

Indian Express, 1 November 2006

Didnt seek Afzals clemency: Azad

New Delhi, October 31: Under fire from the Congress high command as well as the BJP led opposition, J-K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today denied that he sought clemency for Afzal, but added that he was personally against death sentence to anyone. However, he said that he didnt contradict the impression that he was asking for clemency as he had to govern the state. It is, however, learnt that while Azad didn't specifically ask for clemency, but allowed the impression to prevail he had asked to postpone the hanging till Eid, fearing a backlash in the Valley..He also sought to clarify that none of the regional or mainstream political parties had demanded that Afzal should be allowed to go scott free..

Daily Excelsior, 1 November 2006

Militants should be prevented from getting access to nukes: Mufti

United Nations, Oct 31: India has sought concerted international efforts to prevent terrorists from gaining access to radiological materials and technology. In his maiden address to the United Nations General Assembly, its delegate former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed asked the international community to give high priority to development of global security culture and offered it full support to achieve the goal. He said global efforts are needed to prevent terrorists from accessing radiological materials..

Greater Kashmir, 1 November 2006

Editorial: Sowing wind

New Delhi is dangerously pushing the stakeholders in Kashmir of all hues to an edge and spreading despair among the masses. It is a widely acknowledged fact even among the Indian intelligentsia and the international community that New Delhi has countered the political struggle for the past six decades through divisive, devious, and disastrous policies. And in the main, these policies were meant to buy time and tire out the people and their leaders. It is doing nothing new this time also. Before the armed struggle, New Delhi was mainly engaged in containing the mainstream pro-Indian leaders who showed strong Kashmiri nationalistic tendencies. After 2000 the predominant discourse of the armed struggle shifted from the gun to the dialogue..

Kashmir Times, 1 November 2006

Editorial: Level of violence

Chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad may have reason to rejoice with the home ministrys latest figures which reveal a 20 percent decline in violent incidence in Jammu and Kashmir since he took over the reins of the state. Gloating over these figures may be nothing less than living in a world of make-believe. For one, the official figures lack any kind of authenticity. Secondly, they are misleading for they simply take into account the violence perpetrated by the militants and not by the security forces. The latest figures appear to also talk about custodial killings and other kinds of violations at the hands of security forces but one is not aware how scientifically this data is prepared. The home ministry figures indicate only four custodial killings, one disappearance and four molestations. News reports in the last one year about the increasing cases of human rights

violations at the hands of security forces would disprove these claims..

Daily Excelsior, 1 November 2006

Azad meets PM, discusses political, development issues

New Delhi, Oct 31: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad called on Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh here today and discussed matters related to the political and development scenario in Jammu and Kashmir. Briefing the Prime Minister about massive development launched in J&K under various state and centrally sponsored schemes, Mr. Azad lauded Dr Singh for liberal assistance to the state for speedy development. He said that unprecedented assistance provided to the state under Prime Ministers Reconstruction Programme has laid edifice for raising public service infrastructure and giving boost to large scale development related activities..

Indian Express, 2 November 2006

Azads report card: but wheres the politics? (Muzamil Jaleel)

..When Azad took over as CM last year, he carried this historic baggage with him. Here was a Congress leader who had limited grassroots experience in the state, since he had been thus far a national leader, and belonged to Doda district, a region outside the Kashmir Valley. So he was not just a Congress politician heading the state government, he was the first ever chief minister who didnt belong to the Valley. At first, he carried a strong hangover of national politics. The Congress national leadership had always believed that it was a lack of development, high levels of unemployment, widespread corruption and rigging in elections that had caused the rise of militancy in Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 2 November 2006

Omar charges Mufti with plagiarism on self rule

..While addressing a crowded news conference at his party headquarters of Nawa e Subah this afternoon, NCs President, Omar Abdullah, claimed that the features of PDPs self rule concept, made public by the former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed at a public meeting last week before his departure for New York, were no different from NC's paper on greater autonomy. He asserted that Muftis self rule assertions were a bizarre case of political plagiarism and PDP was finally hanging on to what had actually become NCs mark of identification over the last five decades. There's nothing new in Muftis self rule, Omar said and read out paragraphs from the text of NCs draft on greater autonomy which had been passed as a Resolution during Dr Farooq Abdullahs Government by the State Legislature in July 2000..

Daily Excelsior, 2 November 2006

Editorial: Find the remedy

The report of the killing of an Army officer of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel by a subordinate in Harwan in Srinagar is bound to shock many. This is the fifth incident of shooting within the forces in a fortnight in the State. Two of these gory events had taken place in Rajouri district. In one an Army man had gunned down three of his colleagues and made an unsuccessful attempt to take his own life. In the other a soldier had shot two fellow fighters before committing suicide. These happenings were apart from suicides by an Army combatant and a Central Reserve Police Force CRPF jawan both of whom had

eliminated themselves with their service rifles. Frequency of these occurrences after October 21 has been amazing. On an average there are seven cases of fratricide among the armed forces in a year. With three of them having taken place in October their number this year can be anybody's guess..

Greater Kashmir, 2 November 2006

Opinion: Eleven months of Azad Govt - Hope or Hype?-II (Javed Iqbal Shah)

A vested interest has also crept into various layers of the civil administration and bureaucracy over the last seventeen years. After having been initially unnerved by the curt, business like arrival of this government the bureaucracy is back at its old mendacious ways of creating the appearance of work, taking cover behind hollow rhetoric and security holding back the improvement of the law and order situation, public grievance redressal mechanisms, dampening independence of initiative and erecting barriers to whatever is new. That having been said no apparatus will ever deliver or get what it wants, even if executives are masterminds, if the political leadership in the government acts in a vacuum of isolation..

Kashmir Times, 3 November 2006

Azad asks militants to drop gun, wait for working groups result

Srinagar, Nov 2: Asking the militants to drop the gun and wait for the outcome of results of meetings of working groups constituted after the end of second round table conference, the Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that the formulation of working groups is an important step taken in resolving the Kashmir issue. Many a steps have been taken while heading on the path of solving the Kashmir issue and the constitution of the working groups is an important development in this regard. In such a scenario, the militants should wait for the results of meetings of these working groups and therefore, they have no logic or reason to carry out their activities, said Azad while talking to media persons after a function which was held to mark the completion of one year of his government..

Kashmir Times, 3 November 2006

Editorial: ICRC and Kashmir

..The four famous Geneva Conventions of 1949 owe a lot to the dogged patient sponsorship of the ICRC Article 3, which is common to all the four conventions recognises its status. The ICRCs offer of help in a situation of armed conflict or militancy within a state is not regarded as interference in domestic affairs. Precisely for this reason the ICRC is very careful not to exceed its mandate and not to give the host government any impression that it is abusing its hospitality.. The ICRC has a presence in Jammu and Kashmir under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of India concluded a decade ago. It has abided by it in letter and spirit even at the risk of being misunderstood in Srinagar as well as in New Delhi. It has done its work quietly and effectively. If it has not been able to do more it is because of the limitations which it refuses to violate..

Daily Excelsior, 3 November 2006

BSF jawan shot dead, 2 injured

Srinagar, Nov 2: Militants today gunned down a BSF soldier as also a former SPO in Kashmir valley even as an encounter took place between militants and security forces in Sopore. Informed sources told the Excelsior that two unidentified militants targeted three soldiers of BSF 143 Bn outside the busy Shakti Sweets on Residency Road this afternoon. The soldiers were reportedly guarding their officers said to be busy with shopping and withdrawal of last months salary from State Bank of India. Sources said that head constable Mohammad Ashraf of Kerala got killed and two of his associate constables, Rajpal Singh and Vir Singh, sustained critical injuries..

Greater Kashmir, 3 November 2006

SHRC angry

Srinagar, Nov 2: Expressing strong resentment over harassment and damage to property of civilians during gunfights by the army, the State Human Rights Commission SHRC Thursday termed it as breach of human rights. The commission also recommended compensation of Rs 75,000 to a villager of south Kashmir's Islamabad district, whose house was damaged by army in a gunfight. The case: Ghulam Rasool Naik son of Abdul Khaliq of Batgund Veerinag filed a complaint before the commission alleging that on June 30, 2002 some unknown persons knocked at the gate of his house..

Greater Kashmir, 3 November 2006

Opinion: Set Afzal free (Tanvir Sadiq)

It will help remove some of the haze that has been covering the Kashmir issue for past one month. More our political leaders pour out their thoughts through the media more will it help the people to convince themselves what our leaders are doing to save Afzal. Right now every one is concerned or rather looks like concerned about Afzal Guru. Had all our leaders been a little futuristic, Afzal's case wouldnt have become so complex had they come together when Afzal's case was being discussed in the Court. I dont know but is it that the media has made this verdict alive that our leaders have started gaining publicity or is it the previous mistake of not fighting for Afzal, that is being covered up.. Well it seems that who ever talks in favour or against Afzal finds his name in tomorrows news headlines..

Daily Excelsior, 4 November 2006

Ex-Hizb commdr Bil Wahab gunned down

Srinagar, Nov 3: One of Hizbul Mujahideens most prominent commanders in south Kashmir, who had surrendered before Police earlier this year, has been eliminated by militants in Anantnag. Meanwhile, militants fired some shots towards a Police party in Tral and Police destroyed an IED which had been planted by militants near Police Station Sher Garhi. Informed sources told the Excelsior that late last night, unidentified gunmen, believed to be militants, stopped a marriage party in the Anantnag town outskirts of Bumthan. They accosted a particular Maruti car and pumped bullets in the head of one of the four persons travelling in it. The victim of the targeted firing died on spot..

Greater Kashmir, 4 November 2006

Opinion: Coalition govt: four years of failure (Ali Muhammad Sagar)

The present coalition of PDP and Congress is in power since November 2002. It came with the mandate to administer the state for checking human rights violations by the security forces, improve infrastructure development, rehabilitate the migrants, regularize the services of ad hoc employees, disband the SOG and provide employment to one member from each family, eradicate corruption and achieve the goal of fiscal autonomy. While analyzing the performance of the present coalition government trumpeting slogans like Healing Touch and Khushal Kashmir, one finds nothing except massive human rights violations, rampant growth in the ranks of unemployed and absence of infrastructure..

Kashmir Times, 4 November 2006

100 army men commit suicide in 5 yrs

Srinagar, Nov 3: Gen. Joginder Jaswant Singh, chief of the army staff, today disclosed that on an average 100 cases of suicides by the jawans have been registered by the army for the last five years while as the fratricidal cases are a few. Army chief was briefing mediapersons immediately after the presenting the Colours to Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry JAKLI 17th battalion, here at Rangreth. However, Singh declined to attribute the cause of suicides by the army jawans to operational stress. He said that the army is taking a pro active approach to analyse the causes responsible for such incidents..

Daily Excelsior, 4 November 2006

Editorial: Make it fast

It is to be welcomed that Army chief Gen J.J. Singh has lost no time in emphasising the need for a quick and thorough analysis of fratricidal killings within the elite force with a view to finding a solution. He has minced no words while stating that he is concerned over the rising number of such incidents especially in counter insurgency areas. Evidently his personal intervention has been necessitated with the occurrence of as many as seven such incidents in the last 30 days. He is keen to pursue a proactive approach in this sensitive matter. From the publicised reports it is obvious that the Army has set in the motion the following steps: institutionalising counselling in all training institutions, establishment of rest and recuperative steps for troops to reduce stress levels; increasing use of counsellors and psychologists in operational areas..

Indian Express, 4 November 2006

BJP gives call for Jammu Bandh on November 6

Jammu, November 3: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of BJP on Friday called for a Jammu Bandh on November 6 to protest the alleged negative attitude of the Congress led coalition government towards minorities in the state. We appeal to the people of Jammu to observe a complete bandh on November 6 to protest the militant-friendly policies of the ruling coalition and the communal orientation it is giving to state polity to humiliate the minorities refugees from west Pakistan, Pakistanoccupied Kashmir and internally displaced Kashmiri Hindus, BJP spokesperson Hari Om said. He told reporters that the people of Jammu, irrespective of political affiliations, should ensure the collapse of this government..

