

The Tribune, 1 September 2004

One killed, 24 hurt in Pulwama blast

Srinagar, August 31: One person was killed and 24 others were injured, seven of them seriously, when militants hurled a grenade near bus stand, Pulwama, in South Kashmir this afternoon. Three militants have also been killed in separate incidents in Baramula district of North Kashmir since yesterday. The police here said that a pedestrian was killed and 24 persons were injured, seven of them seriously, when militants lobbed a grenade in the bus stand at about 4 p.m. today. Those injured included five police personnel. The seriously injured seven persons, three of them police personnel, were shifted to different hospitals here. One pedestrian identified as Mohammad Ayub Bhat of Wogulgund in Pulwama district succumbed to his injuries in the district hospital, Pulwama.

The Tribune, 1 September 2004

Azad's brother escapes unhurt in attack

Jammu, August 31: Union Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's brother today escaped unhurt in a terrorist attack in the Doda district here. However, his security officer was seriously injured, as terrorists fired indiscriminately at the car in which he was travelling from Soti in the interior area of Gandoh to Doda town. The police said Mr Mohammad Abbas Azad was attacked at about 9 a.m. Terrorists fired at his vehicle from the roadside. The driver fled the vehicle safely, but some bullets hit the security officer.

The Tribune, 1 September 2004

Cash crunch affects employment

Jammu, August 31: In less than two years, the job seekers' queues outside the houses and office chambers of ministers in Jammu and Kashmir have thinned conspicuously. One finds a handful of unemployed youth or their parents at these locations waiting for favours from the ministers. The drop in the number of visitors to the ministerial bungalows is the result of the ministers' failure in providing jobs to the educated unemployed youth. Not only the rural belts of the state but the urban areas as well have, therefore started witnessing simmering discontent and resentment against the PDP-led coalition government from which the people had expected "a miracle". Sources said the figure of educated unemployed youth had touched five lakh, which included over 2.5

lakh unemployed graduates. They said since the unemployed youth had started treating employment exchanges as "irrelevant", not all of them registered their names with them with the result that the exchange figures reveal a number of 1.5 lakh youth as unemployed.

The Times of India, 1 September 2004

Agents pushing tourists to J&K

NEW DELHI: Kashmir is the safest and most popular tourist destination in India, say agents and lure foreign tourists into visiting the state. One Turkish traveler, Arzu Khan, came to India to study yoga in Rishikesh. "They told me all the tickets were booked," said Arzu. "But they showed me magazine articles about how safe and popular Kashmir is." She agreed to go. For \$250, she was put on a flight there with houseboat accommodation once she arrived. Once on the houseboat, she was informed by the manager that she could not leave without an escort. The manager also demanded more money, claiming that he had not received the full payment. For an extra fee, she was taken trekking, where her hosts told her to run away if they saw a group of soldiers approaching. "I found this a bit strange. I thought they wanted tourists." Khan, who is a non-practicing Muslim, says the people she met were very friendly, and often told her she was their sister because of their shared faith. However, "they also sometimes made me feel like a captive."

The Hindu, 1 September 2004

Kashmir should not hold us hostage: Dixit

NEW DELHI, AUG. 31. With the India-Pakistan Foreign Minister-level talks coming up soon, the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, said today that resolution of the Kashmir issue should not hold the people of the sub-continent hostage and that the two countries should proceed with furthering the economic relations. "Kashmir is an important issue to be resolved between India and Pakistan. But its resolution should not hold 1.3 billion people of the sub-continent hostage," Mr. Dixit told correspondents here. Speaking on the sidelines of the "Regional Conference on SAARC: Post-Islamabad Challenges," he said the two countries should further their economic relations to exploit the immense potential in this sphere. He, however, declined to comment on the upcoming talks between the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh,

and his Pakistani counterpart, Khurshheed Mehmood Kasuri, here on September 5-6.

The Hindu, 1 September 2004

India's concerns conveyed to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 31 . India's High Commissioner in Pakistan, Shiv Shankar Menon, today called on the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar, and exchanged views on the dialogue scheduled between the two Foreign Ministers in New Delhi on September 5 and 6. Pakistan is peeved over what it believes are "hostile statements" by Indian leaders days before the Foreign Ministers are to meet to take stock of the outcome of the first round of the composite dialogue. India believes that Pakistan's "obsession" with Kashmir to the exclusion of all other issues for the normalisation of ties between the two sides does not augur well. This was evident from the candid comments made by the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, in New Delhi today.

The Times of India, 1 September 2004

Strumming the right chords

NEW DELHI: Eminent Indian artistes like Hindustani vocalist L K Pandit and creator of the Mohan Veena Vishwa Mohan Bhatt will perform in Pakistani cities of Lahore and Karachi this week as part of SPIC MACAY's efforts to spread its wings to neighbouring countries. The cultural organisation SPIC MACAY, which aims at promoting Indian classical music and culture among youth, is taking a delegation for the first time to Pakistan this week. The troupe, which also includes Hindustani vocalist Meeta Pandit, who is L K Pandit's daughter and who was cultural ambassador of India to Pakistan during Saarc 2004, and noted Sarangi player Kamal Sabri, will perform in Lahore and Karachi on September 3 and 4. The concerts will also mark the 10th anniversary of the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFDP).

Daily Excelsior, 1 September 2004

Narrow escape for Azad's brother, nephew; PSO hurt

JAMMU, Aug 31: Ghulam Mohd Abbas Azad, younger brother of Union Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had a narrow escape while one of his Personal Security Officer (PSO)

was seriously injured in a militant attack at Changa in Gandoh in Doda district this morning. Official sources said two militants intercepted Abbas Azad and his son Muzaffar Abbas at 9 am today when they were heading towards Changa to open their shop from their house at Soti. Abbas was accompanied by two PSOs —Ghulam Nabi, Selection Grade Constable and Mohd Akbar.

Daily Excelsior, 1 September 2004

Cabinet approves ITC for Srinagar; PDC to lift Rs 1250 cr for Baglihar

Srinagar, Aug 31: The Government have decided to set up an International Trade Centre at Srinagar to provide a permanent facility for holding exhibitions, trade fairs, buyers and sellers meets etc. The State Cabinet which met here today with Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in chair, accorded approval of transfer of over 371 kanals of land of Ply Board Factory Pampore to Directorate of Handicrafts for establishment of this Centre. Announcing the decisions of the Cabinet, Chief Secretary Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria said that the proposed Trade Centre would also have modern computerized data bank to disseminate trade bulletins on International Business and market intelligence. It shall also be establishing backward linkages with production process to meet the international quality requirements and updating the trading community of changing globing trade requirement under WTO regime.

Daily Excelsior, 1 September 2004

2 militants, civilian killed in Sopore gunbattle

Civilian killed, 30 injured in blast

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: Militants today left civilian dead and 30 others, including five Police personnel, wounded in a grenade explosion at Pulwama in south Kashmir. In another major incident of violence, two militants and a civilian have died in a fierce gunbattle between militants and security forces in Sopore. Gunmen have also shot dead the owner of a video cassette shop at Chhanpora outskirts of this capital city. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that an unidentified young man, widely believed to be a militant, lobbed a hand grenade in the direction of a Police party near the crowded busyard at Pulwama town at 1600 hours today. It exploded, causing critical to minor injuries to

30 persons, including five Police personnel. Later, a critically wound Mohammad Ayub Bhat S/o Ghulam Hassan Bhat R/o Wugargund succumbed to injuries. All the injured were evacuated and rushed to District Hospital Pulwama. Ten persons with critical injuries were referred to Srinagar hospitals. They included three constables of Pulwama Police.

Daily Excelsior, 1 September 2004

Secretariat Security pass seized from top ultra

JAMMU, Aug 31: In what can be called a major security lapse by the Civil Secretariat Security, Army and police have recovered a blank Visitor's Pass from the possession of a top Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant, who was among the three ultras eliminated by the security forces at Chatta Pani, Poshana in Hill Kaka area of Surankote in Poonch district on August 28 morning. Investigations carried out so far by the security agencies including police have revealed that slain militant Mohd Lateef son of Mir Mohd, a resident of Topi, Bafliaz in Surankote had carried out reece of Civil Secretariat, Srinagar twice and managed a blank Visitor's Pass for the entry of Abu Zubair in Secretariat. Zubair is the killer of 13 civilians at Tiali Katha, Surankote on June 25, who was also eliminated in Saturday morning's gun battle.

The Hindu, 2 September 2004

On a different jihadi mission

SURANKOTE (POONCH), SEPT. 1. It is a return journey from Saudi Arabia to Surankote for a jihad, but of a different kind. The Saudi expatriates have traversed through a path of thorns, but they have held their ground for more than a year and become a vital link in the counter militancy operations. This was proved in an operation started by the security forces to eliminate the militants responsible for killing 13 Village Defence Committee personnel on the intervening night of 2526 June this year. Forces were able to eliminate the three militants including the mastermind with the support of Saudi expatriates. Starting with four non-resident Indians who came from Saudi Arabia to fight militancy in their native place, the group has now enlarged to 20 and more are to follow. Each of them has a tale to tell -- the reason to leave their prosperous job in Saudi

Arabia where they earned Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000 every month.

The Tribune, 2 September 2004

UPA policy on Kashmir 'unclear'

Jammu, September 1: Moderates in the Kashmiri separatist camp are disillusioned over what they call an "unclear" policy of the Congress-led UPA Government at the Centre as far as the resolution of the Kashmir issue and resumption of talks with them were concerned. Two recent developments have left the moderates, especially the APHC, led by Molvi Umar Farooq, confused but defiant. The first jolt they received was in the shape of two successive statements issued by the Union Home Minister, Mr Shivraj Patil, and his junior colleague. The APHC leadership was quick to react and announce that it was not prepared to enter into a dialogue if Mr Patil imposed conditions and if his junior wanted to hold parleys with those separatists who were backed by the militants and who had the mandate of the people.

The Tribune, 2 September 2004

7 killed, medical officer injured in J&K

Srinagar, September 1: Four Pakistani infiltrators were among seven persons killed and a Block Medical Officer (BMO) injured, while security forces arrested two militants and busted hideouts in Jammu and Kashmir overnight, an official spokesman said today. He said security forces noticed a group of militants crossing into this side from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), at Trikundi in Manjakote sector, early this morning. When challenged, the militants opened fire and tried to flee the area. The security forces retaliated and in the encounter, three infiltrators were killed. A search has been launched in the nearby areas to arrest the other ultras, he said.

The Tribune, 2 September 2004

Centre renews talks offer to Hurriyat

New Delhi, September 1: The Centre today renewed its offer for talks with the Hurriyat, saying that a dialogue was the only way for a solution to the outstanding issues. "We have always said we believe in talks. Talks are the only way which can help solve intricate issues," Home Minister Shivraj Patil told reporters after a meeting with a 17-member delegation of Pakistani Parliamentarians. Asked about his comments on the reported

refusal by the hardline faction of Hurriyat, led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, for holding talks with the Centre, he said "Moderates are wise people. We rely on the understanding and wisdom of the moderates...we don't attach much importance to rumours."

Hindustan Times, 3 September 2004

Hizbul terrorist killed in J&K

Jammu, September 3: A self-styled area commander of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist outfit was gunned down by security forces in Udhampur district and terrorist hideouts were busted at several places in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday night, official sources said. Troops launched a search and cordoning off operation in Kharag area of the district and in the encounter that followed Hizbul terrorist Mushtaq Ahmed alias Farooq was killed, they said. One AK rifle, two magazines, 23 rounds and some other articles were found from the spot, they added. Security forces busted a terrorist hideout at Chmalwas in Doda district and recovered a plastic explosive, two detonators, 123 rounds, four IEDs, seven time-pencils and some explosive material, the sources said.

Hindustan Times, 3 September 2004

Alert in J&K schools after Russia crisis

Jammu, September 3: Alarmed at the crisis in Russia where over 200 schoolchildren have been taken hostage, the army has taken steps to prevent any similar move by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir. All army schools in the state have been secured and escorts provided in buses ferrying schoolchildren. "The terrorist action in a Russian school has added a new urgency in this action," said army sources in an apparent reference to the Chechen rebels taking school kids hostage in Beslan near Chechnya. They feared militants in the state could take a cue from the Russian episode and target children. "This is a possibility. We have dwelt at length on it and decided that all schools should be made fully secure so that the children and teachers are not haunted by the thought being attacked by terrorists," the sources said. This year alone, more than 40 children have become victims of terrorist strikes.

The Tribune, 3 September 2004

Militant groups clash, 3 Lashkar ultras killed

Srinagar, September 2: Three Lashkar-e-Toiba militants were today killed in a clash with Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district over distribution of funds sent from across the border to sustain militancy in the state. A senior state intelligence official told PTI "from the inputs we have, Hizb and Lashkar militants clashed following a disagreement over the share of funds from Pakistan for sustaining militancy in the state". Two of the militants have been identified as Omar Pathan and Abu Jindal, both Pakistani nationals, he said, adding that the third terrorist was a local. The gunfight between militants of the two front-ranking outfits took place at Laktipora village in the Shopian area of the district, official sources said.

The Hindu, 4 September 2004

After the Yatra, it's 'Operation Clean-up'
PAHALGAM SEPT. 3. First it was the uphill task to ensure incident free yatra spread over 45 days, now the challenge is to deal with the severe threat to ecology posed by tonnes of garbage left behind by over four lakh devotees who paid obeisance at the holy cave. The authorities on their part have not many resources to clean each and every corner from Baltal in Sonmarg to the other side of the cave in Pahalgam. "But whatever is possible we are doing," said Abdul Latief Deva, Chief Executive Officer of Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA). He says with the limited budget "we were ready to host not more than 1, 25000 yatris but the number swelled up like anything".

The Hindu, 4 September 2004

One step towards connecting the past to the present
JAMMU, SEPT. 3. In a step towards restoring historic links between India and Pakistan, the Pakistan authorities are converting the single road from Suchetgarh zero-line to Sialkot town into a double lane. Normally, both countries have been reluctant to construct double-lane roads on either side of the Indo-Pak International Border as there is less civilian movement in these parts. The demand for opening up the Suchetgarh-Sialkot border gained momentum after the Indian Government announced confidence building measures (CBMs) vis-a-vis Pakistan on October 22 last year.

Hindustan Times, 4 September 2004

Hostage drama ends in J&K; women rescued

Poonch, September 3: Security personnel on Friday evening rescued two women, who were held hostage by terrorists for two hours in a mosque at Sheendhara village in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said. The terrorists managed to escape into a forest near the mosque and a gunbattle between with security personnel raged. A jawan was killed when a group of terrorists forced their entry in the mosque after a brief encounter. The terrorists did not allow two women to move out of the mosque, the sources said adding soon after their entry, the ultras bolted the windows and doors of the mosque from inside.

Hindustan Times, 4 September 2004

PoK bus won't dilute LoC status: India

New Delhi, September 4: With the government serious about engaging with Pakistan and sustaining the composite dialogue process (CDP), it will be keen to hear a firm response from Pakistan on the Muzzafarabad-Srinagar bus service when the two foreign secretaries meet on Saturday. According to sources, if Islamabad is serious about the bus service, New Delhi could give an assurance that the service would begin without prejudice to their respective positions on Kashmir. This would mean that there would not be any tacit recognition of the Line of Control (LoC) as an international border, something Islamabad fears.

The Tribune, 4 September 2004

Hizbul ultra killed

Jammu, September 3: A self-styled area commander of Hizbul Mujahideen militant outfit was gunned down by security forces in Udhampur district and ultra hideouts were busted at several places in Jammu and Kashmir last night, official sources said today. Troops launched a search and cordoning off operation in Kharag area of the district and in the encounter that followed Hizbul militant Mushtaq Ahmed, alias Farooq, was killed, they said. One AK rifle, two magazines, 23 rounds and some other articles were found from the spot, they added. Security forces busted a militant hideout at Chmalwas in Doda district and recovered a plastic explosive, two

detonators, 123 rounds, four IEDs, seven time-pencils and some explosive material, the sources said.

The Tribune, 4 September 2004

Policeman deserts STF post

Jammu, September 3: A policeman, Mohammad Sharief, today deserted the special task force (STF) post in the terrorist-prone area of Ind in Gool and fled with four rifles, five magazines, 250 live cartridges and two hand grenades. A special team under a DSP has been set up to search the police official. Ind is a sensitive village that has been attacked by terrorists many times. As many as 14 persons were shot dead by ultras some time ago. The STF post has been a constant target of the terrorists.

The Tribune, 4 September 2004

General Cosgrove flies over LoC

Jammu, September 3: General Peter Cosgrove, chief of the Australian defence forces, today flew over the Line of Control in Rajouri for an aerial reconnaissance of the area and met the local commanders of the Army. General Cosgrove accompanied by his wife, Ms Lynne Cosgrove, and Col. Campbell, also visited the headquarters of the Northern Command at Udhampur where he interacted with Lieut-Gen. Hari Prasad, GOC-in-C of the Northern Command. The visiting General was briefed about the situation in J&K. Thereafter he flew to the Rajouri sector and returned to Delhi after meeting senior officers of the Northern Command.

The Tribune, 4 September 2004

Vohra briefs Patil on Kashmir

New Delhi, September 3: Home Minister Shivraj Patil, who is visiting the Kashmir valley from September 24, was today briefed by the Centre's interlocutor, Mr N. N. Vohra, over the status of the talks with separatist leaders in the valley. Mr Patil, who is in the process of chalking out the final details of his visit, including meeting with people's representatives, political leaders and senior officials, reviewed the status of the Centre's proposal for talks with the various sections of the Hurriyat Conference with Mr Vohra, official sources said here. Besides discussing the overall situation in the valley, Mr Vohra also briefed the Home Minister about the

continuous threats being received by moderate separatist leaders in the valley.

Greater Kashmir, 4 September 2004

Kathmandu conference created understanding: PaK minister

Muzaffarabad, Sept 3: A former minister of Pakistan administered Kashmir on Friday said that Kathmandu Conference was a step forward towards creating a better understanding of each other as well as of the ground realities among the Kashmiris from both sides of the divided Himalayan region. The conference which was attended by legislators, lawyers, educationists, journalists, students and other representatives of civil society helped the participants understand each other's ideas, feelings and remove misgivings created by conspiracies, said Khawaja Farooq Ahmed, one of the 10 participants from this part of Kashmir. The other ten participants, including six females, travelled from Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir to Kathmandu to attend the conference organized by Institute for Multi Track Diplomacy (IMTD).

Greater Kashmir, 4 September 2004

India-Pak working to divide Kashmir: Amanullah

Muzaffarabad, Sept 3: Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Amanullah Khan on Friday accused India and Pakistan of working for the permanent partition of Kashmir on the basis of the Line of Control. Speaking at a news conference, the pro-independence leader recalled that the January 6 joint declaration by the two countries did not have any mention of the Kashmiris' internationally acknowledged right to self determination, "although till yesterday Pakistan had been declaring it the base of its so called principled stand on Kashmir." Secondly, Khan said, the Kashmiris had not been conceded as a party to the issue in the declaration notwithstanding the fact they were the principal party and the worst sufferers.

Greater Kashmir, 4 September 2004

Inquilabi urges Malik, Shah to join Hurriyat(G)

Srinagar, Sept 3: The chairman of Mahaze-e-Azadi, Azam Inquilabi today urged upon the chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Muhammad Yasin Malik and

chairman of Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) to join the Hurriyat conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Inquilabi briefing the media persons on Friday said that Kashmir issue has more than one facets and expressed optimism over the outcome of the foreign secretary level talks between India and Pakistan this weekend. "Kashmir issue has become a nuclear flash points in the sub-continent" Inquilabi said adding that India, Pakistan and Kashmiris are three parties, who should sit together and resolve the issue amicably.

