

2025

# Operation Sindoor vs Operation Bunyan al Marsoos

*Pakistan India Military Confrontation and its reverberations*

India Program

5/22/2025

## **Special Research Report**

Prepared by: India Program  
Institute of Regional Studies

Edited by: Ms Maryam Mastoor, Research Analyst

Compiled by: Ms Asma Abbasi, Muhammad Hassan Ali and Saqlain Haider, Research Interns at  
India Program

## Table of Contents

Background .....	4
India's Belligerent Actions .....	5
Pakistan's Measured Response to Indian Aggression.....	7
War of Narratives: Competing Media Posturing in the Crisis .....	9
International Media's Varied Perspectives .....	10
Response of the International Community .....	11
Ceasefire and Lingering Tensions (May 12-13, 2025).....	12
Claims and Confirmations .....	13
Likelihood of Pakistan India Dialogue.....	16
What Next? .....	16

# BACKGROUND

One of the most serious escalations between the nuclear-armed rivals since the Kargil conflict in 1999, was the military clash between India and Pakistan in May 2025, ignited by an attack at Pahalgam, a tourist spot in the valley of Indian held Jammu and Kashmir, which costed 26 lives. Indian officials immediately blamed Pakistan for the Pahalgam attack. In response, Islamabad denied the accusations, criticized opaque investigative practices, and demanded an impartial international investigation into the tragedy.

India responded with a series of swift military operations, including targeted bombings on suspected militant hideouts and critical facilities deep within Pakistani territory, rather than holding talks or allowing an unbiased investigation to continue. Pakistan responded harshly and quickly to these strikes, which resulted in numerous civilian casualties, including the bombardment of homes and places of worship in Bahawalpur and Muridke.

In a display of technological superiority and deterrence, the Pakistan Air Force responded by bringing down several Indian fighter jets and intercepting a swarm of Israeli-made drones that were purportedly launched by New Delhi. With both countries putting airbases on high alert, closing civilian airports, and exchanging artillery across the border, the situation quickly became more intense. International stakeholders were alarmed by the confrontation's potential to turn into an unpredictable conflict. This gave way to intense diplomatic engagements of over 30 countries. De-escalation efforts were greatly aided by the United Nations, the United Kingdom, and especially the United States. The table below compares the significant actions undertaken by both nations during this critical 48-hour period from where both countries reached the brink of war .

**Table 1**

India's Actions (April 23)	Pakistan's Response (April 24)
Suspended all bilateral trade with Pakistan	Expelled Indian staff from Islamabad
Halted issuance of visas for Pakistani nationals	Downgraded diplomatic ties with India
Recalled Indian diplomatic officials from Islamabad	Lodged protest with the United Nations and OIC

Labelled Pahalgam attack as “Pakistan-sponsored terrorism” in international statements	Rejected India’s claims and termed them “fabricated and politically motivated”
Increased military alert along the Line of Control (LoC)	Warned of “proportionate response” to any cross-border aggression

Beijing kept a watchful eye on developments because of the strategic ramifications for China's western frontiers and investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). However, China had been instrumental in providing necessary assistance in fighting against Indian aggression. By mid-May, talks on troop pullout from border areas and the creation of direct military-to-military contact lines had resulted in a temporary ceasefire accord. Notwithstanding the termination of hostilities, the crisis brought to light the shortcomings of the current regional security frameworks for handling such crises as well as the persistent dangers of nuclear brinkmanship in South Asia. It reiterated how urgently third-party mediation procedures and confidence-building measures (CBMs), are needed. In the following sections details of combat, role of media and international community, along with repercussions of the combat shall be discussed.

## INDIA’S BELLIGERENT ACTIONS

### Pre-War Posturing Through Nationwide Drills (May 7-9, 2025)

In the days leading up to direct combat, India began a concerning sequence of national military drills. An unprecedented mobilization of civilian infrastructure for war scenarios began on May 7 when the Indian government authorized extensive air raid drills across twelve border states.<sup>1</sup> These exercises featured mass emergency alerts sent to more than 500 million mobile devices at once, forced blackout exercises in key cities, and the activation of nuclear shelter systems in Mumbai and New Delhi. The scope and timing of these drills, which were held during prime nighttime hours within a few kilometers from the Pakistani border, constituted a blatant operational and psychological provocation. According to military analysts, these exercises went well beyond standard preparation, testing civilian reaction mechanisms under duress and mimicking full-scale war scenarios.<sup>2</sup>

### Indiscriminate Missile Strikes and Drone Warfare (May 8, 2025)

<sup>1</sup> "Indian States Told to Conduct Air Raid Drills," *Dawn*, May 6, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1908697>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

