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Pehlgaam to Cease-fire: Indo-Pak crises, 2025

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the 2025 India–Pakistan conflict that was triggered by the Pahalgam terrorist attack and contextualizes it within the deep historical and geopolitical dynamics of South Asia. It provides a detailed timeline of escalation that began with the April 22 attack on Hindu pilgrims and culminating in India's launch of Operation Sindoor that is a series of cross-border strikes. The study critically examines India's military and political response mainly the Modi government's handling of the crisis in the context of upcoming elections, its use of nationalist rhetoric and the strategic signaling involved in nuclear-related statements. The paper evaluates the role of specifically Indian media narratives, the international community's mediation efforts and the ceasefire that followed under U.S. pressure. This paper gives special attention to the performative nature of Modi's posturing, the risks of deterrence breakdown and also the implications for Indo-Pak relations moving forward. The paper argues that the conflict exposed the fragility of peace and the increasing normalization of preemptive strikes as political tools in the subcontinent's volatile security architecture despite the immediate crisis being averted.

Keywords:

2025 India-Pakistan conflict, Operation Sindoor, Pahalgam attack, ceasefire, South Asia security, nuclear deterrence, cross-border strikes, water terrorism, U.S. mediation, Kashmir, escalation dynamics, nationalist rhetoric.

Introduction

The April 2025 Pahalgam attack that claimed the lives of 26 civilians in Indian-administered Kashmir has once again brought India and Pakistan to the brink of conflict.¹ The Modi government expeditiously blamed Pakistan-based militants without any thorough investigation and responded with a series of retaliatory actions. These retaliatory actions resulted in cross-border strikes and the deportation of Pakistani nationals. This also resulted in the dramatic suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty that is quite alarming for Pakistan.² Islamabad denied any involvement in the attack and accused New Delhi of exploiting the tragedy to pursue its political agenda.³ The situation has once again highlighted that how quickly the fragile peace between these two nuclear-armed states can disrupt.

The use of the Pahalgam incident as a *casus belli* by the Modi regime's highlights a wide and deeply troubling pattern. Instead of seeking de-escalation, his government is apparently using the attack to stoke nationalist sentiment, consolidate domestic political support and also divert attention from state's internal failures. Not only that, the much of the Indian media that is often dismissed for sensationalism also plays a serious role in spreading extremism and radicalizing public's mind. The steady drumbeat of hostility and misinformation does not just polarise Indian society but it dangerously fuels tensions with Pakistan at the same time. In a region armed with nuclear weapons and burdened by decades of mistrust, such manufactured hostility poses a threat not only to regional stability but also to global survival.

It is important to consider the historical context to understand the intentness of the current escalation. It is evident that India and Pakistan have been involved in a bitter rivalry mainly due to the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir since their partition in 1947. The very first deadly war in 1947–48 resulted in a ceasefire line that divided Kashmir between Indian and Pakistani control.⁴ Further wars in 1965 and 1971 and the limited but deadly 1999 Kargil conflict entrenched a climate of deep mistrust.⁵ The Simla Agreement of 1972 helped both countries to resolve disputes bilaterally and discouraged third-party mediation however, this framework has failed to maintain perpetual peace.⁶

The security dynamic became even more complex when both nations declared themselves nuclear powers in 1998. Any military crisis e.g., 2001 Indian Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the 2019 Pulwama-Balakot episode since then has risked escalated into a

¹ Reuters, Attack on Tourists in Indian Kashmir Kills 26 People, Injures 17, Police Say, April 23, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/attack-tourists-indian-kashmir-kills-26-people-injures-17-police-say-2025-04-23/>.

² Aakash Hassan and Peter Beaumont, "At Least 26 Tourists Killed by Suspected Militants in Kashmir Attack," *The Guardian*, April 23, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/22/tourists-killed-by-suspected-militants-in-kashmir-attack#:~:text=India%E2%80%99s%20prime%20minister%2C%20Narendra%20Modi%2C,a%20visit%20to%20Saudi%20Arabia>.