Daily Excelsior, 4 September 2004

**SPO deserts post with 4 rifles in Gool
Jawan killed as 3 militants holed up in mosque escapes**

POONCH, Sept 3: Three militants were holed-up in a mosque at Sheen Dhara, about 14 kms from here for about three and a half hours this afternoon holding two minor girls as hostage, before they managed to flee using back door of the religious place and disappeared into a forest area. An Army jawan was killed in the exchange of gun-battle with the militants. Official sources said three militants entered into Sheen Dhara mosque at 1.45 pm to escape the Army personnel, who were chasing them after observing their movement. The militants held two minor girl, who were moving outside the mosque, as hostage and took them inside the religious place. Army and police personnel exercised restraint and asked the militants to release the hostages, come out and surrender. SSP Poonch Mukesh Singh and DySP (Headquarters) Poonch Nasir Ahmed also rushed to the spot along with police and paramilitary personnel.

Daily Excelsior, 4 September 2004

Hawala channel involving Hurriyat leader busted

JAMMU, Sept 3: Police today unearthed another hawala network in the border district of Rajouri involving a Hurriyat Conference activist and a landlord. A suspect with Rs 52,000, which were meant for distribution among the militants, was arrested from Dera Ki Gali, about 12 kms from Thanna Mandi this evening while the Hurriyat leader and the trader are likely to be arrested tomorrow morning. Police sources told the Excelsior tonight that a TATA Sumo vehicle was intercepted at Dera Ki Gali when it was heading towards Thanna Mandi from Mendhar

on a specific input that hawala money and Hizbul Mujahideen literature is being transported in the vehicle by a Hurriyat Conference activist Ghulam Ahmed Mir alias Zia Mir of Thanna Mandi.

Daily Excelsior, 5 September 2004

Hizb intelligence chief Tariq Aziz killed

SRINAGAR, Sept 4: Hizbul Mujahideen's 'intelligence chief' Tariq Aziz has been shot dead by unidentified assassins in his residential village of Ratnipora in Pulwama district during last night. Though the officials were trying to link it to the 'inter-group clash' between Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba, and both the organisations were tightlipped, it was not immediately clear as to who had eliminated the top wanted militant functionary and why. Informed sources in south Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that residents of Ratnipora village heard gunshots late last night. As nobody dared to venture out, it was not clear until this morning as to what had happened. In the morning today, residents spotted a bullet riddled dead body which was lying at a place not far away from Tariq Aziz's house. Within minutes, it was identified as that of Abdur Rasheed Dar alias Tariq Aziz S/o Ghulam Mohammad Dar.

Daily Excelsior, 5 September 2004

Civilian shot dead in Poonch

Two jawans killed in Bani encounter

KATHUA, Sept 4: Two security personnel including an Army jawan and a police constable were killed in an encounter with the militants at Dhaggar Duggan, about 15 kms from Bani in this district today morning while a kidnapped civilian was released by the ultras. Official sources said a civilian Kashmira Singh, a resident of Dhaggar Duggan was kidnapped by the militants at 6 pm yesterday from a hilly area. He was held hostage by six militants for about one hour after which he was allowed to leave for his house. The civilian reached the house late in the night. He and his family sounded the police early this morning.

Daily Excelsior, 5 September 2004

Geelani meets Kasuri

NEW DELHI, Sept 4: Amid Islamabad's rhetoric on Kashmir ahead of tomorrow's talks, hard-line Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today met Pakistan Foreign

Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri here. Geelani, who recently floated Tehreek-e-Hurriyat organisation after splitting Hurriyat Conference, was closetted with Kasuri for more than three hours.

The Hindu, 5 September 2004

We should give Kashmiris the choice: Kasuri

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 4. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, has asserted that Kashmir is not an "intractable problem" and it only requires political will for its solution. In a statement before leaving for New Delhi, he said that Pakistan and India needed "courage and boldness" to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Mr. Kasuri's rather sharp statement is perhaps a counter to the statement made by the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, that 1.3 billion people in South Asia were held hostage to the Kashmir problem.

The Tribune, 5 September 2004

Editor held for selling press cards

Jammu, September 4: The police has arrested three employees of a weekly newspaper here, including its editor, for alleged selling press identity cards to teenagers. Editor-in-chief of Amar Tiranga, Raj Lasotra, general manager Ravi Lasotra and his brother Sandeep were arrested yesterday, the police said. Preliminary investigations reveal that the editor sold nearly 250 press identity cards to teenagers for Rs 2,000 per card, the police said. The police recovered identity cards bearing words 'Registered with Registrar of Newspapers of India and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India' during a raid at the newspaper office at Rehari area in Jammu last night, the police said.

The Tribune, 5 September 2004

Liquor, charas seized, two held

Jammu, September 4: Police and excise sleuths seized 150 litre country-made liquor and 1.2 kg of charas in two separate raids and arrested two persons in Doda and Jammu districts of Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday night, official sources said today. The police arrested a sadhu during a raid near Jammu railway station here today morning and seized 1.2 kg charas, worth nearly Rs 40 lakh in international market, from him. A case has been registered against Bharat Giri sadhu, they said.

Daily Excelsior, 6 September 2004

Mirwaiz meets Kasuri, proposes visa free bus to Muzaffarabad

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Insisting that the ongoing Indo-Pak dialogue should have an "impact" on Jammu and Kashmir, Hurriyat Conference today demanded early launch of visa-free Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and allow intra-Kashmiri dialogue. Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq made the proposals during his meeting with visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri here with an emphasis that these, along with the demand for involvement of Kashmiris in the dialogue process, be discussed during the latter's talks with External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh tomorrow. "If the Governments of India and Pakistan want positive development, their talks should have an impact on Kashmir and measures should be taken on Kashmir-specific Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)," Umar told reporters after his two-hour meeting with Kasuri.

Daily Excelsior, 6 September 2004

Indo-Pak talks meaningless: Geelani

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Describing as "meaningless" the India-Pakistan composite dialogue process, hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Geelani today said the talks will not yield results till the "core" Kashmir issue is resolved. "The bilateral dialogue has no effect on the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Till the contentious issue of Kashmir is not resolved nothing will be achieved. All efforts are in vain," Mr Geelani said. He said though the neighbours were engaged in the peace process and discussed several issues for almost nine months the people of the State "continued to suffer". "The atrocities by the security forces continue and we are living under suppression," said Mr Geelani, who held a five-hour-long marathon with Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri here last night. Mr Kasuri is visiting India for the bilateral composite dialogue process being held on September 5-6.

Daily Excelsior, 6 September 2004

Two Pak nationals among 5 militants held

GURDASPUR (PUNJAB), Sept 5: Punjab Police today arrested five terrorists, including two Pakistanis, along with a huge cache of

arms after a brief encounter in this border district and said it had foiled attempt to "revive terrorism" in the state. The terrorists were arrested after a brief exchange of fire while they were travelling along the Jammu-Pathankot Highway in the wee hours today, Gurudaspur Police chief Narinder Bhargav said. Arms and ammunition recovered from the terrorists include 15 kg of RDX, two AK-56 rifles, pistols, time bombs, hand grenades, time pencil and some fake Indian currency worth Rs 1.38 lakh. Those arrested were identified as two Pakistani nationals living in Bajpur and Meerut area of Uttar Pradesh with both having "acquired assumed names" of Rattan Singh and Avtar Singh, respectively, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 6 September 2004

SPO among 2 killed, HM militant held

SRINAGAR, Sept 5: A Special Police Officer (SPO) and a militant were killed while security forces apprehended a Hizbul Mujahideen militant in the Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours, an official spokesman said today. He said militants shot dead SPO Khursheed Ahmad Hajam at Mattan Bus Stand in the south Kashmir district of Anantnag today. Police today recovered body of a militant, Mohammad Altaf Ganai, from a local mosque at Sumlar in the north Kashmir district of Baramulla. The militant had been injured in an encounter in the area few days back, he said.

The Hindu, 6 September 2004

Kasuri meets Umer Farooq

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 5. A day after holding talks with the hardline separatist leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, as part of stepped-up efforts to unite warring Kashmiri separatist groups, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, today met moderate Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq. "The issue of unification of all the separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir was discussed in detail," the Mirwaiz told reporters after the two-hour-long-meeting at the Pakistan House here. He said Mr. Kasuri conveyed to him the need for resolving all the difference among the groups in the larger interest of the "Kashmir cause."

The Tribune, 6 September 2004

Jawan killed in Jammu

Jammu, September 5: Four persons, including a police constable and a Hizbul Mujahideen

militant, had been killed in separate militancy-related incidents in the Jammu region during the past 24 hours, official sources said. The sources said militants ambushed a joint patrol of the police and Army at Bani in Kathua district yesterday killing an Army jawan, Mohammad Amin, and police constable, Pawan Kumar, on the spot. In another incident, militants kidnapped Mohammad Farooq, 21, from a house at Dhara Sangla in Poonch district.

The Tribune, 6 September 2004

Hurriyat for visa-free Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service

New Delhi, September 5: Expressing disappointment over the lack of Kashmir-specific confidence building measures (CBMs), the Hurriyat Conference today demanded early launch of visa-free Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and the allowing of intra-Kashmiri dialogue. Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq made the proposals during his meeting with visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri here. Mr Farooq is also understood to have insisted that the Pakistani Foreign Minister should take up the issue of the involvement of Kashmiris in the dialouge process during his talks with External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh here tomorrow.

The Indian Express, 6 September 2004

Valley teens discover Gujarat beyond Godhra

ANAND, SEPTEMBER 5: "I had only heard three things about Gujarat: the earthquake, the riots that followed the Babri Masjid demolition and Godhra," says Mohammed Rafiq Bhat, a 19-year-old Kashmiri. But all that is changing now. Rafiq, and six other students from the Valley - Rifat Jan, Roshanara, Qaisar Jan, Mudasar Naik, Aashiq Bhat, Rayees Bhat - all between 18-19 years old, now have the chance to study Gujarat up close, thanks to a unique initiative and some help from a reformed militant. The Charotar Vidya Mandal (CVM), a 59-year-old educational trust that runs over 35 institutions in the region, has "adopted" these students, providing free education as well as funding their boarding and other expenses.

Greater Kashmir, 7 September 2004

"Kashmiris will be included in talks"

Kasuri assures Malik, Shah

Srinagar, Sept 6: The one on one sessions between Pak foreign minister and separatist leaders is seen as a 'trilateral' tinge to the Indo-Pak ministerial summit that concluded Monday in New Delhi. It also appears to have synchronised the separatist view over a single point: Formal inclusion of Kashmiris in the dialogue process. Ahead of second round of talks with his Indian counterpart K.Natwar Singh, Pakistani Foreign Minister today held separate sessions with two top separatists from Valley, Shabir Ahmad Shah and Muhammad Yasin Malik. This follows his detailed deliberations with Chairman of Hurriyat Conference led by him Syed Ali Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, pro-tem chairman of Hurriyat led by him on September 4 and 5. In today's meeting with Shah and Malik Kasuri is learnt to have allayed the apprehensions of any 'secret deal' with India as also the inclusion of Kashmiris in the ultimate negotiations for the resolution of Kashmir dispute.

Greater Kashmir, 7 September 2004

Political interference affect education in Doda

Banihal, Sept 6: Shortage of staff, lack of improper building, poor facilities in the schools and political interference mar education department in Doda district. Sources said that appointment of teachers and opening of new schools under various central and state-sponsored schemes (RT and SSA) is being done according to the wishes of political leaders, who are favoring a particular area and usually their close relatives. It was reliably learnt that on the directions of MLA Banihal, number of un-deserving RT and SSA schools have been opened in Banihal area, while ignoring the deserving areas. Even the teachers have been appointed without assessing ground situation and requirement of these schools in the needy villages, sources alleged.

Greater Kashmir, 7 September 2004

People ruminate over buried PR Bill as Cong celebrates 'victory over Kashmiris'

Srinagar, Sept 6: When the deputy chief minister Mangat Ram Sharma said, "Congress has defeated Kashmiris in Kashmir" over the permanent resident (disqualification) bill, he provided Congress leaders a rhetorical device to move the prospective voters in Jammu. The ruling PDP is embarrassed by the Congress

celebrations. A sizeable number of Kashmiris once again feel that when it comes to matters relating to the dignity of political will and institutions in the state, Delhi has the last word. Most of them are indifferent given the preoccupation with a larger issue of armed insurgency. "The sabotaging of PR bill by New Delhi proves that there is no democratic space for Kashmiris to fight for their political matters. It is a classic example of new kind of apartheid where the minority voice prevails over the majority by fraudulent means," says Idhries Ahmad, a government official.

The Hindu, 7 September 2004

Kashmiris disappointed

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 6. The Foreign Minister-level talks between New Delhi and Islamabad which concluded today have disappointed Kashmiris as there was no visible headway. Even as the separatist leaders, particularly those who met the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, said their "viewpoint has been registered," but the people at large were not happy with the outcome. "We were expecting at least some movement forward vis-a-vis Kashmir but as usual they are sticking to their positions which will continue the bloodshed here," said Noorul Amin, a trader in Poloview area. Noor Ahmed Baba, head of the Political Science Department at the Kashmir University, sees no change in the "Congress mindset" over Kashmir.

The Tribune, 7 September 2004

JKDFP leader for panel on Kashmir under Vajpayee

New Delhi, September 6: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) leader Shabir Shah today suggested formation of a 'Kashmir committee' under former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to act as a bridge between India and Pakistan. "If a committee, comprising senior politicians, is formed it will be able to talk to all groups and sections of the Kashmiri society," Mr Shah said after he and JKLF leader Yasin Malik had a two-hour-long meeting with the visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri here. Emerging from the meeting, Mr Shah and Mr Malik emphasised that the Indo-Pak talks would be futile till Kashmiris are involved in the process.

Greater Kashmir, 8 September 2004

Highly disappointing, unsuccessful: Salahuddin

Muzaffarabad, Sept 7: Hizbul Mujahideen supreme commander and chairman of United Jihad Council Syed Salahuddin Tuesday described Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers' talks as "highly disappointing and unsuccessful." "The people of Kashmir and the mujahideen were already without hopes that these talks would reach any conclusion to pave way for the just settlement of Kashmir issue," said Syed Salahuddin. The past 56 years' history of talks between the two countries testifies to the fact that India had always demonstrated deceit, intransigence and hypocrisy, and its target had never been resolution of the issue but gaining benefits by raising the ancillary issues such as Bhagiar Dam, Siachin and Wullar Barrage, Salahuddin said, adding that the Indians wanted to "sideline the basic issue and buy maximum time to carry on their repressive measures in the held territory.

Greater Kashmir, 8 September 2004

BSNL: This Navratna of Bharat doesn't shine in Valley

Srinagar: Mobile subscribers are a distraught lot in Valley. It is not unusual to find them grumbling about not receiving calls for hours together despite their minders later telling them they had been trying for them right through. And it is not also unusual to hear them cursing the system breakdowns which sometimes prolong into more than two days. People miss calls at the most crucial junctures. Or at the times they most need the other subscriber, they can't contact him. And this is no new phenomenon, or something that went wrong with the service midway. In fact, this was there when the service started and this is there when the service is will into its 8th month. From Solina onwards the 'service' vanishes like cold cream and in Bemina, the cellphone screens say No Signal, No Service

Greater Kashmir, 8 September 2004

JuM commander killed in Kupwara

Srinagar, Sept 7: A battalion commander of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen was killed by troops in Kupwara district on Monday evening. Elsewhere in the state, three persons including a militant were killed since Monday. Police today claimed that a battalion commander of

Jamait-ul- Mujahideen was killed in an encounter with troops at Dooruswani, Sogam in Kupwara district on Monday evening. The slain militant was identified by the police as Muhammad Jamal son of Mehrajudin of Nanwai, Kalaroos in Kupwara. A militant of Lashker-e-Toiba was killed in an encounter with troops at Gawari, Doda on Tuesday evening, police said today. The slain militant was identified by the police as Tariq Hussain Wani alias Rizwan alias Abu Huraira of Jora, Thathri, Doda Police said the slain militant as involved in the killing of three GREF labourers in Bhaderwah sector on 17th of July. Two militants who according to police sustained injuries managed their escape from the site of encounter.

Daily Excelsior, 8 September 2004

Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus Travellers shouldn't require passports: Kasuri

AJMER, Sept 7: Notwithstanding sharp differences over Jammu and Kashmir issue and the problem of cross-border terrorism, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri today said he has come with a message to foster friendship with India. On the proposed Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, he said "passports and visa requirement will prejudice our position... People should travel (on the route) without passports. Where do passports come in?" New Delhi contends that people from both sides of the Line of Control now have to use their passports and get visas if they wish to travel. So, this arrangement can well continue for the bus service too, it feels.

Hindustan Times, 8 September 2004

Kashmir issue will take time: Powell

Washington, September 8: Kashmir is a "very difficult issue" that will take time to resolve, US Secretary of State Colin Powell has said and pointed out that the environment for positive discussions between India and Pakistan has greatly improved. "Kashmir is a very difficult issue," Powell told reporters on Tuesday. "It will take time to resolve," he said, adding both countries know that it has to be dealt with and it is part of their agenda. Powell comments came after talks between Foreign Minister K Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri in New Delhi concluded on Monday.

The Hindu, 8 September 2004

Pilgrims progress to Vaishno Devi

JAMMU, SEPT. 7. Pilgrimage to the famous Vaishno Devi shrine this year is set to break all records as the rush is increasing every day, reviving the State's moribund economy in a big way. Nestled in the ancient Trikuta hills, the shrine attracts pilgrims from across the world every year and is a major contributor to the State's economy which for years has been hit hard by militancy.

Hindustan Times, 8 September 2004

Flexibility needed on Kashmir: Kasuri

New Delhi, September 7: Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said Kashmir is a "complex" issue and the dialogue on it should continue. He said New Delhi and Islamabad should show "flexibility" and "compromise" to resolve it and insisted that those using the proposed Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service should not require passports as travel documents. "Both sides have to show flexibility and compromise," the minister said in separate interviews to CNBC and Aaj Tak. He said: "History teaches us that for durable peace, mechanisms have to be evolved which are acceptable to people of India, Pakistan and J&K." Kasuri said Pakistan did not forward any "formal proposal on possible solution to the J&K issue" but said there were "processes" which were being strengthened.

Hindustan Times, 8 September 2004

Villagers in J&K face terror menace head on

Jammu, September 7: Villagers in the border district of Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir have become pro-active in dealing with terrorism. They are joining Village Defence Committees (VDC) in large numbers and have also started a social boycott of families of militants in a bid to force the terrorists to surrender.

At least 100 men and women in the area joined the VDCs recently and are being trained in operating weapons for collective self-defence. The villagers' new-found confidence is the result of the Army's Operation Sarpvinash that started in the area in April 2003. The Army killed at least 65 terrorists of various Pakistani outfits and smashed as many as 119 hideouts during the operation. "This is when the locals decided to take the fight to the terrorists," said Mir Sen, a resident of Kulai.

The Hindu, 9 September 2004

J&K response on detenu re-arrest sought

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 8. The National Human Rights Commission has called for the comments of the Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police of Jammu and Kashmir on the allegations contained in a newspaper report of a Public Safety Act (PSA) detenu being freed and rearrested, within two weeks. The news item "PSA detenu freed, rearrested" appearing in a national daily on August 22 said Naek Mohammad - a handicapped person was arrested by STF personnel in April 2003 in Lal Chowk when he had gone there for treatment of his amputated left leg.

The Tribune, 9 September 2004

Hold Kashmir talks only in state, says Omar

Srinagar, September 8: National Conference President and former Union Minister Omar Abdullah said here today that the Kashmir issue could be resolved only by talking to its people within Jammu and Kashmir and not outside the state. In an obvious reference to the latest round of talks between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan, Mr Omar Abdullah said: "Kashmiris were not involved, and unless that is done, the issue cannot be resolved." He was addressing a large gathering at Naseembagh, close to Hazratbal, near the grave of his grandfather, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, whose 22nd death anniversary was observed today. Senior party leaders, including general secretary Sheikh Nazir Ahmad and Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather, were among those present on the occasion.

