

OPERATION SINDOOR



INTRODUCTION: -

National security operations are often shaped by a combination of terrorist provocations, diplomatic challenges, and military necessities. *Operation Sindoor* stands as one such critical moment in India's defence history. It was not merely a military response but also a reflection of India's broader strategy to balance diplomacy, deterrence, and defence in the face of rising threats.

The immediate trigger for the operation was the Pahalgam attack, which shook the country's conscience and highlighted the urgent need for decisive action. In the aftermath, India explored multiple diplomatic options, including invoking provisions of the Indus Water Treaty and raising the matter at international forums. However, when diplomacy failed to yield the desired impact, the focus shifted towards direct military measures designed to neutralize threats and reassert national strength.

The operation also unfolded against a complex global backdrop, where major powers like the United States and neighbouring countries kept a close watch. While India demonstrated the resilience of its armed forces—particularly through advancements in air defence missile systems—it also had to navigate the pressures of international diplomacy, including calls for restraint from global actors.

This report aims to present a comprehensive account of Operation Sindoor, starting with the Pahalgam attack as the trigger, examining the diplomatic and military steps taken, analysing the role of India's defence systems, studying the global narrative, and evaluating the impact of US pressure. Finally, the report will reflect on the ceasefire decision, questioning whether it was the right choice or a missed opportunity.

The Pahalgam Attack – The Trigger

The spark that ultimately led to *Operation Sindoor* was the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, a town in the Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir. Known for its scenic beauty and as a base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra, Pahalgam has historically been a symbol of peace and tourism in the Valley. The attack that occurred here was not only an assault on Indian security but also a deliberate attempt to target the religious fabric of the nation.

On the day of the incident, heavily armed Pakistani militants, motivated by extremist ideology, launched an attack against civilians. In an act of brutal hatred, they specifically targeted members of the Hindu community. A total of 27 Hindus were killed, along with one Muslim civilian who courageously attempted to protect them. This clearly demonstrated that the violence was driven not just by insurgency, but by religious hatred and Hinduphobia, aimed at spreading terror in the hearts of ordinary Indians.

The attackers carried sophisticated weapons and conducted systematic checks to identify victims. Male members of families were forced to reveal their religion, asked to chant the Islamic Kalma, and in some cases, even ordered to remove their pants so the terrorists could confirm whether they were Muslim or not. Those who could not pass this forced “test” were executed on the spot. Such targeted brutality made this massacre a chilling example of religiously motivated terror, and one of its kind in the history of the Kashmir conflict.

The scale, brazenness, and communal nature of the attack shocked the entire nation. It was no longer perceived as just another incident of cross-border terrorism, but as an attempt to fracture India’s pluralistic identity by instilling fear among minorities. Within hours, government leaders issued strong condemnations, the security apparatus was placed on high alert, and emergency consultations began on possible diplomatic and military measures.

Public outrage was immediate and widespread. Vigils were organized across India, citizens demanded swift justice, and social media amplified the collective grief and anger. For many, the Pahalgam attack became a symbol of both suffering and resistance, reinforcing the demand for a decisive response.

In this environment of grief, anger, and urgency, the Pahalgam massacre acted as the tipping point. It became clear that sporadic counter-insurgency operations and diplomatic statements would not suffice. The scale and nature of this attack compelled the government to plan a comprehensive response, one that eventually took shape as *Operation Sindoor*.

Evidence cited by India linking the attack to Pakistan: -

1. Identity of the gunmen (Pakistani nationals):
India's Home Minister told Parliament that the three perpetrators killed later were Pakistani citizens and members of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT); this was echoed by NIA-linked reporting.
2. LeT/TRF attribution:
The Resistance Front (TRF) initially claimed responsibility, then retracted; officials say TRF is a front for LeT, a Pakistan-based UN-listed terror group.
3. Forensic/ballistic matches to recovered weapons:
Weapons recovered from the slain suspects in Operation Mahadev were ballistically matched to the massacre, per HM's Parliament statement and national media reports.
4. Documents and material seized indicating Pakistani origin:
Reporting cites Pakistani voter IDs, packaged items (e.g., chocolates) and other artifacts recovered from the gunmen as indicators of Pakistani nationality.
5. NIA arrests of local facilitators & their disclosures:
The NIA arrested two local residents for harbouring the attackers, with agencies stating the three gunmen were Pakistani LeT men. These arrests form the logistical chain showing cross-border militants aided by local support.

6. Independent and international coverage of India's claim: Reuters, Financial Times, and Al Jazeera reported India's identification of the assailants as Pakistani nationals tied to LeT and covered the follow-on operations that killed the suspects; Pakistan denied involvement (important for balance).
7. Background on LeT's Pakistan base and history in Kashmir: encyclopaedic and policy research sources document LeT's origins in Pakistan and history of attacks in J&K, supporting India's assertion that TRF operates as a LeT proxy.
8. Modus operandi consistent with communal targeting post-attack forensics reported trousers of male victims pulled down/unzipped—consistent with attempts to check religious identity—mirroring patterns from prior Islamist terror incidents in the region.

Initial Diplomatic Steps Taken After the Pahalgam Attack

The Pahalgam attack shocked the conscience of the entire nation and immediately triggered a series of diplomatic initiatives from the Government of India. These steps were aimed not only at holding Pakistan accountable for its complicity in the attack but also at mobilizing international opinion against terrorism. The initial diplomatic actions can be categorized as follows:

1. Immediate Condemnation and Blame on Pakistan

Within hours of the attack, the Government of India strongly condemned the incident and directly blamed Pakistan-based terrorist groups for orchestrating the massacre. New Delhi officially declared

that the attack bore the hallmark of Pakistan-backed terror outfits operating from across the border. This early stance set the tone for all subsequent diplomatic efforts.

2. Summoning of the Pakistani Envoy

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) immediately summoned Pakistan's High Commissioner in New Delhi. A strong diplomatic protest (demarche) was issued, demanding that Pakistan stop providing safe havens, training, and arms to terror groups. India categorically stated that such attacks could not have been carried out without direct support from across the border.

3. Engagement with Major Powers

Indian diplomats across the world were instructed to brief their host governments about the details of the attack. Missions in Washington D.C., London, Moscow, and other key capitals shared intelligence pointing towards Pakistan's role. This was aimed at ensuring that the narrative of the attack was shaped internationally as an act of cross-border terrorism rather than a local insurgency.

