

Indian Forces Kill 3 Men Suspected in a Terrorist Attack in Kashmir in April

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Indian security forces gunned down three assailants they said were involved in a deadly terrorist attack in Kashmir this spring, officials said on Tuesday, three months after the slaughter of civilians in a scenic park started a military conflict with neighboring Pakistan.

Amit Shah, India's home minister, told the country's Parliament that security forces had followed the men in a "high-altitude forest" in the months since the April attack, in which 26 civilians were killed. The soldiers finally killed the three fugitives in a shootout on Monday near the city of Srinagar, the capital city of India's Jammu and Kashmir region.

Some Indian news outlets reported the killings on Monday, when the Indian Parliament began a debate on the government's handling of its conflict with Pakistan. But officials had urged caution, as they were still identifying the bodies to confirm they were those wanted for the attack in the Pahalgam area.

Mr. Shah told Parliament on Tuesday that the three men who were killed were all Pakistani nationals and were involved in the attack. He did not say whether

there were other attackers whom the authorities were still looking for.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has come under criticism from the opposition for taking so long to track down the attackers and for its handling of the clash with Pakistan, including how the escalations between the two nuclear-armed neighbors ended under pressure from President Trump.

Even after India went into battle with Pakistan, accusing its neighbor of supporting militants who target India, many details about the incident remained unclear, including the exact number of attackers and their identities. There have also been questions over how such a security lapse could happen in one of the world's most militarized regions.

"It has been 100 days, and this government has not been able to catch those five terrorists," Gaurav Gogoi, a leader of Indian National Congress party, the main opposition group, said in Parliament on Monday before news reports of the killings started filtering through.

New Delhi has long accused Pakistan's military of harboring and training militant groups who carry out violent attacks in India, particularly in the Kashmir valley. The region has been disputed ever

since Pakistan was cleaved from India at the end of British colonial rule.

Pakistani officials have accused India of starting the military conflict without ever providing proof that the militants behind the Pahalgam attack were tied to Pakistan.

After the attack — during which Hindu men were separated from their families

Accused of taking part in an assault that killed 26 civilians, mostly tourists.

and killed after being asked about their religion — Mr. Modi vowed military action against Pakistan. He also paused India's participation in a water-sharing treaty and downgraded its already minimal diplomatic ties.

At the beginning of India's military action, its air force experienced setbacks. Pakistan managed to shoot down some Indian warplanes as they flew along the border before dawn, targeting what were

identified as terrorist camps inside Pakistan. The downing of the jets brought back bitter memories in India of an incident in 2019, when Pakistan captured an Indian pilot after shooting down his jet during a similar buildup of tensions.

Indian officials remained largely silent about their losses as they extended their strikes to Pakistani military targets in the subsequent days of the conflict, which was marked by heavy use of drones and missiles from both sides. Satellite images showed that India had damaged Pakistani military installations.

"In any exam, what matters is the result," Rajnath Singh, India's defense minister, said during the parliamentary debate on Monday. "If a student returns with good marks, it's their marks that should matter to us. We shouldn't be concerned about whether their pencil broke or they lost their pen during the exam."

In the months since the conflict ended, Indian officials have acknowledged some military losses. But they said their operation achieved its goal of raising the stakes for any future militant attacks, since it demonstrated India would respond by striking Pakistan's military bases as possible sponsors of such violence.

"Now, after an attack, the master-

minds will not be able to sleep," Mr. Modi said in Parliament.

Still, the way the fighting ended has also brought scrutiny of Mr. Modi.

On the fourth day of the conflict, Mr. Trump announced in Washington that his officials had brought about a cease-fire by using trade threats as leverage. India quickly played that narrative down, without challenging Mr. Trump head-on, saying the request for a cease-fire had come from the Pakistani side under pressure from India's military assaults.

But to New Delhi's embarrassment, Mr. Trump has repeated his claim more than two dozen times. In the heated parliamentary debate, the opposition's attacks on Mr. Modi focused on President Trump's claims.

Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition, challenged Mr. Modi to call out Mr. Trump's "lies" in his address to Parliament, if it were true that the cease-fire did not come about because of U.S. pressure.

Another opposition lawmaker, Deepender Hooda, suggested an out-of-the-ordinary trade lever of his own.

"Either shut Donald's mouth," he said, "or shut McDonald's in India."