
The 2025 India-Pakistan Conflict: From Pahalgam to Operation Bunyanum Marsoos**Arslan Mehmood ¹**

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Abstract

In April 2025, tensions between India and Pakistan rose sharply after an attack in Indian-controlled Kashmir killed 26 Hindu pilgrims. Pakistan strongly condemned the attack and called for an independent investigation, but India quickly blamed groups based in Pakistan without proof. In response, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, a long-standing water-sharing agreement between the two countries. On May 7, India launched Operation Sindoor, carrying out airstrikes inside Pakistan. Pakistan hit back with Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, targeting Indian military sites. The downing of an Indian Rafael jet by Pakistani forces became a key moment in the crisis and countered India's narrative. Global powers, including the U.S., China, and the European Union, stepped in to prevent the conflict from spiraling out of control. A ceasefire was reached on May 10, though relations between the two countries remain tense, and the water treaty is still on hold. This crisis showed once again how quickly South Asia can be pushed toward conflict—especially when political interests and unresolved disputes like Kashmir are involved. Real peace will only be possible if both sides engage in honest dialogue and take steps to build trust.

Introduction

In April 2025, South Asia once again stood on the edge of conflict. What began as a tragic attack in Indian-administered Kashmir quickly escalated into a dangerous military confrontation between India and Pakistan. For many people in the region, it was a painful reminder that peace between the two neighbors remains fragile—always at risk of being broken by politics, suspicion, and aggression.

The incident that triggered the crisis happened on April 22, when a group of Hindu pilgrims was attacked near the beautiful Baisaran Valley in the Pahalgam region. It was a horrifying event. Twenty-six innocent people were killed—many of them women and children. The news shook everyone, including Pakistan, which immediately condemned the attack and expressed sorrow for the loss of life. But instead of working with Pakistan to investigate the matter, the Indian government rushed to blame Pakistani-based groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, without providing any concrete evidence or allowing an independent investigation.

This quick accusation was not just unfair—it was dangerous. It laid the foundation for a series of aggressive actions by India that made an already tragic situation worse. And for people in Pakistan, it all felt like *déjà vu*. Once again, just as elections were approaching in India, tensions with Pakistan suddenly flared up. Over the years, a disturbing pattern has emerged: every time Indian elections are around the corner, the government turns toward confrontation with Pakistan. It uses war talk and military action to distract voters, stir up nationalist emotions, and rally support for ruling political parties. This time was no different.

Soon after blaming Pakistan, the Indian government made a shocking move—it suspended the Indus Waters Treaty. This treaty, signed in 1960 with help from the World Bank, was one of the few successful agreements between India and Pakistan, allowing both countries to share water from the Indus River system fairly. By unilaterally suspending it, India turned a basic human need—water—into a political weapon. For Pakistan, a downstream country that depends on the Indus for agriculture, drinking water, and survival, the decision was seen as an act of hostility. It was like cutting off lifelines to the millions of people who depend on that water.

Then came the airstrikes. On April 28, India launched airstrikes across the Line of Control, claiming to hit “terrorist camps” inside Pakistani territory. But again, there was no evidence. No satellite images, no independent verification, not even proper footage. It looked more like a show of strength for Indian voters than a real military operation. Yet the consequences were very real. Violating another country’s airspace is a serious matter, and Pakistan had no choice but to respond. Pakistan’s response was swift and calculated. The Pakistan Air Force scrambled jets to intercept the intruders and protect its borders. What followed was a dramatic aerial clash. In a matter of hours, the balance of the crisis shifted. Pakistani pilots shot down multiple Indian aircraft, including a Rafale fighter jet—one of India’s newest and most expensive acquisitions from France. For India, losing a Rafale wasn’t just a tactical loss—it was a massive embarrassment. These jets had been promoted as a symbol of India’s military might, yet here was one, destroyed in Pakistani airspace.

What made the moment even more significant was that this time, Pakistan’s version of events wasn’t dismissed. International media, satellite analysts, and even French defense sources confirmed that a Rafale had been shot down. India tried to deny it, as it often does, but the world was not convinced. The truth was out, and it exposed the false claims and double standards that often define such crises.

