

# India-Pakistan Relation: An Overview

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**Abstract:** *The relationship between India and Pakistan has been one of the most complex and sensitive bilateral relationships in modern international politics. The origins of the conflict date back to the Partition of India, which created two independent nations but also led to large-scale migration, communal violence, and unresolved territorial disputes. Since independence, the two countries have fought several wars, including the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947-1948, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, and the Kargil War. The central issue influencing their relations has been the dispute over the region of Kashmir. Despite recurring tensions, both countries have periodically attempted diplomatic engagement through peace talks, confidence-building measures, and regional cooperation frameworks such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). However, challenges such as cross-border terrorism, political mistrust, and military rivalry continue to hinder long-term stability. At the same time, cultural, historical, and social ties between the populations of the two nations highlight the potential for improved relations. In conclusion, India-Pakistan relations remain characterized by a mixture of conflict and cooperation. Understanding the historical background, key conflicts, and diplomatic efforts is essential for analyzing the prospects for peace and stability in South Asia.*

**Keywords:** India, Pakistan, Relation, War, Kashmir Issue, Terrorism

## 1. Introduction

Relations between and have been one of the most complex and sensitive international relationships in South Asia since their independence in 1947. The relationship is shaped by historical conflicts, territorial disputes, political rivalry, and periods of diplomatic engagement. Despite sharing common cultural, linguistic, and historical roots from the era of, the two nations have experienced persistent tensions that continue to influence regional stability. The origin of the strained relationship can be traced to the in 1947. As the British colonial rule ended, British India was divided into two independent states: India and Pakistan. The partition was based largely on religious demographics, with Pakistan envisioned as a Muslim-majority state and India becoming a secular nation with a Hindu-majority population. This division led to one of the largest migrations in human history and was accompanied by widespread communal violence, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and the displacement of millions. The traumatic legacy of partition left deep mistrust between the two countries. One of the most significant sources of conflict between India and Pakistan has been the dispute over the region of. Both countries claim the territory in full but control only parts of it. Shortly after independence, the dispute led to the, which ended with a ceasefire and the establishment of the Line of Control dividing the region. Since then, Kashmir has remained a major point of contention and has triggered several military confrontations.

India and Pakistan have fought multiple wars since independence. Apart from the first conflict over Kashmir, the countries fought the over Kashmir and the, which resulted in the creation of. The 1971 war significantly altered the geopolitical landscape of South Asia and further intensified mistrust between the two nations. Although both countries signed the to resolve issues through peaceful means, tensions have continued intermittently. Another major dimension of India-Pakistan relations is their nuclear capability. In 1998, both countries conducted nuclear tests-India through and Pakistan through the. These tests officially made both nations nuclear powers and raised

international concerns about the possibility of nuclear conflict in the region. Since then, global powers and international organizations have encouraged dialogue and confidence-building measures to prevent escalation. In addition to military and political tensions, the relationship has also been affected by issues such as cross-border terrorism, border skirmishes, and diplomatic disputes. Incidents like the further strained relations and demonstrated how fragile peace between the two nations can be. At the same time, there have been several attempts to improve relations through diplomatic talks, cultural exchanges, and trade agreements. Despite ongoing challenges, there have been moments of cooperation and dialogue between India and Pakistan. Peace initiatives, people-to-people contact, and diplomatic negotiations have occasionally helped reduce tensions. Many scholars and policymakers believe that improved relations between the two countries are essential for long-term peace and economic development in South Asia. In conclusion, the relationship between India and Pakistan is shaped by a combination of historical grievances, territorial disputes, and political rivalry. While conflicts and mistrust have dominated much of their history, efforts toward dialogue and cooperation continue to offer hope for a more peaceful and stable future in the region. Understanding the dynamics of this relationship is crucial for analyzing the politics and security of South Asia.

