

UPDATE 3

Indo-Pak Standoff and Pakistan's Response

INDO-PAK STANDOFF AND PAKISTAN'S RESPONSE

[Updated 1515 Hours Pakistan Time – Thursday, 22 May 2025]

Ser.	India	Pakistan
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Are nuclear weapons safe in the hands of such an irresponsible and rogue nation?” “I believe that Pakistan's nuclear weapons should be taken under the supervision of IAEA.” [Def Min Rajnath Singh – 14 May 25]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These irresponsible remarks reveal India's profound insecurity and frustration regarding Pakistan's effective defence and deterrence against Indian aggression through conventional means [MOFA – 15 May 25]• The comments of India's Def Min also show his sheer ignorance of the mandate and responsibilities of a specialized agency of the United Nations like the IAEA [MOFA – 15 May 25]• The IAEA and the international community should be worried about the repeated theft and illicit trafficking incidents involving nuclear and radioactive material in India [MOFA – 15 May 25]
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• India appealed to the IMF to rethink on providing financial support to Pakistan claiming that Pakistan has begun rebuilding the terror infrastructure of LeT and JeM and a part of the money received from the IMF would be used to fund such	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have won the war but we want peace. We have taught our enemy a lesson but condemned aggression.” Pakistan hopes for a future where the region is prosperous and peaceful, built on hard work and mutual respect [PM Shabaz Sharif – Youm-e-Tashakur – 16 May 25]

	infrastructure [Def Min Rajnath Singh – 16 May 25]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM also extended a renewed offer to India for dialogue, urging peaceful negotiations to resolve outstanding disputes. “I don’t think we can achieve lasting peace in the region without permanent solutions to Jammu Kashmir and water-sharing issues.” [PM Shabaz Sharif – Youm-e-Tashakur – 16 May 25]
3.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan can never be coerced and it will never bow down to Indian hegemony [DG ISPR – 18 May 25] • The current standoff stems from India’s ongoing policy of sponsoring and abetting terrorism, particularly within Pakistan DG ISPR – 18 May 25] • DG ISPR warned India against weaponising water, saying it could unleash consequences that will echo for generations, as New Delhi threatens to halt the flow of Indus River waters amid rising tensions [Express Tribune – 19 May 25]
4.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan released a comprehensive dossier, containing irrefutable evidence of India's aggression and lies and outlining historic success of Bunyan-um-Marsoos, as well as India’s false-flag operation in

		Pahalgam in Indian IIOJK [Express Tribune – 19 May 25]
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India will send seven delegations comprising members of all opposition parties to key global capitals to push 'zero tolerance' on terrorism after Pakistan tensions [The Independent – 17 May 25] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high-level diplomatic delegation led by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto will visit important world capitals to expose Indian propaganda in the aftermath of the recent military escalation with India [Dawn – 19 May 25] This announcement by Pakistan was labelled as "copy-paste diplomacy" in India media.
6.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar left for a three-day official visit to China on Monday (today) on the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi amid regional tensions [Dawn – 19 May 25]
7.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a senior security source, in the latest interaction between the DGMOs, both sides agreed to consolidate the ceasefire and also agreed to a phased withdrawal of deployed troops and weaponry along the LoC [Express Tribune – 21 May 25]
8.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saudi Arabia could be the "neutral" venue for much-needed talks between Pakistan and India on critical issues; Kashmir, water, trade

		and terrorism [PM Shabaz Sharif – Dawn – 22 May 25]
9.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG ISPR dismissed India's claim of having issued a prior warning about its recent military actions, calling it "absurd" and reiterating that Pakistan does not rely on Indian intelligence for national security. "We prioritise peace and love peace, but we are always ready for war, and if war is needed, then so be it." [Express Tribune – 22 May 25]
International Mediation		
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Foreign Secretary David Lammy hailed Pakistan and India for defusing tensions and agreeing to a ceasefire during meetings with PM Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy PM Ishaq Dar on his official visit to Islamabad while stating that "the conflict serves no one's interest" [Express Tribune – 17 may 25] 	

Assessment

- The four days of armed conflict (Marka e Haq) from 6th to 10th May 2025 have showcased a climactic battle for escalation domination in kinetic domain along with a concomitant war of narratives, where media competed to dominate epistemic space and international attention. Indian media's unidimensional focus on Pakistan bashing and linkage of Pahalgam incident to terrorism was not bought by the international community, due to failure of Indian government to present solid evidence of Pakistan's role in the Pahalgam incident.
- Compared to all previous wars between India and Pakistan, the international media also presented a reasonably balanced picture of the armed conflict, due to defensive and proportionate nature of Pakistan's military response. Indian hauteur and refusal to heed diplomatic advice, evidenced in the aggressive demeanour of Indian leaders like Jaishanker (Minister of External Affairs of India) while hectoring EU leadership, "When we look out at the World...we look

for partners. We don't look for preachers who don't practice at home what they preach abroad.”(The News, May 5,2025).