Indian Express, 5 November 2006

200 kg RDX seized in J-K, police trace Lashkar link

Jammu, November 4: In one of the biggest RDX hauls in Jammu and Kashmir so far, Ramban Police today recovered 200 kg of RDX from a hideout in Sumber village of the district. The RDX was recovered early in the morning today, along with three timers, 60 detonators, 25 kg of wire, five rounds of pika ammunition etc from a militant hideout. Security forces believe that the 200 kg of RDX had been dumped by dreaded local militant Kari, owing allegiance to the Lashkar e Toiba, and that the plan was to use it for different militant activities in the region..

Greater Kashmir, 5 November 2006

Opinion: The love hate relation (Nisar A Patigaroo)

The armed straggle is going unabated, in J&K, since 1989 and is showing no signs of decline. At the time of its commencement it was at its peak, when lakhs of people came to streets and took part in massive demonstrations in which dozens of people lost their lives, as a result of firing by the security forces. Thereafter the militancy witnessed change in tactics wherein apart from using IED, which were triggered through some remote control devices, time bombs and suicide attacks were launched on specific targets, which is continuing at different intervals. At times recourse was taken to serial blasts at a number of places within a short span of time..

Daily Excelsior, 5 November 2006

Mehbooba favours compromises on Kashmir

Srinagar, Nov 4: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti today said compromises must be made by all parties to workout a solution to the Kashmir problem. Fortunately, all the sides have now realised that their stated positions on the Kashmir issue are not realistic and compromises will have to be made to workout a mutually agreeable solution of this intricate problem, she said addressing a party convention here. Describing self rule formula as vital and acceptable to all the people of all regions of the state, the PDP president said time has come to put an end to this pestering conflict to avoid further destruction of life and property..

Greater Kashmir, 5 November 2006

Govt lied on release of 11 detainees

Srinagar, Nov 4: Jammu and Kashmir government has not released 11 detainees who it announced would be freed last month. The cases of the 11 detainees were screened by the governments screening committee and later it was announced they would be set free on the eve of Eid-al-Fitr. But 10 days after the holy festival, the detainees are yet to be released, sources in the Home Department told Greater Kashmir on Saturday. The file has been sent to Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad for his approval but so far there has been no response,they added..

Daily Excelsior, 6 November 2006

Pakistan infiltration into Kashmir has doubled: Azad

New Delhi, Nov 5: Pakistani infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir has doubled this year, according to the state Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad who has, consequently, ruled out reduction of troops. An estimated 500 Pakistani infiltrators have crossed into the State in the first 10 months of this year, he said here, recalling that in the corresponding period last year the figure was less than 200. Firmly rejecting a Pakistani suggestion for reduction of troops in the State, the Chief Minister made it clear that innocent people could not be left at the mercy of terrorists. Azad, who has just completed one year in office, dismissed President Pervez Musharraf's proposal for self rule for both parts of the State, saying that the Pakistani ruler was himself not sure of what he was talking about..

Daily Excelsior, 6 November 2006

4 of family shot dead in Gool

Jammu, Nov 5: Militants gunned down four members of a family including three women in their house at Maglogi, Dalwa in Gool area of Ramban police district last night while Doda police eliminated two Lashkar e Toiba LeT militants of Pakistan at Phagsoo, Thathri in wee hours of this morning. A group of four militants struck in the house of Ahad Bhat at Maglogi near Dalwa, about eight kms from Gool around 10.30 pm last night and started molesting two girls including Ahad's 25 year old daughter Mobina. Ahad Bhat and his wife besides the two girls resisted the militants' attempt, who reportedly wanted to kidnap Mobina for forcibly holding her nikaah with a Hizbul Mujahideen militant, official sources said..

Kashmir Times, 6 November 2006

Editorial: Armys inner weakness

Even in the present days of hi tech warfare it is said that the man behind the machine counts for the most. The best of weapons may be ineffective if the user is not well-trained or properly motivated. That is why, not just the armed forces, the entire nation that depends on them for its security was shocked to hear the sudden spurt in fragging as they in the army refer to cases of soldiers turning their guns on their colleagues. Between 21 October and 3 November, in five separate incidents, mostly in Jammu and Kashmir, eleven men in uniform one Lt. Col. and the rest NCOs and jawans have been shot dead by their own colleagues or subordinates, while around half a dozen have been left wounded..

Daily Excelsior, 7 November 2006

Justice Sagir Ahmed to head Kashmir Working Group: Azad

Jammu, Nov 6: Describing the act of National Conference for its decision of withdrawal from Kashmir Working Group as irresponsible, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that Justice Sagir Ahmed will be the new head of Kashmir Working Group (KWG). Talking to media persons on the first day of the opening of Civil Secretariat in the winter capital here this morning, the Chief Minister expressed hope that the Opposition National Conference would participate in its next meeting headed by Justice Sagir Ahmed in November.. NC is the oldest party in the State and I don't think its patron Dr Farooq Abdullah can pull out from the Working Group..

Greater Kashmir, 7 November 2006

SHRC indicts Army's 7 RR in gang rape

Srinagar, Nov 6: The State Human Rights Commission has indicted soldiers of Army's 7 Rashtriya Rifles for gang rape of a woman of south Kashmir, and recommended the case for prosecution before court of law and compensation of Rs 75,000 to the victim. The commission took Suo Moto cognizance of the gang rape of Parveen wife of Irshad Ahmad Khan of Mattan on the intervening night of October 11, 2004. During the proceedings of the case, the commission received a letter from the acting program director of Amnesty International, Catherine Baber on December 10, 2004, making a reference of the gang rape. To ascertain the facts, the commission sought a report from Inspector General of Kashmir (IGP) Kashmir..

Kashmir Times, 7 November 2006

Jammu observes peaceful bandh

Jammu, Nov 6: With shops remained closed and public transport off the roads a complete and peaceful bandh was observed in the Jammu city on the call given by the state unit of the BJP and Refugees United Front. The BJP had given the strike call against the alleged anti people and pro separatists policies of the coalition regime while RUF had called the strike against the apathetic attitude of government towards the plight of PAK refugees. Government offices, banks, and educational institutions witnessed low attendance as transport, barring auto rickshaws and private vehicles, remained off the road. City wore deserted look due to the total bandh, as all the shops and commercial establishments remained closed with traders supporting the strike..

Kashmir Times, 7 November 2006

Editorial: Demilitarise civilian areas

News reports of militancy related incidents from Doda are distressing. On Sunday two separate incidents in the same region are an indicator of how much people are still sandwiched between the guns of the militants and the security forces. While in Manglogi village near Sangaldan area of Doda, four people of a family were killed, their throats brutally slit, on suspicion that one of them was working as informer for the security forces, in Fagsu village of Thathri police have allegedly killed two innocent youth in an alleged fake encounter. Protests followed the alleged fake encounter and villagers who were asked to bury the two, claimed as foreign militants by the security forces, maintained that they were innocent Kashmiris. Both incidents reflect the brutality of violence and the fear psychosis that persists in the militancy affected areas..

Tribune, 7 November 2006

Geelani likely to meet Pak Foreign Secy

Jammu, November 6: Indications are that senior separatist leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, will accept an invitation for a meeting from Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Riaz Ahmed Khan, who is scheduled to reach Delhi on November 14 for a meeting with his counterpart in India. Reports said that a number of Kashmiri separatists have been invited by Mr Riaz Ahmed Khan and it was after over a year Mr Geelani would be accepting an invitation from a senior Pakistani bureaucrat. Soon after confidence building measures

and peace process were initiated by Delhi and Islamabad Mr Geelani started criticising Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf, for having sidelined the Kashmir issue by giving weightage to trade and traffic between the two countries..

Indian Express, 8 November 2006

Self rule formula for J&K not against Constitution

New York, November 7: Maintaining that the self rule formula suggested by him for Jammu and Kashmir was not against the Constitution, former state Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed has said there is a need to look for an out of the box solution to the problem taking into account realities. The PDP patron, who met a cross section of Kashmiris from both sides of the divide here, told PTI that the peace process between India and Pakistan is irreversible as it is people driven in both countries and that the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue is inevitable..Constitutional guarantees that the legislature elected by the people of the States would not be dissolved by the Central government and allowed to function for its term..

Daily Excelsior, 8 November 2006

Mirwaiz re-elected Hurriyat chief

Srinagar, Nov 7: Awami Action Committee (AAC) chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was today re-elected as chairman of moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference for another term of two years. The Mirwaiz was unanimously re-elected as the Hurriyat chairman after his term expired today. The decision was taken at an extra-ordinary meeting called at the Hurriyat Conference headquarters at Raj Bagh here this morning. The name of Mirwaiz Farooq was proposed by former Hurriyat chairman Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat and seconded by all the other executive committee members. After the name was cleared by the Hurriyat executive committee, the decision was confirmed by the general council..

Daily Excelsior, 8 November 2006

SHRC indicts BSF, RR

Srinagar, Nov 7: The State Human Rights Commission has indicted the security forces for the custodial deaths of two youths in 1993 and 2003. It has recommended Government jobs and ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of Gowhar Amin Bahadur of Batmaloo in Srinagar who died allegedly in BSF custody in 1993, and Tahir Hussain of Tujjar Sharief in Sopore who was allegedly killed after his arrest in 2003. Bahadurs wife Munawara Sultan filed a complaint with SHRC on October 21, 2000, that her husband was killed by soldiers of BSF's 4th battalion on April 8, 1993 after his arrest in retaliation to a militant attack in the area. The SHRC in its judgment said the unfortunate part of the case was the BSF party have not made themselves accountable before investigation of the case..

Kashmir Times, 8 November 2006

Opinion: Judicial activism in J&K: a wake-up call (Mubeen Wani)

..In recent times, quite a large number of PILs (Public Interest Litigation) have been filed before the Honble High Court of J&K, most of them have yielded fruitful results. PIL has already gained legal recognition over a period of time, at present it is an answer to never ending problems and never reaching solutions as it is an extraordinary remedy, available

at a cheaper cost, as a substitute for ordinary ones. However, we must be careful to see that the petitioner who approaches the Honble Court is acting bona fide and not for personal gain, private profit or political or other oblique considerations. The court also should not allow its process to be abused by politicians and others to delay legitimate administrative action or to gain political objectives. Political pressure groups who could not achieve their aims through the administrative process or political process may try to use the courts (through the means of PILs) to further their closely vested aims and interests..

Daily Excelsior, 9 November 2006

A train to Kashmir! A dream comes true

Srinagar, Nov 8: After decades of wait, a train has finally reached Kashmir via the 300 km Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, pulled by a trailer-truck...And not on a rail track. For the people of Kashmir and the Indian Railways, it is a dream come true. But, they have to wait for some more time before the train starts to run on iron wheels or rail tracks. Hundreds of people were today lined up on both sides of the road between Qazigund and Khanabal to watch the Indian Railways perform the first of its kind exercise in its history as Joginder Singh, the driver of the trailer-truck, steered the vehicle pulling the two train coaches towards Srinagar. To meet the deadline of February next year for a train with eight bogeys to start running in Kashmir, the Northern Railways was faced with a tough task of transporting the train coaches to the Valley..

Daily Excelsior, 9 November 2006

3 LeT comdrs killed in Doda

Jammu, Nov 8: Security forces and police tonight gunned down three top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants, all commanders at Draman in Gandoh area of Doda district while LeT ultras clashed with Hizbul Mujahideen activists at Ghuroo, Gandoh early this morning in which a top Hizbul Mujahideen ultra was killed. Security forces recovered 10 kg RDX in Thathri and a consignment of explosives in Banihal. SSP Doda Manohar Singh said Doda police and Army launched a search operation at Draman, Gandoh at 4 pm after developing an information that three top Lashkar commanders were meeting in the house of LeT area commander Shabir Ahmed alias Abu Bakar son of Mohd Subhan Wani..