### The Kashmir dispute:

The **dispute** is one of the longest-running conflicts in modern history, mainly involving and, and partly. The conflict began in 1947 during the, when British India was divided into the independent nations of India and Pakistan. At the time of partition, princely states were allowed to join either country. Kashmir, officially known as the, was ruled by, a Hindu ruler, while the majority of the population was Muslim. Initially, the Maharaja wanted Kashmir to remain independent. However, in October 1947, tribal fighters from Pakistan's northwest invaded Kashmir. Facing military pressure, Hari Singh asked India for help and signed the, allowing Kashmir to become part of India. This led to the (1947-1948). The war ended after the intervened

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and arranged a ceasefire in 1949. The region was divided by the. India controls about two-thirds of the territory, while Pakistan controls the rest, which it calls and. Later, gained control of another part of the region called after the in 1962. Since 1947, India and Pakistan have fought several wars and many smaller conflicts over Kashmir, including the and the in 1999. Both countries claim the entire region but control only parts of it. The dispute has also caused long-term political tension and military presence in the region. In addition to international conflict, Kashmir has experienced internal unrest since the late 1980s. Some groups demand independence, while others support joining Pakistan. India accuses Pakistan of supporting militant groups, while Pakistan denies direct involvement and says it supports the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. The situation changed in 2019 when the Government of India revoked, which had given special autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir. The region was reorganized into two union territories: and. Pakistan strongly opposed this decision, and tensions increased again. The Kashmir dispute remains a complex political, territorial, and historical issue involving national identity, regional security, and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Despite several peace efforts, a permanent solution has not yet been achieved.

#### War of 1971:

The Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 was one of the most significant conflicts in South Asian history. It involved India, Pakistan, and the people of Bangladesh, who were then part of Pakistan as East Pakistan. The war resulted in the independence of Bangladesh and the division of Pakistan into two separate nations. It was not only a military conflict but also a struggle for political rights, cultural identity, and national self-determination. The roots of the conflict go back to 1947, when British India was divided into India and Pakistan during the Partition of India. Pakistan was created as a country with two geographically separated regions: West Pakistan (present-day Pakistan) and East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). These two regions were separated by more than 1,600 kilometers of Indian territory and differed greatly in language, culture, and economic conditions. While the majority of people in East Pakistan spoke Bengali and had their own cultural traditions, the ruling elites in West Pakistan dominated the government and military and promoted Urdu as the national language. Over time, this political and economic imbalance created resentment among the people of East Pakistan.

The situation worsened after the general elections of 1970. In these elections, the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a clear majority in Pakistan's National Assembly, largely due to overwhelming support from East Pakistan. According to democratic principles, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should have become the leader of Pakistan. However, the government and military leadership in West Pakistan refused to transfer power. This led to widespread protests and demands for autonomy in East Pakistan. On 25 March 1971, the Pakistani military launched Operation Searchlight, a brutal crackdown aimed at suppressing the Bengali nationalist movement. The operation targeted students, intellectuals, political activists,

and civilians. Thousands of people were killed, and many villages were destroyed. As a result of the violence, millions of refugees fled from East Pakistan into India, creating a massive humanitarian crisis. At the same time, Bengali resistance fighters formed the Mukti Bahini, a guerrilla force that began fighting against the Pakistani army. India gradually became involved in the conflict because of the large number of refugees entering its territory and the humanitarian concerns arising from the violence in East Pakistan. Under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, India provided support and training to the Mukti Bahini. Tensions between India and Pakistan increased throughout 1971. The situation escalated into full-scale war on 3 December 1971, when Pakistan launched air strikes on Indian airbases, leading to the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971.

The war lasted for about two weeks and ended on 16 December 1971 when Pakistani forces in East Pakistan surrendered in Dhaka. This surrender marked the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation. The 1971 war thus reshaped the political map of South Asia and remains a powerful example of a people's struggle for freedom and self-determination.