4. Raising the Issue at the United Nations

India highlighted the Pahalgam attack at the United Nations and other international forums, describing it as part of a larger pattern of state-sponsored terrorism emanating from Pakistan. This step was critical to bring the global spotlight on Pakistan's use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

5. Pressure Through Bilateral Treaties and Agreements

One of the first strategic signals was the consideration of reviewing the **Indus Waters Treaty**, an agreement signed in 1960 to share river waters between the two countries. While not abrogated immediately, discussions within the Indian leadership sent a clear message that all bilateral agreements would be re-examined if Pakistan continued to support terror.

6. Building a Regional Coalition Against Terrorism

India reached out to its neighbours and regional partners, including countries in South Asia and the Gulf, to expose Pakistan's role. This was important to prevent Pakistan from escaping diplomatic isolation by playing the victim card.

7. Public Diplomacy and Media Briefings

The Indian government also ensured that the domestic and international media carried the correct narrative. Official spokespersons emphasized that the attack specifically targeted Hindus and one Muslim who resisted the terrorists, underlining the religiously motivated hatred behind the massacre. By doing so, India positioned itself as a victim of religiously inspired terrorism, while portraying Pakistan as a state abetting such violence.

Indus Water Treaty (IWT): -

Introduction

The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is a water-sharing agreement signed on **19th September 1960** between India and Pakistan. It was brokered by the **World Bank** after years of negotiations, following disputes over the use of river waters after the partition of India in 1947. The treaty is considered one of the most successful water-sharing arrangements in the world, as it has survived multiple wars and conflicts between the two countries.

River System Covered under IWT

The Indus River system consists of **six major rivers**:

- **Eastern Rivers:** Ravi, Beas, Sutlej
- **Western Rivers:** Indus, Jhelum, Chenab

Provisions of the Treaty

1. **Eastern Rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej):** Allocated exclusively to India for *unrestricted use*.
2. **Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab):** Allocated to Pakistan, but India is allowed **limited use** for irrigation, transport, and hydropower generation (without altering the river flow significantly).
3. **Permanent Indus Commission:** A joint body of officials from India and Pakistan to resolve disputes and manage implementation.
4. **Dispute Resolution Mechanism:** Involves negotiations, neutral experts (appointed by the World Bank), and the International Court of Arbitration in case of deadlock.
5. **Infrastructure:** India had to fund and support the construction of replacement canals in Pakistan so that it could fully utilize the Western rivers.

Why the Treaty is Considered Unfair to India

Despite being the **upper riparian state** (where rivers originate), India accepted major restrictions. Key reasons:

1. **Unequal Division of Rivers:**
 - India got **only 20% of the total water** (eastern rivers).
 - Pakistan got **80% of the water** (western rivers).
2. **Restrictions on Indian Usage:**
 - Even though the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab originate in India (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh), India cannot fully utilize them.

- India can only build “*run-of-the-river*” *hydroelectric projects* without storage capacity, which limits its energy and irrigation potential.

3. Impact on Jammu & Kashmir:

- J&K has been the biggest loser since most rivers flow through it but cannot be fully tapped for irrigation, power, or drinking purposes.

4. Security Risk:

- The treaty made India dependent on Pakistan’s cooperation for any new hydro-projects on western rivers. Pakistan often raises disputes to delay Indian projects like **Baglihar Dam** and **Kishanganga Project**.

5. Geopolitical Context:

- The treaty was signed when India was still recovering post-independence, facing wars (1947-48, 1962 with China, and later 1965). It conceded more water rights to Pakistan under international pressure.

The Indus Water Treaty was designed to promote peace and cooperation, and it has survived decades of hostility between India and Pakistan. However, many in India see it as an imbalanced agreement that unfairly restricts India’s rightful use of its own rivers. With rising water needs, climate change, and increasing tensions, there are growing calls to review, renegotiate, or even withdraw from the treaty in order to ensure India’s water security.

International Response to the Pahalgam Attack: -

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations condemned the attack and described it as a heinous act of terrorism. Although the UN did not directly name Pakistan, it called for strict international cooperation against terrorism and emphasized that targeting civilians during religious pilgrimages was a crime against humanity.

European Union (EU)

The European Union strongly condemned the killing of pilgrims in Pahalgam. EU leaders stressed that such attacks undermined peace and stability in South Asia. They also urged Pakistan to fulfill its commitment to prevent its territory from being used by militant groups.

Commonwealth of Nations

As both India and Pakistan were part of the Commonwealth, the organization expressed concern. It condemned the targeting of civilians and reiterated that terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstance.

Human Rights Organizations

International human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch criticized the attack as a gross violation of human rights. They highlighted that deliberately targeting civilians on religious grounds was a war crime under international law.

United States

President Donald Trump called the attack “deeply disturbing,” expressing strong support and prayers for the victims. Vice President JD Vance also extended heartfelt condolences.

United Kingdom

Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the attack as “utterly devastating” and offered solidarity with India.

France

President Emmanuel Macron and the French Ambassador strongly condemned the massacre, underscoring solidarity against terrorism.

Russia

President Vladimir Putin labeled it a “brutal crime” and expressed full support for India in its fight against terrorism.

Israel

The Prime Minister condemned the “barbaric” attack, and the Consul-General in Mumbai later praised India’s subsequent military response (Operation Sindoor) as a proud act of self-defence.

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent condolences and offered assistance.

United Arab Emirates

The UAE strongly denounced the attack, calling it “heinous,” and offered sympathy to the victims’ families.

Italy

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni expressed deep sadness and solidarity with the Indian people.

Iran

Iran condemned the massacre and sent condolences, later offering to mediate tensions between India and Pakistan.

Nepal

Nepal condemned the attack, stood in solidarity with India, and assisted in verifying a Nepali victim.

Other Nations

Countries such as Sri Lanka, Germany, and Ukraine also issued condolences and strongly condemned terrorism. Liberia's parliament even held a moment of silence in memory of the victims.

Operation Sindoor – Military Aspects

Background

Following the brutal Pahalgam massacre, in which armed terrorists from across the border targeted Hindu pilgrims and local civilians, the Government of India authorized a swift military response. This operation, codenamed **Operation Sindoor**, was intended not only to punish the perpetrators but also to dismantle the broader terror infrastructure that enabled the attack.

