

Indian Express, 1 October 2006

CM praises security forces for rescue and rehab work

Jammu, September 30: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister has lauded the security forces for their exemplary efforts in rescue and rehabilitation efforts when natural calamities struck the state and called for a closer coordination between Army, police and public. The role of security forces has always been worth appreciating in rescue, relief and rehabilitation in the state, Azad said during an interaction programme in Bungam of Doda where where 24 houses were gutted leaving about 200 people homeless..

Daily Excelsior, 1 October 2006

50 kg RDX seized in Mahore

Jammu, Sept 30: Security forces today recovered 50 kg RDX and other explosive devices during a search operation at Tharal in Mahore area of Reasi police district. Recoveries were made from a natural cave, official sources said. Besides 50 kg RDX, 59 detonators, a Chinese hand grenade, 25 meters cortex and five meters wire were also recovered from the cave..

Greater Kashmir, 1 October 2006

Opinion: Kashmir is the key

The functioning of SAARC as a forum that works for peace and disarmament in the region largely depends on how things turn out in Kashmir, Masood Ali Mir comments on the impact of Kashmir conflict on the performance of this conglomerate of South Asian nations Aristotle said, Man by nature and necessity is a social animal. A man who can live without other human beings is either a God or a beast. In modern times we can safely say that no nation or country can live in isolation. Co existence of nations is the order of the day..

Indian Express, 1 October 2006

Opinion: Death by Hanging (Soli Sorabjee)

The debate about the abolition or retention of capital sentence is unending. My objections against it are based on the fallibility of human judgment, experience of convictions secured through evidence by the police, and the irrevocability of the death sentence. Attempts to declare capital punishment unconstitutional have failed..Mohammad Afzal who has been found guilty of the part he played in the attack on our Parliament is ordered to be hanged at 6 am on October 20 at Tihar Jail in Delhi. It appears there is a dearth of hangmen in Delhi and there is a hunt for securing services of hangmen from Punjab and Haryana and West Bengal..

Greater Kashmir, 1 October 2006

Opinion: Tale of two Kashmirs (Arjimand Hussain Tale)

It was 3rd Ramadhan last year when the deadly earthquake hit both parts of Kashmir. One year on from that tragedy, life for the affected people in both parts of Kashmir is still a big challenge, more so because these people continue to live a life of dependency and lack in self assertion. Even as governments on both the sides make tall claims in and promises for complete rehabilitation of the affected people, the fact remains that a number of concerns related to shelter, childrens education and preparedness for future

disasters continue to remain high in both the parts..

Daily Excelsior, 2 October 2006

Clemency to Afzal a disgrace: Victims kin

New Delhi, Oct 1: Amid growing demands for clemency for Mohammed Afzal Guru, facing execution for his role in the 2001 attack on Parliament, the kin of security personnel killed in the terrorist strike say they feel cheated by those seeking a pardon for him. Sunder Singh Patel, the son of Delhi Police head constable Ghanshayam Patel, who lost his life said after seeing the support from human rights and political groups for a terrorist, we feel cheated..

Daily Excelsior, 2 October 2006

Two HUIJI militants, six OGWs arrested

Jammu, Oct 1: Army and police today gunned down a Lashkar e Toiba LeT militant in Surankote area of Poonch district and apprehended two top ultras of Harkat ul Jihad Islami HUIJI outfit during an encounter at village Khushal in Chatru area of Doda district. Security forces arrested six Over Ground Workers OGWs of the militants while a kidnapped civilian was killed by the militants in Gool..

Kashmir Times, 2 October 2006

Editorial: Peace process moving backward

Ominous signs of increasing alienation of Kashmiris. Tragically the ongoing India Pakistan peace process is facing rough weather. One step forward is followed by two steps backward. Following the series of blasts in Mumbai, with New Delhi squarely blaming Pakistan for it, the process had come to a virtual halt with dangerous prospects of it getting derailed..While the State chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad suggesting such a ceasefire followed by a positive response from Hizbul Mujahideen it was hoped that guns will be silenced in the troubled Kashmir soon and the process of dialogue will be vigorously pursued for finding a peaceful settlement of the vexed Kashmir problem..

Greater Kashmir, 2 October 2006

Farooq meeting President Kalam

Srinagar: Former Chief Minister and National Conference chief patron Dr Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said that he would soon meet President A P J Abdul Kalam and appeal him to grant clemency to Muhammad Afzal Guru. Afzal Guru hasnt been given a chance to prove his innocence, local news agency KNS quoted Dr Abdullah as saying before he left for New Delhi..

Daily Excelsior, 3 October 2006

Afzals family arrives in Delhi

New Delhi, Oct 2: The family of Mohammad Afzal Guru, set to be hanged on October 20 for his role in the 2001 attack on Parliament, arrived here today from Srinagar to seek pardon for him from President A P J Abdul Kalam. Afzals wife Tabasum, his seven year old son Ghalib, mother Ayesha Begum, brother Hilal Ahmed Guru and father in law Ghulam Mohammed flew in this afternoon without much media fanfare. The family is expected to approach the President to seek clemency for Afzal, convicted for plotting the

December 13 Parliament attack that left 14 people dead including five armed assailants..

Kashmir Times, 3 October 2006

Mufti, Qarra tour parts of Anantnag, Pulwama

Anantnag, Oct 2 : Peoples Democratic Party PDP Patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, accompanied by Minister for Finance, Planning, Law & Parliamentary Affairs, Tariq Hameed Qarra today conducted extensive tour of Pampore, Bijbehara, Anantnag and Pahalgam constituencies to review the progress of development works in the area. Reviewing the progress of the Mega Shopping Mall coming up at SRTC Yard Anantnag, the Mufti was informed that the shopping complex, first of its kind in the district, would be commissioned in May 2008..The PDP Patron visited the Islamic University campus at Awantipora to review the progress of work there. He directed construction of a good link road upto the campus..

Daily Excelsior, 3 October 2006

Editorial: No change

It is unfortunate that the latest assertion of Hizbul Mujahideen supremo Syed Salahuddin eliminates the possibility of truce now or later. He has made it clear that his organisation will not settle for ceasefire until its conditions are met. According to him the temporary peace for a month has no logic. It means that for one month there is no violence but the rest of the 11 months forces will continue their killings and so will militants..He is confident that the HM and other militant organisations operating in the State are not covered by the proposed joint anti terrorism mechanism between India and Pakistan..

Kashmir Times, 3 October 2006

Editorial: Bleeding Kashmir warns

Kashmir is burning and bleeding. For the past five days the Valley is rocked by massive protests and demonstration of anger and resentment against the Delhi courts order announcing the hanging of Afzal Guru, accused in the Parliament blast case. Not only the so called separatist leaders are in the forefront of this protest but even the mainstream political parties owing allegiance to the States accession to India have joined the powerful voice for reviewing the case to provide justice to Afzal Guru..Burning Kashmir is warning Indian democracy which can ill afford to ignore the popular sentiments and voice of reason and sanity..

Greater Kashmir, 3 October 2006

Opinion: From Havana to Srinagar When? (Ghulam Nabi Hagroo)

It is so good that Dr. Manmohan Singh, the prime minister of India and Parvez Musharraf, the President of Pakistan, met cordially and discussed the problems which trouble both the countries. Quite heartening to see that J&K problem formed the main part of their agenda. Both the countries have agreed to make joint efforts for eradicating terrorism. In July 2006, there were bomb blasts in Mumbai and some 200 men got killed. And Indias security system got damaged very badly..The people of J&K get neglected at Indo Pak talks at the secretarys level and also got so at Havana. In the present day world scenario especially in view of the rise of the armed resistance it would not be profitable for both the countries to neglect the people of J&K..

Kashmir Times, 4 October 2006

Opinion: Should Mohammad Afzal Guru Die? (Nirmalangshu Mukherji)

The Supreme Court delivered its judgment on the case relating to the December 13, 2001 attack on Parliament on August 4, 2005. It acquitted S A R Geelani and Afsan Guru from all charges, and reduced the sentence for Shaukat Hussain Guru, absolving him of all charges of conspiracy. However, it upheld the judgment of the high court in sentencing Mohammad Afzal to death for actively participating in the conspiracy to attack Parliament and waging war against the Indian state. Afzal is characterised as a menace to the society, whose life should become extinct to satisfy "the collective conscience of the society..

Indian Express, 4 October 2006

Opinion: No second thoughts on this punishment (Prakash Singh)

.We are a strange people. If there is an outrageous incident of rape, there are vocal demands that the rapist should be hanged. And now that a terrorist is to be hanged, there are demands for a grant of pardon to him. We seem to lack a balanced attitude and swing from one extreme to another. A rapist must get very stringent punishment but there could be no justification for hanging him. A terrorist found guilty and sentenced to death, however, should be sent to the gallows without any second thoughts..

Kashmir Times, 4 October 2006

Editorial: Administrative absurdities

Principles of stability and equal pay for equal jobs flouted Chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azads assertion that his government was opposed to the policy of jobs through backdoors and believes in the posting of officers only on merit, ability and aptitude cannot be accepted at its face value. A just and fair recruitment policy cannot be implemented without creating independent and autonomous institutions for this purpose. Unfortunate nothing has been done so far to build such institutions and create peoples trust in them. Both the State Public Service Commission and the selection boards for subordinate services are not free from the control and interference of the political executive and top bureaucracy..

Daily Excelsior, 4 October 2006

Chandigarh court fixes Oct 9 for bail order

Chandigarh, Oct 3: A court here today fixed October 9 for the pronouncement of order on the bail pleas of 13 accused in the Jammu and Kashmir sex racket case. After hearing a day long arguments from the defence and prosecution, District and Sessions Judge B S Mehndiratta posted the case for October nine. Earlier, following defences objection to the presence of media, the judge asked them to leave the court room and refrain from reporting the arguments in the case. Of the total 14 accused in the case, one Iqbal Khandey, an IAS officer, is out on interim bail..

Daily Excelsior, 4 October 2006

PoK has no budget to run buses across LoC

Muzaffarabad, Oct 3: Pakistans foreign office has asked authorities in Pakistan occupied

Kashmir PoK to resume bus services to the Line of Control LoC from Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot but officials here have reportedly expressed inability to follow the directive citing financial and administrative constraints. Pakistan and India launched the first bus service between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar on April 7, 2005. The buses on either side carry passengers to terminals close to the LoC, from where the travellers cross the line on foot after completion of formalities..

Daily Excelsior, 5 October 2006

4 cops, civilian killed in Srinagar fidayeen

Srinagar, Oct 4: Four J&K Police personnel and at least one civilian got killed when militants launched a suicide attack near a paramilitary encampment in the business hub of Budshah Chowk in the heart of this capital city today. At least 30 persons, including over a dozen from Police and CRPF, have sustained injuries even as over 200 people have been successfully evacuated and two to three militants are holed up at a nearby hotel building. Meanwhile, security forces have eliminated two of the top ranking militants of Lashkar e Toiba and troops have left two members of a family dead and two more wounded in a late night shootout in Anantnag district of south Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 5 October 2006

21 militants surrender in Valley

Srinagar, Oct 4: In a major success for Army, 21 militants of different outfits, hailing mostly from Baramulla and Kupwara districts, today surrendered before 19 Infantry Division within a day of their infiltration from Line of Control LoC in Uri sector. Defence sources said the militants laid down arms before GOC 19 Division Maj Gen Halgali and Brig D S Hooda besides other senior Army officers on LoC in Baramulla sector this morning. The militants had fled from their training camps in Pakistan after being meted out miserable treatment and crossed over to Indian side on intervening night of October 2 and 3 in two different batches, the sources said..

