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INDO-PAK WAR : 1947-48

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India on the Day of Partition.

INDIA ON THE DAY
OF PARTITION,
15 August 1947
On 15 August, 1947 the princely states of Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Jammu and Kashmir were the aberrations. Indian Territory surrounded and Junagadh. Both states had Muslim rulers and a majority of Hindu population. Jammu and Kashmir was contiguous to both India and Pakistan. The ruler was a Hindu, while the Muslim population in the state was in a majority. However, the Jammu Province had sizeable concentrations of Hindu population, and Ladakh was primarily Buddhist. Nehru suggested to Jinnah that where the ruler of a state and the majority of his subjects professed different religious faiths, a plebiscite could be held to decide the question of accession. Jinnah rejected the idea. He insisted that the ruler alone should decide as provided for in the British Act of Parliament. While doing so, he had in mind the possible future of the princely states of Hyderabad, Bhopal, and Junagadh, where the Muslim rulers had shown an inclination towards Pakistan. The Nawab of Bhopal, however, acceded to India. The Nizam of Hyderabad toyed with the idea of independence. The Nawab of Junagadh actually acceded to Pakistan. When Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir did not accede to Pakistan, the Pakistani leadership did a quick turn about in their views, and invaded the state.

**Junagadh:**

The fall out from what happened in Junagadh set in motion very profound changes in the dynamics of Indian policy formulation, that need to be examined in detail. Junagadh was the largest state in Kathiawar. It was surrounded on three sides by states that had acceded to India. On the fourth side was the Arabian Sea. It had no geographical contiguity whatsoever with Pakistan. 80 percent of its population was non-Muslim. It had enclaves in the neighbouring states that in turn had similar enclaves in the territory of
Junagadh. On all counts, particularly social and economic, Junagadh was firmly integrated in Kathiawar. Before 15 August 1947, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, father of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and a Muslim League politician from Karachi, had replaced the Dewan of the state, who had opposed the ruler's intention to accede to Pakistan. On 15 August 1947, the Nawab of Junagarh announced the accession of the state to Pakistan people, in and around Junagadh, protested enmass against this incongruous action of the Nawab. The rulers of the surrounding states also condemned his decision.

There was no immediate reaction from the Pakistan Government. Since Junagadh had no territorial contiguity with Pakistan, and the population was opposed to the action of the Nawab, the Indian Government approached the Pakistan Government to clarify its policy. To settle the issue amicably, it was also suggested to the latter that the views of the population with regard to accession could be obtained. On 13 September, the Pakistan Government finally informed the Indian Government that it had accepted the accession. The Indian Government did not accept the validity of Junagadh's accession to Pakistan. Mountbatten on the other hand considered it legal but doubted its political and moral propriety. Since the Indian Government was now under strong public pressure to quickly resolve the issue, Mountbatten feared that the Indian Government might resort to use of force, which in his view would be an act of war against Pakistan, and which might lead to an armed confrontation between the two dominions.

Gen Ismay was of the view that despite the limitations of Mountbatten's constitutional position as a Governor General, he had a right to be consulted by the Indian Government before it launched such measures as would lead to an unprecedented war with another British dominion. He further felt that in this case it would be appropriate to seek instructions from His Majesty, the King of England. He strongly advised that Mountbatten should take an active part in the formulation of the Indian defence policy, and
withhold consent to any measure, if in his opinion it might lead to an armed conflict with Pakistan.

By the middle of September Mountbatten apprehended that the Indian Cabinet was on the verge of taking military action against Junagadh. On 17 September, he pointed out to Nehru and Patel the pitfalls of any precipitate military action, especially the strong international disapproval that it would evoke. He persuaded both the leaders to agree that the present situation did not call for an offensive military action. Mountbatten had reported to the King that he had strongly advised Nehru and Patel to explore all avenues of negotiations, and to do nothing that would put India in the wrong. Later in the day the Indian Cabinet decided to launch economic sanctions to put pressure on the Junagadh Government. It was decided to post troops around Junagadh in the adjoining states that had already acceded to India, with strict instructions against violating the territory of the state. Finally V.P. Menon, Secretary to the Indian Ministry of States, was sent to Junagadh to persuade the ruler to agree to a reference to the people of the state. The Nawab refused to meet him.

Out of the smaller states attached to Junagadh, the Khan of Manavadar had also requested Pakistan to accept its accession. On 18 September, the Sheikh of Mangrol acceded to India. The rulers of Babariawad Estates, a conglomerate of small principalities, had also acceded to India. The Nawab of Junagadh refused to approve these accessions. He held that he being the overlord, neither Mangrol nor the Babariawad Estates could accede to India without his consent. To prevent other attached states from following suit, Junagadh troops were sent into the Babariawad Estates. This act of the Nawab caused a lot of consternation in the Indian Government. Sardar Patel considered it as an aggression against India, and called for a befitting military response. Nehru advocated that in view of the attachment of these territories to Junagadh, the constitutional validity of the accession must be ascertained. It was duly established that the accession of these states to India was legal.
On 22 September, Mountbatten, Nehru and Patel agreed that the Government would order the Army and the Navy Chiefs to prepare plans to occupy Babariawad Estates, and to go to the assistance of Mangrol if the situation so demanded. The armed forces were also ordered to prepare to occupy Junagadh if the Nawab indulged in further offensive action. By a telegram the valid legality of the accession of Manrol and Babariawad to India was pointed out to the Dewan of Junagadh, and the immediate withdrawal of Junagadh troops from Babariawad was demanded. Two days later, an Indian infantry brigade was sent to Kathiawar to protect other states that had acceded to India, but with strict instructions not to enter Mangrol and Babariawad. While the Government of India continued to follow its diplomatic initiatives, contingency plans were prepared for a military option, if and when ordered.

On 25 September, the Nawab of Junagadh refused to withdraw his troops from Babariawad Estates. The Government of Pakistan fully supported his stand. It also turned down the Indian proposal for a referendum in Junagadh. While the Indian leaders were considering these developments, on 27 September the three services chiefs of the Indian Armed Forces submitted a joint memorandum to Sardar Baldev Singh, the Minister for Defence, expressing their concern that military measures being taken to protect Mangrol and Babariawad might lead to a clash with the Junagadh forces. They apprehended that Pakistan might intervene in support of Junagadh, leading to an inter-dominion war. They emphasized that in this eventuality, they, or any other British officers, could not play a part in it. They pressed the Minister to stop the movement of the brigade ordered earlier, and urged that the issue be settled by negotiations.

The Indian Cabinet was outraged, and construed the memorandum to mean a collective announcement from the three Services Chiefs that they could not carry out the policy of the Government if they did not agree with it. This was indeed a serious invasion by the military upon political supremacy,
and practically amounted to disloyalty. Nehru conveyed the strong feelings of the Cabinet to Mountbatten, who defused the crisis by persuading Lockhart to withdraw the joint memorandum. On 29 September, Lockhart, while withdrawing the memorandum, had conveyed in effect that what they, the military advisers, had stated was open to misinterpretation, and that they had no intention of trespassing outside their sphere. He, however, added, "The point we were anxious to make was that at the present time all the British officers serving in India, whether at Supreme Headquarters or in the Armed Forces of India or Pakistan, are on a single list. We feel it incumbent on us to represent this." Although the Services Chiefs had withdrawn their joint memorandum, the Indian Cabinet was not very happy with the implications thrown up by the action of the Services Chiefs. Patel remarked to Mountbatten that the Services Chiefs took orders from Auchinleck rather than from the Indian Government.

On 30 September, Field Marshal Auchinleck again instructed all senior British commanders in the Indian and Pakistani armed forces to strictly adhere to the 'Stand Down' orders, if and when issued. There were, however, some differences as to who would issue this order. Lord Alexander, the British Minister Defence, proposed that the decision be left to Auchinleck, as the Supreme Commander. Noel Baker, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, on the other hand held that being a matter of grave importance it should be left to the Minister. The implications of this view were obvious. The expediency inherent in a political decision could be used to serve British interests. On 13 October, the British Cabinet Committee for Commonwealth Relations discussed the question. It was agreed that the Supreme Commander would have full discretion to decide in an emergency. It was, however, most desirable that the British Government was consulted if possible before taking the decision. In any case, before taking the decision himself or approaching the Government, the Supreme Commander should consult the British High Commissioners in both India and Pakistan, or at least the former if the latter could not be contacted. On 15 October, approval of the
British Prime Minister to this 'Stand Down' policy was conveyed by telegram to Auchinleck. The British Cabinet now had acquired another politico-military pressure weapon in their armoury, which could be used selectively, and discriminatively.

On 15 October Nehru, in a rather perceptive analysis, pointed out that in the event of a conflict between India and Pakistan, the British Government had the option to withdraw British Officers from one or both dominions depending upon its foreign policy objectives. This facility would invest the British Government with considerable capacity to influence the outcome of the conflict. When studied in the light of the known British tilt in favour of Muslims (Pakistan), and a logical assessment of residual imperial interests, an initiative of grave import was placed in the hands of London. It had the potential of serious consequences for India. Yet the Indian leadership hesitated to take any immediate steps to remedy the situation till well into 1948.

Mountbatten seized upon this incident to invest himself with powers to influence the course of Indian security management far beyond what his constitutional position as the Governor General allowed. He proposed the setting up of a Defence Committee of the Cabinet, which was accepted by the Indian Government. On the basis of his claim to vast military experience, he succeeded in convincing the Indian Cabinet to make him the chairman of the Defence Committee. The Indian leaders obviously missed out on the grave potential of this extra-constitutional arrangement. The Prime Minister had abdicated his logical constitutional prerogative to head a vitally important committee of the cabinet. The British Governor General had acquired great weight-age to influence vital decisions affecting the security of the nation.

Coming back to Junagadh, by the end of September 1947, the Indian Government was convinced that military action had become unavoidable. Patel held that the Nawab of Junagadh had committed an act of war against India by sending his troops into Babariawad. He argued that a weak handling,
of the situation would seriously bring into doubt the capability of the Government to protect Indian interests. Mountbatten suggested a complaint to the UN. Both Nehru and Patel rejected it. Mountbatten then pointed out that military action against Junagadh might lead to a war with Pakistan. Patel argued that Pakistan was not in a position to wage a war, and consequently there was little risk of precipitating a war. Nehru, while conceding the need for effective action, felt that India should not get into a war situation, which would place it in the wrong with the international community. Eventually, a compromise was reached; in Mountbatten's words, "I reluctantly agreed to a strong show of force provided no part of Junagadh territory, and neither Mangrol nor Babariawad were invaded." It was decided to deploy troops around Junagadh, Mangrol and Babariawad.