³ Frances Mao, "India Reports Strikes on Military Bases, Pakistan Denies Any Role," May 8, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjrndypy3l4o>.

⁴ "Conflict Between India and Pakistan | Global Conflict Tracker," Global Conflict Tracker, n.d., <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-india-and-pakistan>.

⁵ "KARGIL CONFLICT," n.d., <http://www.pakistanarmy.biz.tc/kargilwar.html>.

⁶ Teekah and Ethan, "Simla Agreement (1972) | Significance, Provisions, Impact, & Challenges," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, April 27, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Simla-Agreement>.

catastrophic conflict. Today, the tensions are no longer limited to territorial claims. Water terrorism, exemplified by India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty along with cross-border insurgency and terrorism has increased the possibility of conflict.⁷ At the same time, political leadership on both sides specifically on Indian side has grown increasingly nationalistic that is incentivizing hardline rhetoric over diplomatic restraint. The Pahalgam attack is not just another tragic flashpoint but it is a sign of a much deeper and more volatile pattern. South Asia risks becoming the epicenter of a conflict whose consequences would reach far beyond the subcontinent if it continues to have irresponsible leadership, distorted media and minimal international intervention to escalate.

Key Actors and Institutions

Decision-making is very much centralized in India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** that usually promotes the Hindu nationalist agenda.⁸ India's **National Security Council** is coordinated by the **National Security Adviser (NSA)** that integrates inputs from the **Indian Armed Forces, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)** and also the **Foreign Ministry**.⁹ After the Pahalgam attack, India launched **Operation Sindoor** while framing it as a deterrent strike on alleged militant camps in Pakistan. This act on the other hand is also connected with a familiar pattern of major military escalations occurring just before general elections in India for example the Balakot airstrikes in 2019.¹⁰ Such timing raises serious questions about the politicization of national security to fulfill the electoral goals.

On the other side, **Pakistan's civilian government** is led by Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** and has advocated for restraint and diplomacy. Islamabad's call for a joint investigation into the Pahalgam incident was immediately denied by India.¹¹ This call was actually intended to avoid populist escalation. However, **Pakistan's military establishment**, particularly **Army Chief General** and the **Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)** continues to dominate and influence national security decision-making in Pakistan.¹² These institutions operate through the **National Security Committee (NSC)** and **Strategic Plans Division** and have full control over the country's nuclear doctrine predicated on "minimum credible deterrence."

Verily Pakistan promotes diplomatic channels however the established authority of its military means that escalation remains a real risk. The army's training, strategic culture and operational readiness make it prone to rapid retaliation if provoked especially by India's assertive posturing.

⁷ Navin Singh Khadka, "Pahalgam Attack: Will India Suspending Indus Waters Treaty Affect Pakistan?," April 25, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd7vjyeyzypqo>.

⁸ "How The BJP Promotes Hindutva Through a Nationalist Agenda," Economic and Political Weekly, May 6, 2019, <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/how-bjp-promotes-hindutva-through-nationalist>.

⁹ Admin, "National Security Council," BYJUS, December 19, 2022, <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/national-security-council/>.

¹⁰ Anando Bhakto, "Terror Before Elections: A Pattern," Frontline, July 31, 2021, <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/bogeyman-nationalism-terror-before-elections-becoming-a-pattern/article35511997.ece>.

¹¹ Anirban Bhaumik and Anirban Bhaumik, "India Rejects Pakistan's Call for a Joint Probe Into Pahalgam Attack, Says Evidence Shared Earlier Used to Shield Terrorists," Deccan Herald, May 8, 2025, <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/india-rejects-pakistans-call-for-a-joint-probe-into-pahalgam-attack-says-evidence-shared-earlier-used-to-shield-terrorists-3531930>.

¹² "Civil-Military Coordination and Defence Decision-Making in Pakistan," n.d., https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/sa/sa_aug00pas01.html.

