

Introduction: Pahalgam, terrorist attack

Shortly after midday on 22 April 2025, a terrorist commando arrived in Pahalgam, in the Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, and cold-bloodedly murdered twenty-six people, twenty-five Indians and one Nepalese citizen who was working as an assistant. An unknown number of people were also injured. Pahalgam is about ninety kilometres from Srinagar, the capital of Indian Kashmir, and about 35 kilometres from the Amarnath cave temple, a place of worship for the Amarnath Yatra, a Hindu pilgrimage held during the summer that brings together hundreds of thousands of devotees from various parts of India. The entire region is thus an important pilgrimage route for Hindus and a beautiful natural area nestled between valleys in the foothills of the Himalayas. The attack in Pahalgam was not the first in the enclave, but it holds the record for being the deadliest in India since the 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, which left 173 people dead.



Figure 1. The idyllic Pahalgam Valley, the setting for the April 22 attack. Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pahalgam_Valley.jpg

According to the Indian government, less than 24 hours later, the terrorist group Terrorist Resistance Front (TRF), with a separatist nationalist ideology and allegedly dependent on the larger Sunni Islamist group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), translated into English as

"The Army of the Pure", a group created in 1990 and accused, for example, of carrying out the attack in Mumbai. It should also be noted that the TRF denied its involvement in the attack, according to a statement on a Telegram channel, and in turn accused India of discrediting the so-called "Kashmir resistance movement" (Sharma, 2025) .

Another fact to mention is that the Pahalgam attack was not the only one, nor the most serious, during Modi's term in office, as in 2019, in Pulwama, a suicide bomber killed 46 people. but it has been a blow to his government's attempts to present a situation of normality in the troubled region, especially considering that since 2019, not without controversy, Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which recognised the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, had been repealed in order to give the central government in New Delhi greater control.



Figure 2. Disputed territory of Kashmir between three countries: India, Pakistan, and China (Source: CIA World Factbook, on Commons. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kashmir_map.jpg)

A region such as Kashmir, which has been embroiled in internal conflicts and wars between India and Pakistan since the partition of 1947, was once again set ablaze from Pahalgam, as in response to the terrorist attack from India, reprisals were soon planned, with the ultimate target being Pakistan itself, as New Delhi accused its neighbour, an endemic enemy since 1947, of harbouring jihadist terrorists and separatists in the Kashmir region controlled by Pakistan. as well as using a policy of supporting terrorism not only to destabilise the region, but India itself in general, which could see its priorities as a major power in the Asia-Pacific region compromised (IEEE, 2025).

Indeed, the terrorist attack has been interpreted by Indian military sectors as a possible Pakistani ploy aimed at provoking New Delhi. General S. P. Vishwasrao, former defence attaché in Islamabad, argues that its ultimate goal was to create internal divisions and provoke an immediate military response, for which Pakistan would be prepared, as part of a broader information warfare strategy aimed at destabilising India. It would take advantage of events such as farmers' protests, demonstrations against the Citizenship Amendment Act and riots in the state of Manipur, which would erode internal cohesion and weaken the Indian state in its aspirations to become a major power (Philip, 2025) .

Kashmir and Indo-Pakistani relations since 2014

Pakistan poses a latent threat to Indian security, not so much because of the magnitude of its military resources, which are inferior to those of its neighbour, but because of the deterrent role of its nuclear arsenal, which to a certain extent balances the theoretical asymmetry in conventional capabilities. Added to this is the fact that, since 2018, a strategic partnership between China and Pakistan has been consolidating, reintroducing a third player into the regional equation, namely China, which was already present in the Kashmir conflict itself with its control of the neighbouring region of Aksai Chin.

In this context, Kashmir has been the epicentre of Indo-Pakistani conflict since 1947. The partition of the subcontinent following independence from the British Raj led to the first war between the two states (1947-1949), which ended with the division of the former principality of Jammu and Kashmir by the Line of Control established by the United Nations. The second Indo-Pakistani war (1965) was again mainly fought in the Kashmir Valley, while the 1971 conflict – more focused on the secession of Bangladesh –

reaffirmed hostilities and consolidated the structural rivalry. In 1999, the Kargil conflict, immediately following nuclear tests by both countries in 1998, reignited fears of a nuclear escalation in the region (Bose, 2021) .



Figure 3. Insurgency in Kashmir. Indian soldiers in a terrorist tracking operation on April 26, 2025.

Source: Nasir Kachroo Nur Photo via Getty Images

However, beyond the occasional clashes between the Indian and Pakistani conventional armies, since the late 1980s, another type of war has been waged in disputed Kashmir: an armed separatist and Islamist insurgency in the Indian-dominated regions of Jammu and Kashmir. New Delhi has perceived this movement as being supported to varying degrees by Pakistan, without whose help the succession of attacks, armed clashes and even forced displacement, particularly the exodus of the Kashmiri Hindu community in the early 1990s, would not have been possible. The dawn of THE 21ST century was marked by bloody attacks involving LeT, such as those on the Indian Parliament in 2001 and Mumbai in 2008, which, although not confined to Kashmir, highlighted the connection between these jihadist groups and the conflict in the region.

