

# India, Pakistan escalate diplomatic tensions after attack in Kashmir

BY VICTORIA BISSET

India and Pakistan revoked visas for each other's citizens Thursday as diplomatic tensions escalated two days after a deadly shooting attack on a mountain town in Indian-administered Kashmir killed at least 26 people.

Pakistan announced it was suspending trade with India and closing its airspace to all Indian-owned or -operated airlines, while India's Foreign Ministry said that all Pakistani nationals were to leave the country before their visas expired in the next few days. On Wednesday, India had closed the main land border between the two countries and suspended a key water-sharing treaty — something Pakistani officials described as “an act of water warfare.”

Tuesday's attack on tourists in a scenic mountainous valley in the Kashmir region, a Muslim-

majority enclave, was the deadliest attack against civilians in the region in more than a decade. The attack outside the town of Pahalgam, which coincided with Vice President JD Vance's visit to India, threatens the fragile 2021 ceasefire between India and Pakistan that ended fighting at the de facto border between Indian- and Pakistani-held Kashmir.

The nuclear-armed neighbors both claim Kashmir and administer separate parts of it; India has long accused Pakistan of supporting militants in the area it administers.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday vowed to pursue the perpetrators of the attack “to the ends of the earth,” without identifying them or naming Pakistan. India's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the move to revoke all existing visas to Pakistani nationals came “in the wake of the Pahalgam terror

attack” and also recommended that Indian nationals currently in Pakistan “return to India at the earliest.”

Pakistan has condemned the attack and denied involvement. At a news conference Tuesday, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar accused India of a “blame game” without proof. The country's National Security Committee described India's response as “unilateral, unjust, politically motivated, extremely irresponsible and devoid of legal merit.”

India and Pakistan have fought three wars over the disputed territory, and armed insurgents in Kashmir have spent decades fighting against Indian control. Thousands of civilians have been killed in the violence or caught in the crosshairs of the dispute.

In 2019, the two countries came to the brink of war after a Pakistan-based militant group claimed responsibility for a mas-



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**An Indian paramilitary soldier stands guard Thursday at a lake in Indian-administered Kashmir.**

sive suicide bombing targeting paramilitary forces in Indian-controlled Kashmir — prompting India, and then Pakistan, to launch cross-border airstrikes.

Later the same year, India

revoked the semiautonomous status of Indian-administered Kashmir and imposed sweeping security measures. As The Washington Post has reported, Kashmiris deemed too vocal or too

close to separatists have since been fired, jailed or warned to stay silent.

Shaiq Hussain and Haq Nawaz Khan contributed to this report.