Kashmir Times, 5 October 2006

Editorial: To hang or not to hang

To hang or not to hang Afzal Guru that is the question before the country today. Opinion is divided across the country with campaign for demanding clemency for the prime accused in the parliament attack case being countered by ugly voices of jingoistic patriotism and misplaced concerns of security. The home ministry may have offered some reprieve to Guru by deferring for the time being the execution that was earlier slated for October 20, which incidentally also happens to be Jumait ul Vida, last Friday of the holy month of Ramazan..

Greater Kashmir, 5 October 2006

Opinion: No doublespeak here (NASEER A GANAI)

“I think we need to have more and more people who dont double talk. Why Kashmir has suffered for sixty years? Because of the double talk of the politicians, double faces of the politicians. Politicians saying something different to people in the rural areas, totally different to the media, to the national and the international constituency. They must have the same face in villages and cities, in front of the media and before the masses, in

Jammu, in Delhi, in other parts. Ghulam Nabi Azad in an interview with the Indian Express Chief Editor Shekhar Gupta, published by the newspaper on September 18, 2006..

Indian Express, 5 October 2006

J&K HC reserves judgment in sex racket case

Srinagar, October 4: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court reserved its judgement on whether CBI should continue its probe in the sex racket case. CBI has submitted a list of more than two dozen individuals, as desired by the High Court, against whom chargesheet was not filed because of non-availability of evidence. Assistant Solicitor General of India and CBI counsel S A Naik told a Division Bench comprising Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain and B A Kirmani that investigations in the case had been completed with the filing of chargesheet against three more persons before Chief Judicial Magistrate on September 29..

Greater Kashmir, 5 October 2006

PDP Self Rule Drafting Committee meets

Srinagar, Oct 4: Peoples Democratic Party PDP Patron, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, who is leaving for New York on 29 October to participate in the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly UNGA, briefed the party leaders about his program here last evening. Sayeed, who was specially invited to the partys Drafting Committee meeting, to set broader outlines for the preparation of PDPs position paper on Self Rule, used the opportunity to brief the participants about his upcoming visit to the United Nations and his other engagements in New York..

Daily Excelsior, 6 October 2006

Srinagar gunbattle ends as both fidayeen killed

Srinagar, Oct 5: With 10 fatal casualties, 5 J&K Police personnel, 2 CRPF soldiers, 2 militants and one civilian, the overnight gunbattle between militants and security forces has ended in the business hub of Budshah Chowk in this capital city this afternoon. About 30 people, half of them Police and paramilitary personnel, have sustained injuries in the suicide attack that returned to the Valley after a pause of four and a half months. Director General of J&K Police, Gopal Sharma, said that the 27 hour long operation, that had begun at 1125 hours on Wednesday, ended with the toll of 10 human lives..

Daily Excelsior, 6 October 2006

Gurus family meets President

New Delhi, Oct 5: The family of Mohammed Afzal Guru, facing execution for his role in the 2001 attack on Parliament, today met President A P J Abdul Kalam and sought clemency for him. The President assured us that he will go through our petition seeking clemency for Afzal, Gurus wife Tabassum told reporters after the 20 minute meeting with Kalam. Tabassum, accompanied by her seven year old son Ghalib, mother Ayesha Begum and lawyers Nandita Haksar and N D Panchauli, expressed hope that justice would be done and her husband would be pardoned. This country claims to be a big democracy but Kashmiris do not get justice, she said but cut short her statement when a battery of media personnel sought clarifications on her remarks..

Kashmir Times, 6 October 2006

J&K STF engineered attack on Parliament: Guru

New Delhi, Oct 5: Mohammad Afzal Guru, whose wife's mercy petition to save him from the gallows is now pending with the President, has cited the alleged role of a middle level officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Police in the terrorist attack on the Parliament House in December 2001 and how he was repeatedly threatened with elimination of his family if he spoke out the truth. In a statement that is on the records of the Delhi High Court, Afzal has named Dravinder Singh, a DSP of Special Task Force (STF), a crack commando force now known as Special Operation Group SOG, as allegedly forcing him to escort to Delhi Mohammad, one of the terrorists killed in the Parliament attack, and get him accommodation and buy him a car..

Indian Express, 6 October 2006

India not reciprocating Pakistans gestures: Mirwaiz

Washington, October 5: Increasing his anti India rhetoric after a meeting with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in the US, moderate Hurriyat Conference leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq has accused New Delhi of not reciprocating the gestures by Islamabad for finding an amicable solution to the Kashmir problem. Mirwaiz, who is in the US to participate in seminars organised by the Kashmiri American Council, told reporters that Pakistan had been very accommodative. But I see no flexibility in India's attitude...Unless India reciprocates, I do not see the peace process going anywhere..

Indian Express, 6 October 2006

Opinion: Before we tender clemency (Soli J. Sorabjee)

Every civilised country in its Constitution or in its laws provides for a power to grant pardon or remission of sentence. Articles 72 and 161 of our Constitution confer this power on the president and the governor, respectively. It is settled law that this power is to be exercised in accordance with ministerial advice and not by exercise of the presidents or the governors individual discretion. The rationale of the pardon power is that, A pardon in our days is not a private act of grace from an individual happening to possess power... When granted, it is the determination of the ultimate authority that the public welfare will be better served by inflicting less than what the judgment fixed. The test is public welfare..

Daily Excelsior, 7 October 2006

Civilian killed, 6 hurt in blast

Srinagar, Oct 6: While thin demonstrations were held at various places against implementation of Afzal Gurus death sentence, one civilian got killed and six others sustained injuries when an unidentified person lobbed a hand grenade at the crowded General Bus Stand in Batmaloo today. Informed sources said that an unidentified youth lobbed a hand grenade at General Bus Stand in Batmaloo area this evening. It was not immediately clear whether there was any specific target or the grenade was thrown on the civilian concentration. As the grenade exploded, seven civilians sustained injuries..

Indian Express, 7 October 2006

Jammu, Kashmir divided over Afzal

Jammu/Srinagar, October 6: The calls for clemency for Mohammed Afzal Guru, facing execution for the 2001 Parliament attack, have created a divide between the Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley with political leaders and citizens taking to streets on the same issue but with different demands. In Jammu, students and political parties like the Shiv Sena and BSP organised protests to demand the resignation of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad for favouring clemency for Guru, while separatists in the Kashmir Valley took to streets to demand his immediate release..

Kashmir Times, 7 October 2006

Opinion: Death of Afzal Guru will not solve anything (Dr Shabir Choudhary)

The government of India is in dilemma whether to hang Mohammed Azal Guru or not. The court has given its verdict that he should be hanged. Hanging or even illegally eliminating a person is not a big issue in most third world countries; but hanging of Afzal Guru will become a major issue even though the authorities have a legal mandate for doing this. Issue here is not whether Afzal Guru is completely innocent or guilty; issue is what government will achieve out of this, especially now that it has become a public issue, and demand for clemency is coming from various parts of the world..

Greater Kashmir, 7 October 2006

Opinion: Kashmir Alienated (M. ASHRAF)

Kashmir's alienation is being widely debated these days. Pleas have been made from all sides to pardon Afzal Guru to prevent further alienation of Kashmiris. However, it is debatable whether one single act of mercy can remove the decades or rather centuries old alienation? The malady is much deeper and is probably beyond cure. It would be useful to trace the history of this Alienation. In reality, Kashmir's alienation is centuries old. They have remained continuously alienated from the outside rulers for generations. In fact, Kashmiris got alienated from India in 1947 itself. It was only the degree of alienation which varied from time to time..

Kashmir Times, 7 October 2006

All efforts to defeat infiltration at LoC on: Army chief

Srinagar, Oct 6: Army chief Gen J J Singh today said army has taken all possible steps to defeat the design of infiltration and exfiltration by militants across the LoC. He was talking to media persons after inaugurating the model village of Churunda in Uri. Army chief said while the infiltration from across continues to some extent but the violence level in hinter land has come down. He admitted that human rights violations do take place some times but added that the guilty officials are sternly dealt as per the law..

Daily Excelsior, 8 October 2006

5 infiltrators, Army officer, jawan killed

Srinagar, Oct 7: Foiling an infiltration bid along the Line of Control in Gurez sector, Army today gunned down five Pakistani militants trying to cross over to Indian side but lost two of its personnel in the attempt. A Defence spokesperson said troops guarding the border at Gurez in Baramulla district of north Kashmir challenged the infiltrators when

they were trying to sneak into the Kanzaluan area and asked them to surrender..

Daily Excelsior, 8 October 2006

Advani, Rajnath to meet Kalam today on Afzal

New Delhi, Oct 7: Opposed to clemency for Mohammad Afzal, facing execution in the 2001 Parliament attack, the BJP has sought an appointment with President A P J Abdul Kalam for tomorrow to request that the punishment should not be commuted to life imprisonment. He should be punished in accordance with the court orders. We have sought an appointment with the President for tomorrow. When we meet the President, we will tell him that any decision in this regard should lie in national interest, BJP chief Rajnath Singh said today..

Kashmir Times, 8 October 2006

Geelani launches diatribe against security forces

Srinagar, Oct 7: Reacting sharply to the statement of army chief Gen. J J Singh in which he had attributed rights violation to the misunderstanding of security forces, senior separatist leader and chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Geelani today said that security forces in Kashmir are deliberately doing the same as they have been given special powers. Geelani who was briefing the newsmen inside his house where he has been put under arrest, lashed out at security forces, terming them the agents of eroding peace and tranquility in the region..

Kashmir Times, 8 October 2006

Editorial: NOT EYE FOR AN EYE

It is shocking to realise what a blood thirsty nation we can be, buoying for revenge in the name of justice and national security. It is amazing how everything, that our constitution and legal system are not inspired by, can be justified on arguments. The reasons may stem from vote bank politics or sheer pleasure of machismo of associating national pride with a sense of vengeance that is so perverse. Like always, one is amazed by the hysteria, in the absence of any logical argument, that is being raked up to justify death penalty for Afzal Guru, the convicted and prime accused in parliament attack case..

Greater Kashmir, 8 October 2006

Opinion: Medias verdict (Ajaz Ul-Haque) Ajaz Ul-Haque)

A wrong pairing of words from language point of view but this is how it goes like. As not to hang him is not the option available in the text of a relent campaign media has launched against Afzal Guru. Some self maneuvered opinion polls coming with wishful results are proving a feast to their audience. A deft formulation of questions where answers are known, conclusions foregone. Is Kashmir an integral part of India? Tabassum, the wife of Afzal Guru was asked a question which India itself knows the answer of. Asking it to a shattered woman out to seek mercy for her husband means coercion at its worst..

