

India Pakistan Relations

India Pakistan relations from the beginning are marked belligerently and with mutual suspicion. This is often best manifested by the frequency of wars both countries have fought against one another.

India demands friendly, peaceful, and cooperative relations with Pakistan. However, violence and terror are the biggest hindrances that hamper the smooth relationship between India and Pakistan. The relations between the two countries worsened in February 2021 when they issued a joint statement announcing that they would observe the 2003 ceasefire along the LoC.

The recent developments in India Pakistan relations are as follows:

- In Feb 2020, India stood by its Neighbourhood First Policy and desired a terror-free and non-violent relationship with Pakistan.
- Article 370 of the constitution of India gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. However, this Article was scrapped in 2019. After this, the relationship between India and Pakistan faced a severe blow. Pakistan suspended land and air links, trade, and railway services with India.
- India withdrew the Status of Most Favoured Nation to Pakistan on February 15, 2019.

Background of India Pakistan Relations

India and Pakistan became two separate nations after independence from the cruel British rule. However, they have shared sour relations with each since that time. The basic timeline of India Pakistan relations is as below:

- The composite dialogue between the two countries addresses all the outstanding issues between them from 2004 to 2008. Because of the terrorist attack on Mumbai in November 2008, the fifth round is still on pause.
- Prime of India and Pakistan, Manmohan Singh and Yousuf Raza Gillani, in April 2010, spoke about their willingness to resolve the issues on the margins of the SAARC Summit.
- The bilateral ties were resumed between the two countries after the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the respective countries in 2011. The issues included were Jammu & Kashmir, Economic issues at Commerce, CBMs, Promotion of Friendly Exchanges at the level of the Foreign Secretaries, Siachen at the Defence Secretary-level, and most importantly, counterterrorism and Humanitarian issues.
- In 2004, Cross LoC travel began, and trade across Jammu and Kashmir started in 2009.
- A Visa agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in 2012. The agreement led to the liberalization of bilateral visa regimes.

Evolution of India Pakistan Relations

Since 1947, both countries have fought three major wars, one undeclared war. They are involved in armed skirmishes and military standoffs. Despite several efforts to enhance the bilateral ties, which successfully de-escalate tensions to a particular extent, the India Pakistan relations have been hampered by frequent terrorist attacks and ceasefire violations.

Indo-Pakistan War of 1947-48

Out of the four Indo-Pakistan wars, the 1947-48 war was the primary war between the two newly independent nations. The war resulted from the Conflict between the two nations over Jammu and Kashmir (the state was under the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh). On Pakistan's invasion, Maharaja Hari Singh made a plea to the Indian Government for assistance. Jammu and Kashmir became a significant concern for India, and because of this, the matter was taken to the UN for Pakistan's geopolitical considerations. However, at the war's end, Pakistan got control of one-third of Kashmir while India held two-thirds of Kashmir along with Jammu and Ladakh.

Indo-Pakistan War of 1965

Emboldened by India's defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian war, Nehru's demise in 1964, India's weak economic situation at the time, the perceived weakness of the Indian military but the Pakistani military brass and the qualitative superiority of Pakistan in military hardware and airpower(thanks to the American support), Pakistan started the war against India to "defreeze the Kashmir problem, weaken Indian resolve, and drag India to the negotiation table without provoking general war."

Following the culmination of skirmishes in April 1965, the Indo-Pak War of 1965 was initiated. To infiltrate forces into Kashmir (against India), Pakistan launched the Gibraltar operation. Furthermore, Pakistan tried to capture Akhnoor and started bombing Kashmir in September 1965. To tackle the situation, India opened a replacement front in Punjab.

India launched a full-scale military response to Pakistan. This resulted in thousands of casualties on each side and witnessed an essential engagement of armoured vehicles and, thus, the most crucial tank battle since war II.

The war halted after an UN-mandated ceasefire was declared following diplomatic intervention by the USSR and thus the US, and so the following issuance of the Tashkent Declaration. Better war planning by the leadership, quick deployment of forces, and better use of resources available at its disposal led to Indian Military success.