Nehru was concerned that lack of immediate firm action to deal with aggressive provocations by the Nawab of Junagadh would adversely affect ongoing accession settlements with some of the other princely states such as Hyderabad. It could also encourage Pakistan to precipitate similar provocations. He was, however, keen to avoid a situation that might lead to a war with Pakistan. He felt, "Any war with Pakistan would undoubtedly end in the defeat and ruin of Pakistan provided no other nations are dragged in. At the same time, it may well mean the ruin of India also for a considerable time." Moreover, a war could inflame passions, which would seriously endanger the safety of the massive exchange of populations still going on between the two countries. He feared that under these conditions it might not be possible to protect the large number of Muslims, who were inclined to stay put all over India. With these considerations in mind, troops deployed around Junagadh, Mangrol and Babariawad, were given strict orders to not to enter these territories.

Nehru abhorred violence of any kind. He was also inclined to view political and diplomatic initiatives from a moral standpoint. In statecraft, however, preeminence of national interests often demands calculated
departures from this mindset. He had already suggested that the accession of Junagadh be decided by reference to the people. On 30 September, in a meeting of the Defence Committee, he proposed, 'Wherever there is a dispute in regard to any territory, the matter should be decided by a referendum or plebiscite of the people concerned. We shall accept the result of this referendum whatever it may be as it is our desire that a decision be made in accordance with the wishes of the people concerned. This proposal though morally correct, committed Indian policy to a principle that was to prove very costly later when dealing with Jammu and Kashmir.

On the same day the above principle propounded by Nehru was broached to Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, who was in Delhi to attend the meeting of the Joint Defence Council. Both Mountbatten and Nehru emphasized to him that the Indian Government would abide by the verdict of the people obtained through a general election or a referendum or a plebiscite. Liaquat Ali ignored the offer, and insisted that it was the ruler's prerogative to decide the matter of accession. On 1 October 1947, while the issue of Junagadh was being discussed in the Joint Defence Council at Delhi, Junagadh troops entered Mangrol also. Despite this provocation, the Indian government decided to continue with its efforts to resolve the issue by peaceful means. There was, however, hardly any positive response from Pakistan to Indian overtures. In the meantime Mangrol and Babariawad were under illegal occupation of Junagadh troops. In a meeting of the Defence Committee on October, it was decided to take over both the territories. Mountbatten suggested the use of the Central Reserve Police Force rather than the army, which was not agreed to. On 1 November, an Indian civil administrator accompanied by a small army force took over the administration of both Mangrol and Babariawad.

The isolation of Junagadh had started causing undue hardship to the population. This led to considerable unrest. Undesirable political and criminal forces were causing great alarm. The Nawab, finding the position untenable,
fled to Karachi with his household, the state treasures, and a planeload of
dogs. Under these developments, the administration was fast losing its grip
over the state. On 27 October Bhutto wrote to Jinnah, "Muslims of Kathiaraw
seem to have lost all enthusiasm for Pakistan." The Diwan, Sir Shah Nawaz
Bhutto, had even approached Samal Das Gandhi, whose party had formed an
'Arzi Hukumat' (provisional government), to take over the reins of the
government. The Dewan was persuaded to request the Government of India
to assume the administration of the state. On 5 November, the State Council
decided upon a complete reorientation of the state policy, even if it involved a
reversal of the earlier decision to accede to Pakistan. On 8 November, the
Dewan requested the Government of India to take over the administration of
Junagadh, which was peacefully accomplished on 9 November.

A reference to the Government of Pakistan failed to resolve the issue of
accession. Eventually Nehru, despite stiff opposition from Sardar Patel,
ordered a referendum in the state. On 20 February 1948, the population voted
overwhelmingly in favour of remaining with India. Throughout the drama of
Junagadh's aberration, the Indian Government had shown commendable
restraint. Obviously Nehru desired to remain politically correct in the arena of
world opinion. Nevertheless, after the State Administration had handed over
the state to the Indian Government, a referendum was quite un-necessary.

Hyderabad:

On 15 August 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad announced his intention
to become an independent sovereign, Sir Walter Monckton, British Adviser to
the Nizam, had advised and encouraged his desire to breakaway from the
Indian Union. Some members of the British political department also
instigated the Nizam in his aspirations of independence. Later, some British
politicians and the press also spoke in favour of independence for Hyderabad.
Mountbatten, however, informed the Nizam that an independent, status for
his state was not possible. Nevertheless, it was agreed to negotiate with a
delagation sent by the Nizam. In late October 1947, after protracted
negotiations, an agreed draft agreement was hammered out, but the Nizam as advised by Monckton and others of the same views did not sign it. By this time, he had also come under the complete influence of Qasim Razvi, the Don Quixotic leader of the Razakars; a uniformed and rabid Muslim organization. Razvi made very tall claims way beyond what the state’s military capability actually warranted. On 12 April 1948, Qasim Razvi boasted to the Associated Press that he would plant the Asaf Jahi flag on the ramparts of the Red Fort at Delhi.

Qasim Razvi had made common cause with the communists. He encouraged bands of Razakars and communists to carry out raids in the adjoining Indian Territory. The law and order situation deteriorated to the extent that the mail train from Madras (now Chennai) to Bombay (now Mumbai) was attacked on 22 May 1948, while halted at a railway station in the state. 2 passengers were killed, 11 seriously injured, 13 kidnapped and a large number roughed up. Stern warnings given by the Government of India, to disband the Razakars, and to take strong measures to control the worsening situation, were ignored by the Nizam. Finally on 13 September 1948, Indian troops mounted what came to be called the ‘Hyderabad Police Action’. Within four days of token resistance, the Hyderabad forces laid down their arms. A military governor was installed. Soon after that the Nizam too acceded to India.

**Jammu and Kashmir:**

Prominent Muslim leaders of Kashmir had shunned the two-nation theory, and expressed themselves in favour of accession to India. Maharaja Hari Singh sat on the fence, and awoke to the geo-political reality only after his state was invaded. Hari Singh’s ambivalence, triggered by his personal ambitions, and the indifference of the Indian leadership, had condemned the gentle people of the state to prolonged blood letting and deprivation, the end to which is not in sight even after over a half a century.
Geography and History -

Jammu and Kashmir was the largest princely state in the extreme northwestern tip of the Indian sub-continent. With an area of 222870 square kilometers, it was roughly double the size of Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxambourgh put together. To its north lies the narrow Wakhan corridor that connects Afghanistan with China's Xinjiang (Sinkiang) region. To the north of this narrow corridor lies Tajikistan, one of the Asiatic republics of the erstwhile USSR. Further to the east and north is Tibet (Xizang in Chinese, pronounced Shitsang). To the south is India (Punjab and Himachal Pradesh across high Himalayas). To the southwest is Pakistan (Pakistan Punjab and the NWFP).

Mighty mountain ranges and their spurs divide the state into three distinct regions-Jammu and the outer hills; the Kashmir Valley; and the high mountainous region of the north comprising of Ladakh, Baltistan, and the Gilgit Wazarat (province). The main Himalayas lie to the east of Jammu and Kashmir. Two high spurs to the west from the Great Himalayan Range act as ramparts between the three regions. The Pir Panjal range in the south stretches 480 km from Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh to the gorge of the Jhelum south of Muzzaffarabad. The general height of the range is around 4572 meters. Only the Chenab River cuts through this mighty range near Kishtwar. The eastern half of the range separates the drainage basin of the Chenab from that of the Ravi and the Beas. To the south of this rampart and running parallel to it are the low hills of the Jammu Province. Between these foot hills and the border with undivided Punjab runs an 8 to 24 km wide sub-montane plain. Three passes give access into the valley - the Banetal Pass (2743 meters) on the road from Jammu to Srinagar; the Pir Panjal Pass (3494 meters) from Rajouri to Srinagar; and the Nilakanta Pass (3636 meters) from Punch to Gulmarg. River Chenab drains the southern slopes. It enters Pakistan (West Punjab) southwest of the bridge over it at Akhnur.
The main Himalayan range, after throwing off Pir Panjal to the west, continues northwesrt to become the watershed of the Jhelum River to its west, and the Indus to the north. It also forms the eastern rampart of the Kashmir Valley, which separates the Jhelum and the Chenab basins. A high spur from this eastern wall to the west ends up opposite the Pir Panjal astride the Jhelum gorge. It separates the Kashmir Valley from the valley of the Kishanganga River (called Neelam River and Neelam Valley by Pakistan) to its north. Zoji La (3529 meters) provides passage from Leh-Kargil to Srinagar. From Gilgit the route is over the Burzil Pass (4198 meters) into the Kishanganga Valley and then over the Rajdhangan passes (3638 meters-also called the Rajdhani Pass) to Srinagar. The Great Himalayan Range to the northwest rears up in the massif of Nanga Parbat (8126 meters).

Beyond the Great Himalayan Range lie Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit. At the southern edge of the Ladakh plateau and parallel to the Himalayan Range is the Zanskar Mountains, which take off from just north of Zoji La. This region is an endless waste of rock and snow. To the north of Ladakh are the lofty Karakorams, heights ranging from 7620 to 8610 meters. This is a land of mighty mountains and wastes of rock, ice and immense glaciers. The average height of the Ladakh plateau is about 3810 meters. Jutting out to the northeast between Xinjiang and Tibet is the desolate high altitude desert plateau of Aksai Chin, which had traditionally been a part of Ladakh. This area has been the bridge between Xinjiang region of China and Tibet. Cutting across Ladakh is the valley of the Indus River, which flows northwest from Tibet into Pakistan. The Indus Valley has been the cultural and trade lifeline of Ladakh. There is a very difficult access from Lahaul-Spiti into the Indus Valley over the Bara Lacha La (5182 meters).