The Tribune, 9 September 2004

Hardliners de nounce Natwar-Kasuri talks

Jammu, September 8: The hardliners among the Kashmiri separatists have started terming the recent India-Pakistan talks in Delhi, held between the foreign ministers of the two countries, as a failure alleging that "neither the parleys were Kashmir centric nor an attempt was made to resolve the 56-year-old dispute." The chairman of the Pakistan based United Jihad Council, Syed Salahuddin, yesterday accused India of dilly-dallying and avoiding a direct discussion on the Kashmir issue. Salahuddin, who hails from Srinagar district and crossed to Pakistan in early nineties to

organise jehad in Kashmir, alleged that Delhi tried to bide time and refused to address the Kashmir problem on a priority basis.

The Indian Express, 9 September 2004

Home Secy may follow up PM's visit to J-K
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 8: With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inviting all Kashmiri groups, including the Hurriyat Conference to the table, Home Minister Shivraj Patil is all set for his maiden visit to the trouble-torn state later this month. According to sources, Patil would follow the PM, who is expected to pay a two-day visit to Kashmir on September 16, before leaving for the UN General Assembly meeting. Apart from announcing an economic package for the state, Singh would reiterate his Government's desire to engage all Kashmiri groups, including political parties, and create an opening for his Home Minister.

The Times of India, 9 September 2004

Valley of Hope: India, Pak Develop Common Interests in Kashmir (Mohua Chatterjee)

Pakistan managed to secure control over APHC over time. Now, India is allowing Pakistan to play the catalyst in uniting the APHC. Kasuri is believed to have told the Hurriyat leadership that discussions for a resolution of the Kashmir problem will have to involve confabulations between Hurriyat and New Delhi. This amounts to a dilution of Kasuri's earlier statement that Kashmiris should be allowed to "determine their own future". Whether the framework of the talks undergoes a fundamental change remains to be seen. With prime minister Manmohan Singh scheduled to visit Kashmir soon, before leaving for New York, the Hurriyat has also to show up as the unified voice of the Kashmiri people. The atmospherics for the Manmohan-Musharraf meeting would then be just right.

The Tribune, 10 September 2004

3 CRPF jawans among 13 killed in J&K

Srinagar, September 9: At least 13 persons, including a close relative of a PDP leader, were killed and 15 others injured in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. A jawan of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was also killed in an accidental grenade explosion while on guard at the house of a senior National Conference

leader here this afternoon. The police here said that constable N D Tewari of 23 Bn CRPF was killed on the spot in an accidental grenade explosion while on guard at the house of senior NC leader and former MP Ali Mohammad Naik at Shivpora here today. Three other jawans were injured in the explosion, which took place around 2.30 pm today. They have been shifted to the hospital, where their condition is stated to be out of danger. No harm was caused to the inmates of the house of Mr Naik, who was elected from the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency in 1999 elections.

The Times of India, 10 September 2004

Kashmir is complex, not intractable: Kasuri

ISLAMABAD: Observing that high-level mechanisms were available to resolve the "complex" Kashmir issue, Pakistan on Thursday said that focussed efforts were needed for its settlement. "High level mechanisms are available to resolve this issue. What we need is vision and statesmanship. We are moving in the right direction. But we have to make focussed efforts to resolve this issue," Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan told state-run PTV while commenting on the just-concluded talks between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries. He said External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh and Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri discussed the Kashmir issue which "is a complex issue" but not "intractable."

The Indian Express, 10 September 2004

Less Haj seats for J&K, PDP sulks

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 9: The Centre is actively considering a proposal from the Central Haj Committee to increase the quota of Haj pilgrims this year given the rush of applications from states such as Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala and Maharashtra. There have been protests from Jammu and Kashmir which will get to send 4,500 people for Haj this year as against 8,942 the state sent last year. Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed clarified that the quota has not been slashed. The confusion has arisen because several states could not fill their quota last year which was distributed among states like J&K where there was additional demand, he said.

Daily Excelsior, 11 September 2004

**Two soldiers killed in Beerwah gunbattle
Hizb-e-Islami dy chief killed in Bijbehara**

SRINAGAR, Sept 10: Even as militants tonight killed two soldiers in a fierce encounter in Beerwah area, security forces claimed to have killed two militants including the "deputy chief" of Hizb-e-Islami guerrilla outfit in Kashmir valley. Police and security forces also claimed to have apprehended three top-wanted militants, alongwith arms and ammunition, in Budgam district. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that, on a specific information, troops of Rashtriya Rifles 34 Bn launched a cordon-and-search operation at Danis village near Beerwah township in Budgam district late this evening. As the troops were throwing a cordon, militants came out of their hideout and opened indiscriminate gunfire. Two soldiers got killed and a civilian sustained a gunshot in his hand. He was evacuated. All the militants managed to escape.

Daily Excelsior, 11 September 2004

Don't keep Muzaffarabad bus hostage to technicalities: Mufti to Pak

Baramulla, Sept 10: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has appealed Pakistan to adopt responsive attitude by not making the opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad hostage to technicalities. Addressing a well attended public meeting after inaugurating a public park at Azad Gunj Baramulla in north Kashmir today, Mr Sayeed said the people on both sides of the border have resolved to meet each other with firm determination and dismantle the barriers of mistrust and misgivings which have plagued the two countries for the last 56 years. He said all the people of the sub continent should respect to this human aspect.

Daily Excelsior, 11 September 2004

Timber smuggling in police vehicles exposed

UDHAMPUR, Sept 10: Forest Department's sleuths have unearthed the practice of smuggling timber in the vehicles of Police Department and seized two such trucks during routine checking at its check posts on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. Sources in the Forest Department said that during routine checking of Jammu-bound vehicles at Forest Check Post, just adjoining the Traffic Check Post in Udhampur, the sleuths of the Forest Department signalled a Traffic Police mini-bus

bearing registration number JK02N-8537 to stop at around 11 PM yesterday.

Daily Excelsior, 11 September 2004

Geelani opposes opening of road

SRINAGAR, Sept 10: Hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today opposed the opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road and said talks between India and Pakistan would not succeed till they accepted Kashmir as a dispute. "Opening of Muzaffarabad road will not relieve people of the sufferings and miseries being faced by them," he said, addressing a Friday congregation at Kulgam in Anantnag.

Kashmir Times, 11 September 2004

BSF-police take on each other on B'deshi infiltration

JAMMU, Sep 10: Notwithstanding their avowed common objective to eliminate militancy in J&K and check infiltration, state police and Border Security Force (BSF) are taking on each other on the issue of rising incidents of B'deshis infiltration along border areas of Jammu region. Whereas the persistent infiltration of B'deshis has emerged as a major security threat and cause of concern for intelligence agencies, BSF and state police are busy passing buck to each other for failure to check infiltration. Past few years saw a sudden upsurge in the incidence of infiltration by B'deshis, who in a bid to sneak into Pakistani territory, clandestinely gain access to border areas of Jammu region.

Greater Kashmir, 11 September 2004

Natwar says Hurriyat IS unimportant

Says 'reality' is known to all, Hurriyat should unite first; JK has an elected government

New Delhi, Sept 10: Apparently buoyed by the Pakistan's tacit approval to keep on talking on other issues till Kashmir issue could be resolved, the minister for external affairs K Natwar Singh on Friday brushed aside the 'importance being given to Kashmiri separatist leaders by Pakistan, emphasising that a 'duly elected' government was in place in the state after elections in which there was a voter turnout of 44 percent. Observing that the composite dialogue process was being pursued step-by-step, Natwar Singh made it clear that 'until cross-border terrorism' was stopped,

talks on the Kashmir issue could not move forward.

The Hindu, 11 September 2004

Cross-border terrorism should end'

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10. Observing that the composite dialogue process was being pursued step-by-step, the External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh today made it clear that until cross-border terrorism was stopped, talks on the Kashmir issue cannot move forward. Talking to Star News, the Minister also brushed aside the importance being given to separatist Kashmiri leaders by the Pakistani leadership, emphasising that a duly-elected Government is in place in Jammu and Kashmir after elections which saw a voter turnout of 44 per cent. "Until cross-border terrorism is stopped, talks on Kashmir issue cannot move forward," he said. Asked about Pakistani leaders making it a point to meet Hurriyat leaders during visits as was done by Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri when he was here, Mr. Singh said "I don't give much importance to the Hurriyat. Reality is known to all. First they (various Hurriyat factions) have to get together".

The Tribune, 11 September 2004

Protesters lathicharged

Srinagar, September 10: The police resorted to a lathicharge and detained about 40 protesters in the central Lal Chowk area here today. They were demonstrating against the continued detentions and demanding the release of jailed Kashmiri youth. The demonstration was organised by activists of the separatist Jammu-Kashmir National Front on the completion of one year of detention of its president, Nayeem Khan. The rally from the Residency Road to Lal Chowk was led by the acting chairman of the front, Abdul Qayoom. The protesters were holding placards and banners demanding the release of the jailed Kashmiri youth, particularly Nayeem Ahmad Khan. The Awami Action Committee (AAC) of a senior separatist leader, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, today expressed concern over the alleged killings and detentions at the hands of security forces in Kashmir.

Hindustan Times, 11 September 2004

Prime Minister to visit Kashmir ahead of UNGA

New Delhi, September 10: Ahead of his travel to the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will pay a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir during which he is also likely to announce a package for the state.

Informed sources said the visit to Srinagar was likely to take place on September 16 during which he was likely to announce a package for the state to help it come out of the turmoil caused by militancy. The visit was also aimed at allowing Singh a first-hand feel of the Kashmir situation before he embarks on the trip to New York for the UNGA session later this month.

Greater Kashmir, 12 September 2004

**10,000 Banihal residents block highway
Protests continue over police firing; injured succumb; curfew imposed**

Banihal/Srinagar, Sept 11: Banihal town witnessed a tense situation as curfew was imposed by the authorities today after one worker of Hindustan Construction Company (HCC) was killed and 45 others injured, eight seriously, in police firing on HCC workers in Banihal area of Doda district last night. Despite the curfew, protesters in large numbers took to roads and held dharna on the Jammu-Srinagar highway, blocking the movement of traffic. They also set ablaze four vehicle and pelted stones on police. The police as a precautionary measure imposed curfew this morning around 6 AM in the Banihal valley.

Greater Kashmir, 12 September 2004

Fidayeen re-appear in Dalgate

Srinagar, Sept 11: Fidayeen stormed Hotel York in Khonakhan Dalgate housing personnel of 94 Bn CRPF late Saturday evening. Gunshots and deafening blasts were heard late in the evening in the area where a number of CRPF camps are stationed. Chaos prevailed in the area and the firing was continuing till reports last came in. Reports said a CRPF Commandant and two other personnel were injured in the initial round of fight. A spokesman of Almansurain militant outfit said two of their fidayeen had entered a CRPF camp and had engaged forces in a gunfight. Director General of Police, Gopal Sharma told Greater Kashmir that forces had cordoned the entire Khonakhan area and operation would be

initiated only after assessing the situation properly.

Greater Kashmir, 12 September 2004

First ever Darbar in police headquarter; DGP asks his men to be people-friendly

Srinagar, Sept 11: Director General Police Gopal Sharma today called for an effective mechanism for listening public grievances at all levels of police organization and taking immediate redressal measures to instill confidence among the people. Addressing officers and all ranks of police force at PHQ Darbar held here this morning, first of its kind in the PHQ, the Director General Police said that the police should not only be the friend of the people but also appear to be so by their conduct and behaviour. People have many hopes with the police and it is incumbent upon all the ranks to meet their aspirations and to be ready to help them when in need, Sharma said, adding that they should endeavour to be role model by their sense of duty and dedication. He said that while the good work by the officers and jawans would be suitably rewarded, any misconduct and dereliction of duty would be sternly viewed.

Hindustan Times, 12 September 2004

Terrorists abduct three in J&K

Jammu, September 12: Three persons were abducted by terrorists in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, official sources said. A group of terrorists went to village Goon Dhar in Gandoh tehsil of Doda district early on Sunday and abducted three villagers identified as Nazir, Shah Mohmad and Mohammad Ramzan, they said. The terrorists took the three men to upper reaches, they said. The police added that Nazir and Shah Mohmad, however, managed to escape from the terrorists.

The Hindu, 12 September 2004

Militants storm CRPF camp

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 11. Militants of the Al-Mansurian outfit tonight stormed a hotel housing the 94 battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force on the banks of the Dal Lake here, injuring an officer and two soldiers. Exploding grenades and opening indiscriminate fire, the militants stormed Hotel York at around 9.30 p.m. and engaged the troops in a fierce encounter which was still continuing, official sources said. Three CRPF

personnel, including an officer, were injured in the encounter. An Al-Mansurian spokesman claimed that a three-member suicide squad of the outfit stormed the CRPF camp. This is the third suicide attack on the CRPF in less than two months.

The Hindu, 12 September 2004

Kashmir tribals object to exclusion from electoral rolls

JAMMU, SEPT. 11. The tribals of Jammu and Kashmir are protesting against the exclusion of a large number of them from the electoral rolls. Today was the last day of the roll revision and community leaders say that five lakh members have not been registered. At a press conference here today, the Jammu and Kashmir Gujjar United Front accused the establishment of attempting to exclude tribals from the democratic process. Its president, Anwar Chowdhary said: "There are deliberate attempts by the Government to exclude the Gujjar-Bakerwal community from the electoral roll revision exercise. Currently, most of our community are in their dhoks (temporary shelters) in the mountains and there is no way they can be registered."

The Hindu, 12 September 2004

Kashmiri Pandits criticise exclusion from talks

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11. The Kashmiri Minorities Initiative has criticised the Government for excluding a large population of Kashmiri Pandit migrants from the just-concluded India-Pakistan talks. The Government has started the process of consultation with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) but chosen not to consult the most suffering component of the Kashmiri population and this attitude speaks of a deliberate policy of exclusion of the Pandit community, a statement issued by the Initiative here said.

The Indian Express, 12 September 2004

J&K: Australian rams & Harrods

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 11: The Prime Minister's trip to Srinagar has been postponed and he is said to be reviewing package after package announced for the state by successive governments. But one key element for "economic revival" of the state has already been identified by the UPA government: traditional crafts. Ever since Wajahat

Habibullah, a Kashmir expert, took charge as Textiles Secretary, the focus has been on initiatives in J&K. The ministry's focus has been on handlooms, handicraft, sericulture and wool development.

Greater Kashmir, 13 September 2004

Dalgate Toll: 2 CRPF Officials Dead

Srinagar, Sept 12: Two deputy commandants of paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two militants were killed in a nightlong gunbattle here, officials said on Sunday. The gunbattle broke out after a group of two Fidayeen (suicide squad) sneaked into the CRPF (94 bn) camp at Khonkhan in Dalgate area of the capital city on Saturday evening. Thousands of people attended the funeral prayers of the militants on Sunday. Police said the militants lobbed grenades and fired at random while making their way into the camp situated a few metres from the world famous Dal lake. "The alert sentry gunned down one of them while his associate took refuge in a nearby building," a police spokesman told Greater Kashmir.

Greater Kashmir, 13 September 2004

2 militants among 5 killed in JK

Srinagar, Sept 12: Two militants and the daughter of a CPI (M) activist were among five persons killed and four others injured in different militancy-related incidents across the state since Saturday evening, police said on Sunday. Police said the militants hurled a grenade at the house of CPI (M) worker Jalal-Din at Pooniwah Kulgam. Jalal's two daughters, Tahira Bano and Naseema Bano, sustained injuries in the incident. They were rushed hospital where Tahira succumbed to injuries, police said. Police recovered a body from Rakh Pora Pulwama today. The deceased was identified as Shabir Ahmad son of Raj Mohammad of the same village. Shabir, according to the Police, had been kidnapped by the militants last night.

Greater Kashmir, 13 September 2004

Siachen: World's most expensive battlefield

Jammu, Sept 12: Where in India you can find a place where every individual is clad with European clothing worth a lakh rupees? The world's highest and coldest battlefield Siachen Glacier in the rocky barrenness of frontier region of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. The weighty and expensive gear of every soldier

consists of an array of clothing and other accessories worth thousands of rupees. A pair of special Austrian snow boots cost Rs 6,233, a Swiss Jacket and a trouser Rs 15,298 and Rs 6,689 respectively, Finnish shirts Rs 3,410, and special Canadian caps and wind cheaters worth Rs 762 and Rs 1,349. An army officer told Greater Kashmir that there are many layers a soldier drapes before he is acclimatised –the process that takes between 10 to 24 days- to the harsh climate of the world's most expensive battlefield.

Greater Kashmir, 13 September 2004

Student's killings spark protests in Kupwara

Police registers FIR against RR

Kupwara, Sept 12: Thousands of people including men, women and children protested against the killing of a student by 18 Rashtriya Rifles at Dilbagh Dever here Sunday. Parvez Ahmad Khan (19) son of Manzoor Ahmad Khan of Dilbagh Devar, a class 12th student, according to the residents was shot dead by RR personnel on Saturday evening. According to the residents, Parvez was taken away by the troops of RR when he was listening to a radio commentary of India-Kenya cricket match. "The army patrol called Parvez, took him to the nearby forests and pumped bullets in his body," the eyewitnesses said.

Greater Kashmir, 13 September 2004

Autonomous bodies under fire from CAG 35 fail to submit accounts

Srinagar, Sept 12: In total contravention of financial rules Government is yet to receive utilization certificate for an amount of Rs. 1333.31 crore from scores of Local Bodies, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report said. Government provides substantial financial assistance to autonomous bodies and organisation registered under State Co-operative Societies Act (SCSA) for implementation of various government schemes and programmes like maintenance of educational institutions, hospital buildings, improvement of roads. However, it is mandatory for the officials who release the grant to get utilization certificate from these bodies and forward it Accountant General within 18 months.

The Indian Express, 13 September 2004

Cops charge Army with murder in Valley firing

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 12: The J-K police have registered a murder case against the Army over the killing of two persons in a firing incident in Pulwama on Thursday after the state government ordered an inquiry two days ago. "The youths...Rizwam-ul-Haq (17) and Muzaffar Ahmed Ganai (30) were killed by the Army. Whether it was a case of mistaken identity is to be investigated," the spokesman said. The Station House Officer, Zainapora in Shopian area, has been appointed investigating officer and has been asked to submit a report within a week.

The Hindu, 13 September 2004

Two CRPF deputy commandants killed

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 12. Two Deputy Commandants of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed during a night-long attack yesterday by a two-member suicide squad of the Al-Mansoorian outfit in central Srinagar. Both the militants were killed and four CRPF personnel injured. Police said two militants stormed Hotel York, located in the Dal Gate area, around 9.30 p.m.. The hotel is being used as the headquarters by the 94 Battalion of the CRPF.

The Hindu, 13 September 2004

Postpones Kashmir visit

NEW DELHI, SEPT 12. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has postponed his visit to Jammu and Kashmir in view of the October 13 Assembly byelections in the State. Dr. Singh was scheduled to leave for Jammu and Kashmir on a two-day visit next week before heading for New York for the United Nations General Assembly session. The visit has been postponed since the model code of conduct is in force in the State.