- The ceasefire brokered by USA has been accepted by India due to diminishing political and operational returns after robust military response by Pakistan. The DGMOs have met and exchanged views to decide the mechanism of pulling back the troops to pre 6th May locations. The PM of Pakistan has also mentioned Saudi Arabia as a possible, “neutral” venue, for National Security Adviser (NSA) level talks between the two countries on three main subjects, i.e water, Kashmir, and terrorism.
- Indian leadership has not toned down its bellicose rhetoric and the statement of Indian PM Modi that India would only talk to Pakistan on the issue of terrorism and Pakistan administered Kashmir, and that it would treat the terrorists and their sponsors in the similar manner indicates that mindset. Indian PM was clearly insinuating that attacks on a sovereign state on the pretext of state sponsorship was a “New Normal”. The import inherent in this incendiary rhetoric needs to be understood and suitably challenged at international fora.
- PM Modi has already rejected US mediation role in the Indo-Pak talks and the playing down of the US role in the ceasefire by Indian leadership has been rued by the US President during an Oval Office meeting with the South African President on 21st May.
- Indian leadership had ratcheted up the tensions with the aim to make political mileage out of the Pahalgam incident, besides using this incident as a smokescreen to walk out of Indus Water Treaty (IWT). Having failed to attain their political and military objectives and having suffered the ignominious retreat on military, the Indian media and right wing Hindutva vote bank are riled up and shaping the environment for another attempt at embarrassing Pakistan militarily and diplomatically.
- The Indian leadership in order to appease its rabidly extremist vote bank and demoralized armed forces, is likely to redouble its resource flow to foment terrorism through its proxies like TTP and BLA. The post-Pahalgam spike in TTP and BLA terrorism betokens Indian attempts to continue the war through proxies to destabilize Pakistan.

- Indians have sent an All-Party delegation of 40 parliamentarians including Shashi Tharoor to the world capitals to plead India's case on Pahalgam incident. Though Pakistan has also sent its own delegation led by Mr Bilawal Bhutto, yet more efforts are required to send several other delegations, especially amongst the think tank community of Pakistan to present the counter Indian initiative. Such delegations should be chosen with care, comprising people with good grip on communication skills and equipped with the official brief, including properly packaged, and internationally sellable evidence of Indian complicity in acts of terrorism in KPK and Balochistan.
- India is likely to up the ante on epistemic front by reenergizing its media campaign aimed at highlighting Pakistan's vulnerabilities like political cleavages, unstable internal security situation, weak economy and FATF review requirements.
- The FATF plenary meeting in June 2025 shall feature discussion on Pakistan's compliance with international money laundering and counter terrorist financing requirements. India is likely to lobby against Pakistan to take it back to grey list, an eventuality, Pakistan should be aware of.
- The air defences of Air Bases and sensitive installations especially in the capital city and military headquarters were tested during the 4 days' Maraka e Haq operation. The loitering munitions and cruise missiles with their sneak capability and long reach have blurred the boundaries between our forward defences and the rear areas, making the whole country a combat zone. In view of the transformation of warfare towards missiles, drone, cyber, and BVR air attacks a complete reappraisal of the threats and the air defence response is needed to make our critical assets as well as civilian areas more resilient to attacks.
- The re-hyphenation of Indo-Pak relations and internationalization of the Kashmir conflict are the unintended consequence of Maraka e Haq which need to be capitalized upon by our Foreign Office.
- There is a need to shun triumphalism to guard against the tendency of complacency both at the armed forces as well as national level to concentrate on our internal weaknesses and the externally inspired proxy warfare.

Recommendations

- Pakistan needs to take up the Indian violation of IWT with the World Bank as well as other UN fora like UN Security Council or UN General Assembly. Since river water sharing as upper and lower riparians is important to so many countries of the world, Pakistan's stance, rooted in international law and conventions of water sharing is likely to garner adequate support for a favourable outcome.
- The NSA level meeting between India and Pakistan should lay emphasis on the need to shun proxy warfare and respect of international law vis a vis IWT.
- Pakistan should collect and package the evidence of Indian proxy support to terror networks of BLA and TTP in a manner that is irrefutable at international fora. Our foreign missions and special delegations on advocacy mission should be equipped with this evidence while pleading Pakistan's case abroad.
- A special hub of relevant experts in engineering and international law should be created under Ministry of Water Resources to plead Pakistan's case on IWT at international fora. The capacity building of Indus Water Commission and Ministry of Water Resources through induction of the best talent in water resources engineering and water law should be ensured at priority.
- Foreign Office should garner the requisite support to avert likely Indian attempts to embarrass Pakistan during the forthcoming meeting of FATF in June 25.
- Special measures be taken to ensure fool proof air defence of sensitive installations including air bases and critical defence and cyber assets.
- The Active Defence cyber soft kill and protection arrangements for our mechanized columns especially in desert sectors to be ensured at priority along with dispersal of critical assets to remain unaffected by the new drones and aerial threats.
- The port infrastructure be made more resilient through strengthening of coastal and air defences besides investing more in PN's offensive and defensive capabilities.
- Delegations from government as well as non government think tanks should be sent to leading think tanks of the world to expose Indian mendacity and doublespeak on Pahalgam as well as IWT.