Daily Excelsior, 9 October 2006

Nation behind victims of Kashmir quake: Patil

Teetwal, Oct 8: Visiting the Kashmir valley on the first anniversary of the devastating

earthquake that flattened dozens of villages, Home Minister Shivraj Patil today assured the people of the State that the entire nation was backing the endeavour to help the victims of the disaster. The Government is aware of problems faced by people after such a natural calamity. Several works have already been initiated to minimise these problems and aid is being provided for construction of residential houses, schools and public utility infrastructure, Patil said while addressing a public meeting here..

Kashmir Times, 9 October 2006

Editorial: Pak confession earns trust

Pakistan's ambassador to the US, Mahmud Ali Durrani, has surprised the world by blurting out some known truth. While addressing the School of Advanced International Studies of John Hopkins University, on October the 6th, he admitted, Jihad, insurgency, or whatever you may call it in Kashmir.... Yes, Pakistan may have helped the Jihad at some time, but it was not started by us, and now we are trying our best to stop people from crossing... This is for the first time that a highly-placed Pak official has admitted that, at some point of time, their help for the militants operating in Kashmir was more than just moral and diplomatic. Of course, why he has confessed to his country's past involvement in the bloody drama in Kashmir still remains a mystery..

The Hindu, 9 October 2006

Editorial: Clemency for the right reasons

The issue of exercising presidential clemency and commuting to life imprisonment the death sentence passed on Mohammad Afzal in the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack case which took a toll of nine lives, not counting the five terrorists killed by the security forces has proved to be extremely divisive. It has pitted those who favour a hard line on terrorism against those considered soft, and politicians and groups in Kashmir against much of the rest of the nation. Yet if Afzal deserves a life sentence rather than death by hanging, it is because the death penalty is abhorrent under any circumstances. To plead for clemency alleging a flawed trial or pointing to incensed Kashmiri sentiment is to miss the point..

Kashmir Times, 9 October 2006

PDP misleading people in name of self-rule

Jammu, Oct 8: National Conference provincial president Ajay Sadhotra today warned the people of Jammu against being misled by the Peoples Democratic Party in the name of self rule. He was addressing a meeting of party workers. The meeting was organised to felicitate Bimla Luthra, on being nominated as the provincial president of the women's wing of J&K National Conference. The block president, women's wing, block no. II, Jammu West, Rita Devi, chaired a meeting of party workers today. He further asserted that the PDP didn't have a document of self rule so far..

Indian Express, 9 October 2006

On LoC in Tangdhar (Muzamil Jaleel)

..Out of the 85 schools of Tangdhar valley where 7,000 students of the area would study, 80 were flattened in the quake. And a year after the devastating tremors, the schools still run in makeshift tents and community halls as not a single school building has been

reconstructed. The condition of the Health Care is no different. The quake had destroyed every health centre in the valley, leaving just two Medical Aid Centre buildings intact. The government has not managed to even repair the damage done to the Sub District Hospital building and no health centre building has been reconstructed. In fact, the story of 25 displaced families of Gundi Gujran village is perhaps the most pathetic who still wait for the promise of rehabilitation..

Daily Excelsior, 9 October 2006

Dental surgeon beheaded in broad daylight in Sopore (Ahmed Ali Fayyaz)

Srinagar, Oct 8: Taking advantage of the losing grip of Police, BSF as well as Army in Sopore, militants have kidnapped and mercilessly slaughtered a young dental surgeon within 24 hours of beheading a Territorial Army recruit in the apple rich north Kashmir township. More confident this time, militants have slit the throat of the young dental surgeon and father of three kids with seven shaving blades in broad daylight after subjecting him to untold brutality for about two hours..

Hindu, 10 October 2006

Militants arrested, major tragedy averted in J&K

Srinagar: Militants killed a contractor while security forces averted a major tragedy even as ultras were apprehended in Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours, an official spokesman said on Monday. He said militants had kidnapped a contractor, Bashir Ahmad Wani, at Sumblar, Bandipora on October 4. Wani's body was recovered from the nearby fields on Monday this morning. Hours after brutally killing Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Shah, police said militants set ablaze his car at Sopore. The body of Dr. Shah was recovered from Sopore on Sunday..

Daily Excelsior, 10 October 2006

Court rejects bail plea of 13 accused in sex scam

Chandigarh, Oct 9: Rejecting the bail application of all the 13 accused in the Jammu and Kashmir sex racket case, a court here today said it will hear arguments on framing of charges in the case on October 12. District and Sessions Judge B S Mehndiratta pronounced the order rejecting the bail pleas of all the 13 accused in the case. Earlier on October three, after hearing day long arguments on the bail pleas of the 13 accused the Judge had reserved his order for today. The CBI opposed the bail plea of the accused on the ground that it was a serious offence and there were chances that the accused might run away..

Kashmir Times, 10 October 2006

Editorial: Innocent killings must stop

Spine chilling incident of slaughtering of a dental surgeon by the militants in broad daylight in the apple town of Sopore, needs to be vehemently condemned by one and all, irrespective of party affiliations, ideology, religion and region. Young dental surgeon, father of three kids, who was abducted, was also brutally tortured before being beheaded by the militants. In fact, any heinous act of this nature, whether perpetrated by the militants or security forces, outrages the human conscience. As per the reports, even the people, who had witnessed the militants subjecting the victim to such a brutal treatment,

had appealed them to leave the hapless soul but in vain..

Greater Kashmir, 10 October 2006

Opinion: Still is the time (Hassan Zainagiree)

Tired we are of the worn out cliché: Pakistan or ISI sponsored terrorism in Kashmir trotted out day in and day out by Delhi. It has shifted the paradigm of pro independence movement which in pristine virginity is indigenous and commanding mass support. Even the reliable Trojan Horses of Delhi like Abdullaha, Muftis and persons like Tarigamis and Sagars used at different occasions to torpedo the movement and prop up Delhi's interests have no caveats to offer against this ground reality. Their passive separatist stance and pleas for including militants in the dialogue process reflect their desperation to hold on to ground that drifts from under their feet. That speaks the compulsion why on occasions of public gatherings they seem shorn of main streamist wool and display blue prints of autonomy and self rule..

Daily Excelsior, 10 October 2006

Editorial: A Kashmiri assembly

Often on this side of the Line of Control we view the Muttahida Jihad Council MJC as an umbrella organisation of Muzaffarabad based Kashmiri militant outfits. This is a misnomer. The MJC is actually a conglomeration of jihadi groups active in the State. It includes Lashkar e Toiba LeT, Jaish e Mohammad, Brigade 313, Al Bader Mujahideen and Jamaatul Furqan. All five of them have originated from Pakistan. The LeT has shifted its office to Azad Kashmir as the occupied territory is locally known. A highly informative study by renowned Pakistani terrorism expert Muhammad Amir Rana of the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) points to strategic shift in tactics of jihadi organisations..

Daily Excelsior, 11 October 2006

4 Army jawans, LeT commander killed

Poonch, Oct 10: Four Army soldiers including a Junior Commissioned Officer JCO and a Lashkar e Toiba LeT area commander were killed and another jawan was injured in an encounter in Surankote tehsil of this district early today. It was after a long gap that Army suffered four fatal casualties in a single operation in this border district. Official sources said troops of Rashtriya Rifles had laid an ambush last night at village Chamrerh near Chitti Bhatti in Surankote tehsil after developing an information about the movement of two top Lashkar militants in the area..

Kashmir Times, 11 October 2006

CCS collects 13,000 signatures, to plead Guru case internationally

SRINAGAR, OCT 10: The coalition of civil society CCS has been able to get more than 13,000 signatures as part of the signature campaign launched by it against the death penalty of Mohammad Afzal Guroo in the parliament attack case. During the one week of the signature campaign we have been able to get 13,748 petitions from Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla and Kupwara districts. Hundreds and thousands of people were willing to join the signature campaign but as the deadline was fixed on October 10, 2006 we could not incorporate the signatures of these people and we had to end the campaign,

said Parvez Imroz, Patron CCS while addressing a press conference here today..

Kashmir Times, 11 October 2006

Editorial: Rot within VDCs

Migration of dozens of families from various parts of Doda district to neighbouring areas of Himachal Pradesh during the past few weeks speaks volumes about the insecurity that is prevailing due to militancy and infighting among various groups of Village Defence Committees VDCs. Unfortunately there have been conflicting reports propounded by the police and other anti-insurgency forces operating in remote and far flung areas about the migration of the unarmed poor people from their homes and hearths. But no one in the government has made an attempt to take a look on the whole issue that has forced them to desert their homes..

Daily Excelsior, 12 October 2006

No clemency on political, religious considerations: SC

New Delhi, Oct 11 : In an apparent message in the midst of the controversy shrouding the hanging of Parliament attack accused Afzal Guru, the Supreme Court today held that the powers of President and Governor to grant clemency was open to judicial review and extraneous considerations like political loyalty, religion and caste cannot be grounds for granting pardon to a convict. The far reaching judgement came from Bench of the Apex Court that set aside remission of a sentence given by the then Andhra Pradesh Governor Sushil Kumar Shinde to a Congress activist sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in a murder case..

Daily Excelsior, 12 October 2006

Top Army Commanders review Kashmir situation

New Delhi, Oct 11: The situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast as well as key issues like restructuring the military to meet new challenges were taken up by top Army Commanders during a biannual brainstorming session that began here today. The Army Commanders conference, chaired by Army Chief Gen J J Singh, will review a range of activities, including operational readiness, training and counter insurgency operations. Discussions in particular will be held on force restructuring through optimisation of manpower to formulate a suitable long term policy on the subject, said an Army spokesman..

Kashmir Times, 12 October 2006

Opinion: Afzal Guru: Scapegoat or a terrorist? (Inam ul Rehman)

Its appalling to see the reaction of Indian media and people on the verdict of Afzal Guru. On what basis was Afzal convicted? I have still not been able to find an answer to this. The dead militants identity remains elusive. Did they belong to the Jaish e Mohammad and the Lashkar e Toiba as was quickly claimed? Were they Pakistanis? The judge in the designated court averred that they were indeed Pakistanis, since no Indian had claimed them. But no one from Pakistan claimed them either. Mr. Advani, the then Home Minister, had tendered as evidence in Parliament that the dead men looked like Pakistanis Nandita Haksar and Kumar Sanjay Singh asked in an article in Seminar: How does a Pakistani look? Does Mr. Advani look like a Pakistani? Does Musharraf look like an

Indian?..

Kashmir Times, 12 October 2006

Kashmiri youth tortured, killed in Delhi

Srinagar, OCT 11: People took to streets and held strong demonstrations at Channapora here today in protest against the murder of a local youth, Irshad Ahmad Lone, an automobile engineer, in New Delhi. Police burst smoke shells and resorted to lathi charge to disperse the demonstrators, who retaliated by pelting stones on cops. Senior separatist leader Mohammad Yasin Malik and Shabir Ahmad Shah visited Channapora to offer their condolences to the bereaved family. On his return to his residence, Shah was placed under house arrest. Hurriyat Conference G chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani strongly condemned the killing and described it worst kind of state terrorism..