So in this setting, the presence of a nationalist government in New Delhi and a militarily influenced structure in Islamabad creates a dangerously fragile balance. A single miscalculation or politically motivated strike could trigger a large scale war that neither side would be able to control.

Causation and Core Issues

The primary driver of the 2025 crisis is the unfading Kashmir dispute and history of conflict. Nationalist ideology on both sides (Hindu-majority India vs. Muslim-majority Pakistan) frames Kashmir as a zero-sum issue. Pakistan's founder Jinnah famously called Kashmir Pakistan's "jugular vein,"¹³ while on the hand India insists that Kashmir is an integral part of its absolute territory.¹⁴ The February 2023 crisis in the wake of Pulwama and Balakot had already fragmented relations and the March 2025 Pahalgam massacre must be seen against this landscape. The situation has also worsened as India's political leadership had recently (2019) changed Kashmir's status to union territory without Islamabad's consent.

Security dilemmas and threat perceptions intensify conflict. The example is that India views any militant violence in Kashmir as fed by Pakistani militants and on the other hand Pakistan talks about the human rights grievances and Kashmiri aspirations under Indian rule.¹⁵ In a same way, Indian authorities blamed Pakistan and its proxy networks for training the attackers in the Pahalgam case.¹⁶ Indian officials reported that at least two suspects had "special training in the Pakistani military". Pakistan vehemently denied involvement and even called the attack a "false flag operation" by India to justify retaliation. This clash of narratives is very typical. Just like India sees Pakistan-linked terrorism as the proximate cause, Pakistan also accuses India of causing local unrest such as the recent Jaffar Incident in Baluchistan.¹⁷

Other core issues include resource disputes and domestic politics. The Indus Waters Treaty that has usually been resilient has also become a political **lever**. India's suspension of it in April 2025 was an extraordinary and extreme step. The closures of borders and suspended trade that is taken by India after the Pahalgam attack hurt both sides economically. Leaders on both sides faced domestic pressures politically. Nationalist side of Indian public (especially the Hindutva supporters) demanded a hard and extreme response and on the other side Pakistani politicians faced pressure to defend sovereignty. Finally, misinformation and propaganda inflated tensions and analysts note a "fog of war" of rumors and false-flag accusations obscuring the crisis.

Conflict Dynamics (March–May 2025 Escalation)

March 15, 2025 – Pahalgam Attack: A group of militants ambushed a bus of Hindu pilgrims near Pahalgam in Indian-administered Kashmir and killed approximately 26 civilians (mostly

¹³ Patial Rc, "Kashmir Pakistan's Jugular Vein: A Foolish Thought – OpEd," Eurasia Review, April 25, 2025, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/26042025-kashmir-pakistans-jugular-vein-a-foolish-thought-oped/>.

¹⁴ Nnps Desk, "Kashmir Is Disputed Territory -- Not India'S 'Integral Part', Pakistan Tells UN," Associated Press of Pakistan, March 25, 2025, <https://www.app.com.pk/global/kashmir-is-disputed-territory-not-indias-integral-part-pakistan-tells-un/>.

¹⁵ "Pakistan – India Conflict With Special Reference to Kashmir," CORE Reader, n.d., <https://core.ac.uk/reader/543128290>.

¹⁶ BBC News, "India and Pakistan Blame Each Other for Escalating Military Tensions," May 9, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cwyneele13qt>.

¹⁷ Hussain, Abid. "Pakistan Links Train Hijacking to 'Afghan Handlers' and Indian Mastermind." Al Jazeera, March 14, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/14/pakistan-links-train-hijacking-to-afghan-handlers-and-indian-mastermind>.

tourists).¹⁸ According to survivors, the victims were chosen based on religion that highlights the sectarian nature of the attack.¹⁹ A militant group calling itself The Resistance Front initially took credit. TRF is basically known to be an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba. India without delay blamed intelligence services of Pakistan's and demanded action. Delhi responded with significant political measures.²⁰ It suspended the Indus Waters Treaty (a "framework that had endured even during war"), revoked visa privileges, expelled Pakistani diplomats and closed key land and air links. India's Home Minister publicly warned that "civilization won't tolerate barbarism," signaling tough retaliation. Pakistan flatly denied involvement. The Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told the press that Islamabad was "very strongly" of the stance that the attack was a false-flag by India. Military skirmishes along the LoC that had been mostly quiet under a 2021 ceasefire also resumed at low intensity (small-arms fire and shelling) during March and April.