When Indian soldiers attacked residential areas in Pakistan with precision missile strikes in the early hours of May 8, the conflict reached a perilous new chapter. Four BrahMos cruise missiles hit the town of Muridke at 03:17 AM local time.<sup>3</sup> One of the missiles damaged the Jamia Masjid Ummul Qura during morning prayers. The main prayer hall of the mosque was reduced to rubble, and 31 individuals were killed instantaneously. Dozens were injured.<sup>4</sup> There had been considerable damage of infrastructure in Muridke and Bahawalpur.<sup>5</sup>

### Damage in Muridke



Muridke: Shrapnel from Indian munitions is displayed amid the debris of destroyed structures at the Government Health and Educational complex after Indian strikes; while (right) rescue workers recover a body from a damaged building at the site of a suspected Indian missile attack.—M. Arif / White Star

Source: Dawn. Available at: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1909295>

Impact patterns showed intentional targeting rather than collateral damage, and forensic examination of missile fragments and trajectory data verified that the weapons were fired from Indian territory. International humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention's prohibits against destruction of civilian infrastructure. Hence, these laws were flagrantly violated by these acts<sup>6</sup>. India's operational doctrine was unsettlingly escalated by the strikes, which showed that the country was prepared to target population centers and places of worship as part of its strategic calculations.

<sup>3</sup> "Deaths and Destruction in Bahawalpur, Muridke After Indian Strikes," *Dawn*, May 8, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1909295>.

<sup>4</sup> "Deaths and Destruction in Bahawalpur, Muridke After Indian Strikes," *Dawn*, May 8, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1909295>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*, Article 53, 12 August 1949, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-53>.

## Drone Warfare and Technological Escalation

India attempted to breach Pakistan's air defenses by deploying sophisticated unmanned systems in addition to its conventional strikes. The Indian military launched 25 Israeli-made Harop "suicide drones" from various locations along the Rajasthan border during the evening of May 8–9, 2025. With their 15 kg warheads and anti-radiation homing devices, these loitering weapons marked a dramatic technological advance in the war<sup>7</sup>. According to operational data, the drones' flight routes were meticulously designed for low-altitude penetration, and they were programmed to locate and destroy Pakistani air defense radar installations. Pakistan claimed it had shot down 25 Indian drones in recent hours.<sup>8</sup> Both India's increasing prowess in warfare and the limitations of such systems against layered air defenses were shown by this botched drone swarm attack. The deployment demonstrated the global scope of the intensifying conflict and was the first combat use of Israeli drone technology in South Asia.

## Strategic Implications and Doctrine Shifts

Crisis demonstrated profound changes in its strategic thinking and military strategy. A diverse approach to escalation was exhibited by the combination of precision conventional strikes (against civilian targets), advanced technological warfare (against civilian targets), and psychological operations (via mass civilian drills). This trio of capabilities implies that India had been intentionally pushing Pakistan's response thresholds while creating a cohesive warfighting doctrine that combines conventional and unconventional components. The Muridke bombings set a risky precedent for future conflicts, and the normalization of civilian targeting as part of strategic considerations is especially worrisome. These operations' methodical approach, exact timing, and geographic coordination, all in tandem point to deliberate planning as opposed to haphazard, crisis-driven actions. By reducing the threshold for conventional conflict and introducing new technology components, India might potentially speed up escalation cycles in future conflicts. These advances have drastically changed the risk calculus in South Asia.

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Soutik Biswas, The first drone war opens a new chapter in India-Pakistan conflict, *BBC*, 9 May, 2025

# PAKISTAN'S MEASURED RESPONSE TO INDIAN AGGRESSION

## Military Retaliation with Strategic Restraint

In response to India's provocations, Pakistan took measured military measures intended to show off its might without uncontrollably intensifying the conflict. The efficiency of the Pakistan Air Force's aerial defense systems was demonstrated when it successfully intercepted and shot down five Indian fighter jets that had breached Pakistani airspace<sup>9</sup>. Advanced missile systems, such as the Chinese-made HQ-9 surface-to-air batteries, were used in these Line of Control (LoC) battles<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, 26 carefully chosen Indian military installations, such as command centers and ammunition dumps close to the border, were the target of precision counterattacks by Pakistan<sup>11</sup>. In sharp contrast to India's indiscriminate attacks on Pakistani towns, these strikes were carried out with exceptional accuracy and completely avoided civilian areas.

## Diplomatic Offensive and International Support

In order to refute India's narrative and reveal what it presented as unprovoked aggression; Pakistan initiated a concerted and forceful diplomatic offensive outside of the battlefield. Islamabad promptly appealed to the United Nations and key world powers, recognizing the strategic significance of influencing public opinion, and demanded an independent, UN- supervised probe into the Pahalgam tragedy<sup>12</sup>. This action was intended to portray Pakistan as a responsible international actor dedicated to openness and the rule of law, in addition to challenging India's allegations.