The Kashmir Valley is a fairly level stretch of rich alluvial soil. It has a length of 135 km and a width of 32 to 40 km, running from northwest to southwest. There is geological evidence to suggest that the Kashmir Valley was a vast lake. It drained out when the Jhelum River pierced the mountain
wall at the site of the gorge near Domel. The earliest known human settlements were by some of the Aryan tribes who had pushed up into the Kashmir Valley. The Gandharvan Empire followed Aryan kingdoms. Tartars and Persians entered in the Fifth Century BC. During the rule of Ashoka the Great, and his son Jaluka, Buddhism spread into the Valley. It became a renowned seat of Buddhist learning. Various Hindu dynasties held sway in the ensuing centuries. In the early eleventh century Mahmood Ghaznavi failed to break into the Valley.

In the early fourteenth century, Rinchin, an adventurer from Ladakh, became the first Muslim ruler. After a short restoration of a Hindu ruler, in 1343 AD Shah Mir, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, established the Sultanate dynasty, which ruled for the next 220 years. Sikandar, who ruled from 1394 to 1413, let loose a reign of terror against the Hindus. Apart from the massacres, many magnificent temples and seats of learning were destroyed. In sharp contrast, Zain-ul-Abdin, 1422-1474, established a benign rule. Hindus were rehabilitated. Learning of Sanskrit and Persian was promoted. Development of canal irrigation and horticulture was undertaken. The evolution of Shavite philosophy and the rise of the Sufi-Rishi cult of Islam marked this period.

Apart from the aberration of Sikander's rule, Islam had entered the Valley in the fourteenth century by persuasion rather than conquest, as opposed to what happened in the rest of India. The torchbearers of Islam were the gentle, tolerant and elective Sufi divines. Tallest amongst them was Sheikh Nurdin Nurani, popularly known as the Nund Rishi, whose mausoleum at Charar is deeply venerated by both the Muslims and Hindus of the Valley. Under the influence of these Sufi divines, Islam in the Valley, did not come into conflict with the existing beliefs and absorbed many of them in a peaceful synthesis. The beliefs and practice of Islam had evolved into a unique gentle, tolerant and secular faith.
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The Valley came under uninterrupted Muslim rule when the Muslim dynasties extended their sway over India. In 1586 the Mughals followed the Delhi sultanates. In 1786, Afghans ruled from Kabul. In July 1819, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army defeated the army of the Afghan governor of Kashmir in the Battle of Shupaiyan; and the Valley passed into his domain. The Duggar region extending from Chamba to Punch comprised of twenty-two Dogra principalities. Of these the most dominant was the Raja of Jammu, who exercised his suzerainty over eleven of the principalities contiguous to Jammu. In 1816, Maharaja Ranjit Singh annexed the Jammu Raj. In 1822, Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed Gulab Singh Dogra, who was already in his service, as the feudatory Raja of Jammu.

From the tenth century onward for nearly nine hundred years, Ladakh was an independent Kingdom, ruled by the Namgyal Gyalpos (rulers). The Namgyals were descended from ancient Tibetan rulers. They had been traditionally closer to Tibet. The majority of the population also had close ethnic and cultural ties with Tibet. Consequently, the rulers of Tibet exercised considerable influence over the affairs of Ladakh. It was an important and a peaceful center for the ancient caravan trade between the surrounding regions. One of the much sought after commodities, was the fine Pashmina wool produced in eastern Ladakh and western Tibet. Craftsmen in the Kashmir Valley made highly prized shawls and the Cashmere woolens. These craftsmen were largely dependent on the uninterrupted supply of this wool. When an armed conflict between Ladakh and Tibet threatened to disrupt the supply, the Mughal governor of the Valley intervened with force. A tripartite treaty was signed at Timisgam to ensure safety of the trade.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there had been incidence of interference with the trade in wool, shawls and tea from Tibet to Kashmir through Ladakh. In 1834-35 Wazir Zorawar Singh, the Dogra general in the employment of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu twice invaded Ladakh by crossing over the Pir Panjals into the Zanskar Valley. These
military expeditions were undertaken ostensibly at the behest of the Sikh Durbar, but were in reality intended to extend the domain of Gulab Singh. One of the major underlying motivations of the Dogras was to benefit from the lucrative trade in Pashmina wool. The Gyalpo was made to accept the suzerainty of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Zorawar Singh mounted two more expeditions in 1839-40 to put down revolts in Ladakh, some of which were even instigated out of sheer jealousy by Colonel Minhan Singh, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir. Finally in 1840 Ladakh was annexed to the Khalsa dominion. In the summer of 1840, Zorawar Singh had also captured Baltistan. Subsequently Gilgit, Chilas, and Chitral were also brought under control. The Gilgit Wazirat consisted of six very small principalities of Hunza, Nagar, Yassin, Punial, Koh Khizar and Ashkemand. A governor headed it. This province has indirectly hung like a baneful shadow over the subsequent development of India-Pakistan relations.

In 1841, Zorawar Singh made a deep inroad into western Tibet. Along with Rudok and Gartok, he occupied 880 kilometers of territory in western Tibet. This incursion into Tibet was strongly disapproved by the British, who were engaged in extending their influence into Xinjiang and Tibet. Zorawar Singh died on 12 December 1841, fighting a Tibetan army in the vicinity of Lake Mansarover. In a treaty signed on 16-17 September 1842 with the representatives of the Khalsa Durbar and Gulab Singh, the Chinese and the Lhasa Governments undertook not to interfere with the boundaries of Ladakh and its surroundings as known by ancient tradition. They also undertook to allow the annual export of wool, shawls, and tea by way of Ladakh according to the old established custom. Ladakh thus became a part of the Sikh domain.

During the First Anglo-Sikh war 1845-46, the Sikh Forces were defeated at Mudki (18 December 1845), Feroze Shah (21 December 1845) and Sabhraon (10 February 1846). The Sikh Durbar empowered Raja Gulab Singh to negotiate a peace treaty. Gulab Singh after securing his own interests, agreed to terms and conditions, which heavily favoured the British. Apart
from ceding large territories to the British including the Jalandhar Doab, and a drastic reduction of the Khalsa forces, the Sikh Durbar was to pay a war indemnity of one and a half crore rupees. Unable to pay the full amount of the indemnity, the Durbar ceded the hill territories lying between the rivers Beas and Indus; and the provinces of Kashmir and Hazara. By another treaty signed at Amritsar on 16 March 1846, the British transferred the hill territories including the province of Kashmir to Gulab Singh for a consideration of seventy-five lakh Nanak Shahi rupees. Gulab Singh was recognised as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, comprising of all the three regions. Jammu and Kashmir became a princely Indian state under British paramountcy.

The sale of the Kashmir Province had attracted considerable British criticism. East India Company, which still controlled its Indian possessions, had a profit motive for the sale. There was also a deeper political reason underlying the sale. Punjab was not as yet a part of the British territory. It would have been very difficult to hold the hill territories and the province of Kashmir. Moreover, creation of a substantial Dogra Rajput state in the north weakened the Sikh power and served as a check against any Islamic incursion from the northwest. While the annexation of Punjab on 29 March 1849 after their triumph in the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1848-49, provided an easy access to the north, the other considerations remained valid.

Between the three regions, there was a wide range of diversity in climate, flora and fauna, basic ethnicity of the population, language and culture, religion and social organisation, economy and political outlook. Although a common linkage had been forged by the creation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, the geo-physical barriers had to a great extent stood in the way of a closer integration of the three regions. The northern high mountains, desolate plateaus, extremely cold deserts and isolated valleys had bred their own insular communities. This area including Ladakh is sparsely populated. Ladakh is largely Mongloid and Buddhist, with close religious and linguistic affinity with Tibet. To the west of Ladakh in Baltistan
and Kargil, live Muslim Shias of mixed Persian, Afghan, and Central Asian extraction. To the north in the very sparsely populated valleys of the Gilgit region a largely Muslim population professes a wide range of local dialects and cultures.

The Kashmir Valley had developed its own distinct social and religious culture. Population density is very high. Sunni Muslims are in majority. There is also a sizeable population of the Shia Muslims. In a small minority were Kasmiri Pandits and Sikhs. In the past, both these minority communities had enjoyed considerable clout in the governance of the state. To the east of Jammu the population was largely Hindu, comprising of Rajput Dogras. Mostly Muslim Chibs, also of Rajput extraction, lived to the west. In the Jhelum gorge father to the west, were found the turbulent Khakhas and Bambas. The whole of the Jammu Province provided good soldiers for the Indian Army and the State forces.

The Jammu region has a rather uneven population density. It is substantial in and around Jammu and the other urban centres below the foothills. The hill areas are sparsely populated. Hindus are in majority in the towns and in the plains. There are more Muslims in hill areas. The population is generally closer in its social and cultural outlook to that in the adjoining plains of Punjab. Especially in the strip of territory along the border with Pakistan from the Chenab River to Muzzafarabad, the largely Sunni Muslim population has close ethnic, linguistic, and cultural affinity with those across the border in Pakistan.

There was hardly any response to the struggle for independence launched by the Indian National Congress. By the end of the 1930’s, the general poverty and lack of employment opportunities had bred some discontent against the autocratic Dogra rule. However, there was little of organised protest. There was also no visible Hindu-Muslim divide. Communal harmony prevailed. On 13 July 1931, police firing on a large crowd of Muslims, rather violently demonstrating outside a court in the
Valley, killed 21 Muslims. In retaliation, large-scale violence was instigated against the Hindu population. Communal rioting spread over the whole state. The British secret agencies were suspected to have given clandestine support to fan the communal virus.

In October 1932, the Muslim Conference was formed with Sheikh Abdullah as its president. Its aim was to promote the interests of the Muslim population, that too largely in the Kashmir valley. The organization was not intended to be communal. In the Jammu region, the Hindu Maha Sabha had become active. Nevertheless, both the communities generally continued to live in harmony. Sheikh Abdullah was bitterly opposed to the Dogra rule. In the next few years, he switched the focus of Muslim conference more to oppose this rule. An All India States Peoples Conference had been formed in 1927 to struggle for democratic struggles in the princely states into the broad national movement; the Indian National Congress had forged close links with this organization. In 1939, the Sheikh, along with the bulk of Muslim Conference, broke away from the parent organisation to form the National Conference, which was given a secular orientation. In 1941, the Sheikh had also aligned the National Conference with the States Peoples Conference. Both these developments brought the Sheikh and his National Conference closer to the Indian National Congress, which had grown to great strength in its struggle against the British rule over India. These tactical moves brought Sheikh in touch with Nehru. Both being Kashmir Pandits (Sheikh's ancestors were Kashmiri Pandits), a close empathy grew between them.

