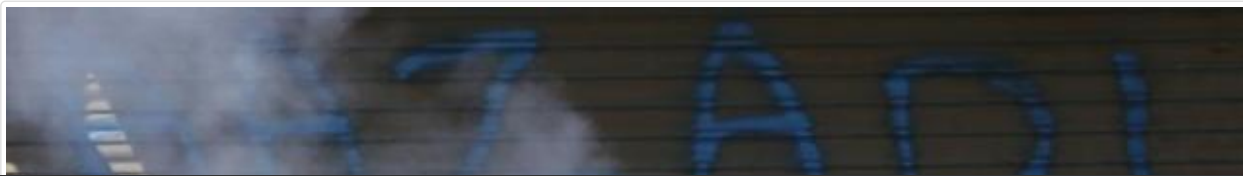


## Settling the Kashmir problem: What Jayaprakash Narayan said in 1964

The Kashmir problem should be solved according to the “ideals and fundamental principles that guided

**EDITORIALS** Updated: Sep 26, 2016 18:40 IST

**ht** Jayaprakash Narayan



india cities opinion world cricket entertainment gurungram it's viral ht-weekend videos health real-estate lifestyle tech



A policeman fires a tear gas shell on Kashmiri protesters in front of a graffiti on shutters that reads "Freedom our goal," in Srinagar.(AP)

*The Kashmir problem should be solved according to the “ideals and fundamental*

top new



Pr  
K  
a:  
e:



IA  
tr  
Ti  
ni

**LIVE** India in West Indies, 3 ODI Series, 2019

**WEST INDIES** 9/0 5.4 ovs

**Play interrupted**

**INDIA** Yet To Bat



*Jayaprakash Narayan in Hindustan Times on April 20, 1964. As India debates the Kashmir question again, here we republish his article.*

f  
bF  
M  
B

The story of Kashmir is an account of confused aims, unsure methods, insincere deals. From the beginning, Kashmir has been the Prime Minister's concern. Yet when Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed from the Prime Ministership and detained, Mr Nehru happened to know of the event just as any other Indian citizen did. That is only one example of the incredible manner in which the Kashmir question has been handled. The present ballyhoo over Sheikh Abdullah's statements raises the doubt if the old story was not going to be repeated again.

After 11 years of dilly-dallying the Sheikh was at last released. But again there seems to be no well-thought-out policy behind that belated decision. Surprise and pain have been expressed at Sheikh Saheb's statements. Unless the gentlemen concerned had deliberately hidden their heads in the sand, they could have saved themselves these emotional upsets. Sheikh Abdullah has said nothing that was not expected from him. Happily, the one same voice in the ruling party is that of the Prime Minister himself.

### Why we must listen to Jayaprakash Narayan on Kashmir: Ramachandra Guha

#### Human Problem

What, after all, is the substance of Sheikh Abdullah's statement? This, that the future of Kashmir has to be decided by the people of Kashmir, and that it has to be done in a manner that the dispute about it between India and Pakistan is amicably ended. With a little imagination it was possible to see that this clear and principled stand of the Kashmir leader opened for India a wonderful opportunity that could be exploited to the advantage of all concerned. What actually is happening, however, is parrot-like reiteration of slogans that carry no conviction in any dispassionate quarters.

One of these slogans is that the accession of Kashmir to India is final and irrevocable,. The Sheikh has questioned that, and it is for impartial lawyers to decide the issue. But the vital point to keep in mind is that it is not by legal advocacy that a human problem like that of Kashmir can ever be settled. Indeed, it was such realization that had prompted the original promise of the Prime Minister to ascertain the wishes of the people.

At this point two further slogans are raised:

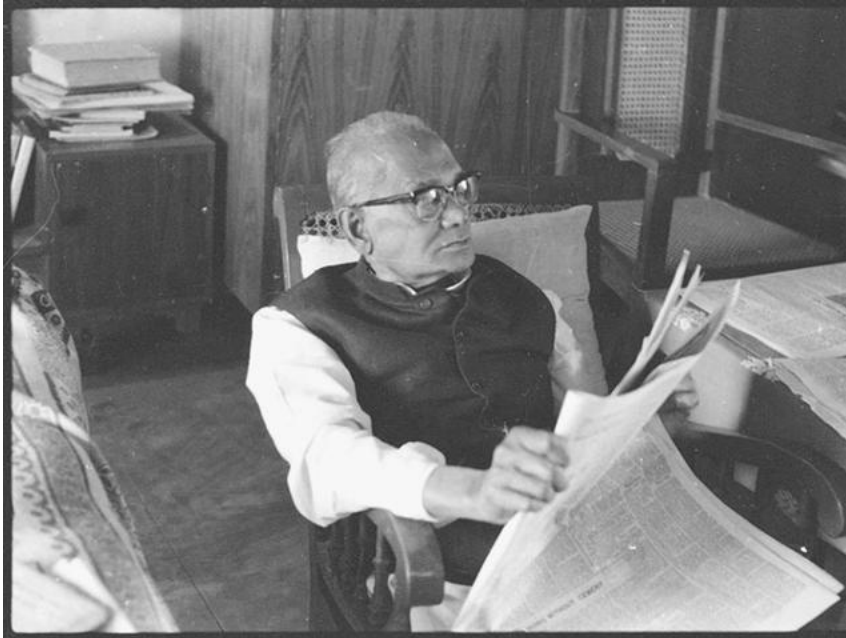
- a) The people of Kashmir have already expressed their will at three general elections.
- b) If the people of Kashmir are allow to express their will, it will be the beginning of the end of the Indian nation. Both, to my mind, are baseless slogans. The elections in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest were neither fair nor free. If that has to be disproved, it can be done by an impartial inquiry and not just by official assertions. Delhi seems to believe that by auto-suggestion it can establish any fact it pleases.