When the U.S. State Department openly supported the notion of a neutral investigation, and Pakistan's demand unexpectedly attracted international attention. Tammy Bruce, a senior State Department official, said she supported an unbiased investigation into the circumstances that led to

---

<sup>9</sup>"Pakistan Downs 5 Indian Jets as Retaliation for Late-Night Strikes at 6 Sites: Officials," *Dawn*, May 8, 2025. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1908824/pakistan-downs-5-indian-jets-as-retaliation-for-late-night-strikes-at-6-sites-officials>.

<sup>10</sup>"China's Military Tech Faces Test in India-Pakistan Conflict," *CNN*, May 9, 2025. <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/05/09/china/china-military-tech-pakistan-india-conflict-intl-hnk>.

<sup>11</sup>"Pakistan Struck 26 Indian Military Sites in Response to Aggression: ISPR DG," *Dunya News*, May 12, 2025, <https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/883442-pakistan-struck-26-indian-military-sites-in-response-to-aggression-is>.

<sup>12</sup>"State Dept 'Supports' Pakistan's Call for Neutral Probe into Pahalgam," *Dawn*, May 9, 2025. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1909577/state-dept-supports-pakistans-call-for-neutral-probe-into-pahalgam>.



the attacks and stressed the need to break the cycle of retaliatory attacks. This endorsement put India in a challenging position globally and represented a major diplomatic victory for Islamabad, pushing New Delhi to face mounting calls for responsibility and restraint. India was further isolated in high-level diplomatic settings when the UK brought up the issue in the House of Commons, when Foreign Office Minister Hamish Falconer restated Prime Minister Keir Starmer's appeal for de-escalation and communication.<sup>13</sup>

## WAR OF NARRATIVES

### Indian Media's Escalatory Role

In the context of escalating tensions with Pakistan, Indian media played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion by deliberately minimizing disturbing data and reiterating official narratives. Prominent Indian news outlets significantly underreported the number of civilian casualties resulting from Indian airstrikes, instead depicting the deceased as terrorists involved in militant activities. This portrayal persisted despite Pakistani authorities' assertions that at least 34 individuals, including women and children, were killed<sup>14</sup>.

Concurrently, Indian social media and major media platforms became fertile grounds for misinformation. Among the false claims was an erroneous report alleging that the Indian Navy had destroyed Karachi Port, which was later refuted by the Karachi Port Trust, revealing that their social media account had been temporarily compromised.<sup>15, 16</sup> Another unfounded narrative accused Pakistan of attempting to attack the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a claim categorically denied by Pakistan's Foreign Office as baseless and inflammatory.<sup>17</sup> In addition, numerous fabricated reports emerged suggesting a coup in Pakistan, including rumours that Islamabad had fallen and Army Chief General Asim Munir had been detained. These were promptly refuted by independent fact-checkers and Pakistani officials.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "UK Parliament Debates India-Pakistan Conflict, Appeals for De-escalation," *National Herald India*, May 8, 2025, <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/international/uk-parliament-debates-india-pakistan-conflict-appeals-for-de-escalation>.

<sup>14</sup> "34 Civilians Killed in Indian Air Strikes, Says Pakistan," *Dawn*, May 17, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1912162>.

<sup>15</sup> "Social Media Erupts as Indian Media Falsely Claims Destroying Pakistan's Karachi Port," *Middle East Eye*, May 16, 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/trending/social-media-erupts-indian-media-falsely-claims-destroying-pakistan-karachi-port>.

<sup>16</sup> "Karachi Port Destroyed? 9 Fake Stories Pushed by Indian Media," *Geo News*, May 17, 2025, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/603813-karachi-port-destroyed-9-fake-stories-pushed-by-indian-media>.

<sup>17</sup> "Pakistan Rubbishes Indian Claim of Attack on Golden Temple," *The Express Tribune*, May 15, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2546862/pakistan-rubbishes-indian-claim-of-attack-on-golden-temple>.

<sup>18</sup> "India's Media Wages a War of Propaganda Against Pakistan," *TRT Global*, May 9, 2025, <https://trt.global/world/article/def29b7fa32f>.

In India, this period also witnessed a marked suppression of dissenting viewpoints. Authorities imposed internet shutdowns in Kashmir, issued legal threats to journalists who questioned the government's narrative, and rapidly erased or sanitized reports of Indian aircraft losses and unsuccessful drone strikes.<sup>19</sup> Collectively, these actions established a tightly controlled information environment that suppressed objective journalism while promoting a state-driven war narrative, significantly restricting the public's access to truthful and diverse perspectives.

### Pakistani Media's Responsible Posture

Pakistani media outlets took a very different track<sup>20</sup>, concentrating largely on reporting on transgressions of international law. In order to show how the assaults violated the Geneva Conventions, television networks invited weapons specialists to conduct in-depth investigations of missile debris and hit locations. In contrast to their Indian counterparts, Pakistani media substantiated the civilian death toll by prominently showcasing interviews with Muridke attack survivors<sup>21</sup>. It also recurrently refuted plethora of claims that were levelled by Indian media against Pakistan.