In 2014, Narendra Modi's rise to power marked a change in tone in Indian policy towards Pakistan, but not towards Kashmir, a persistent hotbed of violence with a local insurgency

pitted against heavy Indian militarisation of the territory. With regard to Pakistan, at the beginning of his term, Modi surprised observers with symbolic gestures of rapprochement, such as inviting Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to his inauguration. but soon the framework of mutual distrust reasserted itself, with Kashmir at the centre of tension, an increase in incidents and attacks against the Indian police and army and, according to New Delhi, encouraged by Islamabad's logistical and political support for these armed terrorist groups, whose target until then had been the Indian armed and security forces.



Figure 4. Map of India showing the location of Jammu and Kashmir, plus the Line of Control. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_disputed_areas_map.svg

Thus, in September 2016, an attack on the Uri base left nineteen soldiers dead. This marked the beginning of Indian reprisals in the form of cross-border 'surgical strikes' against suspected insurgent camps located on Pakistani territory. On 14 February 2019, another attack took place in Pulwama, killing 46 Indian police officers. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by another deadly Islamist group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, literally "The Army of Mohammed", which was also involved in the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament and was even declared a terrorist group by the Pakistani government in 2002. In retaliation, India, which accused Pakistan of continuing to sponsor terrorism, reportedly bombed an Islamist training camp in Balakot, on Pakistani territory, leading to a brief air battle.

In August 2019, New Delhi took a step that Islamabad considered "a *de facto* annexation": it revoked Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which granted Jammu and Kashmir special autonomous status. The region was placed under the direct control of the central government, with a strict communications blackout and a large military deployment. Pakistan responded by suspending diplomatic relations and bilateral trade and launching a campaign portraying India's attitude as contrary to international law, in particular United Nations Resolution 47, which, since 1948, has recommended a referendum to decide its status. However, for India, the Kashmir issue is exclusively a matter of domestic policy (Bhasin, 2022) .



Figure 5. A Kashmiri protester at the protests in Srinagar, the capital of the Indian-administered region, during 2010.

Source: Ieshan Wani, Global Voices

Since then, Indo-Pakistani relations have fluctuated between tense calm and sporadic outbreaks of border violence. In 2021, both countries agreed to reinstate the 2003 ceasefire on the border, known as the Line of Control, but confidence in a resolution to the conflict remained eroded. What did change were the objectives of separatist and Islamist terrorist groups. From attacks and armed clashes exclusively against members of the Indian Armed Forces and security forces, they expanded to the civilian population, more specifically to Hindu citizens in the region and specifically to pilgrims arriving from other parts of the country, under the justification that they are Hindus whom New Delhi wants to resettle in Kashmir to change the demographic balance with regard to Muslims. Above all, they carried out attacks against tourists, of which the attack in Pahalgam was another example.

In May 2024, a targeted shooting inside a private complex in Pahalgam, where the attack took place last April, left two tourists from Jaipur injured. In June of the same year, other terrorists opened fire on a bus carrying pilgrims from the Shiv Khori shrine in the Reasi district. The attack caused the driver to lose control of the vehicle, which plunged into a ravine, killing nine people, including children and women.