Kashmir Times, 9 November 2006

Editorial: Voices of peace and friendship

..The average Pakistani is sore over the fact that on issues of interest to Pakistan, including Kashmir, there has been no discernable progress. Pakistanis feel that India is befooling their leadership, and is pushing forward primarily her own agenda, and has not yet responded favourably to the Pak proposal for a balanced reduction of forces, and the complete demilitarisation of Kashmir. The security agreement on pre-notification of missile tests is being viewed there as a mere formalisation of an already existent agreement. In fact, the Pak intelligentsia admits that any restraint regime, in both nuclear and conventional fields, will help Pakistan more than India, because the present arms-race puts much greater strain on the much smaller Pak economy..But they cannot forget Kashmir, and cannot welcome any settlement that does not meet their expectations, even

partially..

Tribune, 9 November 2006

SEZ brings govt, commerce chamber at loggerheads

Jammu, November 8: The Jammu and Kashmir Government and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry are at loggerheads on the issue of setting up special economic zones (SEZs) in the state. While keeping in mind the heat generated over the matter not only in neighbouring Punjab and Haryana but at the national level too, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has said no to the idea of setting up a SEZ in the state, the Chamber president, Mr Ram Sahay, wants him to follow other states for growth of the industry. Mr Azad is opposed to setting up of SEZ here as the state has had a bitter experience of certain big industrialists setting up units here only to pocket the concessions announced by the Centre and the state government..

Kashmir Times, 9 November 2006

Opinion: India must not spur Hizb's ceasefire offer (A.G. Noorani)

Nothing provides a more revealing clue to the Kashmir tangle than the unique unanimity with which Kashmiris hailed the call by the leader of the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Syed Salahuddin, for a ceasefire on August 17. That includes two former chief ministers, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and Farooq Abdullah; presidents of two unionist parties, the PDPs Mehbooba Mufti and the NCs Omar Abdullah; and leaders of both the factions of the Hurriyat, Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. Equally instructive is the fact that two days later, four militant groups, namely, Al-Nasireen, Farzandan-e-Millat, Save Kashmir Movement and Al-Arifeen, criticised the HM.. The August 17 offer must be read in the context of the HMs failed ceasefire in 2000, opposition by other militants and the diplomatic setting. It conveys two messages: the HM is ready to perform in the political field and it will not be bypassed. The offers began to be made recently, even as talks on Kashmir between India and Pakistan were resumed in earnest..

Daily Excelsior, 10 November 2006

Farooq dares Mufti to make out of box solution public

Jammu, Nov 9 : Terming the much publicized self-rule proposal of Peoples Democratic Party PDP as political stunt to hoodwink the common masses, former Chief Minister and patron of the National Conference, Dr Farooq Abdullah today dared Mufti Mohammed Sayeed to make his out of box solution public to solve the vexed Kashmir problem. In an informal chat with media persons after attending a function organized by G N Foundation, Dr Abdullah observed that self-rule proposal and demand of demilitarization were nothing but a political drama to befool the masses and to accomplish political agenda..The former Chief Minister, who predicted that PDP will be wiped out in next Assembly elections, observed that it was not appropriate time to say whether NC will forge any alliance with Congress..

Kashmir Times, 10 November 2006

Editorial: Security Forces in the dock

The security forces, including even the more disciplined regular army and the Rashtriya Rifles, are almost always in the news, making headlines usually for the wrong reasons.

Sometimes they are accused of organising fake encounters, some time for custodial killings, some time for using hired porters as human shields, some time for inflicting collective humiliation on the local population during cordon and search operations or some time for committing gangrape on any hapless woman of a cursed community..What could be more heartless and what more can our authorise do to encourage men in arms to take the law in their own hands?

Indian Express, 10 November 2006

Opinion: Rail rivalry in Kashmir (C Raja Mohan)

As India limps along in building the rail link between the Srinagar valley and the rest of the nation, China might be getting ready to offer its own rail line to the parts of Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistans control. During Chinese President Hu Jintaos visit to Pakistan this month, media reports say, the two sides might announce a project to build a rail line across the Karakorams between Kashgar in Xinjiang and the rail heads in the North West Frontier province via the Northern Areas of Jammu and Kashmir. The techno-economic approach to the project is expected to be defined in very general terms when senior Chinese officials travel to Pakistan this week ahead of President Hus visit..

Daily Excelsior, 10 November 2006

Guru petitions President for mercy

New Delhi, Nov 9: Mohammed Afzal Guru, sentenced to death for his role in the 2001 Parliament terror attack, has petitioned President A P J Abdul Kalam for mercy. Guru has submitted his 102-page long mercy petition to the authorities of Tihar jail, where he is lodged currently, late last evening, sources told PTI here today. The prison authorities will forward the petition, which includes 75 pages of annexures, to the President, they said. The former JKLF militant so far has refused to file a clemency petition citing that he had no hope of getting justice while his family had approached the first citizen seeking mercy for him. In his plea, Guru said he was moved by the solidarity he has received from the people cutting across ideological divides apart from the support he got from Jammu and Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 11 November 2006

5 killed, 60 injured in grenade attack on Bareilvi cleric

Srinagar, Nov 10: Sectarian tension has gripped the ideologically split Tahab village in Pulwama district where a terrorist has left 5 youngsters dead and 60 others wounded in a grenade attack on prominent Bareilvi cleric Maulana Abdur Rasheed Dawoodi in the afternoon today. Even after the fatal grenade blast, people have captured a youth, allegedly responsible for throwing the grenade, handed him over to authorities and shouted slogans against the followers of a rival sect. Border Security Force (BSF) has, however, sealed the village and provided protection to the followers of Devbandi school of thought and Jamaat-e-Islami, believed to be aligned to the latter..

Indian Express, 11 November 2006

Kashmiri Pandits return to Valley impossible

Jammu, November 10: Terming the invitation extended by the Congress-led coalition government to migrant Kashmiri Pandits to return to the Valley as a 'cruel joke?',

National Conference (NC) patron Dr Farooq Abdullah said the return of the Pandits is 'impossible' as the security situation is not conducive for their return. The invitation extended by the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to Pandits to return to the Valley is a cruel joke. It is impossible to bring them back because the security situation is not conducive for their return, Abdullah said at a function in Nagorta area of Jammu district..

Daily Excelsior, 11 November 2006

Editorial: Rail on road

It has been a unique sight railway coaches being driven by a truck to the Valley but it brings home the challenge of development in the State. There is no other way that this technological bonanza could have been passed on to the other side of the Pir Panjal. It became imperative to think of alternatives in the absence of train track between the two Capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar. The people on the top put their heads together to work out a strategy. First they thought of carrying coaches in a dismantled condition. The idea was to reassemble them at their destination in the Valley. It was given up as no such facility had yet been established locally..

Greater Kashmir, 11 November 2006

Opinion: In for a political introspection-II (DR. GULL MUHAMMAD WANI)

The working committee went a step further in stating that an amicable solution to Kashmir tangle must be found which in the first instance satisfies the aspirations of the people inhabiting the unfortunate state and secondly create conditions in which more than 1200 million people of India and Pakistan can live with peace and friendship. The party reiterated its stand that Hizbul Mujahideen and other militant groups be involved to sit in a negotiating table. Further the party expressed its anguish that mere handshakes, photo sessions and expression of pious wishes can not sustain peoples confidence. Away from and outside these resolutions it would be proper to take a leaf from history and try to understand the NC position on Pakistans involvement in the resolution of Kashmir tangle..

The Hindu, 11 November 2006

J&K wait for train-ride is almost over

OmporaA (BUDGAM): They may have to wait some more for a train ride, but the opportunity to see a coach arriving in the backyard is not what they would miss. As a rubber tyre-pulled truck arrived on Thursday evening at Ompora, a central Kashmir Budgam village where one of the main stations is proposed to be built, people swarmed to see the bogies being pulled down. The bogies reached Srinagar after trucking on the 300-km mountainous road from Jammu and would be used for trial runs on the tracks being laid in Srinagar. The Northern Railway plans to run a train from Qazigund in south end of the Kashmir Valley to Baramulla in its northern part this coming February..

Daily Excelsior, 12 November 2006

Captured militant says he did it for Hizbul Mujahideen

Pulwama, Nov 11: Even as Hizbul Mujahideen today denied that the youth captured by residents of Tahab on Friday was a militant of that organisation, 22-year-old Ghulam

Nabi Mir alias Shora of Littar confessed in Army's custody before media that he had thrown the grenade on the Bareilvi cleric, Maulana Abdur Rasheed Dawoodi, on the direction of an upper ground activist, Gulzar Ahmed Mir alias Nikka Mir of Chowdhary Gund. As already reported, 5 youngsters had got killed and 60 others had sustained injuries in the explosion that sent shockwaves throughout Kashmir valley yesterday. Meanwhile, statements of condemnation are pouring in from all quarters and Pulwama-Pakahrpora belt of south Kashmir observed a shutdown in protest against this act of sectarian terrorism..

Daily Excelsior, 12 November 2006

Violence, progress cant go together: Azad

Kishtwar, Nov 11: Saying that gun culture and development have no relation in the civilized and high-valued society, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that peace is the only medium to realize goal of prosperity and equitable development of the State. Addressing a mammoth gathering at a function held here, the Chief Minister said that permanent rooting of peace is a must to place the State in the orbit of safety, development and well-being..Spelling out high principles of Islam with regard to respecting fundamentals of humanity and each others faith, the Chief Minister said that some elements have brought bad image to this great religion by letting loose violence for their vested interests..

Indian Express, 12 November 2006

Historic chance for resolving Kashmir

Islamabad, November 11: Pakistan has said there was an improved atmosphere and increased people-to-people contacts between India and Pakistan since the initiation of the peace process in 2004 and currently a historic opportunity exists to resolve the Kashmir issue in a manner acceptable to all. A stable, conflict-free cooperative relationship between Pakistan and India held the key to durable peace and prosperity in South Asia, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said addressing academics and students at the Princeton University on Friday. There had been an improved atmosphere and increased people-to-people contacts since the launch of the Indo-Pak peace process in 2004. A historic opportunity exists to resolve the Kashmir dispute in a manner acceptable to all, he said..

Greater Kashmir, 12 November 2006

Kashmir be resolved politically: Farooq

Jammu: Farooq Abdullah, the former Chief Minister and patron National Conference has said that people of Jammu and Kashmir have been facing trouble since long and Kashmir issue be resolved politically by fulfilling genuine urges and aspirations of the people of all three regions of the state. He was addressing 101st annual function of Islamia Faridia Educational and Research Institute, Kishtwar on Friday. Dr Abdullah said that unity and integrity of the state was imperative for strong country. He said that love and affection between people of all the religions was the need of hour. He maintained that every religion teaches to love and respect other religions and Islam also teaches to respect others. He said that all the people should follow the teachings of Islam..

Indian Express, 12 November 2006

Prayer attack at Hizbul behest (Riyaz Wani)

Pulwama, November 11 : When Ghulam Nabi Mir, the youth who allegedly hurled the grenade at worshippers in Tahab on Friday killing five people four of them children and injuring 40 others, spoke in Army custody today about his backers, the word he uttered slowly in his wincing, whispering voice was HM, the acronym for the Valleys largest militant outfit Hizbul Mujahideen. He said a militant of the outfit had prevailed on him to throw the grenade on prominent South Kashmir cleric Abdur Rashid Dawoodi on payment of Rs 1,000, and that he only followed orders. HM militant Gulzar Ahmad Mir met me a week before and persuaded me to hurl a grenade on Dawoodi Sahib. I first declined, then I was paid Rs 1,000, says Mir..

Daily Excelsior, 12 November 2006

Cross-border infiltration this year more than double than last year

New Delhi : Ahead of Indo-Pak Foreign Secretary level talks, infiltration remains a cause of worry for New Delhi as the number of infiltrators from Pakistan has been put at nearly 650 this year, more than double than last year. The infiltrators, entering the valley mainly through Kupwara region in North Kashmir and Balakote in Jammu region, have cut the barbed wires at certain places, sources in the Union Home Ministry said. At a recent meeting of Union Home Ministry officials with central security agencies and other central para military forces, inputs from various forward posts and those gathered through Technical Intelligence (TECHINT) and Human Intelligence (HUMINT) were shared after which the figure of nearly 650 was arrived at, the sources said..

