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# Liaquat-Nehru pact

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## Why in News:

On the 70th death anniversary of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, we take a look at the post-Partition pact between India and Pakistan in 1950, which compelled him to resign from Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet.

## A Brief about Syama Prasad Mookerjee

Syama Prasad Mookerjee was born on 7th July, 1901 in Calcutta in the Bengal Province.

He earned a B.A. (Hons) in English, an M.A. in Bengali, and a B.L., all from Calcutta University. In 1926, he was called to the English Bar, and became a qualified barrister.

Upon returning to India, he entered politics. In 1929, he was elected to the Bengal state legislature as a member of the Congress; however, he resigned from the party a year later due to ideological clashes with the leadership.

Mookerjee was elected to the Constituent Assembly from West Bengal on a Congress Party ticket.

He intervened in several debates, including those on minorities, regional languages, and the effect of the Muslim League's absence from the Assembly.

Post-independence, Mookerjee became a prominent member of the Opposition. In 1951, he founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh

During his time in Parliament, Mookerjee was a strong opponent of Article 370. He launched a [hunger strike](#) in protest against the Union Government's policies in the state of Jammu and Kashmir

**About Nehru-Liaquat pact** The Nehru-Liaquat Pact, also known as the Delhi Pact, was a bilateral agreement signed between India and Pakistan in order to provide a framework for the treatment of minorities in the two countries.

The need for such a pact was felt by minorities in both countries following Partition, which was accompanied by massive communal rioting.

In 1950, as per some estimates, over a million Hindus and Muslims migrated from and to East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh), amid communal tension and riots such as the 1950 East Pakistan riots and the Noakhali riots.

## Key agreements under the pact

The Governments of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that each shall ensure, to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality

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Members of the minorities shall have equal opportunity with members of the majority community to participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other office, and to serve in their country's civil and armed forces. Both Governments declare these rights to be fundamental and undertake to enforce them effectively

The Prime Minister of India has drawn attention to the fact that these rights are guaranteed to all minorities in India by its Constitution

The Prime Minister of Pakistan has pointed out that similar provision exists in the Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan

Both Governments wish to emphasise that the allegiance and loyalty of the minorities is to the State of which they are citizens, and that it is to the Government of their own State that they should look for the redress of their grievances

### **SP Mukherjee's issue with the Pact**

Mookerjee had initially been an advocate for a united India, but as Partition became increasingly inevitable, he shifted his focus towards advocating for a divided Bengal, with West Bengal specifically meant for Hindu Bengalis. His subsequent politics continued on these lines.

Thus, when the Delhi Pact was signed, promising minority rights and the setting up of minority commissions in both India and Pakistan, Mookerjee was incensed. Looking at the huge influx of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan, he felt that the Pact was a betrayal of the logical outcome of the Partition – a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan.

He felt that the Pact would essentially leave Hindus in East Bengal at the mercy of the Pakistani state.

Instead, he argued for a systematic exchange of population and property at the governmental level between East Bengal and the states of Tripura, Assam, West Bengal and Bihar – granting the Hindu minority in East Bengal an opportunity to settle in India while pushing the Muslim minorities in India to East Bengal.

### **Formation of Jan Sangh**

By 1950, Mookerjee had also fallen out with the Hindu Mahasabha, an organisation which he found “myopic” in its approach to national problems.

Thus, after he resigned from his ministership, he turned his focus to starting a new party. With the help of the RSS, he founded the Bharatiya Jan Sangh in 1951, a party which contested and won three seats in the 1952 elections.

Some of the issues that the Jan Sangh raised back in the 1950s such as the promotion of a Uniform Civil Code and banning cow slaughter remain at the top of BJP's poll agenda today. Notably, the abrogation of Article 370 which gave Jammu and Kashmir special status was seen as many as the realisation of Mookerjee's biggest dream.