Daily Excelsior, 13 October 2006

Dont delay Afzals hanging: Advani

New Delhi, Oct 12: Leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha and BJP strongman L K Advani today urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that there should be no delay in hanging Mohammad Afzal, convicted by the Supreme Court for attack on Parliament, even for a day in an effort to send right message to the people of the country and to the terrorists that India was no soft state. Asked for his comments on the issue, Mr Advani said he had seen the news reports about the possibility of postponing the hanging of the convict in view of the mercy petition sent to the Home Ministry..

Indian Express, 13 October 2006

Geelani, Shah put under house arrest

Srinagar, October 12: Senior separatist leaders Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Shabir Ahmad Shah were placed under house arrest as the funeral of a youth, found dead under mysterious circumstances in New Delhi, was carried out amid tight security here today. Geelani, chairman of the hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference, was placed under house arrest at his Hyderpora residence this morning while Shah, president of Democratic Freedom Party, was under restrictions at Rawalpora since yesterday to prevent them from taking part in the funeral of one Irshad Ahmad Lone, officials said..

Daily Excelsior, 13 October 2006

Major gunbattle underway in Shopian

Srinagar, Oct 12: Even as Police managed to rescue nearly 2,000 people, including about 1,500 students of a private higher secondary school, at least two militants of Lashkar e Toiba are holed up in a major operation in Shopian township of south Kashmir. Meanwhile, one militant has been killed by security forces in Kupwara and one soldier has sustained injuries in a militant attack in Bandipore today..Incharge SP said that after evacuating the civilians, Police called in troops of Rashtriya Rifles 44 Bn and a fierce gunbattle commenced. He said that one of the militants sustained gunshot wounds but both the militants escaped to the nearby house of one Ghulam Mohiuddin Sheikh..

Kashmir Times, 13 October 2006

Petition for fair trial, not clemency

Srinagar, OCT 12: Making it clear that the petition filed before President Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam is for seeking fair trial and not for granting clemency to Mohammad Afzal Guru in the parliament attack case, the Society for Protection of Detainees and Prisoners Rights (SPDPR) today said that the Supreme Court has been misled and a fair trial would rectify the wrong done. I want to make it clear that the petition filed before the President is for ensuring a fair trial and not for granting clemency to Guroo in the case. There is confusion in this regard and I want to set the matter right said Prof. Syed Abdul Rehman S A R Geelani, vice president SPDPR while addressing a news conference here today..

Daily Excelsior, 13 October 2006

Editorial: Fight the evil

It is extremely unfortunate that four Army soldiers have lost their lives in an ambush laid by the militants in Poonch district early on Wednesday. From the reports it appears that what was planned as an exercise to nab the terrorists turned out to be a hide and seek game. Acting on a tip off the uniformed men had laid a trap late on Tuesday in a village of Surankote tehsil. When their nigh long vigil turned out to be futile they decided to call off the search the following morning. But as they were returning to their camp they came under heavy fire. Clearly their movement was being watched. It is after a long time that the Army has suffered four fatal casualties in a single action of this kind in the border district. There has never been even an iota of doubt about the presence of the militants in higher reaches of Poonch..

Indian Express, 14 October 2006

In Srinagar, a wait for answers (Muzamil Jaleel)

Srinagar, October 13: In Srinagar city, this autumn has turned into a season of waiting few for bodies to arrive from New Delhi and all others for answers. Thus when the body flecked by visible torture marks of Irshad Ahmad Lone finally arrived in this city neighbourhood, it immediately turned into the epicentre of the mass anger that was already brewing in the streets across Kashmir over the forthcoming death sentence to Afzal Guru next week. The mysterious nature of this killing has become a major issue sending shivers down the spine of the parents of thousands of students and professionals who are spread across the country especially as the separatist conglomerate has appealed to all Kashmiris living or studying across the country to return home for safety..

Kashmir Times, 14 October 2006

Editorial: Victims of brutality

The killing of a qualified automobile engineer from Channapora locality of Srinagar in Delhi, shocking and condemnable indeed, is again reflective of the victimisation of the Kashmiris, not only in Jammu and Kashmir, but also outside the state. Though investigations have yet to reveal a clear picture, the family of the slain youth Irshad Ahmad Lone have alleged that the boy was picked up by police, tortured and killed in custody. The allegations are serious and need investigation. The state government must intervene and take up the matter with Delhi administration where the incident appears to have taken place. Announcing an independent probe may also not be an unreasonable

demand..

Daily Excelsior, 14 October 2006

Editorial: A student's suicide

The suicide by a student of a private school is going to haunt this city for long. It is a tragic occurrence and was perhaps totally avoidable. Prima facie the student appears to have been driven to desperation by the principal of his school. He was subjected to taunts, thrashing and the ultimate humiliation of not being allowed to appear in an examination. It is stated that he had invited the wrath of the boss for not having deposited his fee for two months. Badly shaken the student returned to his house and hung himself from a ceiling fan. Not surprisingly his relatives and neighbours have been angry and agitated..

Tribune, 14 October 2006

Opinion: Cry for clemency (K.N. Bhat)

With the cry for clemency by our politicians and professional human rightists building up to a crescendo and with an assured long waiting period of the mercy plea, one is likely to forget who this Mohammad Afzal is. Be assured that it is the same person about whom our Supreme Court in a recent judgment said: The challenge to the unity, integrity and sovereignty of India by these acts of terrorists and conspirators can only be compensated by giving the maximum punishment to the person who is proved to be the conspirator in the treacherous act. The appellant who is a surrendered militant and who was bent upon repeating the acts of treason against the nation is a menace to the society and his life should become extinct. It is this judgment that will be rendered ineffective if the pardon is granted..

Greater Kashmir, 14 October 2006

Editorial: New Delhi Nightmare

..There are stories about hundreds of youth having been arrested on mere suspicion and then implicating them in different cases, putting them in jails or even killing them in fake encounters. Not only New Delhi police, sleuths in many other cities vie each other to arrest a young Kashmiri innocent, as it brings them under sharp flashlights of media and makes them overnight media celebrity besides winning them loaves and fishes. While the government is responsible for playing with lives of young Kashmiri who visit different parts of India for making a living or pursuing their education, the role played by media both print and electronic has been criminal..

Tribune, 15 October 2006

3 VDC members kidnapped in Doda

Jammu, October 14: Three Village Defence Committee VDC members were today kidnapped by terrorists in the Doda district. Reports said a group of terrorists raided the remote village of Grathar last night and kidnapped the VDC members. They also took their arms and ammunition. The Army and Special Task Force STF personnel launched an operation this morning to trace the kidnapped persons. In another incident, terrorists exploded two grenades on the house of Nissar Ahmad, a surrendered terrorist, in the Gowri village in the Gandoh area of Doda. No loss of life or property was reported..

Daily Excelsior, 15 October 2006

Opinion: To hang Afzal Guru or not to hang? (Dr. Jitendra Singh)

The question is not whether to hang Afzal Guru or not to hang. The question is what are the basic issues that the various mutually contending parties are trying to debate or pretending to debate? Has Afzal Guru been denied justice and wrongly handed out the death sentence? If so, then the Hon'ble Judges who passed such an order deserve to be called to explain. Is our judicial system fallacious? If so, it calls for appropriate amends. Is the death sentence or hanging too uncivilized in a civilised democracy? If so, it calls for an amendment in the Indian Constitution to once and for all abolish the provision of death sentence and simultaneously also calls for an apology from the Government for some of the politically famous death sentences handed out from Nathu Ram Godse down to Beant Singh..

Greater Kashmir, 15 October 2006

If Afzal is hanged Kashmir, India will go up in flames: Farooq

Srinagar, Oct 14: The former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir and patron of opposition National Conference, Dr Farooq Abdullah has warned that if Muhammad Afzal Guru is hanged, the judges who convicted and sentenced him could be murdered, India Pakistan peace process will collapse, and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf might be thrown out of office by the Army. In an exclusive interview to CNN IBNs Karan Thapar on Devils Advocate, Abdullah argued that if clemency was not shown to Afzal, who is due to hang on October 20, you will be making him a hero for centuries to come..

Daily Excelsior, 15 October 2006

4 militants killed in Pulwama, Gurez

Srinagar, Oct 14: Security forces have killed four militants in two separate operations in Pulwama and Gurez areas even as five people have sustained injuries in a militant attack on army in Bandipore today. Informed sources told the Excelsior that over a specific information, troops of RR 55 Bn and Pulwama SOG swooped on a militant hideout at Senzan on Pulwama to Panjgam Road. During the search operation, two militants were spotted. Both the militants were killed in the gunbattle. While one of them was unidentified and was believed to be a resident of Tral area, another was identified as Tauseef Ahmed Bhat alias Kifayat S/o Ghulam Qadir Bhat R/o Jandwal, Pulwama..

Kashmir Times, 16 October 2006

Self rule proposes greater integration with India: Beig

Jammu, Oct 15: Underscoring imperative need of the self rule in Jammu and Kashmir state former Deputy Chief Minister and senior PDP leader Muzaffar Hussain Beig today said that this demand is for greater integration of the state with rest of the country. Speaking on the subject of the self rule, he said that besides ensuring equal opportunities of development to people of all three regions of state, self rule would make them self reliant. Removing apprehensions being created by some political leaders about the self rule issue, as it was first raised by the Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, Beig said that it did not mean merger of the state with Pakistan as it was being projected by opposition parties for their political ends..

Indian Express, 16 October 2006

Are there adjectives for this pain? (Muzamil Jaleel)

Srinagar, October 15: For 22 year old Fatemah Farah, the only memento of her slain husband is a wedding photograph and the memories of 37 days they could managed to spend together since their marriage on September 2 last. She hadnt seen him for past 11 days after he had returned to his duty. And today when the police brought Ghulam Mohideen Hajam 28 on a stretcher, she couldnt even see his face and bid the final goodbye: she was lying unconscious when her slain policeman husband was put beneath mounds of earth in the local graveyard..

Greater Kashmir, 16 October 2006

Hang Afzal if its in nations interest: Muzaffar Baig

Srinagar, Oct 15: When almost all mainstream leaders, including Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, joined the chorus of voices opposing the death sentence to Muhammad Afzal Guru, arguing that his hanging could affect the peace process in Kashmir, former Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig was the lone politician with a different opinion on the issue..

Daily Excelsior, 16 October 2006

Editorial: Elusive right?

It is a matter of deep regret that the pace of implementation of the Right of Information Act in the State is extremely slow. As a report in this newspaper has recently revealed over 95 per cent government departments have yet to follow the mandatory guidelines. As many as 130 of the total 133 such bodies have not so far issued the obligatory citizens' charter and publicised it through websites and newspapers. Inquiries have shown that an overwhelming number of them have not even prepared the charter leave alone making it public. A dozen or so have completed this preliminary exercise. For some inexplicable reason, however, their officials in charge have kept it close to their chests..