Greater Kashmir, 13 November 2006

Hurriyat (M) leaders in Delhi to meet Pak FS

New Delhi, Nov 12: Leaders of Hurriyat Conference (Mirwaiz faction) arrived here Sunday to meet a visiting senior Pakistani official next week. A Hurriyat delegation reached here New Delhi Srinagar to meet Pakistan Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan who arrives here on an official visit to hold crucial talks with his Indian counterpart Shiv Shankar Menon on various issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. While the Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is in Cairo to attend the 56th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, the four members who arrived here today are Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, Maulana Abbas Ansari, Bilal Ghani Lone and Aga Syed Hassan. The Mirwaiz would join the delegation before its meeting with the Pakistani official..

Kashmir Times, 13 November 2006

Shabir for joint working group of separatists

Srinagar, Nov 12: President of Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmad Shah today mooted a proposal for setting up of a joint working group of separatist leadership for result oriented talks with governments of India and Pakistan. Talking to KTNS, Shah said the working group must be recognized by New Delhi and Islamabad. He stated that formation of the joint working group is the need of the hour since the separatist camp is divided. We do not meet the leadership of India and Pakistan together. We meet them separately in groups thus making our own position ridiculous and also damaging the interests of our movement. Now we have to meet the Pakistan's foreign secretary Reyaz

Khan in New Delhi shortly. Again we will meet him in groups, the DFP president said. According to him the approach of meeting in groups to the officials and leadership of India and Pakistan is doing no good to the movement. It has not yielded any positive results so far..

Kashmir Times, 13 November 2006

Editorial: Pulwama outrage

No words can be too strong to condemn the grenade attack at a place of worship in Tahab village of Pulwama on Friday killing five children and wounding several others, some of them critically. What makes the attack even more outrageous is the fact that the grenade was hurled at the mosque during Friday congregation joined by hundreds of villagers. Though the cleric Abdul Rashid Dawoodi, chief of the Swat-Ul-Awilya (a religious organization) was alleged to be the target of the killers the very fact that the mosque was selected for this purpose on the occasion when the people had collected for Friday prayers makes it most condemnable. That large number of innocent citizens including minors were killed or injured makes the act not only a heinous crime against humanity but also unislamic..

Tribune, 13 November 2006

Editorial: Sufis and saints; Not so new targets of terrorism

KASHMIRIYAT came under attack when terrorists targeted a religious congregation in Pulwama district on Friday. The provocation was the growing popularity of Maulana Abdul Rashid Dawoodi, who reportedly belongs to the Barailvi School of theology. The preacher draws sustenance from the sufi tradition of Islam, which has its deep roots in the Valley. Unlike him, the terrorists take inspiration from a militant form of Islam which the Saudis have been overtly and covertly encouraging. Known as the Wahabi school of Islam, it seeks to dissociate the religion from the little Islamic traditions that have flourished in Kashmir since time immemorial..The timing of the attack is also significant. It came a week before secretary-level talks are to begin between India and Pakistan in New Delhi. It amounts to a warning that the terrorists cannot be ignored in any deal they may strike..

Greater Kashmir, 13 November 2006

Editorial: Central govt offices?

In keeping with often repeated claims of Chief Minister for fighting corruption at all levels in the government the state vigilance organization has been carrying out selective raids on corrupt government functionaries. Notwithstanding the organization not touching known corrupt officers enjoying patronage of the cabinet colleagues of the Chief Minister it has been making its presence felt once or twice a month. There can be no denying that the organization has so far failed to come to the expectations of people in general and chief minister in particular but it also cannot be denied the sporadic raids carried out by it are sending a message to the corrupt officials that they are not immune to falling in the vigilance dragnet but what is amazing is the corruption in the Central government offices in the state..

Daily Excelsior, 14 November 2006

3 soldiers, civilian killed

Srinagar, Nov 13: While militants have gunned down a civilian at his home in Sofshali village of Kokernag, three soldiers of JAK LI have got buried under a massive snow avalanche near Jeevan post in Nowshera Naar, on the LoC in Gurez sector of Baramulla district today. Informed sources told the Excelsior that unidentified gunmen, believed to be militants, barged into the residence of one Pir Mukhtar Ahmed at Shofshali village of Kokernag in Anantnag district at 2100 hours tonight and shot the house owner dead. Being allegedly linked to security forces is said to be cause of the militant strike. However, sources said, the picture would become clear not before Tuesday morning. Sources said that a massive snow avalanche rolled three soldiers of 3-JAK LI near Jeevan Post on the LoC in Nowshera Naar of Gurez sector today..

Kashmir Times, 14 November 2006

Editorial: A plan for remilitarisation

The reported move to almost double the present strength of the police under the garb of pulling out armed forces from the civilian areas is fraught with more dangerous portents than the deployment of a large number of troops in the militancy-affected areas in Jammu and Kashmir for anti-insurgency operations. According to a report the State government is gearing up for symbolic pull out of the Army and central para-military forces from the civilian areas by raising its own 51 armed battalions. Claimed to be a move for demilitarisation and providing additional jobs to the alienated youth in the troubled state the exercise actually is aimed at remilitarisation by replacing the armed forces with more ruthless, arbitrary, corrupt, indisciplined and unaccountable armed police force. The Prime Minister has reportedly advised the State chief minister to work out the details for such a remilitarisation plan with the Union home ministry..

Kashmir Times, 14 November 2006

Editorial: Relief for quake victims

Notwithstanding the tall claims of the state government about the transparency in the administrative functioning and corruption free regime, the complaints of bungling in the distribution of quake-relief cheques are pouring out from several parts of the Valley and Poonch even thirteen months after these areas were devastated by earthquake on October 8 last year. Reports that in quake-hit Garkote, whereas many genuine beneficiaries, who lost their home and hearth in the killer quake were deprived of any kind of assistance, the minors, in many instances, have been issued cheques. As a consequence, many victims already engaged in a battle to pick up the remaining threads of life, are fighting against the despicable apathy on the part of administration as well. There are allegations that in connivance with the concerned officials, all the laid down norms for distribution of relief have been bypassed..

Daily Excelsior, 14 November 2006

Geelani favours plebiscite

Srinagar, Nov 13: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of the hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference, today said he would meet the visiting Pakistani delegation headed by Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan and convey to it that the only way to resolve

the Kashmir issue was to hold a plebiscite there. I am going to put my viewpoint across to the delegation, Geelani told reporters here before leaving for Delhi. The Hurriyat leader said Pakistan and European countries, supporting the Kashmiris cause, should persuade India to implement United Nation resolutions on Kashmir, adding that a plebiscite be held there. He said the issue should be addressed in its historic perspective..

Greater Kashmir, 14 November 2006

Opinion: Kashmir in Retrospect (Bhushan Bazaz)

Introduction The people of J&K seem destined to suffer endlessly by being denied many human and political rights, as they have been since 1947, some of which they enjoyed even under the harsh rule of the autocratic Maharaja. It is sincerely believed that a free discussion with an open mind and a strong desire to end the demoralizing suspense born of prevailing uncertainty can be helpful in a search for a solution. The development during the past two decades in both the countries as well as in the two parts of J&K State divided by the ceasefire line have so complicated the issue that we are faced with a baffling situation which depresses the stoutest of hearts..Accession to India..

Kashmir Times, 15 November 2006

Hurriyat (G) : Solution possible only with participation of Kashmiris

Srinagar, Nov 14 : Terming the foreign secretary level talks between India and Pakistan as useless, the Hurriyat Conference (G) today said that a durable and long-lasting solution of Kashmir issue is possible only when Kashmiris are taken into confidence. In a statement a spokesman of the faction said Jammu and Kashmir is the only region in the South Asia where people are not given the chance to decide about their future and people are suffering because of the hostile approach of the Indian government. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have suffered in a great way from past several years due to non-resolution of Kashmir issue..He stated that in past 59 years there have been 130 bilateral level talks, but till date there was not been a single meaningful and result oriented dialogue..

Greater Kashmir, 15 November 2006

DSP among 17 hurt in Car Blast

Srinagar, Nov 14: Seventeen people including a Deputy Superintendent of Police, seven policemen and four paramilitary CRPF troopers were injured in a powerful car blast at the high security Karan Nagar area in the heart of the city on Tuesday afternoon. In yet another blast in north Kashmir's Varmul town 11 people including a Major were injured. Elsewhere in the state, two soldiers were among four people killed in different incidents since Monday evening, while another victim of Friday's Tahab grenade blast succumbed to injuries at SKIMS today. Reports said suspected militants lobbed two grenades towards the main entrance of a CRPF camp at Karan Nagar at around 4:00 pm. As soldiers from the camp came out to carry out a search operation, there was a loud blast..

Kashmir Times, 15 November 2006

Editorial: Indo-Pak talks

..While for Pakistan Kashmir constitutes the core issue of the Indo-Pak dispute, India seeks to play down the importance of the Kashmir dispute and instead emphasises on the

support to militancy by Pakistan. Apparently, the two issues are not equally old or important. While Kashmir is an issue for the last 59 years, i.e. exactly since India's and Pakistans emergence as independent states, armed insurgency appeared as an issue only after 1989, when Kashmir suddenly exploded in violence. So, obviously, Kashmir is not only much older an issue, but is also the cause of the insurgency that has further plagued our relationship for the last decade and a half. So, instead of standing on prestige, India should better accept the importance of the Kashmir problem as the major source of all Indo-Pak frictions, and try to solve it to the mutual satisfaction of both the parties and, above all, of the people of this state..

Greater Kashmir, 15 November 2006

Opinion: Kashmir solution this way (Hassan Zainagiree)

..There are reasons for Kashmiris to be susceptible to anything Delhi offers and practices in Kashmir. Whatever be the quantum of pro-people and pro-democratic agenda of main-stream parties in Kashmir they are, for all practical purposes, labeled and taken as Indian stooges to further Indian interest. Right from legendary Sheikh Abdullah to third filial generation of Abdullah dynasty, to Mufti family and to Azad of Congress, everyone has contributed his/her part in strengthening Indian hold in Kashmir and, conversely, disemboweling State of its autonomous character. They at all critical junctures went against the public sentiments in salvaging and retrieving situation for India..

The Hindu, 15 November 2006

Car bomb attack in Kashmir

Srinagar: Militants detonated a car bomb and an improvised explosive device in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, injuring 30 persons, among them an Army Major and 11 security personnel. Elsewhere in the State, seven persons, including two soldiers and two militants, were killed in separate incidents since Monday night, official sources said. Militants carried out multiple attacks on a CRPF security camp and detonated a car bomb at the posh Balgarden in the Karan Nagar area of the city. Nineteen persons, including five policemen, four Central Reserve Police Force personnel and 10 civilians were injured..

Indian Express, 16 November 2006

Pakistan brushes aside Geelanis hard line (Riyaz Wani)

Srinagar, November 15 : Syed Ali Shah Geelanis first meeting with a senior officer of the Pakistani establishment in two years didnt go well for the Hurriyat hawk, with Pakistan rejecting his strong objections to Islamabad's compromising stance on Kashmir and urging him to move beyond the traditional straitjacket. In his meeting with Geelani on the margins of the Foreign Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan, Pakistan Foreign Secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan told Geelani that President Pervez Musharraf's new proposals on Kashmir had the complete backing of Kashmiris across the divide...However, Khan agreed with Geelani that three years into the dialogue process, India and Pakistan were still far from reaching any compromise on Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 16 November 2006

8 militants, jawan killed in Kupwara

Srinagar, Nov 15: Even as search is still underway for three militants, seven of their freshly infiltrated associates have been eliminated by Police and security forces in Kupwara forests in the last 48 hours. A Major among four soldiers who sustained injuries and one soldier has died. Meanwhile, troops have killed yet another militant in Magam area of Kupwara district. SSP Kupwara Vijay Kumar told the Excelsior that in all Police and security forces had killed seven militants and search was on for three more militants of the freshly infiltrated group in Kupwara forests. As exclusively reported by this newspaper in its Tuesday issue, Police and security forces had launched a major combing operation in Warsun-Gulgam forests on Monday evening after learning that at least eight militants were hiding in that area..