#### Kargil War:

The was a major military conflict between and that took place between May and July 1999 in the mountainous Kargil district of (then part of). It is considered one of the most significant conflicts between the two countries after their nuclear tests in 1998. The war occurred along the (LoC), the de facto border dividing Indian-and Pakistani-controlled areas of Kashmir. The conflict began when Pakistani soldiers and militants secretly crossed the Line of Control and occupied strategic mountain peaks on the Indian side during the winter months when many high-altitude posts were temporarily vacated due to extreme weather. These infiltrators established positions on high ridges overlooking the vital, which connected the towns of and. Their aim was to cut off India's supply route to Ladakh and force India to negotiate over the Kashmir dispute. In May 1999, Indian patrols discovered the intrusions, leading to a full-scale military response known as. The launched an offensive to recapture the occupied peaks, while the carried-out air operations under. Fighting took place at extremely high altitudes, often above 16,000 feet, making the battle conditions extremely difficult. Soldiers faced freezing temperatures, steep rocky terrain, and enemy fire from higher positions. Several key battles were fought during the war. One of the most famous was the capture of, a strategically important peak that overlooked the surrounding region. Indian forces carried out a daring assault and successfully recaptured it in early July 1999. Other important battles took place at and, where intense fighting resulted in heavy casualties on both sides.

The international community closely watched the conflict because both India and Pakistan were nuclear-armed nations. Diplomatic pressure, particularly from the and other global powers, urged Pakistan to withdraw its forces from the Indian side of the Line of Control. Eventually, Pakistan agreed to pull back its troops after a meeting between, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and, the President

of the United States, in July 1999. By late July 1999, Indian forces had successfully regained control of most of the occupied territory, and the conflict officially ended on July 26, which is now celebrated in India as. The war resulted in the deaths of more than 500 Indian soldiers and several hundred Pakistani soldiers. The Kargil War had significant political and military consequences. It highlighted the dangers of the unresolved Kashmir dispute and emphasized the importance of surveillance and preparedness in high-altitude border areas. The conflict also strengthened India's military strategy and national unity, while raising international awareness about tensions between India and Pakistan. Overall, the Kargil War remains a symbol of bravery and sacrifice for India and is remembered for the courage shown by soldiers who fought under extremely challenging conditions to defend their country.

### Indian Parliament Attack:

The Indian Parliament attack occurred on December 13, 2001, and was one of the most significant terrorist attacks in India's recent history. Armed militants attacked the Parliament of India in New Delhi, the heart of the country's democracy, causing widespread panic and a serious national security crisis. The attackers were heavily armed and attempted to storm the Parliament complex during a session, which was in progress at the time. The assault was carried out by a team of five terrorists associated with Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. They used firearms and explosives to breach security, but the swift response of the Parliament Security Service, the Central Reserve Police Force, and the Delhi Police prevented the attackers from entering the main building. All five militants were killed in the encounter. Unfortunately, eight security personnel and a civilian also lost their lives, and several others were injured. The attack was widely condemned internationally and brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war, as India accused Pakistan-based groups of orchestrating the strike. Following the attack, India launched a major military and diplomatic response, including increased border security and counter-terrorism measures. The incident also led to the enactment of stricter anti-terrorism laws within India. The Parliament attack of 2001 is remembered as a critical moment that tested India's democratic institutions and resilience. It highlighted vulnerabilities in national security and emphasized the need for intelligence coordination and preparedness against terrorism. The bravery of the security personnel is still honored annually in India as a symbol of dedication to protecting the nation's democratic framework.