Daily Excelsior, 16 October 2006

PDP not giving full support to Govt: Azad

New Delhi, Oct 15: The Congress heading the coalition Government in Jammu and Kashmir today accused its alliance partner PDP of not giving complete support to it in governing the State. To a pointed question on coordination between the two parties, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said that, we used to be very happy when Congress Ministers accompanied the previous Chief Minister (PDP leader Mufti Mohammed Sayeed). The previous Chief Minister was given complete support by all Congress Ministers, which is not the case since the Congress took over the reins of the Government in November last year, he said..

Greater Kashmir, 16 October 2006

Opinion: Time to save him (GHULAM NABI HAGROO)

Afzal Guru is facing death sentence. There seems to be no hope in sight. Lets support his wife in her move to file a mercy petition to the president of India which she has already done. The president has the power to commute this sentence. The outstanding case in this regard is Phoolan Devi's case. She had committed so many murders and was found guilty

and accordingly a death sentence was pronounced against her too. But the president of India acted and set her free and she, thereafter, contested elections and got elected to the parliament of India..

Kashmir Times, 17 October 2006

Azad asks militants to come to dialogue table

Srinagar, Oct 16: The chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has asked the militants to come to the dialogue table instead of remaining in forests so that the issues could be resolved in a peaceful manner. He has said added that the last 17 years of turmoil have only resulted into the killing of thousands of people and destruction of infrastructure. He has reiterated that development process in the state should not wait till the settlement of issues. The chief minister was speaking at Tangmarg today after inaugurating the 85 meter long four lane bridge. He has said that everybody has a right to speak up in a democratic set up, but forcing ones viewpoint by resorting to weapons doesnt sound advisable..

Greater Kashmir, 17 October 2006

Afzals death Shah warns GoI of dreadful consequence

Srinagar, Oct 16: Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party DFP on Monday alleged Indian leaders never tried to understand Kashmiris as a result of which the subcontinent is teetering on the brink of nuclear war. Shah was addressing hundreds of party workers sitting on dharna at Amira Kadal here against the death sentence awarded to Muhammad Afzal Guru by the Delhi court. Had India understood the wishes and aspirations of Kashmiris, the subcontinent would not have been today on the brink of nuclear war, said Shah. He asked India to meet its commitment on the right of self determination of the people of state..

Daily Excelsior, 17 October 2006

Editorial: Matter of relief

The homecoming of 64 migrants of Sawara village in Gandoh area of Doda district last weekend should be a matter of immense relief. Their flight early this month to the adjoining Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh whatever the reasons had made concerned citizens squirm in their seats. Actually it had given rise to serious suspicion that everything was not well in their remote habitat. The State Government has done very well to persuade them back to their village. It appears that a police team from Doda has taken about one week of stay in Chamba district to help them regain their confidence. Initial reports had said that the rural folks had panicked fearing militants reprisals..

Kashmir Times, 17 October 2006

Opinion: Dont hang peace process (Ismail Khan)

Afzal Guru, a Kashmiri accused of involvement in the 2001 Indian parliament attack will be hanged till death on October 20, 2006 at 6am in Delhi. The decision by a trail court and upheld by the Indian supreme court has triggered massive protests in Kashmir where Guru has already become a cult figure. Gurus family and human rights activists have lodged a spirited campaign appealing for presidential clemency, and in a rare display of unity politicians from across the spectrum in Jammu and Kashmir have come together in demanding that the Indian president reprieve the death sentence which, if carried out, is

likely to snowball into another wave of bloody unrest in Kashmir, setting back the frail peace process between India and Pakistan to the point where it started..

Daily Excelsior, 17 October 2006

RTCs most viable option to discuss issues: Azad

Srinagar, Oct 16 : Holding that Jammu and Kashmir has seen economic regress due to militancy, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad today asked separatists to join the dialogue process and said even criticism is welcome if it is in a democratic and peaceful manner. During the past 17 years, the State has witnessed a cycle of bloodshed and economic retrogress. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has provided the viable and pragmatic platform of roundtable conferences to put forth viewpoints which should be taken advantage of in the interests of the people, he told a public meeting at Kunzar on Srinagar to Gulmarg road, about 30 km from here. Even criticism on the performance of the Government was welcome but it should be in a democratic and peaceful temperament..

Kashmir Times, 18 October 2006

Seminar on Afzal Guru Case (Jehangir Rashid)

Srinagar, Oct 17: Varied opinion about the likely execution of Mohammad Afzal Guru or its commutation came to the forefront as leaders of the various separatist leaders came out with their point of view about the issue. While some of them said that commutation should be pursued vigorously while as there were others who thought that come what may the execution would give a new direction to the ongoing movement. The views were shared during a seminar Judicial Murder of Mohammad Afzal Guru is a mockery of Democracy and Justice held here today by the Society for Protection of Detainees and Prisoners Rights SPDPR..

Greater Kashmir, 18 October 2006

Opinion: Role of SHRC in JK (ARIFAT JAN)

Human rights in Jammu and Kashmir has always been a matter of serious concern especially when the National Conference presented the Naya Kashmir charter in 1944 in order to establish a welfare state. An important feature of this plan was the inclusion of a bill of rights. The charter also provided that all residents of the state would be entitled to legal protection of their rights by the courts of law. It was particularly with the armed militant upsurge in 1989 that human rights became a matter of national and international concern because of increased violations of human rights of the people of the Jammu and Kashmir..

Daily Excelsior, 18 October 2006

Mattoo murder accused convicted

New Delhi, Oct 17: In a triumph for peoples outcry for justice, the Delhi High Court today set aside a perverse lower court judgement and convicted a former IPS officers son for raping and murdering 23 year old Priyadarshini Mattoo nearly 11 years ago. Declaring that the trial court s acquittal of Santosh Singh, a lawyer now in his 30s, in 1999 had shocked the conscience of the judiciary, Justices R S Sodhi and P K Bhasin, who conducted rare day to day hearings over just 42 days, convicted him under sections 302 (murder) and 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code..

Indian Express, 18 October 2006

Tide turning in restive Kashmir: Army

New Delhi, October 17: The Army chief said on Tuesday violence in the troubled Himalayan Kashmir region was lessening as more disillusioned Islamist militants surrendered and more were detained. General J.J. Singh, chief of the Army staff, said the security situation in the restive state was manageable as militants were not engaging the Army in head on combat and local people were giving more information on infiltrators. Violence levels have come down by 20 per cent. There may be an odd incident of a grenade thrown at one place or the other, but that can happen anywhere in the world, he told a news conference. By and large Kashmir is peaceful..

Kashmir Times, 19 October 2006

Law ministry opposes clemency for Guru

New Delhi, Oct 18: Law Ministry said there was no compelling reason to stop the hanging of Mohd Afzal Guru found guilty plotting a 2001 attack on Parliament, a report said. The ministry' advice came after President Abdul Kalam sought the opinions of the law and home departments ahead of deciding on a mercy petition filed by the family of the condemned man, Mohammed Afzal Guru. Last month, a court set October 20 as the date for the execution of Guru, who was convicted of helping plot the raid that left 14 people dead, including the five attackers, and brought nuclear armed India and Pakistan close to war. India blamed Pakistan backed militants fighting against its rule in its part of Kashmir for what it called a terrorist strike at the heart of Indian democracy, but Islamabad denied involvement..

Kashmir Times, 19 October 2006

Editorial: Misinterpreting self rule

In Jammu and Kashmir, there can be nothing more misinterpreted than autonomy and self rule. The two words have become rather fashionable but their essence have remained more elusive than recent years. If National Conference cries hoarse about autonomy, even though it miserably performed to provide even the basic elements of regional autonomy which was within its jurisdiction, the PDP has brought in its own song of self rule which has yet to be spelt out. If the National Conferences autonomy report was replete with serious flaws and inadequacies, the PDPs self rule lacks even the basic clarity. Latest to add a dose of confusion to this demand of self rule is former deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Beig, in his earnest bid to make the self rule proposal sound reasonable and impressive..

Greater Kashmir, 19 October 2006

Opinion: Move beyond Human Rights (Naseer A Ganai)

The idea that Kashmir is a nuclear flash point and South Asia is on the verge of burning doesnt matter to a Kashmiri whose existence is at stake. What does threats that Kashmir issue will end poverty in India and Pakistan matter to both the countries? In India and Pakistan there are better brains and renowned economists, who know what problems these countries are facing and how they could be solved. They need not suggestions from us. The reality is that world considers India as great and vibrant democracy and believes

whatever it says. The government of India constantly tries to link Kashmir with international Islamic terrorism.

Hindu, 19 October 2006

Intellectuals rally behind Afzal (Shujaat Bukhari)

Srinagar: Intellectuals and politicians on Tuesday called for clemency for Mohammad Afzal, sentenced to death in the Parliament attack case, on the grounds that he did not get a fair trial. At a seminar, Judicial Murder of Afzal and Mockery of Democracy and Justice, organised by the Society for Protection of Detainees and Prisoner Rights, speakers argued that Afzal was not given a chance to defend himself and the whole process lacked transparency. They alleged that he was made a scapegoat to satisfy the public of India..Kashmir Bar Association president Mian Qayoom said even Kashmiri lawyers were regarded as terrorists and not allowed to plead cases. He claimed that Afzal was forced to confess what he had not done..

Daily Excelsior, 19 October 2006

4 militants killed in Kashmir

Srinagar, Oct 18 : Army troops today foiled an infiltration bid by gunning down four militants near the Line of Control in Kupwara district, a defence spokesman said here. Troops guarding the LoC noticed a group of intruders at Sona Pindi area in Machil sector of Kupwara, the spokesman said adding, when the security personnel confronted them, they opened fire. In the ensuing encounter, four militants were killed, the spokesman said adding, the search of the area is still on. Meanwhile, Army apprehended a militant and seized two hand grenades during a search operation at Chek e Raithan in central Kashmir district of Badgam today..

Daily Excelsior, 20 October 2006

Gurus hanging put off

New Delhi, Oct 19: The hanging of Mohammed Afzal Guru, the main conspirator who was convicted in the 2001 terrorist attack on Parliament, will not take place tomorrow, the date fixed by the court for his execution. The hanging of Kashmiri separatist has been put off in view of the petition for clemency, filed by his wife, pending before President A P J Abdul Kalam. About a month ago, the trial court had ordered his death by hanging at 0600 hrs on October 20. The hanging will not take place tomorrow since the mercy petition is pending before the President who will have to take a final decision on the matter, a Home Ministry spokesman said here..

Daily Excelsior, 20 October 2006

Militants strike again in Sopore

Srinagar, Oct 19: Militants have yet again struck on non-combatant targets in the liberated appletown of Sopore as they have left a PDP Councilors personal security officer PSO wounded before taking away his rifle. Militants have also kidnapped a civilian and amputated his earlobe to add to the wave of terror. Meanwhile, security forces have killed two militants in separate gunbattles in Bandipore and Rafiabab in Baramulla district today. Informed sources in north Kashmir told theExcelsior that militants fired upon SPO Javed Ahmed, a resident of Watlab and PSO to PDPs local

leader and Councilor Haji Mohammad Abdullah Dar..