Operation Sindoor – Phase I (7th May)

Objectives

The main objective of the 7th May offensive under Operation Sindoor was to neutralize terrorist strongholds in South Kashmir, particularly in the districts of Pulwama, Anantnag, and Shopian, which had emerged as hubs for infiltrated militants. The specific goals were:

1. To eliminate the active leadership of Pakistan-backed terrorist groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).
2. To destroy underground hideouts, arms dumps, and safe houses used to shelter militants.
3. To break the morale of terrorist networks by conducting simultaneous operations, preventing them from regrouping.
4. To send a strong message to Pakistan and international observers that India was willing to respond firmly to state-sponsored terrorism.

Strategy

The Indian Army and special forces designed a multi-layered strategy for the 7th May strike:

1. Element of Surprise (Mock Drill Bluff):
 - Since Mock drills were to be held all over India on the 7th of May, the Pakistanis were expecting an attack on after the 7th.
 - But the attack took place just before that and was an element of surprise for the terrorist and the Pakistani Military.
2. Multi-Front Coordination:
 - The Indian army struck at all the 9 places at the same time in the early morning.
 - This prevented terrorists from escaping from one zone to another.
3. Pinpoint Intelligence-Based Strikes:

- Inputs from local informants, intercepted calls, and UAV (drone) surveillance were used to mark houses and orchards where militants were hiding.
- Special Forces were tasked with targeting leadership figures, while Rashtriya Rifles units created outer cordons.

4. Shock and Awe:

- The offensive was launched at 03:30 AM on 7th May, just before dawn, when militants were least alert.
- Simultaneous firing, drone surveillance, and house-to-house combing were executed to overwhelm and disorient the terrorists.

Execution: The Nine Targets

The nine terror camps struck were:

1. Sawai Nala Camp, Muzaffarabad (PoK)
2. Syedna Bilal Camp, Muzaffarabad (PoK)
3. Gulpur Camp, Kotli (PoK)
4. Barnala Camp, Bhimber (PoK)
5. Abbas Camp, Kotli (PoK)
6. Markaz Subhan Allah, Bahawalpur (Pakistan)
7. Markaz Taiba, Muridke (Pakistan)
8. Sarjal Camp, Sialkot (Pakistan)
9. Mehmoona Joya Camp, Sialkot (Pakistan)

The coordinated missile strikes, executed between 1:05 AM and 1:30 AM on 7 May, targeted nine terrorist camps across Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), resulting in the elimination of at least 70 terrorists and injury to over 60 more.

Indian officials later reported that over 100 terrorists were killed, including high-value targets such as Yusuf Azhar (brother of JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar), Abdul Malik Rauf, and Mudasir Ahmed—individuals linked to the IC-814 hijacking and the 2019 Pulwama attack.

The operation completely destroyed key training, recruitment, and indoctrination camps—for groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen—across strategic locations including Muzaffarabad, Muridke, Barnala, and Sialkot.

It is also important to note that the Indian Army attacked only well-known terrorist camp and not civilian areas. This was an excellent display of India's fight against terrorism and clearly states that India was not against Pakistan but the terrorists that they harbour and fund.

India's Defense and Diplomacy

1. Controlled Retaliation and Clear Communication

India consistently described Operation Sindoor as “focused, measured, and non-escalatory”, emphasizing strikes only on terrorist infrastructure, not civilian or military targets. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and national messages reaffirmed India's defensive posture.

2. Proactive Diplomatic Outreach

Within an hour of the strikes, India engaged with global partners—including the US, UK, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Russia—to ensure its narrative was heard. National Security Advisor Doval briefed US officials, stressing that only terror camps were targeted.

3. Highlighting Pakistan's Sponsorship of Terror

Home Minister Amit Shah stated that Pakistan's response—like military eulogies for terrorists—revealed its sponsorship of terrorism. He emphasized that India had carefully avoided targeting military installations.

Pakistan's Retaliation on 7 May

Context and Initial Response

In the immediate aftermath of India's precision airstrikes on nine terror camps (Operation Sindoor), Pakistan's leadership promptly labelled the attack a "blatant act of war" and committed to responding "at a time, place, and manner of its choosing" under the right to self-defense (Article 51, UN Charter).

In Parliament, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif characterized the strikes as "cowardly," stating Pakistan would defend its sovereignty firmly. Defense Minister Khawaja Asif echoed this, pledging a forceful response.

Shelling Along the Line of Control (LoC)

Later on, 7 May, Pakistan initiated heavy artillery and mortar shelling across the LoC in Kashmir—targeting areas such as Poonch, Kupwara, Uri, Baramulla, Mendhar, and Rajouri. The Pakistani army attacked a gurudwara and killed innocent civilians including women and children. Indian authorities reported 16 civilian deaths (including women and children) and 59 injuries due to these attacks.

Pakistan launched a wave of loitering munitions and missiles targeting multiple northern and western Indian cities including Jammu, Udhampur, Samba, Akhnoor, Pathankot, and more.

India's integrated air defense systems—including Akash missiles, L-70 guns, ZU-23mm cannons, Shilka systems, and counter-UAS grids—

neutralized over 50 incoming weapons. Debris confirmed Pakistan's involvement.

Due to heightened tensions and aerial threats, Pakistan closed its airspace for 48 hours for Indian carriers and national flights.

Pakistan's military and government made bold claims:

- Allegedly downing multiple Indian fighter jets and drones (claims not independently verified).
- Demonizing the strikes as unprovoked aggression targeting civilians.

Meanwhile, mass protests were held across cities such as Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore, with slogans rallying national unity and denouncing Indian aggression.

Indian Fightback – 7th and 8th May

Background

Following Pakistan's retaliatory strikes on 7th May, which tragically targeted civilian areas including a Gurudwara, leading to the deaths of women and children, the Indian Army launched an immediate and calibrated counter-offensive. The objective was to neutralize terrorist infrastructure, prevent further civilian targeting, and send a strong deterrent signal to Pakistan-backed groups.

Objectives of the Fightback

1. Neutralize Terrorist Launch Pads – Dismantle camps along the Line of Control (LoC) used for infiltration.
2. Respond to Civilian Killings – Demonstrate that attacks on civilians, especially women and children, would invite decisive retribution.

3. Prevent Escalation – Conduct operations that were strong yet measured, avoiding full-scale war.
4. Psychological Impact – Undermine terrorist morale and signal India's readiness to strike swiftly.

Execution (7th – 8th May)

1. 7th May – Evening Counter-Strikes:

- Immediately after the Gurudwara attack, Indian artillery pounded terrorist camps in Neelum Valley and Leepa Valley.
- Special Forces units neutralized 2 major launch pads across the LoC.
- Around 15–18 terrorists and handlers were reported killed.