After the separation of the main body to form the National Conference, the residual Muslim Conference had its main following in the Punch-Mirpur region. It was hostile to the secular approach of the National Conference. It is also significant to note here that the All India Muslim League had kept aloof from the democratic struggles in the princely states. On the eve of independence the Muslim League had denounced the links of the National
Conference with the all Indian National Congress and its democratic struggle against the autocratic princely rule. The League therefore, neither represented the majority of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, nor supported their struggle for democracy.

**The Indian Leaders:**

The partition had considerably weakened the administrative infrastructure needed to govern the country. Vast exchange of population and communal riots had put a tremendous strain on the administrative machinery. The mental and emotional burden carried by the leadership was considerable. It speaks volumes for their commitment and acumen that the system of governance did not break down entirely. Nevertheless, it did cloud the vision of the leadership, and acted to compress it to the pale of their immediate preoccupations. The perceptions of the potential threats inherent in the geo-strategic environment, and the strategic concerns for security in the immediate as well as in the long term did not receive adequate attention.

They were rather diffident to go to open war against a sister dominion and fully exploit the superior Indian armed power. They felt that India could not immediately dispense with its British links. They were also faced with serious structural handicaps. The setup, both at the policy formulation and executive levels, was most unusual. The security structures of both India and Pakistan were dominated by British officers, who had till 15 August 1947 served together. These British officers led both the opposing armies. Indian policy planning was subject to an even more serious handicap. The Defence Committee of the Cabinet, the premium policy consideration and formulation forum, was chaired by Lord Mountbatten, the British Governor General and not by Prime Minister Nehru. The strong British presence at the top rungs of the civil and military governance influenced Indian policies into directions favourable to British interests, rather than those of India.
The strategic Significance:

The importance of Jammu and Kashmir lay in its strategic location. The state was located just north of the traditional invasion route into India through the western frontier. Control over the region protected the northern flank of the invading armies. Through its northwestern reaches passed some of the well-trodden caravan trade routes. From centuries past, human migrations, conflicts and invasions have traveled these links between the lands to the west, the north, and the riches of India to the south. In reverse, the access also held out the prospect of exploitation of the very rich mineral and energy resources of Central Asia. More than that, it opened both windows of listening and access into vast areas of actual or potential political dissidence, discord and conflict. The British were particularly sensitive to a threat from expansionist Czarist Russia southwards to their Indian Empire. In the twentieth century, most forms of physical onslaught were gradually overtaken by the penetration of ideas and cults to engineer spheres of favourable influence and political orders. Moreover, the barren Aksai Chin plateau jutting out to the northeast was the only easily negotiable land link between the Xinjiang region of China and Tibet, over which it claimed suzerainty. In consequence the highlands of Gilgit and Ladakh were of global strategic value.

The British colonial rule had projected India into the orbit of their global imperial ambitions and interests. Foremost in their calculations was the fear of a territorial expansion by Russia, China, and any West Asian combination aided and abetted by a European power. In 1889, the British forced Maharaja Pratap Singh (grand son of Gulab Singh) to establish the Gilgit Agency, comprising of the small principalities of Hunza, Nagar, Yassin, Punial, Koh Khizar, and Ashkoman, to be overseen by their political agent. By the early 1930’s, the USSR had started emerging as a potential world power with distinct expansionist aspirations. The perception of a threat through the western frontier was enhanced. Gilgit assumed a more tangible
strategic importance. In 1935 the British brought the Gilgit Agency under their direct control by obtaining it on a lease from the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir for a period of sixty years.

Gilgit became an important strategic link in the world-wide British imperial web. The region acquired added significance as the cold war developed between the western and eastern blocks in the wake of the Second World War. In the run up to the partition the British were keen that Kashmir should join Pakistan. Since Maharaja Hari Singh would not play ball, other options had to be explored. The Muslim League leadership too could not have missed the potential of the area to establish a profitable equation with the western power block. A synergy of strategic interests between the British and the Pakistan leadership was a natural consequence.

The state was equally important to the security of both Pakistan and India. If India controlled the area west of Jammu, and then north to Muzzafarabad, it would hold a strategic dagger at the communication jugular of Pakistan passing through the Jhelum-Rawalpindi corridor. A military foothold into this vital corridor would render the security of Pakistan largely untenable. This inherent strategic threat would effectively deter Pakistan from any military adventures into not only Kashmir, but also into the rest of the country. If the area were controlled by Pakistan, the strategic advantages would be reversed in its favour.

Geographically and physically, Pakistan was better placed to exploit the strategic advantages that lay in its control over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It had easier and more viable contiguity with the state. Two roads, which emanated in Pakistan, provided the only well developed access to the state. The easier route was from Wah on the Grand Trunk Road to Abbottabad-Domel, where a hill road from Rawalpindi via Murree joined it. From Domel the road ran along the Jhelum River to Uri, Baramulla, and Srinagar. A lesser-developed route was from Wazirabad on the Grand Trunk Road to Sialkot, Jammu, Banihal Pass and Srinagar. While the first road
remained open throughout the year, the second road was generally snowed under at the Banihal Pass in the winter. Besides these two major roads, there were innumerable minor roads and tracks, which provided cross border access into the adjoining areas of the state from Pakistan all the way from Kathua to the tri-junction with Afghanistan in the extreme northwest.

Before the award of the Radcliffe Commission in respect of the district of Gurdaspur, contiguity with India lay only in the rather inaccessible high Himalayas from Punjab (later Himachal Pradesh) to the area of Doda, and further north to Ladakh. When Radcliffe awarded the district of Gurdaspur minus the Tehsil of Shakargarh to India, a very poorly developed land route from Pathankot to Jammu via Madhopur, Kathua, and Samba had become possible. It was largely a dirt track. There were no bridges over a number of rivers and perennial nalaś enroute. The Ravi River at Madhopur was unfordable. Though Pakistan had an easier access, its claim over the state was inconsistent with the real-politic of conflicting geo-strategic interests of both the dominions. It is inevitable that every nation pursues its national interests irrespective of the tilt of accidents of geography to one side or the other. As it would clearly emerge later, the Indian leadership seemed to have ignored this vital perception.

Despite the above geo-physical formulation, the Indian policy makers were either blissfully unaware of the geo-strategic advantages of a control over the state or unwilling to act with firm vigour to secure vital national interests. The truth seems to lie somewhere in between. Sundry thinkers, amongst them politicians, bureaucrats and some senior soldiers have claimed that the strategic importance of the state was pointed out to the Indian government. It is more than obvious that the Indian leadership was not unaware of the strategic significance of the state to Indian security as well as to foreign policy equations developing in the post Second World War scenario. The leadership, however, neither reached out nor concerned itself
with evolving a strategic framework that would serve both short term as well as term Indian interests.

Nehru himself admits the possibility that Pakistan might try to take over the state by force. Nevertheless no serious effort was made to dissuade Pakistan from using violent coercive measures including an aggression by force into the state. Equally no concerted effort was made to persuade Maharaja Hari Singh to accede to India. This indeed was a grave failure, the effects of which linger on to bedevil Indian foreign policy and national security. To understand this lack of a forward-looking strategic vision, a closer look is necessary at the political and military imperatives that influenced the Indian decision-makers.

The Tribal Invasion of 1947:

With independence in August 1947, both India and Pakistan had begun to apply pressure on the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, to join them at an early date. While Hari Singh had continued to vacillate, Sheikh Abdullah, the champion of the Kashmiri cause, was waiting to endorse an accession in India's favour. His desire was to form a popular Government promising to get an entire Kashmir safety into the Indian Union. On 4 October 1947 at a mammoth public gathering in Srinagar, immediately after Sardar Patel had arranged his release from Hari Singh's prison, Sheikh Abdullah had declared, "I have never believed in the Pakistan slogan." Unfortunately for India, other than Nehru, the rest of its leadership, especially Patel, lacked the urgency to finalize the accession issue. And then, everything happened all of a sudden.

Beginning in the autumn of 1947, two related incidents turned the Kashmir issue into an Indo-Pak conflict. The first was a localized revolt in the predominantly Muslim Poonch area, focused against the administrative neglect of the Maharaja's rule. This strategic border region had long been a recruiting base for the Indian Army, and since the end of the Second World War, the home of thousands of demobilized Muslim soldiers of the British
Indian Army. The second incident was the initiation of an economic blockade of Kashmir by Pakistan. To this effect, Pakistan began to apply an economic squeeze on Kashmir, stalling food supplies to the Valley. This was done on the land routes from Pakistan into Kashmir. Even the Sialkot-Jammu rail service was suspended. Simultaneously, certain small armed groups of Pakistanis had been probing the military defensibility of Kashmir, and they drew conclusions that favoured the Pakistani idea of a large-scale invasion of Kashmir.

When Maharaja Hari Singh's troops arrived in the Poonch area to suppress the revolt in October 1947, they also encountered Pathan tribesmen from Pakistan's Frontier region (NWFP). Apparently, the tribal leaders of the Frontier had sent these tribesmen to the aid of their Muslim brethren to fight the brutalities of Dogra rule. And on 22 October 1947, Pakistan launched its first unsuccessful military campaign to "liberate" Kashmir. Their aim was apparently to reach Srinagar by 26 October to celebrate the Muslim festival of Id at Srinagar's main mosque.

Pakistan's leadership had naively assumed that their campaign in Kashmir would be smooth and finish in only four days - and then Jinnah Sahib would come triumphantly riding into Kashmir! However, when it all went wrong the blame was laid on a number of people; on corruption within the Pakistani military, and most importantly Pakistan alleged that Maharaja Hari Singh had, in connivance with the Indian leadership, duped Pakistan despite the Pak-Kashmir Standstill Agreement.

Why and how did it all go wrong for Pakistan? First, the Pakistani-led "tribal" invasion force lacked the training and cohesion required for the success of such a sensitive operation. Second, this invasion force was composed largely of Frontier tribesmen, who are traditionally hard to discipline. Instead of focusing on the military time-table of the campaign, they were distracted (as is normally the case) with the thrill of loot and plunder. Third, India's eventual military intervention - at the request of
Maharaja Hari Singh - took Pakistan completely by surprise. Thereafter, events moved so rapidly that there was no chance for Pakistan to reverse the clock.