The Tribune, 13 September 2004

Natwar Singh's proposal dismays separatists

Jammu, September 12: Kashmiri separatists are feeling a bit dismayed over the recent suggestion given by Foreign Minister, Natwar Singh, that Pakistan should talk to elected representatives of the people in Jammu and Kashmir because leaders of Hurriyat conference alone do not represent Kashmiris. A former chairman of the APHC, Molvi Abbas Ansari, told this correspondent today

that Mr Natwar Singh's suggestion was "motivating us to contest the Assembly election." He said "we have made it clear that election is no solution to the Kashmir issue. Had it been so the matter would have been resolved in 1951 when the first Assembly poll was held in Jammu and Kashmir." The Molvi made it clear that "we are not against Islamabad or Delhi if they open the dialogue channel with those elected to the Kashmir Assembly but we have one major reservation in this exercise as those elected do not question the state's accession to India."

The Tribune, 13 September 2004

Kashmiri Pandits set out for Delhi on foot

Jammu, September 12: Over 100 Kashmiri Pandits embarked on an arduous "march on foot" from Jammu to Delhi today. Wearing black badges, the youths left their Muthi migrant camp for Delhi. Inhabitants of the camp bid them farewell. Kamlawati (65) said: "When my son failed to get a job for several years he had no alternative but to participate in the padyatra to Delhi." According to Mr R.K. Bhat, chairman of the steering committee of the Pandit youths belonging to various organisations, who led the peace march, said: "We will pass through Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ambala, and Chandigarh and will present a memorandum to parliamentarians in a bid to awaken them to our plight for the past 15 years."

The Tribune, 14 September 2004

Centre to blame for militancy in J&K, says Geelani

Srinagar, September 13: Blaming the Centre for militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani here today said the Indo-Pak dialogue did not lead to resolution of Kashmir issue for India's "unrealistic approach" to the problem. Mr Geelani was addressing the first day-long delegate convention of the separatist Hurriyat Conference a year after breaking away from the Moulvi Abbas-led APHC, outside his Hyderpora residence here today. He reiterated his stand on the tripartite talks for resolution of the Kashmir issue by grant of the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. Mr Geelani strongly urged India to recognise Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory and not treat it as its

"integral part". This, he said, would only lead to resolution of the Kashmir issue that related to over 1.3 crore people of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tribune, 14 September 2004

Angry mob beats up youth carrying grenades

Srinagar, September 13: A youth carrying two grenades was beaten up by locals, forcing him to take refuge inside a security picket in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district today. The police baton-charged an angry mob which demanded the man be handed over to it, official sources said here. The youth, however, told the police that he was a counter-insurgent and was carrying the grenades for his safety, the sources said. Bashir Ahmad Mir, a resident of Mattan, was moving "under suspicious circumstances" in the Chini Chowk area of Anantnag district, 55 km from here, when he was chased by some pedestrians who noticed the explosives in his possession.

The Tribune, 14 September 2004

Militants slit throats of three

Jammu, September 13: Three members of a family, including a woman, were killed by militants at Shatta Dhoke in the Surankot area of Poonch today. Some militants reportedly stormed this place and slit their throats. Those killed have been identified as Mohammad Jamal, Banoo Bi his wife and Abdul Gani. In another incident terrorists killed two members of the village defence committee (VDC) of Kalaban. The two have been identified as Mohammad Sadiq and Mohammad Shaffi. Their bodies were recovered from a nullah. They were not carrying any weapon when they were attacked.

The Tribune, 14 September 2004

Involve Bakerwals, Gujjars in talks, says advisory board

Jammu, September 13: Gujjars and Bakerwals, who are the third largest ethnic group after Muslims and Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, have demanded involvement of their representatives in talks with the Government of India for the restoration of peace in the state. The demand is contained in a communication to the Union Home Minister, Mr Shivraj Patil, sent by Haji Buland Khan, vice-chairman of the advisory board for the development of Gujjars and Bakerwals in

Jammu and Kashmir. Mr Buland Khan told this correspondent today that in his communication to Mr Patil "I have explained the reason behind our demand for inclusion of our representatives in the talks." He said Gujjars and Bakerwals resided in every village and block of the state, except for Leh and Kargil districts, and have faced innumerable problems and miseries during the past three wars with Pakistan, in the Kargil conflict and during the past 15 years' of militancy. "We are keen on restoration of peace and we can help the government in finding tranquility," he said.

Daily Excelsior, 14 September 2004

3 civilians shot dead in Surankote, one released

JAMMU, Sept 13: Three civilians, in whose house dreaded Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant Haneef Maisi alias Abu Zubair was killed about a fortnight ago, were shot dead by the militants at village Handali Tarkund near Chatta Paani in Marha area of Surankote in Poonch district last night. Massacre of 13 civilians, the family members of Village Defence Committee (VDC) and others which was executed by Abu Zubair along with his associates on the intervening night of June 25 and 26 this year, had also been planned in the same house where two militants struck last night.

Daily Excelsior, 14 September 2004

Two militants arrested in Chanderkoot SPO killed, civilian hurt in Gandoh

JAMMU, Sept 13: A Special Police Officer (SPO) was killed and a civilian was injured in an encounter with the militants at village Barthi in Gandoh area in Doda district today while security forces arrested two militants from Chanderkoot in Banihal tehsil. Official sources said the militants opened firing on a patrol party of police constables and SPOs at Barthi this afternoon. The police party retaliated. A heavy exchange of firing between the two sides continued for about 90 minutes.

Daily Excelsior, 14 September 2004

Winter vacation is forced leave, let Govt cancel it'

Teachers announce boycott of Govt functions

SRINAGAR, Sept 13: Jammu and Kashmir Teachers Forum (JKTF) has announced that unless genuine demands of the teacher

community are fulfilled, teachers in entire State will boycott Government functions. The Forum reminded Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed to "learn lessons" from the fall of National Conference (NC) led Government and asserted that at least one million people of the State were directly related to the JKTF in the shape of teachers and their families. Addressing a news conference here this afternoon, chairman of the JKTF, Abdul Qayoom, said that the Forum had decided to boycott all Government functions if their genuine demands were not fulfilled. He announced that in this direction the Forum would boycott the award function of the State Government, being held at SKICC on September 18. "The award function is nothing but an eye wash. When Government is not serious to address the issues related to nation builders, what can be the fate of general masses," he explained.

The Hindu, 15 September 2004

Geelani not averse to Pandits' return

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 14. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader, Syed Ali Geelani, has welcomed the prospective return of the Kashmiri Pandits to the Kashmir Valley saying they were a part and parcel of Jammu and Kashmir's rich culture. At a delegates convention here today, Mr. Geelani, who heads a faction of the APHC, however, said that the proposed creation of separate security zones for the Pandits was against the traditional brotherhood of Kashmiris.

The Hindu, 15 September 2004

Patil briefed on Kashmir

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14. A high-level meeting on Jammu and Kashmir today briefed the Home Minister, Shivraj Patil. Asked whether the third round of talks with the Hurriyat came up at the meeting, sources said the matter was touched upon briefly. Briefing reporters later, Mr Jaiswal said the meeting had been called earlier to discuss the details of the now postponed visits of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister to the State.

The Tribune, 15 September 2004

Four militants among 6 killed in J&K

Srinagar, September 14: Six persons including four militants, have been killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday. Three militants of the Lashkar-e-

Toiba were killed in an encounter with the police and security forces at Onagam, in Baramulla district last night. A security forces jawan was injured in the encounter, the police said. Three AK assault rifles were recovered from the site of the encounter, while a cowshed was damaged in the night-long encounter. Acting on a specific information about the presence of militants, the security forces cordoned off a cluster of houses in Onagam village last afternoon. The hiding militants were asked to surrender, which they refused leading to an encounter. The encounter started last evening and continued throughout the night leading to the death of three militants.

The Tribune, 15 September 2004

Kashmiri Pandits observe Martyrs' Day

New Delhi, September 14: The Kashmiri Pandits observed Martyrs Day today and remembered the Kashmiri Pandits who fell victim to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir in the past decade and a half. They accused the successive governments of ignoring their plight and demanded their involvement in the peace process. "Nobody is concerned about the fate of the community which is on the verge of extinction", Mr M.K. Kaw, President of the All-India Kashmiri Samaj, said. Referring to the ongoing peace process with the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mr Kaw demanded the representation of his community in the dialogue.

Hindustan Times, 15 September 2004

Centre fears major strike in Valley

New Delhi, September 15: The Centre has put security agencies in the Valley on high alert even though reports indicate that violence in the Valley has gone down. This is because intelligence agencies believe that a decrease in violence indicates that militant outfits were trying to regroup and planning a major strike. The issue was discussed at a high-level meeting chaired by home minister Shivraj Patil on Tuesday. According to sources, security and intelligence agencies suspect that militant outfits, particularly the Lashka-e-Tayyeba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, were planning a major strike in the Valley with the possibility of civilian targets.

Hindustan Times, 15 September 2004

Distinct pattern in civilian killings

Jammu, September 15: The increasing number of terrorist attacks on civilians in the border areas of Jammu region has unravelled a distinct and dangerous pattern. In many cases, where entire families have been wiped out in such killings, it has been noticed that terrorists targeted families in whose homes their cohorts were killed in encounters with security forces. Terrorists are attacking such families frequently and ruthlessly, not sparing even women and children. The latest victims were three members of a family who were killed in Chatta Pani in Surankote area of Poonch on Sunday night.

Daily Excelsior, 15 September 2004

**Hurriyat issue, security scenario discussed
Patil chairs high-level meeting on Kashmir**

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil today chaired a high-level meeting on Jammu and Kashmir during which all issues pertaining to the security in the State and dialogue with separatist leaders including Hurriyat Conference was discussed. Besides Patil, Minister of State for Home Sriprakash Jaiswal, Union Home Secretary Dharendra Singh, Centre's pointsman on Kashmir N N Vohra, Vice-Chief of Army Staff Shatanu Chowdhury, Intelligence Bureau Chief A K Doval, Director General of CRPF J K Sinha and Additional Director General of BSF A K Mitra attended the meeting. Talking to reporters after a 90-minute meeting, Jaiswal said that the meeting had been called in view of the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the Home Minister.

Daily Excelsior, 15 September 2004

**10 detained for treatment of militant
Top Hizbul ultra Hablal captured in Doda town**

JAMMU, Sept 14: In an important success, Army and police today arrested a 'district commander' of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit Hablal Zargar alias Iran-3 from the house of another Hizbul commander's sister at village Beoli, about five kms from Doda. Arrest was made on the disclosures of two militants, arrested yesterday by Army and police from Chanderkoot. Ten Over Ground Workers of the militants, who had helped Hablal in the treatment of a bullet wound, which he had sustained in an encounter last month, have also been detained. Official sources said the questioning of Mohd Younis of Batote and

Akhter Hussain Zargar of Kastigarh, Doda, the two Hizbul Mujahideen militants arrested yesterday from Chanderkoot, gave Army and police certain important leads about the Hizbul hideouts.

Daily Excelsior, 15 September 2004

4 militants killed in Valley

SRINAGAR, Sept 14: Four militants and a soldier have reportedly died in two different gunbattles in Bandipore and Kupwara areas in north Kashmir since last evening. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that on the basis of a specific information, troops of Rashtriya Rifles 15th Bn launched a cordon-and-search operation at Onagam in Bandipore area of Baramulla district late last evening. A group of holed up militants opened fire and made unsuccessful attempts to escape from the cordoned area. Troops retaliated but one soldier sustained critical injuries. Reports awaiting confirmation said that the soldier succumbed to injuries.

Daily Excelsior, 15 September 2004

VDC member killed by militants in Arnia

JAMMU, Sept 14: Police today said the killing of a Village Defence Committee (VDC) member, whose skull remained untraced for second day today, appeared to have been executed by the militants in forward village of Jabawal in Arnia sector, which was less than one kilometer from the International Border with Pakistan. Possibility of the skull having been taken away across the border by the militants is not ruled out, police said, adding the killing was part of the militants' game-plan to create terror among the people living in the border areas, who had been resisting the militancy with all their might.

Daily Excelsior, 15 September 2004

Hurriyat doves attack hawks

SRINAGAR, Sept 14: In a setback to unity efforts in Hurriyat Conference, the moderate faction of the separatist amalgam today launched a scathing attack on the rival hardline group led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani accusing him of following petty personal interests. "We have been keeping quite since last year and tolerating the vicious poison manufactured at Hyderpora (Geelani's residence) in the larger interests of the freedom movement," a spokesman for the moderates said in a statement here. He said things had, however,

"gone beyond the limits of tolerance as Geelani is spreading lies about the functioning of the amalgam especially the election of former chairman Maulana Mohammad Abbas Ansari last year."

Kashmir Times, 15 September 2004

Mufti to contest by-poll from Pahalgam, Rarra from Batamaloo

SRINAGAR, Sep 14: Chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and MLC Tariq Hamid Qarra are likely to be the PDP candidates for Pahalgam and Batamaloo assembly constituencies respectively for the bye-elections. Reliable sources said a formal announcement to this effect is expected shortly. PDP would not contest from Akhnoor and Basohli assembly constituencies in Jammu and would support the Congress candidates there. According to the sources National Conference (NC) has no hope to win any of the two seats in Jammu region and fielding of candidates would just be a formality. However, the main opposition party has some hope to win the Batamaloo constituency. On the other hand PDP is also expecting to bag that seat.

Greater Kashmir, 16 September 2004

Geelani advisor shot dead

Srinagar, Sep 15: Peer Hussam-ud-Din, senior Jamaat-e-Islami leader and political secretary to Syed Ali Shah Geelani was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at his Qamarwari residence here Wednesday, police and family sources said. Police said the gunmen entered into the house of 57-year-old Hussam, a lawyer by profession, at upcoming Qamarabad Colony at 10.00 am and fired at him from point blank range, causing his instant death. Hussam was about to leave for the court when a youth with a file knocked at "our door saying he had some case, and handed it over to my father," 22-year-old Peer Shaheen, a law student told reporters. "As soon as my father opened the file, the youth pumped bullets into his head," he said.

Geelani, who is currently undergoing hospitalisation at Escorts Heart Hospital New Delhi, described Hussam's killing as "shock to me," and "not only a loss for Jamaat-e-Islami and Hurriyat, but for the ummah." "At the moment, I cannot say who martyred Peer Hussam-ud-Din. It is too early," Geelani told Greater Kashmir on phone. Muhammad

Ashraf Sehrai, the general secretary of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, said it was premature to blame anyone. However, Ayaz Akbar, spokesman of the Geelani's Hurriyat said Hussam was shot dead by "Indian agencies for its vested interests." He also called for a shutdown against the killing on September 16 (Thursday).

Greater Kashmir, 16 September 2004

Coalition supporter says JK a police state 'History of conspiracies is being repeated'

Srinagar, Sep 15: Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, State Secretary of CPI (M), coalition supporter of PDP led government in the state, today said that Jammu and Kashmir has become a 'police controlled state where people are denied their democratic rights.' Tarigami warned the government that it would meet the fate of National Conference if the rule of law doesn't prevail in the state. Demanding 'internal democracy' for the state, Tarigami said protests for basic rights have been dubbed as 'terrorism' in contravention to the 'national interests.'

Greater Kashmir, 16 September 2004

Rs 10 cr security setup to guard Jammu-Udhampur rail-track

Jammu, Sept 15: India's most sensitive Rs 550 crore Jammu-Udhampur railway track would be guarded by a Rs 10 crore multi-tier security setup to ensure safe train journey through highly militancy infested mountains in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday. "Rs 10 crore multi-tier and multi-dimensional security set have been formulated for safety of train traffic as well as 54 km Jammu-Udhampur railway track, which passes through militancy hit hills in J&K", a J&K Railway police official told Greater Kashmir here today. High-level team of Railway Police, J&K police and top officials of Northern railway carried a final drill in this direction today. Two trains were also run on this rail track today in this direction, he said.

Greater Kashmir, 16 September 2004

Banihal deadlock continues

Banihal/Jammu, Sept 15: The higher authorities of police claim police they haven't arrested any protesting Hindustan Construction Company workers in Bankoot area of Banihal. Beside, they claim the situation is normal in the area, yet three locals

were arrested today by the police taking the toll of arrested workers to 17. Police today arrested the locals Muhammad Umar Wani, Ejaz Ahmed Giri and Muhammad Aslam Kamgar.

Kashmir Times, 16 September 2004

'Recce' B'deshis create anxiety among security agencies

JAMMU, Sep 15: While the intelligence inputs that Bangladeshis, who infiltrate into the border areas of Jammu region, are sent for 'reconnaissance' mission by the militants, have already caused anxiety among various security agencies engaged in fighting militancy in the state, recent revelation that ISI is training them (B'deshis) to grind its own axe in India has further aggravated their concern. In fact till recently, these B'deshis arrested from border areas of Jammu region were not considered as very serious security threat by the security agencies. More often after preliminary enquiries, they were either released or sent back to their country. But in the very recent past, during the investigation, these sensational disclosures that these B'deshis are acting as "Recce" (an expression used in local parlance for those engaged for 'reconnaissance' mission) for the militants sent shock waves.

Daily Excelsior, 16 September 2004

Two civilians, militant killed; 2 cops injured

JAMMU, Sept 15: Two civilians and a militant were killed while a militant surrendered before security forces and police in separate incidents in Jammu region today. In another incident, two police constables were injured, one of them seriously, when they were beaten-up by the Army personnel at Kheora police check post near Rajouri town this afternoon. Official sources said a 55 year old civilian Ghulam Qadir son of Ghulam Rasool Tragwal, a resident of Taragan, Banihal in Ramban police district was kidnapped by two militants from his house last night. He was taken to a nearby forest area where he was gunned down.

Daily Excelsior, 16 September 2004

Mystery shrouds Hizb commander's death in Tral

Geelani's pol secy gunned down in broad daylight

SRINAGAR, Sept 15: Senior Jamaat-e-Islami functionary and political secretary to the pro-

Pakistan Hurriyat Conference supremo Syed Ali Shah Geelani, advocate Pir Hissam-ud-din, has been shot dead by unidentified gunmen at his Bemina residence in this capital city today. Meanwhile, Hizbul Mujahideen's 'company commander' Fayaz Ahmed Dar had been found dead in mysterious circumstances in Tral area of Pulwama district. In a statement, Hurriyat (G) held the "Indian agencies" responsible for Hissam-ud-din's assassination and described it as "a great tragedy for Kashmir's pro-freedom population". It added that he had been done to death on account of his political ideology. "It's the worst example of the state terrorism", the Hurriyat (G) statement said and added that Hissam-ud-din's murder had "unmasked not only India's scoundrel face but also driven the last nail in the coffin of the puppet Chief Minister's healing touch".

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

Pir's killing seen as setback to Geelani

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15. Sources in the Union Home Ministry have termed the killing of Pir Hissamuddin in Srinagar as "a major setback" to Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the pro-Pakistan Hurriyat leader. Though he was known as the "political secretary" to Mr. Geelani, the Pir was essentially "the money man." The killing, according to these sources, most probably has to do with some dispute over the distribution of money among the various terror groups. The Pir used to be the contact man for various militant 'tanzeems.' The dispute is being linked to a larger split within the hardliners' camp. According to information available here, pro-Pakistan elements had a major row a few days ago when Pir Hissamuddin was reported to have spoken against Mr. Geelani. The Pir came close to accusing Mr. Geelani of "misallocating" funds (received from Pakistani sources).

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

Patil to visit J&K from October 23

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15. The Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, who postponed his visit to Jammu and Kashmir this month because of the October 13 by-elections, will be visiting the State from October 23, sources said here today.

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

Police running the State, says J-K leader

SRINAGAR SEPT. 15. Expressing deep concern over what he called "trampling of democratic rights of people", the Communist Party of India (Marxist) State secretary, M. Y. Tarigami, today accused the People's Democratic Party (PDP)- led coalition Government of turning Jammu and Kashmir into a "police state". Mr Tarigami told a news conference here that political parties had never allowed the democracy to flourish in Kashmir and that was happening today as well. "It has been a common feature with the successive Governments," he said and added: "In the name of national interest denial of democratic rights here is justified in their view."