2. 8th May – Expanded Operations:

- The Army widened the offensive to Tangdhar, Keran, and Poonch sectors.
- Air surveillance drones guided artillery fire to precision-hit bunkers.
- Indian units engaged in close-quarter battles in Rajouri and Shopian, eliminating infiltrators who tried to take cover inside civilian houses.

Damage Inflicted on Terrorist/Military Infrastructure

Air Defence Systems Destroyed

- India conducted precision airstrikes on Pakistani air defence radar stations located in Bhimber, Leepa Valley, and near Muzaffarabad.
- According to intelligence intercepts, 3 mobile air defence units and two radar stations were completely destroyed.

- This left Pakistani forward bases exposed to further Indian aerial superiority.

Pakistani Army Casualties: -

- Indian artillery fire targeted bunkers and posts along Tangdhar, Keran, and Poonch sectors.
- Estimated 45–50 Pakistani Army personnel were either killed or severely injured.
- Several forward bunkers and ammunition depots were set ablaze, visible even from the Indian side of the LoC.
- Pakistani communication towers used for coordinating militant movements were destroyed.
- Roads connecting launch pads in Leepa and Kel valleys were cratered, halting reinforcements.

High-Value Targets Eliminated

- Intelligence inputs confirmed the killing of two senior Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commanders and a senior Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) handler, who were overseeing infiltration plans.
- Their elimination marked a severe blow to Pakistan's proxy war strategy

Pakistan Escalates with Missile & Drone Attacks: -

Drone Swarms Across India

- On the night of 8 May, Pakistan launched an extensive drone offensive using up to 500 small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) across 24 cities spanning Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. Targets included both military and civilian infrastructure, likely aimed at spreading panic and gathering reconnaissance.

- Simultaneously, Pakistan deployed swarm drones across the Line of Control (LoC) and international border, exceeding 50 drones, which attempted to breach Indian airspace.
- Later assessments put the total number of Pakistan-origin drones intercepted during hostilities at over 600, showcasing the scale of unmanned aggression.

Missile Launch Attempts

- Pakistan also launched at least eight missiles targeting Indian military and civilian areas—Satwari, Samba, RS Pura, and Arnia among others—between 20:00 and 23:30 hours.

Blackouts In Several Indian Cities

As reported by several sources:

- Jammu & Kashmir: Blackouts were imposed in Jammu, Rajouri, Udhampur, Samba, Srinagar, Uri, and Baramulla, accompanied by repeated air raid sirens and public panic.
- Punjab: Entire districts/towns including Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Ferozpur, Fazilka, Pathankot, Jalandhar, and Hoshiarpur were plunged into darkness.
- Rajasthan: Blackouts were enforced in Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Barmer, Ganganagar, and Sri Ganganagar.
- Haryana: Panchkula and Chandigarh witnessed a full blackout as well.
- Gujarat: Border villages in Bhuj and Kutch also enforced blackout protocols
- These blackouts generally lasted overnight—from roughly 9:00 PM to 5:00 AM—as a precaution against potential drone or missile strike

India's Multi-Layered Counter-Response

Integrated Air Defense Systems

- India deployed a robust anti-aircraft setup including L-70 guns, ZU-23mm cannons, Shilka systems, Akash Tir, and over 750 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) to intercept drone and missile threats.
- The Integrated Counter-UAS Grid was activated across multiple sectors, successfully neutralizing drone swarms and missile threats.

Battlefield Deployment

- Quick-reaction Air Defence units protected target areas like Amritsar, Pathankot Air Base, and sectors within Jammu, effectively nullifying aerial threats.

Turkish Drones in Pakistan's Retaliation – Cost, Capability, and Economic Impact

During the May 7–8 retaliatory strikes, Pakistan reportedly deployed Turkish-made drones as part of a broader escalation strategy. These unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) represent a shift in warfare tactics, where low-cost, mass-produced systems are used to overwhelm traditional defenses. The Turkish drones employed showcased not only offensive capability but also their ability to economically strain the defending side.

2. Types of Turkish Drones Used

a) Bayraktar TB2

- Range: 150 km line-of-sight, satellite link for extended missions.

- Payload: Up to 150 kg (guided bombs, MAM-L/MAM-C missiles).
- Cost per unit: ~\$5–10 million.
- Operational record: Widely used in Syria, Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Ukraine with devastating impact.

b) Kargu-2 Loitering Munitions (Suicide Drones)

- Range: ~10 km, but highly manoeuvrable.
- Cost per unit: ~\$20,000–30,000.
- Function: One-way strike against radar stations, convoys, and soft targets.

c) Cheap Swarm Drones (DIY/Export variants)

- Cost per unit: ~\$5,000–10,000.
- Function: Used in large numbers to saturate air defense systems and force the enemy to expend costly interceptor missiles.

3. Strategic Advantages of Turkish Drones

1. Cost-effectiveness:

- Shooting down a TB2 or even a smaller loitering drone forces the defending country to use missiles costing \$500,000 to \$1.5 million each (e.g., surface-to-air systems like Akash, Spyder, or S-400 interceptors).
- This asymmetric cost ratio ensures the attacker causes economic damage even when drones are neutralized.

2. Swarm Tactics:

- By deploying dozens of drones simultaneously, Pakistan attempted to overwhelm India's radar and air defense systems.

- Even if 80–90% of drones were shot down, a few breakthroughs could cause infrastructure damage.

3. Psychological & Civilian Impact:

- Drones were used not only for precision strikes but also to induce fear by targeting urban peripheries.
- Reports of temporary power blackouts and civilian panic in Indian border cities show the disruptive psychological effect.

4. Economic Burden on the Defender

- Missile vs. Drone Cost Asymmetry:
 - Drone cost: \$5,000–30,000.
 - Missile defense cost: \$500,000–1,500,000.
 - Ratio: Defending country spends 50–200 times more per engagement.
- Radar & Fuel Consumption:
 - Continuous monitoring of drone swarms' forces radars, early warning systems, and fighter jets into prolonged operation → very high fuel and maintenance costs.
- Opportunity Cost:
 - Drones tie up critical assets (fighter squadrons, missile batteries) that could otherwise be reserved for larger threats like ballistic missiles.

5. Outcomes of Pakistani Drone Use (7–8 May)

- Direct Damage:
 - Several drones reportedly struck fuel depots and logistics centres in Indian border regions.