**Jammu and Kashmir Accede into India:**

When the news of this invasion, coupled with the urgent appeal of Hari Singh for military assistance reached Delhi, both Mountbatten and Nehru reacted with considerable speed to save what was left of Kashmir - however, not before completing certain formalities. India's V.P. Menon was sent to Jammu to contact Hari Singh, who finally signed the instrument of Accession. It is said in historical retrospect that the Pakistani invasion perhaps "indirectly" coerced Hari Singh to join the Indian Union - fearing that all his kingdom would otherwise be lost forever! Whatever the explanation, the state of Jammu and Kashmir did formally accede into India - and this includes its entire territory even the areas occupied by Pakistan since 1947.

**Text of the letter addressed to Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General of India, containing the decision of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir State regarding Accession of the State**

26 October 1947

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I have to inform Your Excellency that a grave emergency has arisen in my State and request immediate assistance of your Government.

As your Excellency is aware the State of Jammu and Kashmir has not acceded to either the Dominion of India or to Pakistan. Geographically my State is contiguous to both the Dominions. It has vital economical and cultural links with both of them. Besides my State has a common boundary with the Soviet Republics and China. In their external relations the Dominions of India and Pakistan cannot ignore this fact.
I wanted to take time to decide to which Dominion I should accede, whether it is not in the best interest of both the Dominions and my State to stand independent, of course with friendly and cordial relations with both.

I accordingly approached the Dominions of India and Pakistan to enter into a standstill agreement with my State. The Pakistan Government accepted this arrangement. The Dominion of India desired further discussion with representatives of my Government. I could not arrange this in view of the developments indicated below. In fact the Pakistan Government under the standstill agreement is operating Post and Telegraph system inside the State.

Though, we have got a standstill agreement with the Pakistan government, that Government permitted steady and increasing strangulation of supplies like food, salt and petrol to my State.

Afridis, soldiers in plain clothes, and desperadoes, with modern weapons, have been allowed to in filter into the State at first in Poonch area, then in Sialkot and finally en mass in the area adjoining Hazara district on the Ramkot side. The result has been that the limited number of troops at the disposal of the State had to be dispersed and thus had to face the enemy at several points simultaneously that it has become difficult to stop the wanton destruction of life and property and looting. The Mahoora Power House, which supplies the electric current to the whole of Srinagar has been burnt. The number of women who have been kidnapped and raped makes my heart bleed. The wild forces thus let loose on the State are marching on with the aim of capturing Srinagar, the summer capital of my Government, as a first step to overrunning the whole State.

The mass infiltration of tribesmen drawn from the distant areas of the NWF Province coming regularly in motor trucks using Manschr-Muzaffarabad road and fully armed with up-to-date weapons cannot possibly be done without the knowledge of the provincial government of the NWF Province and the Government of Pakistan. In spite of repeated appeals made by the government no attempt has been made to check these raiders or stop
them from coming to my State. In fact both the Pakistan Radio and press have reported these occurrences. The Pakistan Radio even put out a story that a provisional government has been set up in Kashmir. The people of my State both the Muslim and non-Muslims generally have taken no part at all.

With the conditions obtaining at present in my State and the great emergency of the situation as it exists, I have no option but to ask for help from the Indian Dominion. Naturally they cannot send the help asked for by me without my State acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government. The other alternative is to leave my State and my people to freebooters. On this basis no civilised government can exist or be maintained. This alternative I will never allow to happen so long as I am the Ruler of the State and I have life to defend my country.

I may also inform Your Excellency's Government that it is my intention at once to set up an Interim Government and ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in this emergency with my Prime Minister.

If my State has to be saved immediate assistance must be available at Srinagar. Mr Menon is fully aware of the situation and he will explain to you if further explanation is needed.

In haste and with kindest regards.

(Sd.) Hari Singh

15 August 1947 to 31 December 1948:

Operations in Ladakh -

Before the Dogras occupied Ladakh, there were two main sources of threat to the security of this region -Tibet and Baltistan. Threat from both these sources ceased during the Dogra rule. Tibet, under its treaty obligations, and perhaps British influence, renounced its expansionist policies of the past, while Baltistan was made innocuous through its subjugation by the Dogras during the same period. This situation, however, changed in 1947. While Tibet
continued its policy of peaceful co-existence, the Dogras lost control over Gilgit and consequently Baltistan, which opened the floodgates of aggression on Ladakh.

The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh had leased the Gilgit Agency to the British in 1935 for a period of 60 years. Consequently, the State Forces had been withdrawn from the Agency and instead, the British had raised the 600 strong Gilgit Scouts for the maintenance of internal security. This force formed the first line of defence in the event of hostilities with a foreign power. The Scouts were officered by the British themselves and were well trained, armed and equipped. Before the lapse of their paramountcy in the subcontinent, the British relinquished control over the Agency and handed it back to the State. The State immediately appointed a governor who took over formally from the British on 1 August 1947. The Governor, Brigadier Ghansara Singh, however, was hardly in a position to physically hold what he had taken over on paper. The loyalty of a section of the population, which must have been subverted by the British during their 12-year rule, was subjected to further stress on the creation of Pakistan. Besides, what loyalty could one expect from Gilgit Scouts who continued to be commanded by two British officers whose loyalty clearly lay with Pakistan? But the unkindest cut of all was when some officers and men of the 6th Jammu and Kashmir Infantry deserted the State service and joined the rebellious Gilgit Scouts against the Maharaja's authority. The Governor was imprisoned and the Gilgit Scouts took over the administration for handing it over to Pakistan. With the setting up of Pakistani administration, a recruitment drive was launched which resulted in the enlistment of about 2,000 local inhabitants, later known as raiders. They were armed, equipped and trained upon the arrival of small arms and other military equipment from Pakistan while preparations for further territorial acquisition began.

With Gilgit firmly control, Pakistani attention was now focused on Ladakh. As a strategic requirement, any advance on Leh had to be preceded
by, firstly, control over Baltistan and, secondly, cutting it off from Kashmir at Kargil.

**Topography -**

The State of Jammu and Kashmir bordered by the erstwhile Soviet Union (now Turkistan), Afghanistan, Tibet and the Xinjiang region of China, is of great strategic importance. The State had three frontier areas, namely Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit. In 1947, the population of Jammu and Kashmir was under 5 million of which 3½ million were Muslims, and the remainder Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists.

There were two major roads in 1947 leading into Jammu & Kashmir. The better one led from Domel-Uri-Baramulla on to Srinagar, a length of 160 kms. This was the main supply line to Kashmir during the British period.

The other major road was from Wazirabad-Sialkot on to Jammu then to Udhampur, over the Banihal Pass into the Kashmir Valley. From Jammu onwards it was a cart road. During winter, this road was closed for vehicles because of snow on the Banihal Pass.

**Operations in Leh Sector -**

Leh, Skardu and Kargil were, at that time, held by garrisons from the 6th Jammu and Kashmir Infantry under the overall command of Lieutenant Colonel Sher Jung Thapa, who had assumed command, with his headquarters at Leh, of what remained of the Battalion after desertion by fifty per cent of its strength. When the Pakistanis made their first move towards Skardu, the State Army Headquarters at Srinagar asked Colonel Sher Jung Thapa to proceed to Skardu with the maximum force that could be mustered from Leh and Kargil. Reinforcements under Captain Prabhat Singh were also despatched from Srinagar and arrived at Skardu after crossing over the Zojila Pass in the dead of winter, just in time to beat off the first Pakistani attack on 10 February 1948. Thereafter, the Skardu Garrison was subjected to continuous attacks by the
Pakistanis for the next three months; being each time repulsed every time by Colonel Sher Jung Thapa's gritty men. Kargil and Dras fell on 16 May 1948.

Approximately 400 raiders operated in the Ladakh Sector. The first infiltration attempt into Ladakh came to notice in January 1948. Even though not serious, the attempt caused an alarm throughout Ladakh. Colonel Sher Jung Thapa had left behind at Leh just one platoon (about 33 men) of his Battalion before setting off to Skardu. From this strength, garrisons had to be provided for Leh, Khalsi and Nubra Valley, which allowed just about a section at each place. Urgent messages were, therefore, sent to Srinagar and New Delhi for reinforcements. Stories of Pakistani atrocities on non-Muslims in occupied territories, had by now reached Ladakh, and aroused the martial instincts of Ladakhis, which had lain dormant for the last hundred years. They volunteered to take up arms against the invaders and appealed to the Government of India for weapons and training facilities. In response to this request, Major Prithi Chand, Captain Khushal Chand, Subedar Bhim Chand and 15 soldiers of 2nd Battalion the Dogra Regiment, who belonged to the Lahaull and Ladakh area, crossed the Zojila Pass in mid winter and arrived at Leh on 12 March 1948. The object of organising a local Resistance Army there and its feats cannot be better described than to quote from General Thimayya's Special Farewell Order of the Day to 2nd Battalion the Dogra Regiment: "The object of sending them to Leh was to restore confidence in the locals and raise a militia force. Two officers, one JCO and 15 Other Ranks under the command of Major Prithi Chand left Srinagar for Leh on 6 February 1948 and in heavy and blinding snow, crossed over the Zojila, which is 11,580 feet high. This, in itself, was an epic feat and could only have been carried out by the toughest and most determined men. Their subsequent deeds and acts of gallantry against very superior forces in Ladakh Valley will go down in the annals of the Indian Army as one of its greatest feats". Sonam Norbu, a Ladakhi engineer, also arrived along with Major Prithi Chand and his party, had the task of immediate construction of an improvised airfield at Leh. Following closely at their heels, arrived two platoons of the State Forces
under Captain Badri Singh as reinforcements for the garrisons in Ladakh, repeating the feat of Captain Prabhat Singh and Major Prithi Chand by crossing the Zojila at the peak of winter.