Kashmir Times, 16 November 2006

Opinion: Kashmir solution lies in economic wisdom (Muhammad Ahsan Yatu)

..Though making the Line of Control a permanent border and self-rule for the Kashmiris may be the only solution, the establishment in Pakistan is not ready to accept it, nor are the religious militants and a large number of Kashmiris willing to shed their undefined ideals. The Kashmiris of the Valley are uncertain about the solution, but not about their fate. Most of them think that they have been perhaps destined to live in darkness, the darkness that started with the Mughal occupation of Kashmir and deepened during the Afghan, Pathan and Dogra rules, and solidified after the start of the militant struggle. India did try to lessen the centuries-old miseries of the Kashmiris through genuine land reforms and development work, but did not succeed in winning over the hearts of the majority of Kashmiris...

Kashmir Times, 16 November 2006

Kashmir: A year after the quake (Yoginder Sikand)

The road from Baramulla to Uri and beyond straddles the gently flowing Jhelum, lined by trees and terraced fields-a perfect, but deceptive, picture of serenity. Forgotten by the media and quickly abandoned by the state their own fate, one year after the deadly quake that struck this part of Kashmir last October the denizens of this region struggle to rebuild their lives. Balkot is one of the largest villages in the Uri tehsil in Baramulla district, almost on the Line of Control that separates the Indian and Pakistani-administered parts of Kashmir. Its hamlets are scattered across the face of a massive mountain, reached by a narrow, unpaved, rocky and crater-filled path. Almost all the 400 houses in the village were destroyed in the quake. Today, only the shells of what were once graceful cottages remain. Its inhabitants now live in makeshift tin sheds and canvas tents..

Greater Kashmir, 16 November 2006

INDIA RULES OUT KASHMIR DE-MILITARISATION

New Delhi, Nov 15: India today ruled out withdrawal of troops from Kashmir until, what it said, terrorist violence ends in the valley and said the government was responsible for the safety and security of the people. The troops level is related to the security situation in the state...If there is an improvement in the situation, certainly we will withdraw troops. But the threat of violence has to go down, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon said at a

press conference after concluding his two-day talks with his Pakistani counterpart Riaz Muhammad Khan. He, however, said India had removed some troops from Kashmir in the past. But the government had a responsibility towards its citizens, he added..

Kashmir Times, 17 November 2006

Separatists may be invited for talks with Centre

Srinagar, Nov 16: Government of India may again invite the Kashmiri separatists particularly the Hurriyat Conference (A) for talks after two or three weeks. Reliable sources said there is a desire in the central government for resumption of dialogue process with the separatists. Since the Indo-Pak dialogue process has gained momentum now, the union government intends to continue the process for addressing the internal dimension of Kashmir issue. The foreign secretary level talks between India and Pakistan ended in New Delhi yesterday..However, no progress was made by the working groups and even National Conference (NC) decided to boycott the working group meets and round table conference in protest against human rights violations..

Daily Excelsior, 17 November 2006

Two VDC members held for helping LeT ultras

Jammu, Nov 16: Doda police today arrested two Village Defence Committee (VDC) members, who had connived with Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants and surrendered their rifles and ammunition. Besides, they had also helped the militants to loot weapons of two other VDC members from village Garethar in Doda district on October 13 this year. SSP Doda Manohar Singh identified two VDC members, who have been arrested, as Ghulam Mohd son of Lassa Batt and Ghulam Hussain son of Ahmedu, residents of Tander, Garethar. He said investigations into snatching of four rifles of VDC members by the militants revealed that two militants of LeT outfit, whose identity hasn't been established so far, approached VDC members Ghulam Mohd and Ghulam Hussain at village Tander on October 13 and asked them to hand over their weapons and ammunition, given to them in their capacity as VDC members..

Greater Kashmir, 17 November 2006

Opinion: The illusion of Self Rule

Apparently PDPs slogan of Self Rule is no different from the same proposal floated by Pervez Musharraf. But getting closer reveals the essence. There is a fundamental barrier that separates the two. The differences are not only incompatible but irreconcilable, comments Dr Sheikh Showkat Hussain Muslim Conference is the oldest political party of Kashmir. After 1947 it was completely banished from Indian side of the ceasefire line where as it remained a dominant political party across line of actual control (LOC). National Conference is the secularized version of Muslim Conference. It remained main political forum on Indian side of LOC. Treachery of Sheikh Abdullah, intellectual bankruptcy of Farooq Abdullah, Omer Abdullahs overdose of loyalty towards Indian foreign ministry landed National Conference into a mess..

The Hindu, 17 November 2006

Editorial: The stresses of soldiering

The incidence of suicides in the Indian Army has emerged as a matter of concern. Any

suicide is one too many, but in this case the rate less than 10 per 100,000 since 2001 is not substantially different from the average for the country's general population. The rate for the United States Army in 2005 was 13. Indeed, historically modern armies have had to grapple with the problem, with periodic ups and downs in the rates. Meanwhile, a growing trend of fratricidal killings within the Indian Army is of greater and immediate concern: October alone saw seven incidents, and the cumulative count is 100 over the last four years. Unlike in the case of suicides, such incidents are few and far between elsewhere. The Indian Army no doubt offers a disciplined and structured occupational-social environment, and has high-quality entry-level screening and training procedures, but it may now need to look carefully for ways to moderate impulsiveness and aggression at the unit level..

Daily Excelsior, 17 November 2006

Editorial: Not enough

No more does it sound strange that the incidents of violence should continue in the State even while India and Pakistan are engaged in a dialogue. These have taken place every time during such get-togethers in the past. To shed tears, therefore, over the bloodshed coinciding with the resumed foreign secretary-level talks in New Delhi will not serve any purpose. Clearly the neighbouring country is not doing enough to close the terror tap at its end. There are some who are inclined to take a sympathetic view of the Musharraf Governments approach in this behalf. They think that it will be wrong to blame the Pakistan President in any way..

Kashmir Times, 18 November 2006

Editorial: Well begun but half done

For once, after many rounds of apparently empty discussions and shadow-boxing with arguments, the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan, meeting in Delhi on the 14th and 15th, have arrived at least, one very significant and much-debated agreement..So far so good, but does it go far enough? There were and are quite a few crying needs of both these peoples, which have been left unheeded. The proposed truck service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad was not even discussed, nor was the much discussed reopening of the road-links between Jammu and Sialkot, Jhangar-Kotli or Jaurian-Bhimbar..New Delhi is still not demonstrating any flexibility on this question and instead of taking it as a human issue concerning the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir the two countries are still looking at it as a territorial problem. .What is more important is to evolve a mechanism for the involvement of the Kashmiri leaders in the process of dialogue..

Greater Kashmir, 18 November 2006

2 LeT MILITANTS KILLED IN JK

Srinagar, Nov 17: Two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants were killed in an encounter with troops at Gulgam in frontier district of Kupwara on Friday. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kupwara told Greater Kashmir that soldiers from 41 RR and SOG Kupwara cordoned off Charwadi village on Friday morning and launched a search operation. Militants holed up inside the house of Muhammad Sultan Lone fired upon the troops, which was retaliated by them, triggering an encounter, he said. The SSP said that

militants jumped out of the house in the afternoon. One of the militants was killed as he jumped out and his another associate took shelter in the nearby cowshed. As the gunfight was on, the cowshed caught fire and firing stopped. After the debris was removed, body of the other militant was recovered from there, he said..

Greater Kashmir, 18 November 2006

Opinion: Leadership vacuum (M. ASHRAF)

The present mess in Kashmir is attributed by many to a crisis of leadership. There is supposed to be a total absence of leaders with conviction, ideals, and a vision for future. It is alleged that Kashmir has been facing this vacuum of genuine and honest leadership right from the start of the present movement in 1931. Normally for a people who have been living for centuries under the worst kind of oppression in history it is difficult to produce honest and genuine leaders. It is because of the exceptional resilience and adaptability that the Kashmiris have survived so long. In such worst conditions it is unrealistic to expect them to have the virtues of a free people. However, from time to time there have been rebellions against the outside invaders which have been ruthlessly crushed. Had Kashmiris got a breathing space between the arrivals of different invaders, they might have had a chance to throw up some good leaders..

The Tribune, 18 November 2006

PDP misleading people: Cong

Jammu, November 17: The Congress has ridiculed the PDP and the National Conference for misleading the people on the issues of self-rule and autonomy. The PCC chief, Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed, who was addressing a meeting of Congress activists organised by a former MP, Mr Janak Raj Gupta, here today, asked the PDP to come out with a clear document on its self-rule proposal. He also had a dig at the National Conference for blowing the trumpet of autonomy for its narrow political ends. The PCC chief said with an elected Assembly, Jammu and Kashmir already had self-rule and was enjoying more autonomy than any other state in the country..

The Hindu, 18 November 2006

Land lease triggers protests (Luv Puri)

Jammu: Leasing of land in the hill resort of Gulmarg has snowballed into a controversy with many parties, including the National Conference, opposing the move as an attempt to dilute Jammu and Kashmir's unique character, enshrined in Article 370 of the Constitution. Under Article 370, only permanent residents can buy land in the State. The Cabinet sanctioned the auction of approximately 550 kanals of land for construction of hotels, restaurants and other tourism-related facilities in the virgin valley of Dohbhat..

Greater Kashmir, 19 November 2006

Unity Must Come From Within: MIRWAIZ

Srinagar, Nov 18: Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference, Saturday said unity between two Hurriyats cannot be forged at the behest of Pakistan. Mirwaiz told a local news agency KNS, Unity among the separatist leaders is need of the hour. We, however, have to realize its importance; others cant tell us what we should do. According to Mirwaiz strong efforts were being made to persuade leaders from both

Kashmiris to share a common platform. Reacting to the statement of Syed Ali Shah Geelani that Pakistan has softened its stand on Kashmir and hampered the Kashmiri political struggle, said, Pakistan hasnt softened its stand; Pakistans stand is based on principles, and it is not rigid..

Greater Kashmir, 19 November 2006

Police doesnt allow Jamiat peace march

Srinagar, Nov 18: Police Saturday stopped the activists of Jamait-e-Ahlihadis from taking out a silent and peaceful march against the attempts to divide people on sectarian lines, Tahab bomb incident, and attack on its president Maulana Showkat Ahmad. Hundreds of Jamait activists assembled at their headquarter at Babarshah to participate in the peaceful procession against the grenade attack on a religious gathering at Tahab Pulwama, in which seven people were killed and several wounded on last Friday. Maulana Showkat the president of Jamiat who escaped a bid on his life last month, was summoned by Police Station Kralkhud in the morning, where he was detained nearly for an hour. Later, he reached the headquarters and informed his activists that police has told him not to take out the procession..

The Hindu, 19 November 2006

BJP to focus on security, Afzal issues

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjees interactions with the leadership of political parties ahead of the winter session of Parliament got off to a start when a four-member group of the National Democratic Alliance met him over breakfast here on Saturday. The group led by Leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani made it clear that internal security issues would be a top priority for the Opposition. The first day would be devoted to the Bharatiya Janata Partys demand that no leniency be shown to Mohammad Afzal, sentenced to death in the Parliament attack case. BJP leaders do not rule out the party pressing this issue to the point of its not allowing Parliament to function. It will simultaneously organise a demonstration outside Parliament demanding that Afzals clemency appeal be rejected..

Kashmir Times, 20 November 2006

Army adopts new network centric communication technology

Jammu, Nov 19 (Agencies): The Indian Army has set up latest Internet and network centric warfare technologies codenamed Escon Phase-III, AWAN, VSAT and MCCA in Jammu and Kashmir. The Army has installed state-of-the-art communication technology for better coordination, mobility and reach of troops in militancy-infested state, top Army officials told news agencies here. Giving details as to how the Army was keeping pace with communication technologies used of defence forces across the world, they said Escon Phase-III, codenamed Mercury Thunder, was adopted in 16 Corps area at Sunderbani and Patnitop areas of Jammu region on October 19..