Indo-Pakistan War 1971

Pakistan was geopolitically divided into two major regions after independence: West Pakistan and East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). Bengalis dominated East Pakistan. However, Pakistan launched a genocide of Bengalis in December 1971, along with its military operation (Operation Searchlight), and the political crisis in East Pakistan. All these made the situation worse and went out of control in East Pakistan.

Seeing the rebellion among Bengalis' India entered into the scenario to support the Bengali population. The Mukti Bahini movement was supported morally and physically by the Indian Government. Also, a government was formed by the members of the Awami League. Indian Army announced an attack from three sides over East Pakistan. Also, it imposed a naval blockade that led to massive damage to the Naval strength of Pakistan.

The US Navy tried to blockade India, but the Soviet navy held them off in the Bay of Bengal. With the surrender of 93,000 Pakistani forces, the independent nation of Bangladesh was formed. The Shimla agreement was signed on July 2, 1972, when LOC was recognized. India gave back occupied land to Pakistan, POWs were repatriated, and it was decided that the Kashmir issue would be resolved peacefully through bilateral negotiations.

Kargil Conflict of 1999

The Indian Army vacated its positions at high peaks in the Kargil Sector of Kashmir during the winters of 1998-99, like every year. But, Pakistan Army exploited this opportunity and tried to move across the LOC and occupy the posts that were vacant. In Feb 1999, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Indian Prime Minister, visited Lahore, and India-Pak signed the Lahore declaration.

But, when the snow thawed in May 1999, the Indian Army discovered that Mujahideen/disguised Pakistan army units occupied the high altitude Indian posts along LOC, and India's crucial link-NH1D from Srinagar to Leh could be easily targeted from these posts. It resulted in intense conflict between the armed forces of these two countries in the Kargil sector. Indian Air Force backed the Indian Army because of this; they regained many of Pakistan's posts on Tiger hill, Tololing, etc. However, because of internal pressure and high casualties, Pakistan withdrew itself from the remaining area. In memory of the victory, the Kargil Diwas is celebrated on July 26.

Agra Summit 2001

The Agra summit was a two-day meeting between India and Pakistan that lasted from 14–16 July 2001. It was organized to resolve long-standing issues between the two nations. At this meeting, various proposals were proposed, like reducing nuclear arsenals, resolving the J&K dispute, and cross-border terrorism. However, the negotiations broke down. Thus, the Agra treaty was never signed.

India Pakistan Relations: Areas of Contention

The history of Indo Pak Relations has mainly been a story of Conflict and discord, mutual distrust and suspicion. Some significant irritants in the India Pakistan relations are as follows:

Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan

Pakistan is locked in multiple territorial disputes with India, such as-

- **Kashmir:** Because of the political differences in India Pakistan relations, the territorial claim in J&K has been the subject of wars three times, i.e., in 1947, 1965 and limited Conflict in 1999 and violations of the ceasefire and rebellion promotion within the Indian side of J&K. Jammu & Kashmir is still a contentious issue that is divided by the Line of Control (LoC) between Pakistan and India, The LOC demarcates the line of the ceasefire agreed to post-1947 Conflict.
- **Siachen Glacier:** Siachen Glacier is located in the Karakoram Range of Northern Ladakh. It is the world's second-largest glacier in the world. Siachen glacier is a disputed territory between these two neighbours. Before 1984, neither India nor Pakistan had any permanent presence on the glacier. In 1984, India's intelligence learned that Pakistan was planning to occupy Siachen Glacier. To stop this incident and to reach out to the glacier first, India launched Operation Meghdoot. The Indian Armed forces obtained the area at a higher altitude through Operation Meghdoot, and the Pakistani Army got control of a much lower height. Thus, in this region, India enjoys a strategic advantage. An armistice treaty was signed between the two countries in 2003. Because of the treaty, the firing and bombardment have stopped in this area, though both sides have placed their armed forces in the region.
- **Sir Creek Dispute:** Sir Creek is a 96-km estuary in the Rann of the Kutch region of India lying between Sindh (Pakistan) and Gujarat (India). The maritime boundary line between

the two countries has been disputed. According to the agreement signed between the Rulers of Kutch and the Government of Sindh, Pakistan claims the entire Sir Creek to be its own, while India claims that the boundary lies mid-channel as per a 1925 map. No country is willing to give away the creek to the other because that means a loss of an excessive amount of Exclusive Economic Zone, rich in mineral deposits and gas.