As a first action for boosting public morale, Major Prithi Chand hoisted the Tricolour over the Residency (later Alfa Mess) where surprisingly, the Union Jack had continued to fly. He then gave a call for volunteers - one man from each house - for training to defend their motherland. Training camps were established at Leh, Nimmo, Saspol, Khalsi, Chushol and Diskit. A concentrated dose of training in handling of rifles, field craft and minor tactics was given to these volunteers for 15 days at the different camps by instructors from the State Forces and Major Prithi Chand's party. At the end of their training, they were organised into sections and platoons and sent off to various posts for 'on the job training'. Two platoons of these Home Guards under Subedar Bhim Chand took up forward positions in the Nubra Valley to augment the two platoons of the State Forces deployed along this approach. The Home Guards, however, were poorly armed and equipped at this stage. There being not enough arms for all of them, many had to be armed with lances, bows and arrows, and any other lethal weapons that they could lay their hands on. Armed with such indigenous weapons and dressed in their traditional costumes they were truly a people's militia out to defend their homeland. On the raising of militia battalions by the State Government, the Ladakh Home Guards, some 300 in number, were designated as the 7th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Militia on 15 April 1948, with Major promoted to Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand as its first Commanding Officer.

Arms and ammunition were now immediately needed to equip the newly formed militia. Transportation of arms and ammunition by road was not advisable, as besides taking a long time, they had to pass through Kargil, which was precariously held by the State Forces, and could fall at any moment. The only solution to the problem was air supply. Even
reinforcements, which were required urgently, could reach Ladakh in time only if they came by air. Realising this, Sonam Norbu had immediately upon arrival, set about laying out a small landing strip near Leh. With the help of the locals, he was able to have the airstrip ready by 26 May 1948, when a Dakota, flown by Air Commodore Mehar Singh, and carrying Major General KS Thimayya, General Officer Commanding Srinagar Division landed there.

Although Skardu was still holding out, the capture of Kargil by the Pakistanis enabled them to make a full-fledged advance on Leh along the Srinagar-Leh Highway. They reached Khalsi around 20 May 1948, and attacked the garrison which was defending the bridge over the Indus. The State Force platoon there was soon dislodged, but Major Khushal Chand was able to destroy the bridge at great personal risk before the Pakistanis could cross over it. In the meantime, Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand, collecting all the remnants of the State Force troops and men of his newly formed Battalion rushed to the aid of Major Khushal Chand at Khalsi and deployed at Skinding. The Pakistanis were delayed at Khalsi for six days.

On 1 June 1948, six Dakotas carrying a weak company of 2nd Battalion the 4th Gorkha Rifles, under Lieutenant PN Kaul, landed at Leh airstrip. This company was immediately moved towards Khalsi where it took up position at Komkhar. Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand handed over the command of his men to Lieutenant PN Kaul and returned to Leh for the overall control of preparations connected with the defence of Ladakh.

Simultaneous to their advance along the Kargil-Leh road, the Pakistanis also started activity opposite the Nubra Valley. Reports came in of Pakistanis crossing Biadango and occupying position at Waris and Churuk La. Believing in offence being the best form of defence, Subedar Bhim Chand decided to attack both these places with a view to dislodging the Pakistanis before they were able to launch any offensive action. He led his Home Guards first on Waris, but this proved to be a tame affair as the Pakistanis fled at the sight of the Home Guards. Next, Subedar Bhim Chand planned an attack on
Churuk La, which was known to be strongly held. To ensure success of the first major operation of the Home Guards, Subedar Bhim Chand first moved to the top of Churuk La with a reconnaissance party of twelve men. He reached the top in two days from his base. After carrying out his reconnaissance, he called up the main party of about 60 Home Guards, the next day. Unfortunately, the weather turned bad just then and it began to snow. The Home Guards had to wait for a full 23 days before an attack could be launched. On the 24th day, they moved up to the top, observed the Pakistanis and then assaulted the position under cover of light machine gun fire. Seven Pakistani soldiers belonging to the Gilgit Scouts were killed while the others fled. The Home Guards also made their first catch of arms consisting of three rifles, four local muzzleloaders and some ammunition. Subedar Bhim Chand then took some selected men and rapidly advanced to a ridge in front, where some more Pakistanis had been spotted.

Shortly thereafter, Subedar Bhim Chand received a message from Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand asking him to come at once to Leh for its defence. By then the situation along the Indus Valley had become very precarious. In mid June 1948, Lieutenant PN Kaul's company had been attacked at Domkhar and forced to withdraw to Hemis-Sukpachan. On arrival of a company of 2nd Battalion of the 8th Gorkha Rifles under Major Hari Chand, (popularly known as the 'chapatti column'), on 1 July 1948, it was hoped that the situation would now stabilise. But this Company which had been rushed forward to Hemis-Sukpachan immediately on arrival had also been forced to retire, along with the 4th Gorkha Rifles Company, elements of State Forces and Home Guards, under the pressure of Pakistani raiders. The situation was indeed critical on the Indus Valley front but it was equally critical in the Nubra Valley. Subedar Bhim Chand requested Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand to be allowed to stay back for the defence of the Nubra Valley. While this correspondence between the two was going on, the Pakistanis counter-attacked Churuk La and forced the small garrison of the Home Guards, that was holding it, to withdraw up to Tershe Nala. Subedar
Bhim Chand immediately went forward and organised the defences on the Tershe Nala, which were held by his Home Guards and a platoon of the State Forces. After this, on receiving urgent messages from his Commanding Officer, Subedar Bhim Chand moved to Leh.

Having been pushed back from Hemis-Saikpachan, our troops under the overall command of Major Hari Chand, had ultimately withdrawn to Taru, after taking up successive intermediate positions at Bazgo, Nimu and Likir. Taru was just 12 miles from Leh and had to be defended at all costs. Every available man had to be sent forward to this front. Consequently, the Garrison Commander at Leh issued orders for all troops deployed in the Nubra Valley to move to the Taru front. He also issued orders for the Nubra Home Guards to be disbanded and their weapons carried to the front, so as to fully arm the Home Guards fighting on the Taru front. Subedar Bhim Chand, who had arrived at Leh by now, was given command of all the available Home Guards and ordered to take up a defensive position on the Stondok Hill feature covering the right flank of the Taru defences.

The order of the Garrison Commander, withdrawing all troops from the Nubra Valley and the disbandment of the Nubra Guards, even though perhaps necessary, left the Valley completely defenceless and its people at the mercy of the invaders. It caused great panic among the people and many prepared to leave their homes and move towards Leh. There were, however, some among them who would not allow the Pakistanis to occupy their land without a fight. One such person was a seventeen-year old high-school boy, Chhewang Rinchen, destined to bring glory to him and the force that he served. Rinchen who had responded to Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand’s call to arms earlier in the year, decided to proceed to Leh and plead with the Garrison Commander the case of the people of Nubra, for arms to defend themselves. Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand was greatly moved by the spirit of this young man of Nubra. Even though hard-pressed for arms and ammunition, some were released and he asked the Nubra Guards to defend
the Nubra Valley as best as they could. Rinchen, whose potential had been recognised by Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand, was appointed leader of the twenty-eight men enlisted for this task. He took up defences on Kharu Nala and to make a show of force he took with him an equal number of unarmed civilians. The Nubra Guards continued to hold on to these positions for nearly a month, before they were relieved by regular troops and could thus take the credit for saving the Nubra Valley from being over-run by the Pakistanis during a very crucial period.

The situation along the Indus Valley front was now fast stabilising and towards this the Home Guards had played an important part.

With the situation on the Taru front improving, a platoon of the Home Guards under a State Force Jemadar was withdrawn from this front and sent to the Nubra Valley. The platoon relieved Rinchen’s volunteers at the Kharu Nala, who now moved to Diskit. The situation in the Nubra Valley was thus restored.

During the stalemate in the situation at Nubra Valley, the Ladakhis were employed by the Sector Commander, Major S Sidhu (who had replaced Major SS Bhonsle) for patrolling and carrying out small raids on Pakistani positions. The Taru front having been secured after the arrival of the rest of the 2nd Battalion the 8th Gorkha Rifles, the Leh force could now take offensive action by organising raids deep into Pakistani occupied territory.

The first raid was planned against the Pakistani battalion headquarters at Nimu sometime in September 1948. The composite party selected for the task by Major Hari Chand consisted of eight Ladakhis, eight Gorkhas, six Dogras and six Sikhs of the State Forces. It was already known that the Pakistanis had brought a 3.7-inch Howitzer to the area but its exact location was not known. The presence of the gun opposite the Taru front caused great concern to the Leh force. By deploying the gun at Rahul the Pakistanis could even interfere with the aircraft landing at the Leh airfield, let alone the devastating effect that it could have had on the not too strongly constructed
defences on the Taru front. A raid was organised to destroy this gun. Major Hari Chand during the raid urgently instructed his men to destroy the barrel of the gun located at Likhil-Lubrang by putting grenades into it. Then setting the grass around the wheels of the gun on fire, the party withdrew towards Likhil-Thang. Here they destroyed the telephone line, which had earlier been laid by the State Forces and was now being used by the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis having been alerted, the raiding party could not obviously return to base by the route it had taken earlier. So it withdrew towards Leh via Hunder-Dok. The party had to go without food for two days and two nights before it could arrange food at Hunder village. From Hunder the commandos made it back to Leh in three days.

Major Hari Chand made his second major raid sometime in October 1948. Selecting a fresh composite group of volunteers, he proceeded to Lamayuru, taking a circuitous and a treacherous route via Markha, Sumdo and Wanta that involved climbing a steep mountain (Alam), and crossing the Zanskar River with improvised rafts. After reaching Lamayuru, a temporary commando base was established and from there the Pakistani dump was raided. The dump, which contained some 200 horse-loads of stores consisting of 3-inch mortar, rifle ammunition and clothing was not well defended. Killing the guards (seven of them), the commandos first helped themselves to ammunition and personal clothing and then destroyed the dump, using gun-cotton slabs. The party then withdrew to Wanla with one prisoner and from there to village Sumdoh Chenmo via Phanjila village. Realising that the men were very sick and tired, from Sumdoh Chenmo, Major Hari Chand took a shorter route back to the Taru Bagh headquarters.