Early May 2025 – Operation Sindoor: Tensions exacerbated until May 6–7. India launched Operation Sindoor on the early morning of May 7 and started firing a barrage of missiles and launching drone strikes into Pakistani territory and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. India said it struck nine terrorist infrastructure sites from which future attacks were plotted.²¹ Its official statement emphasized the strikes were non-escalatory and targeted only militants however many civilians also suffered casualties. In Pakistan, sirens blared as cities like Muzaffarabad, Kotli and Lahore came under attack. Islamabad announced that 26 civilians were killed and 46 wounded by the strikes, condemning them as an "act of war".²² Pakistan's government responded in kind. Pakistani air defenses downed several Indian aircraft, according to Pakistan's Defence Minister, who claimed five Indian jets were shot down.²³ Pakistan also launched its own retaliatory strikes against Indian military bases (code-named Operation Bunyan al-Marsus), hitting multiple sites across the Line of Control and interior regions. Both sides reported dozens of casualties. India admitted some soldier fatalities and on the other hand Pakistan claimed dozens of civilian deaths from Indian missiles.

Over the night of May 7–9, the conflict escalated with new technologies. Pakistan's military claimed it had shot down over 77 (Israeli-made) Indian drones²⁴ while India reported intercepting

¹⁸ Jessica Rawnsley, "At Least Five Killed After Gunmen Open Fire on Tourists in Kashmir," April 23, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy9vyzyjzlo>.

¹⁹ Zulfikar Majid and Zulfikar Majid, "Pahalgam Terror Attack: Religious Profiling Preceded Killings, Say Eyewitnesses," Deccan Herald, April 23, 2025, <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/jammu-and-kashmir/pahalgam-terror-attack-religious-profiling-preceded-killings-say-eyewitnesses-3507051>.

²⁰ Peter Beaumont, "Kashmir Crisis: What Is Lashkar-e-Taiba and Is It Supported by Pakistan?," The Guardian, May 8, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/07/kashmir-crisis-pakistan-terrorist-groups-infrastructure>.

²¹ Flora Drury, "What We Know About India's Strikes on Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir," May 7, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj6868pdpw4o>.

²² "India Strikes Pakistan in Retaliation for Deadly Terrorist Attack," May 7, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/world/india/india-pakistan-jammu-kashmir-rcna205229>.

²³ "Pakistan Has Downed 5 Indian Air Force Jets: Defense Chief," n.d., <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-has-downed-5-indian-air-force-jets-defense-chief/3559324>.

²⁴ "Pakistan Announces Shooting Down 77 Israeli-made Indian Drones – Middle East Monitor," n.d., <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250510-pakistan-announces-shooting-down-77-israeli-made-indian-drones/>.

hundreds of Pakistani drones or missiles heading for its cities.²⁵ The battle and the first full-blown drone war between two nuclear states witnessed drones strike civilian suburbs on both sides (including a mosque in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, where a child was killed). Artillery and mortar exchanges along the LoC increased markedly. Each side accused the other of attacking civilian areas that fueled public anger. Indian press noted Pakistani strikes injured border villagers, while Pakistan alleged India hit civilian concentrations.

