

Daily Excelsior, 3 November 2008

### **194 civilians exchangesides at Chakan-Da-Bagh**

JAMMU, Nov 3: As many as 194 civilians today crossed Line of Control (LoC) from Chakan-Da-Bagh in Poonch district in weekly Poonch-Rawlakote bus service. While 116 civilians were on board Poonch-Rawlakote bus service, 78 civilians travelled to this side from Rawlakote in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Out of 116 civilians, who went to PoK from this part of the State after crossing Chakan-Da-Bagh weekly cross-LoC point, 53 were first timers who left Poonch for PoK to meet their divided family members and relatives

Dawn, 3 November 2008

### **US should help resolve Kashmir issue: Obama: 'Militants, not India, biggest threat to Pakistan'**

WASHINGTON, Nov 2: The United States should try to resolve the Kashmir dispute, says US presidential front-runner Barack Obama while backing American efforts to promote a better understanding between India and Pakistan. 'We should probably try to facilitate a better understanding between Pakistan and India and try to resolve the Kashmir crisis so that they can stay focussed not on India, but on the situation with those militants,' said Mr Obama in an interview to MSNBC

Hindu, 4 November 2008

### **India considers army tunnel network for Kashmir border**

Jammu, November 3: : India is considering building deep tunnels along its borders with China and Pakistan in Kashmir to protect its troops from nuclear, chemical and biological attacks, officials said. "The Northern Command has mooted a proposal and the same will be discussed at army commanders' meeting in New Delhi today", defence spokesman Col. D K Kachari said on Monday

Daily Excelsior, 4 November 2008

### **Omar files nomination amid shutdown in Ganderbal**

SRINAGAR, Nov 3: National Conference (NC) leaders Omar Abdullah and Mian Altaf Ahmed were among three candidates who filed their nomination papers in Ganderbal and Kangan Assembly segments for Phase-II of polling amid total shutdown and hostile slogans in Ganderbal today. Polling is scheduled to take place in two segments of Ganderbal district (Ganderbal, Kangan) and four segments of Rajouri district (Rajouri, Darhal, Kalakot, Nowshera) in Phase-II of Assembly elections in Jammu & Kashmir on November 23

Daily Excelsior, 4 November 2008

### **Cong clears 40 more candidates**

JAMMU, Nov 3: Congress high command tonight announced the list of forty (40) candidates for the second, third, fourth and fifth phase of Assembly elections in the Jammu and Kashmir State. The party sources said that Screening Committee led by senior Congress leader and Union Minister for External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee during marathon meeting in New Delhi finally cleared the list of six candidates for the phase second, five for the third, eighteen for phase fourth and eleven for phase fifth of the elections being held on November 17, 23, 30, December 7 and 13, respectively

Daily Excelsior, 5 November 2008

### **India, Pak clash on Kashmir in UN panel**

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 4: India and Pakistan clashed in a key United Nations committee with New Delhi firmly telling Islamabad that its advocacy for "self-

determination" for people of Jammu and Kashmir is "unacceptable" and constitutes "clear interference" in the country's internal affairs. The people of the State, India emphasised, have already exercised the right by participating repeatedly in free and fair elections and raking up of the issue by Pakistan was "unwarranted"

Daily Excelsior, 5 November 2008

**Infiltration bid foiled in Makwal sector, 2 injured**

JAMMU, Nov 4: With election process picking up, Pakistan Rangers and army tried to push a group of at least five to six militants from International Border of Makwal in Niki Tawi area of Jammu sector late last night but their attempt was reported to have been foiled by the Border Security Force (BSF). Police officers, who also visited the spot later, said fencing was found cut from Pakistan side. Though there was no visible sign of any successful infiltration from Makwal, they didn't rule out possibility of intrusions from other places

Daily Excelsior, 6 November 2008

**Ex-MP, MLAs revolt in NC, Cong; join fray**

JAMMU, Nov 5: Prominent leaders of Congress and National Conference including a former MP and MLAs today raised a banner of revolt against the party leadership after they were denied mandate for Assembly elections and jumped into electoral fray from three out of four Assembly segments in Rajouri district on the last date of filing nominations. Trouble was also brewing up in Congress in Kathua district with four prominent party leaders including a former All India Youth Congress Secretary and an ex-president of Kathua Municipality announcing their decision to contest the election against official party candidates