### International Media's Varied Perspectives

Varied analytical lenses were implied by international news organizations to analyze Indo Pak conflict. The geopolitical aspects were highlighted in *CNN's* coverage, with particular attention paid to China's possible role as a supplier of military equipment to Pakistan. Segments examined whether or not Chinese systems had made it possible for Pakistan to intercept drones successfully. With in-depth coverage of American mediation efforts and the conflict's economic effects, *Reuters* continued to keep a closer eye on diplomatic events. The backchannel communications between Washington and both capitals were initially reported by their journalists<sup>22</sup>. Notable for their on-the-ground verification efforts were European media outlets such as the BBC and AFP, who sent investigative teams to both sides of the border to independently verify damage estimates and fatality numbers. A

---

<sup>19</sup> Mujib Mashal and Hari Kumar, "India's Media Becomes a Megaphone for War, Spreading Misinformation," *The New York Times*, May 17, 2025,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/17/world/asia/india-news-media-misinformation.html>.

<sup>20</sup> "Army Chief Praises Pakistani Media for Responsible Role During Conflict with India," *The Express Tribune*, May 12, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2546250/army-chief-praises-pakistani-media-for-responsible-role-during-conflict-with-india>.

<sup>21</sup> *What Did the Public Witness When Indian Attacked Masjid in Muridke?*, YouTube video, posted by Dawn News English, May 8, 2025, <https://youtu.be/OtlRWXbBB9g>.

<sup>22</sup> Saeed Shah, Asif Shahzad, Shivam Patel, and Gibran Naiyyar Peshimam, "How India and Pakistan Pulled Back from the Brink with U.S.-Brokered Ceasefire," *Reuters*, May 13, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/how-india-pakistan-pulled-back-brink-with-us-brokered-ceasefire-2025-05-13/>.

more complex understanding of the situation was produced by this multifaceted international coverage than could be obtained from either nation's domestic media alone.

Different audiences' perceptions of the conflict were influenced by the conflicting narratives; Indian populations were given a narrative that concentrated on victory, Pakistani audiences were given a narrative that focused on victimhood and resistance, and international observers were given a more nuanced picture of reciprocal escalation with global ramifications. Later, ceasefire talks and attempts at postwar reconciliation were witnessed. However, lately, an article that appeared in *New York Times* lamented the 'amplification of falsehood by Indian media.'<sup>23</sup>

## RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

### United Nations: Urgent Calls for Restraint

Secretary-General António Guterres issued severe warnings about the potentially disastrous effects of further violence as the UN reacted quickly to the growing situation<sup>24</sup>. Sessions of the Emergency Security Council were called, but permanent members had conflicting interests, reaching a consensus was challenging. While the UN's special envoys diligently labored behind the scenes to prevent further escalation, the main accomplishment of the organization was keeping lines of communication open between the nuclear-armed neighbors<sup>25</sup>. The world body repeatedly demanded an immediate end to cross-border attacks and stressed strict obedience to international law, but geopolitical realities still hindered its capacity to execute its rulings.

### United States: From Reluctance to Active Mediation

Over the course of the crisis, Washington's response changed considerably. The U.S. State Department was reluctant to take sides at first, but after analyzing classified intelligence, it later supported Pakistan's request for an unbiased probe. Former President Donald Trump's threat of broad economic sanctions against both countries unless they decided to de-escalate marked a turning point. The May 12 truce was achieved by this economic ultimatum and covert talks mediated by American officials in Oman. Backchannel diplomacy is still relevant in South Asian disputes, as seen by the success of American mediation where public diplomacy had failed<sup>26</sup>.

---

<sup>23</sup> How the Indian Media Amplified Falsehoods in the Drumbeat of War, *New York Times*, May 17, 2025

<sup>24</sup> "UN Secretary-General Urges India, Pakistan to Avoid Escalation," *National Herald India*, May 6, 2025. <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/national/un-secretary-general-urges-india-pakistan-to-avoid-escalation>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "India-Pakistan Cease-Fire Extended," *The New York Times*, May 12, 2025,

## United Kingdom: Parliamentary Scrutiny and Diplomatic Pressure

Because of Britain's longstanding ties to the area, the UK Parliament debated the problem in great detail<sup>27</sup>. While MPs from all parties underlined the risks of military escalation, Foreign Office Minister Hamish Falconer began talks by restating the government's commitment to a peaceful conclusion. Concerns regarding the sizable South Asian diaspora in Britain and its possible impact on community relations were raised during the debates<sup>28</sup>. Although the UK offered to help with the talks, it deferred to the U.S. leadership in mediation efforts, concentrating instead on humanitarian aid and using Commonwealth channels to monitor ceasefire compliance.

