

# Pakistan suspends India peace accord as tensions rise over Kashmir killings

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Pakistan has closed its airspace to India's airlines, suspended a 1972 peace treaty with its neighbour and warned that any diversion of shared river water would be "considered an act of war".

Pakistan has denied any involvement in the attack that killed 26 in Pahalgam, a tourist destination in the Indian-controlled territory of Jammu and Kashmir, and yesterday levelled India's accusations of supporting terrorism back at Narendra Modi's government.

The Islamic republic's National Security Committee denounced India's suspension of the 1960 treaty under which the two countries share water from the Indus river system. "Any attempt to stop or divert the flow of water belong-

ing to Pakistan as per the Indus Waters Treaty . . . will be considered as an act of war and responded [to] with full force across the complete spectrum of national power," the committee said.

It said that Pakistan would suspend all bilateral treaties with its neighbour, including a 1972 peace accord, "till India desists from . . . fomenting terrorism inside Pakistan [and] transnational killings." The remarks were an apparent reference to Indian agents' alleged involvement in the killing of separatist Sikh activists in Canada and Pakistan.

The committee also said Pakistan would hold "in abeyance" the Simla Agreement, which has governed ties between the nations since after 1971 war. The pact's provisions included establishing the "Line of Control" along which they face off in Kashmir.

Michael Kugelman, a Washington-

based South Asia analyst, said the Indus Water Treaty and Simla accord had served as "safety nets", ensuring a baseline of co-operation and communication at times of high tension between Pakistan and India. "The relationship risks entering uncharted territory."

Police in Jammu and Kashmir said two of the three suspects in the Pahalgam massacre were Pakistani nationals, identifying them as part of a militant group behind one of India's worst mass murders of civilians. In a "Wanted" notice published online, the police described the men as "LeT terrorists", a reference to Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, which was responsible for the killing of 175 people in Mumbai in 2008.

Pakistan's foreign minister said Islamabad was not involved in the Pahalgam attack and that "no evidence" had been provided to show otherwise.