Daily Excelsior, 20 November 2006

Editorial: Hurriyat blues

Nobody is surprised that the States secessionist leaders have met Pakistan Foreign Secretary Riyaz Mohammad Khan separately in the national capital last week. They are

divided into various camps. It is the plain truth. However, all of them have been unanimous in saying that confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan have not percolated to the State. Any such assertion flies in the face of existing realities. The fact is that the two neighbouring countries have been able to create a feel-good environment in the sub-continent as a whole. Peace along the Line of Control and the International Border has come as a big boon to lakhs of border residents on either side. The resumption of road links across the LoC has facilitated contacts between divided families on the one hand and post-1947 generations on the other. It is not a small breakthrough..

Greater Kashmir, 20 November 2006

Opinion: Autonomy revisits-I (MALIK IRHAM)

..General Musharraf is facing too difficult a situation. Even then he deserves appreciation for his bold steps and broad vision. America is all powerful country to change the times and bring back Stone Age, wherever it intends to. Realizing all this, Pakistan President has suggested Self rule as an answer to Kashmir issue. It appears that Mir Waiz Umer Farooqs Hurriyat faction has picked up some of the contours of the Musharras self rule Plan, and PDP leader Mufti Syed has been talking about it in a staccato language. Kashmiris wait the day, when India Pakistan reaches an agreement for final resolution of Kashmir issue..

Kashmir Times, 20 November 2006

Editorial: Not by slogans alone

Apart from replacing the counter-productive strong-arm method policy with resultant human rights abuses, pursued since the onset of militancy in the State, by a healing touch policy with emphasis on dialogue the heterogenous coalition including among others the Congress and PDP and motley crowd of independents had promised the people a corruption-free, transparent, responsive and accountable administration. The working of the coalition for the past four years leaves no one in doubt that it has not only failed to honour its commitment in this regard but also lacks will and capacity to do so. With a number of tainted ministers in the council of ministers and an inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy at the helm of affairs one can hardly expect any radical changes in the system of governance that has been the hallmark of most of the regimes in the troubled state. No serious attempts have been made either to root out corruption or to streamline the administration..

Daily Excelsior, 20 November 2006

2 CRPF men among 3 injured in Srinagar grenade attack

Srinagar, Nov 19 : Three persons, including two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, were injured when militants hurled a grenade at a patrol party engaged in checking of vehicles here this afternoon, officials said. Militants lobbed a grenade towards a 'naka' party of CRPF at Kawdara locality of downtown Srinagar, they said. The explosion caused splinter injuries to two CRPF personnel and a civilian. All the three were hospitalised where their condition was stated to be stable. The militants fled from the spot taking advantage of the panic which followed the blast, the sources said. The CRPF men along with the police immediately cordoned off the area and a hunt has been

launched to nab the militants involved in the grenade attack, the sources said..

Kashmir Times, 21 November 2006

WG meet on good governance

Jammu, Nov 20: After having a wide range of discussions on Indo-Pak peace process, HR violations, corruption, political instability, empowerment of local bodies and administrative reforms, the working group on good governance in the state administration is all set to finalize its report by January next year. The working group meeting chaired by former cabinet secretary Dr Naresh Chander Saxena and coordinated by principal secretary to the government Ajit Kumar here today, pondered over bottlenecks hampering good governance in the state administration. The meeting was attended by working group members Rangil Singh, Nizamudin Bhat, Mangat Ram Sharma, P Namgyal, Prof Hari Om, Amarnath Vaishnavi, Abdul Gani Hafiz, Bashir Ahmed Dar and Mohammed Shafi Pandit..

Kashmir Times, 21 November 2006

Editorial: Blessed yet backward

The missive that the HRD ministry has sent to the Jammu and Kashmir government as well as to a few others on the 16th is something that should make those concerned with the growth of education in the state sit up and cerebrate. It reminds the governments concerned of their failure to provide the youth of their states with the requisite number of institutions offering courses in vocational education, e.g. in subjects like engineering, technology, architecture, pharmacy, hotel management, business management etc..So, the question is, why should J&K be at the bottom? We are deservedly proud of the fact that our state is the first probably the only one till date to promise free education to all up to post graduation level, as a matter of state policy. It gets the necessary funds for this and large numbers of schools and colleges have been opened around the state in the last sixty years..

Greater Kashmir, 21 November 2006

Editorial: Draft Time Frame

With thaw having set in India and Pakistan relations after meeting of foreign secretaries of the two countries in New Delhi past week hopes for dialogue process coming to a logical conclusion have brightened. The two senior officers had wide range of discussions on peace and security, trade and CBMs, counter terrorism and prisoner?s problems and Kashmir. What augurs well for the talks held in the past week is the meeting between Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri with his new Indian Counter Part Pranab Mukherjee during his private trip to New Delhi this week. The occasion will be a lunch hosted by Pranab Mukherjee for Kasuri on November 27, in the palatial Hyderabad House in New Delhi. The meeting that is being billed as unofficial will help in bridging the gap that was created after ignominious exit of Natwar Singh from office..

Greater Kashmir, 21 November 2006

I wont change my stand on Kashmir: Geelani

Srinagar, Nov 20: Whoever gives legitimacy to Indian occupation of J&K would be considered a traitor and an Indian agent, said Syed Ali Geelani, chairman of his faction of the Hurriyat Conference, here on Monday. Speaking at a seminar here titled J&K is again on sale, Geelani referred to his recent interview to a private news channel. During my visit to New Delhi I was interviewed but I wasnt told that Professor Abdul Gani Bhat (of the other Hurriyat) is also participating. While I was talking to the anchor, he suddenly looked behind the curtains and asked Bhat to react to my statement. Quoting Bhat, Geelani said, In the given circumstances everybody has to drink the poison (read join the talks process) and there is no other way. These people are pessimistic that is why they are not coming forward..

Greater Kashmir, 21 November 2006

Opinion: Autonomy revisits-II (MALIK IRHAM)

Status of the Centre-State relationship as existed till 8th August 1953, forms important chapter of history of the State. The relationship was fragile but developed with a hope to live longer or at least till the time, Kashmirs gained confidence in the democratic set up and secular fabric of India. No government on the earth under such circumstances could afford to annoy its innocent subjects, but New Delhi, having created the suspicious situation, should hold itself responsible for destroying the democratic set up and the secular fabric of the State. The State had a Sadr-e-Reyasat, directly elected by the State legislator, as head of the State, Prime Minister as head of the government, dully authorized judicature, and election commission. The State had its independent voice in the name of Radio Kashmir and its own army unit, (JK militia), for assistance of the local police during needy hours..

Indian Express, 22 November 2006

Militants warn Kashmiri Muslims joining Army

Srinagar, November 21: Four militant outfits on Tuesday warned Muslim Kashmiri youths against joining security forces and threatened to target their families and relatives if they chose to do so. Muslim youth of Kashmir should refrain from joining the Indian Army or else their families and relatives will be targeted, a spokesman of the self-styled G-4, comprising Al Nasireen, Farzandan-e-Millat, Save Kashmir Movement and Al Istiqlal, said in a faxed statement. He said joining the security forces was an unforgivable sin and unemployment in the state was no excuse for it as other avenues of earning livelihood were present in abundance. Odd jobs and working as a labourer is far better and dignified than joining the Indian Army, he said. The spokesman said under a conspiracy, Muslims were being inducted into home and hearth battalions, which will not be allowed to succeed..

Greater Kashmir, 22 November 2006

Opinion: Demystifying the jingle of Self Rule (Dr. Riyaz Punjabi)

The two formulas of Demilitarization and Self Rule proposed by the Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharaff as possible solutions to the waxed problem of Kashmir has dominated the political discourse cutting across the ideological and political boundaries

across the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The proposals which were made by General Musharaff on the sidelines of UN meeting last year did not evoke any response from the government at the national level in India. However, the separatist conglomerates as well as mainstream political parties in the state appear to have been fascinated by the proposals. The leaders of these parties are vying with each other in extending their support to these proposals. The proposals, which have an inbuilt capacity for the broader and narrower interpretations, has provided a field day for the political entrepreneurs in indulging in politicking in the name of the proposals..

Kashmir Times, 22 November 2006

Kashmiris await good news (Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani)

Addressing the 61st Session of UN General Assembly President Musharraf made a revelation on Kashmir. He said that Improved relations and the conducive international environment have brought an acceptable solution of this long standing dispute within reach. At least two interesting elements in his reference to Kashmir remain very interesting. One remains embedded in his statement where he informed the world community that We have been engaged in a peace process with India, aimed at confidence building and resolving issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute which have been the source of tension and conflict between the two countries in the past. He also emphasised in several speeches during his visit to the US that Kashmir dispute was to be resolved in accordance with Kashmiris aspirations. In the first quote he makes an announcement in public that a solution on Kashmir is within reach..

Indian Express, 22 November 2006

Christian missionary shot dead in Valley

Mamosa (PATTAN), November 21 : In a major attack on Christian missionaries in Kashmir Valley, a convert, Bashir Ahmad Tantray, was today shot by unidentified gunmen at Mamoosa of Pattan district. Tantray, and engineer with the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department (PDD), was a central figure in the Christian missionary movement led by foreign evangelical groups in the Valley. The 47-year-old Tantray had returned to Mamoosa, his native village, only on Sunday evening after his father had taken ill. This morning he was roaming outside his ancestral house he had left 12 years ago when two unidentified youth shot him from point blank range..

Kashmir Times, 22 November 2006

Two militants killed in Banihal

JAMMU, Nov 21: Security forces claimed to have eliminated two ultras of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) outfit including a section commander at Kawana village of Banihal while two Over Ground Workers (OGWs) were nabbed by the security forces in Chajroo area of Mahore in Udhampur district late last evening. Reports from Banihal said that troops of 23 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) and police today eliminated two ultras of HM outfit in Kawana village of Banihal. Based on specific information of presence of two militants in village Kawana, a joint operation was launched by the police and army last evening. Troops cordoned the whole village and plugged all the escape routes..

Hindustan Times, 23 November 2006

Fighting terror digitally in Jammu & Kashmir cities

In a new push to fight urban terror attacks, the Jammu and Kashmir police department has digitally mapped both Srinagar and Jammu, installed secret cameras at 32 vulnerable public places, and wired police squads with Global Positioning System (GPS) devices in both the cities, say police officials. The high-resolution surveillance cameras have already captured immediate footage of two grenade blasts at Dal Gate, the entry to the lakeside boulevard, and at the Batmaloo bus station and a suicide attack at the Standard Hotel at Lal Chowk, the city's main square. An image taken by a secret police camera shows one of the terrorists who raided a Srinagar hotel last month. He was killed minutes later. The attackers, however, had their backs to the cameras in all cases, preventing identification.

Greater Kashmir, 23 November 2006

14 years on, poor Gujjar woman fights for her missing son (NASEER A GANAI)

Srinagar, Nov 22: It has been a long legal battle in search of her disappeared son, but 14 years down the line, Zaitoon Begum, 50, refuses to give up. Her ordeal began on January 26, 1992, when the Dogra Regiment of Army took her son Nazir Ahmad Khan, 23 into custody along with his two neighbors Abdul Majid Khan and Muhammad Ayoub Khan from Gujjarpatti village of Bandipora. Later the two neighbors were released, but Army straightway denied the arrest of Nazir. Though shocked by the denial, Zaitoon didn't give up. She went to the camp many a time. The repeated refusal of the Army forced her to move to the High Court.

Kashmir Times, 23 November 2006

Editorial: Peaceful solution of J&K

..Unilateralism has so far failed to make any progress towards a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute. A settlement to be durable, if not permanent, has to be acceptable to all the parties concerned by safeguarding the dignity of all of them. So a consensus has to be built up in support of the quest of a peaceful settlement through dialogue, both with Pakistan and all the concerned groups of the disturbed state. The opposition to the process of dialogue by the saffron brigade should be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. What, however, is most unfortunate is the ostrich like attitude of the Congress in Jammu and Kashmir by denying the existence of a Kashmir problem and trying to outdo the Hindu fundamentalists in this regard.

