lalchowk this afternoon. Two women got killed and 60 others-including 25 students-sustained splinter injuries. Meanwhile, security forces today claimed to have eliminated four militants, including the dreaded Abdullah Bhai, in two operations in Kulgam and Kupwara areas. Even as 35 persons injured in the explosion were pedestrians, shopkeepers and other commoners, Biscoe and Mallinson school students faced the main brunt. Sources said that 25 students (15 boys and 10 girls), two female teachers, one male teacher and two more staff officials of the twin schools sustained injuries. Today's grenade blast in Srinagar Civil Lines came just a day after militants caused a powerful car bomb explosion at Jawahar Nagar. Meanwhile, informed sources told the Excelsior that over a specific information, troops of RR 9th Bn and SOG Kulgam launched a cordon-and-search operation at Katarsu, Parigam, in Kulgam area of south Kashmir today. During the operation an encounter took place between the holed up militants and security forces. Two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen got killed.

The Indian Express, 13 May 2005

**Blast rocks heart of Srinagar, 2 killed (By Muzamil Jaleel)**

Srinagar: A little red shoe, windscreen fragments, a tiny crater, three patches of blood and the wails of mothers. A day after the uptown Jawaharnagar blast, terror struck at the heart of Srinagar today, when a suspected militant lobbed a grenade on the road outside a school gate near Lalchowk, injuring 50 and killing two unidentified women. Police said militants seem desperate

now, but people are angry, unable to understand the reason behind spurt in violence.

The Indian Express, 13 May 2005

#### **Governor, CM condemn grenade attack near Biscoe School**

Srinagar: GOVERNOR Lt Gen S K Sinha (ret'd) and Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed today condemned the grenade attacks in Kashmir Valley and expressed anguish over targeting school children near Biscoe School here this afternoon. Gen Sinha said that the perpetrators of violence, pretending to be messiahs of the people, stand exposed for their savagery and sadistic tendencies. The Governor conveyed his sympathies to the sufferers and prayed for their early recovery. The CM conveyed his sympathies to the affected families and directed for providing all medicare to the injured children.

The Indian Express, 13 May 2005

#### **Kashmir bus sparks fears of property wrangles (Reuters)**

Srinagar: It was an emotional homecoming for Farida Gani, but also one that sparked a fierce desire to reclaim her ancestral property in Kashmir left behind after her family moved to Pakistan. Although Gani is the only one to claim her property so far, the path-breaking bus service linking the India and Pakistan has raised the likelihood of more legal wrangling over property in the troubled region. Thousands of Kashmiris abandoned their houses and property when their homeland was partitioned after India and Pakistan plunged into war over Kashmir in 1947-48. Most of the land and buildings, called evacuee properties, were allotted to Hindus who migrated to Jammu, the winter capital of Kashmir, from Pakistani Kashmir after the bloody partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Gani's property claim after the cross-border bus journey, the most concrete gain so far in a stumbling peace process between the neighbours, has caused panic among people in Kashmir who fear being uprooted from their homes. People in Pakistani Kashmir said they were determined to reclaim their homes in the Indian part of the region.

The Hindu, 13 May 2005

#### **Grenade attack near school**

SRINAGAR: In yet another militant attack in the heart of Srinagar, at least two women were killed and 60 persons, including 25 children, injured when a grenade exploded outside a school on Thursday afternoon. The condition of seven persons, including two children, is stated to be critical. On Thursday, home-bound students of the Tyndale Biscoe School, along with pedestrians, bore the brunt of the blast as an unidentified militant threw a grenade at a security force vehicle on Lal Chowk around 2.40 p.m. It caused a crater on the road and a number of vehicles were damaged. Hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Geelani termed the blast "an inhuman act". Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed expressed his anguish at the loss of lives.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2005

#### **Two HM comdrs killed in Banihal**

RAMBAN: Two Hizbul Mujahideen militants including a 'district commander' and a 'communication operator' were gunned down by troops of 23 Rashtriya Rifles in an encounter at Bujala in Agnari area of Banihal tehsil tonight. Slain militants have been identified as Jamaal Din alias Saifullah, a 'district commander' and Ghulam Mohd Bhat alias Gulfam, a 'communication operator' of Hizbul Mujahideen, both residents of Bujala. Official sources said the militants were eliminated in a fierce two hour gun-battle tonight amidst heavy rains. Two AK rifles, two radio sets and a large quantity of ammunition were recovered from them.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2005

#### **Pupils protest, 'leaders' play politics (By From Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)**

SRINAGAR: The 'leaders' have their own reasons of absence. Those in the camp of the separatist politics are understandably pre-occupied with the "greater jihad"-issuing statement after statement to establish that Thursday's explosion at the school entrance was the "handiwork of the anti-freedom elements". After the Imam of a local mosque conducted the funeral prayers, over a thousand people from Kukerbazar, Maisuma and other localities resorted to stone-pelting on Police and shops around besides burning of rubber-tyres. They yelled "an end to State terrorism". Even as like all separatist leaders-with the singular exception of Peoples Conference chief Sajjad Lone-Yasin Malik has afforded to remain mute to Wednesday's car bomb explosion at Jawahar Nagar, he was among the first to condemn the unclaimed grenade blast at Lalchowk. None of the separatist leaders even visited the bereaved family ... As the demonstrators take over the 'larger responsibility' of clashing with Police and the 'leaders' engage themselves with their press statements, it takes Bhat and his neighbours four hours to wait for the desired calm.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2005

#### **3 of Bijbehara family killed in blast**

SRINAGAR: Three members of a family have been blown into pieces in a bomb blast meticulously planned and executed at Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed's hometown of Bijbehara in south Kashmir last night. Meanwhile, a militant has been killed by security forces and one person has died in a late night shootout in Harwan area. An Excise & Taxation Officer (ETO) who had been critically injured in a car bomb blast in Jawahar Nagar on Wednesday last, has breathed his last at hospital. SP Anantnag, Syed Ashiq Hussain Bukhari, said that Police immediately swung into action with its investigation. Bukhari said that Police was working on different theories. According to him, Gafoor Wagay's son is a prominent commander at a training camp in PoK. Muzaffar Ahmed Bhat's son, Sajjad Ahmed Bhat, allegedly a "District Commander" with Jaish-e-Mohammad, had been arrested by SOG Pulwama at Dr Munir Khan's Kidney Hospital in Sonwar, Srinagar, earlier this year. Bukhari said that Police were investigating whether it was a routine blast caused by militants or one managed by non-militants. The Army today unearthed an underground arms factory catering to the needs of the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Laskher-e-Toiba (LeT) militants at Pattan.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2005

**Farooq for granting property rights to J&K migrants** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Voicing his support for the Jammu and Kashmir Resettlement Act, former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has said that Kashmiris who had migrated to Pakistan occupied Kashmir have full rights over the property left behind by them. Explaining his support for the Act, recently stayed by the Supreme Court, Abdullah said at a panel discussion last evening that implementing the Act could in turn uphold India's stand that PoK is an integral part of India. Training his guns at Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Abdullah said the state Government's decision to rehabilitate displaced Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley beginning June would be "suicidal" without assuring proper security for them.

The Daily Excelsior, 14 May 2005

**No visitor from PoK made claim on Evacuee property: Govt**

NEW DELHI: Putting a lid on the controversy over people from Pak-occupied Kashmir (PoK) claiming their ancestral property in Jammu and Kashmir during a recent visit, the State Government today informed the Supreme Court that it has not received any application from the visitors till date. Giving a twist to the new bonhomie between India and Pakistan, Panthers Party had sought to restrain the State Government from acceding to the request from certain visitors from PoK laying claim over the property their forefathers had left behind before migrating to PoK. The properties, left behind by those who migrated to PoK and Pakistan after partition, were declared Evacuee Properties under J&K State Evacuees (Administration of Properties) Act. It may be recalled here that the controversy over resettlement issue came to limelight after a lady from PoK, Ms Ganai, who visited Srinagar on maiden Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service, had reportedly approached Evacuee Property Department for claiming her property.

The Indian Express, 14 May 2005

**Two held for running underground gun factory**

Srinagar: ARMY claims to have unearthed an underground gun factory in Palahalan Pattan area of north Kashmir and seized weapons and machines. Two persons operating the factory have also been arrested by the troops. The find, they claim, is the first of its kind in the militancy-torn Valley. Giving details about the operation, Army spokesperson Lt Col V K Batra said troops of 29 Rashtriya Rifles and police personnel conducted a joint search of the premises of Ghulam Ahmad Ahangar, a blacksmith at Palahalan following a tip off. On search, troops found huge quantities of countrymade weapons, tools and machines required for manufacturing weapons and butts of AK rifles. Giving details, the spokesperson said militants of Lashkar and Hizbul-ul-Mujahideen were repairing weapons at the factory, which was being run in one room of the house.

The Indian Express, 14 May 2005

**Parcel bomb attack: Three members of family killed**

Srinagar: THREE members of a family were killed in a parcel bomb attack at Bijbhera in South Kashmir. Elsewhere five militants were killed in separate incidents of violence across the Valley since Friday evening. Giving details about the parcel bomb, police said last evening Mohammad Sayed Kakroo, an employee in State Road Transport Corporation was opening a parcel gifted to him by a friend. As Kakroo, along with his son Mohammad Rafiq (30) and daughter Shahazada (24) opened the parcel it exploded with a big bang. In the blast Kakroo, his son and daughter died on the spot. Three other members of the family sustained injuries. Meanwhile, two militants were killed in an encounter at Zaloor Sapore after a long encounter. In another encounter, police said a militant of Hizbul-ul-Mujahideen was killed, however, identity of the slain militant is yet to be ascertained. Police said two militant were killed at Katrsoo in South Kashmir after an encounter with the army. The militants have been identified as Abu Abdullah Abrar and Ejaz Ahmad both militants of the Hizb outfit. Police said Abdullah, a foreign militant was involved in dozen of killings in South Kashmir. Two AK rifles and huge quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered from the encounter site.

The Daily Times, 15 May 2005

**Nine killed in Held Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants in held Kashmir shot dead on Saturday the brother of an ex-militant who became a moderate separatist leader, police said. He was one of eight people killed in incidents across the region, they said. Abdul Gani Bhat was a supporter of his brother's party, the Kashmir Salvation Movement, which belongs to the moderate wing of the APHC. Police said Bhat was shot dead near his home on the outskirts of Srinagar. Bhat's younger brother, Zafar Abdul Fateh, was a former top rebel commander of the region's biggest group, Hizbul Mujahideen, before he gave up arms and formed his own moderate separatist movement. Separately, Indian troops killed two militants in a clash near Banihal town, 100 kilometres south of Srinagar, police said. Another militant and a soldier died in clashes elsewhere, police said. In Kalakote, 120 kilometres northwest of Jammu, suspected militants ambushed a group of coalmine workers returning home from work late on Saturday, killing three of them and injuring another, police said. The militants fled after firing at the mine workers. No militant group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Indian Express, 15 May 2005

**4 ultras among 6 killed in Valley**

Srinagar: In the upsurge of violence, six persons including four militants were killed and three others injured in separate violent incidents across the valley since Saturday evening. Police sources said that in a fierce gun-battle with security forces, two militants were killed in the south Kashmir district of Pulwama. In a separate encounter in the frontier district of Kupwara, a militant of Hizbul Mujahideen was killed. Police has claimed to recover an AK rifle, three magazines, a UBGL, 9 UBGL grenades and some rounds of ammunition from the possession of the slain militant.

The Hindu, 15 May 2005

**Five killed in J&K blast**

SRINAGAR: Ghulam Mohammad Bhat alias Gulfam of the Hizbul Mujahideen and three militants were among five people killed in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday night, an Army spokesman said on Saturday.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2005

**Hurriyat to hold conference on Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: The Hurriyat Conference, led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq will observe martyrdom week from May 16 to 21 in memory of assassinated leaders Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq and Abdul Ghani Lone. Besides seminars and blood donation camps, the Hurriyat Conference will organise a conference on "Kashmir dispute and dialogue process" at its Raj Bagh headquarters on May 19. On May 20, noted scholars, intellectuals and religious leaders will pay homage to the leaders at the Jama Masjid here which will be followed by a rally the next day. Meanwhile, ostensibly softening his stance, chairman of the hard-line Hurriyat faction Syed Ali Shah Geelani today said he is not against better ties between India and Pakistan, but the friendship should not be at the cost of the "birthright of the people of Kashmir".

The Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2005

**Salvation chief's brother gunned down**

SRINAGAR: Unidentified killers have gunned down the brother of a former 'divisional commander' of Hizbul Mujahideen in Bagh-e-Mehtab area in Srinagar outskirts today. Meanwhile, four militants, one former militant and one soldier have died in other incidents of violence in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources told the Excelsior that two to three strangers appeared at the working office of a small-time property dealer, Abdul Gani Bhat... Immediately after an exchange of greetings, one of the strangers took out his pistol and fired several shots on Bhat. While Democratic Liberation Party chief, Hashim Qureshi, and a Hurriyat Geelani leader, Syed Saleem Geelani, called on the bereaved family with their organisation's condolences, both the factions of the separatist Hurriyat Conference condemned Bhat's killing. Chairman of J&K Peoples Conference, Sajjad Gani Lone, who is the only Kashmiri separatist leader (before or after Hashim Qureshi) condemning the claimed killings of militants, expressed his shock over Bhat's murder. He condemned Bhat's killing which was not claimed by any militant organisation till late this evening.

The Daily Excelsior, 15 May 2005

**4 of a family shot dead near Kalakote**

JAMMU: Few days after the killing of four civilians at Chakka, Bhaderwah, the militants this evening struck at Raa, Taryath in Kalakote tehsil in Rajouri district killing four members of a family including three brothers and their father. In another incident, two more Hizbul Mujahideen militants were today gunned down by the troops in an encounter at village Suigam in Doda district while seven hideouts of the ultras were busted by police and security forces in Poonch district. Official sources said two militants opened indiscriminate firing on four coal mine workers when they were returning from the mines after daily work at 6.30 pm at village Raa between Bhai nullah and Dharloti, about one and a half kilometer from Taryath police post in Kalakote tehsil today. All four were killed on spot while the militants managed to escape. Sources said all four members of the family were targeted by the militants, who had laid an ambush for them.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2005

**Jehadis done worst damage to Kashmir cause: Qayyum** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Former Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) president and an influential pro-Pakistan Kashmiri leader Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan has said "jehadis" have done the "worst" damage to the Kashmiri cause. "Jehad has become a business now. In fact, the worst damage to the Kashmir cause has been done by the Jehadis. They have maligned the Jihad as well as the true Mujahideen. Jehad has no future now. It is over," Khan said in an interview published in the noted Pakistani weekly "The Friday Times." To a question about his views on the recent Indo-Pak thaw, he said "the progress is positive and is leading towards a solution. But the solution might not be permanent, if not sustained. The former PoK President replied in the affirmative when asked if "India was more tolerant to Kashmiri leaders", including Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who had been openly attacking India.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2005

**Proposal to shift summer capital draws flak**

SRINAGAR: The PDP-Congress ruling coalition's plan to shift Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital from Srinagar to Parihaspura in Pattan, about 20 km from here, has hit a roadblock with the National Conference (NC), the single largest party in the Assembly, strongly opposing the move and drawing a parallel between the State Government and medieval Indian ruler Mohammad Bin Tug-hlaq. And there are voices of dissent within the ruling alliance as well. State CPI(M) secretary Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami termed the decision as "most unfortunate". He said Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed should also have convened a meeting of leaders of various political parties and threadbare discussed the issue with them. However, Mr Tarigami said his party stands for the expansion, rationalisation and beautification of the Srinagar city. The CPI (M) leader said Srinagar city should be developed as the one of the most developed and attractive tourist destination of the world. In its reaction to the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Government's plan to shift the capital, the NC said, "Srinagar has been the cradle of our civilisation and no one will be allowed to play with the sentiments of the people."

The Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2005

**Lolab protests student's killing Hizb ultra among 3 killed in Valley**

SRINAGAR: While security forces today killed a "battalion commander" of Hizbul Mujahideen in Kulgam area, residents in Lolab valley of Kupwara put up a demonstration against alleged killing of a student last night. Reports from north Kashmir said that militant ambushed a patrol party of Territorial Army near Dooraswani village in Lolab valley of Kupwara district last night. A

newly recruited local militant-turned-trooper, Meraj-ud-din, got killed and two more of his local associates sustained injuries. Residents alleged that well after the shootout, troops from the local camp of RR 18 Bn swooped on the village and resorted to indiscriminate firing in which a Class 12th student, Fayaz Ahmed Wani S/o Ghulam Rasool Wani, got killed. The residents alleged that troops roughed up a number of innocent civilians, including young children while a civilian was lifted for interrogation. People assembled and formed a demonstration which staged a dharna in front of DC's office with the demand that the student's killers be identified and punished.

The Daily Excelsior, 16 May 2005

**People protest against Kalakote killings BSF jawan, ultra killed**

JAMMU: A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan and a top Hizbul Mujahideen militant were killed in an encounter at Sumbar in Ramban police district while people held a massive demonstration at Taryath, Kalakote in Rajouri district today in protest against the killings of four civilians by the militants last evening. The militants involved in the killings have been trapped by police. Official sources said the BSF jawans of 4 battalion launched a search operation at Loli Gali in Sumbar area of Ramban police district last night on a specific information that a top Hizbul Mujahideen militants Abdul Karim alias Gulzar along with his body-guard had taken shelter in the area. One AK-47 rifle, three magazines and 26 rounds were recovered from the slain militant, who was a most wanted ultra in Ramban police district. Meanwhile, about 2500 people gathered at Taryath in Kalakote tehsil of Rajouri district this morning along with dead bodies of four coal mine workers... The people were demanding establishment of a post in the village. Traffic on Taryath road remained closed for more than six hours. Meanwhile, the militants involved in the killings, were tonight trapped by police and security forces in Lalu Khetar forests in Taryath.

The Daily Times, 16 May 2005

**Four killed in Kashmir** (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants shot dead a father and his three sons as they left a coal mine in southern Indian-administered Kashmir, police said. The four men, Hindus in Muslim-majority Kashmir, were returning home from work in the mine when the gunmen opened fire and killed them in the village of Raa in southern Rajouri district, a police spokesman said. "All four were working in a coal mine as labourers," the spokesman said, blaming militants for the slayings. None of the dozen militants groups fighting against Indian forces in Kashmir claimed responsibility for the deaths.

The Indian Express, 16 May 2005

**After violence, now Baramulla witnessing series of thefts**

Srinagar: Border township of Baramulla is witnessing a series of day thefts in the last seven days more than seven thefts were reported in both up and down town localities of the town with a population of one lakh souls. Pointing a figure of suspicion towards the young boys and men addicted to drugs- the locals allege that some boys to get easy money have formed a group which is involved in these thefts. "This is a handi work of a group, not a case of a routine thefts," says Ali Mohammad, a shopkeeper. The group comprising of two or three persons threatened house inmates and relieved them of cash and gold ornaments worth thousands. A police officer investigating the thefts hopes the group will be exposed soon. "In connection with the thefts, we have arrested many suspected persons. Those responsible for these thefts will be put behind the bars," he says.

The Indian Express, 16 May 2005

**Offerings worth lakhs stolen from Charar-e-Sharief shrine** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: Offerings worth lakhs of rupees were stolen from the Charar-e-Sharief shrine in central Kashmir after burglars broke open a safe in its sanctum sanctorum, officials said today. The burglars struck the 600-year-old shrine housing the tomb and relics of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani, one of the greatest sufi saints of Kashmir, on the night of May 12, broke open the money chest and decamped with the offerings, they said. People who came to offer morning prayers were shocked to find the safe open in the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine and reported the matter to the police, the sources said. They said the safe had not been opened since 2002 and contained a large amount of money and valuables. The shrine has nine large money lockers and their keys are deposited with the Waqf Board here.

The Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2005

**Two PSOs of Cong leader shot dead**

RAJOURI/DODA: Army today foiled another infiltration attempt on Line of Control (LoC) in Tarkundi area of Mendhar sector in Poonch district killing three militants while the ultras torched four dhoks of Village Defence Committee (VDC) members in Koteranka. Two VDC members were injured in the attack. In Doda, the militants gunned down two Special Police Officers (SPOs), who were working as PSOs with a Congress leader and Sarpanch Mohd Iqbal Keen and injured another at Thathri in Kishtwar tehsil. Bodies of two militants were recovered in the morning. Recoveries made from the encounter site include three AK rifles with 15 magazines and 270 rounds, one damaged Chinese pistol with 10 rounds, four hand grenades, four UBGL grenades, one damaged Nokia mobile handset, one Kenwood radio set, one Ingam radio set, one wire cutter, one pistol silencer, Rs 7000 Indian currency and water bottles. Army didn't suffer any casualties in the operation. Identity of the slain militants hasn't been established so far but they were stated to be the activists of Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) outfit.

The Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2005

**Civilian, 2 militants killed in Valley**

SRINAGAR: While suspected militants have gunned down the father of a woman councilor in Pattan, security forces today claimed to have killed two more militants in the gunbattle which had commenced in Tral area on Sunday. Reports said that in the wake of the shootout, shops remained closed for the day in Pattan. Killing of two elected councillors, alongwith three Policemen, in two broad daylight strikes in less than a month, has created a fresh wave of terror and scare in this garrison township situated on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Road. Militants here have begun to strike on their non-combat targets inspite of

the columns of military and paramilitary forces keeping watch on the highway.

The Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2005

### **Gulmarg Gondola inauguration on May 28**

SRINAGAR: After several postponements, the world's highest and the Asia's longest cable car project at the famed Ski Resort of Gulmarg will finally be inaugurated on May 28, official sources said today. The sources said that the project has been completed in record time of about two years at the cost of Rs 110 million. The cable car, which has been extended further by 2.65 km, will connect the bowl-shaped Kongdoori Valley with Afarwat, situated 13 km from the tourist resort of Gulmarg, and at an altitude of 13,400 ft (4,390 mt). The second phase from Kangdoori to Afarwat was finished well ahead of time. Jammu and Kashmir State Cable Car Corporation (JKSCCC) officials said the project is aimed at promoting Gulmarg, 52 km from here, as a premier skiing destination in the world and give a major boost to the militancy-hit tourism industry in Kashmir. The officials said engineers worked in huge drifts of snow to erect towers and lay cables in the area close to the Line of Control (LoC), overlooking Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The Daily Excelsior, 17 May 2005

### **Peace process must continue: MPs** (Press Trust of India)

BHURBAN, PAKISTAN: Setting aside their differences back home, Indian Parliamentarians representing major political parties today conveyed to the people of Pakistan that peace with this country has the support of all outfits. Congress MP, Ashwani Kumar, who was elected conference co-chairman, said India and Pakistan cannot transact business with the prism of antagonism and mistrust of the past. Kumar said India is committed to the Iran-India gas pipeline project through Pakistan territory and Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Iyer would soon visit the country to discuss it. Although the conference has representatives from other South Asian countries, the focus has been on Indo-Pak ties.

The Indian Express, 17 May 2005

### **Two separatist rallies in two days**

Srinagar: Kashmir's two main separatist groups would be testing their strength by holding separate rallies this weekend, here. The moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is organising a rally at Idgah on Saturday to commemorate the death anniversary of his father Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq and former Hurriyat executive Abdul Gani Lone. Both the leaders were assassinated on May 21, Farooq in 1990 and Lone exactly 12 years after that. Sajjad Lone, who heads another faction of the People's Conference and severed ties with the Hurriyat, would be holding a separate rally on Sunday commemorating his father Abdul Gani Lone's death anniversary. But all eyes would be on the Mirwaiz's rally where he is expected to make an important announcement, sources said. Mirwaiz has been hogging limelight since Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf gave him the "sanction to hold talks with New Delhi, an endorsement to his triangular talks theme". Prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, too, has said that Centre is not averse to talk to the separatists.

The Daily Times, 17 May 2005

### **Indian troops kill 3 militants in Kashmir** (Associated Foreign Press)

JAMMU: Indian troops shot dead three Islamic militants on Monday who infiltrated into Indian Held Kashmir from the Pakistani zone of the divided Himalayan state, a defence ministry spokesman said. The militants were killed in the mountainous southern district of Rajouri near the Line of Control, 179 kilometres northwest of Jammu, the spokesman said. Rajouri's senior police officer said security forces had killed 25 militants attempting to cross into occupied Kashmir in the past three weeks. Infiltration attempts from Pakistan had increased over alpine passes that were now open after the winter snowmelt, he said.

The Hindu, 18 May 2005

### **Two killed in attack on mourners**

SRINAGAR: Militants hurled a grenade and opened fire on Tuesday at a gathering of mourners on the outskirts of Srinagar, killing two persons and injuring nine others. A large number of people had gathered to mourn the killing of Abdul Gani Bhat, brother of the former 'divisional commander' of the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, Mohammad Akbar alias Zafar Fateh. Bhat was shot dead by militants on Saturday. Superintendent of Police (South City) S.P. Pani told The Hindu that a grenade was lobbed first and it was followed by firing "but we could not immediately react as there were many personal security officers in civvies." He said two persons died on way to hospital and nine were injured. Locals said that 17 persons had been wounded. Police cordoned off the area and conducted house-to-house searches but failed to nab the culprits. No militant outfit has claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attack or the killing of Bhat. People's Conference chairman Sajjad Lone and Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq condemned the attack.

The Indian Express, 18 May 2005

### **Mir urges Azad to sanction Bhaderwah-Chamba road on priority**

New Delhi: Minister of State for Works G A Mir has requested the Union Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad that Bhaderwah -Chamba road connecting J&K State with Himachal Pradesh may be got sanctioned by the Union Ministry on priority basis. The Minister of State briefed the Union Minister regarding overall development scenario of the state and discussed various projects of his Ministry which need central assistance for their early completion. Mir requested the Union Minister for immediate release of funds for restoration of roads, bridges and buildings which got damaged by the recent heavy snowfall. Giving details, Mir told the Union Minister that out of 120 number of schemes under (CRF) only 39 schemes have been sanctioned by Govt. of India, Ministry of Roads Transport and Highways, at an estimated cost of Rs.118 crores. He said 13 schemes stand completed so far.

The Indian Express, 18 May 2005

**Grenade attack on mourners, 2 killed**

Srinagar: TRAGEDY revisited slain leader Abdul Ghani Bhat's residence at Baghi Mehtab today, as militants lobbed a grenade and fired indiscriminately on the mourners gathered here, killing two and injuring at least 15 people. Brother of the chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement, an organisation of former Hizbul Mujahideen militants, Bhat was killed at the same spot three days ago. No militant outfit has so far claimed responsibility for today's attack, said police. The police, however, say there was only a grenade blast and the fire was returned by the police. "The militants didn't open fire. The fire, in fact, was returned by the SPOs (Special Police Officers)," said Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar, Saeed Ahmad Saeed. The attack came just minutes after several senior leaders of both factions of the Hurriyat Conference left Bhat's house after expressing their condolences, the sources said.

The Indian Express, 18 May 2005

**Mirwaiz in US, wants to solve Kashmir issue** (Press Trust of India)

Washington: Senior separatist leader of Jammu and Kashmir Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has said India, Pakistan and Hurriyat Conference must show flexibility from their stated positions to solve the Kashmir issue. An approach, he said, will only be successful if it embodies flexibility and understanding among the parties. The official declared positions of Pakistan, India and the Hurriyat Conference, he said, are known and currently incompatible, so without the initial abandonment of their declared positions, progress is unlikely. He suggested three-way talks among India, Pakistan and the Hurriyat "without pursuing a specific solution at this point in time." The process of engagement and negotiation, he said, is perhaps more important than any solution right now.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2005

**4 civilians slaughtered in Harwan** (By Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: Blood-thirsty actors of Kashmir violence have returned after a brief lull of four days and struck in a big way in this capital city outskirts. While four civilians have been slaughtered to death outside the famous Dachhigam National Park in Harwan area, two more have been left dead and 20 wounded in a grenade attack in Bagh-e-Mehtab. Informed sources told the Excelsior that one or two groups of three gunmen each appeared at the Gujjar hamlet of Dardkhaur, in Chak Dhara locality of Harwan, late last evening. They kidnapped six persons of four families, including a woman, and vanished in the foothills of Zarbarwan hillock. In the morning today, dead bodies of four of the kidnapped persons were spotted and recovered at four different spots. Neither Lashkar nor any other militant organisations had claimed the massacre till late this evening.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2005

**Kashmir solution key to peace: Pak** (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Emphasising that bilateral economic ties must move in tandem with the resolution of the Kashmir issue with India, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz today said the settlement of the problem was key to durable peace and stability in South Asia. He said the resolution of Kashmir issue was key to durable peace and stability in South Asia while stressing that economic ties with India must move in tandem with the settlement of the problem. Turning to war on terrorism, Aziz said Pakistan has played a key role to combat the menace and would continue its policy in this regard. He said Pakistan rejected prejudices and misconceptions about Islam and stood for two-pronged strategy of enlightened modernisation moved by President Pervez Musharraf.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2005

**Alternate Jammu-Srinagar highway by 2013: BRO**

SRINAGAR: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) today said an alternate and much safer highway between Srinagar and Jammu will be operational by 2013. He said with the inflow of funds, the road will be fully operational in the next 7 to 8 years. "By 2013, we will have an alternate means," Brig Basaka said. There is a plan to make it double-lane and the work is going on at various stages in this regard, he added. Brig Basaka said the NH-1B will be definitely much safer than NH-1A from Jammu to Srinagar and which is at present the lifeline of the Valley. He said the vagaries of weather experienced during the winter months on the NH-1A will also be less on the NH-1B. Brig Basaka said that the 434-km Srinagar-Leh highway, closed for the past six winter months, will re-open for general traffic only after the successful completion of the Army convoy's trial run on May 20.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2005

**Shankaracharya hill to have Gondola**

SRINAGAR: Work on Rs. 18 crore Ropeway Project from Boulevard to Shankaracharya temple will be taken up shortly and the pulse type unique design having a capacity to lift 400 persons per hour is slated to be completed and commissioned within two years so that the tourists and devotees would have this modern facility available. This was disclosed by Minister for Tourism, Housing and Urban Development Ghulam Hassan Mir during his visit to the Shankaracharya hill for inspecting the base terminal and upper hill terminal points and tower spots. The Minister along with Managing Director, Gondola Cable Car Corporation, F.A.Shah and Director Tourism Kashmir, Nazir Ahmed discussed related aspects of the project and was informed that the project has been designed of unique pulse rate which would be eco- friendly and free of any hazard to harm environment of this unique scenic spot.

The Daily Excelsior, 18 May 2005

**Azad will be next CM: Vakil** (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR: Dismissing suggestions that Congress will forego its turn to rule Jammu and Kashmir, a senior party leader has said Union Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad will be the next Chief Minister of the State, as per the power sharing agreement, after PDP leader Mufti Mohammad Sayeed completes three-year tenure in office. He said the Congress High Command had taken the final decision in this regard and it was made clear during his meetings with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress

president Sonia Gandhi that Mr Azad will be the next Chief Minister. As per the power sharing agreement reached between Sayeed's PDP and Congress after Assembly polls in the State in 2002, the two parties had agreed to take turns of three years each to hold the Chief Minister's post. Unlike other states, the tenure of State Assembly is six years. Azad will be the first Congress Chief Minister of the State in 30 years.

The Indian Express, 19 May 2005

#### **Seminar on quality standards in higher education held**

Srinagar: "TEACHERS are the nation builders and responsible to mould the future of the society by inculcating the spirit of commitment, honesty, hardwork, patience, dedication, zest and positive attitude in students," said the Minister for Education Harsh Dev Singh... Harsh Dev Singh said the teachers as well as students are equally responsible for creation of conducive atmosphere for quality education. He asked the students to contribute in creating palatable atmosphere in educational institutions for imparting education of highest standard and of scientific temper. Giving details of the steps taken by the present government, the Minister said that more than 10,000 education guarantee centres were opened in order to ensure easy reach to each child to quality education. Referring to recent visits of UGC teams to various colleges of the state to evaluate the performance of these government institutions, the Minister said that this helped us to identify the aspects of imparting quality education.