## China: Strategic Ambiguity and Regional Interests

During the crisis, Beijing's public posture remained remarkably composed. Chinese leaders recognized the war as a major test of their regional power and mediation skills, albeit formally rejecting direct military engagement<sup>29</sup>. China expedited the transfer of pre-approved defense hardware to Pakistan behind the scenes, taking care to avoid any acts that may incite India. China's complicated role as Pakistan's closest friend and its desire to maintain its fragile economic ties with India were both reflected in this delicate balancing effort. Although it cautiously avoided taking the lead in efforts to find a solution<sup>30</sup>, the crisis helped to underscore China's emerging role as a regional power broker.

In a time of resurgent great power competition, the international response showed the potential and constraints of managing conflicts on a global scale. The crisis demonstrated how regional conflicts could be used as stand-ins for larger geopolitical rivalries, even though concerted pressure prevented full-scale war. The need for updated international crisis management frameworks are needed to stop nuclear-armed states from entering into a full blown conflict.

## CEASEFIRE AND LINGERING TENSIONS (MAY 12-13, 2025)

The fragile ceasefire agreement, brokered under intense U.S. pressure, represented a critical, albeit temporary, reprieve in an escalating conflict that had brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war

---

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/12/world/asia/india-pakistan-cease-fire-extended.html>.

<sup>27</sup> "UK Parliament Debates India-Pakistan Conflict, Appeals for De-Escalation," *National Herald India*, May 8, 2025. <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/international/uk-parliament-debates-india-pakistan-conflict-appeals-for-de-escalation>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> "China Rejects Claims That It Sent Military Aircraft with Arms to Pakistan," *Scroll.in*, May 13, 2025.

<https://scroll.in/latest/1082287/china-rejects-claims-that-it-sent-military-aircraft-with-arms-to-pakistan>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

in May 2025<sup>31</sup>. The agreement, while hailed as a diplomatic breakthrough, underscored the precariousness of regional stability and the vulnerability of South Asia to the volatility of military escalation. Under the terms of the deal, both India and Pakistan committed to an immediate withdrawal of troops from their forward positions along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB)<sup>32</sup>

Citing the successful interception of Indian drones and aircraft as evidence of its defensive capabilities, Pakistan's military leadership announced the restoration of genuine deterrence. Officials did, however, recognize heavy casualties, noting 51 military and civilian deaths overall as well as major infrastructure damage in border areas<sup>33</sup>. Indian opposition leaders and media outlets questioned the strategic justification for strikes on civilian targets and the failure of drone operations, prompting the Indian government to come under increasing domestic criticism for how it handled the crisis<sup>34</sup>.

Prime Minister Modi's speech after the ceasefire reflected anger and urge for inflicting more harm to Pakistan. <sup>35</sup> India has refused to talk on Indus Water Treaty, declared 'any' terrorist attack in India 'as an act of war'. In this scenario, reconciliation between the two countries can hardly have a chance. At the moment both states are celebrating victory over the other.

#### Claims and Confirmations

Category	Claim	Rival Country's Comment	International Confirmation
<b>Jets</b>	Pakistan claimed it shot down 6 Indian jets <sup>36</sup> .	India refused to confirm or deny jets loss, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US officials confirm Pakistan shot down at least 2 Indian jets, possibly more<sup>38</sup>.</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "India, Pakistan Agree to Consider Troop Reduction from Borders, Forward Areas," *Scroll.in*, May 12, 2025. <https://scroll.in/latest/1082276/india-pakistan-agree-to-consider-troop-reduction-from-borders-forward-areas>.

<sup>33</sup> "Pakistan Army Says 51 Killed in Military Conflict with India," *Reuters*, May 13, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pakistan-army-says-51-killed-military-conflict-with-india-2025-05-13/>.

<sup>34</sup> "Congress Questions PM Modi's Silence on Trump's Claims of Threatening to Stop Trade," *Scroll.in*, May 13, 2025. <https://scroll.in/latest/1082282/congress-questions-pm-modis-silence-on-trumps-claims-of-threatening-to-stop-trade>.

<sup>35</sup> India's 'new normal' of perpetual war will damage its democracy, *AlJazeera*, 13 May, 2025 <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2025/5/13/indias-new-normal-of-perpetual-war-will-damage-its-democracy>

<sup>36</sup> "PAF Achieves 6-0 Victory Over India: Air Vice Marshal Aurangzeb," *Samaa TV*, May 12, 2025, <https://www.samaa.tv/2087333336-paf-achieves-6-0-victory-over-india-air-vice-marshal-aurangzeb>.