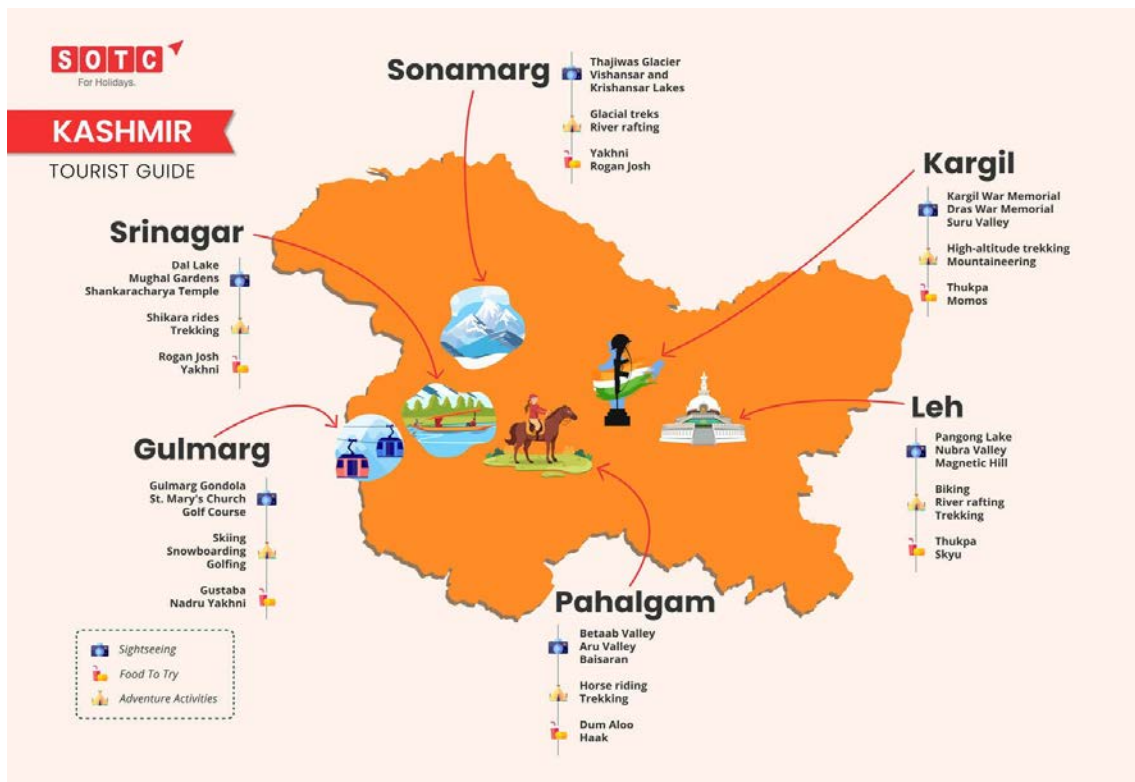


Figure 6. As shown on this 2019 tourist map, Kashmir has been promoted as a tourist destination due to the beauty of its enclaves and places of worship. Source: <https://www.sotc.in>

Tourism is fundamental to the Kashmiri economy, and any situation of insecurity undermines its development. Indeed, it has become the driving force of the region, encouraged both by the beauty of its enclaves and by a proactive policy from New Delhi. Thus, the influx of tourists grew exponentially, reaching more than half a million in April 2025. In this way, the attack in Pahalgam may also have been motivated by an attempt to torpedo the integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union, focusing attention on and undermining tourism as its main driving force, Indian domestic tourism, which seems to be recovering again (ET Travel World, 2025) .

Sindoor versus Unbreakable Wall: spring under fire

Following the attack in Pahalgam, attributing responsibility to the TRF group and accusing Pakistan of supporting it, the Indian government set up a security committee that developed an initial five-point response plan, all of them focused on Pakistan: the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, the closure of the Attari-Wagah border crossing, the revocation of visas for Pakistani citizens, the expulsion of Pakistani military advisers from New Delhi and the reduction of Indian diplomatic staff in Islamabad (Fernández Aparicio and Pandey, 2025).

The most significant effect was the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, an agreement negotiated in 1960 with the mediation of the World Bank. The inability to access the Indus River exposes Pakistan to serious consequences in a context already marked by economic hardship and widespread protests against the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. This was a *casus belli* that led some Pakistani leaders to declare that the suspension of the treaty was *tantamount* to a declaration of war. At the same time, Narendra Modi authorised the Indian Armed Forces to plan an unrestricted punitive operation, indicating that a military response was coming sooner rather than later. There was also an increase in tensions towards the Muslim community in various regions of the country, with incidents of hostility and the implementation of restrictive measures. These events were associated with the dominant narrative following the attack on Pahalgam, which tended to link that community in general with what happened (Nussbaum, 2024) .



Figure 7. The Indus River and its tributaries, essential to the economies of India and Pakistan and subject to the 1960 water-sharing treaty. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indus_river-es.svg

Indeed, at midnight on 6–7 May, India launched Operation Sindoor, named after a Hindu cultural symbol in tribute to the widows of those killed in Pahalgam. The military operation aimed to destroy nine terrorist bases and training camps located in the Pakistan-administered region of Azad Kashmir, such as Sawai Nala and Syedna Bilal in Muzaffarabad; Gulpur and Abbas in Kotli, and Barnala in Bhimber; but also venturing into

Pakistani Punjab itself with attacks in Bahawalpur, Markaz Taiba Muridke, Sarjal Sialkot and Mehmoona Joya. In the early hours of 7 May, following the start of the Indian offensive, Islamabad responded with its own military campaign to counter it, dubbed Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, translated as 'Unbreakable Wall', a name that evoked the determination of absolute resistance (Majumdar, 2025) .

Initially, the Indian Air Force used air-to-ground missiles from 72 aircraft. After 48 hours of campaigning, the Pakistan Armed Forces Public Relations Service (known as ISPR), which centralises information on military affairs for the media, announced that five of these Indian fighter jets, three Dassault Rafales plus a Su-30 and a MiG-29, had been hit from the ground. Subsequently, Prime Minister Sharif claimed that a sixth aircraft, a Dassault Mirage 2000, had been shot down. At the time, 42 Pakistani aircraft, including Chinese-made Chengdu J-10Cs, were flying over the country awaiting possible combat involvement.