The Indian Express, 19 May 2005

#### **JMM flays escalation of violence in state**

Jammu: THE Jammu Mukti Morcha (JMM) at a meeting held here on Tuesday, took serious note of escalation in violent activities engineered by militants. The meeting was held under the leadership of Prof Virender Kumar Gupta. Members during the meeting said that recent episodes exposed the hollow claims of Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and the Central Government about the confidence building measures and the peace process initiated. The JMM criticised the statements of Dr Farooq Abdullah, Mufti Mohammad Sayed and other Kashmiri leaders and silence being observed by the Congress party on the issue of resettlement bill. Morcha leaders condemned these leaders for their failure and silence on the issue of settlement of claims of the refugees.

The Daily Times, 19 May 2005

#### **Rocca due to discuss Kashmir**

LAHORE: Pakistan and the United States will discuss bilateral interests and the prevailing South Asian situation in Islamabad in the last week of this month, official sources told the daily online newspaper Kashmir Monitor. US Assistant Secretary of State Cristina Rocca will lead the US team in formal talks with Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan. According to the online newspaper, Pakistan-India relations will figure prominently in the meeting with special reference to the Kashmir dispute.

The Indian Express, 19 May 2005

#### **Constable among 2 killed in J-K**

Two persons, including a police constable was killed in an attack by militants in Jammu and Kashmir since last night. Meanwhile, militants also snatched a maruti car from a civilian in Valley. According to sources, militants opened fire on a police post at Guddar in Basantgarh area last night. During the exchange of fire after police retaliated, constable Jaswant Kumar was killed, they said. Meanwhile in Valley, police said unidentified militants kidnapped Riyaz Ahmad Shah from Bahu Awantipora. Police has launched a manhunt to trace the abducted person. Sources, however, said the person was working as an SPO.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 May 2005

#### **Governor anticipates 5 lakh yatra**

JAMMU: Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha today anticipated a record five lakh yatra to Amarnath shrine during two month pilgrimage this year beginning from June 21. Last year, four lakh pilgrims had visited holy Amarnath shrine, which was also a record. Assuring adequate security arrangements for the pilgrimage, he said a meeting of the Shrine Board will be held to review security and other arrangements for the yatra. He also referred to incident free yatra for the last two years. To a question about differences with the State Government on Amarnath yatra, the Governor said: "we had difference of opinion on yatra duration last year. That too was sorted out". Saying that Kashmir is embedded in soul of India, Gen Sinha hoped that endeavors would be made by all in bringing about peace and rendering much-needed support to the sufferers of militancy.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 May 2005

#### **Govt to hold probe into HM commander's passport: CM**

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said a high-level enquiry will be ordered to probe the alleged nexus between a top Hizbul Mujahideen commander and a National Conference (NC) leader who reportedly helped the militant in securing a passport and facilitated his travel to Attari in Amritsar on way to Pakistan early this month. Mr Sayeed said the investigations into the issue are on. "It is very necessary for us to find out how he managed to get a fictitious passport. It is to be seen and looked into. I will seek the report immediately," he added. The Chief Minister, however, said that no system is foolproof but asked the officials to be extra careful and watchful while issuing the passports. Mohammad Amin Baba, the divisional commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen managed to secure a passport and crossed over into Pakistan through Attari on May 2 this year. It was reported in the media here that the Hizb commander had been helped by an NC leader in securing the passport. It said that the Hizb militant was also helped by a top separatist leader who managed to get visa for him from the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 May 2005

#### **Canadian diplomats meet Hurriyat leaders**

SRINAGAR: Diplomats from the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi discussed the Kashmir issue, the ongoing comprehensive dialogue process and the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) taken by India and Pakistan with top Hurriyat and other separatist leaders last night, sources said today. They said the Canadian delegation led by Mr Adrion Norflok, Councillor Political Affairs met senior moderate Hurriyat leaders, including Maulana Abass Ansari, Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat, Bilal Ghani Lone and Shahid-ul-Islam. The visiting delegation held a detailed discussion with Hurriyat leaders on the ongoing dialogue process between India and Pakistan. The two sides also discussed the Kashmir issue and the CBMs initiated by the two countries, the sources added. They said both the sides were unanimous in their opinion that the participation of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the composite dialogue process between India and Pakistan was indispensable. The delegation showed keenness to know the Commission's working and took note of various difficulties faced by it in playing an effective role, they added.

The Daily Excelsior, 19 May 2005

**Cop killed, woman succumbs to injuries**

JAMMU: A police constable was killed in an encounter with the militants in Basantgarh area of Udhampur district last night while a woman, injured in a blast during a marriage party at Lower Matta, Reasi, succumbed to her injuries today taking death toll to three. Official sources said a joint team of security forces and police was ambushed by a group of militants at village Glaini Mang in Basantgarh area of Udhampur district late last night. In exchange of firing, a police constable Bushan Kumar, a resident of Doda was killed. Police and security forces continued searches in the area but the militants remained untraced. Meanwhile, a woman Shakuntla Devi of Matab Pouri, Reasi, who was injured in a blast at a marriage function at Lower Matta in Reasi on May 5, succumbed to her injuries in the Medical College hospital.

The Hindu, 20 May 2005

**'Caravan of Peace' makes fourth trip**

SRINAGAR: Thirty-four passengers crossed over to Muzaffarabad from the Kaman Post on board the fourth "Karvaan-e-Aman (Caravan of Peace)" on Thursday as 45 persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) arrived here amid an unprecedented security cover. The fourth bus left from the General Bus Stand at Batamaloo near here at around 7 a.m. on Thursday for Muzaffarabad, DIG Police, Kashmir Range, H. K. Lohia, told presspersons. The passengers who had come on the previous three buses went back to Muzaffarabad Mr. Lohia said. From the PoK side, three buses carrying 45 passengers also arrived at the Kaman bridge, now known as "Aman Setu (peace bridge)" this afternoon. The venue of the bus is being continuously changed for security reasons. While today it started from the Batamaloo General Bus Stand, the third "Karvaan-e-Aman" rolled out from the State Police Control Room on May 5.

The Indian Express, 20 May 2005

**India, Pak should jointly invest in Kashmir: Mufti** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Thursday suggested that India and Pakistan jointly invest in the power sector of the state to harness its 20,000 megawatt power potential that would meet electricity requirements of both countries. Referring to Baghlihar power project, which has run into trouble due to objections by Pakistan, he said, "it is life line of Jammu and Kashmir. The state has already spent Rs 3000 crore on the project worth Rs 4000 crore. Sayeed said the government had the interests of the people of the state dearer and as such the answer to settle down the mistrust and apprehensions was to go for joint ventures in hydro electric power. The Chief Minister also said that Kashmir should be declared as free trade and economic zone where the investors from anywhere can invest and contribute in the growth and development of the state. Welcoming the heavy influx of tourists at the onset of the season, Sayeed said tourism was the core sector of the state and had huge potential for development.

The Indian Express, 20 May 2005

**Spurt in violence reflects militants' frustration: J&K Govt** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma has said the spurt in violence since the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road reflected the 'utter frustration' of militants. "It reflects the utter frustration of the elements inimical to peace," Sharma said in response to a query in this regard by a visiting delegation of Delhi-based Candian High Commission on Wednesday evening, official sources said on Thursday. Led by Adrion Norflok, Counsellor, Political Affairs in the High Commission, the delegation, during the 30-minute interaction with Sharma, discussed current political situation with emphasis on improved ties between India and Pakistan, the sources said. The Deputy Chief Minister also apprised the Canadian delegation about the developmental scene in Jammu and Kashmir especially in the education, industry and agriculture sectors, the sources said.

The Indian Express, 20 May 2005

**Fourth batch leaves on peace bus for PoK** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: The fourth batch of the Muzaffarabad-bound peace bus carrying 36 passengers left Srinagar on Thursday with a tight security net along the 120-km route to Kaman post on the Line of Control, officials said. The 'Caarvan-e-Aman' bus left in the morning with 24 passengers from this side and 12, who were returning to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir who were returning home after spending time with relatives, they said. There was a heavy deployment of police and paramilitary forces along the route to Uri town near the border. The bus reached Salamabad Tourist Reception Centre at around 1100 hrs, they added.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**Mufti favours joint power projects by India, Pak**

SRINAGAR: In order to explore vast hydel potential of the State, estimated by experts at 20,000 MWs, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today suggested for joint power projects by India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir for Hydro Electro

Power generation. He said that in case technical experts of both countries feel it viable and feasible, this would enrich both countries in electric energies and also boost their economy besides benefiting the State considerably. The Chief Minister said that there is highest need of declaring Kashmir as free trade and economic zone where the investors from anywhere can invest and contribute in the growth and development of this State which has a vast potential for so many sectors. Emphasizing the urgency for investment in the Valley by the private sector, Mr Sayeed said that Hydro Electro Power, Tourism, Agriculture, Horticulture, Bio-Technology, Information Technology and Craft industries provide vast potential for the investors to invest.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**Peace process can't be held hostage to unity: Mirwaiz**

SRINAGAR: Conceding setback to their unity efforts, moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference today said the ongoing Indo-Pak peace process cannot be held hostage to the reunification among the separatist groups. "The efforts of reunification has failed but we will continue our efforts to bring the Kashmiri leadership on the single platform. However, the peace and dialogue process cannot be held hostage to the unity," Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq said addressing a seminar at Rajbagh, the headquarters of the conglomerate here today. Mirwaiz said it is an internationally accepted norm that solution of all issues lies in the dialogue process. Echoing the sentiments of Mirwaiz, former chairman of the Hurriyat Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, in his address, said the Kashmir issue could be solved through talks alone. The Mirwaiz once again appealed to all separatists to close ranks and unite in the larger interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, saying "time and tide will wait for no one".

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**3 Bihar militants among 6 arrested**

JAMMU: For the first time, three Bihari militants operating in the State, have been arrested by the police along with their three Kashmiri associates. The militants were planning terror strikes in the two capital cities. While two Bihari militants were arrested near Nagrota on Jammu-Srinagar national highway, four others including another Bihari, were apprehended from Srinagar on a clue given by the former during their interrogation, police sources told the Excelsior today. All the arrested militants were part of Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit, the sources said. This is for the first time that Bihari militants operating in the State have been arrested by the police. Interrogation of the Bihari militants revealed that they were motivated by a "religious person" at Bhagalpur to join "jihad" in Kashmir.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**Two LeT ultras found dead**

JAMMU: Security forces today recovered dead bodies of two Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants from Marwah while a civilian was kidnapped by the militants in Doda district. Two hideouts of the militants were busted in Doda and Rajouri districts and a large quantity of explosives including 10 kg RDX and 27 UBGL grenades were seized. Sources said the militants had succumbed to their injuries while fleeing from the scene of encounter. Their bodies kept lying in the forest for last more than 25 days till they were observed by some shepherds this morning. Police and security forces, in a joint search operation this morning, destroyed a hideout of the militants at Jandhar in Bharat area of Doda district. Recoveries made from the hideout include 10 kg RDX, four circuit boards, 30 kg ration and some utensils. Another hideout of the militants was busted by police and security forces along Dharni nullah at Bud Khanari in Darhal area of Rajouri district.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**Hizb militant, civilian killed in Valley**

SRINAGAR: A Hizbul Mujahideen militant and a civilian were killed in militant related incidents in Kashmir, where one person escaped from the captivity of militants, during the past 24 hours. A Pakistani militant associated with Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, Umer Khalid alias Saifullah, was killed in a gunfight with a joint search party of police and Army at village Seller in Anantnag district today. An AK rifle, three magazines, a rocket launcher, three rockets, two grenades and some documents were recovered from him, an official spokesman said.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**No lowering of guard in J&K: Govt**

NEW DELHI: Even as the fourth bus left from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad amid tight security today, the Centre ruled out "lowering its guard" for some time, asserting that some "frustrated elements" were bent upon disrupting the peace initiatives. Mr Anil Choudhary, Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Home Ministry, said the Centre was in contact with the passengers of the previous three buses because of the security threats to them by terrorists. Some had refused security. Citing the recent increase in the tourist inflow to the Valley as an instance of normalcy returning, he said the Government had reasons to feel satisfied with the continuous improvement in the situation. He claimed that there had been 69 per cent decline in infiltration and 30 per cent in violence. Mr Choudhary, however, cautioned that some desperate elements were still bent upon creating disturbances as was evident from the recent grenade attack on school children.

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**Hurriyat alleges threat on phone**

SRINAGAR: Former chairman of moderate faction of separatist Hurriyat Conference Abdul Gani Bhat today alleged senior leader of the conglomerate Fazal Haq Qureshi had been receiving death threats on phone. "Qureshi has been receiving death threats on phone. These phone calls are not from mujahideen (militants) or Pakistan but from the kitchens of residential houses," Bhat alleged while addressing a seminar here. However, he did not identify any individual or party for the threat. Bhat said "we cannot be bogged down by the threats and will foil all attempts aimed at disintegrating Hurriyat."

The Daily Excelsior, 20 May 2005

**Time ripe for Kashmir solution: Kasuri** (Associated Foreign Press)

KUALA LUMPUR: The time is ripe for a deal between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and the two countries should seize the opportunity to end the long-running issue, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said today. Kasuri said a major Confidence-Building Measure in the search for a solution to the Kashmir issue would be an agreement on the Siachen Glacier in talks beginning on May 25. "It is doable. I think if we have agreement on this it will act as a major Confidence-Building Measure. It will also help in the process of resolution of Jammu and Kashmir. "It requires just a bit of political will. The Defence Secretaries need to try to convince each other that their fear and apprehension is misplaced."

The Indian Express, 21 May 2005

**Action against HR violation initiated, says Mufti** (Press Trust of India)

Jammu: Chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has said whenever any incident of Human Rights violation takes place, action is initiated against the guilty. Asking the people of the state to complement the efforts of his government, he said the people of Jammu and Kashmir need to guard whatever results the peace process has brought for the state as they have suffered immensely during the past 15 years. The Chief minister said the people of the state have to play an important role in this process of reconciliation and dialogue.

The Indian Express, 21 May 2005

**Srinagar-Leh highway thrown open to traffic before time**

Srinagar: AFTER remaining closed for six months, the strategic Srinagar-Leh highway was thrown open to vehicular traffic today. On the first day, Army trucks carrying essentials and medicines rolled on the 435-km-long highway. For the next few days, only Army and government trucks will be allowed to ply on the route. After that, civilian traffic will also be permitted to use the road. To ensure that the route remains smooth, BEACON and HEMANK projects of the Border Road Organisations (BRO) are jointly maintaining the highway considered to be the gateway to the land of the Lamas, monks and monasteries. Chief engineer BEACON, S S Dasaka, said the officials and men of his organisation worked overtime for two months to clear the highway. "It was a challenge we took up and succeeded," he said.

The Indian Express, 21 May 2005

**Major among four killed in militant attack**

Jammu: FOUR security personnel including a major in the Army were killed and four others injured in a militant attack in Kalalara forest at Rajouri district today. According to sources, following an information about the presence of militants, an Army patrol party of 14 Maratha Light Infantry was on its way for an operation in Dharamshal area of Rajouri district when it was attacked. The militants, having laid an ambush in Kalalara forests area, hurled grenades and opened indiscriminate fire on the troops led by Major Satayjet Shinday. The troops retaliated. In the ensuing gunbattle, four Army personnel were killed and four others sustained injuries. In another incident today, security forces apprehended a Pakistan-trained militant, owing allegiance to Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, after they burst a hideout in Doda district. In another incident today, an Army jawan was seriously injured when a landmine exploded near Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri sector.

The Indian Express, 21 May 2005

**'CRPF to replace BSF soon in areas outside Srinagar'** (By Bashaarat Masood)

Srinagar: THE Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will soon replace the Border Security Forces (BSF) in maintaining internal security of the Valley. The information was given by the Director General, CRPF, at a function organised to honour the brave men of the security force. The decision to replace BSF with CRPF in a phased manner was taken by the Centre last year. In its first phase, the CRPF replaced the BSF in Srinagar city. However, the plan was put in abeyance as the fidayeen attacks on CRPF camps increased. The Union Government has now decided to withdraw the BSF personnel from other towns and rural areas of the Valley and replace them with CRPF men. Already, 38 CRPF battalions are already present in Kashmir.