- Civilian casualties occurred where drones slipped past defense (especially smaller suicide drones).
- Indian Defense Response:
 - India intercepted a majority of incoming drones using SPYDER systems and anti-aircraft guns, but the interception costs were disproportionately high.
 - Fighter jets scrambled multiple times, further adding operational expense.
- Psychological & Economic Strain:
 - Despite minimal strategic damage, the drone swarms forced India to spend millions in defensive operations.
 - Power grid disruptions in certain northern cities, although temporary, created panic and demonstrated the drones' potential to paralyze civilian life at low cost.

6. Broader Implications

- Asymmetric Warfare: Drones have cemented themselves as the perfect weapon for nations with smaller budgets to counter technologically superior militaries.
- Defense Rethink: Traditional air defense systems, built to counter jets and missiles, are unsustainably expensive against drones.
- Future Risks: Unless counter-drone technologies (laser systems, electronic warfare, jamming) are scaled, defending countries will continue to face unsustainable financial pressure.

India's Air Defence Capabilities: A Detailed Report

1) Executive Summary

India fields a layered, network-centric air defence (AD) architecture that combines long-range interceptors (S-400), medium- and short-

range SAMs (MR-SAM/Barak-8, Akash/NG, QRSAM, SPYDER), very-short-range systems (VSHORAD/Igla-S), counter-drone suites, and ballistic-missile defence (BMD). These “shooters” are fused by automated command-and-control networks (IACCS for the IAF and the Army’s Akashteer) and cued by ground-based radars plus AWACS/AEW&C aircraft. Indigenous programs (Akash-NG, QRSAM, BMD AD-1/AD-2, Project Kusha) are rapidly expanding depth and autonomy. During the May 2025 crisis (often referenced under “Operation Sindoor”), Indian C2 and counter-UAS layers were widely credited with neutralizing inbound threats at scale.

2) Command-and-Control Backbone

2.1 Integrated Air Command & Control System (IACCS)

IACCS is the IAF’s nation-wide, network-centric C2 grid that aggregates feeds from long-range radars, AEW&C, and sector nodes to generate a common air picture and assign weapons for engagement. It has been highlighted as a key enabler of fast, deconflicted engagements in India’s AD posture

2.2 Akashteer (Army Air Defence ADCRS)

Akashteer is the Army’s automated Air Defence Control & Reporting System. It integrates multiple sensors and GBAD units, improves low-level airspace monitoring, reduces fratricide risk, and plugs into IACCS for jointness. Operational induction began in 2024; in May 2025 it was repeatedly credited with high effectiveness against drones and low-flying threats.

3) Sensor Layer

3.1 Ground-based Radars

- **Swordfish LRTR (L-band)** for BMD roles and long-range tracking. Reports place detection performance well beyond several hundred kilometres and serving as the backbone for BMD test architecture.

- Medium/short-range 3D radars (e.g., Arudhra, Rohini, etc.) cue GBAD batteries (open-source specifics vary; the key point is integration into IACCS/Akashteer).

3.2 Airborne Early Warning & Control (AEW&C)

The IAF operates Phalcon AWACS and DRDO Netra AEW&C; the government has approved six new indigenous AWACS (Awacs India/Netra MkII) on A321 platforms to expand persistent coverage and control.

4) Shooter Layer (Surface-to-Air Missiles)

4.1 Long-Range: S-400 Triumph

India contracted five S-400 regiments in 2018; three are deployed along western/northern fronts. Russia has stated the remaining regiments will complete delivery in the 2026–27 timeframe.

4.2 Medium-Range: MR-SAM/Barak-8

The Indo-Israeli MR-SAM (Barak-8 family) equips both services in land and naval variants, defending against aircraft, cruise missiles and UAVs.

4.3 Medium-Range (Indigenous): Akash Family

- **Akash / Akash-Prime:** in service with iterative upgrades.
- **Akash-NG:** dual-pulse solid motor, ARH terminal guidance, 70–80 km class reach; underwent multiple tests through 2024–25 and is nearing induction after high-altitude trials.

4.4 Quick-Reaction SHORAD: QRSAM

A road-mobile, all-weather quick-reaction system intended to replace aging systems and complement Akash; Army order placement and induction steps have been reported in 2023–25 coverage.

4.5 Point Defence: SPYDER (Python-5/Derby)

The IAF employs SPYDER for low-level, quick-reaction defence of high-value sites and field formations.

4.6 Very-Short-Range: VSHORAD / MANPADS

India fields Igla-S as an interim/augmenting solution and is advancing indigenous VSHORADS. Deliveries and fast-track procurements have been noted in 2023–25.

5) Counter-Drone / Counter-UAS (C-UAS)

- **D4 anti-drone system (BEL):** soft-kill (jamming) and hard-kill (laser) capability; public demos credited it with a role in the May 2025 crisis.
- **Indrajaal (private sector):** AI-driven “wide-area” counter-UAS solution (sensor/jammer/spoofers fusion) deployed to protect critical infrastructure; deployments at naval ports reported in 2025. T
- **Army/DRDO laser/jammer systems:** multiple indigenous vehicle-mounted systems inducted or trialed for northern sectors.

6) Ballistic-Missile Defence (BMD)

India’s two-phase BMD program has validated exo-/endo-atmospheric interceptors and associated long-range sensors and MCC networks:

- **Phase-I** architecture protects key regions (e.g., NCR) using indigenous LRTRs and command centres.

- **Phase-II** introduces **AD-1/AD-2** class dual-pulse interceptors for longer-range/higher-speed threats; tests were conducted in 2022–24.
- Swordfish LRTR family provides key BMD tracking range and discrimination.

S-400 Engagement Against PAF Saab 2000: -

During Operation Sindoor, an Indian S-400 battery positioned near the India–Pakistan border detected a Pakistani Saab 2000 Erieye AEW&C aircraft operating about 314 km inside Pakistani airspace near Dinga, Punjab.

- **Detection & Threat Assessment:**
The S-400's advanced radar systems tracked the aircraft, identifying it as a high-priority threat due to its role in providing airborne surveillance and command-and-control for the Pakistan Air Force (PAF).
- **Decision & Preparation:**
After high-level clearance, the system prepared a 40N6 long-range missile with a 400 km range and 143 kg warhead. The Saab 2000's relatively slow speed and high radar visibility made it an ideal target.
- **Engagement:**
The S-400's Grave Stone radar locked on, and a 40N6 missile was launched at Mach 12. Mid-course guidance kept it on track, leaving the Saab 2000 little chance to evade.
- **Intercept & Kill:**
The missile struck at 314 km, destroying the Saab 2000 in a massive fireball. This crippled Pakistan's airborne early-warning capability.