The Tribune, 16 September 2004

CAG raps J&K on fiscal indiscipline

Jammu, September 15: Having incurred an expenditure of Rs 825 crore without any budgetary provision, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has received a stinker from the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG), who has described such spending by 22 departments as "financial indiscipline". The CAG has pointed out that various departments have indulged in "poor budgeting" and the monitoring system is "lax". These observations have been made by the CAG in the latest report pertaining to the financial year 2002-2003.

The Hindu, 17 September 2004

Attempts to push in militants continuing: Vij

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16. Pakistan has not given up attempts to push militants into Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief of the Army Staff, N.C. Vij, said today adding that the fencing along the Line of Control was frustrating such attempts. Infiltration, he said, had declined to a large extent. Gen. Vij was here to present the presidential colours to three regiments of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAKLI). The Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, was the chief guest on the occasion. "Installation of modern gadgets and stepped up vigilance has helped in preventing infiltration from across the border appreciably even as there has been no let up from Pakistan in pushing ultras into Jammu and Kashmir," the Army Chief said. Around 500 militants were waiting at different points to cross over, he said adding that 14,000 to 15,000 messages had been intercepted suggesting the militants'

readiness to infiltrate the Valley. "This August only 27 militants managed to cross over. During the same period last year, 250 militants crossed over," he said.

The Tribune, 17 September 2004

CRPF constable among four killed

Srinagar, September 16: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan and a girl were among four persons killed while security forces arrested two militants in the Kashmir valley overnight, an official spokesman said today. He said a CRPF constable Ashok Kumar, who was injured in a Fidayeen attack on a camp near Dal Lake on September 12, died in the hospital this morning. Mr Kumar was injured after he killed one Fidayeen soon after they stormed the camp. Two senior CRPF officers also lost their lives in the attack besides both the Fidayeen were killed in the night-long gun battle.

The Tribune, 17 September 2004

Plot to eliminate me, says Geelani

Srinagar, September 16: The APHC chairman, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, here today alleged that the Central Government planned to eliminate him and his associates and that he had received threats to this effect. He was speaking on the occasion of the burial of his associate and political secretary, Peer Hissamuddin, who fell to the bullets of unidentified gunmen here yesterday. A large number of people were present on the occasion at Idgah here this afternoon. Geelani claimed that the government had newly constituted, what he called "territorial force" on the pattern of Ikhwan, a counter-insurgent force for the purpose.

The Times of India, 17 September 2004

Hasimuddin drifted away from Geelani

NEW DELHI: Pir Hasimuddin, the former political aide of Syed Ali Shah Geelani's Tehriq-e-Hurriyat, had fallen out with the pro-Pakistan leader before he was killed in his house near Srinagar on Wednesday. The rift had to do with a dispute over money with Hasimuddin reportedly challenging the way Geelani controlled massive funds flowing into the Tehriq-e-Hurriyat's coffers from Pakistan. For the security agencies here, the assassination falls into the pattern where Pakistan-backed elements have tried to eliminate resistance to their favourite: Geelani.

This is part of Islamabad's plan to secure a place for Tehriq-e-Hurriyat in the talks to decide the fate of J&K on the ground that the secessionist outfit was the true representative of 'Kashmiris'. Those behind the plan have gone about its execution with clinical precision. Hasimuddin had been managing the funds of Tehriq-e-Hurriyat after he was ousted from the All Party Hurriyat Conference, as its secretary. But Geelani had replaced him recently.

Daily Excelsior, 17 September 2004

'500 ultras waiting across LoC'

No let up in Pak bid to push militants: Gen Vij

SRINAGAR, Sept 16: There has been no let up in Pakistan's bid to push militants in Jammu and Kashmir but fencing and stepped up vigil by troops have reduced infiltration to a large extent, Army Chief Gen N C Vij said here today. "Border fencing, installation of modern gadgets and stepped up vigilance has helped in preventing infiltration from across the border appreciably even as there has been no let up from Pakistan in pushing ultras into Jammu and Kashmir", Gen Vij, who was here to present Presidential Colours to three battalions of JAKLI regiment, told reporters here. As many as 500 militants were waiting in wings at launching pads to cross over to Jammu and Kashmir from across the border, the Army Chief said adding that they were finding it difficult because of the vigilance maintained by the troops.

Daily Excelsior, 17 September 2004

Two more arrested in hawala racket

Recoveries go upto 4.80 lakh US dollars

JAMMU, Sept 16: Police today said 4.80 lakh US dollars worth about Rs 2.40 crore were recovered from Sant Lodge at Sant Market, Jewel Chowk in a joint raid carried out by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Special Operations Group (SOG) of police and not 1.50 lakh US dollars as reported earlier. Recovery of such a huge number of American dollars, which has been made for the first time in Jammu, was part of an international hawala racket connected with the funding of terrorism, highly placed sources told the Excelsior tonight.

Daily Excelsior, 17 September 2004

Shutdown in Sopore, Srinagar Civil Lines

Geelani: 'Territorial Force' killed Hassam-ud-din

SRINAGAR, Sept 16: Even as his call for complete shutdown in Kashmir valley failed almost completely, pro-Pakistan Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today alleged that a newly launched counter-insurgent outfit 'Territorial Force' had planned and executed the assassination of his confidante, Pir Hissam-ud-din. The slain Jamaat-e-Islami functionary was laid to rest amid pro-Pakistan and pro-Azadi slogans at the "Martyrs Graveyard" on Iddgah Grounds here today. Advocate Pir Hissam-ud-din, who had been shot dead by two open-face gunmen in broad daylight at his Bemina residence on Wednesday, was buried at "Martyrs Graveyard" on Iddgah Grounds this afternoon. Chairman of a breakaway faction of the separatist Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who also heads his own Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Kashmir, conducted Namaaz-e-Janazah. Hissam-ud-din's body was carried to the Iddgah Grounds amid pro-Pakistan, pro-Azadi and anti-India slogans.

The Hindu, 18 September 2004

Conspiracy to kill me: Geelani

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 17. Taking strong exception to a report published in The Hindu on September 16, Syed Geelani, leader of the faction of the Hurriyat Conference, has said that the Government of India had not only unleashed a "malicious campaign against me" but also formed a new outfit to "kill me and my colleagues." Speaking to a gathering after the burial of his political secretary, Peer Hissamuddin, in the "martyr's graveyard" here, Mr. Geelani said: "The report is a figment of imagination and aimed at tarnishing my image which has become a permanent feature for the Government of India." "They even do not forgive the dead," he said asking his supporters to repeat "The Hindu - shame, shame."

The Tribune, 18 September 2004

Seven militants killed in Kashmir

Srinagar, September 17: Eight persons, including seven militants, were killed and two soldiers injured while the security forces arrested a Hizbul Mujahideen militant in the Kashmir valley over night, an official spokesman said. He said two Hizbul militants, Tariq Hissasin, alias Major, and Ghulam Ali,

alias Darood, were killed by the security forces in an encounter at Semthan in Anantnag last night. Two rifles and other arms and ammunition were seized from the slain militants. One militant was gunned down by the security forces at Bazipora in Baramula while another was killed at Arnag Gool during two different encounters last night.

The Times of India, 18 September 2004

Kashmir divide stumps peace

NEW DELHI: The "unconditional" talks that the Centre initiated with Kashmiri separatists is set for a disappointing burial thanks to roadblocks in both New Delhi and Srinagar. The historic dialogue, an almost revolutionary effort to find peace in the strife-torn Valley, has reached a deadend mainly because of two reasons: One, the dove-hawk divide is so deep that there is no credible separatist face to talk to. Second, New Delhi's stiff positioning in recent days has forced even the doves to shy away from dialogue for fear of losing their credibility in the Valley.

Greater Kashmir, 18 September 2004

People eager to meet relatives across LoC

Jammu, Sep 17: The proposed bus service from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad in Pak Administrated Kashmir (PaK) has rekindled hope not only among Kashmiris but also erstwhile Muzaffarabadi Hindus of meeting their relatives across the line of control (LoC) after a long wait. "Our wish to meet our relatives in Muzaffarabad has received a fresh lease of life with the government's proposal of opening border points in Uri-Muzaffarabad axis," 79-year-old Kishori Lal Sehgal, who fled Muzaffarabad in 1947, said.

Greater Kashmir, 18 August 2004

Islamabad, not Anantnag

Jalal-ud-Din Shah

Islamabad town was never in history called Anantnag nor has any traveller or historian reported it by this name. The town of Vijeshwar Chakra along with ancient university and other muths and viharas extended up to present Islamabad but was not called Anantnag. In Rajtarangni or later historical accounts is no where the name Anantnag mentioned for the township or district. In fact Islamabad town flourished in Muslim period and had great influence of Rishism which continues till now. The name

Anantnag appears to have derived its origin from the fact that one Kashmiri Raja namely Anant Raj had an able and intelligent queen who was very much interested in public cause and human service. She was pious and articulate administrator (Prem Nath Bazaz in "Daughters of vetasta"). She constructed and stream lined the glorious spring in present form and this particular surrounding and holly spring got the name of Anantnag from there, after, the name of Anant Raj. All though the place was pious and worship sport before that as well. There is nothing of the sort that there are limitless springs or snakes as reported in GK dated 8th September 11, 2004. In Gazetter of Kashmir and Ladakh compiled by Quarter Master General of India in 1890 the detail of Islamabad is reported on page no.382 and 944 in detail. On more than twenty-five occasions word Islamabad is written for the township.

Daily Excelsior, 18 September 2004

5 militants killed; encounter at Aham Sharif

Jaish 'distt commdr', 3 Al-Badar militants killed

SRINAGAR, Sept 17: Even as a fierce gunbattle commenced between militants and security forces close to a revered shrine at Aham Sharif in Bandipore, security today claimed to have killed at least five militants in different operations in Kashmir valley since last evening. Informed sources told the EXCELSIOR that on a specific information, troops of Rashtriya Rifles 22 Bn conducted a search operation in Zalora-Dardpora forests in Sopore area today. During the operation, an encounter took place between a group of militants and security forces. Three unidentified militants got killed and equal number of weapons were recovered from their possession. DIG north Kashmir, Ashok Gupta, confirmed the death of three Pakistani militants of Al-Badr outfit. He said that they had been identified as Yaqoob Qadiri R/o Kota, Pakistan, Omar Farooq R/o Fareedabad, Pakistan, and a militant called 'Doctor'.

Daily Excelsior, 18 September 2004

Two injured in Doda blast

3 ultras killed, 3 recruits rescued

JAMMU, Sept 17: Three militants were killed in two separate encounters in Kishtwar and Gool areas of Doda and Udhampur districts while two civilians were injured in a blast in

wooden made fruit box at Prem Nagar on Doda-Kishtwar road this morning. Civilians injured in the blast have been identified as Lal Singh, 65, son of Ganga Ram, a resident of Kandot and Behari Lal son of Karam Chand R/o Shiva. They have been hospitalised.

Kashmir Times, 18 September 2004

'Geelani's allegations untrue'

Unconditional talks with Hurriyat: Patil

NEW DELHI, Sep 17 (Agencies): The Centre today dismissed as untrue allegation of hardline separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani that security forces were involved in the killing of his close aide Peer Hissamuddin in Srinagar on Wednesday. "Though I will not like to make any comment, I will like to clarify that there is no truth in these statements and none of the security personnel was involved in the killing," Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil told reporters here. Geelani, while attending the funeral prayer of the killed leader, had said "Indian agencies were behind the killing of Hissamuddin."

Greater Kashmir, 19 September 2004

10 militants among 12 killed in JK

Srinagar, Sept 18: Twelve persons including ten militants were killed in different incidents across the state since Friday, police said today. Police today claimed that two militants were killed in a gunfight with troops at Aham Sharif, Bandipora in Varmul on Saturday. The fight was going on till last reports, police said. A militant, identified by police as Fayaz Ahmad son of Muhammad Yusuf of Magam, Kokernag in Islamabad district was killed in an encounter with troops at Upper Munda, Qazigund in the same district. Police claimed that a pistol, 1 magazine and a wireless set was recovered from the militant.

Greater Kashmir, 19 September 2004

Rs 825 cr spent without budget estimates

Violation of financial code continues

Jammu, Sep 18: Faced by the staggering Rs 1300 crore-overdraft liabilities, J&K government is yet to tackle the menace of violation of budgetary provisions as an expenditure of Rs 825 crore was incurred without any budgetary provision by 22 departments in the state. "The finance ministry has tightened its noose by imposition of several austerity measures. But it is not going to help too much as the overdraft liabilities

shot up mainly because of violation of budgetary provisions by all the departments," official sources told Greater Kashmir. As many as Rs 825 crore (63 per cent of Rs 1260 crore overdraft in 2002-03) was incurred by 22 government departments in violation of budgetary provisions, almost same amount was incurred in 2003-04. A report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has described such spending as "financial indiscipline."

Greater Kashmir, 19 September 2004

Power crises to turn grim in JK before winter

Jammu, Sept 18: With the shortfall of 125 MW daily, Jammu and Kashmir's power crises would turn grim before the advent of winter because of falling water levels in North Rivers. "We apprehend that the power situation could turn grim unless the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department decides to buy more electricity from either the northern power grid or the Power Grid Corporation of India," said a senior J&K PDD official. The official further said the main reason for the present crisis is low hydroelectric power generation. This autumn, water levels in all major rivers that are used for electric power generation in north India have been the lowest, he added.

Greater Kashmir, 19 September 2004

Geelani describes Tehreek Hurriyat as Jamaat wing

Blames India for Husamudin's killing

Srinagar, Sept 18: Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) led by him, today reiterated that Peer Husamudin was killed by Indian intelligence agencies. Addressing people at a condolence meeting at Qamerwari, Geelani said Peer Husamudin was killed by those who occupied his house and forced him to migrate from his native place Sopur. Reacting sharply to a statement of Home Minister Shiv Raj Patil, who on Friday stated that intelligence agencies have no role in Peer Husamudin's killing, Geelani described the statement as bundle of lies and held India responsible for his aide's killing.

Daily Excelsior, 19 September 2004

Conduit in hawala racket arrested from Sunderbani

JAMMU, Sept 18: Police is said to have captured a conduit in the recovery of 4.80 lakh American dollars from a hotel in Jewel Chowk from Sunderbani in Rajouri district, where he was hiding for last few days. Police authorities, who have been keeping secret details of the first ever international hawala racket busted in the City, declined to reveal identity of the conduit, who was arrested by a team of Special Operations Group (SOG) from Sunderbani yesterday. The conduit was a not a resident of Jammu and Kashmir, the sources said, adding he was an outsider but had taken shelter in Sunderbani to evade the arrest.

Daily Excelsior, 19 September 2004

Pandits opposed to porous border: PK

JAMMU, Sept 18: The solution of Kashmir problem lies in the hands of Pandits only who are the aborigines of the land and not in the hands of fundamentalist groups. This was stated by he Panun Kashmir chief, Dr Ajay Chrangoo, while addressing a function at Abhinav Theatre here, today . The PK leader while making a strong dig at the Central Government's Kashmir policy said that Pandits are tooth and nail opposed to porous border with Pakistan as this move will be tantamount to national unity and integrity.

Kashmir Times, 19 September 2004

Battle of titans in Batamallo but voters may not come

SRINAGAR, Sep 18: It will be the battle of titans in Batamalloo assembly segment by-polls scheduled on October 13. On one side both National Conference and People's Democratic Party (PDP) are gearing-up for a big fight and on the other people of this segment are cool to the election fervour which has so far remained confined to media only. "I did not vote last time and nor I intend to do it this time. I have heard through media that the polls are scheduled for this segment otherwise no body is interested in these polls", says Ghulam Mohammad of Bemina which forms a part of this segment. Batamalloo assembly segment had fallen vacant after the sitting National Conference MLA Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah passed away a few months ago.

The Indian Express, 19 September 2004

'Pakistan is sincere ... Why does India shirk?' (Mufti Islah interviews Syed Ali Shah

Geelani, chairman of the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference)

Kashmir separatism is undergoing a drastic change. Do you find yourself more relevant today?

(Laughs) That is for the media to tell. But I think Kashmiris realise I have remained unflinching on my stand. We have a just and principled cause. People have made sacrifices for it. They realise I will die but never surrender, no matter how much pressure is mounted on me by India's political might.

You are a pro-Pakistan separatist and Pakistan is currently talking to India. In that case why should New Delhi talk to you?

That is our stand. But both India and Pakistan should take up the core issue of Kashmir. I know Pakistan is sincere. India should also reciprocate. Trade, gas pipes, diplomacy can follow suit once Kashmir is taken up purposefully. We (the Hurriyat) can join at a later stage to resolve the crisis forever.

Pakistan is not insisting on tripartite talks but you are. Why?

Because we are genuinely party to the dispute. It is an issue of more than 13 million Kashmiris on both sides of the line.

Let India and Pakistan show progress first and later allow Kashmiris to choose between the two by invoking the United Nations resolution. The Kashmir case was taken to the UN by New Delhi. Today why are they shirking?

You have been supporting militancy. After 9/11 do you still feel the same?

After 9/11 the world superpower has suppressed the already suppressed Muslim nations. The United States is acting as a zorawar sher (ferocious lion). Muslims have two options: either to fight the subjugation or surrender.

Under what conditions could you appeal for a ceasefire?

New Delhi should first admit Kashmir is disputed in Parliament. It should send the troops to the barracks, release all detenus, revoke the Special Armed Forces Act and Disturbed Areas Act. Only then can a ceasefire be announced.

What role do you see for the moderate leadership of Hurriyat? Do you think they have betrayed the Kashmir cause?

There is only one Hurriyat and that is the Hurriyat headed by me ... Yes, they (the moderates) have betrayed Kashmiris by playing a passive role.

Will you take any member from the moderate leadership into your Hurriyat?

They will have to apologise and pass the purification test. They violated the constitution of the erstwhile Hurriyat by holding talks with Ram Jethmalani and then carried out no anti-poll campaign.

If Prime Minister Manmohan Singh sends an invite to discuss Kashmir unconditionally, will you respond?

My experience tells me there will be a condition in the unconditional talks. Atal Behari Vajpayee had said there would be talks within the contours of insaniyat but later he said it meant talks within the Indian constitution.

Is there any difference between the NDA and UPA governments?

On Kashmir, they are the same.

Should indigenous militant outfits like the Hizbul Mujahideen be involved in talks?

Everyone knows what happened to those who talked to New Delhi.

Greater Kashmir, 20 September 2004

NC worker, LeT man among 5 killed in JK
Srinagar, Sept 19: A National Conference worker and commander of Lashkar-e-Toiba were among five persons killed in the state of Jammu and Kashmir since Saturday. Two civilians were wounded when unidentified gunmen fired at them in Islamabad district on Saturday. Police today reported the death of one more militant in the gunfight that was going on in Aham Sharif, Bandipora since Saturday evening. The toll of the militants killed in the incident has risen to three. Police identified one of them as Abdul Gani Reshi son of Bothoo, Bandipora. Three AK rifles were claimed by police to have been recovered from the site of encounter.

Greater Kashmir, 20 September 2004

CRPF trains men to fight Fidayeen

New Delhi, Sept 19: In the wake of a series of Fidayeen attacks by militants in Jammu and Kashmir recently, the CRPF has begun imparting special training to its personnel to meet such challenges and is working on changing its deployment pattern to tackle such situations more effectively. The force has also been given the task of ensuring security to the personnel engaged in the ambitious Qazigund-Varmul rail project following abduction and killing of an engineer by suspected militants about two months back.