Major Hari Chand and his commandos are also reported to have made forays behind Pakistani lines in the Nubra Valley. All these daring raids must have shaken the Pakistanis but what actually unnerved them was the advance of the Para Brigade of the Indian Army over Zojila in early November 1948 and its subsequent advance to Kargil. With their rear on fire it became
difficult for the Pakistanis to withstand the offensive action launched by the Leh force during the same month. The Pakistanis began withdrawing in unseemly haste as the Leh force started to advance. Major Hari Chand mounted his commandos on horseback and kept pursuing the Pakistanis and harassing them during their withdrawal right up to Nurla. Thereafter, the militiamen returned to Leh leaving 2nd Battalion the 8th Gorkha Rifles to chase the Pakistanis. Immediately after the capture of Kargil on 25 November 1948, the Leh force was able to affect a link up with the Para Brigade at Kargil.

Simultaneous to the advance along the Indus, offensive action also started in the Nubra Valley. For this purpose, as many militiamen as could be spared from Leh were dispatched to the Nubra Valley under Subedar Bhim Chand. Here too the Pakistanis' morale was in their boots and soon a rout, of the type they suffered on the Indus front, set in. Giving no respite, the Gorkhas and Ladakhis chased the Pakistanis right up to Biagdangdo. Churuk La was cleared by Jemedar Chhwang Rinchen and his platoon while Subedar Bhim Chand established the forward-most post on the Tebe Nala. By the time the ceasefire came into effect on 31 December 1948, the whole of Nubra Valley had been cleared of the Pakistanis. Ladakh was saved and the Ladakhis who had contributed considerably towards it had every reason to feel proud. Jemadar Chhwang Rinchen emerged as the hero and his bravery was duly recognized with the award of a Maha Vir Chakra. Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Chand and Major Khushal Chand were also awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, while Subedar Bhim Chand was awarded the Vir Chakra and bar. The doctor, Captain (AMC) Kartar Singh attached to the Ladakhi Militia was awarded the Vir Chakra.

Peace returned to Ladakh once again, but this time it was peace with a difference. It was a peace during which preparations for war continued to be made. Ladakh now bustled with military activity of a large force that was permanently located in and around Leh. What stirred the Ladakhis most,
however, was military activity connected with the organization and training of the newly formed 7th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Militia.

**Operations in Kargil Sector**

The raiders that operated in Kargil Sector consisted of 800 men. They were disposed as given below:

- 200 men laid siege to the Fort of Skardu, cutting it off from Parkutta. The road from Kargil to Parkutta was also cut off by the raiders to prevent reinforcements from reaching it.

- 300 raiders were marked for Kargil and Dras. The route they work was Chilam Chowki, Gultari along Shingo River. Of these, 100 were earmarked for capture of Dras and 200 were to strike Kargil.

- The other prong of 300 raiders was to traverse Burzil Bai Pass, capture Gurez and demonstrate against Bandipur. Having drawn the Indian forces to those places they were to strike Gund and Sonamarg.

The raiders captured all objectives apart from Dras. The troops guarding the Khera Bridge (now known as Harka Bahadur Bridge) were overrun and taken by surprise. With the fall of Kargil, the forces at Parkutta were ordered to recapture it. But while attempting to concentrate, the forces were attacked near Kharmong and suffered heavy casualties. Only 150 men made it to Sonamarg via Gultari. Meanwhile, the position of Dras Garrison became alarming and all attempts at reinforcement failed as Pindras was in the hands of the Pakistanis. An attempt made by the Garrison to withdraw also failed. Meanwhile, the raiders consolidated their hold over areas from Zojila to Khalsi.

Colonel Thapa and his force at Skardu, consisting of elements of the 6th Battalion the Jammu and Kashmir Infantry were besieged by the Pakistan Army. The Pakistan Army decided to launch a multi-pronged aerial attack on this strategic location, but around it was also located the bomb depot of the Pakistan Army. Wapitis and Spitfire aircraft were employed to strike the
Fort. This meant going into the inner Himalayas across Nanga Parbat, causing destruction and returning to base.

Operation Si.EDGE, the code name for the operation, took place when 1 PATIALA (now 15 PUNJAB), then commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sukhdev Singh, was inducted from the north-east to Zojila to keep the Zojila Pass open and also to ensure a safe retreat of the State Forces back to Srinagar. On 21 May 1948, the troops moved out of Sonamarg and reached Zojila. A patrol was sent to probe the areas beyond Machhoi where it encountered heavy Pakistani fire. The Battalion marched against all odds in the most inhospitable terrain, through the snow and facing the odd sniper bullets. Most of the fighting took place at heights varying from 12,000 - 15,000 feet.

The Pakistanis managed to occupy the heights overlooking Gumri and Machhoi and launched a series of attacks on all positions held by 1 PATIALA. For four months, 1 PATIALA held on to its position, but it soon became clear that clearing Zojila required a bigger effort and thus Operation DUCK was launched.

The plan entailed moving along the Suru River and capture of Lasaria. One battalion was to capture Dras and the other battalion to capture Kargil. The Brigade concentrated at Khanabal. However, 3rd Battalion the Jat Regiment had to move elsewhere and it was unable to join the Brigade on 28 August 1948. Thereupon, the plan was revised. Two battalions were to capture Dras via Botkulan Ganj, Mushko Nala and 80r. 5th Battalion the Maratha Light Infantry was to tackle Zojila when the main thrust came into contact with the Pakistanis at Pindras. 'A' Company of 1st Battalion the 5th Gorkha Rifles was to move along the banks of the Suru towards Kargil as a diversionary attack.

1st Battalion the 5th Gorkha Rifles captured Botkulan Ganj after a frontal attack and started its advance along Mushko. However, when it reached 80r it was found to be occupied by the Pakistanis in great numbers. Since no progress could be made on this axis, the Battalion firm in around
80r. The diversionary attack along the Suru River could not be undertaken, because of inclement weather conditions. The Pakistanis had deployed almost a battalion to counter the Indian thrust. The defences had been well prepared and the Pakistanis were strongly dug in. They had occupied important heights overlooking the Zojila Pass. They occupied Chabutra, Mukand Ridge and Machine Gun Ridge. 5th Battalion the Maratha Light Infantry had, on 6 September 1948, captured Mukand Ridge but had to fall back due to a Pakistani counter-attack. On 13 September 1948 Zojila was again tackled by simultaneous attacks put in by 5th Maratha Light Infantry on Mukund Ridge and 3rd Battalion the Jat Regiment on Chabutra. However, not much success was achieved.

With the failure of two well planned attacks on Zojila by 77 Parachute Brigade, the chances of dislodging Pakistanis from these positions appeared to be remote and the situation became desperate. It was imperative to capture Zojila before the onset of winter; otherwise the Pakistanis would consolidate their defences. By now it was known that there were only a few courses of action available. Thus was born an idea, that of employment of tanks.

It was decided that tanks would have to be employed for the battle of Zojila. The employment of tanks in mountainous terrain as obtained in Jammu and Kashmir was unheard of, more so in high altitudes and glaciated areas such as those of Zojila. Apart from difficult conditions, there were the problems of maintaining surprise. Lieutenant Colonel Rajinder Singh "Sparrow", Commanding Officer, 7 Light Cavalry was asked for his views. In his usual cavalier manner, he replied confidently, "Yes I can, and it will be done".

7 Light Cavalry less a squadron concentrated at Baltal on 24 October 1948. There were several problems now facing the Commanding Officer such as lack of tracks, maintenance of surprise and others. But each man carried out his task with grit and determination. Major Thangaraju made the tracks
in record time. Infantry troops winched up the tanks. All of them were determined to achieve the impossible.

Trial runs were carried out by a move of tanks on 19 October 1949 and thus were set the stage for Operation BISON. The outline of the plan was:

- 5 Maratha Light Infantry was to take over all positions from 1 PATIALA.
- On D Day at 1000 hours the tanks and armoured cars of 7 Light Cavalry were to advance up to Gumri and neutralise the Pakistani position and probe towards Machhoi.
- 'A' Company of 1 PATIALA was to move in covered troop carriers at night for local protection of tanks.
- 1/5 Gorkha Rifles was to capture Mukand Ridge and Chabutra and the remaining Battalion, 1 PATIALA to capture Machine Gun Ridge.
- 4 Rajput was to act as Brigade reserve.
- D Day was planned for 19 October but heavy snowfall resulted in its postponement to 25 October, then to 29 October and finally to 1 November 1948.

There was no let up in the weather conditions as a blizzard persisted but no further postponement was possible. The ground conditions had by now become worse and in view of the difficulty of an infantry assault, it was decided to employ tanks initially, to be followed by 1/5 Gorkha Rifles, who were to occupy the lower slopes of Mukund Ridge. 1 PATIALA was to pass through and capture Machhoi. The artillery opened up at 1030 hours and the tanks began their advance. The Pakistanis were taken completely by surprise. By 1 November at 1700 hours 1/5 Gorkha Rifles reached Gumri base. On 2 November, 1 PATIALA put in an attack on Machhoi and captured it by 1200 hours. The Rajputs passed through 1 PATIALA and captured Matiyan on 3 November at 1500 hours. Beyond that there was stiff resistance and tanks had
to be brought in to destroy the bunkers and defensive positions. Thereafter, infantry troops attacked and captured its objective. Dras fell the same day. By about 23 November, Kargil was captured.

While the battle raged in Kargil, 2/8 Gorkha Rifles, which had been defending Leh, advanced along the Indus front. On 24 November 1948 a small column of the Battalion and local Leh militia entered Kargil and completed the link up.

With the recapture of Kargil it was decided to further exploit and capture Marol. A column of 2/8 Gorkha Rifles that had moved along the Indus met with stiff resistance three miles short of Marol. Further progress along the entire front came to a standstill due to the ceasefire, which became effective on New Year's Eve - 31 December 1948.

Thus ended Operation HIMALAYA, the stretch from Zojila to Khalsi abounds in tales of courage and the leadership of Officers, JCOs and NCOs. 4 Rajput and 77 Parachute Brigade while advancing on the road Zojila-Kargil took harbour near Pindras. In the morning they found the ridge occupied in sizeable strength and our troops fell back. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Girdhari gave a kick to each of his commanders and showered the choicest of abuses on his troops. Thereafter, he personally led the attack and this time the Rajputs did not fail. Another incident that speaks of the bravery of the leaders is of 1/5 Gorkha Rifles. While advancing to Kargil, the advance element came under fire from Khera Bridge, four miles short of Kargil. The bridge had been completely burnt down. Subedar Harka Bahadur made an improvised raft and crossed the Shingo River and drove away the raiders. Yet another instance of bravery was that of a civilian porter who evacuated a wounded JCO at great personal risk.