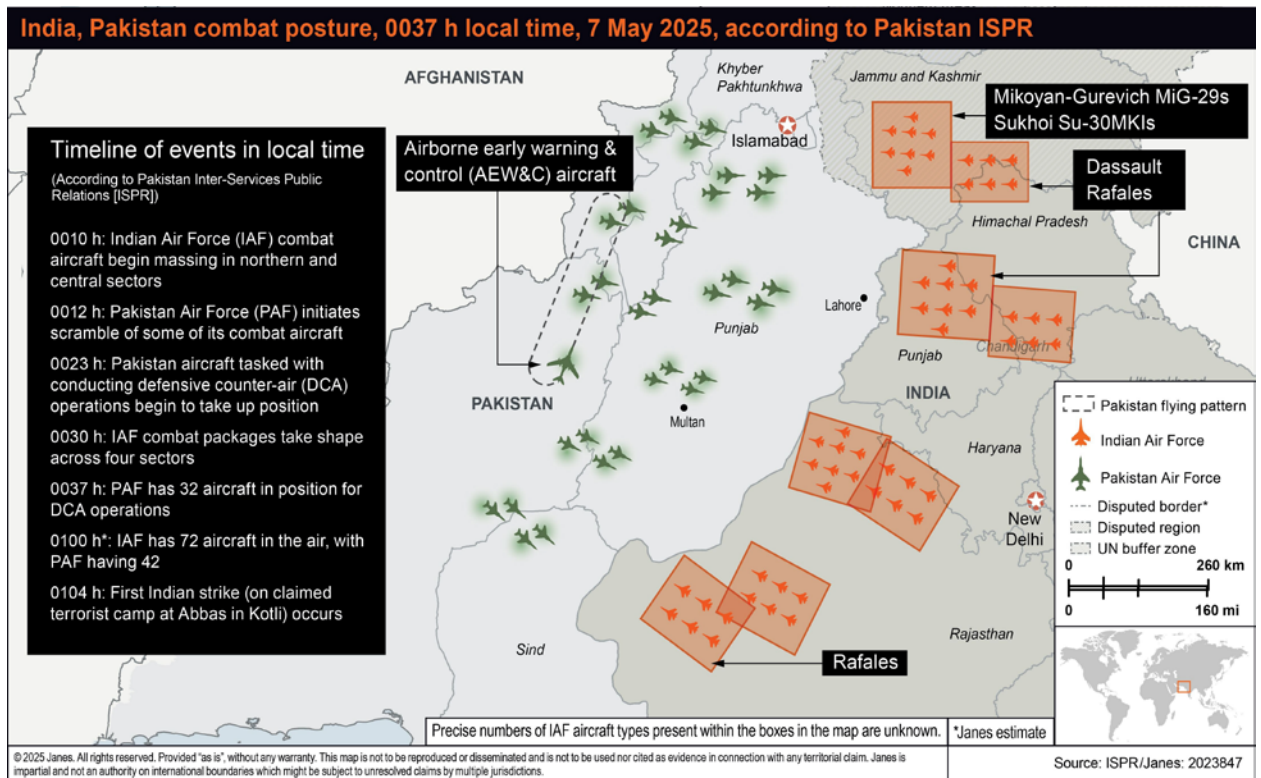


Figure 8. Map of operations as of May 7, based on information presented by the General Staff of the Pakistan Air Force during a press conference on May 9. Source: Janes

India's air strike tactics changed in the early hours of 8 May, with the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles and HAROP loitering munitions, but no longer against alleged terrorist bases, but to damage Pakistan's air defence structure. As Pakistan had done, the Indian Army also showed images of fragments of what appeared to be two Chinese-made PL-15 missiles, all of which gave the exchange of fire the appearance of a test of weaponry and intelligence assets on the ground, such as satellite images, from different sources and at the service of one country or the other (Ranjan Sen and Strumpf, 2025).

Pakistan also countered Operation Sindoor with precision artillery strikes along the Line of Control and commando raids in strategic sectors, seeking to erode the initial momentum of the Indian forces. In parallel, as had happened in 2019, the Pakistani diplomatic apparatus launched an offensive in international forums, attempting to frame the conflict as a unilateral aggression by India against the self-determination of Kashmir. and on 8 and 9 May it also counterattacked using Turkish-made unmanned aerial vehicles against enclaves within India, ranging from Srinagar to Bhuj, a town in the state of Gujarat, as well as a military base in Dalhousie, Himachal Pradesh, in the foothills of the Himalayas.