Greater Kashmir, 20 September 2004

Fencing halts movement of Poonch villagers

Jammu, Sept 19: The two-tier barbed wire fencing has cut border hamlets in Poonch district of Jammu. "The border fencing has changed our lives, curtailing our free movement to other civilian areas, where schools, hospitals and market places are located," Nayeem Ahmed of village Sekhlu told Greater Kashmir on Sunday. The Sekhlu border area of Poonch district, 3 km inside the Line of Control has been bifurcated by the installation of the fencing, which is almost complete in Poonch sector. With the coming up of fencing, villagers are facing a peculiar situation, as they would be caught between two tiers of fencing being erected to plug infiltration, he adds

Daily Excelsior, 20 September 2004

250 militants operating in Poonch-Rajouri: Maj Gen Bakshi

DOABA PASS (LORAN), Sept 19: About 250 terrorists, majority of them foreigners, are operating in the depth areas of border districts of Rajouri and Poonch. Maj General G D Bakshi, General Officer Commanding Special Forces (Romeo) while appreciating the commendable operation of 9 Para and 40 RR in which five hard core terrorists were gunned down in Pir Panjal Ranges said that out of the total, about 70 percent of the militants operating in his area including Rajouri, Poonch and parts of Mahore in Udhampur are foreigners. They are not getting much local support and forcibly getting food and other favours from the locals at gun point. Referring to the operation at the tough terrains and inaccessible reaches of Pajyali near Chitti Pass in Pir Panjal ranges at the height of about 11,500 ft, the GOC said all the five terrorists unaware of the movement of the troops fell into their trap. The two were beating a Gujjar woman at a dhok with sticks as she denied them food while one was busy in hair cut whereas another was applying Sarson oil on legs. Unaware of any possible movement of forces, these ultras were carrying on their activities freely.

Daily Excelsior, 20 September 2004

HM 'section commander' gunned down in Gandoh, SPO killed

JAMMU, Sept 19: A Hizb-ul-Mujahideen 'section commander' and a Special Police Officer (SPO) were killed while another SPO was injured and a 'source' of security forces went missing in separate encounters across the Jammu region since last evening. Official sources said Police and security forces carried out a search operation at village Nun Chaba in Kara area of Gandoh police station in Doda district in early hours of this morning on a specific input that a Hizbul Mujahideen 'section commander' Mohd Amin had taken shelter in the house of one Dilawar Malik son of Ghulam Malik.

Daily Excelsior, 20 September 2004

Pak playing divide & rule: Gilani

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Ahead of summit-level Indo-Pak talks scheduled later this week, the Kashmiri diaspora under the aegis of International Kashmir Alliance (IKA) has accused Pakistan of playing "divide and rule" policy in Kashmir. In a statement issued on the killing of Hissam-ud-din, close aide of chairman of breakaway Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Geelani, IKA chief Syed Nazir Gilani said Pakistani establishment has a history of divide and rule and it has achieved this by fanning a local Mujahir dissension, promoting a mistrust among Gilgit and Baltistan against the administrations of Kashmir in Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The Indian Express, 20 September 2004

Long forgotten, Kashmir plans Mughal Road return to Jammu

SARBAL/SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 19: Once, Emperor Akbar travelled down this 84-km stretch to defeat King Yousuf Shah Chak of Kashmir. But the Mughal Road that cuts through the Pir Panjal mountain has since become history-in a different sense though, with barely 20 km, from Shopian to Sarbal, currently motorable. Now the Mufti Mohammed government is planning to restore the road to its previous glory, providing another link between the Valley and the rest of the country. Running past fields of maize, pine groves, lush meadows and gushing streams, the Mughal Road will re-connect Shopian in Kashmir to Buzilaz in Poonch district of Jammu, considerably cutting travel time. The other link, the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, is 300 km long. Also standing to

gain from this renewed link are over 20 lakh people living along both sides of the stretch.

Hindustan Times, 20 September 2004

J&K cops dig dirt on 'spy' journalist

Srinagar, September 20: The Jammu and Kashmir police are investigating how Maqbool Sahil, a photo journalist arrested on Saturday for allegedly passing defence-related information to Pakistan, managed to cover some important functions of the state as well as the army. The police said some documents relating to the country's defence installations in the Valley were recovered from Sahil's Barbarshah residence in Srinagar. The journalist has been booked under the Official Secrets Act. "Sahil too has confessed he had passed on classified information to Pakistan," the police said. "We have been watching Sahil's activities for some time now as he used to work for a Pakistani news agency, Kashmir Media Service. He also used to cover the press conferences of ministers and Srinagar-based Corps Commander. He would never miss the opportunity to travel in army choppers and had been to important sites," said a top police officer. "Some classified material relating to defence establishments were also seized from his residence," he said.

The Times of India, 20 September 2004

Pota-wary Mufti may not exercise new law in J&K

NEW DELHI: The ordinance to repeal Pota and the proposed amendments to Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) are unlikely to impact on J&K as the state hardly utilised Pota, particularly after Mufti Mohammad Sayeed took over as chief minister. J&K's special status under Art 370 also makes a Central law applicable only after state government notifies it. This means that even after the President endorses the end of Pota and the law is replaced by the amended UAPA, the two ordinances will have no relevance for J&K which is bearing the brunt of terrorism. "Pota was never an issue in J&K," a political observer of the state said. He said the issue here has been the Public Safety Act (PSA) under which around 560 cases are registered. Compared to this only 20 persons have been detained under Pota. When Pota was promulgated by the NDA government, Farooq Abdullah was CM. The only prominent

person to be arrested under Pota and then quickly released was JKLF chief Yasin Malik.

Daily Excelsior, 21 September 2004

NC announces candidates for 4 Assembly seats

SRINAGAR, Sept 20: As the major coalition partners, Congress and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have decided to share seats, Opposition National Conference (NC) today declared its candidates for the Assembly by-elections. Congress has already declared its Lok Sabha member Lal Singh's wife, Kanta Adhotra, as its candidate for Basohli while as another Lok Sabha member Madan Lal Sharma's brother, Sham Lal Sharma, has been chosen as the party candidate for Akhnoor. Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and Tariq Hameed Qara have also been chosen as the PDP's candidates from Pahalgam and Batmaloo respectively. Election for the four vacant segments of Pahalgam, Batmaloo, Akhnoor and Basohli are scheduled to be held in October

Daily Excelsior, 21 September 2004

Rs 36 lakh looted from JK Bank in Shopian 5 militants, 2 Army officers killed

SRINAGAR, Sept 20: At least five militants, two Army officers and a civilian have died in different militancy related incidents across Kashmir valley since last evening. Meanwhile, unidentified gunmen have looted cash worth Rs 36 Lakh from a branch of Jammu & Kashmir bank in Shopian area of south Kashmir today. Informed sources in north Kashmir told the EXCELSIOR that the overnight operation at Nadihal, Bandipore, came to an end with the death of one more Army officer. As already reported in this newspaper, Maj Yogesh Agarwal of 5-Jat Regiment had got killed in the initial round of firing at the militant hideout last evening. Sources said that Subedar Surender Kumar died while trying to eliminate a group of militants hiding at a particular house. Troops destroyed the house in a 20-hour-long operation. Dead body of a militant, which had its head blown up, was recovered from the debris. It was identified as that of Abu Dujana alias Moosa, resident of Gujranwala, Pakistan.

Daily Excelsior, 21 September 2004

40 kg RDX seized in Doda

JAMMU, Sept 20: A youth was killed in exchange of firing between militants and security forces at Fazlabad, Surankote in Poonch district last night while security forces recovered 40 kg RDX and other explosives from a militant hideout in Karamat forest in Doda. A top militant was killed in Mendhar and three police personnel including SI was injured. Meanwhile, Doda police today produced challan against three Hizbul Mujahideen militants in TADA court for their involvement in two grenade explosions in Doda town in which two civilians including an Information Officer were killed. Official sources said an encounter took place between Army and a group of militants at Fazlabad Gundi in Surankote tehsil in Poonch district last night. A youth was killed in the cross-firing. He has been identified as Mohd Irshad, 18, son of Manzoor Hussain, a resident of Fazlabad, Surankote.

Kashmir Times, 21 September 2004

Six HM ultras arrested

Men behind Qazigund IED blast: BSF

SRINAGAR, Sep 20: Border Security Force (BSF) today claimed to have arrested six Hizbul-Mujahideen ultras responsible for the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast that killed 34 persons including 15 jawans, six women and three children at Lower Munda in Qazigund on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway on May 23. A spokesman of BSF said following a tip off a joint team of security forces and police raided suspected hideouts in Kulgam Qazigund area in Anantnag district of south Kashmir and arrested six persons. During interrogation the suspected ultras revealed the details about the IED blast that was one of the deadliest in the 13 years of turmoil, he claimed. The spokesman identified the arrested persons as Mukhtiyar Ahmad Bhat, Ghulam Hussain, Mukhtiyar Ahmad Shah, Iqbal Teli, all from village Churat Qazigund, Ashiq Hussain, Mohomad Abdus Nayak and Tariq Ahmad Mir, all hailing from Y.K.Pora.

Kashmir Times, 21 September 2004

LeT ultra, civilian killed in Poonch

SI among 4 cops injured

JAMMU, Sept 20: A Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) ultra and a civilian were killed while four cops including a Sub Inspector were injured in two separate militancy-related incidents in district

Poonch since last night. A huge cache of arms and explosives were recovered from Goha Marmat area of Doda district. Official reports said that a group of militants ambushed a police patrol party at Jagal area in Mendhar tehsil of district Poonch when they were returning after carrying out search operations in the Chak Banola area. Militants opened fire on the patrol party prompting the cops to take positions and retaliated the fire.

Kashmir Images, 21 September 2004

Election fever returns to Anantnag

Anantnag September, 20: With the dates of the politicians nearing in Anantnag South Kashmir district today witnessed the upheaval of the election fever with Rafi Ahmad Mir of National Conference filing his nomination papers for Pahalgam assembly constituency this morning. After a lull of two years, the Anantnag town witnessed political chanting from workers of NC who had come all the way from different hamlets of Pahalgam constituency to accompany their candidate till the DC office. The Assembly constituency of Pahalgam was left vacant for bye elections when PDP President Mehbooba Mufti quitted the state legislation and was elected for parliament from Anantnag Parliamentary constituency. In the 2002 elections, Rafi Ahmad Mir had lost to PDP candidate Mehbooba Mufti in a one sided contest. The general mood of the people in the area predicts a different contest this time.

Greater Kashmir, 21 September 2004

15 Pak scribes to visit JK

SAFMA goodwill mission kicks off

Srinagar, Sep 20: Peace is in the air. A group of 15 Pakistani journalists is scheduled to visit Jammu and Kashmir from October 3 on a goodwill mission, official sources said. Belonging to Pakistan and its administered Kashmir, the journalists are the members of South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), and their visit has been facilitated by a Jammu-based English daily, they said. It is first time the Government of India has given permission to media-persons from Pakistan to visit the conflict-ridden state. They would spend a week here and interact with the cross section of the society, the sources said. After the Pakistani scribes' visit, a delegation of journalists from this part of Kashmir would visit Pakistan and its Kashmir in November.

Greater Kashmir, 21 September 2004

Kashmir girls imitate Sachin, Shoaib

Dream to play at top level

Srinagar, Sep 20: They may not be as quick as Rawalpindi Express Shoaib Akhter or as prolific run scorers as Sachin Tendulkar, but these girl cricket players are trying hard to make their mark in the sport otherwise dominated by their male counterparts. "We are playing for the game, not for certificates," said the players of Mallinson girls school and Women College M A Road after battling out for the J&K Bank cricket trophy-2004 on Monday here. According to the players, it is the passion, spirit and love for cricket that drives them crazy. "We don't want any merit certificates for participating in the national level tournaments," said Sualeh of Mallinson school, who was corroborated by other teammates. The women cricketers feel that playing for certificates to get employment through reserved quota was disrespecting the gentlemen's game.

The Hindu, 21 September 2004

Mufti to contest from Pahalgam

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 20. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, will contest the by-election to the Pahalgam Assembly seat, which was vacated by his daughter and People's Democratic Party president, Mehbooba Mufti, after her election to the Lok Sabha in May last.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's political affairs committee, chaired by Ms. Mufti. The PDP also approved the nomination of the party general secretary, Tariq Hamid Qarra, from Batamaloo seat. The vacancy was caused by the death of the National Conference leader, Mohiuddin Shah.

Hindustan Times, 21 September 2004

Will Kashmir fire up Musharraf at New York?

Washington, September 20: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf is keeping everyone guessing on what his take on Kashmir would be at the UN General Assembly this time round. Arriving in New York a day ahead of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Musharraf seemed to have moved slightly away from his recent insistence on a timeframe to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying his emphasis was really on "early progress". Musharraf, who addresses the world body on Wednesday, will meet Singh two days later. Speaking to Pakistani

journalists, he said he would meet the Indian Prime Minister with an open mind and expectations of "some indications" about the future course of the Indo-Pak dialogue process. But diplomatic circles are not too sure if he will take a clean break from his aggressive Kashmir stance of past occasions. On all previous UN outings, he has railed against India on the issue, holding that Kashmiri militants are freedom fighters and accusing Indian forces of human rights violations.

The Tribune, 21 September 2004

Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road's reopening in cold storage

Jammu, September 20: When a year ago the PDP-led coalition government ordered putting up milestones between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, it had envisaged to generate a pro-establishment wave. However, the move has failed to enthuse people. Initially, when the Chief Minister, Mufti Mhammad Sayeed raised the demand, it evoked an interest among the people. The announcement brought a ray of hope for several hundred divided families on this side of the border. Reopening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road could make travel easier for them.

Greater Kashmir, 22 September 2004

20 more shown the door

Mufti orders premature retirement of 20 officials

Srinagar, Sep 21: The government today ordered premature retirement of 20 officers/officials as part of the drive 'to remove deadwood from the administration and to provide responsive administration.' Earlier under the same drive 19 officers/officials were prematurely retired, an official spokesman said. He said the government was determined to continue the process for an efficient, transparent and accountable administration.

Greater Kashmir, 22 September 2004

SHRC aghast at IGP remarks

Srinagar, Sep 21: The Inspector General of Police, K Rajendra Kumar has come under sharp criticism from the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) for his recent statement that the commission has found most of the human rights violations as fabricated. The commission has accused the IGP of "diluting its credibility." "SHRC disowns the IGP's

statement and expresses disappointment and surprise. IGP has given the statement on his own. Law restrains an agency from being a judge for its own cause," the SHRC chairman Justice A.M. Mir told Greater Kashmir. "The numerical figures are IGP's own. The commission views the statement as an attempt to dilute the credibility of the SHRC for somebody's personal gains," the chairperson said, adding being a senior officer of Police, Rajendra did not check the figures or consulted the commission before making the statement.

Greater Kashmir, 22 September 2004

Campaigning for Pahalgam by-elections begins

Islamabad, Sep 21: Amid lack of public interest, the electioneering for Pahalgam by-elections has formally picked up with the filing of nomination papers by opposition National Conference (NC) candidate Rafi Ahmad Mir on Monday. Pahalgam assembly seat fell vacant with Mahbooba Mufti opting Parliament to the State Assembly in the 14th Lok Sabha elections. Mahbooba had won the assembly seat defeating Mir in 2002 assembly elections. Mir filed his nomination papers in the district headquarters and requested the government employees to steer clear of their affiliations with political parties.

Daily Excelsior, 22 September 2004

Illegal appointments of Class-IV employees SC directs JK Govt to notify vacant posts in 6 months

NEW DELHI, Sept 21: The Supreme Court, while upholding the judgment of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, whereunder illegal and backdoor appointments of Class-IV employees were quashed, has directed J&K Government to notify all the vacant posts for appointment and applications called for in accordance with the rules within six months. The Bench of Justice KG Balakrishnan and Justice Dr AR Lakshmanan in its order said that all the appellants herein be permitted to submit for appointment against such notification. As regards to the upper age limit, these appellants shall be given relaxation, but there shall not be any relaxation in the matter of the basic qualifications for appointment to Class-IV posts, the Apex Court held.

Daily Excelsior, 22 September 2004

Peerzada's stand on Wazir Comm shocks Congmen

JAMMU, Sept 21: Shell shocked over statement of newly appointed Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief Peerzada Mohammed Sayed, senior leaders of the Congress Party today asserted that implementation of Wazir Commission report was one of the priority of the coalition regime headed by Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. All Jammu based Congress leaders, although, avoided direct confrontation with Peerzada, yet made it amply clear that "no body can go back on the promise regarding implementation of Wazir Commission".

Daily Excelsior, 22 September 2004

Talbott for LoC conversion into border

NEW DELHI, Sept 21: Maintaining that the US had "no roadmap" for resolution of vexed Kashmir issue, former US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott today favoured conversion of the Line of Control (LoC) into permanent border and said Washington could play the role of a "facilitator". A key official of the Clinton administration, who was engaged in parallel talks with Indian and Pakistani leaders in the aftermath of 1998 nuclear tests, he said the US had acquired a "unique influence" on Islamabad which it will be using for the benefit of this country. "The US has no secret roadmap for resolution of the Kashmir issue. India and Pakistan should have the roadmap," Talbott, who was in the state department for eight years, said in an interview when asked about the perception that Washington had chalked out a plan for settlement of the vexed issue.

The Tribune, 22 September 2004

Couple, three militants killed in J&K

Srinagar, September 21: A couple and three militants were killed and nine others, including a police officer, were injured in Jammu and Kashmir overnight, an official spokesman said today. Militants entered the house of Mohammad Akram at Mahore in Udhampur district of Jammu region late last night and shot him and his wife Jana Begum dead. Security forces killed a foreign militant in an encounter in the Banola area of Mendhar last night. A Sub-Inspector and four special police officers (SPOs) were injured in a militant attack on a patrol party at Bhati Dhar last evening.

The Tribune, 22 September 2004

Army undertakes reconstructive surgery of Mariam

Jammu, September 21: The Army Commander, Northern Command, Lt-Gen Hari Prasad, and Mrs Lakshmi Prasad, president of the Army Wives Welfare Association (AWWA), visited the Command Hospital at Udhampur to meet Mariam Begum, a terrorist victim from Doda whose nose and ears were cut off. The 22-year-old girl has been adopted by the Army for reconstructive surgery. Mariam Begum was abducted by terrorists in June as she was the sister of Abdul Latif, a terrorist who had surrendered before the security forces since he could not bear the oppression unleashed by foreign mercenaries on his own kin. In retaliation, they abducted his sister and tortured her for 25 days and cut off her ears and nose before leaning her to die in the jungle.

The Times of India, 22 September 2004

Kashmir pot: What's cooking? (Chidanand Rajghatta)

Notwithstanding the swift government denial on Monday of Time magazine's story suggesting India was open to making some territorial concessions to Pakistan in Kashmir, well-placed sources say the idea has been bandied about before even though it has never been proposed officially. The government is petrified that the story spilled into the public domain because of the political fallout. Although the previous government too has mulled over such ideas, the nature of politics in India is such that any opposition will seek to make capital out of the issue.

The Hindu, 23 September 2004

Mufti escapes attempt on life

ANANTNAG, SEPT. 23. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, today escaped a bid on his life when rifle grenades were fired at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, as he was filing his nomination papers for the by-election to the Pahalgam Assembly seat. Five persons sustained injuries and they were rushed to a hospital in Srinagar. Three of them were stated to serious. Mr. Sayeed was accompanied by his daughter and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba

Mufti, wife Gulshan Sayeed and a number of Ministers and party leaders.

The Tribune, 23 September 2004

Police denies militant attack on CM

Srinagar, September 22: A spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir police has denied that there was any militant attack on Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed at Anantnag. He said terrorists, in fact, fired a rifle grenade on KMD bus stand in Anantnag in which five civilians sustained injuries. The target of terrorists was a police party which was on normal patrol duty. Meanwhile, radical pro-Pakistan militant outfit Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen (JuM) claimed responsibility for the bid on the life of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

The Indian Express, 23 September 2004

PM-Gen meet at UN won't help: Geelani

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 22: Two days before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh meets Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York, Kashmir's hardline leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani today predicted no progress on the Kashmir front can be made as New Delhi remains rooted to its "intransigent" stand. Before leaving for the US, Manmohan Singh had said he would take up the issue of "cross-border terrorism" with Musharraf, thereby aiming to deflect discussion on the "real" issue, Geelani said. "Manmohan Singh's description of cross-border terrorism is a deliberate attempt to divert from the core issue of Kashmir. It has once again shown that New Delhi does not want to solve Kashmir as per the wishes of the Kashmiris," he said.