The Ceasefire Line as it pertained to the Kargil Sector ran south of Point 13,620, Marol and Chalunka.
List of PVC Awardees:

- Major Somnath Sharma, 4 Kumaon, 3 November 1947, Badgam, Kashmir (posthumous).
- Naik Jadunath Singh, 1 Rajput, 13 October 1948, Naushera, Kashmir, (posthumous).
- Second Lieutenant Rama Ragobha Rane, Bombay Engineers, 8 April 1948, Naushera - Rajauri, Kashmir.

Major Somnath Sharma

Maj Somnath Sharma of the 4th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment was the first soldier of independent India to win the coveted award of the newly constituted Param Vir Chakra for his supreme sacrifice and outstanding gallantry in action against the Pakistanis near Badgam village close to the Srinagar airfield in Kashmir on the 3rd of November 1947.

Naik Jadunath Singh

Nk Jadunath Singh was the third son of Shri Birbal Singh Rathore and Smt Jamuna Kanwar. Shri Birbal Singh was a poor farmer in a remote village Khajuri, in Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. Born in 1926, Jadunath was one of eight children -seven brothers and one sister - and did not have the fortune of having a good education.
He studied till class 4 in the village school and spent a lot of his time in helping his family in their agricultural work in the farm. He was the champion of the village in wrestling. He showed strong character from his very early days and was soon nicknamed in the village as "Hanuman Bhagat Bal Brahmachari". True to his name he never married.

He was enrolled into the Rajput Regiment on 21 November 1941 at the Regimental Centre, Fategarh. After completing his training he was assigned to the 1st Battalion of the Rajput Regiment (now 4 Guards). He took part in the Second World War showing gallantry and was promoted to the rank of Nk.

**Company Havildar Major Piru Singh**

**CHM Piru Singh**, son of Shri Lal Singh, was born in village Beri, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan on 20 May 1918. He was enrolled in 6 Rajputana Rifles on 20 May 1936.

During the Jammu and Kashmir operations, the Pakistani raiders mounted a strong counter offensive in Tithwal sector in July 1948. It forced the Indian troops to vacate their forward positions across the Kishanganga and take their position on the Tithwal ridge. It was at this time that 6 Rajputana Rifles was moved from Uri to strengthen 163 Brigade for its offensive in the sector.

**Lance Naik Karam Singh**

**I/Nk Karam Singh**, son of Shri Uttam Singh was born on 15 September 1915 in village Malian, Sangrur, Punjab. He was enrolled in 1 Sikh on 15 September 1941. He fought in the Second World War and earned a Military Medal.

During the Jammu & Kashmir operations in the summer of 1948 the Indian Army made
substantial gains in the Tithwal sector and finally captured Tithwal on 23 May 1948. The Pakistani troops fled in utter confusion across the Kishanganga, but recovered quickly from this shock. They reorganised their forces and mounted a fierce counter-attack forcing the Indian troops to withdraw from their positions across the Kishanganga. They finally settled on the Tithwal ridge.

2nd Lieutenant Rama Raghoba Rane

2/Lt Rama Raghoba Rane, son of Shri RP Rane, was born on 26 June 1918, in village Chendia, North Kanara, Maharashtra. He was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers on 15 December 1947. He retired as a Maj in 1968 and had earned 5 Mention-in-Despatches.

During the Jammu & Kashmir operations, Jhangar was lost to the Pakistanis in December 1947. It was later recaptured on 18 March 1948. The Indian troops planned an advance from Naushera to Rajauri to protect the inhabitants from the atrocities of the raiders. Half way lay Chingas, on the old Mughal route to Kashmir.

UN Resolution - 13 August 1948

PART I

Cease-Fire Order

The Governments of India and Pakistan agree that their respective High Commanders will issue separately and simultaneously a cease-fire order to apply to all forces under their control in the State of Jammu and Kashmir as of the earliest practicable date or dates to be mutually agreed upon within four days after these proposals have been accepted by both Governments.

The High Commanders of the Indian and Pakistan forces agree to refrain from taking any measures that might augment the military potential of the
forces under their control in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. (For the purpose of these proposals 'forces under their control' shall be considered to include all forces, organised and unorganised, fighting or participating in hostilities on their respective sides.)

The Commanders-in-Chief of the Forces of India and Pakistan shall promptly confer regarding any necessary local changes in present dispositions, which may facilitate the cease-fire.

In its discretion and as the Commission may find practicable the Commission will appoint military observers who under the authority of the Commission and with the co-operation of both Commands will supervise the observance of the cease-fire order.

The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan agree to appeal to their respective peoples to assist in creating and maintaining an atmosphere favourable to the promotion of future negotiations.

PART II

Truce Agreement

Simultaneously with the acceptance of the proposal for the immediate cessation of hostilities as outlined in Part I, both Governments accept the following principles as a basis for the formulation of a truce agreement, the details of which shall be worked out in discussion between their Representatives and the Commission.

As the presence of troops of Pakistan in the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes a material change in the situation since it was represented by the Government of Pakistan before the Security Council, the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from that State.

The Government of Pakistan will use its best endeavour to secure the withdrawal from the State of Jammu and Kashmir of tribesmen and Pakistan nationals not normally resident therein who have entered the state for the purpose of fighting.
Pending a final solution, the territory evacuated by the Pakistan troops will be administered by the local authorities under the surveillance of the Commission.

When the Commission shall have notified the Government of India that the tribesmen and Pakistan nationals referred to in Part II A-2 thereof have withdrawn thereby terminating the situation which was represented by the Government of India to the Security Council as having occasioned the presence of Indian forces in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and further, that the Pakistan forces are being withdrawn from the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Government of India agrees to begin to withdraw the bulk of their forces from that State in stages to be agreed upon with the Commission.

Pending the acceptance of the conditions for a final settlement of the situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Government will maintain within the lines existing at the moment of the cease-fire those forces of its Army which in agreement with the Commission are considered necessary to assist local authorities in the observance of law and order. The Commission will have observers stationed where it deems necessary.

The Government of India will undertake to ensure that the Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will take all measures within their power to make it publicly known that peace, law and order will be safeguarded and that all human and political rights will be guaranteed.

Upon signature, the full text of the Truce Agreement or a communiqué containing the principles thereof as agreed upon between the two Governments and the Commission will be made public.

**PART III**

The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that end, upon acceptance of the Truce Agreement both Governments agree to enter into consultations with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression will be assured.
UN Resolution -5 January 1949

The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan

Having received from the Governments of India and Pakistan in Communications, dated 23 December and 25 December 1948, respectively their acceptance of the following principles which are supplementary to the Commission's Resolution of 13 August 1948;

1. The question of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite.

2. A plebiscite will be held when it shall be found by the Commission that the cease-fire and truce arrangements set forth in Parts I and II of the Commission's resolution of 13 August 1948, have been carried out and arrangements for the plebiscite have been completed.

3 a. The Secretary-General of the United Nations will, in agreement with the Commission, nominate a Plebiscite Administrator who shall be a personality of high international standing and commanding general confidence. He will be formally appointed to office by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

b. The Plebiscite Administrator shall derive from the State of Jammu and Kashmir the powers he considers necessary for organising and conducting the plebiscite and for ensuring the freedom and impartiality of the plebiscite.

c. The Plebiscite Administrator shall have authority to appoint such staff or assistants and observers as he may require.

4. a. After implementation of Parts I and II of the Commission's resolution of 13 August 1948, and when the Commission is satisfied that peaceful conditions have been restored in the State, the Commission and the Plebiscite Administrator will determine, in consultation with the Government of India, the
final disposal of Indian and State armed forces, such disposal to be with due regard to the security of the State and the freedom of the plebiscite.

b. As regards the territory referred to in A2 of Part II of the resolution of 13 August, final disposal of the armed forces in that territory will be determined by the Commission and the Plebiscite Administrator in consultation with the local authorities.

5. All civil and military authorities within the State and the principal elements of the State will be required to co-operate with the Plebiscite Administrator in the preparation for and the holding of the plebiscite.

6. a. All citizens of the State who have left it on account of the disturbances will be invited and be free to return and to exercise all their rights as such citizens. For the purpose of facilitating repatriation there shall be appointed two Commissions, one composed of nominees of India and the other of nominees of Pakistan.

The Commissions shall operate under the direction of the Plebiscite Administrator. The Governments of India and Pakistan and all authorities within the State of Jammu and Kashmir will collaborate with the Plebiscite Administrator in putting this provision to effect.

b. All persons (other than citizens of the State) who on or since 15 August 1947, have entered it for other than lawful purpose, shall be required to leave the State.

7. All authorities within the State of Jammu and Kashmir will undertake to ensure in collaboration with the Plebiscite Administrator that:

a. There is no threat, coercion or intimidation, bribery other undue influence on the voters in plebiscite;
b. No restrictions are placed on legitimate political activity throughout the State. All subjects of the State, regardless of creed, caste or party, shall be safe and free in expressing their views and in voting on the question of the accession of the State to India or Pakistan.

There shall be freedom of the Press, speech and assembly and freedom of travel in the State, including freedom of lawful entry and exit;

c. All political prisoners are released;

d. Minorities in all parts of the State are accorded adequate protection; and

e. There is no victimization.

8. The Plebiscite Administrator may refer to the United Commission for India and Pakistan problems on which he may require assistance, and the Commission may in its discretion call upon the Plebiscite Administrator to carry out on its behalf any of the responsibilities with which it has been entrusted.

9. At the conclusion of the plebiscite, the Plebiscite Administrator shall report the result thereof to the Commission and to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. The Commission shall then certify to the Security Council whether the plebiscite has or has not been free and impartial.

10. Upon the signature of the truce agreement the details of the foregoing proposals will be elaborated in the consultation envisaged in Part III of the Commission's resolution of 13 August 1948. The Plebiscite Administrator will be fully associated in these consultations.

Commends the Governments of India and Pakistan for their prompt action in ordering a cease-fire to take effect from one minute before midnight of first January 1949, pursuant to the agreement arrived at as provided for by the Commission's resolution of 13 August 1948; and

Resolves, to return in the immediate future to the sub-continent to discharge the responsibilities imposed upon it by the resolution of 13 August 1948, and by the foregoing principles.