Figure 9. A Pakistani J-10CE aircraft, manufactured in China, displayed at the Zhuhai Airshow in 2024. Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:J-10CE_for_Pakistan_air_force_in_Zhuhai_airshow_2024.jpg

Thus, on 9 May, the Indian command decided to attack with unmanned aerial vehicles and BrahMos missiles, of Russian-Indian shared design, as well as air bases, command and control centres and air defence systems in Pakistani Punjab, such as Shaikh Zayed International Airport and the strategic Nur Khan base in Chaklala, completely destroying its operations centre, the unmanned aerial vehicle complexes at the Rafiqui and Murid air bases, plus other points in Arifwala and the historic cities of Chunian and Sargoda. The Indian attacks reached other regions such as Passur in Gilgit Baltistan, Bholari and Jacobabad in Sindh, where an aircraft hangar was destroyed . In turn, Pakistan launched a massive cyberattack against India, the scope of which was undetermined, although reports emerged that 70% of India's electricity grid had been affected and official websites had been taken down, a claim that was denied by India (The Express Tribune, 2025) .



Figure 10. General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Staff of the Indian Armed Forces, who acknowledged some tactical errors at Sindoore. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anil_Chauhan_Chief_of_Defence_Staff_\(CDS\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anil_Chauhan_Chief_of_Defence_Staff_(CDS).jpg)

Faced with the risk of an escalation that would involve more resources and targets in territories of both countries, beyond the Kashmir region, on 10 May the United States announced an immediate ceasefire, confirmed first by Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and shortly afterwards by Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, but each country claimed critical successes in the brief conflict. The number of casualties is unknown, but is estimated to be in the dozens. Pakistan acknowledged at least 26 deaths on 7 May.

In perspective, Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's response to it have raised more questions than answers about India's operational capabilities. Thus, at the Shangri-La Dialogue forum on 31 May 2025, the Chief of Staff of the Indian Armed Forces, General Anil Chauhan, acknowledged that the Air Force had to change its strategy in light of the losses of Indian aircraft on the first night of operations, highlighting the agility with which certain tactical errors were understood and remedied by addressing other operational tactics (Singh, 2025) .

Divergent consequences: India under pressure and Pakistani gains

The conflict between India and Pakistan has not only reconfigured regional dynamics, but has also had international repercussions for both countries. Although it may seem strange, if we look at the course of both countries in international geopolitics, with India clearly on the rise in the world arena as the fourth economic power, after overtaking Japan even if only symbolically in terms of GDP in 2025¹ , while Pakistan, with serious internal political and socio-economic problems, appeared to be an isolated state backed only by China, for India, the consequences of the confrontation have been largely negative.

The international community did not take a clear stance with India, even though it justified its military operation due to the Pahalgam attack, and called for restraint from both countries in a possible escalation. Prior to the attack, various forums expressed concern about military escalation and possible human rights violations in the region, particularly since the revocation of autonomy in 2019, which has limited New Delhi's ability to project

¹ However, according to data from the International Monetary Fund, in 2025, India's GDP per capita will be approximately \$2,480, which is less than 8% of Japan's GDP per capita of \$33,955. See "India beating Japan as world's 4th biggest economy no cause for major celebration, warns ex-WEF MD". Available at: [India overtaking Japan as the world's fourth largest economy is no cause for major celebration, warns former WEF managing director - The Economic Times](#)

itself as a responsible power and has even led to some conflict with other countries beyond Pakistan².

It should be remembered that the attack took place, on the one hand, during the visit of US Vice-President J. D. Vance to India and, on the other, that Modi himself had to return hastily from Saudi Arabia, a country with which India has close relations. It is therefore possible that the date of the attack was not random and that the terrorists were seeking to make a dramatic impact by starkly exposing the unresolved situation in Kashmir and its conflict to the West and the Muslim world. In any case, India is facing growing pressure that is limiting its room for manoeuvre in Jammu and Kashmir.



Figure 11. President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the latter's visit to the United States in February 2025. Source: AP Photo/Alex Brandon

Shortly after the Pahalgam attack and the Indo-Pakistani confrontation of 7-10 May, with India unhappy with what it considered to be US lukewarmness, with the United States presenting itself as a mediator rather than coming to the aid of a supposed preferred ally

² During the 2023 G20 summit in India, the government attempted to hold a meeting on tourism in Kashmir, with the aim of projecting an image of peace derived from its strengthened control in the region. Apart from Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Indonesia decided to boycott the meeting in protest.

in the Indo-Pacific, India's definitive disenchantment with the Trump administration came with the imposition of tariffs of around 50% on India, justified by India's purchase of Russian crude oil; in fact, India is the second largest importer globally after China, plus Trump's criticism of India for benefiting from the war in Ukraine and not caring about its victims. Modi's reaction was immediate, in pursuit of strategic autonomy, which strengthened India's ties with other allies and fostered economic agreements, for example, with Japan and Southeast Asian countries, but also initiated an evident rapprochement with China, its secular rival and Pakistan's great supporter over the last few decades.