### Mumbai Terror Attack:

The **2008 Mumbai terror attacks**, also known as **26/11**, were a series of coordinated terrorist strikes that shook India's financial capital, from November 26 to 29, 2008. Ten heavily armed militants from, linked to the terrorist group, infiltrated Mumbai via the Arabian Sea. Their attacks targeted multiple high-profile locations, including the, , and a crowded Jewish center. Over 60 hours, the attackers used firearms and grenades, killing **166 people** and injuring more than 300. The assaults created widespread panic, paralyzed the city, and drew global

attention due to their brutality and precision. Indian security forces, including the, responded with coordinated operations, ultimately neutralizing all attackers. Investigations revealed that the terrorists received planning, guidance, and logistical support from handlers based in Pakistan. This revelation intensified Indo-Pakistani tensions, leading to diplomatic and security repercussions. The attacks also exposed significant gaps in India's counter-terrorism preparedness, prompting reforms in intelligence, coastal security, and rapid response mechanisms. The 26/11 attacks left a lasting impact on India's collective consciousness. Stories of courage from survivors, police, hotel staff, and armed forces became symbols of resilience. Memorials and commemorations honor the victims and responders, emphasizing the importance of vigilance against terrorism. Internationally, the attacks highlighted the global reach of extremist networks and reinforced the need for cross-border cooperation to combat terrorism. 26/11 remains one of the most tragic and defining episodes in Mumbai's history, a reminder of the devastating consequences of terrorism and the enduring spirit of those who confront it.

### Recent National Security Adviser Level Talks (NSA):

In recent times, relations between **India and Pakistan** have been marked by heightened tensions and sporadic diplomatic engagements. Although there have been discussions at various military and diplomatic channels to reduce the risk of escalation, **official National Security Adviser-to-National Security Adviser talks between the two countries have not taken place in a formal, direct bilateral setting in the immediate past**. According to statements from Pakistani military spokespersons, there has been **no direct NSA-level communication** with India amid ongoing tensions, and diplomatic engagement has generally been handled through foreign ministries rather than top security advisers directly speaking to one another. The backdrop to this situation includes significant military and diplomatic friction, such as cross-border incidents and India's security concerns regarding terrorism emanating from across the Line of Control and international border. While there have been attempts by Pakistan to signal a willingness to discuss peace, including statements from Pakistani leadership calling for dialogue instead of conflict, sustained NSA-level talks have yet to materialize. Recent remarks from Pakistan's foreign ministry have also focused on criticizing public statements made by Indian officials, suggesting deeper disagreements on narrative and intent. At the same time, military-to-military channels such as Corps Commanders and Director General Military Operations (DGMO) have engaged to manage ceasefire and de-escalation mechanisms. These engagements have, at times, led to temporary reductions in hostilities along the border, though they do not equate to strategic dialogue at the NSA level. Overall, while both sides have utilized available communication channels to prevent wider conflict, **formal NSA-level talks remain limited or indirect**, reflecting the complex and often fragile nature of India-Pakistan security relations in the current period.

### India-Pakistan Efforts for Peacekeeping:

The relationship between India and Pakistan has historically been marked by periods of tension, mainly due to territorial disputes, cross-border terrorism, and differing political ideologies. Despite these challenges, both nations have made significant efforts over the decades to promote peace, stability, and cooperative engagement. One of the primary avenues for peacekeeping has been through bilateral dialogue. Several rounds of talks have been held under frameworks such as the Shimla Agreement, aimed at addressing core issues like the Jammu and Kashmir issue, water sharing, and trade facilitation. Confidence-building measures, including the exchange of prisoners, ceasefire agreements along the Line of Control, and the reopening of trade routes, have served as practical steps to reduce tensions and foster mutual trust. Both countries have also actively engaged in regional and international peacekeeping efforts. India has contributed significantly to United Nations peacekeeping missions, sending troops to conflict zones in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere, demonstrating its commitment to global stability. Pakistan has similarly participated in UN missions, showcasing its willingness to cooperate internationally and present a constructive image on the world stage. Cultural and people-to-people initiatives have further supported peacekeeping efforts. Programs promoting dialogue between civil societies, student exchanges, and collaborative arts and sports events have helped humanize the "other side" and build grassroots understanding. For instance, cross-border initiatives such as the Kartarpur Corridor have sought to encourage dialogue and foster mutual goodwill among citizens of both nations. Despite occasional escalations and political setbacks, the ongoing engagement reflects a shared recognition that peace is essential for regional prosperity. The efforts in diplomacy, conflict resolution, international collaboration, and societal engagement collectively illustrate a sustained commitment to mitigating hostilities and creating avenues for long-term coexistence. In conclusion, while India and Pakistan face complex historical and political challenges, their combined efforts in peacekeeping, both bilaterally and through global frameworks, demonstrate a persistent, albeit cautious, aspiration for harmony and stability in South Asia. Continued dialogue, cooperation, and trust-building remain key to ensuring a peaceful future for the region.