Water Disputes in India Pakistan Relations

The dispute over water between the two countries is as under-

- The two nations have a long-standing issue over sharing waters from the Indus river. Both sides are at odds over how to manage and share the waters of rivers of the Indus system.
- Before the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960, the countries shared a weak arrangement with share east and west-flowing rivers. Later, India and Pakistan signed the Indus Waters Treaty. This treaty was brokered by the World Bank.
- As per the treaty, Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi were given to India for exclusive use, while Pakistan got Jhelum, Chenab, and Sindh.
- Though the countries have been engaged in three wars since independence, this treaty has failed to address the dispute since the source rivers of the Indus Basin were in India, potentially creating famines and drought in Pakistan. Being highly technical, this treaty has led to far-ranging interpretations and divergence.
- The treaty does not provide a definitive solution, so the two countries have frequently sought time-consuming and expensive international arbitration. The treaty also needs to adequately address the division of water during the shortage of river water flow. Last year, after the Pulwama terror attacks, the Indian Government declared that India would not allow water flow into Pakistan.

India Pakistan Relations: Ceasefire Violations and Terrorism

This has been a major issue of concern between India and Pakistan. It can be explained as under-

- Since independence, Cross-border terrorism has been a contentious issue. Even after the 2003 Ceasefire Agreement, the post-Kargil Conflict came into effect, Pakistan has been engaged in regular ceasefire violations. These violences has led to multiple casualties of civilians and the army on both sides.
- Not just ceasefire violations, Pakistan-sponsored terror attacks on India have also been a significant issue between the two countries. 26/11 Mumbai attacks, Pathankot airbase attacks, Uri attacks, and the most recent Pulwama attacks are cases in point.
- The Modi Government's massive armed retaliation in the surgical strikes of 2016 and the Balakot airstrikes of 2019 has given a strong message to Pakistan that terror attacks will no longer be tolerated. However, recent terrorist encounters in Kashmir show that the complete elimination of terrorism is still elusive.
- Apart from the terror attacks, Pakistan has been involved in anti-India propaganda. Recently, intelligence agencies warned the Government about Pakistani propaganda on social media to accuse India's secular credentials concerning Gulf countries amidst the Covid-19 crisis.

Relationship Between India and Pakistan: Kulbushan Jadhav Case

Pakistan has accused Kulbushan Jadhav of espionage and spying. The military court of Pakistan sentenced him to death. However, according to India, Jadhav was a retired Naval

Officer falsely framed by Pakistan after he went to Iran on a business trip. India has demanded consular access to Jadhav many times, but Pakistan has rejected this demand, citing frivolous reasons.

After Pakistan's rejection, India approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ). India stated that Vienna Convention had been violated by Pakistan by denying Consular Access to Kulbhushan Jadhav. As a result of India's appeal, the ICJ asked Pakistan to retake a look at the death sentence and allow consular access to India.

Trade Conflict between India and Pakistan

Until 1965, India was Pakistan's largest trading partner. But due to the deterioration in relations, trade volume reached a minuscule level. Tensions between the two countries in 2019 have reduced the already abyssal volumes of bilateral trade to near zero. After the Pulwama terrorist attack in February, India withdrew Pakistan's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status and raised customs duty on Pakistani imports to 200%.

In April, India suspended cross-LoC trade to stop the misuse of this route by Pakistan-based elements for infiltration and terror financing. Pakistan, in turn, closed its airspace to India for a prolonged period.