Figure 12. Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping during the SCO Summit in Tianjin on September 1. Source: Alexander Kazakov/Le Grand Continent

Thus, at the end of June, at the first summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, where the defence ministers of the member countries met, India vetoed the final declaration for not explicitly condemning terrorism supported by certain states, in a clear

reference to Pahalgam and Pakistan. Modi himself managed to have it included in the final declaration of the SCO Heads of State summit in Tianjin, during his first visit to China in seven years, since before the Sino-Indian border incidents in the Himalayas in May 2020 (El Grand Continent, 2025) . It should be remembered that, during the hostilities between India and Pakistan, China declared itself an unconditional friend and strategic cooperation partner of Pakistan "in all circumstances".

Experts such as Christopher Jaffrelot believe that India is, in fact, clearly dependent on China economically, which leads it to alienate part of its strategic autonomy and seek to ingratiate itself with the Chinese giant (Jaffrelot, 2025) ; but not to express any possible opposition to Washington, something that may be ruled out with the convening of high-level meetings to negotiate the impact and scope of tariffs, as well as agreeing on a strategic partnership to resolve other possible future frictions between both countries (Campbell, 2025) . What is certain is that India is making considerable diplomatic efforts to isolate Pakistan, which has once again become an uncomfortable neighbour that, beyond its alleged support for Islamist or secessionist terrorism in Kashmir, is pursuing assertive diplomacy with countries that India views with suspicion, primarily China, but also with Bangladesh, since the fall of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheik Hasina in August 2024. India also has two uncomfortable neighbours in Myanmar, whose war has led to border friction, and Nepal, where protests and the resignation of Prime Minister Sharma Oli may lead, as in Bangladesh, to a more hostile policy towards India (Biswas, 2025) .



Figure 13. Infographic generated using an AI tool with data on India's main trading partners in 2024. The United States had overtaken China for first place. Source of figures: India Forbes

In contrast, Pakistan has been able to capitalise on its position on the global stage. Although it remains under scrutiny for its alleged tolerance of armed groups on its territory, Islamabad has strengthened its strategic ties, especially with China and other actors interested in countering Indian influence. Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir's self-determination has gained traction in international forums, contributing to greater diplomatic visibility that had previously eluded it. Furthermore, international pressure on India has allowed Pakistan to present itself as a victim of Indian aggression and has improved its political and negotiating profile, as evidenced by its recent agreement with Saudi Arabia that includes mutual assistance in the event of attacks against either country and, incidentally, contributes to undermining India's position among the Gulf countries (Ardemagni and Missaglia, 2025).



Figure 14. General Asim Munir, Chief of Staff of Pakistan and, de facto, the most influential figure in the country's current political situation. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:General_Asim_Munir_\(Pakistan\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:General_Asim_Munir_(Pakistan).jpg)

However, Pakistan shows serious internal divisions and the persistent weight of the 'deep state', where the army conditions foreign and security policy, all of which is exacerbated by the severe monsoon floods that have claimed more than a thousand lives and, above all, by the fact that although the ceasefire has, for the time being, put an end to military operations, other fronts remain open, such as diplomacy, trade and the closure of communications between the two countries. Above all, the suspension of the Indus River Water Supply Agreement () continues to be a source of deep concern for the Pakistani economy³ .

Nuclear deterrence and international pressure therefore seem to be the persistent and dangerous guarantee that escalation into open war between India and Pakistan will not occur. Currently, India is estimated to have 180 nuclear warheads in storage and is developing nuclear submarines and ballistic missiles which, like the Agni-5 tested in August, have the capacity to reach not only Pakistan but also more than 7,000 kilometres away, i.e. Chinese territory. For its part, Pakistan is estimated to have 170 nuclear warheads in storage, although it is developing new delivery systems and is likely to increase its arsenal in the coming years (SIPRI, 2025) .

However, in the conventional sphere, India was one of the countries with the highest investment in armaments in 2024, acquiring equipment from various sources, including Russia, the United States, France and Israel. In 2025, it was announced that its defence budget would be linked to GDP rather than to the deficit in relation to GDP, which means that it will increase to a historic figure of 6.81 trillion rupees, or around 72 billion euros. The Indian Armed Forces are made up of 1,260,000 active soldiers and 300,000 in the reserve, making it the largest army in South Asia (The Military Balance, 2025) . In the case of Pakistan, its Armed Forces were estimated to have some 625,000 active personnel, but it is an army under severe strain due to the internal situation in the country, which is plagued by terrorism in the regions of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as political unrest; nevertheless, it has staged three coups since independence in

³ In May, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague requested India and Pakistan to submit arguments on the impact of the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. Pakistan was the only party to submit them. In June, the court noted that the treaty does not provide for unilateral suspension and reaffirmed its jurisdiction through an award. India considers it illegal and therefore rejects any resolution. See "The Indus Waters Western Rivers Arbitration (Islamic Republic of Pakistan v. Republic of India)". Available at: [76022](#)

1947 and continues to play a significant role under the leadership of Chief of Staff General Asim Munir⁶.