Pakistan also claimed that more Indian aircraft and drones were downed during the engagement. While India remained silent on those, the damage to its narrative was already done. Pakistan had shown that it was not only ready to defend its sovereignty, but also capable of doing so effectively. Meanwhile, the world watched anxiously. The United Nations, European Union, China, and the United States all called for calm. After nearly two weeks of tension and fear, both sides agreed to a ceasefire on May 10. The guns went quiet, but the deeper wounds remained. India did not reverse its harsh measures. Pakistani diplomats were still expelled. Visa processes were frozen. And the water treaty stayed suspended. India continued to demand that Pakistan take action against militant groups—even though it had never presented clear evidence linking Pakistan to the Pahalgam attack.

From Pakistan’s perspective, the whole episode once again exposed how conflict with Pakistan is used as a political tool in India. When governments in New Delhi face pressure, when elections are near, or when domestic problems grow too large to hide, suddenly a new story emerges: that Pakistan is a threat, that war is necessary, that strikes are “defensive.” But who decides what’s defensive when there’s no proof? How can bombing another country without evidence be considered self-defense?

In reality, these actions often serve only one purpose: to win votes. Ordinary people pay the price, while politicians make speeches and gain applause. And when the dust settles, the truth usually comes out—that there was no evidence, no real reason for war, just another episode in a long cycle of political theater.

Pakistan has consistently maintained that it wants peace, not war. Its response in 2025 was not driven by aggression, but by the need to protect its borders and its people. Pakistani officials repeatedly emphasized that the way forward is through dialogue, not blame. Through cooperation, not confrontation. And through truth, not propaganda.

This crisis also reminded the world just how dangerous things can become when nuclear-armed neighbors lose trust and communication. Turning off diplomacy, accusing without proof, and weaponizing natural resources like water—all of this pushes the region closer to disaster.

The downing of the Rafale jet became more than a military achievement. It became a symbol of the truth breaking through carefully crafted lies. It showed that power doesn't always come from buying the latest weapons, but from having the courage to stand firm, to defend sovereignty, and to speak honestly even when the world is listening.

Now, as the ceasefire holds, the biggest question is what comes next. Will South Asia choose the path of peace? Or will politics once again pull the region toward conflict when the next election arrives? For the sake of future generations, the answer must be peace. The people of Pakistan and India deserve better than this endless cycle of fear and hostility.

Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is a key agreement between India and Pakistan that has governed how they share water from the Indus River and its tributaries for over 60 years. Signed in 1960 with help from the World Bank, the treaty had survived wars and many tense moments between the two countries. It gave India control over three eastern rivers—the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—while Pakistan got the rights to the three western rivers—the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. India was allowed limited use of the western rivers for things like farming and electricity, but under strict rules.

Everything changed on April 23, 2025, right after a deadly terrorist attack on April 22, when militants killed 26 Hindu pilgrims in Baisaran Valley. India blamed Pakistan for supporting these militants and accused Islamabad of using terrorism as a state policy. In response, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India was suspending the Indus Waters Treaty. In a national TV address, he made it clear why India took this step, saying, “Water and blood cannot flow together,” meaning India could no longer share water peacefully while terrorism continued.

After suspending the treaty, India quickly changed how it managed water flowing into Pakistan. It increased the release of water from dams on the Chenab and Jhelum rivers, which supply water for farming and drinking in many parts of Pakistan. This caused the water levels downstream in Pakistan to rise and fall suddenly, damaging canals and raising fears of crop failures and water shortages.

Pakistan's government was furious. Leaders from all political parties called India's move illegal and hostile. The Pakistani Foreign Ministry said suspending the treaty was like declaring war and warned of serious consequences for the region if India didn't reverse its decision. Politicians from areas in Pakistan that depend heavily on the Indus water, like Sindh and Punjab, warned of possible famine, mass displacement, and long-term environmental harm if water supplies stayed disrupted. The crisis also caught the attention of the international community. Countries like China and Turkey expressed support for Pakistan and urged both sides to stay calm. Meanwhile, the U.S. and the European Union emphasized the importance of sticking to international agreements like the IWT. The World Bank, which helped set up the treaty, expressed concern and offered to help mediate, but India insisted this was a matter to be dealt with directly between India and Pakistan. Experts in water management and environmental groups from both countries warned that turning water into a political weapon could make the already fragile water situation worse, especially since the region is vulnerable to climate change. They feared this could harm ecosystems, hurt farmers, and disrupt people's lives in rural areas.