- Aftermath:
 - The S-400 battery immediately relocated to avoid counter-strikes.
 - Satellite and signals intelligence confirmed the kill.
 - With this and a separate BrahMos strike on another AEW&C at Bholari airbase, Pakistan lost 2 of its 9 AEW&C platforms, a severe blow to its air operations.
 - The strike showcased India's growing air defence dominance and validated the strategic importance of acquiring the S-400 despite external pressure.

Strategic Impact:

The engagement demonstrated India's ability to enforce an anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) bubble up to 400 km into Pakistani airspace. It degraded Pakistan's situational awareness and coordination ability, shifting the airpower balance in India's favor.

India's Final Counterattack (9–10 May 2025): -

Between 9–10 May 2025, after several days of escalating strikes and reprisals following the Pahalgam massacre and Operation Sindoor, India carried out a decisive final counterattack that targeted Pakistan's air-power and command-and-control infrastructure. The operation combined precision cruise-missile strikes (BrahMos/SCALP reports), coordinated air operations and integrated air-defence activity, aimed at degrading Pakistan's AEW&C/radar capability and airbase operability. After these strikes and reciprocal actions, international mediation helped both sides accept a ceasefire effective 10 May. Many details—especially casualty and equipment loss figures—remain disputed between the two governments and in open reporting.

Context and purpose of the operation

- **Background:** India's Operation Sindoor (7 May) hit multiple terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Pakistan retaliated with artillery, drone sorties and missile attempts; tensions escalated rapidly.
- **Purpose of the final strike:** Indian leadership sought to (a) blunt Pakistan's ability to mount further coordinated air and drone offensives, (b) demonstrate decisive deterrence to compel de-escalation, and (c) protect critical Indian territory and assets from further attacks. Public and private Indian statements framed the action as calibrated and targeted at military infrastructure.

Objectives (operational)

1. **Degrade AEW&C and airborne C2** to deny Pakistan the ability to coordinate sustained air and drone swarms.
2. **Damage or neutralize key airbases and radars** that enabled long-range sorties and missile/drone launches.
3. **Destroy logistics and missile staging facilities** used to sustain retaliatory strikes.
4. **Create a coercive effect** that would push Islamabad toward accepting a mediated ceasefire.

Planning and forces involved

- **Multi-service coordination:** The IAF (strike aircraft, CAP), Indian Army assets (air defence/air-space denial integration, forward controllers), and strategic missile assets (BrahMos-capable platforms) were coordinated through national defence command channels and the Integrated Air Defence System. Planning emphasized precision, timing, and limiting collateral damage.
- **Intelligence fusion:** Inputs from human intelligence, SIGINT, AWACS/Netra assets, and satellite imagery were fused to select high-

value targets—airbase runways, radar installations, and known AEW&C operating locations.

Weapons, tactics and targeting

Weapons/tactics used (reported)

- **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles** and other stand-off weapons (some reporting also cites use of SCALP/other cruise munitions) to strike hardened airbase infrastructure—runways, hardened shelters, radars—minimizing exposure of manned aircraft to air defences.
- **Armed drones and ISR assets** to provide battle damage assessment and deny repair/clearance operations in real time.
- **S-400 and integrated AD network** to protect Indian airspace and intercept Pakistani attempts at deeper strikes during the exchange (public reporting credits Indian suppression/interception roles to integrated AD systems).

Target selection

Reported primary targets included:

- **Pakistani air bases and runways** (multiple outlets name bases such as Bholari/Sargodha/Muridke/Nur Khan in various reporting, though individual lists differ between sources).
- **AEW&C and radar sites**—airborne early warning platforms were a high-priority category. Indian reporting and analyst commentary highlight strikes that aimed to degrade airborne surveillance and command nodes.

Execution — timeline

- **9 May (daytime–evening):** Indian surveillance picked up Pakistani repositioning of AEW&C and fighter elements; India readied long-range strike packages. Pakistan conducted intermittent missile/drone sorties and heightened LoC shelling.
- **Night 9–10 May (final strike window):** India launched coordinated BrahMos and stand-off missile strikes against selected airbases, radar

sites and at least one AEW&C operating location—reporting indicates multiple airbase facilities were damaged, affecting runways and radar arrays. These strikes were followed by surveillance drone overflights documenting damage.

- **10 May (daytime):** Pakistan mounted counterstrike and continued artillery and aerial attempts; international diplomatic pressure increased. By mid-10 May, under sustained international mediation (including US engagement), both parties agreed to a ceasefire effective 10 May afternoon/evening.

Effects and damage

Corroborated / widely reported

- **Damage to multiple Pakistani airbase facilities and radar/AEW&C capacity:** Independent reporting and government briefings indicate that runways, radars and some support infrastructures were hit—temporarily degrading Pakistan’s ability to sustain large-scale coordinated air operations. Analysts cite these strikes as a material factor in Pakistan’s willingness to accept a ceasefire.
- **Use of BrahMos and stand-off munitions:** Multiple outlets report BrahMos use to strike hardened targets; these strikes were central to India’s coercive message.

Operational assessment & significance

1. **Tactical success** — The strikes appear to have achieved their immediate tactical aim: degrading Pakistani airborne surveillance, reducing Pakistan’s ability to coordinate mass drone/missile attacks, and damaging runway/radar infrastructure that supported sorties. This constrained Islamabad’s operational options.
2. **Strategic coercion** — The timing and targeting of the final strikes increased diplomatic pressure on Pakistan by imposing tangible operational costs and signaling India’s capacity to strike

deeper and with precision. This appears to have contributed to Pakistan's agreement to a ceasefire.

3. **Escalation management** — India combined kinetic strikes with visible defensive posture (integrated air defence) to limit the conflict's spread; the campaign remained short, intense and ended with a ceasefire rather than extended war—indicating calibrated escalation control.

Pakistan's BEGS for a Ceasefire

After four days of intense military exchanges between India and Pakistan (7–10 May 2025), Islamabad formally requested a ceasefire and engaged in urgent diplomatic outreach to secure a halt to hostilities. Pakistan's appeal was driven by a mix of operational setbacks, domestic and international pressure, and an interest in preventing further escalation. A U.S.-brokered agreement and DGMO-level hotline talks led to a ceasefire that came into effect on 10 May.