Greater Kashmir, 20 October 2006

Opinion: Hang all Kashmiris (S Rehman)

Hang him is the voice that must set off in unison from this blood battered, traumatized and distressed land. Afzal Guru is not the first to die for this unfortunate place and his contribution is being poured scorn upon by the cries and moans when he is all set to become the hero of the land where hundreds of heroes everyday pass away unnoticed. The denigration of his role in the freedom struggle by ducking before them for extending clemency to Afzal would be indignantly treated by the future historians. This voice would be a great favor to the history of Kashmir and a favor to those who mark a black line on their necks everyday they cruise upon their mission for the sake of those who from their drawing rooms cry hoarse over Afzal's death sentence..

Kashmir Times, 20 October 2006

Opinion: Afzal Guru case: Some unaddressed questions (Anuradha Bhasin Jhamwal)

Those favouring death for Afzal Guru argue that capital punishment will be deterrence to forbid anyone to attack parliament in future. But does Afzal Gurus hanging ensure the safety of democratic institutions of the country? The attack on parliament brought to fore the vulnerability of Indias democratic institutions. Obviously, the unaddressed security concerns, which can not be dispensed with whatever punishment Afzal Guru gets, cannot be taken care of without questioning the security lapses. While dispensing with the case, the investigating authorities, unquestioned by the courts, have also failed to take into account several other people acting in complicity with Afzal or those who masterminded the attack. Why and how was the parliament attacked and have adequate measures been taken to ensure its safety?

Indian Express, 20 October 2006

Separatists ask Kashmiris to return

Srinagar, October 19: A hardline separatist outfit advised the Kashmiri youths working in other parts of the country to return home for their safety. Kashmiri youths working in different parts of India should return home as it is not safe for them to stay over there, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League chairman Masrat Alam told reporters here. He alleged police and other security agencies are targeting Kashmiris on one pretext or the other. On the death sentence given to Mohammad Afzal Guru for his role in the 2001 Parliament attack, Alam said, By sending him to the gallows, we are not going to be cowed down. It will, instead, strengthen our resolve to continue our struggle..

Daily Excelsior, 21 October 2006

Decision on Afzals mercy plea soon

NEW DELHI, Oct 20: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tonight said Government is in the process of deciding on the plea for clemency for Mohd Afzal sentenced to death in Parliament attack case and a final call will be taken by the President. The process is on, Singh told reporters at the Iftar dinner hosted by him on being asked about the status of the mercy plea filed on behalf of Afzal. The final call will be taken by the President,

Singh said..

Greater Kashmir, 21 October 2006

Mirwaiz to visit Pak soon

Srinagar: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chairman of a faction of Hurriyat Conference, on Friday announced that he would be leaving for Pakistan soon along with other leaders of the amalgam in connection with the ongoing peace process. Mirwaiz, who was addressing a Friday congregation at historic Jamia Masjid, said, Hurriyat leaders will leave for Pakistan shortly to take the dialogue process forward. There is no doubt that relations between India and Pakistan have improved and dialogue process is moving ahead, but both the nations need to bear it in mind that until Kashmir is not resolved in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of Kashmiris, uncertainty will continue to prevail..

Greater Kashmir, 21 October 2006

Editorial: The Prosperous State?

Notwithstanding the Chief Ministers dream of ushering in an era of peace, prosperity and development that would steer the State towards the much cherished goal of a true welfare state, the administration almost at every tier is enjoying a siesta. It would be unjust to suspect intentions and sincerity of the Chief Minister but with the type of administration he is heading, his much trumpeted slogan of prosperous state will prove nothing but a pipe dream. There can be no denying that he has very noble ideas for speeding up the pace of development in the state. He announced that work on most of the projects under construction, roads and bridges will be carried out in two shifts so that they are completed within the stipulated period..

Greater Kashmir, 22 October 2006

ON Shab e Qadr, ARMY KILLS YOUTH IN CUSTODY

Charar i Sharif, Oct 21: Soldiers of Armys 55 Rashtriya Rifles tortured to death a 19 year old farmer cum-labourer inside their camp in Pakharpora village of Chara i Sharif in Budgam district, sparking massive demonstrations on Saturday. Police has filed a case of abduction and murder against the army. The murdered youth is Muhammad Maqbool Dar son of Muhammad Ramzan Dar of Mohandpora village. Maqbool was the lone breadwinner of his family, and he is survived by aged parents and a 10 year old sister..

Greater Kashmir, 22 October 2006

Opinion: The agenda of Self Rule (Bashir Ahmad)

Cynicism has been the ruling sentiment in contemporary Kashmir. And that is understandable given the terrible baggage of its political history, centuries of harsh and merciless autocratic rule followed by no better deal in the wake of subcontinents freedom from foreign yoke.. Talking of a solution to their problems therefore evokes derision and disbelief in the first instance. They have been bitten too many times by the accords and resolutions to be comforted by the thought of a new one..The actual formulation of the idea is still awaited and one hopes it would be complete soon, not only to silence PDP detractors but also for the public debate as well, which is inescapable..

Greater Kashmir, 22 October 2006

Opinion: The Self Rule (M. ASHRAF)

These days a strong debate is raging all over the sub-continent about the concept of Self Rule as a possible solution to the vexed Kashmir problem. However, every body is hesitating in elucidating in clear terms the parameters of the concept. As usual politicians are making use of the slogan to derive maximum benefit by keeping the whole thing vague. On one hand President Musharraf is advocating Self Rule without going into the nitty gritty of the proposal while as on the other hand some main stream parties in Kashmir are fighting each other for and against the concept without detailing its parameters. What would Self Rule mean to an ordinary Kashmiri?

Daily Excelsior, 23 October 2006

Infiltration bids foiled; 9 militants killed

SRINAGAR, Oct 22 : Nine people, including eight militants, were killed while security forces foiled two attempts of infiltration from across the Line of Control LoC in Kashmir during the past 24 hours, official sources said today. Elsewhere in the Valley, security forces arrested six militants and seized a large cache of arms and ammunition while militants damaged a Railway bridge on the Qazigund Baramulla track. Security forces foiled an infiltration bid in the Uri sector last evening when they gunned down three Pakistani intruders. The sources said troops noticed some suspicious movement along the LoC at Limber Gali near Boniyar in the Uri Sector..

Kashmir Times, 23 October 2006

Mufti asks Centre to discuss Mushs offer

New Delhi, Oct 22 : Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed has urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to initiate serious discussion with various political parties on Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf s offer of self rule and enhanced autonomy to the strife-torn state. Sayeed, who met Dr Singh here before leaving for New York to attend the UN General assembly session, called for increasing the role of state police in tackling militancy and reducing the involvement of the Army and para military force task in counter insurgency operations. He told the Prime Minister that the present situation in the state was not conducive for finding a lasting solution to the Kashmir issue..

Kashmir Times, 23 October 2006

Opinion: Why Afzal shouldnt hang (Praful Bidwai)

For centuries, executions of criminals and enemies of the state used to be public events in most countries of the world, held in the town square to the applause of mobs drunk with revenge. It is only in the 20th century that the delivery of capital punishment stopped being a spectacle. The death penalty pained and revolted many citizens and was gradually abolished in nearly 130 countries. However, as the world enters the murky Age of Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, the spirit of revenge and retribution is back with a vengeance. As the Latin American writer Eduardo Galeano puts it: In a world that prefers security to justice, there is loud applause whenever justice is sacrificed at the altar of security. Every time a criminal falls in a hail of bullets, society feels some relief..

Greater Kashmir, 23 October 2006

Opinion: Self Governance-Yet Another Slogan

Slogans are born to die. This may not be true of other places in the world where they are born to be translated into reality by the leaders who raise and coin these slogans. In our subcontinent Mr. Gandhi of the loincloth and stick raised the slogan of Swaraj and made it a reality. As very aptly said by Llyod I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber in their recent work on this great Indian leader that Gandhi meant to change the world as well as interpret it and he did. Gandhi got inspiration for leading Indian struggle from great Russian writer Tolstoy who through his A letter to Hindoo told him that India must resist England non violently; to resist violently would be to yield to the conquerors. Gandhi translated this aphorism through his vision, commitment, courage and determination into reality..

Kashmir Times, 23 October 2006

J&K Police probe into civilians death in Army custody

Srinagar, Oct 22 (UNI): The Jammu and Kashmir Police have launched an inquiry into the death of a civilian in the Army custody in central Kashmir district of Badgam yesterday, an official spokesman said today. He said the Army has also assured severe punishment to whosoever found guilty in the incident. Giving details, the spokesman said troops arrested a civilian, Maqbool Ahmad Dar of Mohandpora village in Badgam district, on October 20 during a search operation..

Daily Excelsior, 24 October 2006

Two killed, militant network busted

Srinagar, Oct 23 : Two persons were killed while a Police Station was attacked in Kashmir during the past 24 hours. An official spokesman said militants detonated a powerful Improvised Explosive Device IED in JK Cable Network Office at Tarzoo near the Sopore Bus Stand in North Kashmir's Baramulla district at around 1720 hrs today. The building caught fire due to the blast as a result of which a 26 year old person, Parvez Ahmad Mir, was killed, he added. A fire service personnel also sustained injuries while dousing the blaze..

Daily Excelsior, 24 October 2006

Jawan kills 2, ends life

Rajouri, Oct 23: An Army jawan gunned down his two colleagues before ending his life in Keval area of Budhal in this district today afternoon. Official sources said an Army soldier Naik Lingam opened firing on his two colleagues with an automatic rifle after a tiff during patrolling in Keval area at 2.45 pm today. He gunned down two jawans identified as Suresh Kumar and Thakre Prasad before killing himself with the same weapon. All of them were posted in Rashtriya Rifles and were on anti militancy duty..

Greater Kashmir, 24 October 2006

NC blasts ruling coalition on Human Rights abuses

Srinagar: The National Conference on Monday accused government of total failure, and said the government has no moral authority to rule the state following massive human rights violations here. The NC Legislative Party president Abdur Rahim Rather while

addressing media persons here said government has failed to protect lives of people. Rather while condemning killing of Muhammad Maqbool Dar, 19, who was only son of his parents, by troops of 53 RR of Army in Pakharpora, Budgam in custody. He described zero tolerance to human rights by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as a mere slogan and said ground realities were in total contrast of what PM has stated. Rather said human rights abuses in the State have reached to peak and the government was not taking any actions against force personnel involved in rights violations..

Daily Excelsior, 24 October 2006

Editorial: Get over it

The latest gruesome incident in Rajouri in which an Army jawan has killed three of his colleagues underlines a problem of which we are well aware. It has been afflicting our security forces for quite some time. On an average there has been one such happening almost every month in the recent period. These dastardly events are not confined merely to this State but also take place in other parts of the country. One occurrence that had shaken the nation was the suicide by a woman officer in Udhampur. It had brought into discussion the role and status of uniformed women. Both the Houses of Parliament had taken notice of this. For their part the people at the helm in the Army were called upon to do some serious introspection..

Greater Kashmir, 24 October 2006

Opinion: Satisfying collective conscience (Hassan Zainagiree)

The verdict against Muhammad Afzal Guru goes like this. The collective conscience of the society will only be satisfied if capital punishment is awarded to the offender and he is a menace to the society and his life should become extinct. Absolutely true. An offender deserves punishment that is most effective deterrent. A society cannot be left at the mercy of criminals. A menace needs to breathe its last count. What entire Kashmir is protesting against is Afzal's being fixed up and convicted on confessional statement exacted under police torture. The clemency appeal, in essence, is pleading for justice as they believe Afzal has become victim of flawed trial..