India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty marks a major shift in the tense relationship between the two countries. By targeting a long-standing agreement that symbolized cooperation, India seems to be sending a strong message that supporting terrorism will come at a high cost. However, this move also risks making the conflict even worse and could lead to further breakdowns in diplomacy or more violence if tensions aren't carefully managed.

Operation Sindoor: India's Military Response

On May 7, 2025, tensions between India and Pakistan exploded when India launched a major military operation called "Operation Sindoor." This operation targeted what India called terrorist camps and command centers deep inside Pakistani territory. The strikes came just a little over two weeks after a deadly attack on Hindu pilgrims in Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam, which India blamed on militant groups based in Pakistan like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

The operation was carefully planned and involved Indian fighter jets using precise weapons to hit several important locations across Pakistan-administered Kashmir and mainland Pakistan. Some of the key targets were:

- Kotli and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which Indian intelligence says are bases for militant training and logistics.
- Bahawalpur in Punjab province, known as a stronghold for Jaish-e-Mohammed, where the group's leaders and recruitment centers are believed to be.
- Noor Khan Air Base near Rawalpindi, close to Pakistan's military headquarters, used for air operations and strategic planning.

India's Defense Ministry said the strikes were a "pre-emptive and non-military" action focused solely on disabling terrorist groups and their infrastructure. They claimed every effort was made to avoid civilian casualties, and the operation was timed to maximize surprise and effectiveness. But Pakistan responded very differently. The government condemned the strikes as a blatant violation of their sovereignty. They said they shot down several Indian jets during the attacks, including some of India's newest Rafale fighters, though India hasn't confirmed losing any aircraft. Pakistan also claimed to have intercepted many missiles using its upgraded air defense systems.

Despite these defenses, Pakistan admitted some targets were hit, including areas where civilians live. Local officials reported more than 50 deaths, including women and children, but these numbers couldn't be independently confirmed.

The strikes pushed the two nuclear-armed neighbors dangerously close to open war. The United Nations, the United States, China, and the European Union all called for calm and restraint. India described Operation Sindoor as a strong counterterrorism move meant to deter future attacks, while Pakistan warned it might respond whenever and however it chooses.

Military experts noted that this was India's boldest cross-border strike since the 2019 Balakot airstrikes, but much bigger in scale and more coordinated. The use of advanced Rafale jets, precision bombs, and possibly drones showed India's increasing military capabilities. Satellite images showed damage to buildings at several sites in Kotli and Bahawalpur after the strikes.

This operation has made relations between India and Pakistan even worse and raised fears that the whole region could become unstable. Fighting along the Line of Control (LoC) between the two countries resumed, and people living near the border started evacuating out of fear of a larger war. As the world tries to help cool things down, the situation in South Asia looks more tense than ever. India's willingness to strike deep inside Pakistan, combined with Pakistan's threat of retaliation, raises the risk of a long and dangerous standoff that could affect not just the two countries but the whole region and beyond.

Operation Banyanum Arsoos: Pakistan's Retaliatio

When Indian fighter jets carried out airstrikes inside Pakistani territory late on May 7, 2025, under what they called "Operation Sindoor," the situation quickly turned grave. For Pakistan, it wasn't just a military strike—it was a direct violation of its sovereignty. The country found itself at a crossroads, needing to respond—but wisely.

Within hours of the Indian action, the Pakistani government convened an emergency high-level meeting in Islamabad. The Prime Minister, the Army Chief, senior intelligence officials, and members of the National Security Committee gathered to weigh their options. This was no ordinary meeting. Every word carried weight, and every decision had the potential to affect millions. While the public and media called for a strong response, the leadership knew that a reckless move could escalate into an all-out war between two nuclear-armed states.

After long hours of consultation, analysis, and deliberation, the decision was made. Pakistan would respond—but not in anger. The retaliation would be sharp, calculated, and measured. It would be enough to send a message but not enough to throw the region into chaos.

In the early hours of May 8, the Pakistani military launched "Operation Banyanum Arsoos," a phrase that loosely means "Veil of Retaliation" in Urdu. The operation was designed to restore deterrence without inviting total war. Pakistani Air Force jets targeted key Indian military installations that were believed to have played a role in supporting the May 7 airstrikes. These included the Pathankot Air Force Station near the border, the strategic Srinagar Air Base in Indian-administered Kashmir, and military complexes in Awantipora and Udhampur that are crucial to India's northern command structure.