The Tribune, 23 November 2006

Ceasefire completes three years (S.P. Sharma)

Jammu, November 22: Villages on the border of Jammu and Kashmir are humming with normal activity as the ceasefire between India and Pakistan completes three years. However, infiltration of terrorists from the Pakistani soil has not stopped. The two countries had, for the first time in 56 years, ordered a ceasefire on the night of November 25, 2003. The nearly 1,126 km-long international border and the LoC has witnessed calm, except a couple of stray incidents of bullets being fired, during the past 36 months. Doubts were initially expressed whether the ceasefire would hold or not. However, the barren lands on both sides, right up to the point zero on the border, has turned green by

the farmers..

The Tribune, 23 November 2006

Opinion: Afzals hanging (J. Sri Raman)

THE death sentence meted out to Mohammed Afzal under the Indian Constitution is not just in any way. This is not a line from any appeal for commutation of the punishment decreed by the Supreme Court for Afzal Guru. It is a quote from a section of the Hindutva camp that does not find the punishment harsh enough. An outfit in Tamil Nadu called the Federation of Hindu Organisations has called upon President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, with whom a mercy petition for Afzal is pending, to set aside the death sentence. Sounding as pious as the Fallen Angel citing the scripture, the federation asks Mr Kalam to recommend punishment as prescribed (according to it) by the Shariat and the Quran..

Greater Kashmir, 24 November 2006

Mirwaiz Umar visits Tahab

Srinagar: Hurriyat Conference faction chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Thursday described the grenade attack on a mosque in Tahab Pulwama, two weeks ago, as a conspiracy to give sectarian color to the resistance movement. Addressing people at Tahab on Thursday, Mirwaiz condemned the attack and lauded people for maintaining calm and defeating evil designs of enemies. Demanding impartial probe into the incident, he said, whatever his political affiliations the attacker should be exposed. Mirwaiz met the relatives of those who died in the incident and expressed solidarity with them..

Daily Excelsior, 24 November 2006

Afzal hanging issue rocks Parliament

New Delhi, Nov 23: The issue of hanging of Parliament attack convict Mohammad Afzal Guru today rocked both Houses of Parliament after slogan-chanting BJP-Shiv Sena members trooped into their wells demanding that he be sent to the gallows without any delay and mercy. The Samajwadi Party members also raised slogans and entered the wells of both Houses, but on a different issue accusing the Congress-led UP Government at the Centre of attempting to oust the Mulayam Singh Yadav Government in Uttar Pradesh and demanding the release of Abu Azmi, who was arrested in Mumbai for staging a rally despite ban orders..

Kashmir Times, 24 November 2006

Editorial: Elusive healthcare services

.That chicken pox epidemic hit Basohli has to bank on a team of doctors rushing from Jammu or Kathua to be able to deal with a crisis that is as yet in its infancy is a sad reflection of the poor health-care facilities available in the semi-urban areas, leave alone the rural areas where even the very basic health care remains totally elusive. Six decades after independence and a decade after the cyber space connected the world into a more easily communicable one, the rural areas in Jammu and Kashmir, like most other far flung areas of the country, still remain deprived in many respects. Even for a minor ailment like a fractured bone, the rural people are made to traverse long distances to the district hospital or sometimes even forced to visit the two capitals of the state.

Greater Kashmir, 24 November 2006

Rajouri man brutally tortured in custody

Srinagar, Nov 23: The State Human Rights Commission on Thursday took cognizance of brutal torture of a man by police and death of child due to negligence of a doctor, and directed the Director General of Police and the principal Medical College Jammu to present their reports about the cases before the commission. On November 21, 2006, a complaint was filed before the SHRC by Muhammad Maufouz, son of Tasaduq Hussain of Darhal Rajouri alleging that his uncle Ghulam Qadir Malik son of Hadiyatullah was brutally tortured by police. The complainant said that on November 1 the police personnel of Darhal police station lifted Ghulam Qadir. During custody he has been brutally tortured and third degree was applied on him, Maufouz said..

The Tribune, 24 November 2006

Sainiks barge into Geelanis conference

Jammu, November 23: Activists of the Shiv Sena and the Janata Party gatecrashed at the venue of the press conference of separatist leader Syeed Ali Shah Geelani, here today and raised slogans against him. The police was posted around the Press Club where Mr Geelani addressed reporters, but activists of the two parties sneaked there and raised slogans against him and Pakistan. Those accompanying Mr Geelani also raised slogan. The police pushed Shiv Sena and Janata Party activists out from the hall. Mr Geelani criticised the Congress-led coalition government in the state for inviting outsiders to acquire land on lease at Gulmarg and other tourist places for building hotels and other infrastructure..

Daily Excelsior, 25 November 2006

Working group suggests measures

Jammu, Nov 24: Although meeting of the working group on Confidence Building Measures remained inclusive, representatives of various political parties put forward their view points and suggested measures to be taken by the Government for improving conditions. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mohammed Hamid Ansari. Six issues were thoroughly discussed in today's meeting. These issues included measures to be taken to improve conditions of the people affected by militancy, schemes to be formulated for the rehabilitation of orphans and widows. Issue regarding relaxation of conditions for persons who have forsworn militancy was also discussed. They also discussed approach to be formulated for the return of Kashmiri youth, who have crossed over to the areas controlled by Pakistan..

Kashmir Times, 25 November 2006

Opinion: Militancy, frustrating a solution (H.L Shishoo)

India and Pakistan may have recognized the importance of building a workable relationship on the basis of common interests but as they stand on the ground, only time will tell to what extent they can make constructive adjustments on vital issues, particularly on Kashmir. If restoration of peace and economic stability is the preference, they must learn to respect not only each others frontiers but each others national concerns as well. There is a formidable weight of international understanding behind them that should help them to facilitate a workable solution in Kashmir, in the long run. That

Pakistan is showing some understanding of a diversified pluralistic world, not dominated by ideological confrontation, should make understanding the difficult things easy between the two countries..

The Hindu, 25 November 2006

Four Lashkar-e-Taiba militants killed in Kashmir

Srinagar: Three Lashker-e-Taiba militants and a darwaish (hermit) were killed while a Hizb-ul Mujahideen insurgent surrendered in Jammu and Kashmir since Thursday evening, police said on Friday. Militants shot dead one Farooq Ahmed Dar (38) after dragging him out OF his house at Panzoo-Tral, 45 km from here, on Thursday night, a police spokesman said. Police have launched a hunt to nab the militants responsible for the murder of Dar. Three LeT militants, all locals, were killed in an encounter with police in the upper reaches of Hanzer area under Marwah police station in Doda district on Thursday..

Daily Excelsior, 25 November 2006

Editorial: Friends turn foes

Only the naïve will be surprised by the report of a clash between two separatist groups outside the headquarters of the moderate Hurriyat Conference in Srinagars posh Rajbagh locality. Leaders and workers of the Islamic Student League (ISL) and the Democratic Political Movement (DPM) had taken on each other in a free-for-all. The fight it seems was over the control of the premises that the DPM, a constituent of the Syed Ali Shah Geelani-led Hurriyat, presently occupies. The ISL came out the worst sufferer as its leader and his associates were mercilessly beaten up. It is a case of friends having turned foes with the passage of time. This is not the first time that such an occurrence has taken place on the secessionist spectrum in the Kashmir region..

Daily Excelsior, 26 November 2006

Armys operations fail in Bandipore, Shopian

Srinagar, Nov 25: With two of the joint operations of Army and J&K Police failing and a number of holed up militants escaping in Bandipore and Shopian, as many as 9 soldiers have got killed and two more injured. One civilian and two militants have also died in these operations. Informed sources told the Excelsior that the overnight gunbattle between militants and security forces at Rampur, Bandipore, claimed four soldiers of 2-Grenadiers and one Constable of SOG Bandipore, namely Farooq Ahmed, even as two more soldiers were left wounded and all the holed up militants managed to escape from the cordoned area. As already reported, Army and SOG Bandipore had launched the cordon and search operation over a specific information on Friday afternoon..

Daily Excelsior, 26 November 2006

Opinion: Why is Indian Army losing its cool? (Dr. Jitendra Singh)

One of the surest ways to ruin an Army is to assign it civilian operations and expect the results which it was never trained for. One of the surest ways to spoil an Army soldier is to ask him to share assignment with a state policeman and then expect him to remain unaffected by the menace of expecting bribes, playing truant and all other ills that plague a civil cop. Over 15 years of deployment in anti-militancy operations in Kashmir has

been a great learning experience for the Indian Army but what both the Army personnel as well as their political bosses overlook is that in the process the Army soldier has inadvertently unlearned much of what was once a part of the rich Army tradition subtly passed down from one generation of Army personnel to the next. Reoccurring incidents of suicide among Army..

Greater Kashmir, 26 November 2006

JKLF returns to downtown roots after 17 yrs

Srinagar, Nov 25: The opening of an office by the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front at Bohri Kadal on Sunday would bring into spotlight the resistance struggles that were launched from the old city called downtown in local parlance.

According to the JKLF, decision to shift to the place at a time when new offices of political outfits are mushrooming in posh Rajbagh and Hyderpora areas was taken to acknowledge the contribution of the downtown people since 1931 and particularly in the past 17 years of conflict in the state. In fact, observers say the chequered history of Kashmir is incomplete without the mention of downtown Srinagar..

Daily Excelsior, 27 November 2006

Armymen summoned by Doodipora panel

Srinagar, Nov 26: The one-man Inquiry Commission probing the killing of four boys at Doodipora early this year has asked the Army personnel, including a Captain, who were allegedly involved in the firing, to appear before it on December 11. There is prime-facie material involving the Captain and the Army personnel of 33 Rashtriya Rifles with the incident of firing on February 22 resulting in the death of four innocent boys and that these allegations, if remain un-rebutted, are likely to prejudicially affect their reputation, the Commission said. It is therefore, necessary to inquire into the conduct of the said Captain and the Army personnel (called hereafter the defendants) in this probe..

Kashmir Times, 27 November 2006

CBMs failed to improve situation in J&K: JKPM

Jammu, Nov 26: A constituent of the Mirwaiz faction of the All Party Hurriyat Conference, the Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM) concluded a three day tour of far flung areas of the Udhampur as a part of its mass contact programme. A five member delegation led by the chairman, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, visited Reasi, Mahore, Gool and Gulabgarh and interacted with people. He criticized the rigid attitude adopted by the Government of India towards the Kashmir issue..

Kashmir Times, 27 November 2006

Editorial: Indefensible defence forces

Shutters were suddenly pulled down in the Cantonment Market of Satwari, Jammu on Friday morning, when some personnel of the Corp of Military Police manhandled some shopkeepers over a minor dispute over the parking of a car. A fortnight earlier too a similar fracas had taken place over an apparently trivial incident around Bikram Chowk. Unfortunately, such incidents of army personnel clashing with members of the police and the public are getting increasingly frequent all over India. This is particularly unfortunate because the armed forces, as the defenders of country's frontier and freedom, are idolised

by the masses and are rated among the best and the least corrupt of all our state institutions. Yet, such incidents are getting increasingly common and that suggests that something somewhere within the armed forces have gone wrong..

Daily Excelsior, 27 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Bad politics drives out good economics

..As the leader of the ruling coalition the Congress has cut a sorry figure. At the same time its alliance partner Peoples Democratic Party has sought to indulge in scoring a point. It has preferred a verbal duel with the National Conference instead of pressing home its advantage. So far as the State's premier political outfit is concerned it too has ignored its own pioneering role in this matter. The controversy has surrounded the allotment of land to non-State subjects. Those opposing the Governments move want such benefit to be restricted to the State subjects alone. The Government has tried to explain that it has found a middle path. Under its scheme the land will be given only to permanent residents who in turn will be entitled to enlist the cooperation of non-State subjects..