I may be lacking in patriotism or other virtues, but it has always seemed to me to be a lie to say that the people of Kashmir had already decided to integrate themselves with India. They might do so, but have not done so yet. Apart from the quality of the elections, the future of the State

trending

Kashmir Live U  
India vs West Ir  
Kulbhushan Jac  
Ghulam Nabi A  
Prime Minister  
Yuvraj Singh

needed, it has come in the form of Sheikh Abdulla's emphatic views who, to put it at the least, is as representative of the people as any other Kashmiri leader.



The story of Kashmir is an account of confused aims, unsure methods, insincere deals, wrote Jayaprakash Narayan in 1964. (KK Chawla/ HT file photo)

### Mockery of Nation

Lastly, if we are so sure of the verdict of the people, why are we so opposed to giving them another opportunity to reiterate it? The answer given is that this would start the process of disintegration of the county. Few things have been said in the course of this controversy more silly than this one. The assumption behind the argument is that the states of India are held together by force and not by the sentiment of a common nationality. It is an assumption that makes a mockery of the Indian Nation and a tyrant of the Indian State.

Threats have been held out that should Sheikh Abdullah misbehave, the law would take its course. The law had taken its course for eleven years and the issue remained unsettled. It is not likely to achieve more in the future. It is remarkable how the freedom fighters of yesterday begin so easily to imitate the language of the imperialists.

### Forgotten Facts

The last and final slogan raised in the ballyhoo is that there is no Kashmir question at all, and that if there was one at any time, it has now been settled once for all. Kashmir is a part of India and that is a fact of history, they say. That, I think, is the worst form of auto-suggestion.

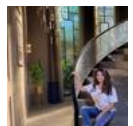
The slogan-raisers forget that less than half of the State of Jammu and Kashmir is under the occupation of Pakistan. Has that been accepted as a settled fact? If so, when and where? If not, how is that issue of Kashmir settled, except in the private thoughts of those who believe that "we shall keep what we have and 'they' shall keep what they have".

Secondly, the issue is still pending before the Security Council and UN observers are still posted in Kashmir. Thirdly, here is a leader of stature of Sheikh Abdullah who clearly states

don't m



Ti  
aj  
oj  
R.



Si  
K  
lu



A  
ty  
K.  
b.



H  
re  
ir

Therefore, as a humble servant of this country, I plead earnestly that instead of trying to take shelter in a fool's paradise of our own making, let us have the courage to face facts and deal with them on the basis of the ideals and fundamental principles that guided our freedom movement. After all, Sheikh Abdullah has not said anything that shuts the door to a reasoned and amicable settlement. All he has done is to envisage the unity and integrity of the original State of Jammu and Kashmir and the ascertainment of the wishes of the people of the re-united State in a manner to be agreed upon. He has indicated that a plebiscite need not be the only way of ascertaining the people's wishes and has mentioned free and fair election as one method. That is not a stand that does not provide a meeting ground for India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

### Nehru's Faith

It was encouraging to find that the Prime Minister in his reply to the foreign affairs debate boldly affirmed his faith in Indo-Pakistan friendship, envisaging even some kind of a constitutional tie, and was generous enough to concede that mistakes had been made by both sides. Recent events have proved that the partition of India was a grave mistake and it has failed to solve any problem. However, there is now the incontestable fact of two sovereign nations.

But at the same time the history of the post-independence years has proved another incontestable fact, namely, that neither India nor Pakistan can live and grow unless there is friendship and co-operation between them. The lack of such relationship between them has, among other things, upset the power-balance in South and South-east Asia, depriving the sub-continent of the role that history and geography had destined it to play. The result was the tilting of the balance in favour of China--a most unhealthy state of affairs.

The Kashmir question has to be viewed in this broad perspective.

The question whether settlement of the Kashmir problem would establish friendship between India and Pakistan may be debated, but it cannot be denied that it will go a long way towards that goal, as also create international conditions that will necessarily promote that friendship. I do fervently hope that our leaders would have the vision and statesmanship that this historic moment demands.

First Published: Sep 26, 2016 18:35 IST

---

#### more from editorials



Pakistan's response will yield it little diplomatically | HT editorial



The ascendancy of Amit Shah | HT editorial