1. Timeline of Pakistan's Ceasefire Request

- **7–9 May 2025:** Exchanges of strikes and counter-strikes continued after India's Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's retaliatory actions. The conflict featured cross-border strikes, drone activity and attacks on military installations on both sides.
- **10 May 2025 (day):** Pakistan, through senior officials including Deputy Prime Minister / Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the Foreign Office, publicly confirmed that Islamabad had requested a ceasefire after suffering damage to key airbases and other infrastructure. Pakistan's Foreign Office posted statements referring to the request. Pakistan framed its

approach as an effort to prevent further civilian casualties and to stabilise the situation.

- **10 May 2025 (later):** Following intense diplomatic engagement (notably from the United States), India and Pakistan agreed to an immediate ceasefire, implemented after DGMO-level contacts and formal statements by foreign ministries. India's Ministry of External Affairs confirmed the ceasefire timing.

How Pakistan Requested the Ceasefire (Channels & Messaging)

Official channels and statements

- Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister / Finance Minister Ishaq Dar acknowledged that Islamabad had requested a ceasefire after India's strikes on several airbases. The Pakistani Foreign Office posted statements confirming Pakistan's diplomatic outreach to de-escalate the situation. These official communications framed the request as a defensive and stabilising measure.

Military-to-military contacts

- The formal mechanism that implemented the ceasefire was DGMO-level communication (Directors General of Military Operations) between the two armies, who agreed to stop firing at a specified time. These military hotlines played a central role in translating diplomatic intent into a tangible cessation of hostilities. India's Foreign Secretary and Pakistan's Foreign Minister also confirmed the diplomatic outcome.

Third-party mediation

- The United States and other actors engaged intensively behind the scenes. Public statements by the U.S. State Department and the White House noted Washington's role in facilitating talks; other regional actors also welcomed the agreement. External pressure and offers of mediation helped create a diplomatic window for Pakistan to press India for a pause in fighting.

Agreed ceasefire conditions: -

- Immediate military ceasefire
At 15:35 IST on 10 May the DGMO of Pakistan called the DGMO of India by hotline; it was agreed both sides would stop all firing and military action on land, air and sea effective 17:00 IST on 10 May. Instructions were issued to give effect to the understanding. This formal statement was released by India's Ministry of External Affairs.
- Military-to-military mechanisms to implement the truce
The DGMO hotline was the primary operational channel to convert diplomatic agreement into de-escalation on the ground. Both militaries were tasked to implement orders at formation level and to maintain open communications to reduce accidental escalation. International reporting emphasised the centrality of this military hotline to preventing further clashes.
- Scope and constraints
The ceasefire language required cessation of kinetic actions "on land and in the air and sea," i.e., a cross-domain pause. The agreement did not immediately resolve broader political disputes or non-military punitive measures that either government subsequently retained or imposed (see Section 3).

Indian Media Behaviour During the Conflict

The India–Pakistan conflict has always been accompanied by intense media coverage, both domestically and internationally. Media plays a critical role in shaping public opinion, influencing political decision-making, and projecting a narrative to the outside world. However, the approaches of Indian media and foreign media often diverge in tone, style, and intent. This report critically examines the behavior of both Indian and foreign media during the conflict, with a particular focus on the strengths and shortcomings of the Indian media.

1. Strengths – Narrative Building and National Sentiment

- **Effective National Narrative:** Indian media has been instrumental in consolidating a unified national sentiment during times of crisis. By framing the conflict as an issue of national security and sovereignty, it ensured that domestic public opinion remained firmly behind the government and armed forces.
- **Countering Pakistani Propaganda:** When Pakistan attempted to push misleading narratives on international platforms, Indian media's assertive coverage helped counter misinformation and provide visibility to India's stance.
- **Mobilization of Public Support:** The emotional storytelling, visuals, and constant coverage strengthened the collective will of the people, ensuring that support for the armed forces was not limited to policy circles but extended to the grassroots.

2. Criticisms – Sensationalism and “Masala Journalism”

- **Excessive Dramatization:** Many Indian channels resorted to loud, hyperbolic coverage, sometimes resembling entertainment shows more than news broadcasts. This “masala” presentation, while effective in grabbing eyeballs, often diluted the seriousness of the conflict.
- **Race for TRPs:** Instead of prioritizing factual accuracy, several outlets focused on dramatic visuals, exaggerated claims, and speculative reporting, which risked spreading misinformation or unverified details.
- **Undermining Credibility:** Overuse of aggressive rhetoric and theatrical debates made Indian media appear less professional to international observers, potentially weakening India's case in global opinion-making.

Ceasefire & The “NEW NORMAL”: -

Immediate “new-normal” conditions imposed by either side after the ceasefire

Security and operational measures (military posture)

- Both sides kept high readiness levels; localized incidents and alleged violations were reported, making the truce fragile in early days. Military commanders on both sides retained orders to respond to perceived violations, which kept the situation tense despite the ceasefire.

Non-military punitive measures and practical restrictions (economic / civic)

Following the fighting and the ceasefire, several practical measures shaped the new normal:

- **Suspension of visa services and consular friction** — both governments reduced or suspended routine consular services, making people-to-people movement harder.
- **Closure of airspace / restrictions** — Pakistan closed parts of its airspace temporarily during the fighting; aviation caution and flight reroutes continued in the immediate aftermath.
- **Trade and border crossings** — bilateral trade was curtailed and the Attari-Wagah crossing was closed temporarily.
- **Indus Waters Treaty** — India suspended its cooperation under the Indus Water Treaty, creating an important political and economic aftershock. These steps represented punitive leverage short of war but inflicted economic and operational pain.
- Any further terrorist attacks by Pakistani funded terrorist will be seen as an act of war from the Indian Side and India will not hesitate to take counter measures.

India's Diplomatic Achievements After the India–Pakistan Conflict

Beyond the military dimension, conflicts between India and Pakistan often extend into the global diplomatic arena. While the armed forces safeguard the nation on the battlefield, diplomats ensure that India's position is understood, accepted, and supported in the international community. After the conflict, India scored significant diplomatic victories by shaping the global narrative, isolating Pakistan's position, and reinforcing its credibility as a responsible state.

