

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to the Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir¹

New Delhi
27 October 1947

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

Shri V.P. Menon returned from Jammu this evening and informed me of the talks there. He gave me the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement which you had signed, and I saw also your letter to the Governor General of India. Allow me to congratulate you on the wise decisions that you have taken. I earnestly hope that they will lead not only to the effective protection of the Kashmir State in the present, but also to the freedom and well-being of Kashmir and India as a whole.

2. I am sending you separately the Governor General's reply to your letter. As you know, we sent Indian Army troops by air to Srinagar today. The decision to send them was made yesterday afternoon. Our resources in aircraft are limited. Nevertheless we strained every nerve and got all the available planes and sent a considerable body of men to Srinagar today. I must express my great satisfaction of the manner in which this difficult piece of organizational work was done at this end. It involved working hard, nearly the whole night. Soon after arrival in Srinagar the troops proceeded on the Baramula Road and came in contact with the enemy raiders and held them at Baramula. To have been transported from Delhi to Srinagar and to be in action within a few hours has been a remarkable achievement.

3. Tomorrow morning we shall send more troops by air and we propose to continue sending reinforcements by air and road. By road we would like to send them to Jammu, but we are not quite clear about the state of the road and I suggest that every effort might be made to put this road in proper conditions within the next two or three days. This road is going to be the chief life-line for our troops and for supplies. It is essential and urgent, therefore, that the road be in good condition and the river that has to be crossed should be bridged. Naturally there is no time for any permanent arrangements. Something should be done temporarily to make the road and the river passable.

¹ J. N. Collection.

4. I trust that there are enough motor vehicles in Jammu to take our troops and supplies to Srinagar from Jammu whenever necessary. Motor transport should also be made available to our troops in Srinagar. It is impossible to send it there. We shall try, of course, to send petrol.

5. It is our intention to use some aeroplanes in the valley. For this it is necessary to have some kind of aviation petrol depot in Srinagar. We shall try to send the aviation petrol there.

6. I am sorry we have been unable to send relief to the pockets of Kashmir State troops which have been isolated in Jammu Province. We felt that we must use every aircraft available for transport of troops to Srinagar. Tomorrow also we want to use every plane for troop transport. Day after tomorrow we shall endeavour to send food supplies to these isolated pockets in Jammu province.

7. The arrival of our troop, in Srinagar undoubtedly saved the situation at the very last moment. Probably a day or two's delay would have been fatal. But the task is still very difficult and we have to put all our strength and energy into it. We propose to do so.

8. The way the people of Kashmir, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh, are facing the situation and preparing to defend their country is most heartening. I trust that in this defence we shall give a demonstration to all India and to the world how we can function unitedly and in a non-communal way in Kashmir. In this way this terrible crisis in Kashmir may well lead to a healing of the deep wound which India has suffered in recent months.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

Source: Collected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Volume 4