The Daily Times, 21 May 2005

**Musharraf on Kashmir solution:** (By Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Friday that the solution to the Kashmir issue lay in making boundaries irrelevant and stressed seizing the "fleeting moment" to resolve the conflict... the president said there were three statements (on the issue): the boundaries could not be redrawn; the Line of Control (LoC) could not be made a permanent border; and the boundaries should be made irrelevant. He said some Kashmiris wanted independence and "their concerns must also be addressed by giving them an opportunity for self-governance. The president said he was optimistic about a Kashmir solution but it required sincerity of intent. Statements and declarations had failed to lead to one because of a trust deficit, he said. He said confidence-building measures and conflict resolution should move in tandem. About a timeframe, the president again suggested that the dispute should be resolved within his and Prime Minister Singh's terms.

The Daily Excelsior, 21 May 2005

**Solution to Kashmir cannot be on religious basis: Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: Acknowledging India's "sensitivities", Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said tonight that a solution to the Kashmir issue cannot be on religious basis... Musharraf said therefore it (a solution) should be on a people's basis, regional basis". The Pakistani leader had in November last spoken about demilitarising regions but this is probably the first time he has ruled out a solution of Kashmir on the basis of religion. He said a solution has to be found from within India's stand of no re-drawing of borders, Pakistan's stand of LoC cannot be a permanent border and boundaries becoming irrelevant. Musharraf said history offered only "fleeting moments" to resolve complex issues like Kashmir and the prevailing international atmosphere as well as improved relations between the two countries offered "ideal opportunity" for him and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to resolve it .

The Daily Excelsior, 21 May 2005

**Major, 3 jawans killed; 5 injured**

RAJOURI: Four Army soldiers including a Major were killed and five others were injured in a fierce gun-battle with a big group of militants at village Jatyari in Munnu area of Dharamshal police station this morning. A massive search and cordon operation has been launched for the militants, who were stated to be between six and eight in number. It was after a long gap that Army suffered eight casualties including four fatal in a single operation in this border district. Latest reports tonight revealed that some of the militants had been trapped by the security personnel in Mogla forests, about two kms from the scene of attack. According to sources most of the militants involved in the attack were believed to be the hardcore activists of Lashkar-e-Toiba and were foreign mercenaries.

The Daily Excelsior, 21 May 2005

**Central team in Valley to discuss JK situation**

SRINAGAR: A high level Central team headed by Union Home Secretary VK Duggal arrived here on a four- day visit to assess the present situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The sources said that the four member Central team will discuss with Army Core Commanders, Officers, Director General of State Police, IGs of Police, BSF and CRPF and officers of intelligence wings the introduction of Srinagar -Muzaffarabad bus service and its impact in terms of losses and gains. Apart from the bus service, the team is scheduled to discuss threadbare the recent spurt of militant activities in Valley and find out causes that led to blasts at Jawarhar Nagar, Lal Chowk and killings of civilians in Harwan area.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

**Home Secy announces 12,000 jobs** (By Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: Union Home Secretary, V K Duggal, today announced that 12,000 youth from Jammu & Kashmir state would be absorbed in the Central paramilitary forces and J&K Police in the next one year. He said that Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) would fully replace Border Security Force (BSF) in the capital city of Srinagar before October this year. In an extensive interaction with Srinagar -based mediapersons this afternoon, Mr V K Duggal asserted that addressing the burning problem of unemployment in the strife-torn Jammu & Kashmir State was a matter of top priority with the Government of India. Unfolding the Union Home Ministry's package of employment, Duggal elaborated that 3,500 unemployed youth from Jammu & Kashmir would be recruited in the CRPF and 1,500 more in the SSB. Duggal revealed that Government of India was keenly pursuing all objectives in order to ensure success of the fresh spell of friendship between New Delhi and Islamabad.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

**Mirwaiz dismisses religious solution of Kashmir** (By Aijaz Hussain)

SRINAGAR: A day after Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf said that a religious solution of Kashmir issue was not possible, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, head of a faction of Hurriyat Conference and Awami Action Committee (AAC) chief, today advocated an intra-Kashmir dialogue to hammer out a mutual acceptable solution of the Kashmir issue. Unambiguously terming the Pakistan's approach on Kashmir as "realistic", he castigated New Delhi for continuing its "stubborn" attitude on Kashmir and counselled it to adopt a "just and realistic" way to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio. Commenting on the Pakistan president Gen Pervez Musharraf's proposal, Mirwaiz said that let India and Pakistan come out with their roadmaps on Kashmir. He warned India as well as Pakistan that no solution could be thrust upon the people of Kashmir. Mirwaiz asserted that Pakistan had adopted a "realistic" approach on Kashmir while blaming India for continuing with its "stubborn" attitude.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

**4 militants, 2 civilians killed**

SRINAGAR: Even as security forces have killed three militants in two operations in Kupwara district and yet another militant has been blown into pieces in a grenade blast in Kulgam, suspected militants have killed two persons in Tral area today. Meanwhile, at least one person has sustained injuries when Police opened fire on a mob, which had formed a demonstration against Army in Handwara area. Defence sources claimed that... a militant of Hizbul Mujahideen, who got killed in an encounter with troops early in the morning today. Sources said that over a thousand people staged a demonstration in Handwara area today with the allegation that security forces had swooped on the house of a militant's relative and roughed up the inmates last night. They claimed that troops had raided a house after receiving information that a couple of militants were hiding there. However, none of the militants was found present.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

**Indo-Pak leaders debate Kashmir** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: In the backdrop of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's suggestion on resolving Kashmir issue, differences emerged here today on the approach to the settlement as a former Pakistani Minister joined Indian experts in deliberating over the matter. Mubashir Hasan, former Finance Minister of Pakistan, proposed a solution envisioning an "almost independent" Kashmir which would give the two countries and the people of the State "much more than they have now." The "solution" involved reunification of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with a common Government. India and Pakistan would be responsible for defence of the new State at places they do today. They would also enter a treaty not to prepare for or wage war inside Kashmir. Thus, the need to defend the Line of Control would cease to exist and both countries could withdraw their forces, Hasan said. However, former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Jagmohan said the autonomy issue was being "overplayed and the real issues were how to stop terrorism, build roads and reach water to villages."

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

**Cong core group to discuss J&K political situation** (By Dinesh Manhotra)

JAMMU: Amidst conflicting reports regarding implementation of Power Sharing Agreement of 2002, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) Peerzada Mohammed Sayed has convened an important meeting of senior party leaders at New Delhi to discuss latest political situation of the State. The meeting, which has been convened on the directions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), will be presided over by AICC general secretary and incharge Jammu and Kashmir Ambica Soni. Only selective leaders have been invited to attend this high level meeting. Highly placed sources said that AICC has decided to convene the meeting as conflicting reports continued to pour in regarding power sharing agreement. There was confusion among Congress workers so party highcommand has decided to call the meeting. Peerzada Mohammed Sayed, who has prepared a detailed report about cross voting in election of the Mayor of Jammu Municipal Corporation, will also inform the meeting about entire episode.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

#### **Former NC MLA arrested**

SRINAGAR: Former National Conference MLA Gul Rafeeqi has been arrested for allegedly facilitating the escape of a top militant commander to Pakistan through the Wagah Border, a senior police official said here today. Rafeeqi was arrested last night from his residence in Anantnag district, 52 kms from here, under the Unlawful Activities Act and the investigations into the case are in full swing, Deputy Inspector General of Police Anantnag Range Owais Ahmad said. He said the two Personal Security Officers of Rafeeqi, who had allegedly accompanied the former MLA and the militant commander to Amritsar were also being questioned. The matter came to light when police in Anantnag district of south Kashmir apprehended a suspect involved in a mine blast at Sangam on national highway in which an Army jawan was killed earlier this month. The suspect revealed that the mastermind behind several blasts in the area, the Hizb commander, had fled the country on a fake passport.

The Daily Excelsior, 22 May 2005

#### **Srinagar-Leh highway closed again**

SRINAGAR: A day after the successful trial run of the army convoy on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, the 434-km-long road was again closed today following heavy snowfall and landslides along the route. The Senior Superintendent of Traffic Police said following fresh snowfall in the Zojila sector today and landslides at some places on the Sonamarg-Kargil road, the fresh traffic movement has been stopped on the Srinagar-Leh highway. All goods-carrier and passenger vehicle operators have been asked not to undertake journey on the Srinagar-Kargil road till weather conditions improve, he added. The entire operation of clearing and opening the road is being done by the BRO in coordination with the army and the civil administration.

The Indian Express, 22 May 2005

#### **Mufti welcomes Gen proposal** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's latest proposal of "maximum self-governance" was welcomed today by J-K Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. The Chief Minister added that Musharraf's suggestion of autonomy was a step in the right direction and would benefit the people on both sides of the LoC. However, he said peace was pre-requisite for the success of the peace process. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the Hurriyat's moderate leader ... endorsed Musharraf's formula as a step towards a Kashmir resolution. The Mirwaiz said the onus of responding positively now lies with New Delhi. "The Pakistan President's approach is realistic. But leader of the Hurriyat's hardline faction Sayeed Ali Shah Geelani, however, rejected the offer saying: "Maximum self-governance is not a permanent solution to the Kashmir issue. And, separatist leader and president of J-K Democratic Freedom Party Shabir Ahmad Shah said he would seek the masses' opinion on the issue and organise district-level debates in the state for the purpose.

The Daily Times, 22 May 2005

#### **Kashmir bus may be stopped if freedom struggle ignored: Sikandar**

ISLAMABAD: Welcoming President Musharraf's statement on Friday in which he floated the option of demilitarising Kashmir to give more autonomy to Kashmiris, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat said on Saturday that the trans-Kashmir bus service could be closed if India continued to grind its axe under its (bus service's) pretext. Talking to a private TV channel, Sardar Sikandar said that a sizable number of Kashmiris feared that India might use the bus service as an excuse for delaying the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

The Daily Times, 22 May 2005

#### **Strike paralyses Kashmir, 6 dead**

SRINAGAR: New violence in Indian Held Kashmir killed six people on Saturday, and thousands flocked to a cemetery to honour separatists who have died in the 15-year insurgency. Unidentified gunmen killed two villagers outside Tral village, 55 kilometres south of Srinagar, a local police officer said. Police were investigating, but no motive for the killings was immediately known, the officer said on condition of anonymity. A grenade blast killed a suspected rebel, and three other people believed to be militants died in separate gun battles with army soldiers elsewhere in Kashmir... Meanwhile, businesses and schools closed on Saturday in Srinagar after the separatist Awami Action Committee party called for a general strike to mark the anniversary of the slaying of its former leader, Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq, who was killed in 1990.

The Indian Express, 23 May 2005

#### **Pak tells Hurriyat board the bus, Govt says up to them** (By Mufti Islah & Sudhi Ranjan Sen)

Srinagar/new Delhi: While Islamabad's initiative to forge unity among the separatists is yet to show results, it has invited them to travel on the June 2 Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus for talks. With India and Pakistan agreeing to open political dialogue between Kashmiri leaders, New Delhi is not averse to the Hurriyat leadership travelling across the Line of Control (LoC). Reacting to the Pakistan government's invitation to Hurriyat leaders-including hardline leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani-to travel to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), a top Home Ministry official said: "We have no problems if Hurriyat wants to go to PoK..."

it is up to them to decide whether they want to take the Pakistani offer." Separatist hawk Syed Ali Shah Geelani has not received the invite so far but the Mirwaiz Umar Farooq-led Hurriyat Conference is holding a crucial meeting on Wednesday to decide on the invitation. While the Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat has welcomed Gen Musharraf's latest Kashmir formula of "self governance through maximum autonomy," Geelani has outrightedly rejected it.

The Daily Times, 23 May 2005

**Thousands rally to remember Gani Lone** (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Thousands rallied on Sunday in held Kashmir to honour a top Kashmiri leader Abdul Gani Lone slain three years ago, while his son urged the crowd to support the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan. Lone was the head of the Peoples Conference, an important constituent of Kashmir's main freedom alliance, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. On Sunday Lone's supporters carried placards with pictures of the slain leader saying "peace martyr" in the stadium, which was surrounded on all sides by police and security force personnel.

The Daily Times, 23 May 2005

**PML-N admits failure to form Kargil commission**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Sunday admitted its inability to form an investigative commission on Kargil in the last several months of its previous government. "We could not form the commission during our government because there were so many considerations," said Zafar Iqbal Jhagra, the PML-N secretary general, at a press conference. Asked whether the PML-N blamed itself for damaging the Kashmir cause because of the Kargil war, he claimed the last PML-N government had not been given enough time to form a commission to reveal the real facts of the story. He said the government was emphasising Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and had thrown the core issue onto the backburner. He said the PML-N supported the CBMs, but not at the cost of undermining Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**Hurriyat to decide on Pak visit soon**

SRINAGAR: The moderate Hurriyat Conference will hold an all important meeting of its executive council in the coming few days to decide on the dates and the mode of travel to visit Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) for talks with the political and militant leadership there to resolve the vexed issue. Hurriyat sources said that amalgam chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has been verbally invited to visit Pakistan and Muzaffarabad, but no formal invitation has so far been extended to the separatist leaders. The Mirwaiz, in his address at the public meeting yesterday, had confirmed that they had received an invitation from the Pakistan Government and PoK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan to visit Muzaffarabad. He advocated an intra-Kashmir dialogue for mutually acceptable resolution of the Kashmir issue and said a comprehensive dialogue within the entire Jammu and Kashmir was needed to help resolve the Kashmir issue.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**J&K seeks early release of Central funds** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Jammu and Kashmir Government has sought early release of about Rs 45.35 crore by the Centre sanctioned for various developmental works in the State, citing limitations of working period because of weather vagaries. The State Government complained that under the Central Road Fund, 120 schemes had been submitted to the Centre of which 39 schemes have been sanctioned by the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways at an estimated cost of Rs 118 crore. Mir said the State Government had submitted 60 project proposals under the scheme 'State roads of inter-state connectivity and economic importance' but till date no scheme or proposal has been sanctioned by the Centre. The Union Government had earlier provided Rs 50 crore for reconstruction of these bridges, Mir said, adding the State requires Rs 70 crore more for such works.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**One killed, 3 kidnapped youths rescued**

JAMMU: Police and security forces today rescued three youths, who had been kidnapped by the militants, from Tanta forests in Thathri area of Doda district while a civilian was killed and an ultra was injured in two separate incidents. In an hour long operation, the security personnel managed to rescue all three youths but the militants managed to escape. Sources said a militant was injured in an encounter between militants and a security patrol at Mugli Dharm in Gool area of Ramban police district last night. However, the ultras along with their injured colleague escaped into the thick forest. Another encounter took place between a police search party and militants at Addi Jungle in Banjoie area of Bhaderwah tehsil in Doda district last night. Another hideout of the militants was busted at Adshal in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch. Recoveries include two UBGL grenades, one AK magazine and 28 AK rounds.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**Let Kashmiris elect their representatives: Sajjad** (By Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: On occasion of the third anniversary of his father Abdul Gani Lone's assassination, Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Conference (PC) chairman, Sajjad Gani Lone, has once again dismissed Kashmir's Hurriyat leaders as "a bunch of jokers" and asked both, New Delhi and Islamabad, not to impose puppets on the people of the strife-torn State. He has implored the two governments to facilitate such an exercise in which the people of Jammu & Kashmir would democratically elect their own representatives for the purpose of settling the 57-year-long political crisis... Sajjad Lone argued that "hand-picked individuals and self-styled leaders" would never solve Kashmir's political problem. Sajjad Lone emphasised the need of involving the state's genuinely and democratically elected representatives with the Indo-Pakistan peace process on Kashmir. Sajjad Lone asserted that the Hurriyat leaders were helping India delay the political resolution of the Kashmir problem as New Delhi, according to him, was not pursuing the peace process sincerely and honestly.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**NC to discuss Hurriyat proposal**

SRINAGAR: The National Conference (NC) will discuss Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's "encouraging" offer to join hands with separatists in finding an amicable and permanent solution to the vexed Kashmir issue at its crucial working committee meeting to be held by the month-end or first week of June. NC sources said the working committee will meet immediately after party chief Omar Abdullah arrives in the State. Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and NC patron Farooq Abdullah, in a statement here, said Mirwaiz Farooq's recent suggestion that all organisations should unitedly strive for resolving the Kashmir issue, was "encouraging and worth consideration". Senior NC leader Ali Mohammad Sagar also hailed the Hurriyat chairman's peace efforts, saying "we all should put in joint efforts towards restoration of peace".