International and Diplomatic Fallout: world leaders urgently called for restraint when the situation escalated. The UN Secretary General and several countries (including China, the US, Russia, Britain, France, Japan, Gulf states) showed their concern and offered mediation.²⁶ China “regretted” India’s strikes and encouraged both sides to “remain calm and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation”. The UN’s spokesman also showed concern and said that “the world cannot afford a military confrontation” between the two nuclear powers.²⁷ Western leaders (President Trump and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio) “hoped it ends very quickly” and offered to mediate. Russia and the UAE urged de-escalation and on the other hand China that has been Pakistan’s closest ally sought stability.²⁸

The international response was unfortunately slow when it was critically needed as two nuclear-armed states stood on the edge of war. India launched missiles that were capable of carrying nuclear payloads into Pakistani territory. Pakistan faced an existential dilemma as it could not verify whether the payloads were conventional or nuclear. Even a moment’s uncertainty could justify a retaliatory nuclear strike in such a high-stakes scenario. The absence of timely diplomatic intervention not only heightened mistrust but also allowed the situation to move toward catastrophe. This event highlighted how delayed global engagement in volatile moments does not just risk regional instability but it can endanger the very fabric of human civilization.

May 10, 2025 – Ceasefire: A ceasefire was finally agreed upon on May 10 with India and Pakistan calling a halt to the fighting. After three days of intense exchanges with the help of Trump, Indian officials announced that their Directors-General of Military Operations held a phone conversation and agreed to stop hostilities at 5 p.m. IST.²⁹ Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed the ceasefire that followed a night of talks mediated by the United States. Although there were some initial violations after the ceasefire began, the truce mostly held. However

²⁵ Times Of India, “Payback for Pahalgam: How India Intercepted Pakistan Drones, Missiles and Hit Back,” The Times of India, May 9, 2025, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/payback-for-pahalgam-how-india-intercepted-pakistan-drones-missiles-and-hit-back/articleshow/121020787.cms>.

²⁶ Web Desk, “Pak-India Clash: US, UK, Russia, China, Offer Mediation, Urge Restraint After Airstrikes,” Aaj English TV, May 7, 2025, <https://english.aaj.tv/news/330415742/pak-india-clash-us-uk-russia-china-offer-mediation-urge-restraint-after-airstrikes>.

²⁷ Jessica Rawnsley, “Global Leaders Call for ‘de-escalation’ of India-Pakistan Tensions,” May 7, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c78j8vdlg38o>.

²⁸ Shweta Sharma, “How the world responded to India’s strikes on Pakistan: ‘Hope it ends very quickly,’” AOL, May 7, 2025, <https://www.aol.com/world-responded-india-strikes-pakistan-095423659.html>.

²⁹ ET Online, “India, Pakistan DGMOs Agree to No Cross Border Firing, Troop Reduction at LoC,” The Economic Times, May 12, 2025, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-pakistan-dgmos-agree-to-no-cross-border-firing-troop-reduction-at-loc/articleshow/121116207.cms?from=mdr>.

many commentators warned that this was only a temporary pause. They emphasized that the core issue of Kashmir remained unresolved and could lead to future tensions.

However, this sudden de-escalation has left Modi supporters frustrated. Many had expected a stronger stance from the Prime Minister who had been seen taking aggressive actions to rally support and secure votes by showcasing himself as a strongman.³⁰ The ceasefire seen by some as a retreat actually raises questions about whether Modi, who has been willing to push limits to cater to extremist elements within his base, can continue to fulfill these desires without exacerbating tensions. The very extremism that he has nurtured appears to be backfiring that is leaving his government in a difficult position. Instead of achieving a decisive victory, Modi's actions seem to have only deepened the complexities of the situation, with nationalistic fervor growing more intense while the fundamental issues remain unresolved.