India Pakistan Relations: Latest Events

The latest events that further reduced the engagement between the two countries and impacted India Pakistan Relations are-

- **Pulwama Attack:** First, there was the February 2019 Pulwama attack, India's Balakot response, and Pakistan's counter-response.
- **Article 370:** After India abrogated Jammu & Kashmir's special status on August 5, India and Pakistan have downgraded their diplomatic presence in each other's countries. Both countries withdrew their high commissioners after the Article 370 issue.
- **Trade Stopped Completely:** Bilateral trade, which, though minuscule, had managed to survive earlier shocks to relations, has stopped entirely after the abrogation of Article 370.

Areas of Cooperation Between India and Pakistan

The India Pakistan Relations have been in a constant state of rivalry. Still, certain areas of cooperation have been bridging the bond between these two countries.

SAARC:

The contentious relationship between the two essential members of SAARC is the reason behind the unsuccessful journey of SAARC so far. If India and Pakistan can manage their relationship, then both can play an essential role in transforming SAARC from a failed organization into a successful one. This will result in the overall development of South Asia, which is among the most underdeveloped regions of the world.

Climate Change and Disasters:

As per the Global Climate Risk Index 2019, South Asia is among the most vulnerable region to climate change and related disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts, etc. India and Pakistan can come together with other South Asian countries in dealing with these disasters.

Kartarpur Corridor:

Cooperation between India and Pakistan on the people-to-people level was showcased in the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor. Similarly, other religiously or culturally significant sites, such as Shakti Peeth in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, can help develop a better people-to-people relationship between India and Pakistan.

Fight Against COVID-19:

India's initiative of cooperation with all SAARC nations, including Pakistan, through video conferencing, as well as India's proposal of a trilateral response with Pakistan and Iran to combat desert locust attack, can lay down the path of greater cooperation between the two countries on issues impacting both of them, provided bilateral other problems are managed or resolved.

Potential of India Pakistan Relations

Peace at the border, better relations between India and Pakistan, and a solution to the Kashmir issue arrived, then the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), can certainly benefit the South Asian region, its people and the economy. The other aspects of India Pakistan Relations are as follows:

- With better India Pakistan relations, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, which originates in Turkmenistan, passes through Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and ends in India, can also help secure the National Energy needs of both Pakistan and India.
- A better India Pakistan relationship can also help in meaningful stability in Afghanistan and, thus, overall security in the region.
- SAARC may regain its relevance as it has yet to deliver up to its expected potential, mainly due to the contentious India Pakistan Relations.
- Reduced tensions between the two nations will help reduce military expenditure, and both can divert attention and resources toward other developmental activities.
- Since India and Pakistan have among the world's highest numbers of poor, malnourished, and illiterate, cooperation between the two will help achieve Sustainable development goals for 2030 to a great extent.

Way Ahead:

For any meaningful engagement between India and Pakistan, cross-border terrorism has to come to an end. So, India must continue its policy of "Talks and terrorism can't go hand in hand." However, both countries can keep engaging at international forums like SCO and SAARC (seen during the Covid-19 crisis) and continue with Track 2 diplomacy. This will ensure that the window for frontline engagement is always open.

- Initiatives such as the Kartarpur Corridor can improve the relationship between India and Pakistan, so the two countries must explore other avenues.
- India already has military and economic superiority over Pakistan. To increase it further, India must focus on rapid economic development and modernization of its armed forces.
- The growing China-Pakistan nexus can undermine India's strategic superiority vis Pakistan. So India will have to manage its relations with China shortly, especially after an increasing backlash against China in the post-covid world.
- To deal with terrorism emanating from Pakistan, India should keep on mounting international pressure on Pakistan through International as well as regional organizations.

- Also, India must continue to isolate Pakistan diplomatically on the international stage, as was during the Pulwama attack and Balakot airstrikes as well as after the abrogation of Article 370.
- India must further enhance its border security infrastructure along its Western border under CIBMS.
- To prevent any Pakistani propaganda from creating fissures in Indian society, Indian intelligence must keep a vigil on various platforms, and the Indian Government must keep its house in order.