Daily Excelsior, 25 October 2006

NC will withdraw from second roundtable committees: Omar

Srinagar, Oct 24: Accusing the Centre of failing in ensuring zero tolerance of human rights violations main opposition in the State National Conference today announced complete suspension of its participation in any of the committees formed after the second roundtable conference held here earlier this year. Human rights violations have increased manifold and it will not be appropriate for us to continue attending the committees formed after the second round table conference chaired by the Prime Minister as the Centre had failed continuously in ensuring zero human rights violations, party President Omar Abdullah said..

Daily Excelsior, 25 October 2006

Govt to soon decide on Afzal plea

New Delhi, Oct 24 : Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tonight said Government is in the process of deciding on the plea for clemency for Jaish e Mohammed militant Mohd Afzal

sentenced to death in Parliament attack case and law will take its own course. The legal process is on. The due process will be followed. Law will take its own course, he told reporters after the swearing in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The mercy plea has been sent to the Union Home Ministry by President A P J Abdul Kalam for the Government's view. The Home Ministry is awaiting a report from the Government of Delhi, where the crime had taken place, on the issue..

Indian Express, 25 October 2006

Congress worker Afzal Beig shot dead

Srinagar, October 24: Suspected militants killed a Congress worker and a policeman in separate attacks in Anantnag and Baramulla districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, official sources said. Congress worker Mohammad Afzal Beig, 52, was shot at and critically injured by militants at Changoo Dooru in south Kashmir's Anantnag district around 11.15 am, they said. Beig was rushed to the hospital where he succumbed to injuries. In the second incident, Head Constable Hanief Ahmad was shot in north Kashmir's Baramulla town around 1:20 pm..

Greater Kashmir, 25 October 2006

Opinion: The Great Indian Tamasha (M ASHRAF)

The electronic media over past few weeks had created a drama like the tele show, The Great Indian Tamasha for the planned hanging of Afzal Guru. They must all have been greatly disappointed now that the hanging has been postponed because of the pending petition with the President of India. Still there are probably going to be more acts of the drama as the execution of the sentence has only been delayed and it has not been commuted yet. Unfortunately no one from both the sides, for as well as against the execution, is looking at the real background of the whole episode. It is a pity that even those who have been continuously protesting against this execution and claim to stand for the rights of Kashmiris have not been able to project their case in the right perspective..

Kashmir Times, 25 October 2006

Editorial: To trust or not to trust

By suggesting self rule for Jammu and Kashmir, and by taking the initiative in proposing a joint mechanism for facing the challenge of terrorism, hand in hand with India, President Musharraf has once again lobbed the ball into India's court, and has left Indian leadership divided and confabulating over how to react to his proposals.. The foremost among the non Congress leaders to openly support a positive response to Musharrafs proposals is Mufti Mohammad Syed, the ex CM of J&K.. Reportedly, he has strongly pleaded for for the state, and for allowing nearly 2000 young Kashmiris waiting just across the LoC a safe passage to their homes in the valley to let them start a new life afresh. By self rule, which the PDP has owned as their party creed, they mean some thing a little different from what the NC means by greater autonomy..

Daily Excelsior, 26 October 2006

Two brothers, ex SPO killed

Srinagar, Oct 25 : Militants killed three persons, including two brothers, while security forces foiled an infiltration bid and seized a large cache of arms and ammunition in

Kashmir since last evening, an official spokesman said today. He said militants shot at and critically wounded two brothers , Matloob Ahmed Ganai (25) and Hafiz Ahmed Ganai (18) at Duraswani Lolab in the frontier district of Kupwara last evening. The injured were hospitalised where they succumbed to their injuries this morning, he said. The spokesman said militants broke into the house of one Abdul Aziz Mir at Yaripora in Kulgam area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district this afternoon and shot dead his son Abid Ahmad Mir, a former Special Police Officer..

Hindu, 26 October 2006

Jammu and Kashmir autonomy working group proves stillborn (Praveen Swami)

New Delhi: Five months after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh promised to set up a working group to discuss greater federal autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir, State Government authorities have yet to appoint either a chairperson or members..Procedural problems? Union Home Ministry sources told The Hindu that the delay in forming the working group was a result of procedural problems. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who had been given the charge of appointing its members, approached the former Chief Justice, A.M. Ahmadi, to chair the autonomy deliberations. However, the proposal collapsed after Justice Ahmadi asked that the group be granted the status of a government commission..

Kashmir Times, 26 October 2006

Editorial: Brutal and inhuman

The killing of a father son duo by a speedy police van which ran over their motor cycle in Mehboob Nagar area of Srinagar, condemnable as it is, was compounded by the inhuman police action against the residents of the area who came out on the streets to protest against the brutal killing. What makes the police action even more condemnable is the manner in which they dealt with the protestors. The residents were naturally angry over the manner in which the racing police vehicle over ran the man and his son. What further agitated them was the inhuman behaviour of the policemen travelling in the vehicle when instead of attending to the injured father .son duo, who later succumbed to their injuries, they tried to flee the scene..

Kashmir Times, 26 October 2006

Mirwaiz hopes for positive outcome

Srinagar, Oct 25: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chairman Hurriyat Conference A, today hoped that the proposed Indo Pak foreign secretary level talks would make atmosphere conducive for carrying forward the composite dialogue process and solution of Kashmir issue.He was addressing the people at Jamia Masjid here before Eid prayer. Mirwaiz said he is optimistic about the secretary level talks proving effective and successful for giving a new direction to the future dialogue process. According to him, government of India will have to show seriousness and sincerity in the dialogue process.Hurriyat A chairman stated that the proposed dialogue is also imperative for the success of prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh's Pakistan visit..

Kashmir Times, 27 October 2006

Editorial: Politics of HR abuses

The National Conference has announced that it would boycott the working group meetings and the round table conferences for the simple reason that human rights violations in Kashmir are not being stopped. That human rights abuse exists in the Valley, despite the prime ministers assurance of zero tolerance to injustices, harassment and torture perpetrated by security forces, it is already too well known. In fact, going by the level of brutality, if not statistics, there is an unprecedented rise in cases of abuse in recent months. But when politicians choose to make human rights issue a vote bank politics plank, there can be nothing more shameful..It was only soon after the rout of national Conference in 2002 elections that Farooq Abdullah and his son started waving the flag of human rights..

Daily Excelsior, 27 October 2006

650 calls, SMS received on Jail mobile

Jammu, Oct 26: After 650 calls and SMS were traced on a mobile telephone recovered from the possession of an under trial Gurmeet Singh in high security Kot Bhalwal jail, he was taken into custody by CID Counter Intelligence sleuths today. Prisons Department have also ordered a high level probe into smuggling of mobile telephone and SIM cards inside the jail where a number of militants including foreign mercenaries are lodged.. All calls and SMS were received on the telephone from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir, mostly the Kashmir Valley.. Intelligence agencies were also investigating as to how the militants could manage to get the mobile telephones issued on the name of an Army soldier Naresh Kumar of Rashtriya Rifles, posted in Baramulla..

Daily Excelsior, 27 October 2006

Editorial: A terror tool?

The Kot Bhalwal jail in this city had got extraordinary attention in 1999. It was from this high security prison that Maulana Masood Azhar, the Pakistan-based high priest of terrorism, was set free to secure the release of hijacked passengers of Indian Airlines now Indian Flight 814. Off and on this well fortified lock up makes news for one misadventure or the other by its inmates the majority of whom are believed to be terrorists. Presently the alarm bells are ringing with the recovery of two mobile telephones one from a militant and the other from an undertrial in a murder case. The authorities are reported to have directed prisoners to surrender their instruments and other undesirable material including drugs..

Indian Express, 27 October 2006

Opinion: Saving the Kashmir Valley (Jagmohan)

..Baramulla fell into the hands of the raiders on October 24-26. They indulged in looting, burning, raping and killing, hardly realising that the time they spent on their abominable crimes would contribute crucially to their defeat. On October 27, the first batch of troops under the command of Lt Colonel Ranjit Rai, landed in Srinagar. He led the small contingent towards Baramulla and lost his life in the operation. But it unnerved the raiders. In another bold move, Major Som Nath Sharma engaged the raiders at Badgam very near the airport. He was outnumbered seven to one but inflicted heavy casualties on

the enemy. He was killed..It would appear that the country has all but forgotten her heroes of this remarkable period. As a nation we need to recall October 27 as the day India saved the Kashmir Valley..

Daily Excelsior, 27 October 2006

Editorial: Dig them out

The curtain has not yet been rung down on the process of recovery of unauthorised weapons on either side of the Pir Panjal. This week has begun with security forces finding a large quantity of arms and ammunition from three different places in Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur districts. Chinese pistols, grenades and Kalashnikov ammunition are among the armaments that have been seized. In addition, five detonators wrapped in a newspaper have been found near Patnitop on the Jammu-Srinagar highway.. Already a grave suspicion persists that they have been used during the militancy to benefit one business person or the other by imposing indiscriminate bans. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to dig them out..

Daily Excelsior, 28 October 2006

Shutdown in Valley over 1947 Army landing

Srinagar, Oct 27: Kashmir valley today observed shutdown over a separatists call against the first landing of the Indian Army in the State in 1947. Meanwhile, a police constable and a CRPF driver got killed in separate road accidents, whileas militants lobbed a hand grenade on a CRPF bunker near DCs Office here. In Srinagar and other major towns in the Valley, shops and other business establishments remained closed for the day while traffic was off the road. Almost all Government offices and educational institutions were also closed all over Kashmir valley. Call for todays shutdown was given by the pro Pakistan faction of Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani to register Valleys protest against the maiden arrival of the Indian Army on October 1947..

Hindu, 28 October 2006

Editorial: Staying the course in Kashmir

For decades, Indian policy making on Jammu and Kashmir has consisted of doing the same things again and again and hoping they will somehow have a different outcome. When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced in May 2006 that a Working Group would be created to discuss the constitutional future of the State, it was hailed as a historic attempt to try something new. Dr. Singh promised to allow the people of J&K to be the authors of their own history. He appealed to all politicians to use the mechanism to make a material contribution to the problems that we have been discussing for many decades now and arrive at an understanding and a consensus on what needs to be done. Five months later, the Working Group has neither a convenor nor members..

Kashmir Times, 28 October 2006

Opinion: Kashmir solution: A sketch (Er. Saif-ud-din Shangloo)

..As a result composite dialogue process started in the year 2004. A peaceful environ is not only in our interest but also that of warring countries of India and Pakistan as is evident from the economic progress the two countries have made ever since. We welcome this approach more so when the countries have nuclear arsenal. Different

options for solution to the problem are being discussed and debated in various fora. Some of these proposals like Autonomy/Self Rule are vague/confusing. These are the time wasting exercises satisfying only those who are interested in stalemating the process as they have been doing since 1947.. The Kashmir problem is not peculiar to valley as some people believe.. I will henceforth use the nationality of the State as KASHMIRIANS which has so far been expressed as Kashmiri which has a confusing connotation connecting it to the valley of Kashmir only..