Key Diplomatic Achievements

1. Global Recognition of Pakistan's Role in Terrorism

- India's efforts successfully highlighted that the root cause of instability was cross-border terrorism sponsored from Pakistani soil.
- Major powers—including the U.S., the U.K., France, and Russia—acknowledged India's right to defend itself against terrorism, a notable shift from earlier years when calls for “restraint on both sides” were the norm.

2. International Isolation of Pakistan

- At forums like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), India's diplomatic push ensured Pakistan was increasingly identified as a hub for terror financing and safe havens.
- Several countries issued strong statements urging Pakistan to act against terror groups, limiting Islamabad's ability to play the “victim card.”

3. Reinforcement of Bilateralism

- India reasserted that issues with Pakistan, including Kashmir, are **strictly bilateral** and not open for international mediation.
- Despite attempts by Pakistan to internationalize the matter, most global powers echoed India's position, reaffirming the validity of the Simla Agreement (1972) and the Lahore Declaration (1999).

4. Strengthening Strategic Partnerships

- In the aftermath of the conflict, India deepened defense and intelligence-sharing ties with countries like the United States, France, and Israel.
- These partnerships not only helped diplomatically but also enhanced India's long-term security preparedness.

The Indian Delegation

- To drive these outcomes, India sent a high-level diplomatic delegation led by senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- The delegation included experienced diplomats who engaged key global capitals, briefed foreign governments, and coordinated with Indian missions abroad.
- Their core task was to:
 1. Provide factual briefings on the conflict.
 2. Expose Pakistan's sponsorship of terror.
 3. Reinforce India's commitment to peace, while asserting its right to self-defense.

Notably, the **then Foreign Minister and National Security Advisor** played a crucial role, along with India's permanent representative at

the UN, who was active in countering Pakistan's propaganda attempts in New York.

Downsides and Failures

1. The Problem of Sudden Ceasefire

- A **premature ceasefire**, often declared under international pressure, can deny India the chance to consolidate its military and political advantage.
- Ceasefires leave the conflict unresolved, allowing Pakistan to regroup and rebuild for future provocations.
- By agreeing to sudden halts in combat, India sometimes appeared to yield to external powers rather than dictate terms on its own strength.

2. Diplomatic Failures – U.S. and IMF Angle

- **U.S. Pressure for Ceasefire:** Despite India's strong position on the battlefield and internationally, Washington often pushed for restraint and ceasefire, effectively limiting India's operational space. This gave Pakistan a face-saving exit.
- **IMF Bailout for Pakistan:** Even as Pakistan was being called out for terrorism, it managed to secure **IMF loans** and financial packages, often with U.S. backing. This undermined India's efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan by giving Islamabad the economic relief it needed.
- **Equating Victim and Aggressor:** Many international statements—especially from the U.S.—called for “both sides to show restraint,” creating a false equivalence between India (defending against terror) and Pakistan (supporting terror).

3. Intelligence Failures – The Case of Pahalgam

- The conflict exposed gaps in India's intelligence system. Despite years of insurgency in Kashmir, major incidents like the **Pahalgam massacre** (where militants targeted pilgrims and civilians) revealed vulnerabilities in local intelligence gathering and response.
- Such lapses damaged India's internal security credibility and highlighted the need for stronger coordination between central and state intelligence agencies.

Key Questions to be Asked

1. Intelligence and Preventive Measures

- Why was there an intelligence gap that allowed terrorists to regroup and necessitate a large-scale operation?
- Were warnings from local intelligence, police, or villagers ignored?
- What reforms are being undertaken to strengthen ground-level intelligence sharing between central and state agencies?

2. Operational Preparedness

- Were our forces adequately equipped with modern technology (night-vision, drones, surveillance) before launching Ops Sindoor?
- Were there any lapses in coordination between the Army, paramilitary, and local police?
- Why did the operation take longer than expected, and what bottlenecks were faced on the ground?

3. Civilian Safety and Collateral Damage

- How many civilian lives and properties were lost during the operation?
- Could better planning have minimized collateral damage?
- What compensation and rehabilitation plans have been put in place for affected families?

4. Diplomatic and Strategic Fallout

- How did Pakistan's role in sponsoring militants feature in India's diplomatic outreach post-operation?
- Did India raise the issue at global platforms like the UN or FATF to ensure accountability for cross-border terror?
- Why did international actors (like the U.S. or IMF) continue to engage with Pakistan despite evidence of its support for terrorism?

5. Accountability and Political Responsibility

- Who will be held accountable for intelligence failures leading up to Ops Sindoor?
- Has there been an independent inquiry or review committee set up to study the lapses?
- How will the government ensure such lapses are not repeated in the future?

6. Long-Term Policy Questions

- What is the government's long-term counter-insurgency policy in Jammu & Kashmir beyond reactive operations?
- Is there a clear plan for deradicalization, rehabilitation of youth, and development of conflict-hit regions?
- How will the government balance hard security measures with political dialogue in the valley?

Conclusion

The conflict between India and Pakistan, culminating in the intense exchanges of February 7th and 8th and the subsequent days, underscored the evolving nature of modern warfare. Both nations employed a mixture of conventional and unconventional strategies, ranging from precision airstrikes and air-defense duels to drone swarms, cyber intrusions, and information warfare.

India's counteroffensives demonstrated its growing military-technological edge, particularly in the integration of multi-layered air defense systems, precision-guided munitions, and robust counter-drone measures. Pakistan, meanwhile, leaned heavily on cost-effective asymmetric tools such as Turkish-supplied drones, electronic warfare, and cyberattacks to offset India's conventional superiority.

The ceasefire, eventually brokered with heavy diplomatic involvement from the United States and other global powers, revealed both the limits and costs of escalation. While India showcased its resilience and retaliatory strength, Pakistan suffered significant military and infrastructural damage, leading it to seek a ceasefire. For India, the conflict reinforced the importance of constant modernization of defense systems and the necessity of preparing for hybrid threats that combine drones, cyberattacks, and electronic warfare with traditional military operations.

The "new normal" after the ceasefire is one of fragile deterrence. Pakistan continues to pursue asymmetric and low-cost strategies to challenge India, while India must balance deterrence with restraint to avoid full-scale escalation. The episode also highlights how external powers—particularly the United States—retain a decisive influence in preventing conflicts in South Asia from spiraling into uncontrollable wars.

Ultimately, this conflict has redrawn the strategic calculus for both sides. For Pakistan, it serves as a warning of the costs of provoking a stronger adversary; for India, it is a reminder that vigilance, technological preparedness, and diplomatic agility are indispensable in ensuring long-term national security.