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**Militant, civilian killed in Valley**

SRINAGAR: While security forces have killed a militant in an encounter near Kunzar on Srinagar-Gulmarg Road, one civilian has died in a blast at Tosa Maidan in Budgam district today. Reports from south Kashmir said that two soldiers sustained injuries when a blast took place at an Army camp in Tral today. Both of the injured were rushed to a hospital.

The Daily Excelsior, 23 May 2005

**HM running short of cadre in Udhampur, Doda** (By Mohinder Verma)

JAMMU: With the continuous killing of its commanders and surrenders by cadre, Hizbul Mujahideen has been facing grave situation to keep the outfit intact in the districts of Udhampur and Doda, where once it had strong bases. Sources said that most of the commanders of the outfit have lost their lives while fighting with the security forces for the past two to three months and remaining are not in a position to effectively carry out attacks because of acute shortage of arms and ammunition. Sources said that laying down of arms by the HM militants is proving very beneficial for the security forces as most of the hide-outs are being busted on their information. It is worthwhile to mention here that eight top militants of HM were killed and six laid down their arms during the past one week in Doda and Udhampur districts and this points towards the wave of fear sweeping the outfit these days.

The Indian Express, 24 May 2005

**Accepting Hurriyat proposal on Kashmir is latest NC mantra** (By Rakesh Rocky)

Jammu: The National Conference by giving clear signals that it will discuss on the party level, the Hurriyat Conference chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's proposal on joining hands on the vexed Kashmir issue, the NC seems to be preparing itself for the big show. The NC wants to counter the incessant efforts of PDP patron and Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed to grab the support base of both the Hurriyat Conference and of the National Conference in the Valley. Though in Jammu, the National Conference wants to continue to have its secular face in place, in the Valley it is trying to remain neutral. Sources said that the NC will call a working committee meeting by the month end or the first week of June to discuss the Hurriyat's proposal on joining hands for finding a permanent and amicable solution to the Kashmir issue. Interestingly the NC had not only been a strong critic of the Hurriyat but also of Pakistan, for which Hurriyat "always has had a soft corner".

The Indian Express, 24 May 2005

**Militants kill three, injure 3 PDP activists**

Srinagar: Three persons were killed and three Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) workers injured in separate incidents of violence in the Valley since Sunday. In another incident, a Border Security Force personnel was killed in a case of accidental fire. Police said that unidentified gunmen yesterday injured three PDP activists in Bandarpora, in south Kashmir district of Pulwama. According to sources, a group of gunmen in Bandarpora's Quil village, three PDP activists and later shot at them. In another incident, a militant of pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen was killed in an encounter with the security forces in the same district. In the south Kashmir village of Bijbehara, police said a militant was killed in an encounter with a joint party of Police and security forces. Police have identified the militant as Mohammad Shafi Shah, a resident of Pahalgam, affiliated to Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba.

The Indian Express, 24 May 2005

**Ultras kill two in Doda district**

Jammu: Militants killed two persons after abducting them in Doda district Elsewhere, security forces yesterday apprehended one ground worker from Gul area of the district. Meanwhile, security forces have launched an operation to track down the militants responsible for these acts of crime. During search operations, security forces busted five hideouts at Chhatrnal (Banihal) today.

The Indian Express, 24 May 2005

**Two criminals of underworld arrested**

Jammu: With the arrests of two hardcore criminals of an underworld gang after conducting series of raids at their hideouts in the city, the police have claimed to solve the shootout case, which took place in front of the GGM Science College on April 30. Those arrested have been identified as Tajinder Paul Singh alias Mitti, son of Prithipaul Singh of Bathandi Narwal and Ravi Dass alias Pital, son of Banta Ram of Patil Nagar, Talab Tillo. Both are associates of Vipan Bhoot and Sanju Gang. Sources said that their interrogation had revealed that a proper planning was hatched to eliminate gangster Raju by the Bhoot gang, in the house of Sanju at Talab Tillo. Sources said that during interrogation, the duo have further disclosed the names of three other criminals involved in the shootout, who have already been arrested by the police.

The Daily Times, 24 May 2005

### **Pakistan invited APHC leaders**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has invited All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders in Jammu and Kashmir to visit AJK and Pakistan by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2 and hopes that there will be no restriction from India... Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said the government and people of Pakistan and AJK had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of Hurriyat leaders. The spokesman said all APHC leaders including Syed Ali Geelani had been invited to Pakistan and hoped they would not face any problems as the bus service was meant to facilitate travel by Kashmiris. He also said APHC leaders would be welcome to visit any part of Pakistan. He said what was going on in Jammu and Kashmir was in response to the massive repression of Kashmiris by Indian security forces. The spokesman said India and Pakistan had crossed the stage of discussing the Baglihar Dam issue bilaterally.

The Daily Times, 24 May 2005

### **UN resolution only way to resolve Kashmir issue: APC**

ISLAMABAD: Granting the people of Jammu and Kashmir their right to self-determination as promised in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions was the only way to resolve the Kashmir dispute, said a declaration by an All Party National Conference on Kashmir organized by Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) here on Monday. The participants condemned the government's policy of ignoring UN resolutions and President's Pervez Musharraf's statements on Kashmir without taking into confidence the parliament or its Kashmir committee. It called for carrying out the dialogue process with India in line with the Shimla Agreement of 1972, Islamabad Declaration of 1988 and Lahore Declaration of 1999. They called for a greater national consensus on the issue and inclusion of Kashmiris in the process of dialogue. They criticized the government for not taking up the violation of the Indus Water Treaty by India, which they feared might make Pakistan barren land.

The Daily Times, 24 May 2005

### **AJK Council now under AJK Accountability Bureau jurisdiction**

ISLAMABAD: The jurisdiction of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Accountability Bureau was extended to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council. They said the issue was discussed in detail and the decision was unanimous. They added that the council also approved an increase in perks and privileges to members of the council, who would now get same facilities as the members of the National Assembly. An increase in council seats was also discussed but the AJK prime minister opposed the proposal. However Syed Faisal Salah Hayat, Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas minister, thought that seats in the AJK Legislative Assembly had been increased therefore it was necessary to increase the seats of the AJK Council.

The Daily Times, 24 May 2005

### **Mubashir calls for 'win-win' solution to Kashmir issue** (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: Pakistan's former finance minister Dr Mubashir Hassan called for working out a "win-win" solution to the complex Kashmir issue so that all relevant parties - India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir - are at an advantageous position. Many here believe that Dr Hassan reiterated what President General Pervez Musharraf had been saying - that a solution needed to be found that was a compromise to the stated positions of the two countries. Dr Hasan said that although all of Jammu and Kashmir belonged "legally" to India, in reality it had no control over some parts of the state. Likewise, Pakistan had no legal rights to control what it called Azad Kashmir. And Kashmiris wanted an independent state, which no country in the world was in favour of, Dr Hasan said. In this scenario, Dr Hasan suggested giving Jammu and Kashmir as much autonomy as possible with India and Pakistan maintaining troops to protect borders and foreign policies and the rest would be taken care of by the Kashmiri people.

The Daily Times, 24 May 2005

### **Four killed in Kashmir violence** (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Suspected rebels shot dead two people in Indian Held Kashmir, where a civilian died in an explosion and a rebel was shot dead by troops during a clash, police said on Monday. A police spokesman said insurgents had abducted and shot dead two Muslim civilians overnight in the southern district of Doda. No rebel group claimed responsibility for the two killings. Another Muslim civilian died on Sunday when he stepped on a land mine in the Tosha Maidan area of central Budgam district, police said. A police spokesman also said a rebel was shot dead by Indian troops during a clash in the district of Baramulla on Sunday.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2005

### **Hurriyat leaders invited to Pak, PoK** (Press Trust of India)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan today extended an invitation to all Hurriyat leaders, including hardline separatist leader Sayed Ali Geelani to visit the country and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) on June 2 by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. "We have extended an invitation to Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan on the bus on June 2. The people of Pakistan and Government and the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, have been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Hurriyat leaders to Pakistan and we hope that they would be able to make it this time. To a question, he said the invitation to Hurriyat leaders included Geelani and discounted reports that Pakistan may not extend invitation to him due to his hardline stance on the peace process. Jilani said Pakistan's invitation to Hurriyat was long pending and now that the bus service has started it should materialise without any problems.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2005

### **Woman, 2 militants killed in Valley**

SRINAGAR: While security forces have killed two militants and suspected militants have hanged to death a woman, three persons have been fired upon and left injured in Kashmir valley since last evening. In Pulwama district again, troops of BSF 71 Bn claimed to have killed a local militant of Hizbul Mujahideen... In yet another operation, troops of Rashtriya Rifles 01 Bn and

SOG Anantnag claimed to have killed a local militant of Lashkar-e-Toiba at Urnhal village near Bijbehara. Dead body of an unidentified woman was fished out from the Jhelum river at Gantmulla in Baramulla district today.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2005

**Kashmir needs honest political approach: Omar**

SRINAGAR: National Conference president, Omar Abdullah has said that Kashmir needs honest political approach where truth and transparency prevails. In a statement here, he said that such approach should be devoid of petty political considerations as sincere efforts should be made to evolve a long term permanent solution to the problem of Kashmir. The NC chief said that autonomy, soft borders and opening of roads was a vision of legendary Sheikh Mohd Abdullah and NC today also stands by this agenda. He, however, expressed surprise at the hypocritical approach of Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed, who he said, was making ideological about turns for political convenience and survival. Omar said that the people of the State want lasting peace and it should be endeavour of all to facilitate the process of peace.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2005

**Include KPs in peace process: Jagmohan** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Jagmohan has called for including Kashmiri Pandits in the Indo-Pak peace dialogue even as he asked the State Government to desist from "half-hearted" attempts at bringing them back to the Valley without addressing their genuine fears. In the Indo-Pak peace moves, "there is a strong missing link and that is the fate of the exiled Kashmiri Pandits, who are being thrown in the dust bin of history," Jagmohan said... "No CBMs for them, even worse they don't find mention in this entire process," he said. He said being rendered "territory-less" has only exposed them to the possibility of disintegrating as a collective force in near future.

The Daily Excelsior, 24 May 2005

**Civilian killed, another kidnapped**

JAMMU: A civilian was gunned down by the militants at village Tiller in Marwah area of Doda district last night while another civilian was kidnapped in Khanetar, Poonch. Official sources said the militants kidnapped a youth Rafi Lone son of Mohd Sultan Lone from his house at village Tiller last night. He was killed in the captivity and his body was recovered from river Chenab at Samzal. Security forces arrested a suspect Hamid Tregwal from Maswa in Gool area. Five hideouts of the militants were busted at Chhatarnal in Banihal. Recoveries include 33 pencil cells, three lighters, two perfume bottles, one stove and utensils.

The Indian express, 25 May 2005

**International community should play role in peace process: Musharraf** (By B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: In a new twist to the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said both sides should consider whether the peace process should be "guaranteed" by the international community. Gen. Musharraf has said that since he believed the Kashmir issue should be resolved within his and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tenure in office, efforts should be made for a final agreement in the next 12 months. Gen. Musharraf said he hoped Dr. Singh would continue in office and be "allowed" to move forward. Asked if he could enforce a ceasefire by militant groups, Gen. Musharraf said if there is an agreement, up to a point something could be done. In response to a question on who represented the Kashmiris, Gen. Musharraf said it was a sensitive issue. Stating that the Hurriyat was the true representative of Kashmiris, he said there has to be a "trilateral arrangement" where Kashmiris become part of the dialogue process.

The Indian Express, 25 May 2005

**Attack on Sufi shrine a heinous crime, says Mufti** (Press Trust of India)

New Delhi: BLAMING militants for burning down the 700-year-old shrine of Zainuddin Shah Wali in Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed today described it as the "most heinous crime." Expressing shock at the incident, he said, the loss of the shrine was "colossal" to the people of the state who had great faith in it. He said the contribution of the Sufi Saint Wali is of "extraordinary nature" and his pure thoughts, human uplift and brotherhood were revered by all." Ruling PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti also condemned the act. The shrine of the Sufi Saint at Pendabal in Aishmuqam area of Anantnag was set on fire last night.

The Indian Express, 25 May 2005

**8 CRPF men honoured for bravery, meritorious services**

Jammu: IN a glittering function, eight Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officials were given disc and commendation certificate for their bravery and meritorious services to the organisation. The function organised at the CRPF group centre at Bantalab here today was attended by a large number of officials including Inspector General CRPF Jammu P.M.Nayar. Nayar presented the Director General's Disc and commendation certificate to these eight officials. In his address, Nayar said that this Disc and commendation certificate are given to those CRPF personnel, who set examples for others while performing their duty with dedication and courage.

The Daily Times, 25 May 2005

**'Visit to Pakistan may help resolve Kashmir issue'** (Associate Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Pakistan's invitation for Kashmiri separatists to visit the other side of the divided territory is the first step toward talks that could resolve the conflict, said separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Tuesday. All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader Farooq said, "We have been saying that until the Kashmiri people are involved in the talks there can be no resolution of the Kashmir dispute."

The Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2005

### **Governor returns Panchayati Raj bill to Legislature**

JAMMU: The PDP-led coalition Government today suffered a major setback when Governor Lt Gen (retd) S K Sinha returned the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj (second amendment) Bill 2005 to the Legislature for review. The bill, which empowered the Government to dissolve all Panchayats prematurely (about one and a half year before completion of their term), was passed amid stiff opposition and walk-out by the National Conference at fag end of the budget session last month. The Governor was not satisfied with some points of the bill, official sources said. This was only second time in the history of the State when a bill passed by the Legislature has been returned by the Governor. They said there was no security to the Councilors after civic bodies elections held early this year and some of them have been killed by the militants. The sources said the Governor had objections on holding the Panchayat elections in the present security situation and feared risk to the life of the contestants due to escalation of violence.

The Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2005

### **3 'commanders', two jawans among 9 killed**

JAMMU: Nine persons including three militant commanders, two Army jawans and a mother-son were killed in separate incidents across Poonch and Doda districts in stepped-up violence since last night. Slain militant commanders included a MBBS doctor from Pakistan. A contact with the militant commanders was established in early hours of this morning. A heavy exchange of gun-fighting between the two sides continued for two hours in which two militants and two Army jawans were killed. Slain LeT commanders have been identified as Dr Abu Farkan, an MBBS doctor from Pakistan (code G5) and Abu Haider (code name H4), both foreign mercenaries. Recoveries made from the scene of encounter include two AK 47 rifles, five magazines, 55 rounds, one Kenwood radio set and three diaries. A 'section commander' of Hizbul Mujahideen was gunned down by police and Army in an encounter at Balooni nullah in Basti area of Bharderwah tehsil in Doda district.

The Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2005

### **Agreement on Kashmir can be reached in a year: Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: Adding a new dimension to the peace process on Kashmir, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said he would prefer some kind of "international guarantees" for implementation of any pact reached with India on the issue, which he wants to be settled in a year's time. The President had last week said a solution to the Kashmir issue cannot be on "any religious basis" and has to be found within India's stand of no redrawing of borders, Pakistan's stand on LoC cannot be a permanent border and boundaries becoming irrelevant. Musharraf, who last week was diffident in fixing a timeframe to work out a solution for Kashmir in his address at the Parliamentarians conference at the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), believes 12 months is good enough to reach an agreement as the new timeline ensures that it could be reached within the tenures of his and that of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2005

### **All but Geelani seem ready to board bus**

SRINAGAR: After Pakistan extended invitation to the separatist leadership to visit Pakistan and the other side of Kashmir, all of them except for Syed Ali Shah Geelani seem to have decided to board the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2. Shabir Shah's Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) today formally accepted the invitation of Pakistan to board the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2 and visit Pakistan-held Kashmir. Even as Syed Ali Shah Geelani led Hurriyat Conference 'officially' stated that decision would be taken after meeting, sources close to the amalgam disclosed that Mr Geelani would not board the bus to visit the other side of Kashmir or Pakistan. Announcing his acceptance of the Pakistan's invitation, DFP chief Shabir Shah said that after the executive meeting of his party, it was decided that a delegation led by him would be formed to visit Pakistan-held Kashmir.