Daily Excelsior, 7 November 2008

**Hurriyat leader's daughter, 4 ex-Ministers, getting into fray**

SRINAGAR, Nov 5: Even as the National Conference (NC) stalwart Chowdhary Mohammad Ramzan filed Kupwara district's first nomination with a demonstration of traditional enthusiasm of his supporters in Handwara today, slain separatist leader Abdul Gani Lone's advocate daughter was among 33 other aspirants who obtained their nomination forms from respective Returning Officers (ROs) for five segments of Handwara, Kupwara, Lolab, Langet and Karnah. Meanwhile, maintaining huge response of Phase-I of polling in Kashmir valley, as many as 25 candidates have filed their nomination papers till expiry of the stipulated time in the Phase-II segments of Ganderbal and Kangan in Ganderbal district

Daily Excelsior, 9 November 2008

**Militant who operated in Chechnya among 8 killed**

JAMMU, Nov 8: In two important successful operations across the regions today, Army and police gunned down eight top militants of Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfits-four each in Doda and Poonch districts. An infiltration attempt, aimed at disrupting November 17 elections in Poonch district, was foiled by troops on Line of Control (LoC) at Sabjian killing four intruders. A search was on for two others

Tribune, 9 November 2008

**Encounters in Poonch, Doda; 7 ultras killed**

Troops of the Bihar regiment of the Army and the BSF foiled an infiltration bid near CRP Dhok just close to the Line of Control (LoC) in the Sawjian sector in Poonch today and killed three militants. Security forces spotted a group of 3-4 militants near CRP Dhok at around 8.30 am. Troops asked them to surrender but the militants fired at them. The troops fired back and in the ensuing gunbattle, which continued till

evening, three militants were killed. Naib Subedar Thappa of the Army was also injured in the encounter and was shifted to nearby hospital, the sources said

Daily Excelsior, 10 November 2008

### **18 slain politicians' kin contesting elections in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR, Nov 9: Guns and grenades may have traumatized hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris in the last 20 years of insurgency and counter-insurgency but these have failed to prevent family members of mainstream politicians from participating in the Assembly elections conducted by Election Commission of India. The sympathy factor in the electorate has been so strong that the slain politicians' sons or daughters, fielded by prominent pro-India political parties, have rarely lost their first election in Kashmir valley in the last 12 years. In the current Assembly elections, as many as 18 of the slain politicians' close relatives have so far jumped into the fray in Valley alone

Tribune, 10 November 2008

### **Fighting for Lone legacy in Kupwara**

An animated contest is building up in Kupwara where daughter of one of the most respected Kashmiri separatist leaders, Abdul Gani Lone, who was slain by militants in 2002, would fight not only National Conference and PDP candidates but also hostility of her brothers, who are political heirs to Lone's legacy in the region. Shabnam Lone, a member of the Supreme Court Bar Association, says hundreds of party workers who once served her father almost forced her to file nomination papers

Daily Excelsior, 11 November 2008

### **Religious heads hold sway in Kargil**

JAMMU, Nov 10: Shia dominated Kargil district comprising two Assembly segments of Kargil and Zaskar is all set to witness a keen contest between two religious institutions of international repute, which are clearly divided in their support to National Conference and Congress. Much to the advantage of National Conference, which has been trying to stage a comeback in Kargil after losing both the seats Kargil in 2002 Assembly poll and Zaskar in 2006 by-poll, Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil, Chief Executive Councilor (CEC) Kachu Ali Khan has come out openly in support of the two party candidates

Daily Excelsior, 12 November 2008

### **Bigwigs join fray with huge rallies**

JAMMU, Nov 11: National Panthers Party (NPP) MLA and former Minister, Harshdev Singh, who is seeking a third term from Ramnagar Assembly segment in Udhampur district, today filed his nomination paper from the constituency. BJP leader Baldev Sharma, who has lost election from Reasi twice, albeit with narrow margin, also filed his paper from the same segment today

Daily Excelsior, 13 November 2008

### **Vote without any fear: CEC**

SRINAGAR, Nov 12: Urging voters to cast their votes without any fear, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, N Gopalaswami today said nobody can prevent people against taking part in the democratic process. Talking to mediapersons after day-long meeting with officials and leaders of different political parties here this evening, Mr Gopalaswami said, "we will provide secure and conducive atmosphere to voters so that he or she can vote fearlessly in the polls."