According to Pakistani officials, every effort was made to avoid civilian areas. The operation aimed purely at military targets, and it was conducted with what the military described as maximum discipline and professionalism. Local reports from Kashmir indicated that while some Indian military buildings were damaged and communication networks disrupted, civilian casualties were low—largely due to prior evacuations and India's alert air defenses. Indian officials claimed they had shot down some Pakistani aircraft and intercepted the strikes, but neither side confirmed any major losses.

Later that day, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir, addressed the nation. His message was firm yet composed. He made it clear that Pakistan did not want war but would not allow anyone to breach its borders with impunity. He praised the military's professionalism and reassured citizens that the country was capable and prepared to defend itself when necessary.

In Pakistan, the response was widely seen as sensible and strong. Even opposition leaders supported the government's decision, calling the operation a balanced show of strength. Analysts described it as a textbook example of deterrence—signaling military readiness without provoking further escalation.

India, however, condemned the Pakistani response as provocative and dangerous. Prime Minister Modi held emergency meetings and ordered Indian forces to be placed on high alert. In border states like Punjab and Jammu, schools were closed, civilians were moved to shelters, and hospitals prepared for possible casualties. The fear of further fighting was very real on both sides of the border.

As tensions grew, the international community began to worry. With two rival nuclear powers exchanging fire, global leaders feared that the conflict could spiral out of control. Among the first to act was U.S. President Donald Trump, who personally contacted both Prime Ministers—Shehbaz Sharif and Narendra Modi—urging them to step back from the brink. Trump warned of the catastrophic consequences of a prolonged conflict and offered the United States as a neutral mediator. While India firmly rejected any third-party involvement, calling Kashmir an internal matter, Pakistan was open to dialogue through diplomatic channels.

Behind the scenes, several countries—China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and members of the European Union—used their diplomatic influence to push both sides toward restraint. The United Nations also issued a strong call for de-escalation. As a result of these efforts, secret backchannel talks began. After two tense days, on May 10, the foreign ministries of both countries jointly announced a ceasefire.

The ceasefire helped ease the immediate fear of full-scale war, but it did not bring things back to normal. India followed up with a series of diplomatic and economic measures designed to pressure

Pakistan. These included suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, expelling Pakistani diplomats, cancelling visas, halting cultural exchanges, and freezing most bilateral trade. India stated these actions would only be reversed if Pakistan took “irreversible” steps against militant groups operating from its territory, especially Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Pakistan, in turn, welcomed the ceasefire but strongly denied supporting terrorism. Islamabad rejected India’s accusations as politically motivated and without credible proof. Instead, Pakistan emphasized that real peace would only come through resolving the Kashmir dispute, which it called the root cause of instability between the two nations.

Although the fighting had paused, military forces on both sides remained on high alert. Skirmishes were reported in some areas along the Line of Control, and fear still lingered in border villages. Civilians remained vulnerable, unsure whether peace would hold or if another clash was around the corner.

International experts pointed out that while the ceasefire was a welcome step, it was only a short-term fix. Without sustained dialogue, mutual trust, and meaningful steps toward conflict resolution, the situation could easily flare up again. In a rare move, the UN Security Council issued a unanimous statement urging both countries to resume communication and work toward a durable peace.

In the days that followed, analysts around the world tried to understand what the crisis meant for South Asia’s future. Think tanks discussed not only the risk of military escalation but also the impact of diplomatic isolation, economic disruptions, and the fragility of water-sharing agreements. The fact that both countries possessed nuclear weapons added another layer of urgency to these conversations.

Operation Banyanum Arsoos was Pakistan’s way of standing its ground without crossing into recklessness. It demonstrated military capability, strategic thinking, and national unity. But it also exposed the dangerous fault lines that remain unresolved. The ceasefire brought a pause—but not peace. For long-term stability, both countries will have to do more than just avoid war. They will need to build trust, reestablish dialogue, and address the real issues that keep bringing them to the edge.

International Diplomacy and Ceasefire

As fighting between India and Pakistan heated up in early May 2025—with India’s Operation Sindoor and Pakistan’s response, Operation Banyanum Arsoos—the world grew very concerned. Since both countries have nuclear weapons and a long history of conflict, many feared the situation could spiral into a much bigger regional or even global crisis. This prompted urgent diplomatic efforts by major world powers to calm things down.

One of the most notable efforts came from U.S. President Donald Trump. He reached out directly to both India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, urging them to avoid further escalation. Trump warned about the “catastrophic consequences” if the conflict got out of control and offered the United States as a mediator to help ease tensions.