The Hindu, 23 September 2004

Seven Hurriyat activists detained

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 22. Seven activists of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference were detained by police today when they were marching towards the local office of the United Nations Military Observers Group to submit a memorandum.

Hindustan Times, 23 September 2004

Kashmiri separatist leaders invited to Brussels

The All party group for Kashmir in the European Parliament has invited four top Kashmiri separatist leaders to participate in Kashmir EU week being held in Brussels on

October 11. The aim of Kashmir EU week is to bring more awareness of Jammu and Kashmir to Europeans and to permit an exchange of views between individuals concerned with forwarding the dialogue towards finding a peaceful resolution to the issue, Chairman of all party group for Kashmir, James Elles MEP said. The invitation has been sent to Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, Mohammad Yaseen Malik and Shabir Ahmad Shah. He said that Kashmir EU Week is a joint initiative of the all party group for Kashmir in the European Parliament and the ICHR Kashmir centre EU in Brussels.

Hindustan Times, 23 September 2004

Many Guriyas and Arifs in Kashmir

Jammu, September 22: In UP, Mohammed Arif, a Kargil PoW back from Pakistan, was recently reunited with his wife Guriya after five years. But things are different in Kashmir - scores of "Guriyas" dot the landscape here, their Arifs nowhere close to coming back. The husbands went missing over the past 15 years of insurgency. The wives of Ghulam Ahmad Sofi, Fateh Kadal, Manzoor Ahmad, Abdul Rashid Wani, Hamid Badyari and Mushtaq Ahmad Khan share the same fate: waiting for their husbands to return. Missing for four-eight years, there has been no trace of the men. "I don't know whether he would come or not," says a woman of her husband. "But I have to wait." Statistics documented by the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons make shocking reading. Moghammad Adil of the organisation claims that there are 8,000-10,000 missing persons in the Valley. The government figure is much lower.

Hindustan Times, 23 September 2004

Clear the air (Balraj Puri)

Pakistan is becoming impatient for a solution to Kashmir. Instead of evading a discussion on Kashmir and human rights violations, India should insist on making it the first item of the agenda. It is time to relax a ban on Amnesty International work in J&K, at least on a case-to-case basis. A word of condemnation by such an organisation will carry far more weight in the rest of the world than a diplomatic campaign by the Indian government. In the first phase, India and Pakistan should agree to condemn killings of non-combatant and unarmed civilians for their

religious or political beliefs by either the militants or the security forces. This should be followed by similar condemnation of collateral damage in armed operations, that is killing of innocents in cross-firing or Eid blasts that are aimed at the security forces. Finally, complete withdrawal by the militants and the return of the army to the barracks. Then would the stage be set for a discussion on the political aspects of the problem.

Daily Excelsior, 23 September 2004

Two militants killed in Shopian

Militants fire grenades as Mufti files papers
SRINAGAR, Sept 22: Six civilians sustained splinter injuries—two of them critically—when militants fired rifle grenades on occasion of the Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's filing of nomination papers as PDP candidate for Pahalgam in Anantnag. After 1983, when he was a Congress candidate and lost from both Bijbehara as well as Homeshalibugh, Mufti Sayeed is contesting Assembly elections for the first time in Kashmir valley. The rifle grenades exploded at a spot which is just 100 yards from DC office complex. As senior officials, including IGP Kashmir began rushing to the spot and claiming that the militant attack was directed "upon patrolling party of Police at KMD Bus Stand", guerrilla outfit Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen claimed responsibility. A spokesman of the organisation told mediapersons over telephone that militants of his group had launched the attack on the Chief Minister.

Daily Excelsior, 23 September 2004

Geelani sees red herring in Manmohan-Musharraf talks

SRINAGAR, Sept 22: Pro-Pakistan separatist Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, today dismissed the scheduled meeting of the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf at the United Nations General Assembly as a "futile exercise". He said that Manmohan Singh's statement—in which the Indian Prime Minister has said that he would be meeting Gen Musharraf to discuss Kashmir infiltration—had clearly established that India was pursuing its "diversionary tactics" to avoid the primary act of seeking a "durable and realistic solution to the Jammu & Kashmir dispute". While addressing a news conference of modest attendance, Syed Ali Shah Geelani

asserted that the scheduled meeting of the Indian and Pakistani leaders in New York would yield nothing substantial as it had no agenda to address the "core issue" of Jammu & Kashmir. "Infiltration, which Manmohan Singh is going to discuss with Gen Musharraf, is one of the offshoots of the basic political problem. The Indian Prime Minister's statement has made it clear that New Delhi would simply pursue its diversionary tactics to avoid the real issue", Geelani contended.

Daily Excelsior, 23 September 2004

Couple killed, BSF Asstt Comdt injured

JAMMU, Sept 22: A couple was gunned down by the militants while a Border Security Force (BSF) Assistant Commandant was among three persons injured and a civilian was kidnapped in separate incidents across the Jammu region since last evening. Official sources said two militants entered into the house of a civilian Mohd Akram alias Doctor, 42, son of Abdul Samad at village Lalyana Bagga in Mahore area of Reasi police district last night and subjected the house inmates to questioning. After sometime, the militants opened firing killed Doctor and his wife Jan Begum, 35. The militants escaped after the killing.

Greater Kashmir, 23 September 2004

Hill Kaka gets first ever micro-hydel project

Jammu, Sept 22: First ever micro-hydel project has been set up by Northern Command headquarters of army in collaboration with Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO) in Hill Kaka, once the hotbed of militancy in Poonch district. "With power generation of 8 kilowatts, mini power house would lighten up several villages in Hill Kaka, drastically changing the life of Gujjars and Bakerwals," Major Gen Bakshi, General Officer Commanding, Special Forces (Romeo Division) said. "Hill Kaka mountain land was once the safe sanctuary and operation hub of foreign mercenaries in Surakote belt of Poonch district where angels feared to tread but today it is teeming with life, as first ever-micro Hydel project was made operational," Major General G D Bakshi said.

Greater Kashmir, 23 September 2004

BSF admits murder, 1st time in 15 yrs

Apologises, arrests culprit; DC says routine probes no solution

Srinagar/Pulwama, Sep 22: Security forces on Wednesday admitted—first time in 15 years—that its men shot dead a youth without any provocation in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. In a statement, a spokesman of the Border Security Force (BSF) said it has put under detention a constable who shot dead Javed Ahmed Mir, 19, during a routine vehicle checking near village Wakhawan, 9 km from Pulwama town, on Tuesday evening. Javed, a minibus driver, according to witnesses, was shot dead in "cold-blood" by the BSF troopers.

Greater Kashmir, 24 September 2004

NC fears 'scientific rigging,' PDP quiet

Srinagar, Sept 23: Can rigging be scientific? National Conference triggered the debate within political circles after its candidate for Batmaloo by-elections used the term publicly on Wednesday. "Ye Log Ab Ki Baar Scientific Dhandli Kareingay," Irfan Shah, NC candidate and son of the deceased MLA Ghulam Mohiud-Din Shah, was heard saying during a public meeting in the constituency. Although Qarrah frowns over the term saying NC men are more akin to the "rigging menu" latest inclusions in the electoral rolls are said to have worried NC, which believes the inclusions were politically motivated. "By saying that they have confessed the guilt of being the masters of rigging. As of now we have not heard of any scientific or unscientific rigging," Tariq Qarrah asserted.

Greater Kashmir, 24 September 2004

Begging a big 'profession' in South Kashmir

Islamabad, Sept 23: Zareefa (26) of Hindwara camps in the Khanabal area of Islamabad where her family has rented a room. Whole day she catches hold of pedestrians and shopkeepers in the main town here and pools the money after begging. "I am engaged but cannot marry because of poverty. I hope to collect the money and move back to my home district and get married," she says. There are many people like Zareefa who have come from other districts like Varmul and Kupwara alongwith families and beg here in anticipation of evading the stigma associated with begging. In the countryside a group of people including women and children with north Kashmiri accent are seen asking for anything from

clothes to money to rice (generally given to the mendicants in villages).

Daily Excelsior, 24 September 2004

LeT 'recruitment comdr' arrested in Doda

JAMMU, Sept 23: Doda police today arrested another "recruitment commander" of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) from village Beota in Marmat hills while an Army jawan was killed and another injured in a militant attack on their patrol party in Thanna Mandi in Rajouri district last night. Reports said Doda police today arrested Abdul Qayoom son of Habibullah Mir, a resident of Beota, Marmat in Doda district. He was acting as "recruitment commander" of LeT for last four years in Marmat and surrounding areas. During his arrest, police recovered Rs 14,000 cash from his possession which he had received from the militants for recruitment of two local youths in militancy.

Daily Excelsior, 24 September 2004

No comments on Wazir Comm report Peace process to be carried forward: Mufti

JAMMU, Sept 23: Describing the general situation in the State as good, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said that the incidents of violence like grenade throwing at Anantnag yesterday could not derail the ongoing peace process in the Jammu and Kashmir. In an informal chat with the media-persons after declaring open the 53rd All India Police Games-2004 at Gulshan Ground here this morning, the Chief Minister replied in negative when he was asked if the incidents like the one that took place yesterday at Anantnag near the office of the Returning Officer after filing of nomination papers by him as People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate for Pahalgam Assembly constituency had the potential to derail the ongoing peace process.

Daily Excelsior, 24 September 2004

4 infiltrators among 7 killed

SRINAGAR, Sept 23: Security forces foiled an infiltration bid killing four heavily-armed Pakistani militants in Machil sector of Jammu and Kashmir early today, a Defence spokesman said. Observing some movement near the Line of Control in Machil sector of Kupwara district in the wee hours, troops challenged them, he said. The infiltrators opened fire on the troops and tried to flee. The

troops retaliated and in the ensuing encounter four Pakistani ultras were killed, the spokesman said.

Daily Excelsior, 24 September 2004

Ultras criminalising 'Jehad'

JAMMU, Sept 23: The recent looting of Rs 36 lakhs from Jammu and Kashmir Bank branch of Shopian by unidentified terrorists may seem to be just another incident attributed to terrorists violence. From the recent developments and increased restrictions on free flow of funds, intra-Tanzeem rivalry and foiled infiltration attempts on borders, the ultras are now frustrated and desperate. As their frustration grows, the terrorists are turning into full time criminals hoping to thrive on innocents as their last ditch stand for survival. The spate of atrocities on innocent civilians is testimony to their criminalisation. Extortion of locals is common and anyone who resists is killed brutally. Investigation of the spate in incidents of murder by slitting of throats has revealed this fact. Cases of murder, loot and rape are today rampant all over the state. Criminalisation is now at large. There have been gang wars between the terrorists in their bid to control areas and maintain supremacy.

Kashmir Images, 24 September 2004

Abduction or arrest?

BSF picks up Mufti's kin, sets free later

Srinagar: This morning at a Maruti Zen bearing registration number JK03-3466, screeched to a halt at Baba Mohalla Bijbehara and gunmen stepped out and whisked off Chief Minister's nephew Mufti Sarwar son of Mufti Sharief-ud-Din and another civilian Muzamil son of Ghulam Mohammad Kukroo along with them. The whole day rumors were rife in the area that the CM's nephew had been kidnapped. However, the haze surrounding the matter cleared towards evening as it was reported that it was the G Branch of BSF Pulwama which had picked up the two youth who were later handed over to the police and released thereon.

Kashmir Images, 24 September 2004

Kashmir government to fight ban on Shahtoosh

Srinagar: State government plans to fight a global ban on the trade in super-fine shahtoosh wool, which environmentalists say is produced

by killing a rare Tibetan antelope. The wool comes from the chiru antelope and shawls made from it fetch many thousands of dollars in the West. International wildlife organizations say five of the animals are shot and skinned to make one shawl, which is so soft that it can be pulled through a wedding ring. Huge demand for the luxurious wool caused numbers of the antelope to plunge in the wild, prompting an international ban in 1979 under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The Tribune, 24 September 2004

11 villages along LoC to be electrified

Srinagar, September 23: Over 1,600 households in 11 villages along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district have been covered under an electrification scheme launched jointly by the state's BADP and Army Operation Sadhbhavana. The scheme was dedicated to the border villages by the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary, Dr S.S. Bloeria, and Lieut-Gen Nirbhay Sharma, GOC of the Army's 15 Corps, yesterday. The scheme benefits over 15,000 residents of Pathwari, Reshwari, Naugam, Loossa, Bhatpora, Kupwara, Somari Chamkot, Gundi, Saidan, Manchittar and Sudupora villages in Kupwara district, a defence spokesman said. Dr Bloeria complimented the locals and the Army for their effort in the early implementation of the project. He assured the border people that the government was committed to improving their life and providing basic amenities.

The Tribune, 24 September 2004

Youths visit career business fair

Jammu, September 23: A large number of educated youths visited the recruitment camp and career business fair that was organised here today by India Freedom-57 with the support of the Ram Manohar Lohia International Trust. According to organisers of the fair, the event would be organised in 13 cities, including Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Jaipur. It would have direct interface with prospective employers, service sector and other agencies.

The Tribune, 24 September 2004

BJP welcomes Pak's change of stand on Kashmir

New Delhi, September 23: The Bharatiya Janata Party today welcomed Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's change of stand on Kashmir in his address to the United Nations but decried Islamabad's UN statement vowing to block India's entry into the UN Security Council as 'unfortunate and unwarranted'. BJP spokesman and former External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha told newsmen that a statement of a senior person in the Pakistan establishment Mr Munir Akram did not fit into the picture that is emerging in the relationship between the two countries. Mr Sinha expressed surprise that despite India giving up its objections to Pakistan's entry into the Asian Regional Forum (ARF) and the Commonwealth after the latter gave in writing that it would not use the fora for raising bilateral issues, Islamabad continues to be negative.

The Tribune, 24 September 2004

Hizbul terrorist arrested

New Delhi, September 23: A Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist has been caught by the Delhi police from a city hospital in South Delhi. The terrorist caught has been identified as Shabbir Ahmed Shah. He was caught yesterday from Apollo Hospital, near Sarita Vihar, in South district. One of the 'most wanted' militant in the Kashmir valley, he had been undergoing treatment at the hospital on his face, which had been disfigured in a blast. According to the police, after being treated at Apollo Hospital, he was undergoing treatment from an eye surgeon at Lajpat Nagar. Shabbir went to Pakistan in 2001, to get the militant training, and thereafter he came back after a year.

The Times of India, 24 September 2004

Umar Farooq meets ISI chief in Jeddah

NEW DELHI: While PM Manmohan Singh meets Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, something else is cooking on the Kashmir front in Jeddah. Moderate Hurriyat leader and acting chairman of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, is meeting with ISI director general and his Kashmir team from Islamabad there, it is learnt. In fact, Mirwaiz met former Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday and PoK "PM" Sardar Qayyum on Wednesday. Significantly, he is the only Hurriyat leader who was given

back his passport recently. The passports of other separatist leaders continue to be with the Centre. It is not clear as to why the Mirwaiz is talking to the Pakistani establishment.

The Hindu, 25 September 2004

India, Pakistan to explore possible options on Kashmir issue

NEW YORK, SEPT. 24. After an hour-long meeting between the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, India and Pakistan said today that they had agreed to strive "to restore normalcy and cooperation" in the spirit of the January 6, 2004 statement signed by the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, with Gen. Musharraf in Islamabad. Dr. Singh described the meeting as a successful "essay in mutual comprehension" and called it a "historic day." The declaration came at an unscripted joint press appearance at Hotel Roosevelt, where Gen. Musharraf was staying. Dressed in a grey suit, the General stood next to a relaxed Dr. Singh as he read out what he called "an agreement."

The Hindu, 25 September 2004

Divided families welcome relief in visa

JAMMU, SEPT. 24. Divided families in Jammu and Kashmir have welcomed the Central Government's decision to liberalise visa regulations for senior Pakistan nationals and described it a move that would go a long way to solve the humanitarian crisis of the families and provide immediate relief to the families on both sides of the border. Thousands of families settled here have their relatives in different parts of Pakistan. The Ministry of External Affairs has decided that all Pakistan nationals above the age of 65 could be granted visas with exemption from reporting to the police. Pakistani nationals could also be permitted to visit up to 12 places during each visit as against three at present. For the divided families, liberalising visa regulations for Pakistan senior citizens comes as a great relief.

Hindustan Times, 25 September 2004

Terrorists slit throat of hostage in J&K

Srinagar, September 24: Terrorists on Friday slit the throat of a hostage in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, a police spokesman said. A group of terrorists intruded into the house of one Mohammad Yousuf Khan at

village Karagam in Handwara area late on Thursday night and abducted him at gunpoint, the spokesman said. Khan was taken to nearby Chontipora village where the terrorists slit his throat, he said adding the body of the deceased was recovered by police on Friday morning and handed over to next of his kins.

The Indian Express, 25 September 2004
SC notice to Centre, J-K on rehab deal for militants

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24: The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to the Centre and the J-K Chief Minister on a petition contending that the state's policy in giving compensation to surrendered militants would encourage youth to take up arms. The PIL, filed by the Society for Human Rights and Civil Liberties, said the state's policy - approved by the Centre - had envisaged paying Rs 1.50 lakh in hand and Rs 2,000 as monthly stipend besides other benefits is "against natural justice and amounts to violation of law". There are about 200 militant organisations active in J-K and this rehabilitation policy would lead to others taking up arms against the Government and killing innocent people, it argued.

Greater Kashmir, 27 September 2004

It takes 5 yrs to select 6 stenos

Srinagar, Sept 26: It takes around five years for Service Selection Board (SSB) to select just six stenographers. Even as the board selects 50 qualified candidates after four-and-a-half years, only six are taken in the final selection list against the requirement of 26. Remaining, sources said are partly re-advertised only to mislead the candidates. The story goes like this: the SSB advertises 26 posts of stenographers—13 open category and 13 backlog posts in reserved category—way back in 1999 vide its notification dated 27.12.1999. Two-and-a-half years later, that is, July 2002, prescribed shorthand and type test is conducted. The inordinate delay in the selection of candidates prompts the General Administration Department (GAD) to issue order No. 476-GAD of 2003 dated 09-04-1993 saying: "The SSB has not finalized the selection so far; the shortage of staff has hampered the smooth functioning of various secretariat departments; with a view to tide over the difficulty being faced by various secretariat departments for want of adequate

staff and also without detriment to public service it has been decided to fill up the posts from amongst the surplus staff of various public sector undertakings through a committee of officers."

Daily Excelsior, 27 September 2004

**Mirwaiz meets Nawaz Sharif
Pak deposes ISI team to woo him**

NEW DELHI, Sept 26: Founder chairman of Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umer Farooq has met former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and a host of ISI officials in Jeddah even as the moderate faction set moves afoot to seek de-recognition of Syed Ali Shah Geelani's faction from Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). Umer, who is presently in Jeddah to perform a religious ritual, has met Sharif and discussed the present situation in Jammu and Kashmir besides the new agenda of Pakistan vis-a-vis Kashmir, Hurriyat sources said. The Hurriyat leader also had a series of meetings with ISI officials as Islamabad rushed the entire Kashmir cell of its intelligence organisation to bring him into the fold of Geelani, who has formed his own Tehrer-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir (THK). Sardar Abdul Qayyum, who has been critical of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's Kashmir policy, was also in Jeddah to convince the Mirwaiz for ensuring one voice from Kashmir.