<sup>38</sup> Mujib Mashal, "Satellite Images Show Damage to Pakistan's Military Sites," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/05/14/world/asia/india-pakistan-attack-damage->

		said <sup>37</sup> : "Losses are part of war."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three fighter jets crashed in India's Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday<sup>39</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>S-400 Missile System</b>	Pakistan claimed that the S-400 air defence battery systems at Adampur and Bhuj were attacked and effectively neutralized by the Pakistan Air Force <sup>40</sup> .	India rejected Pakistan's claim. PM Modi visited Adampur Airforce Base and was photographed <sup>41</sup> with the S-400.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experts say the photo shows only launchers, not the entire S400 battery, especially its crucial parts such as radar or command units, which are the most likely targets in such strikes<sup>42</sup>.</li> <li>US-based expert Christopher Clary suggested Pakistan would more likely target S-400 radar or Command centers, not just launchers. It's possible but unconfirmed<sup>43</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Karachi Port Blockade</b>	India claimed its Navy's 36-ship fleet led by INS Vikrant moved	The Pakistan Navy rejected India's claim by stating that the Indian Navy	No data.

[satellite-images.html](#).

<sup>37</sup> "Indian Air Force Says Losses Are Part of Combat but All Pilots Back Home," *Reuters*, May 11, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indian-air-force-says-losses-are-part-combat-all-pilots-back-home-2025-05-11/>.

<sup>39</sup> "Three Fighter Jets Crashed in India's Jammu and Kashmir, Local Govt Sources Say," *Reuters*, May 7, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/three-fighter-jets-crashed-indias-jammu-kashmir-local-govt-sources-say-2025-05-07/>.

<sup>40</sup> "Pakistan Army announces conclusion of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos: ISPR," *The Express Tribune*, May 16, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545413/1>.

<sup>41</sup> "With S-400 in backdrop, PM Modi's salute at Adampur air base junks Pakistan's claims," *Hindustan Times*, May 13, 2025, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/adampur-air-base-pm-modi-s400-air-defencesystem-pakistan-lies-factcheck-airbas-101747127056150.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Zeeshan Ahmad, "Indian soldier's death reinforces Pakistan's S-400 narrative," *The Express Tribune*, May 14, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545815/indian-soldiers-death-reinforces-pakistans-s-400-narrative>.

<sup>43</sup> Zeeshan Ahmad, "Did Modi inadvertently confirm Pakistan's S-400 claim?" *The Express Tribune*, May 13, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545624/did-modi-inadvertently-confirm-pakistans-s-400-claim>.



	closer to Karachi <sup>44</sup> and blockaded Karachi Port <sup>45</sup> .	stayed within its territorial waters and refrained from challenging the Pakistan Navy <sup>46</sup> .	
<b>Military Installations</b>	Pakistan claimed it targeted multiple Indian bases, including Udampur, and Indian military installations were severely damaged <sup>47</sup> .	India confirmed <sup>48</sup> Pakistan used highspeed missiles to target military installations, causing limited damage, but said many missiles were intercepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satellite imagery shows limited or no visible damage to Indian bases<sup>49</sup>.</li> <li>• An Indian soldier's family confirmed his death in Udampur, indicating a possible attack<sup>50</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Air Bases</b>	India claimed it carried out precision strikes on 11 major Pakistani airbases, causing significant damage <sup>51</sup> .	According to ISPR, India targeted the 3 air bases, but all assets of the Pakistan Air Force remains	Satellite images confirmed extensive damage to military infrastructure. Indian strikes damaged three aircraft hangars, two runways, and

<sup>44</sup> "INS Vikrant-led 36-ship Fleet Was in Position to Hit Karachi Port; BrahMos-Equipped Warships, Submarines Also Used," *Business Today*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.businesstoday.in/india/story/operation-sindoor-ins-vikrant-led-36-ship-fleet-was-in-position-to-hit-karachi-port-brahmos-equipped-warships-submarines-also-used-476196-2025-05-14>.

<sup>45</sup> "Karachi Port Blocked by Indian Navy with 36 Ships, Including INS Vikrant: Officials," *The Hans India*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.thehansindia.com/news/national/karachi-port-blocked-by-indian-navy-with-36ships-including-ins-vikrant-officials-971136>.

<sup>46</sup> "Pakistan Navy's effective strategy kept INS Vikrant confined to India's territorial waters," *The Express Tribune*, May 16, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545419/pakistan-navys-effective-strategy-kept-insvikrant-confined-to-indias-territorial-waters>.

<sup>47</sup> "Pakistan Army announces conclusion of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos: ISPR," *The Express Tribune*, May 16, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545413/1>.

<sup>48</sup> "Udhampur, Pathankot, Bathinda Attacked by Pakistan: India's Special Briefing," *NDTV*, May 10, 2025, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/udhampur-pathankot-bathinda-attacked-by-pakistan-indias-specialbriefing-8377711>.