Tribune, 14 November 2008

### **LUTF, Cong workers clash, one hurt**

With barely four days left for the elections, the campaigning in Leh has assumed a feverish pitch. The Congress and LUTF, the main contenders in the region, are using every means to win the support of voters. An LUTF worker was injured and a vehicle was completely damaged after a minor clash broke out between LUTF and Congress workers. A counter case has been registered by the police. Sources said both LUTF and Congress were leaving no stone unturned in wooing women's self help groups and youth associations of villages, who were the determining factors in mobilising voters in their respective villages

Daily Excelsior, 15 November 2008

### **Heavy snowfall, thunder storms hit Kashmir**

SRINAGAR, Nov 14: Heavy snowfall and thunderstorms hit Kashmir valley marking early onset of winter as normal life was paralyzed and all flights, including those scheduled to carry Haj pilgrims, cancelled today. The 434-kilometre long Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway and a number of roads to far flung and remote areas in the Kashmir valley were also closed due to snowfall. However, Srinagar-Jammu Highway remained open for normal vehicular traffic

Daily Excelsior, 15 November 2008

### **No postponement of polls: EC**

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, Nov 14: The Election Commission today rejected National Conference demand for postponement of Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir in view of snowfall, saying the first phase of the elections would be held as scheduled. "No decision has been taken by the Commission for postponement for first phase of polling in the State (due on November 17) and contingency plans are there for transporting poll personnel", Deputy Election Commissioner R Bhattacharya told reporters while replying a question on demand by NC to defer the polls in view of unseasonal heavy snowfall in Kashmir valley

Tribune, 15 November 2008

### **Simplicity rules in Poonch**

The campaign ends tomorrow in Poonch district, which goes to polls on November 17, and the parties are busy giving final touches to their political plans. These outfits are targeting even those who can't come to rallies; hence 'nukkad' meetings and door-to-door campaign are the order of the day in three Assembly constituencies --- Poonch-Haveli, Mendhar and Surankote. Besides, the leaders along with workers brave threat from militants by campaigning late into the night, even in rural pockets where security remains a cause of concern

Daily Excelsior, 16 November 2008

### **Campaign ends for 10 segments**

JAMMU, Nov 15: Campaigning for all 10 Assembly segments of four districts including Poonch in Jammu region, Leh and Kargil in Ladakh and Bandipora in Kashmir, which are going to polls in first phase on November 17, came to an end this evening while 18 candidates today filed their nomination papers in Reasi and Udhampur districts, which will go to polls in fourth phase on December 7. Curtains came down on the campaigning in Poonch, Mendhar and Surankote Assembly segments of Poonch district, the only district in Jammu region going to polling in first phase on Monday. The State is going to elections in a total of seven phases

Daily Excelsior, 16 November 2008

### **Rebels, defectors galore in Jammu region**

JAMMU, Nov 15: Almost all major political parties have been plagued by rebellion with several prominent political leaders changing sides in the ongoing seven phase elections to the State Assembly in Jammu region. Not only the rebels but a number of political defectors are also in the fray, as per list of the candidates released by major political parties so far

Tribune, 16 November 2008

### **For them, poll a hope to unite with their families**

Kerni (Poonch), November 15 Till a few years ago, the residents here refused to publicly admit family linkages in Pakistan across the Line of Control (LoC) simply to avoid being put on the 'suspect' list of the security forces. Today, every other person is rattling out their list of relatives they have not seen since India and Pakistan were partitioned because these people remained in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK). Now, the objective is common - to tell candidates that they will only get votes if they promise to help unite separated families

Daily Excelsior, 19 November 2008

### **Farooq optimistic about formation of next Govt**

JAMMU, Nov 19: Though election to 77 Assembly constituencies is yet to be held yet the National Conference patron and former Chief Minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah is very much optimistic about the formation of next Government in Jammu and Kashmir by his party. The intensity of Dr Abdullah's optimism can be gauged from the fact that he even announced to strengthen Accountability Commission and frame high-powered Commission to check dowry related harassment of women besides implementation of 6th Pay Commission report

Daily Excelsior, 20 November 2008

### **Tough contest in 5 Kupwara segments**

SRINAGAR, Nov 19: National Conference, which won four of the five Assembly constituencies in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir in 2002 elections, is facing a stiff challenge from PDP and Independent candidates in these seats where polling will be held in the third phase on November 30. The party had only lost in Handwara segment to Ghulam Mohiuddin Sofi a "proxy" candidate fielded by People's Conference founded by slain Hurriyat Conference leader Abdul Gani Lone