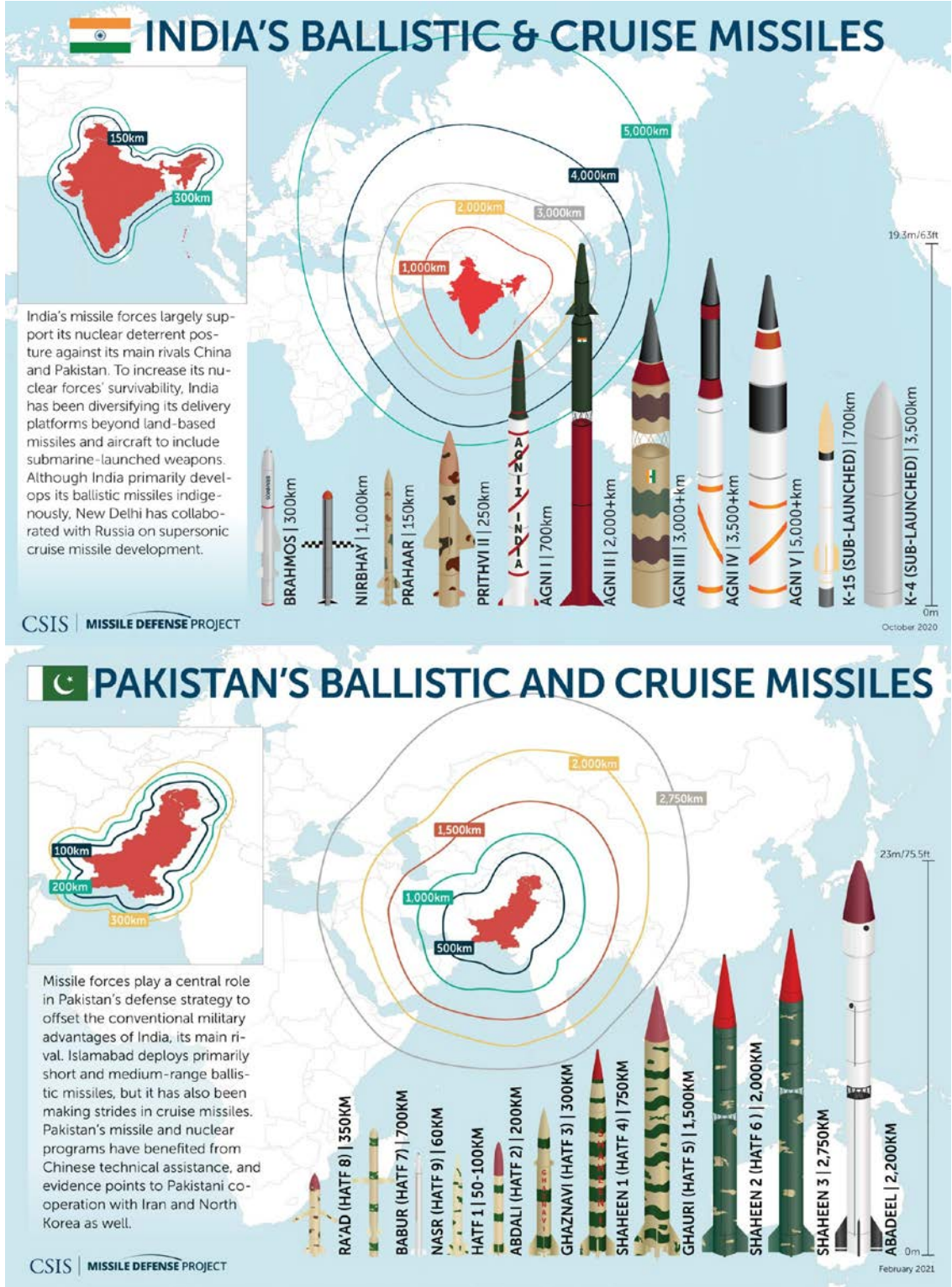


Figure 15. Ballistic missiles in the possession of India and Pakistan with their range. According to SIPRI data, it is estimated that India possesses 180 nuclear warheads and Pakistan 170. Source: Missile Threat/CSIS

Finally, the third part of this Indo-Pakistani equation would be the Kashmir region itself, with remarkable economic development now subject to the effects of violence on tourism, but also on other sectors such as construction and the automotive industry, the increased Indian military presence and possible episodes of social unrest. On 5 August 2024, a newly re-elected Prime Minister Modi announced his intention to permanently integrate the territory into the central administrative domain of New Delhi. The polarisation surrounding this decision was very visible in the first local elections held between September and October of that year, where an alliance between the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India won, although without achieving an absolute majority, while the prime minister's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party consolidated its presence in Jammu, thus serving as a counterweight. Omar Abdullah, grandson of the historic leader Mohammed Abdullah, was appointed prime minister by the Legislative Assembly, and a period of political normality seemed to be beginning, only to be shattered after Pahalgam. Abdullah was quick to condemn the attack and warn of a political and economic crisis, which was not long in coming (Kashmir Life, 2025) .