Hindu, 28 October 2006

Mysore terror threads were spun in Kashmir (Praveen Swami)

New Delhi: A Jammu and Kashmir based counter terrorism operation led police to the Al Badr terrorists arrested in Mysore early on Friday, security sources told The Hindu. In September, Intelligence Bureau operatives learned that a Pakistan based Al Badr operative had visited Jammu. Informants told the domestic covert service that the Pakistani national had handed over Rs. 3,00,000 to finance a Srinagar based terror cell. Little was known about the Srinagar cell, other than that it was led by an operative code named Imran..

Greater Kashmir, 28 October 2006

In three days, 5 militants among 9 killed in JK

Srinagar, Oct 27: A trade union leader, five Hizbul Mujahedin militants, a Special Police Officer SPO, and two brothers were killed in different incidents across the state since Tuesday evening, police and reports said on Friday. Police recovered body of trade union leader Munawar Ahmed Bhat son of Ali Muhammad of Lurgam Tral from Larve Jigar Tral in south Kashmir's Islamabad district on Thursday. Unidentified armed men had abducted Munawar from his house on Wednesday night and after slitting his throat dumped his body in the village. Pall of gloom descended over Tral township as soon as the news about his death spread in the area..

Daily Excelsior, 29 October 2006

Fahad pumped hawala money worth lakhs in Kashmir (Sanjeev Pargal)

Jammu, Oct 28: Top Pakistani militant Mohd Fahad, who was arrested by police after a gunbattle at Mysore yesterday, had pumped hawala money worth several lakhs among Al Badr cadre through different hawala channels in Kashmir valley . Official sources told the Excelsior that Mohd Fahad, who was arrested by police along with another Pakistani militant Mohd Ali Hussain in Mysore yesterday for plotting a terror attack in Bangalore, had infiltrated into Indian territory after training in Pakistan from Lipa Valley in Kupwara district of Kashmir in 2002..

Daily Excelsior, 29 October 2006

Civilian killed, 36 injured in Sopore grenade attack

Srinagar, Oct 28 : A civilian was killed and 36 others injured when militants targetted a Border Security Force vehicle in apple-town of Sopore this afternoon. Security forces apprehended two militants and seized a large cache of arms and ammunition overnight. The spokesman said militants lobbed a hand grenade towards a Maruti gypsy belonging to the BSFs 45 battalion at the Sopore Main Chowk at around 1245 hrs. The battalion is

headquartered at Sopore. The grenade hit the vehicle resulting in injuries to 32 civilians and four BSF personnel, he added. The spokesman said the wounded were shifted to various hospitals where the condition of many of them was stated to be critical..

Greater Kashmir, 29 October 2006

Opinion: Kill crime, not criminal (Shahnawaz Qadir)

The death penalty is an insufficient form of punishment because it is cruel and inhumane. There is no proof that it reduces the level of crime and it can be inflicted upon people innocent of any crime. The death penalty is the ultimate form of revenge. Many countries have realized the fact that killing human beings is not a deterrent and thus have abolished the death penalty. The death penalty has resulted in a gross failure. Beyond its horror and incivility, it has neither protected the innocent nor deterred the wicked. The recurrent spectacle of publicly sanctioned killing has cheapened human life and dignity. No country in the world can be so confident in their judicial system that they believe all of those people they murdered were guilty and death was there absolute punishment. Murder is wrong no one has the right to kill another human being..

Daily Excelsior, 29 October 2006

Opinion: Afzal Guru exposes all ! (Dr. Jitendra Singh)

Whatever the merits of the judgement in Afzal Guru case, it has helped serve atleast one important purpose. It has inadvertently exposed the real agenda or the hidden agenda of key players on the Kashmir scene.... from Farooq Abdullah to Mehbooba Mufti, from Yasin Malik to Syed Ali Shah Geelani, from Ghulam Nabi Azad to Lal Krishna Advani. Simultaneously, it has also exploded the myth of vain idealism that thinly masks the timidity and chicanery of so-called freedom fighters or Mujahideen apparently championing the cause of Kashmir's independence. And, incidentally, it has also left bare a pathetic lack of reasoning on the part of certain sections of press as well as certain so-called intellectuals associated with local media or local universities. It offers an interesting case study to scan some of the following statements in the light of Afzal Guru followup..

Greater Kashmir, 29 October 2006

Paralysis of RTI (ARJIMAND HUSSAIN TALIB)

It is now almost three years since our State enacted the law for Right to Information (RTI) amidst fanfare that this new law would do a magic act with the quality of our governance. But three years on, looking at what the law has done in making governance better and people-friendly paints a sorry picture. Although many loopholes continue to dog the law at the all India level, yet the Right to Information (RTI) Act has come as a useful tool for empowerment of common masses in obtaining useful information on public issues from government of their interest. Throughout India governments aversion to sharing information and their dislike in making common masses partners in transparent decision making is a reality which is widely known.. When it comes to J&K, however, the nature and application of the law has been very little more than cosmetic from the very onset..

Daily Excelsior, 30 October 2006

Violent incidents in J&K decline in last one year

New Delhi, Oct 29: As Jammu and Kashmir's Congress led Government completes a year in office next week, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has reason to be happy with its handling of the security situation as official figures show a 20 per cent decline in violent incidents since he took over. Figures available with the Union home ministry also show that the killing of civilians and security personnel has fallen by 27 per cent during Azad's tenure. Though political parties, including Azad's alliance partner PDP, have been critical of the State Government's handling of human rights, the figures show only nine cases of rights abuses were reported this year..

Greater Kashmir, 30 October 2006

Mufti leaves for UN on important mission

Srinagar: Former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Sunday left for New York on an important mission at the head of a non official Indian delegation to attend the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The first Muslim Union Home Minister of independent India would also be the first Kashmiri to represent the country at the UN as the head of a non official delegation. During his 10 day stay in New York, Sayeed would be meeting a cross section of world leaders. A Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) statement said the former Chief Minister's visit would be an important step towards accelerating the ongoing peace process in the state..

Kashmir Times, 30 October 2006

HR abuse goes up, frisking becomes part of life (Jehangir Rashid)

Srinagar, Oct 29: No less than a Prime Minister makes an announcement that the human rights violations would not be tolerated and there would be zero tolerance in this respect, but more than five months down the line after making such an announcement the situation is as it is with people feeling the heat both from the security forces as well as police personnel..The custodial killing of a youth Mohammad Maqbool at Charar e Sharief was a stark reminder to the common man that there is lot of difference between the rhetoric and the action. This youth was picked up by the security forces and like many other such incidents next day his body was found a little distance away.. The Prime Minister may come out with a statement and issue directions, but the concerned people that is the security forces personnel do not pay any heed to it and they go by their own dictum..

Daily Excelsior, 30 October 2006

Editorial: Think it over

It is not good for any place to have the dubious reputation of being a sanctuary of militants. We in this State need to consider this rather seriously. It does cause heartache whenever there is talk of major terror incidents anywhere in the country having one link or the other with the State. The last week, for instance, has ended with television news channels again and again flashing the news of a Karnataka police team heading for Srinagar. We are told that this exercise has become necessary in the wake of disclosures following an encounter with the Pakistani terrorists in Mysore and email threats to VIPs emanating from Kerala. There is said to be some connection between the two instances.

Police inquiries have given rise to the suspicion that the source of mischief is located in the Kashmir region..

Daily Excelsior, 30 October 2006

Governor, CM ask India, Pak to work unitedly for promoting Kashmiriyat

Srinagar, Oct 29: Governor Lt. Gen Retd. S K Sinha today gave a clarion call to India and Pakistan for working unitedly to promote Kashmiriyat, which holds key to the future of mankind while Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said that Kashmir has been a role model of secular and characteristic, amity and pluralistic culture in the Subcontinent..Inaugurating a three day International Seminar on Approaches to Kashmir Studies organized by the Centre for Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir here this evening, the Governor referred to the functioning of Department of Kashmiriyat at Punjab University, Lahore and said that it can interact with the Centre for Kashmir Studies closely to strive for the common goal..

Daily Excelsior, 31 October 2006

Salahudins associate shot dead in Doda

Jammu, Oct 30: A Hizbul Mujahideen divisional commander, who was reported to be a close associate of Pakistan based Hizb supremo Syed Salahudin, was gunned down by Rashtriya Rifles and police in Bhadarwah tehsil of Doda district this morning..According to official sources, Javed Burqi was an active militant of Hizbul Mujahideen since 1992. He had remained with Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahudin for seven years in Pakistan during which he also underwent training in arms, IEDs and other weaponry..

Hindu, 31 October 2006

Still no word about kin (Shujaat Bukhari)

Srinagar: Scores of people assembled in a local park here on Monday sat silently for many hours to register their protest. It was a unique way to give vent to feelings by the kin of hundreds of those people who have allegedly disappeared while in custody in the last 16 years. Rejecting the Governments offer to give cash compensation that too after proper verification, many offered double the amount to the Government just to let them know whether my relative is dead or alive and if dead give us the body. The Government had offered Rs. one lakh as relief. In the crowd there is a young woman who swore that she would not marry till the whereabouts of her brother were known..

Greater Kashmir, 31 October 2006

Rights groups to hold anti-Mufti protests in New York

Srinagar, Oct 30: Former Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, who left for the US on Sunday to attend a session of United Nations General Assembly is likely to face protests from human rights groups there for custodial disappearances in Kashmir during his tenure. Mufti, who is also the patron of Peoples Democratic, is heading a non official Indian delegation to the UN where he is scheduled to present his partys position paper on the self rule as the final solution to the Kashmir issue. The Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons APDP that fights for the whereabouts of the Kashmiris missing in custody since 1990, says its mobilized many rights groups in the US to protest against Muftis visit..

Greater Kashmir, 31 October 2006

Editorial: From light to darkness

It is a sad state of affairs that the state government at every juncture has been failing to live up to its promises. It is not hypertensive promises like zero-tolerance on human rights violation or abolition of forced disappearances where it has literally flunked but ironically its most dismal failures are seen on the very mundane issues of governance. If seen in retrospect the story of state administration is simple starting with a bang and ending with a whimper. It launched a campaign against corruption but ended up decorating those known for not having a clean slate, it promised about bringing accountability in administration but ended up succumbing to parochialism and breeding inefficiency in the top echelons there is hardly a story of success in the government that one could laud it for. Instead of lessening peoples problems it has been multiplying them either out of naivety or out of callousness..

Daily Excelsior, 31 October 2006

Militant killed in Bandipore encounter

Srinagr, Oct 30: Security forces have killed one militant in an encounter at Kudara in Bandipore area of Baramulla district. Official sources said that an encounter took place between militants and troops of RR 14 Bn at Kudara forest area in Bandipore last night. Even as three militants are believed to have escaped, one unidentified militant got killed. He has been identified as Shabir Piswal, alias Sadiq one AK rifle, two magazines, one wireless set and 35 rounds of ammunition were recovered from him..