

# Pakistan accuses India of plans to launch assault within days

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ATTARI, India — Pakistan on Wednesday said it had “credible intelligence” that India is planning to attack it within days, as soldiers exchanged gunfire along borders and Pakistanis heeded New Delhi’s orders to leave the country after last week’s deadly assault in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir.

India’s moves to punish Pakistan after accusing it of backing the attack in Pahalgam, which Islamabad denies, have driven tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals to their highest point since 2019, when they came close to war after a suicide car bombing in Kashmir.

The region is split between India and Pakistan and claimed by both in its entirety.

Pakistan said the intelligence shows that India plans military action against it in the next 24 to 36 hours “on the pretext of baseless and concocted allegations of involvement.”

There was no immediate comment from Indian offi-

cial. However, Indian government officials said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has “given complete operational freedom to the armed forces to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India’s response to the Pahalgam massacre.” They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive deliberations.

Last week’s attack was claimed by a previously unknown militant group calling itself the Kashmir Resistance. New Delhi describes all militancy in the Indian-held part of Kashmir as Pakistan-backed terrorism. Pakistan denies this, and many Muslim Kashmiris consider the militants to be part of a homegrown freedom struggle.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, in separate phone calls with India and Pakistan, stressed the need to “avoid a confrontation that could result in tragic consequences.” The U.S. State Department also called for de-escalation and said Secretary of State Marco Rubio would be speaking to the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers.

The deadline for Paki-

stani citizens to leave India, with exceptions for those with medical visas, passed Sunday, but many families were still scrambling to the border crossing in Attari town in northern Punjab state.

Some arrived on their own. Others were being deported by police.

“We have settled our families here. We request the government not to uproot our families,” said Sara Khan, a Pakistani who was ordered back without her husband, Aurangzeb Khan, who holds an Indian passport.

She carried her 14-day-old child and said she had been living in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir since 2017.

The Indian authorities “told me you are illegal and you should go,” she said while waiting on the Indian side of the border crossing.

Tensions between India and Pakistan have escalated after gunmen killed 26 people, most of them Indian tourists, near Pahalgam, a resort town.

The massacre set off tit-for-tat diplomatic measures that included the cancellation of visas and a recall of di-

plomats. New Delhi suspended a crucial water-sharing treaty with Islamabad and ordered the closure of its border with Pakistan. In response, Pakistan has closed its airspace to Indian airlines.

Cross-border exchanges of gunfire between soldiers have increased along the Line of Control, the de facto frontier that separates Kashmiri territory between the two rivals.

On Wednesday, India and Pakistan accused each other of starting the gunfire.

Pakistan’s state-run media said Indian forces violated the ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control by initiating fire with heavy weapons. According to Pakistan Television, Pakistani troops returned fire after coming under attack overnight in the Mandal sector of the Pakistani-controlled portion of Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the Indian army said it responded to “unprovoked” small-arms fire from Pakistan in the Naushera, Sunderbani and Akhnour sectors of the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir.

The incidents could not be independently verified. In

the past, each side has accused the other of starting border skirmishes in the Himalayan region.

India’s Cabinet committee on security, headed by Modi, met Wednesday. It was the second such meeting since the attack.

At least three tourists who survived told the Associated Press that the gunman singled out Hindu men and shot them at close range.

The dead also included a Nepali citizen and a local Muslim pony ride operator.

Aishanya Dwivedi, whose husband was killed, said a gunman approached the couple and challenged him to recite the Islamic declaration of faith.

Her husband replied that he was Hindu, and the attacker shot him “point-blank in the head,” she said.

“He was on my lap. I was soaked in his blood,” Dwivedi said.

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Gill, Saaliq and Ahmed write for the Associated Press and reported from Attari, New Delhi and Islamabad, respectively. AP writer Rajesh Roy in New Delhi contributed to this report.