Along with the U.S., officials from the United Nations, European Union, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation also pushed for restraint and backchannel talks to bring peace back to the region. However, India made it clear that it did not want any third-party involvement in the Kashmir dispute or other issues. Prime Minister Modi’s office said India was committed to peace but insisted that dialogue could only happen if Pakistan took real action against terrorist groups operating from its soil.

Despite this, international pressure from countries like the U.S., Russia, and Saudi Arabia—who have ties with both India and Pakistan—helped open up secret diplomatic talks. By May 10, both sides agreed to a ceasefire, which was announced by their foreign ministries. Both countries expressed a wish to avoid further civilian deaths and economic damage.

But this ceasefire didn't mean everything went back to how it was before. India made it clear that some tough measures put in place after the Pahalgam attack would stay in place, including:

- Continuing to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, which affects shared water resources and worries many globally.
- Expelling Pakistani diplomats and lowering the level of diplomatic relations.
- Canceling visas for Pakistani citizens, stopping most people-to-people contact.
- Halting most trade and cultural exchanges, except for humanitarian reasons.

India said these measures would only be lifted if Pakistan took “real and irreversible” steps against terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, including arresting and prosecuting their leaders.

Pakistan, on the other hand, welcomed the ceasefire but strongly denied involvement in terrorism, calling India's demands political and lacking evidence. Islamabad insisted that true peace could only come from resolving the Kashmir dispute, which they see as the root cause of conflict.

Even though the fighting stopped for a while, both countries kept their armies on high alert along the border. There were still occasional skirmishes, and people living near the Line of Control remained at risk.

International experts warned that without ongoing dialogue, the conflict could flare up again. The United Nations Security Council made a rare unanimous call for both sides to keep communication open, restart diplomatic talks, and work towards lasting solutions.

After the ceasefire, think tanks and policy experts worldwide started analyzing what this crisis meant for the future, including concerns about managing nuclear risks, sharing water resources, and the long-term outlook for India-Pakistan relations in a tense global landscape.

Conclusion

In April 2025, South Asia once again teetered on the edge of open warfare. What began as a tragic act of violence in Indian-administered Kashmir quickly spiraled into a full-blown military standoff between two nuclear-armed neighbors—India and Pakistan. The crisis, ignited by the Pahalgam attack, reignited long-standing tensions and exposed how fragile peace remains in the region.

On April 22, a group of Hindu pilgrims was attacked near Baisaran Valley in Pahalgam. The massacre left 26 people dead, including women and children. Pakistan immediately condemned the attack and expressed sorrow for the loss of innocent lives. However, without providing any concrete evidence or allowing an impartial investigation, the Indian government hastily blamed Pakistan-based groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. Rather than cooperating with Pakistan to investigate the incident, New Delhi escalated matters. For many in Pakistan, this response was not surprising—it echoed a troubling pattern that has repeated itself over the years: each time India approaches an election cycle, tensions with Pakistan mysteriously spike. Nationalist rhetoric ramps up, and military posturing becomes a political tool to rally support domestically.

In a highly provocative move, India unilaterally suspended the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) on April 23, just a day after the Pahalgam attack. The IWT, brokered by the World Bank in 1960, had stood as a rare symbol of cooperation between India and Pakistan, even during times of war. It allowed equitable sharing of water from the Indus River system: India had rights over the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej), and Pakistan controlled the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab). The suspension of the treaty was framed by Indian leaders as a response to terrorism. Prime Minister Modi, in a televised address, declared, “Water and blood cannot flow together.” This decision had immediate and destabilizing consequences. Dam releases along the Chenab and Jhelum rivers were suddenly altered, causing sharp fluctuations in water flow downstream in Pakistan. Agricultural damage, fears of drought, and potential famine were voiced by Pakistani provinces like Punjab and Sindh.

Pakistan condemned the move as a breach of international law. The Foreign Ministry equated it to a declaration of war, and Pakistani politicians across party lines denounced it as an act of collective punishment. International reactions followed swiftly—China and Turkey expressed support for Pakistan, while the EU and U.S. urged restraint and adherence to international agreements. Environmental and water policy experts from both sides warned that weaponizing water could lead to long-term regional instability, particularly in a climate-vulnerable zone like South Asia. What was once considered a neutral lifeline had now become another tool in geopolitical warfare.