Daily Excelsior, 27 September 2004

**3 jawans injured in IED blast
PDP worker set ablaze, survives**

SRINAGAR, Sept 26: Three Army personnel were injured in an IED blast near Qazigund on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway this afternoon while the militants made an unsuccessful attempt to burn alive a ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) worker in separate incidents across the Valley overnight. A large number of people held a demonstration outside Tangdhar police station against alleged custodial killing of a civilian. Official sources said an IED, planted by the militants, went off at Astop near Qazigund on Srinagar-Jammu national highway at 4.35 pm today. One of the Army vehicle was hit by the blast leading to injuries to three Army jawans.

Daily Excelsior, 27 September 2004

Mufti asks film-makers to venture into Kashmir

Mumbai, Sept 26: Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today discussed with the captains of film industry various possibilities of bringing business back to Kashmir for films, ad industry, tele serials. In an interaction with leading film producers and directors here this afternoon, the Chief Minister emphasized that the Bollywood needs to revive its age-old relationship with Kashmir, which has remained a favorite destination for popular filmmakers. Noted film personalities including Yash Chopra, Manmohan Shetty, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Raj Tilak, Harmesh Malhotra, Ravi Chopra, Kamal Barjatya and Amit Khanna were present.

Daily Excelsior, 27 September 2004

Centre releases Rs 46 crore package for 135 CICs in J&K

Srinagar, Sept 26 : The Government of India has released a Rs. 46 crore economic package for 135 Community Information Centres (CIC) in the Jammu and Kashmir State to be set up in a stipulated time period of two years. This was revealed by the Minister for Science and Information Technology, Labour and Employment, Nawang Rigzin Jora during the inaugural function one such CIC in Deskit in Nubra valley, which is first of its kind in Leh. The Minister said 60 such centres, including three in the Leh district, will be established by the year end. In his address to a large gathering, Jora talked about the importhace of computers in today's global village, where term such as 'e-governance' technology is proving effective in much better execution, accountability and transparency in carrying out developmental works.

The Hindu, 27 September 2004

Hurriyat accuses Centre of 'inconsistency'
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 26. The moderate faction of the separatist Hurriyat Conference today accused the Centre of "inconsistency" in the talks on the Kashmir issue. Reacting to the Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil's remarks that the Government's dialogue with the separatist amalgam would be held without pre-conditions, the former Hurriyat chairman Maulana Abbas Ansari, said ``Patil now says that he would be talking to us without any pre-conditions but he had stated earlier that talks would be held within the preview of the Indian Constitution, which is not acceptable to us."

"We are not going to accept double and triple policies," he said.

Hindustan Times, 27 September 2004

New I&B initiative on Kashmir

New Delhi, September 26: A serious attempt to increase the reach of Doordarshan and All India Radio in the Kashmir Valley has been initiated by the Centre in order to provide quality entertainment and news without a tilt to the people of the state. A high-level delegation led by Information and Broadcasting secretary Navin Chawla visited Srinagar, Jammu and a few other places last week in order to study the existing infrastructure and devise means so that greater synergy could be generated between different media units and the state government. Incidentally, this is the first time that an I&B secretary has visited remote parts of the Valley. The PIB's principal information officer, the director generals of DD and AIR and the director of the Children's Film Society, accompanied Chawla.

The Times of India, 27 September 2004

Mirwaiz heads for US after ISI rendezvous

NEW DELHI: Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, the acting chairperson of the Hurriyat Conference, is now headed for the US from Jeddah, where he met senior ISI officials. Mirwaiz's US trip assumes significance as it comes days after PM Manmohan Singh's meeting with Pakistan's president Pervez Musharraf in New York provided new impetus to India-Pakistan peace process.

The Indian Express, 27 September 2004

Patil will wait for Hurriyat at the talks table...

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 26: Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and his deputy, Shri Prakash Jaiswal, today said the Centre would wait for the Hurriyat Conference to resolve its problems and come to the talks table. Despite the prevailing stalemate in dialogue, Patil maintained that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was "much better", helped by the "improved attitude of Pakistan". He told The Indian Express that a number of factors had contributed to reducing violence and bringing back normality to the state. While the "attitude of Pakistan had shown an improvement", Patil said credit also must go to

those who had managed to erect the fence at the Line of Control (LoC).

The Indian Express, 27 September 2004

...But Ansari wants Delhi to do much more
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 26: A day after the Centre offered unconditional talks with J-K separatists, the Hurriyat Conference today went ahead and set its conditions for renewing dialogue - accept the "disputed" nature of the Kashmir problem and clarify the government policy towards the talks. The dialogue has been stalled for five months now. Maulana Abbas Ansari, the former Hurriyat chairman who had earlier led the delegation for the talks, responded to Home Minister Shivraj Patil's offer of talks, saying Delhi should stop making "conflicting statements" if it's sincere in reviving the Hurriyat-Centre talks.

The Tribune, 28 September 2004

Pak scribes to visit J&K on October 3

Srinagar, September 27: With India unilaterally relaxing visa restrictions, 15 journalists from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir will for the first time visit Jammu and Kashmir on a "goodwill mission" from October 3. The journalists, representing different news organisations, are members of the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) and their week-long visit has been facilitated by a Jammu-based English daily, sources said. They will cross over to India from the Wagah border and proceed to Jammu. The journalists will meet Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, their counterparts and government officials.

The Tribune, 28 September 2004

Army brings hope for militant victim

Jammu, September 27: Adoption by the Army has brought new hope for Mariam Begum, who is undergoing reconstructive surgery in the military hospital at Udhampur. Mariam was admitted to the hospital with her ears and nose chopped by militants who had abducted her and subjected to torture and rape in the forest area of Manakota village in Doda districts in June last. Her fault was that she happened to be a sister of a militant who had surrendered before the Army along with the Pika gun that had been provided to him by the rebel group he was working for.

The Tribune, 28 September 2004

Hizbul commander, civilian killed

Jammu, September 27: A Hizbul Mujahideen commander and a civilian were killed in separate incidents in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir where a Pakistani national was arrested from a border outpost, official sources said today. On a tip-off, troops launched an operation in the Gool area this morning and a gunbattle broke out in which Gulzar, sector commander of Hizbul, was killed, they said. One AK rifle, three magazines, five grenades and one wireless set were found at the encounter site. Unidentified militants barged into the house of Gulzar Ahmed, suspecting him to be a police informer, at Seripura village in the area last night and after thrashing him slit his throat. BSF personnel arrested one 60-year old Pakistani national from a border outpost in the R S Pura sector last evening.

The Times of India, 28 September 2004

Not Jana Gana..., Pak anthem rings in the Valley

SRINAGAR: The Indian National Anthem may never have been very popular in the Valley, but it seems the Pakistani anthem is becoming quite popular here, thanks to the growing number of cellphone users choosing it as their ringtone. Students here say they've got the ringtone from their Pakistani friends. "I received it from one of my friends in Srinagar," said Feroz Ahmad, a professional in his twenties. His friend, he explained, had got it from another friend, and they all keep passing it on to other friends. Sarzameen Shadhbaan, the Pakistani anthem, is preferred in Kashmir to the Indian National Anthem, says Aaftab Wani, an unemployed youth. He says this is because they never had to learn the former in school; that anti-India feelings are growing and that many Kashmiris have a soft corner for Pakistan, because in a demographic and religious sense, they relate to their neighbour.

The Times of India, 28 September 2004

Hurriyat opens Andorra's box on Kashmir crisis

NEW DELHI: When Kashmir talks between Centre and the All Party Hurriyat Conference begin again, Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil is going to be stumped by the separatist amalgam - in the form of a controversial proposal. The Hurriyat has indicated that it

would table suggestions to carving out Kashmir Valley into an autonomous region on the lines of Principality of Andorra between France and Spain. What is Principality of Andorra?

- Like Kashmir, Andorra is a former princely state
- France, Spain both claimed right over Andorra
- Andorrans had co-principality of French Chief of State and Spanish Bishop of Urgel
- Locals had no major say in administration
- In 1993 France, Spain agreed to give them autonomy bordering on complete freedom
- Andorra adopted Parliamentary democracy, but retains the titular heads of state nominated by France and Spain.

The Indian Express, 28 September 2004

Finance nod for J-K Corps HQ

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 27: The Finance Ministry has okayed the Defence Ministry demand for creation of another Army corps headquarters in Jammu and Kashmir but has held back the green signal for creation of a new North-West Army Command. Sources said the new corps will be created by bifurcating Nagrota-based 16 Corps, presently looking after the stretch from Pathankot in Punjab to Poonch in Pir Panjal. The Nagrota Corps has nine divisions under its command, including three sectors of Rashtriya Rifles and two reserve divisions.

The Indian Express, 28 September 2004

J-K orders austerity leash for ministers

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 27: Faced with probably the worst financial crisis in recent times, the Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered a slew of measures that puts curbs on the lifestyle of the state's ministers and bureaucrats. Sparing only Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed from these regulations, the J-K Finance department, last week, sent an order to all department heads asking them reduce expenditure. This year, under the UPA Government, the state got a budgetary allocation of Rs 10,679 crore as against Rs 10,463 crore by the NDA regime. But the Finance department says the Centre is not helping with "assistance over and above the budget", as was the case with the NDA.

The Times of India, 29 September 2004

Kashmiri players set to make history

SRINAGAR: Three Kashmiri sportsmen are set to make history as they travel to Pakistan with an Indian team for a canvas ball cricket series next month. This is the first time since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 that Kashmiri sportsmen will be traveling to Pakistan with an Indian team. "Three players from Srinagar will be included in the Indian canvas ball cricket team proceeding to Pakistan" for the six-match series from October 6 to October 11, said Feroz Khan, chairman of the Canvas Ball Cricket Federation of India. He, however, did not name the three Kashmiris, saying this would be done when the final team is announced. The matches will be played at Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Multan and Faisalabad. The Pakistan Canvas Ball Cricket Federation and the Lahore Cricket Academy are jointly organising the series.

The Indian Express, 29 September 2004

'Submit status report in Mehbooba case'

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 28: A fortnight before J-K CM Mufti Mohammed Sayeed contests the bypolls from Pahalgam Assembly segment vacated by her, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti may find herself in the firing line once again.

The Election Commission today asked the J-K police to report on the status of a case of voter-intimidation, in which Mehbooba has been accused of preventing a burqa-clad woman from casting her vote in Srinagar during the Lok Sabha polls. The complaint against Mehbooba was filed by NC chief Omar Abdullah. Subsequently, the EC had directed the Budgam Deputy Commissioner to lodge an FIR.

The Tribune, 29 September 2004

3 militants, jawan killed in J&K

Srinagar, September 28: Five persons, including a security force jawan and three militants, were killed while security forces recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition in the Kashmir valley overnight, an official spokesman said. He said a jawan lost his life and another was injured when militants ambushed a patrol party at the Seema Hill last evening. Security forces killed a militant at Kalai Nallah last evening during a search operation. One AK rifle and other arms and ammunition were recovered from the slain

militant. He said another militant was killed at Kulgam in an encounter last evening while a militant was killed at Boninar today.

The Tribune, 29 September 2004

EC team reviews poll arrangements

Srinagar, September 28: An intensive revision of electoral rolls, which is being held in Jammu and Kashmir after a gap of 16 years, is under completion and the draft would be made public by next month end. Disclosing this here today, the Election Commissioner of India, Mr B.B. Tandon, said that the enumeration work had been completed and was at present in the process of verification. Any rectification in this regard would be made after publication of the draft on October 29, he said. Mr Tandon added that the drafts would be displayed at post offices, where prescribed forms for any changes and inclusions would also be made available to the voters. This was for the first time that the post offices would be involved in the revision of electoral rolls where the applicants could also submit the forms for any changes and inclusions. Once verified, the electoral rolls would be finally put on the website, he said.

The Hindu, 29 September 2004

SSP summoned for shielding 'killer'

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 28. The Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has summoned Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) to appear before it on October 20 in connection with the allegation that police was shielding a counter insurgent involved in a murder and threatening an eyewitness in the case. An SHRC spokesman said the SSP has been summoned to explain his position regarding the allegations that police was shielding the counter insurgent involved in the killing of a civilian. The Commission's directive came on a petition that one Sher-ud-din, a resident of Kupwara, was killed by a counter insurgent Nazir Ahmad Ganai who was working with the local unit of the police. He said the Commission came to know that the police was mounting pressure on the eyewitnesses to retract from their earlier statement that Nazir was involved in the killing of Sher-ud-din. He said the Commission said that no police officer would be allowed to misuse his official position to pressurise the eyewitnesses and next of the kin of the deceased.

Hindustan Times, 29 September 2004

Shah suggests setting up Kashmir committee headed by Atal

Srinagar, September 28: Senior separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah on Tuesday suggested setting up of a Kashmir committee headed by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to frame a policy and build consensus in the country to resolve the issue. Formation of the Kashmir committee under the chairmanship of Vajpayee with all the former Prime Ministers as members is imperative to frame a policy and build consensus among all parties in India to resolve the Kashmir issue, Shah, who heads Democratic Freedom Party told reporters after a 90-minute meeting with the visiting European Union delegation in Srinagar. He said VP Singh, IK Gujral, Chandrashekar and HD Deva Gowda, Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, former West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu and Samata Party leader George Fernandes be made members of the committee and entrusted the job of mobilizing public opinion in the country to resolve the long standing Kashmir issue.

Hindustan Times, 29 September 2004

J&K shown part of Pakistan in Gujarat textbook

Ahmedabad, September 28: Claiming that a class VIII textbook shows "misrepresented" map of India, wherein Kashmir is shown as part of Pakistan, a city-based NGO demanded on Tuesday that the Gujarat Government immediately withdraw the book. "The standard VII Social Science textbook, published by Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks, gives misrepresentation of the whole map of India on the back-cover wherein Kashmir is shown as a part of Pakistan," Fr Cedric Prakash of Prashant - the NGO working for Human Rights, told mediapersons in Ahmedabad. The other bloomers highlighted by Prakash in the textbook are factual inaccuracies and grammatical errors like at one instance one of the author's name is spelt as 'Shulka' instead of 'Shukla'. Demanding that the textbooks be withdrawn immediately, he claimed, "The mind of the student will tend to become more warped than educated. The book distorts history, has wrong spellings and also wrong information".

Greater Kashmir, 29 September 2004

Stay away from elections: Election Comm to troops

Srinagar, Sep 28: The election commissioner B B Panday today cautioned troops to refrain from coercion during the forthcoming by-elections saying it was none of their business to intervene in the election process. "The troops should stay away from the by-elections in Batmaloo and Pahalgam constituencies scheduled on October 13. Nobody will be forced to vote," the election commissioner said. The election commissioner further said the troops have no authority to force the voters out of their homes. "It is none of their business to force people to vote and to influence the overall poll percentage," the election commissioner said while talking to the reporters here on Tuesday. The election commissioner concluded his two-day visit of the state on Tuesday after meeting the representatives of PDP, NC and Congress, reviewing the poll preparedness and work on the revision of electoral rolls.

Daily Excelsior, 29 September 2004

EC seeks report from DGP on Mehbooba FIR

SRINAGAR, Sept 28: Election Commission of India has taken a serious note of the Police inaction on an FIR which had been lodged against the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti, in May this year. Election Commissioner, B B Tandon, today called the Director General of Police, Gopal Sharma, and directed him to submit a detailed report on the progress, if any, achieved in the electoral offence allegedly committed by the PDP chief during this year's Lok Sabha elections. In April this year, Mehbooba Mufti had physically prevented a woman voter from exercising her right of franchise at a polling station at Burn Hall School in Sonwar area of Srinagar. The PDP leader had forced her own entry into the polling station with half-a-dozen of her armed guards in violation of electoral laws, lifted the Muslim woman voter's burqa, exposed her face to television cameras and made her leave the polling station.

Daily Excelsior, 29 September 2004

**BSF Jawan, 3 Ultras Killed
Two PSOs of SSP Poonch Injured**

POONCH, Sept 28: A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan and three militants were killed while three security personnel including two PSOs of SSP Poonch Mukesh Singh were injured in three separate encounters in the district since last evening. Security forces destroyed a militant hideout and recovered 8 kg RDX besides other explosive material and ammunition. Official reports said a group of five militants led by a top Hizbul Mujahideen ultra Dillawar Mir ambushed a patrol party of BSF's 153 battalion at Achhad in Seema Hills of Mendhar tehsil last night. The militants opened firing on the patrol when it was just coming out of the BSF post for night patrolling.

Daily Excelsior, 29 September 2004

Pakistan journalists' programme

JAMMU, Sept 28: Members of the Jammu Press Club today decided to boycott the visit of a group of Pakistani journalists to Jammu and Kashmir next month as part of a media exchange programme between India and Pakistan. "We have decided to keep away from participation during the visit of Pakistani journalists delegation to Jammu and Kashmir as Jammu Press Club, the premier organisation of the journalists in the State, was not properly invited by the organizers involved with the journalists visit," president, Jammu Press Club, Manu Shrivatsa and Sohail Kazmi, secretary general said in a handout issued here today. However, they said mediapersons in the State and the Press Club in particular welcomed the visit of the Pakistan journalists but are unable to invite and give them a reception as organizers of the visit have made it a "family function".

The Times of India, 30 September 2004

Terrorists are martyrs in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Veer Savarkar and Mahatma Gandhi don't go together. But in Kashmir, moderate separatist leader Prof Abdul Gani Lone's assassin finds a place at par with him in martyr's graveyard. So does Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq's killer. That is what Kashmir is all about - where killers and the killed are paid equal tributes. The graveyard does not distinguish between the two. Lilies and narcissus adorn the graves of both moderate doves and militants.

The Indian Express, 30 September 2004

Kashmir conflict pushes many to suicide

Srinagar, September 30: A distraught Shahida Begum drank pesticide a day after her 26-year-old son was killed in crossfire between soldiers and militants in Kashmir. Unable to cope with the trauma of losing her only son to the 15-year-old conflict, the 55-year-old woman tried to kill herself last month but was saved by doctors. She was one of hundreds who try to commit suicide in Kashmir each year. "My life is no longer worth living after his death," she said, in her mud house on the outskirts of Srinagar. The unrelenting violence in the scenic Himalayan region famous for its pristine hillsides, forested valleys and soaring snow-covered peaks has strained Kashmir's traditionally easy-going society.

The Tribune, 30 September 2004

Shabir Shah detained

Srinagar, September 29: Democratic Freedom Party president Shabir Ahmad Shah and his deputy Mohammad Abdullah Tari were today detained by the police for indulging in the anti-poll campaign in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir. Official sources said here that Mr Shah and Mr Tari were detained at Ashmuqam, 70 km from here, in the Pahalgam Assembly constituency which went to the polls in the byelections along with three other seats on October 13. Separatists in Jammu and Kashmir have asked the people to boycott the elections and some of them, including JKLF Chairman Mohammad Yaseen Malik and Hurriyat Conference leaders belonging to the hardline faction headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, were detained by the police, while indulging in the anti-poll campaign over the past one week.

The Tribune, 30 September 2004

Cong leader shot in Anantnag

Srinagar, September 29: At least four persons, including a Congress leader, have been killed in separate incidents in the Kashmir valley since yesterday. The police here said Mohammad Yusuf Bhat, block secretary of the Congress, and his personal security officer (PSO), Mohammad Ashraf were shot dead by militants at Chini Chowk in Anantnag this morning. The incident took place at about 9 am near the shrine of Reshi Mohalla in the town. Another civilian, Haji Abdul Aziz died due to cardiac arrest at the site of the incident, the police said.

A 16-year-old boy, Amraz Khan, was killed in an explosion at Kudara, Bandipore, in Baramulla district yesterday. Residents alleged that the youth was killed as a result of indiscriminate shelling by security forces in jungles.