The Daily Excelsior, 25 May 2005

### **Bridge blown up enroute Amarnath shrine**

SRINAGAR: Two militants were killed across Kashmir valley overnight, as militants blew up a bridge en- route the holy Amarnath cave shrine early today. An official spokesman said militants struck early this morning and blew up a bridge on the holy cave shrine route in the Pahalgam area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district. The annual Amarnath Yatra commences from June 21 this year and will continue for two months to end on the Rakhsa Bandan day on August 19. Troops seized one AK rifle, two magazines and 70 rounds at Rajpora Litter in the south Kashmir district of Pulwama last night, the spokesman said. Meanwhile, a defence spokesman said ... in another incident, a Hizbul Mujahideen militant identified as Farooq Ahmed Sheikh was killed at Arabal in the Pulwama district yesterday.

The Hindu, 26 May 2005

### **Hurriyat faction to board bus on June 2 (Shujaat Bukhari)**

SRINAGAR: The moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) on Wednesday accepted Pakistan's invitation to visit that country. It would take the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2. On its return, the Hurriyat would resume talks with New Delhi if an invitation came. Meetings with Pakistan-based militant leadership and politicians would be on top of the agenda, the Mirwaiz said. On its return, the Hurriyat would resume talks with New Delhi, but the invitation had to come from India "like it came from Pakistan. We want to become a bridge between India and Pakistan," the Mirwaiz said. The pro-Independence Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has put off its decision till tomorrow.

The Indian Express, 26 May 2005

### **Give free hand to Army in J&K: BJP**

Jammu: HAILING the GoC-in-C Northern Command Lt Gen Hari Prashad's statement that there is no question of ordering

internal ceasefire in the militant-infested state, BJP president Nirmal Singh today demanded a free hand for the security forces so that the cult of gun is removed from J&K and the people are able to lead a peaceful life. He said in a statement here, today, that security forces in the state should be given a free-hand to fight terrorism. Singh alleged that ISI agents and terrorists were threatening the minority community in the state and forcing them to flee their homes. Criticising the 'healing touch' policy of the PDP-led coalition in the state, Singh said both the centre and the state government were responsible for the escalation in terrorist violence in the state.

The Indian Express, 26 May 2005

#### **Release of relief assured to non-state migrants**

Jammu: J-K REVENUE Minister Hakim Mohamad Yaseen has assured the non-state subject Kashmiri migrants release of relief to them immediately. President of the NSSMWA Hasnain Akhtar along with other members of the Association, appealed to the minister to release the relief to them. They handed over representation to him in this regard. The NSSMWA expressed its gratitude to A.N.Vaishnavi, a leader of Kashmiri Pandit migrants, for pleading their case before the revenue minister. The revenue minister was also apprised of the fact the non-state subject migrants were living in Kashmir for four-five decades before the migration and registered themselves with the Kashmiri migrants in the year 1990. The NSSMWA also said that many among them were victims of militancy whose relief had been stopped.

The Daily Times, 26 May 2005

#### **Kashmiri moderates agree to visit Pakistan** (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: The moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference on Wednesday decided to visit Pakistan on June 2 at the invitation of the Pakistani government. The decision came after the Indian government indicated that it would not object if Kashmiri leaders boarded the peace bus from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad as "individuals," not as a group. Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik and Shabir Ahmed Shah have also accepted the invitation in principle and will take a formal decision on Thursday. But the Syed Ali Geelani-led faction of the Hurriyat was still undecided on the trip. Mirwaiz also said the Hurriyat would like to resume the dialogue process with New Delhi on its return from Pakistan. He hoped that that India would reciprocate Pakistan's gesture by inviting the Kashmiri leadership to talks.

The Daily Times, 26 May 2005

#### **Kashmir solution a must for peace: Kasuri**

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri has urged India to approach the dialogue process between the two countries with a positive mind... he said that Pakistan had made it clear to India and the international community that no durable peace in the subcontinent was possible without the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Mr Kasuri said that Siachen, Sir Creek, Baglihar and Kishanganga Dam could be resolved with relative ease if a positive approach was adopted. The foreign minister said that Pakistan had invited all the leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). He said Pakistan was pursuing policy of constant dialogue with India.

The Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2005

#### **Mirwaiz Hurriyat decides to visit Pak on June 2** (By Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: Even as uncertainties are galore with regard to the Kashmiri separatist leaders' visit to Pakistan in the next three weeks, Hurriyat Conference faction headed by the Awami Action Committee (AAC) chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq today decided to board Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2nd. While the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) of Shabir Ahmed Shah has engaged itself with a "district level interaction with the people" and Yaseen Malik's JKLF is likely to take a positive decision on Thursday, reluctant separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani's faction of the Hurriyat Conference is meeting here to take its final decision on Sunday next. The participants emphasised that the invite from Pakistan, coupled with positive indications from India, had finally vindicated the Hurriyat stance that the Kashmiris were a party to the "triangular dispute" without whose involvement no peace process would succeed between India and Pakistan.

The Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2005

#### **Mufti meets Home Minister, Vohra**

NEW DELHI: As Hurriyat today announced its decision to undertake much-desired visit to Pakistan, the latest situation and developments in Jammu and Kashmir were reviewed at the meetings the State Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed held with Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and Centre's special representative N N Vohra here. Sayeed and Patil, who met for 50 minutes, favoured maximum people-to-people contact followed by establishment of trade relations, official sources said. The Chief Minister said he was confident that Kashmir, which was a bone of contention between India and Pakistan, will act as a "bridge" between the two countries. The Hurriyat decision to visit Pakistan at the latter's invitation also came up for discussion at the meetings. The Government is not inclined to prevent the visit.

The Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2005

#### **Militant killed in Harwan, soldier injured**

SRINAGAR: Special Operations Group of District Police Srinagar has killed a militant in Harwan area even as militants have left a soldier injured in a grenade attack in Sopore today. Informed sources said that SOG Srinagar shot dead an unidentified militant in Chak Dhara area of Harwan in the wee hours today. The shootout has taken place in the same area where suspected militants had slaughtered four civilians last week. One of the six persons had been let off while a woman is still in captivity of the suspected militants. Reports said that militants conducted a grenade attack on a BSF formation near Degree College in Sopore. One soldier sustained injuries.

The Daily Excelsior, 26 May 2005

#### **Civilian, VDC member killed**

RAJOURI: A civilian was gunned down by the militants in captivity at village Taragi under the jurisdiction of Dharamshal police station today while a Village Defence Committee (VDC) member reportedly ended his life at Koteranka. Reports said bullet riddled dead body of Puran Chand son of Bindraban R/o Barooi Morha in Taragi village was recovered this afternoon from a forest area. Puran Chand was kidnapped by the militants from his house a couple of days back.

The Hindu, 27 May 2005

**Centre's stand negative, says Hurriyat** (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR: The Hurriyat Conference, whose leaders plan to visit Pakistan, termed "negative" the Centre's view that their travel beyond Pakistan-occupied Kashmir would be contrary to the understanding reached between New Delhi and Islamabad. "This is a negative approach considering the improvement in relations between India and Pakistan," said the former Chairman of the Hurriyat Conference, Abdul Ghani Bhatt, on Thursday night.

The Hindu, 27 May 2005

**BJP opposes Hurriyat leaders' travel without passports**

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party has objected to the idea of Hurriyat leaders being allowed to travel to Pakistan to visit areas outside Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) without proper passports and visas. The party has said that the agreement between India and Pakistan to allow Kashmiris to travel across the Line of Control within the State on permits did not extend to the rest of the country. The permit system was devised to allow Kashmiris to travel from Jammu and Kashmir to PoK and the other way round, not to allow people to use the bus service to travel to Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad or anywhere else in Pakistan... The party was reacting to reports that leaders of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was planning to leave for Muzaffarabad on June 2 on an invitation from Pakistan. The party objected to the statement made by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf that any lasting peace between India and Pakistan should be guaranteed by the international community.

The Hindu, 27 May 2005

**JKLF team for Pakistan** (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: It was the turn of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) on Thursday to join the bandwagon. After a two-day meeting, the party decided to send a delegation to Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on June 2. Announcing the decision, the Front chairman, Mohammad Yasin Malik, said that it was decided to give "yet another chance" to the process started ostensibly to resolve the Kashmir issue. "But keeping in view the interests of people of Kashmir, the JKLF has accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan. Mr. Malik, however, was not optimistic about the exercise but wanted "to give peace another chance." "If we fail we will rethink. My aim will be to get Kashmiris involved in talks and to win an assurance that any resolution has to be in accordance with the wishes of Kashmiris," he said.

The Daily Times, 27 May 2005

**Kashmiri leaders cannot go beyond AJK, says India** (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: Kashmiri leaders cannot go beyond Azad Jammu and Kashmir because it would be "contrary" to the understanding between India and Pakistan, said Indian External Affairs Ministry officials on Thursday. External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters that India had a "clear understanding with Pakistan that passengers travelling by the bus could do so only within the territory of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir and travel beyond the territory was not within the understanding between the two governments". Indian officials had earlier said they had no problem if Hurriyat leaders boarded the peace bus from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad "as individuals." "We don't consider those who stayed away from elections true representatives of Kashmiris," said a senior official. About the Indian External Affairs Ministry statement, moderates' chief spokesman Prof Bhat said, "These are technical hitches created by bureaucrats, but politics demands flexibility," adding that he hoped the issue would be resolved promptly and equitably.

The Daily Times, 27 May 2005

**Gun battles kill five and injure four in held Kashmir** (Associated Foreign Press)

SRINAGAR: Three Indian soldiers and two militants were killed and four soldiers were injured in two separate clashes on Thursday in remote villages in Jammu and Kashmir, said police. A gun battle left two militants and an Indian Army soldier dead in the Kupwara district on Thursday morning. Four soldiers were also injured. Another gun battle in a remote village in Doda district left two Indian soldiers dead, added the spokesman.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2005

**Hurriyat leaders cannot travel beyond PoK: Govt**

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR: The separatist Hurriyat Conference leaders' plan to visit Pakistan may hit a roadblock with India today making it clear that their travel beyond Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) would be contrary to the understanding between the two countries. Pakistan has invited all Hurriyat leaders to travel to that country and the part of Kashmir under its occupation by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said... "the very clear and explicit understanding between Governments of India and Pakistan is that while this bus is open to the citizens of India and Pakistan, they can only travel within the erstwhile State of J and K. Anything which goes beyond this will be contrary to the understanding of the two Governments". Meanwhile, Hurriyat Conference, whose leaders planned to visit Pakistan tonight termed as "negative" the Centre's view that their travel beyond Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) would be contrary to the understanding reached between New Delhi and Islamabad.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2005

**Mufti meets PM, seeks jobs in Central projects**

NEW DELHI: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here and sought recruitment of youth from the State in various hydro-power projects and other Central ventures in the State. During the 40-minute meeting, Singh assured the Centre's full cooperation and assistance to the State in its task of rebuilding tourism industry, the mainstay of its economy. The Chief Minister thanked Singh for the economic package extended to the State and said the implementation of various schemes was in full swing. Sayeed talked about the availability of professional, technical and skilled manpower available in the State and requested for their absorption in various hydel projects and other Central Government projects.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2005

**8 militants, two Army jawans killed**

JAMMU: In a major success, police today smashed a training centre of Hizbul Mujahideen killing five militants at Sui Patyala, about 32 kms from Gandoh, bordering Himachal Pradesh, in Doda district and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition. In another encounter in Doda, three militants including a 'divisional commander' of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and two Army jawans were killed at Machan Koti nullah, about six kms from Doda town this morning. SSP Doda Prithvi Raj Manhas said Doda police had launched a search operation at Sui Patyala, bordering Himachal, two days back following an information that Hizbul Mujahideen outfit was running a training camp for the militants in the area. The busting of the militant training camp and killing of their five activists was a big setback to Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, official sources said.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2005

**Pak invite creates a storm in Hurriyat** (By Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

SRINAGAR: Constituting delegations for the proposed visit to Pakistan has instantly become a headache for the leaders of all Kashmiri separatist alliances even as Mirwaiz faction of the Hurriyat Conference and Yaseen Malik's JKLF have concluded the exercise in two days after receiving a formal invitation from the High Commission of Pakistan. Interestingly, almost all the separatist leaders, who had been speaking of unity until yesterday, have begun broadcasting threats of "further divide" in the Valley's separatist camp. They are reportedly upset over the fact that Hurriyat had yesterday decided to give "proper representation" to the General Council in the "delegation of 10 to 15 leaders" but only five names were finally shortlisted on Thursday. Leaders of some Hurriyat constituents have begun to ask why Mirwaiz faction should have only five members in the delegation when JKLF was taking 17 leaders and Shabir Shah's DFP another 15.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2005

**Soldier, 2 militants killed**

SRINAGAR: One soldier and two militants have died in a gunbattle between militants and security forces in Rangwar forest area of Kupwara. Three soldiers, including a Major of Army, have sustained injuries in the same operation. Informed sources in north Kashmir told the Excelsior that troops launched a search operation over the information developed in the last one week in Rangwar forest area, in general area of Chowkibal, in Kupwara district last evening. During the operation, militants attacked security forces. In the initial round of the firing, four soldiers... sustained injuries.

The Daily Excelsior, 27 May 2005

**JKLF to board Muzaffarabad bus**

SRINAGAR: Announcing his party's decision to accept the Pakistani invitation to visit that country by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Mohammed Yasin Malik today lamented that people of Kashmir have been kept in "dark tunnel" even when India and Pakistan discuss the Kashmir dispute. The JKLF chief ridiculed the ongoing "peace process" between India and Pakistan while terming it "irony of sorts" that talks regarding involvement of Kashmiris were only done for "media consumption". "We are running out of patience. Every Kashmiri is feeling exhausted and humiliated," Malik said while pointing out the Kashmir issue was actually being discussed at the track-2 level. He asserted that they wanted to be part of dialogue where decisions were being taken regarding the settlement of the Kashmir issue. Malik clarified in case their inclusion in negotiations on Kashmir as principle party was not conceded to, JKLF would be forced to launch an agitation in both sides of Kashmir.

The Hindu, 28 May 2005

**Strike total in Valley; top Hizb militant killed** (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: A total strike was observed in Kashmir Valley on Friday in protest against the alleged desecration of the Koran by U.S. soldiers at Guantanamo Bay. Protesters burnt U.S. flags and effigies of President George Bush. Chairman of hard-line faction of Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Geelani, who had given the strike call, was put under house arrest. Dukhtara-e-Millat, rightwing women's organization, supported the strike call. Shops, schools, banks, government and private offices were closed. Soon after the prayers at the Jamia Masjid, where Mirwaiz Umar Farooq delivered the sermon, a large number of people took to the streets shouting anti-U.S. slogans.

The Hindu, 28 May 2005,

**Hurriyat leaders should not go beyond PoK, says Mufti Sayeed**

NEW DELHI: : Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Friday said All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders should travel to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service like ordinary people and refrain from going beyond PoK. Their travel beyond PoK would not be in the spirit of the India-Pakistan agreement under which the bus service was launched. "There should not be double standards while dealing with Hurriyat leaders," he told reporters here. However, he hoped it would not be an impediment to their travel plans. On the statement by the Hurriyat faction led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq that they wanted to persuade militant leaders to agree to a ceasefire, the Chief Minister expressed the hope that they would succeed in their attempt. The Hurriyat's attitude had been positive and its leaders had continued with the dialogue

process.