<sup>49</sup> Mujib Mashal, "In the India-Pakistan Clash, Satellite Imagery Shows Limited Damage," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/05/14/world/asia/india-pakistan-attackdamage-satellite-images.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "IAF Strikes 11 Pakistani Airbases, Inflicts Severe Damage; Targets Include Nur Khan, Sargodha, and Skardu," *The Economic Times*, May 10, 2025, <https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/india-pakistancasefire-iaf-strikes-11-pakistani-airbases-inflicts-severe-damage-targets-include-nur-khan-sargodha-andskardu/articleshow/121060642.cms>.

		safe <sup>52</sup> .	several mobile air force structures <sup>53</sup> .
<b>Ceasefire Initiation</b>	India claimed that our armed forces compelled Pakistan to seek a ceasefire and denied U.S. pressure or trade leverage played any role <sup>54</sup> .	Pakistani officials stated that India requested the ceasefire, not Pakistan <sup>55</sup> .	President Trump stated that the threat of cutting off U.S. trade forced both countries to agree to a ceasefire <sup>56</sup> .
<b>Victory</b>	Victory is being claimed by both countries, however ISPR decalred, Pakistan is celebrating peace, not victory.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India seems to dominate in targeting Pakistan's airbases and infrastructure<sup>57</sup>.</li> <li>• Pakistan seems to dominate in shooting down Indian fighter jets<sup>58</sup>.</li> </ul>

## WILL THERE BE PAKISTAN INDIA DIALOGUE?

Despite renewed diplomatic initiatives by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's administration, the

---

<sup>52</sup> "India Targeted Nur Khan Airbase, Murid Base, Shorkot Base but All PAF Assets Safe: DG ISPR," DAWN.COM, May 10, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1909839/india-targeted-nur-khan-airbase-muridbase-shorkot-base-but-all-paf-assets-safe-dg-ispr>.

<sup>53</sup> Imogen Piper, Evan Hill, Maham Javaid, and Rick Noack, "Indian Strikes on Pakistan Damaged Six Airfields, Post Analysis Finds," *The Washington Post*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/05/14/india-pakistan-strikes-conflict-damage/>.

<sup>54</sup> "Force of Indian Arms Compelled Pakistan to Seek Ceasefire: India Reiterates Trade Did Not Come Up in Talks with US During Operation Sindoor," *The Times of India*, May 13, 2025, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/force-of-indian-arms-compelled-pakistan-to-seek-ceasefireindia-reiterates-trade-did-not-come-up-in-talks-with-us-during-operationsindoor/articleshow/121141358.cms>.

<sup>55</sup> "India Not Pakistan Requested Ceasefire, Says ISPR DG," *24 News HD*, May 11, 2025, <https://24newshd.tv/11-May-2025/india-not-pakistan-requested-ceasefire-says-ispr-dg>.

<sup>56</sup> "Trump Says Trade Threat Ended India-Pakistan Conflict; Indian Authorities Refuse to Comment on Record," *The Wire*, May 14, 2025, <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/trump-says-trade-threat-ended-indiapakistan-conflict-no-say-indian-sources>.

<sup>57</sup> Mujib Mashal, "In the India-Pakistan Clash, Satellite Imagery Shows Limited Damage," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/05/14/world/asia/india-pakistan-attackdamage-satellite-images.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Saeed Shah and Idrees Ali, "Pakistan's Chinese-made jet brought down two Indian fighter aircraft, US officials say," *Reuters*, May 8, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/pakistans-chinese-made-jet-broughtdown-two-indian-fighter-aircraft-us-officials-2025-05-08/>.



likelihood of substantive dialogue between India and Pakistan remains minimal. Pakistan has consistently emphasized the significance of regional peace and stability, extending proposals for discussions on critical issues such as bilateral trade, counterterrorism, and the Kashmir conflict. Prime Minister Sharif recently reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peace negotiations, underscoring Kashmir as the "core issue" requiring resolution to alleviate tensions.<sup>59</sup>

However, India's response has predominantly been dismissive. The administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unequivocally stated that such engagement will only occur if Pakistan addresses terrorism-related concerns and aligns with India's position on Pakistan Azad Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>60</sup> India's strategy effectively establishes preconditions that prioritize its territorial claims and security interests, while excluding broader dialogues that could facilitate regional cooperation and de-escalation.<sup>61</sup>

In an effort to counter India's allegations of supporting terrorism, Pakistan has embarked on a diplomatic campaign, dispatching delegations to various international forums to influence global perceptions and garner support for a more balanced narrative.<sup>62</sup> On the contrary, India has sent a delegation for global outreach to malign Pakistan. Its objective is to counter Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir and terrorism. The campaign, dubbed "Operation Sindoor," consists of 59 members of the Parliament, former ministers and politicians, cutting across party lines, will travel to 32 countries and the European Union headquarters in Brussels. It aims to highlight Pakistan's alleged support for cross-border terrorism, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. The move comes amid ongoing tensions between the two nations, with India aiming to garner international support by presenting evidence of Pakistan's role in fueling militancy.<sup>63</sup> It is again a component of India's broader strategy to isolate Pakistan diplomatically.