### 2. Conclusion

The relationship between India and Pakistan has been one of the most complex and contentious in the modern world. Rooted in the traumatic partition of 1947, their interactions have been shaped by historical grievances, territorial disputes, religious and cultural differences, and competing national identities. Over the decades, this relationship has oscillated between periods of dialogue and cooperation, and episodes of intense hostility and military conflict. Understanding the trajectory of India-Pakistan relations requires a nuanced assessment of both structural challenges and opportunities for engagement. Territorial disputes, particularly over Jammu and Kashmir, have been the most persistent source of tension. The issue has triggered multiple wars, cross-border skirmishes, and a continuing military standoff along the Line of Control (LoC). Kashmir remains a flashpoint not only because of its strategic importance but also due to the symbolic

significance it holds in national narratives on both sides. While India emphasizes its territorial integrity and sovereignty, Pakistan frames its involvement as supporting self-determination for the Kashmiri people. This deeply entrenched disagreement makes political rapprochement extremely difficult, as both nations face domestic pressures that limit their flexibility on core issues. Another dimension influencing the bilateral relationship is the broader security and defense posture. Nuclear weapons in both countries have transformed traditional military competition into a more precarious deterrence-driven environment. While the presence of nuclear arsenals has arguably prevented full-scale wars in recent decades, it has also heightened the stakes of any conflict and fostered an atmosphere of mistrust. Cross-border terrorism, insurgency, and extremist networks have further complicated the situation, eroding confidence and making cooperation in counterterrorism a challenging endeavor. Despite these tensions, there have been notable attempts at dialogue and cooperation. Economic exchanges, trade initiatives, and cultural engagements have offered glimpses of the potential benefits of improved relations. People-to-people contacts, including sports diplomacy and artistic collaborations, have occasionally bridged political divides and highlighted shared heritage and history. Such interactions underscore the reality that India and Pakistan are not merely strategic rivals but also neighbours whose destinies are intertwined in multiple social, economic, and environmental domains.

In recent years, geopolitical shifts, domestic political changes, and global economic pressures have created both opportunities and obstacles for reconciliation. While periods of constructive dialogue have often been short-lived, the recurring attempts at negotiation reflect a mutual recognition that enduring conflict imposes significant costs on both nations. Regional stability, economic growth, and international reputation depend in part on a reduction in bilateral tensions and the establishment of reliable channels for conflict resolution. In conclusion, India-Pakistan relations remain a study in contrasts: they are defined by historical animosity, yet also punctuated by aspirations for peace; shaped by security dilemmas, yet driven by the practical need for cooperation. The path forward requires sustained political will, confidence-building measures, and an emphasis on diplomacy over confrontation. Both countries must reconcile national narratives with pragmatic interests, seeking common ground in trade, regional security, water sharing, and cultural exchange. While the legacy of partition and historical mistrust cannot be erased overnight, the long-term stability of South Asia depends on a constructive and forward-looking engagement between India and Pakistan. Achieving lasting peace will be neither easy nor immediate, but it is imperative—not just for the two nations themselves, but for the broader regional and global order that looks to South Asia as a pivotal zone of peace and prosperity. Ultimately, the India-Pakistan relationship exemplifies the complex interplay of history, identity, and realpolitik, reminding us that conflict and cooperation often coexist. It serves as a poignant illustration of how deeply rooted grievances can coexist with the potential for reconciliation, emphasizing that progress is possible when dialogue, mutual respect, and strategic foresight guide policymaking.

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