The Indian Express, 28 May 2005

### **2 ultras among 4 killed in Valley**

Srinagar: TWO militants, two civilians and two army personnel were killed in various militancy-related incidents across the Valley since Thursday evening. In an infiltration attempt, two unidentified militants and an army jawan were killed at Drangwari Kupwara near Line of Control (LoC). Sources said, late last night, troops of 14 Grenadiers spotted two militants near the Line of Control. The troops asked the militants to surrender, however, they fired on the troops resulting in an encounter in which two militants got killed. An army personnel was killed and three others, including an officer were injured in the encounter.

The Indian Express, 28 May 2005

### **Desecration of Quran: Valley rises in anger** (By Shafiq Nazir)

Srinagar: THE Valley today observed a complete shutdown as protests were held across Kashmir over the alleged desecration of the Quran, the Muslim holy book, by American soldiers. Several persons were injured in the police cane-charge. The strike call was given by the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference and was supported by many other separatist organisations. The Hurriyat chairman and member of the World Muslim League, Syed Ali Geelani, who had given a call for protests after the Friday prayers was put under house arrest. . In Srinagar and other major towns of the Valley, people took to the streets and protested against the alleged desecration of the holy book by American troops at Gauntanamo Bay. Newsweek had last week reported that American troops at the Guantanamo prison "flushed the Quran down the toilet. In North Kashmir town of Baramulla, thousands of protesters today took to the streets to protest against the "desecration" of the Quran. In Srinagar, police and security forces were deployed in heavy numbers from early morning to prevent any demonstration.

The Indian Express, 28 May 2005

### **Toy grenade near CM's house rings alarm bells**

Jammu: PANIC gripped the Shahidi Chowk area here today with the detection of an abandoned grenade lying near the Congress headquarters by the police personnel. The bomb disposal squad was called in and the shopkeepers were evacuated to prevent any untoward incident. But after scrambling for more than half-an-hour, the grenade turned out to be a toy. When officials from the bomb disposal squad declared the grenade a toy, everyone present there, including police officials, were surprised. People could not believe that a toy had been prepared with such finesse that it contained all the original features. As the news spread, police officials and mediapersons arrived there in full strength. One of the officials of the bomb disposal squad showed the toy grenade to the mediapersons and said it was too light to be an original.

The Indian Express, 28 May 2005

### **Mufti lauds Amnesty report**

Jammu: APPRECIATING the latest report of Amnesty International, J&K Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said it is for the first time atrocities committed by militants have been properly reported and condemned by Amnesty International. Addressing a press conference here today, the Chief Minister said specific instances have been quoted regarding killing of innocent people and journalists in the hands of militants in the report. He said it is for the first time that Amnesty International has not mentioned any specific instance where any innocent persons have been killed by security forces. He said since his government took over, all security agencies, including the Army, have been made accountable and clear directions have been given that no damage should be caused to innocents while fighting terrorism. He said the role of the gun has dwindled and forces trying to adopt violent methods to focus on their demands have lost their relevance and role.

The Indian Express, 28 May 2005

### **Hurriyat leader Geelani under house arrest in J&K** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: Chairman of hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Shah Geelani was put under house arrest today as the Kashmir valley observed a complete shutdown against the alleged desecration of the Holy Quran by US troops in Guantanamo Bay detention centre, official sources said. The strike call was given by Geelani's faction and supported by several groups including Jamaat-e-Islami, Dukhtaran-e-Millat and Muslim Khawateen Markaz against the alleged desecration of the holy book by the US troops. Four activists of Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement were taken into preventive custody as they staged a protest against the incident on residency road at Lal Chowk, the sources said. The protestors raised anti-US slogans and burnt the star and stripes flag of the country to show their anger, they said.

The Daily Times, 28 May 2005

### **Hizb commander among 12 killed in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: Indian security forces on Friday killed a Hizbul Mujahideen commander in a gunfight in held Kashmir while 11 other people were killed in separate violent incidents in the valley, police said. Indian army soldiers killed Yusuf Sheikh, a top fighter of the group, during a gunfight in Ratsun, about 35 kilometres north of Srinagar... Elsewhere, two suspected militants were killed in a clash with soldiers at Kupwara. In Anantnag, a civilian was shot dead by unknown gunmen, police said. Eight militants were killed in two clashes in the southern district of Doda overnight, police said. It said five of the militants were gunned down by counter-insurgency police at Sui Patyala. Separately, Indian troops overnight gunned down three militants in the same district during an operation, police said.

The Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2005

### **Mufti warns Hurriyat against travel to Pak without passports**

NEW DELHI: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today warned the Hurriyat Conference against violating the travel-permit of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus which restricts movement beyond Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and said they must visit Pakistan only on passports and visas. The rules and guidelines have to be uniform and same for all people

who will travel on the bus, he added. However, he expressed optimism that the issue will be amicably settled and it will not be an impediment in the Hurriyat's travel to PoK. A five-member delegation of the moderate Hurriyat Conference and the JKLF have decided to board the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2 to visit Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) as proposed by Islamabad. Yesterday, India made it clear that it would not like the Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan, but only PoK during their visit.

The Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2005

#### **Hizb terror Yusuf Sheikh killed in Budgam**

SRINAGAR: Hizbul Mujahideen's most dreaded militant in Kashmir valley, Mohammad Yusuf Sheikh alias Sajjad of Rathsun, has finally been eliminated by State Police at the same place where he had gunned down five people in November last in Budgam district. According to Police, Sheikh had worked as an active militant, killed more than 75 persons and escaped successfully from over 30 Police and military operations in the last seven years. The spokesman described Sheikh as the Valley's most dreaded militant. He claimed that after working with Hizbul Mujahideen since 1990, Sheikh had risen to the position of a "divisional commander" and the organisation's "chief of operations for central Kashmir". Sources said that Sheikh had also inflicted substantial damage on Police, security forces and the counter-insurgents he knew well due to his tenure as SPO with SOG Budgam. Reports from Beerwah said that about 1,000 people participated in Sheikh's funeral at Rathsun. Separatist leaders, Nayeem Khan of National Front, and Fareeda Behenji of Kashmir Mass Movement, addressed the gathering and described Sheikh as a "great warrior".

The Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2005

#### **Hurriyat, separatist leaders issued travel forms**

SRINAGAR: A day after the Centre gave clearance to the high-profile visit of the separatists to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the moderate Hurriyat and JKLF leaders were today issued forms to travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June two. Regional Passport Officer S L Sreeramulu said the forms have been issued to the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders. Mr Sreeramulu also made it clear that the applications of the separatist leaders would be processed as per the established procedures. Union Home Secretary V K Duggal had also said in New Delhi yesterday that the Centre is not averse to the Hurriyat leaders visiting PoK, but asserted that they will have to go through the necessary verification procedures for travelling on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. Asked if the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders will be allowed to travel beyond PoK, Mr Sreeramulu said as per the agreed procedure between India and Pakistan, no person aboard the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus can travel beyond PoK.

The Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2005

#### **Centre monitoring Hurriyat visit** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Making it clear that the applications of separatist Hurriyat leaders for travel by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service proposed to be undertaken on June 2 would go through "established procedures", Government today said it cannot fix any timeframe for completing the verification formalities which "may vary" from case to case. On whether any Indian law would be violated if on the basis of the entry permit issued by the designated authority in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) the Hurriyat leaders travelled to other parts of Pakistan, Sarna said "how can Indian law, in any case, apply in any other country. I do not think that sort of an argument will lead us to any conclusive results".

The Daily Excelsior, 28 May 2005

#### **Gulmarg Gondola being launched today**

GULMARG, May 27: After several postponements, the world's highest and Asia's longest cable car project will finally be inaugurated by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed at the famed Ski resort here tomorrow. The five-km-long ropeway project - Gulmarg Gondola - a joint venture of the Jammu and Kashmir Government and French firm Poma Glaski, was earlier scheduled to be inaugurated by UPA chairperson and Congress president Sonia Gandhi on April 8, a day after she along with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were to launch the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service on April 7. Jammu and Kashmir State Cable Car Corporation (JKSCCC) officials said the project is aimed at promoting Gulmarg, 52 km from here, as a premier skiing destination in the world and give a major boost to the militancy-hit tourism industry in Kashmir. Tourism, Housing and Urban Development Minister Ghulam Hassan Mir, who is also the JKSCCC Chairman, will be present on the occasion.

The Indian Express, 29 May 2005

#### **Geelani turns down Pak invitation** (Press Trust of India)

Srinagar: The hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani today turned down the invitation of Pakistan to visit that country and Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The decision was taken in a meeting of their Majlis-e-Shoora (advisory council) by majority vote with 11 in favour and five against the decision, Hurriyat sources told PTI.

The Daily Times, 29 May 2005

#### **Kashmir blasts injure 31**

SRINAGAR: A remote controlled car bomb on Saturday toppled a paramilitary truck as it drove through a village in Indian Held Kashmir, and a grenade exploded near a group of civilians in a separate attack, leaving 31 people injured, police said. 11 civilians and seven soldiers were injured when a bomb placed in a car exploded at Lazbal village, said SSP Ashiq Hussain. A Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman claimed responsibility for the bombing. Hours later in Srinagar, suspected rebels hurled a grenade at a paramilitary patrol vehicle but missed, injuring 13 civilians, said SP SA Sayeed. The injured included an Indian tourist.

The Daily Times, 29 May 2005

**'India and Pakistan thinking about resolving Kashmir dispute'** (By Waqar Gillani)

LAHORE: The ruling classes of India and Pakistan are seriously thinking about possible solutions to the Kashmir issue, said Dr Mubashir Hasan, former finance minister of Pakistan... Dr Hasan proposed that Pakistan should have trade and travel access to Jammu and Kashmir. He also proposed that the citizens of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) have the right to travel and trade throughout occupied Kashmir and India, while Indian Kashmiris and India should have mirror-image rights as well. In his article, which appeared in newspapers in Jammu and Srinagar as well, he said that Indian and Pakistani forces should be withdrawn from Kashmir, except along the Chinese border, and a special Kashmiri force should be established to aid the civic power. Dr Hasan proposed that the Pakistani rupee be made the legal currency in Kashmir. He said that Pakistan and India should sign a treaty guaranteeing that they would not wage war in the area. Dr Hasan said that the Kashmir issue must be debated in Pakistan as well and that, "The political climate in India to resolve the issue is extremely auspicious".

The Hindu, 29 May 2005

**40 injured in explosions in Kashmir** (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: After a brief lull, the militants detonated an explosive-laden car in Anantnag town and hurled a grenade in the Dalgate area of Srinagar on Saturday, wounding nearly 40 persons. Sources said that a car believed to have been loaded with explosives ripped apart around 1 p.m. on the Khanabal-Pahalgam road in Anantnag town of South Kashmir. The blast was detonated by a remote control device when an armoured vehicle of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), its apparent target, was passing by. However, the blast injured 13 civilians and seven CRPF personnel. Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman Junaidul Islam rang up newspaper offices here and owned responsibility for the blast. Two hours later, militants hurled a grenade towards a Border Security Force vehicle in the busy Dalgate area. It missed the intended target and exploded on the road, injuring 17 civilians... Meanwhile, one foreign militant was killed in an encounter in Lolab in Kupwara district...

The Hindu, 29 May 2005

**Setback to Geelani faction** (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR: The hardline Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani suffered a setback ahead of a crucial meeting of its advisory council to decide on the invitation to visit Pakistan. The Jammu and Kashmir People's League, one of its constituents, said it would abstain from the meeting on Sunday following the continued detention of its leader. JKPL has decided to "remain away" from the meeting and "not to join" the proposed visit to Pakistan next month. "The main reason for boycotting the meet was to protest against the Hurriyat's inaction following the arrest of JKPL chairman Sheikh Abdul Aziz," a JKPL spokesman said.

The Hindu, 29 May 2005

**On a gondola from Gulmarg to Affarwat peak** (By Shujaat Bukhari)

AFFARWAT: The inauguration of the second phase of the Gulmarg Gondola by Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Saturday signalled the revival of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. The 2.5-km ropeway connects Kangdoori valley with Affarwat peak, the last point overlooking Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The first phase connects Gulmarg with Kangdoori. "It will boost tourism in the Valley. Winter Games will see a new destination which has attraction at the international level," said Mr. Sayeed. Minister of State for Tourism Jugal Kishore said that tourism promotion was on top of the Government's agenda. He termed the Gondola as a milestone in this direction.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2005

**41 civilians injured in Valley blasts**

SRINAGAR: As many as 48 persons, including seven paramilitary personnel, sustained injuries in two major blasts at Khannabal and Dalgate in Kashmir valley today. Meanwhile, a civilian woman, an SPO, one militant and two soldiers have died in other incidents of violence in the Valley since last evening. Informed sources told the Excelsior that militants caused a powerful blast near Telephone Exchange at Khannabal-Pahalgam in Anantnag town at 1305 hours today. It ripped apart Maruti car No: JK03-6929, at the crowded place causing injuries to 17 civilians and seven CRPF personnel. According to CNS, Hizbul Mujahideen has claimed responsibility. One-and-a-half hour after the Anantnag explosion, unidentified persons lobbed two hand grenades at a crowded spot near Taxi Stand, Dalgate, in the capital city. One of the grenades exploded, causing injuries to 24 persons, all of them civilians.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2005

**Rat race to catch Muzaffarabad bus: Mufti**

GULMARG: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said "a rat race" has started to catch the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus which was launched to enable the reunion of the divided families, separated since 1947. "A rat race has begun to catch the the Karvaan-e-Aman (Caravan of peace). Separatist and political leaders as well are eager to board the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus," Sayeed said... The Chief Minister said the peace process is gaining momentum and good atmosphere is prevailing in the State. He said tourism promotion is a precursor to economic development of the State. Mufti Sayeed said the Government is on the way to develop the tourist infrastructure in State and said he met many people of the State settled abroad who are keen to invest in the State. Deputy Chief Minister, Mangat Ram Sharma on the occasion underscored the need for showcasing the giffic scenic beauty of the Jammu and Kashmir across the world so that the heavy tourist influx to the state would benefit the people for changing socio-economic profile.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2005

**JKLF to board bus despite Centre's 'no' to Pak visit**

SRINAGAR: Despite clear message from the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed that

separatists going to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) cannot visit Pakistan, the pro-Independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) is all set to board the Karvaan-e-Aman bus on June two to Muzaffarabad. When asked about the Centre's 'no' to their Pakistan visit, he said: "We have nothing to do with it. We have been invited by Pakistan and they will have to decide where we have to go." The high-profile JKLF delegation, including three members of Kashmiri Pandits will be led by its chairman Yasin Malik. He said that it was not a picnic trip but to make use of what will be the last chance to resolve the Kashmir issue. About holding talks with the Indian Government on his return from Pakistan, Mr Malik said no formal invitation has been received so far.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2005

#### **No confrontation with CM on Amarnath yatra: Governor**

JAMMU: Clarifying that there was no confrontation with the Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed over the duration of Shri Amarnath yatra, Governor Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha today said that it was Shrine Board's decision to conduct annual yatra for two months beginning on June 21. Referring to the recent meeting of the top officers of all the security agencies including Army and Paramilitary Forces, the Governor said that the Security Advisor to the State has given security clearance for the smooth conduct of the annual yatra. In response to a question, the Governor justified the apprehensions of Mufti Sayeed regarding security threat and said that he has very legitimate perception about the possible threat. It is hoped that after mutual and open discussion touching all aspects and common understanding he would be able to settle the things openly with him.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2005

#### **Mehbooba contradicts CM on Hurriyat visit** (Press Trust of India)

SRINAGAR: Striking a contradictory note with Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's stand, ruling PDP today favoured unrestricted movement of Hurriyat leaders when they travel across the Line of Control (LoC) by Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. She said official formalities surrounding the visit of Hurriyat leaders to PoK and Pakistan should not impede the broader peace process. Mehbooba's comment is in sharp contrast to Sayeed's statement yesterday in New Delhi, where he said the Hurriyat leaders should not travel beyond PoK as it would be "discriminatory" and not in the spirit of the Indo-Pak agreement under which the bus service was launched.