Strategic Options and Proposed Solutions

Resolving the Indo-Pak conflict will require addressing the deep-seated causes while rebuilding trust. Short-term steps focus on consolidating the ceasefire that means strict adherence to the May 10 agreement, verification of suspended hostilities and also restoration of diplomatic channels. Both sides have activated hotlines that verily is a positive CBM. They should also roll back punitive measures (reopening border crossings and air links, resuming limited trade and travel) to signal goodwill. In that vein, it is suggested reviving or preserving long-standing treaties for example the Indus Waters Treaty was suspended in crisis but could be restored to calm tensions. Reinstating cultural and religious linkages (such as the Kashmiri migrant bus service or Sikh pilgrimage corridor) would rebuild people-to-people ties. Military confidence-building measures (CBMs) like weekly flag meetings on the LoC, advance notice of exercises and agreed rules of engagement can reduce border incidents. Establishing joint anti-terror mechanisms with international oversight to investigate and police infiltration has been proposed in prior dialogues. Long-term conflict resolution inevitably revolves around Kashmir. One oft-cited proposal is the 2004 four-point formula put forward by Pakistan's then-President Pervez Musharraf.³¹ Under this plan, the Line of Control would become irrelevant through reciprocal demilitarisation of both sides of Kashmir, with free movement of people across it. Kashmiris would be granted full self-governance (short of independence) under this arrangement, and a joint India-Pakistan oversight mechanism would manage the region. India ultimately rejected this back-channel offer at the time, but the formula is still discussed by analysts as a comprehensive framework. Any future negotiations could draw on aspects of it (e.g. LoC demilitarisation and local autonomy) while ensuring India's sovereignty is respected. Such ideas, however, require major shifts in both countries' political will.

Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) beyond demilitarisation are critical. Experts recommend expanding transparency and cooperation on shared interests. For example, resumed cross-

³⁰ Anant Gupta, "Why The India-Pakistan Ceasefire Is Giving Modi Supporters Heartburn," Scroll.In, May 12, 2025, <https://scroll.in/article/1082235/why-the-india-pakistan-ceasefire-is-giving-modi-supporters-heartburn>.

³¹ Express News Service, "Musharraf at Agra Summit: What Was His 'Four-point Formula' on Kashmir Issue?," The Indian Express, February 7, 2023, <https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/pervez-musharraf-agra-summit-india-pakistan-kashmir-8425532/>.

border trade (the Kashmir trade routes opened in 2008–09) would create economic interdependence. Joint management of water resources (beyond the Indus Treaty) – such as hydroelectric projects benefiting communities on both sides – could build mutual gains. Exchanges in education, health, and counterterrorism can also normalize relations. In short, CBMs should address both security and human needs. The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty in 2025 illustrated its importance as a CBM: analysts note that its continuity “endured even during prior wars,” implying that keeping it intact is a stabilizing factor.

Finally, multilateral diplomacy is necessary to sustain peace. Although both governments officially favour bilateral talks (as per Simla), the 2025 crisis showed that major powers inevitably get involved. During the de-escalation, the United States played a key role – even the US President publicly announced the ceasefire. Going forward, international actors should act proactively rather than reactively. UN agencies, the Group of 77, or even a restored OIC summit could help mediate indirectly. Notably, Atlantic Council analysts argue that “the world cannot afford to wait until the brink again” and that the ceasefire “highlights the need for proactive international mediation”. Great-power diplomacy could involve a conference or framework similar to the 2001 Bonn process in Afghanistan, dedicated to Kashmir. Trade-offs might be needed: for example, Pakistan’s privileged military alliance status with the US (MNNA) was criticized by some US experts as undermining counterterrorism; altering such policy could pressure Islamabad to act against militant groups. Meanwhile, China, as a close ally of Pakistan, could use its leverage to discourage anti-India proxies and encourage dialogue.

In sum, lasting peace will hinge on a combination of agreed safeguards and a revived political process. Proposed solutions range from pragmatic CBMs (hotlines, visas, trade, cultural exchanges) to grand strategies (Musharraf’s four-point plan, third-party diplomacy). All experts agree that dialogue is essential. Both Atlantic Council and crisis-group commentators argue that further hostilities carry “unacceptable risks,” and that renewed diplomacy is the only thing that can break the cycle. A balanced approach is much needed for addressing Pakistan’s security concerns while protecting India’s core interests. Any resolution must ensure that Jammu and Kashmir’s future reflects the will of its people, within a framework acceptable to both nations. While the May 2025 ceasefire offers a temporary reprieve, it also creates an opportunity to rebuild trust through concrete steps (CBMs) and to restart substantive negotiations on Kashmir and related issues.