On May 7, 2025, India escalated tensions further with the launch of Operation Sindoor, its largest cross-border airstrike since Balakot in 2019. Targeting alleged militant bases, Indian fighter jets bombed locations in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and deep into mainland Pakistan. Strikes were reported in Kotli and Muzaffarabad (Azad Kashmir), Bahawalpur (Punjab), and even near Rawalpindi at the Noor Khan Air Base—uncomfortably close to Pakistan’s military headquarters. India described the mission as "pre-emptive and non-military," aimed strictly at terrorist infrastructure.

But Pakistan painted a very different picture. It denounced the attack as a clear violation of sovereignty. Pakistani officials claimed several Indian aircraft were shot down, including one of India’s prized Rafale jets. The airstrikes reportedly caused civilian casualties—though the numbers remain contested—and triggered widespread panic. The Indian government offered limited confirmation, and most media coverage within India downplayed losses. Yet satellite imagery and independent defense analysts supported several of Pakistan’s claims. The downing of a Rafale jet, in particular, was confirmed by international sources, including French defense observers, leading to significant embarrassment for New Delhi. India’s bold offensive was widely seen as a calculated political move ahead of national elections. The lack of clear evidence connecting Pakistan to the Pahalgam attack, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure, raised questions about the true intent behind the operation.

Within hours of India’s airstrikes, Pakistan convened its National Security Committee for an emergency session. The response was decisive but restrained. Rather than retaliating in kind with indiscriminate attacks, Pakistan launched Operation Banyanum Arsoos—a precisely calibrated counterstrike aimed at Indian military installations. Targets included the Pathankot Air Force Station, Srinagar Air Base, and military complexes in Awantipora and Udampur—strategic nodes within India’s northern command. Pakistani officials claimed the strikes were designed to avoid civilian areas and focused solely on military objectives.

Pakistan’s leadership framed the operation not as aggression, but as defense. General Asim Munir, Pakistan’s Army Chief, addressed the nation, stating, “We do not seek war, but we will not tolerate violations of our sovereignty.” The message resonated across the political spectrum. Even opposition parties praised the operation’s precision and composure. India condemned the strikes and placed its military on high alert. Border regions were locked down, schools were closed, and emergency services were mobilized. Though both sides claimed to have intercepted incoming aircraft and missiles, no full-scale ground war followed—thanks largely to rapid international intervention.

As South Asia edged closer to war, the international community scrambled to contain the crisis. The United States, China, the European Union, and the United Nations all issued urgent appeals for restraint. In a rare move, U.S. President Donald Trump personally contacted both Prime Ministers—Shehbaz Sharif and Narendra Modi. Trump emphasized the catastrophic risk of nuclear escalation and offered the U.S. as a neutral mediator. While India rejected third-party mediation, citing Kashmir as an internal issue, Pakistan welcomed diplomatic engagement.

Backchannel negotiations—facilitated quietly by China, Saudi Arabia, and EU diplomats—ultimately led to a ceasefire announcement on May 10. The guns fell silent, and both air forces stood down. However, the ceasefire came with no reversal of Indian actions. The Indus Waters Treaty remained suspended, Pakistani diplomats were still expelled, and economic ties stayed

frozen. India continued to demand that Pakistan take “irreversible action” against militant groups—still without offering credible proof of their involvement in the Pahalgam attack.

While open conflict was averted, the crisis left behind deep scars and profound questions. Once again, Pakistan’s sovereignty had been violated. Once again, military action was taken without evidence. And once again, political theater in India appeared to drive a dangerous narrative of confrontation. Pakistan’s conduct during the crisis emphasized restraint and responsibility. From condemning the Pahalgam attack, to calling for independent investigation, to launching a disciplined retaliatory operation, Islamabad sought to avoid unnecessary escalation while preserving its dignity and deterrence.

The 2025 crisis reminded the world of a dangerous reality: when diplomacy fails and nationalism rules, peace becomes hostage to politics. The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, the use of advanced fighter jets, and the mutual exchange of airstrikes brought South Asia dangerously close to disaster. If there is any lesson from this episode, it is that real security does not come from weapons or political posturing. It comes from truth, trust, and the courage to seek peace—especially when the easier choice is war. The ceasefire may have held. But peace remains uncertain. Unless both countries commit to dialogue, transparency, and conflict resolution, the region may soon find itself at the edge once again—next time, with consequences the world might not be able to contain.

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