Tribune, 20 November 2008

### **Phase-I polls over, cross-LoC bus resumes**

One hundred thirty eight people today crossed the LoC as the Poonch-Rawlakote trans-border bus service resumed after it was put off for a day due to first phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. The weekly movement of cross-LoC bus service which takes place every Monday was put off for a day due to polling in Poonch district. While about 91 people crossed Chakan-da-Bagh LoC point from India to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), 47 others crossed it from PoK to Jammu and Kashmir to meet their relatives, official sources said

Times of India, 22 November 2008

### **India strongly objects to Pakistan comments on J&K polls**

NEW DELH: India on Friday reacted sharply to certain comments by Pakistan on the Jammu and Kashmir polls, saying it indicates Islamabad is not interested in playing a responsible role in the region which it should in its own interest. ( Watch ) External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vishnu Prakash termed as most unfortunate the comments by Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Muhammad Sadiq that polls in Jammu and Kashmir do not reflect authentic expression of aspirations of the people

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Hindu, 24 November 2008

**62 per cent polling in J&K**

GANDERBAL/KANGAN: Defying the boycott call given by separatists, a large number of people turned up for the second phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Ganderbal district recorded 62 per cent polling. The overall polling percentage in Rajouri and Ganderbal districts was put at 59.09 per cent. Briefing journalists, Divisional Commissioner Masaud Samoon said elections in the two districts went off smoothly. He said 60.02 per cent exercised their franchise in Kangan constituency while 44 per cent voted in Ganderbal constituency

Tribune, 24 November 2008

**About 65% turnout**

About 65 per cent of polling was registered in six constituencies of Ganderbal and Rajouri districts in the second phase of elections today, which passed off peacefully barring stray incidents of stone pelting in Ganderbal area. The tentative poll percentage, which is expected to rise further with more information from some areas, has shown a remarkable rise in the overall percentage as compared to the last elections held in 2002. There were no reports of any violence and some of the EVMs rendered non-functional had been replaced immediately in Ganderbal district

Daily Excelsior, 24 November 2008

**Massive participation, enthusiasm in Phase-2 of polling**

GANDERBAL, Nov 23: Much like in the Phase-I of polling in Bandipore district on November 17th, voters in both segments of Ganderbal district in Kashmir valley today defied the separatist leadership's call for boycott to the Assembly election and turned out in large numbers to exercise their right of franchise. Contrary to many speculations---which had turned serious in the wake of at least six grenade attacks in the last two days and killing of two civilians in Police firing in Baramulla yesterday---turnout was an astonishing 59.30% in Kangan and 51.75% in Ganderbal

Daily Excelsior, 25 November 2008

**Record 85 candidates join electoral fray in Kathua**

JAMMU, Nov 24: Several candidates displayed their show of strength with bigwigs including rebels of Congress and BJP jumping into the fray on last day of nominations in Kathua district, which goes to polls in fifth phase on December 13. Scrutiny of nominations will be held tomorrow while the candidates can withdraw their papers upto November 27. A total of 85 candidates, a record for any district of Jammu region in five phases so far, have joined the electoral fray for five segments of Kathua district. Thirty eight candidates filed their papers on last day of nominations today

Daily Excelsior, 25 November 2008

**Udhampur, Reasi abuzz with political activity**

Udhampur, November 24 After the completion of the second phase of the poll in Jammu region, all attention is now being focused on Udhampur and Reasi districts that will go to poll in the fourth phase of Assembly elections on December 7. There is not assembly segment that will form a part of the polling process during its third phase on November 30 in the Jammu division. The next phase here will test the political fortunes of four former ministers. The Udhampur and Reasi districts comprise of six assembly segments, three in each district. These are Udhampur, Ramnagar and Chenani in the former, while the latter has Reasi, Gulabgarh and Gool-Arnas

Daily Excelsior, 26 November 2008

**Electoral battle enters final phase today**

JAMMU, Nov 25: Crucial seven phase electoral process is entering into its final phase with issuance of notification for maximum number of 21 Assembly segments spread over Jammu, Samba and Srinagar districts tomorrow. Eleven constituencies in Jammu, highest in any district for the State, two segments in Samba and eight in Srinagar district will go to polls in seventh and final phase of polling on December 24. Deputy Commissioners of three districts, who happened to be District Electoral Officers (DEOs), will issue the notification at 10 AM tomorrow inviting nominations from the candidates