The Indus Water Treaty still stands in limbo, whereas any instance of diversion of water is declared as an act of war by Pakistan. India has termed any 'terrorist incident' in India as an 'act of war'. In

---

<sup>59</sup> "PM Shehbaz Sharif Offers Peace Talks with India, Stresses Kashmir as Core Issue after Military Success," *Pakistan Today*, May 16, 2025, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/05/16/pm-shehbaz-sharif-offers-peace-talks-with-india-stresses-kashmir-as-core-issue-after-military-success/>.

<sup>60</sup> "Modi Warns India 'Monitoring Pakistan Closely'," *DW News*, May 15, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/modi-warns-india-monitoring-pakistan-closely/live-72512591>.

<sup>61</sup> "India's Modi Says Fighting 'Only Paused' in Wake of Conflict with Pakistan," *Al Jazeera*, May 12, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/12/indias-modi-says-fighting-only-paused-in-wake-of-conflict-with-pakistan>.

<sup>62</sup> "India, Pakistan Trade Diplomatic Blows as Delegations Rally Global Support," *The Independent*, May 14, 2025, <https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/india-pakistan-all-party-delegation-pakistan-b2752852.html>.

<sup>63</sup> India's Operation Sindoor delegation visit begins today; 1st group headed to UAE | 10 points, *Hindustan Times*, 21 May, 2025

absence of confidence building mechanism, these stringent positions might impede peace recurrently.

There was a brief moment of optimism for de-escalation following the recent ceasefire agreement between the two nations. However, ongoing allegations of ceasefire violations have impeded any long-term peace initiatives. India has maintained an elevated military posture, indicating that it perceives the ceasefire more as a tactical pause than a pathway to negotiation, while Pakistan has reiterated its commitment to uphold the truce.<sup>64</sup> Prime Minister Modi himself has stated that the conflict is "only paused," further diminishing expectations for a genuine engagement.<sup>65</sup>

From Pakistan's perspective, the prospects for productive negotiations are diminished by India's rigid diplomatic stance, exclusive focus on terrorism, and deliberate marginalization of Pakistan's position. Islamabad finds itself in a challenging strategic predicament as the Kashmir issue remains unresolved. The prospects for a diplomatic breakthrough in the near future appear bleak due to New Delhi's hardened position and continued military assertiveness, despite repeated calls for a broader dialogue.

## WHAT NEXT?

### Policy options for Pakistan

- The long-term sustainability of the shaky ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan is threatened by a severe lack of confidence. The reluctance of India to agree on an impartial, third-party probe of the Pahalgam incident is amongst the most obvious problems.
- Both India and Pakistan need to resurrect and institutionalize confidence-building measures (CBMs). Despite being a step in the right direction, the 2025 ceasefire agreement is nevertheless shaky in the absence of concrete enforcement procedures.
- Restoring military hotlines between the two countries is another important step in lowering the likelihood of conflict. These open channels of communication between military officials are crucial for defusing potentially explosive situations<sup>66</sup>.

---

<sup>64</sup> "PM Shehbaz Sharif Offers Peace Talks with India," *Pakistan Today*.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/05/16/pm-shehbaz-sharif-offers-peace-talks-with-india-stresses-kashmir-as-core-issue-after-military-success/>

<sup>65</sup> "India's Modi Says Fighting 'Only Paused'," *Al Jazeera*.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/12/indias-modi-says-fighting-only-paused-in-wake-of-conflict-with-pakistan>

<sup>66</sup> "Pakistan, India DGMOs Establish Hotline Contact," *Pakistan Today*, May 11, 2025,

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/05/11/pakistan-india-dgmos-establish-hotline-contact/>.

- Resuming trade and people-to-people contacts would also be an effective way to promote goodwill. These steps might reduce animosity and promote an atmosphere of understanding.
- Enhancing media transparency is equally vital. State-run media frequently misrepresent facts and employ propaganda to stoke animosity and nationalism on both sides. Media manipulates public opinion through narrative management. Both governments must pledge to eradicate propaganda. A ‘genuinely’ informed audience is more inclined to support peace-building efforts and is less susceptible to being influenced by hostile language or fear-mongering.
- However, given the current atmosphere, it is more likely that India might not negotiate with Pakistan. In case it does, it will buy time rendering the dialogue fruitless. Therefore, Pakistan must establish good relations with neighbours like Afghanistan, Iran and even Bangladesh. It should also focus on developing strategically driven economic relations with Middle Eastern countries. It needs to win trust and support of European countries, which are gradually coming out from the influence of the United States.
- The new dynamics of war depends on alliances. Pakistan must forge efforts to sustain the existing, and establish new alliances to thwart any threat to its sovereignty.