Daily Excelsior, 27 November 2006

Opinion: Demilitarization in Kashmir (K.K.Khullar)

Among the so-called peace proposals made from time to time such as self-governance, United States of Jammu and Kashmir, Joint Management of the whole of J&K, the latest in the series is the Demilitarisation of Kashmir which means complete withdrawal of troops not only from the borders but also from such urban centres like Kupwara, Baramulla and Srinagar. The term Demilitarisation was first used during the discussions at the time of finalizing the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 on the conclusion of the First World War. Thereafter, it has been regularly used, mis-used and abused although not in that order. Literally the term means the removal of armed forces and ammunitions from the war-zone. However, in the Kashmir context there is a distinction between the troops returning to barracks on completion of internal security task assigned to them and troops being completely moved out of the area including from border defense duties. The votaries of demilitarization in Kashmir do not understand this..

Greater Kashmir, 28 November 2006

UJC sets conditions for Ceasefire

Srinagar, Nov 27: The conglomerate of militant outfits United Jihad Council (UJC) Monday set three conditions for announcing a truce in Jammu and Kashmir. Syed Salahudin the UJC chairman and supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen in a telephonic interview to a local news agency CNS offered a conditional truce. The CNS quoting Syed Salahudin said, We are ready to announce a truce even today but for that India will have to accept our three conditions. All the prisoners should be released unconditionally, strength of troops be cut down to pre-1989 position, and human rights violations should be stopped. I took up the gun as a last resort and I would be the happiest person if guns on both the sides stop roaring. However, India for proving its sincerity would have take some major steps, Salahudin said..

Daily Excelsior, 28 November 2006

Militant killed, 3 escape in Qazigund

Srinagar, Nov 27: Even as one militant got killed, three more of his group managed to escape in a joint operation of Police and security forces at Sesman village in Qazigund area of south Kashmir today. SP Kulgam, S P Pani, said that information regarding the movement and plans of some militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba to strike on a security forces convoy in Qazigund area had been pouring in from certain village close to Srinagar-Jammu national highway since Friday last. He said that working on this information, troops of Rashtriya Rifles 9th Bn with Police launched a major search operation last evening. In the morning today, searches were simultaneously conducted in about a dozen village..

Kashmir Times, 28 November 2006

Self rule-the only solution-I (Sadiq Ali)

Kashmir is a saga of broken promises, above-turns, and half hearted initiatives. Because of the past experiences Kashmiris judge every move with suspicion and every leader with contempt. It is a dangerous trend and I am afraid the moderates might be the biggest casualty if the present stalemate continues. While Narsimha Rao offered the sky, Prime Minister Manmohan has more specifically declared that he would consider anything short of cessation. Musharraf too has climbed down considerably. They have agreed to zero-in to a solution that is acceptable. Self Rule may be the answer? Kashmir continues to be on the front burner. With the peace process temporarily stalled, a lot of rhetoric has once again started to emanate from Delhi and Islamabad..

Greater Kashmir, 28 November 2006

Editorial: Lawyers and the Law

Kashmir Bar Association by raising its voice against human rights violations, protesting against atrocities, fighting against social injustice, crusading against moral corruption, agitating over political issues and identifying itself with peoples movements is not doing something unusual. Lawyers have been a part of struggle for restoration of rights of the people of the state since the time an organized struggle was started in 1931 against the feudal autocracy. If seen in historical perspective it were young lawyers, who later on played key roles in Kashmir politics, on their return from Aligarh Muslim University and other institutions joined the movement for restoration of peoples rights and ending of the feudal autocratic rule. With their dedication and commitment they immediately shot to prominence and earned a distinctive place in the contemporary Kashmir history..

Daily Excelsior, 28 November 2006

Editorial: Wake-up call again

A report in this newspaper about three murders within 24 hours in this district should make every concerned citizen get up and take notice. It confirms the worst fears. Gangs have emerged for whom snuffing lives out of human beings does not cause any qualms of conscience. They have served notices about their ugly presence now and then. A perusal of their track record shows that they find suburbs handy for carrying out their dastardly actions. It cant be just be a coincidence that they have focussed more than once on Trikuta Nagar. Some of the more sensational killings have taken place in this

comparatively new locality. Only recently it has been exposed to the brutal assassination of three members of a business family. Not very long ago it was rocked by the gory slaying of parents of a well-known doctor. Why do the criminals find it a favourite hunting ground?

Indian Express, 29 November 2006

Hizbul dangles ceasefire again, this time rope longer

Srinagar, November 28 : Setting again the talk about a ceasefire in Kashmir abuzz, Hizbul Mujahideen supremo Syed Salahuddin has set three conditions for holding the fire in the state. The conditions are release of prisoners, demilitarisation and end to human rights violations. Significantly, Salahuddin this time omits the demand for consideration of Kashmir as a disputed state, otherwise a staple condition for its previous offers of truce to New Delhi. We are ready to announce a truce even today but for that India will have to accept our three conditions. Release of all prisoners, cut the strength of troops to pre-1989 position and end of human rights violations, Salahuddin says in a telephonic interview to a local news agency. In fact, Hizb supremo expresses a passionate wish for the peace in Kashmir..

Kashmir Times, 29 November 2006

Afzal Guru: a victim of his own surrender and oppression by BSF, STF (Syed Basharat)

Baramulla, Nov 28: For Afzal Guru and his family, it is the label of being a surrendered militant that proved to be the biggest bane. While his much publicized letter to his lawyer Sushil Kumar, which was rejected by the judge during his trial, mentions how he was forced to work for the Special Task Force (STF), his wife Tabassum gives more details about the kind of harassment the family went through even before his alleged involvement in the parliament attack case. Tabassum recalls that after they were married in 1998, she realized how much victimized Afzal Guru felt because he was virtually unable to lead a normal life. Guru was a militant and had surrendered in 1992 at Jagir Sopore BSF camp, after which he was given a surrender certificate by the BSF, she said. From then on, Afzal had to attend the BSF camp every Sunday, which was a mandatory for all the surrendered militants in the area..

Kashmir Times, 29 November 2006

Gulmarg land lease issue: stirring a hornets nest (Zubair A. Dar)

Srinagar, Nov 28: The controversy is far from over. Though the state government, after a political stir over the leasing of land in Gulmarg, withheld the decision till a cabinet review, the de-escalation is no where in sight. At stake is the government's credibility, and more importantly, the larger interest of the Jammu and Kashmiri people of that has till now been protected by the state subject law. While the government is most likely to come out with an amended policy, one should not expect a complete roll back as it would mean a victory, not only for the separatists, but also for the opposition National Conference that has questioned the competence of the state cabinet. But the days ahead look most challenging for Azads coalition government as different quarters have now started challenging the sense behind the rush in erecting tourist infrastructure..

Daily Excelsior, 29 November 2006

Hizb Div Commdr Suhail Faisal killed

Srinagar, Nov 28: Suhail Faisal, one of Hizbul Mujahideens most wanted commanders in Jammu and Kashmir, has been killed by security forces at his hideout which he had established in the residential locality of the former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his relatives in Baba Mohalla of Bijbehara township in south Kashmir. Meanwhile, suspected militants have fired upon the wife of one-time Hizbul Muhajideen chief Abdul Majeed Dar in the Srinagar outskirts of Chhanapora and 9 civilian, including 5 tourists, have been left wounded in a grenade attack at the tourist attraction of Tangmarg in Baramulla district today. Informed sources told the Excelsior that late last night troops of 3 Para, Rashtriya Rifles 01 Bn and District Police Anantnag laid siege to the interior locality of Baba Mohalla in Bijbehara township in Anantnag district..

Kashmir Times, 29 November 2006

Six tourists among 11 injured in Tangmarg grenade attack

Srinagar, Nov 28: In a major attempt to sabotage tourist trade at Gulmarg, some unidentified person today hurled a grenade at a tourist vehicle in Tangmarg leaving six Keralite tourists, the vehicle driver and four locals injured. Three among the injured tourists and the driver were rushed to Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) here, where the condition of three of them is stated to be critical. The critically injured were identified as Krishen Kumar, Dharam Raj and Ashok Kumar. I was in my shop that I heard a bang on the road outside. As I reached the spot, several tourists and locals were lying injured, said Shabir Ahmad, a Tangmarg resident attending the injured tourists at SKIMS. We ferried six of the injured tourists to the hospital as none of them were in a condition to look after themselves..

Daily Excelsior, 30 November 2006

People fed up with hollow slogans: CM

Srinagar, Nov 29: Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today said that people of the State are fed up with hollow slogans and peace disturbing attitude created by vested interests. Addressing a huge public meeting organized by Welfare Forum of the area at Vilgam in Kupwara district, the Chief Minister said that, falsehood and deceitful tactics to led astray people donot hold water for long time. Truth always prevails and exploiters get exposed Mr Azad said, adding that his strength lies in the support of general masses, who are the real fountainhead of power. .Thanking people for rendering him fullest support in his endeavors to eradicate corruption from the administration and book corrupt, he said his every step taken during last one year for the development and benefit of State and putting shattered economy back on rails received enthusiastic support from all sections of the society..

Daily Excelsio, 30 November 2006

Editorial: A way of life?

Has this disclosure really shocked anyone? The State Vigilance Organisation has caught 45 officers red-handed while accepting bribe this year. It is an exemplary curative action. The amount has varied from Rs 500 to Rs 20000. It may appear to be small. But what matters in these instances is not the quantity of money involved but the fraudulently

unlawful conduct on the part of concerned government employees. The SVO has registered 43 trap cases. By no means can the number of nabbed officials be called insignificant. Indeed, the figure of cases is also fairly high. Yet, one is constrained to notice that there is no ripple in either society or bureaucracy. Is this because those ensnared are perceived to be small fishes? There is popular perception that those in top echelons of power go scot-free even after they are booked for one offence or the other. Such thinking may not be without any reason.

Kashmir Times, 30 November 2006

APHC (A) to begin exercise on demilitarization, self-rule proposals

Srinagar, Nov 29: Hurriyat Conference (A) will go for an extensive home exercise tomorrow to give a final shape to its demilitarization and self-governance proposals prior to its talks with governments of Pakistan and India. The executive and general councils besides the working committee of Hurriyat (A) will meet at their Raj Bagh headquarter here tomorrow in this connection. The recent interview of Syed Sallah-u-Din, chairman United Jihad Council (UJC) and supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) regarding talks, cease fire and unity among separatists would also come under discussion..

Kashmir Times, 30 November 2006

Editorial: Time for a positive response

Despite several set backs, there is once again some positive sign of break-through on peace process in the sub-continent, specially in terms of Kashmir, where pace of initiatives for peace has not moved beyond the simple rhetoric. Yet fresh statements coming from the Hizb chief imbue optimism about a ceasefire if these are taken up seriously by both India and Pakistan, more by the former. While public gaze is focused on the foreign secretary level talks, the officially informal visit of the Pakistan foreign minister and his meeting with Indian foreign minister and Prime Minister Manmohan Singhs impending visit to Islamabad, equally significant is the fact that Syed Salah-ud-Din of the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), the chairman of the United Jihad Council (UJC), has spoken and contributed his bit on behalf of those little known people who count for more than others in shaping the future scenario of Jammu and Kashmir..

Greater Kashmir, 30 November 2006

Editorial: Note of Caution

Kashmir politics is returning to its roots this is how newspaper described the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front opening its office in Bohari-Kadal on the Nallamar Road and the National Conference holding a public rally within the precincts of Shahi Masjid adjacent to Mujahid Manzil once hub of political activities and now in ruins. What was so significant about these otherwise innocuous political developments to attract headlines in newspapers is a moot point. And what prompted the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front to open its office in the now forlorn part of the city of Srinagar? Or what reminded the National Conference to revive its activities in its old bastion has engaged the minds of political analysts. Does it symbolize a change in the political spectrum of the state or does it suggest of some new whiff in political breeze sweeping across the state in the wake of Pakistan President Musharraf having taken a departure from the traditional stand of his

country on Kashmir issue.

The Hindu, 30 November 2006

Hizb threat leaves students, teachers worried

Srinagar: A reported threat by militant outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen to some public schools in the Kashmir valley to close down has left both parents and their wards anxious.

According to newspaper clippings, the Hizb has sent out these threats to various Army-run schools, the Delhi Public School and the Vision Public School, to name a few.

Students and teaching staff are of the unanimous view that their future and their careers will be at stake if these schools shut down..