The Daily Excelsior, 29 May 2005

#### **Four new micro hydel projects to be commissioned shortly: Niaz**

Srinagar: Minister for Power Mohammad Sharief Niaz has said that the basic necessity for economic progress and development of electricity is required practically in every sphere of life. On this occasion, the Minister expressed satisfaction for speedy completion of work for commissioning of 4 mini hydel power projects at Pahalgam, Bhandarwah, Faftal, Igo-Mercelang, which would generate 7.5 MW power to cater the needs of the concerned areas in respect of power supply. He said that efforts are on to start construction of mini hydel power project at Aharbal, Khamil, Hirapora, Athwato, Ranjala Dumadi, Tangmarg, Mandi, Boniyar, Brenwar and Drung as the formalities have been already completed. He said that this venture would make the department able to generate more 59.25 MW power.

The Hindu, 30 May 2005

#### **``Full efforts to resolve problems with Pakistan''** (By Kanwar Yogendra and Agencies)

SHIMLA: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said here on Sunday that the country would make "full and sincere" efforts to resolve all bilateral problems with Pakistan through talks. Though progress had been made in strengthening the ties with Islamabad, "several complexities" remained, he said. Dr. Singh welcomed the proposal of Pakistan President General Musharraf to demilitarise a part of Kashmir. Dr. Singh said that with the promotion of people-to-people contacts between the two countries, the frequency of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service would be increased.

The Hindu, 30 May 2005

#### **No thanks, says Syed Geelani** (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: The hard-line faction of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, led by Syed Ali Geelani, on Sunday rejected the Pakistan Government's invitation to visit "Azad Kashmir." It decided not to board the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2. After a six-hour meeting of the Hurriyat general council, Mr. Geelani told presspersons: "We are thankful to the Pakistan Government for extending the invitation to us but we do not feel that our visit will serve any purpose." Reiterating his stand that the Centre was denying Kashmiris "their right to self-determination," he said: "Pakistan is supporting our stand on the right to self-determination. So, with which demand would we be going to meet them?" On the other hand, "it is India which has been denying us the right. So, I do not think our visit to Pakistan is warranted at this stage."

The Indian Express, 30 May 2005

#### **Militant eliminated in Aishmuqam encounter**

Srinagar: IN the south Kashmir village of Aishmuqam, a militant was killed in an encounter with the security forces. Sources said the security forces on a specific tip off about the presence of militants laid cordon og the Gosh-Ainyoo village at Aishmuqam in south kashmit district of Anantnag. As the security forces started the search operations, they came under the militant fire, which was retaliated by the security forces. In the ensuing encounter, a militant was killed. In the same district, security forces claimed to recover two hand grenades, 20 AK magazines and some rounds of ammunition during the search operations.

The Indian Express, 30 May 2005

#### **First BSNL shoppe inaugurated in Valley; 80 towers to be installed**

Srinagar: IN a significant step towards the private participation in telecom services, the first BSNL shoppe in Kashmir was

inaugurated today at Srinagar. Chief general Manager of BSNL for Jammu and Kashmir K C Jindal today inaugurated the Dickson Electronics BSNL shoppe at Residency Road, Srinagar. Speaking on the occasion, Jindal said BSNL is increasing the towers in the Srinagar city and eighty more towers would be installed soon in the city. He said Nigham is also proposing to provide another 2,84 lakh connections in a phased-manner. The people in Srinagar have welcomed the BSNL move to start franchisee in the Valley. BSNL officials say the idea behind the opening of such shops is to enlist the private participation in seeking to extend the market of the telecom sector.

The Indian Express, 30 May 2005

**J-K to have silk exchange** (Press Trust of India)

Jammu: WITH an aim to market famous Kashmir silk across the country, the Government has decided to set up a silk exchange by investing Rs 60 lakh. The exchange will have two branches, one each at Srinagar and Jammu and would provide better marketing cover to the silk reelers of the state, they said. In addition, cocoon banks have also been set up for easy availability of raw material to reelers throughout the year, they said. Besides improving the raw material for cocoon production, three modern hot Air driers would be installed during the current year to do away with old and absolute cocoon sun drying methods in a phased manner, they said.

The Indian Express, 30 May 2005

**Two Hizbuls shot dead**

Jammu: TWO militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were eliminated by the security forces and police during a search operation at Duksar Nala of Gul tehsil in Udhampur district on Saturday. Security forces seized two AK rifles, 5 AK magazines, 60 rounds of AK ammunition, one radio set and a dictaphone from them. When contacted, DIG Udhampur-Doda range Satvir Gupta confirmed that both the slain militants belonged to the HM cadre and were active in the area since 2000. Meanwhile, during a search operation, the security forces rescued three youths from the militants' captivity on Friday and Saturday.

The DailyTimes, 30 May 2005

**Musharraf's proposal to demilitarise Kashmir** (By Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Sunday that his government would make "full and sincere efforts" to resolve all bilateral issues by dialogue. He also praised Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's proposal to demilitarise a part of Kashmir and give it autonomy, saying these proposals could be considered if the India-Pakistan dialogue remained on track. Addressing a press conference in Shimla, Manmohan indicated it was possible to increase the frequency of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. Relations between India and Pakistan "are improving and our full and sincere endeavour will be to resolve all problems through talks", he said.

The Daily Times, 30 May 2005

**Kashmir bus passenger lists exchanged**

MUZAFFARABAD: Travel documents for the sixth Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service were exchanged between Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Indian authorities on Sunday. Leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) are expected to travel to AJK by the sixth bus. However, Muzaffarabad's deputy commissioner refused to comment on which Hurriyat leaders' travel documents had been handed over to the AJK government. According to sources, the Hurriyat leaders are not required any clearance, for being notable personalities of Jammu and Kashmir. According to sources, if the Hurriyat leaders are not allowed to come to Pakistan, President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will hold talks with the Kashmiri leaders in Muzaffarabad.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 May 2005

**Filling up of 26,000 posts, creation of SFC on agenda**

JAMMU: Constitution of State Finance Commission, appointments of chairman of Board of Professional Entrance Examination (BPEE) and president State Consumers Protection Forum (SCPF), creating of eight Tourist Development Authorities and devolution of Municipal functions to the Municipal Corporations figured among other issues in tomorrow's Cabinet meeting, scheduled to be held in Srinagar at 11 am. In addition to this, a decision on the filling up of 26,000 vacancies in 36 Government departments, which have been identified by the authorities, will also be taken up by the Cabinet meeting, which will be presided over by Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Sayeed.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 May 2005

**Indus Water Treaty violated rights of J&K people: Omar**

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) president and former Union Minister Omar Abdullah has opposed the Kishenganga Hydro-Power Project, saying it is not in the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Mr Abdullah, however, said the Wullar barrage should come up as it is beneficial for the State and claimed that the Indus Water Treaty was the biggest violation of the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He said the NC would stand by the people of Gurez in their opposition to the construction of the proposed dam as it would submerge the entire Gurez Valley under water. Mr Abdullah also said proper stakeholder analysis has been never done for such projects affecting local communities in the State.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 May 2005

**Geelani rejects Pak invitation to board bus**

SRINAGAR: Breakaway Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani today rejected Pakistan's invitation to visit that country and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June 2, in protest against Islamabad's "flexible stand" on the Kashmir issue. The firebrand separatist leader accused Pakistan of softening its stand on the Kashmir issue... Mr Geelani said there is no point in going to Pakistan as the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders have been regularly briefing them about the current political situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The hardliner said India was not responding positively to

Pakistan's flexible approach. The Hurriyat (breakaway) chairman said Pakistan has repeatedly failed to protect the interests of the people of the State. Mr Geelani also accused Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf of regularly changing his stand on the Kashmir issue.

The Daily Excelsior, 30 May 2005

#### **Two HM ultras killed in Gool**

JAMMU: Two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit were today gunned down by security forces and police in an encounter at Dharam in Gool area of Ramban police district while another youth was rescued by Army from captivity of the militants in Thathri. Official sources said security forces and police launched a search operation at village Dharam under the jurisdiction of Gool police station last night on an information about the movement of two militants in the area. Both the militants were eliminated after a fierce two hour long encounter with the security forces, who didn't suffer any casualties. Two AK rifles and one wireless set were recovered from them. Sources said... the militants... was a hardcore militant of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit and was operating in Gool, Gulabgarh and Mahore areas for the last two and a half years. His killing was a setback to the Hizbul cadre, they added. The army seized three AK magazines, nearly 100 AK rounds and explosive powder during routine checking of vehicles at the Mughal Maidan the sources said.

The Hindu, 31 May 2005

#### **Ready to work with Musharraf, says Manmohan Singh** (Press Trust of India)

NEW DELHI: Maintaining that it would be "unrealistic" to fix any timeframe for resolving the Kashmir issue, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday offered to work together with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to find a "meaningful solution" to difficult problems. He asked Pakistan to honour its commitment to quickly dismantle terrorist camps operating from that country. Observing that he was willing to discuss all issues "including what President Musharraf calls the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir," Dr. Singh firmly ruled out further division of the country or redrawing of boundaries. "I will never accept anything that leads to further division of India on religious lines. I have no mandate to negotiate on redrawing our boundaries."

The Hindu, 31 May 2005

#### **Musharraf made no remark on autonomy: Pakistan** (By B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani on Monday denied that President Musharraf had made any remarks on autonomy or semi-autonomy for any part of Kashmir. Mr. Jilani said Pakistan's quest was to seek a lasting solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and in this context the President had made certain remarks. These included the unacceptability of a solution based on the Line of Control, respect for the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, a resolution of the dispute which is acceptable to all the stakeholders, including Pakistan, India and Kashmir, de-militarisation, which was a prerequisite for extending the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and was inherent in the U.N. resolutions, and empowering the people of the State.

The Hindu, 31 May 2005

#### **Militants laud Geelani for not going to Pakistan** (By Shujaat Bukhari)

SRINAGAR: Four militant organisations - Save Kashmir Movement, Al-Nasireen, Farzandan-e-Milat and Al-Arifeen - have commended the decision of the hardline faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference not to board the bus to Pakistan. In a joint statement issued here by their spokesman Samiullah, they said that the decision of Syed Ali Geelani and his associates reflected their pro-movement ideology and political maturity.

The Indian Express, 31 May 2005

#### **Jawan killed in landmine blast**

Jammu: AN Army jawan was killed in a land-mine blast in Baba Khorie area in Rajouri district today. While one person was kidnapped by the militants from Gucha-wali dhok on Sunday night under the jurisdiction of Thanamandi police station in same district. Sources said that when he stepped on the landmine accidentally it exploded causing grievous injuries to him. Meanwhile, a 27-year-old Pakistani national identified as Mohammad Shafi son of Syed Abdullah of Bilal Colony Karachi (Pakistan) was apprehended by security forces from Abdullian near Tube-well in R S Pura sector.

The Indian Express, 31 May 2005

#### **Return to Valley with resolute mind, Mir to KPs**

Jammu: MAINTAINING that the Government is committed for the safe and dignified return of the Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley, Minister of State for Roads and Buildings GA Mir said that home-coming should be a firm and determined decision. The return to paradise should be with a resolute mind for perennial settlement, said Mir after inaugurating a Trust in the camp. Welcoming the formation of a Trust committed to the cause of transforming socio-economic profile of the people inhabiting these camps, the Minister said that such philanthropist activity helps in preserving the rich ethos of Kashmiriyat. Earlier, the Minister also referred to the opening of the Srinagar-Muzzafarabad road and said the move has helped in building confidence among the people besides bridging ties.

The Indian Express, 31 May 2005

#### **4 militants killed in encounters**

Srinagar: IN fresh incidents of violence in the Valley, five persons, including four militants, were killed since Sunday evening and an injured militant was arrested from a city hospital today. Two militants were killed in the border town Uri in the north Kashmir district of Baramulla in an encounter with the Army. In another incident... soldiers came under militant fire and in the encounter that followed, one militant was killed. In a similar incident in the south Kashmir district of Anantnag, one militant was killed in an encounter with security forces. During the encounter, a militant belonging to the largest indigenous militant outfit -

Hizbul Mujahideen - was killed. Meanwhile, police sources said they caught an injured militant from a city hospital. Ramiz Raja, a Hizbul militant, was reportedly injured in an encounter at Pulwama.

The Indian Express, 31 May 2005

**JKLF chief, Hurriyat men get ready to roll**

Srinagar: FIVE members of the moderate Hurriyat Conference and JKLF chairman Yasin Malik were among the 10 separatists who submitted their travel applications to the Srinagar's Regional Passport Office for the June 2 Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus. A Hurriyat leader, when asked if their travel would be limited, said it was up to the two countries to allow them to go beyond the PoK. Meanwhile, JKLF chairman Yasin Malik submitted his travel application after 12 of his 17 party workers' forms were not cleared, official sources said. Shabir Shah, who heads the Democratic Freedom Party, said he wants to take a 15-member delegation comprising leaders from Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir to PoK on the historic June 2 bus.

The Daily Times, 31 May 2005

**Geelani's exclusion will harm Kashmir cause: JI chief**

LAHORE: The visit of Kashmiri leaders excluding Ali Geelani will divide the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and harm the Kashmiris' freedom struggle, said Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal president and ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), in a statement on Monday. He urged the Pakistani government to find out why Geelani was not visiting Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Qazi praised Geelani and said that he had played a very important role in the freedom struggle and had fought for the Kashmiris right to self-determination for 57 years. The visit of Kashmiri leaders without Geelani reinforces the belief among the Kashmiri and Pakistani people that the core Kashmir issue is being pushed to the backburner under US pressure.

The Daily Times, 31 May 2005

**Kashmir autonomy no solution: FO**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday called for a sincere effort for a lasting resolution of the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of Kashmiris, for durable peace in the region. Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jillani told reporters at his weekly briefing, "Pakistan wants a just resolution of the issue acceptable to all stakeholders including India, Pakistan and Kashmiris." He said President Pervez Musharraf had clarified that demilitarising Kashmir was a pre-requisite for the right of self-determination to Kashmiris. About Syed Ali Geelani's refusal to visit Pakistan, the spokesman said Geelani had declined to visit Pakistan because of some reservations fostered by the Indian government. "However, Geelani has thanked the Pakistani government and people for inviting him," he added.

The Daily Excelsior, 31 May 2005

**Malik among 5 JKLF leaders cleared to travel to PoK**

SRINAGAR: The authorities have cleared just five names of the 17 submitted by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) to undertake the journey to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the Karvaan-e-Aman bus on June 2 on the invitation from Islamabad. However, he said that against 17 forms issued to JKLF by the RPO on Friday, they were told that only five leaders will be allowed to undertake the visit. The JKLF had decided to send a high profile 17 member delegation, including three members from the minority Kashmir Pandit community, after receiving the invitation from the Pakistan Government.

The Daily Excelsior, 31 May 2005

**HM commander among 7 militants killed**

SRINAGAR: Seven militants, including a top commander of pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) were killed while as a family had a miraculous escape as militants bombed their residence and followed it up with indiscriminate firing, a police spokesman today said. Militants also shot at and critically injured a woman and abducted a civilian in the State while security forces busted three militant hideouts since last night, the spokesman said. Ultras lobbed a grenade towards the house of Majnoon Ganai at Kalaroos in the frontier district of Kupwara last night. Ultras abducted one person and security forces busted a number of hideouts in Kashmir overnight, an official spokesman said today. A report from Baramulla said that an encounter ensued between militants and security forces at Lamber in Uri sector during which two militants were killed today. Some arms and ammunition were also recovered from the slain militants. Two more militants were killed by the security forces in a similar encounter at Limber Boniyar in the same district...

The Daily Excelsior, 31 May 2005

**Allow separatists to visit Pak: Farooq**

SRINAGAR: Joining issue with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed for opposing Hurriyat leaders' visit beyond Muzaffarabad, National Conference stalwart Farooq Abdullah today said there was contradiction in Mufti's words and deeds. "Mufti is always in favour of Hurriyat leaders visiting Pakistan. And when time has come for such a visit, he is advising them not to go beyond Muzaffarabad," Abdullah said in a statement here. He appealed to leadership of the two countries not to put any roadblocks in the way of Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir. The Hurriyat leaders could give their opinion on resolution of Kashmir issue after examining ground realities and meeting the leadership in Pakistan and PoK, Abdullah said. About the Kashmir issue, he asserted that no lasting solution to the vexed issue was possible without the involvement of the people of the entire State including PoK.