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Timeline of the conflict and geopolitical indicators

DATE	EVENTS
1947	Partition of British India and first Indo-Pakistani War (1947-1949) over control of Kashmir, which is divided between the two countries.
1965	Second Indo-Pakistani War, centred on Kashmir, which ended without any significant changes to the previous situation.
1971	Third Indo-Pakistani War, with the independence of Bangladesh. Establishment, following the Simla Agreement (1972), of the Line of Control, a border supervised by the United Nations.
1990	In Kashmir, the Sunni Islamist group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba is created, which will carry out serious attacks in the region and other parts of India.
1999	The Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan breaks out, following nuclear tests by both countries in 1998.
2001	Attack on the Indian Parliament: fourteen dead.
2008	Mumbai attacks: 166 dead.
2014	Narendra Modi is elected Prime Minister of India, inviting Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif to his inauguration. Last legislative elections in Kashmir before the suspension of autonomy. The PDP wins in coalition with Modi's BJP.
2015	Modi's surprise visit to Lahore in December, the Indian leader's only and last visit to Pakistan.
2016	Insurgent attack in Uri (Kashmir), resulting in the deaths of nineteen Indian soldiers. India launches cross-border 'military surgery' for the first time.

2017	Intensification of armed clashes on the Line of Control between forces from both countries.
2018	Elections in Pakistan, Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) comes to power. Beginning of closer Sino-Pakistani relations.
2019	In February, Pulwama attack (Kashmir), with 46 dead and a subsequent air clash. In August, India revokes Article 370 of the Constitution and removes the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir.
2020	Sporadic border skirmishes and heavy restrictions from India in Kashmir justified by the pandemic.
2021	Indo-Pakistani restoration of the 2003 ceasefire.
2022	Increase in nationalist rhetoric in India and Pakistan-China military cooperation (economic corridor from Xinjiang ending at the port of Gwadar).
2023	Elections and internal instability in Pakistan with supporters of Imra Khan, who is in prison, protests over the economic situation and a resurgence of Baloch and Pashtun independence terrorism. Protests in Kashmir against Indian control. In September, during the G20 summit, New Delhi attempts to organise a meeting in Kashmir, boycotted by several countries, primarily China.
2024	In May 2024, a targeted shooting inside a private complex in Pahalgam leaves two Indian tourists wounded. Cross-border tensions arise due to Indian military exercises near the Line of Control. On 5 August, a newly re-elected Modi announces his intention to permanently integrate Kashmir into New Delhi's central administrative domain.

	In October, the first elections in Kashmir in a decade take place, with the <i>INDIA Alliance</i> winning and autonomist Omar Abdullah being appointed chief minister.
2025	<p>Attack in Pahalgam (Kashmir, 22 April) resulting in 26 deaths. The terrorist group Resistance Front, affiliated with Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, claims responsibility.</p> <p>After several diplomatic and economic measures, in particular the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (1960), on 7 May, India launches Operation Sindoor to punish terrorist camps on Pakistani territory.</p> <p>Pakistan's reaction escalated the conflict to a military and diplomatic level until a ceasefire was established on 10 May.</p>

INDIA	
Area: 3,287,263 km ²	
GDP: €3,612,664 million	
GDP structure	Agriculture: 17%
	Industry: 25%
	Services: 58%
GDP per capita: €2,450-2,480	
GDP growth rate: 6.5%	
Trade relations (exports): refined oil, diamonds and <i>software</i>	
Trade relations (imports): crude oil, gold and electronics	
Population: 1.42 billion	

Age structure	0-14: 25%
	15-64: 68%
	Over 65: 7%
Population growth rate: 0.88% per annum	
Ethnic groups: Indo-Aryans (72%), Dravidians (25%), Tibeto-Burmans (2%), Austroasians and traditional ethnic minorities (1%)	
Religions: Hinduism (69%), Islam (14%) and others (7%)	
Population literacy rate: 78%	
Population below poverty line: 16%	
GINI index: 35	
Military expenditure as % of GDP: 2.27 (SIPRI)	

PAKISTAN	
Area: 881,913 km ²	
GDP: €312.8 billion	
GDP structure	Agriculture: 19%
	Industry: 20%
	Services: 61%
GDP per capita: €1,550-1,570.	
GDP growth rate: 2%	
Trade relations (exports): textiles, rice and leather	
Trade relations (imports): oil, machinery and chemicals	

Population: 243 million inhabitants	
Age structure	0-14: 34%
	15-64: 65%
	Over 65: 1%
Population growth rate: 2.55% per annum	
Ethnic groups: Punjabi (45%), Pashtun (18%), Sindhi (14%), Saraiki (8%), Balochi (5%) and others (7%).	
Religions: Muslims (97%, Sunni 90% and Shia 10%), Hindus (2%) and Christians (1%).	
Population literacy rate: 62%	
Population below the poverty line: 25%	
GINI index: 31	
Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP: 2.67% (SIPRI)	

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