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Topics Covered

- **'Pak. did not resort to nuclear signalling'**
- **In the wake of crisis, the need for bipartisanship**
- **e-Zero FIR initiative**
- **Understanding India's relationship with Turkey and Azerbaijan**
- **Pakistan's attacks targeting Golden Temple were thwarted: Army official**

'Pak. did not resort to nuclear signalling'

'Pak. did not resort to nuclear signalling'

U.S. was not involved in truce talks, Foreign Secretary tells parliamentary standing panel on External Affairs | All questions raised by members were answered 'satisfactorily', says Tharoor, who heads panel | Pak., through 'coordinated ceasefire violations', also helps terrorists cross the LoC, says Centre

Sobhana K. Nair
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NEW DELHI

Pakistan did not resort to "nuclear signalling" in the wake of Operation Sindoor and the United States was "neither involved nor informed" about cessation of firing between the two countries, the Union government told the parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, on Monday.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, who briefed the panel, rebutted Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's remarks on Pakistan being informed at the "start of our attack", sources said. Mr. Misri told the panel that India's Director-General of Military Operations

(DGMO) spoke to his Pakistani counterpart about Operation Sindoor only after the "first strike". Mr. Misri detailed the recent spike in activities of Pakistani-sponsored terrorists operating on Indian soil. Pakistan continues to extend support for terrorists, helping them in training and by providing financial and technical support. In the past year, Mr. Misri reportedly told the panel that there were at least 24 terrorist-initiated attacks, leading to the deaths of 24 security personnel and more than 30 civilians.

Solidarity with Misri

Speaking to presspersons after the meeting, Mr. Tharoor said External Affairs Ministry officials and Mr. Misri "satisfactorily" answered all questions raised by the members. There was a "comprehensive and



Key meet: Members of the Parliament's Standing Committee on External Affairs with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

rich discussion", he said.

Congress MP Deependra Hooda asked if India had lost any jets in the operation, to which, as per sources, MEA officials said it was beyond their domain to answer this.

The Trinamool Congress's Lok Sabha member Abhishek Banerjee asked if the government had any information about the terrorists involved in the Pahalgam attack. There was no immediate reply.

"Many of the MPs had thoughtful questions to ask. There was even a desire to have a resolution expressing solidarity with the Foreign Secretary in the face of the unwarranted attacks and comments, he

himself requested that there should be no resolution but it was unanimous sentiment of the committee that he has performed good service for the nation, we all stand with him," Mr. Tharoor said.

Aiding terror activities

The investigations by security agencies, Mr. Misri said, had revealed that the Pakistan state apparatus has been aiding and abetting terror activities on Indian soil. Pakistan, through "coordinated ceasefire violations", also helps terrorists cross the Line of Control (LoC) and also lends them assistance through drones, the government said.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) MP John Brittas asked for clarification on why U.S. President Donald Trump was the first to announce the "ceasefire"

even before the two countries did, to which the government said that the U.S. was "neither involved nor informed". Conversation with U.S. officials was part of a routine process, officials explained, equating it with India's own interventions urging both Russia and Ukraine to de-escalate. It was only natural, the MEA officials said, for other countries to respond similarly.

Mr. Misri clarified that India has clearly stated its position to world leaders that it is only responding to the Pahalgam attack. The MEA officials further said that India has responded through proper channels on Mr. Trump's statements.

Mr. Misri reiterated the government's stance that there was no deviation from the stated policy of no third-party mediation.

Context: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri briefed the Standing Committee on External Affairs on the India-Pakistan military conflict in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor.

The meeting was chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor.

Crux of the Report:

- Pakistan did not engage in any nuclear signalling during or after Operation Sindoor.
- **U.S. Not Involved:** The U.S. was neither involved in nor informed about the ceasefire; Trump's early announcement was coincidental and not based on prior information.

India's DGMO communicated with his Pakistani counterpart only after the first strike of Operation Sindoor. India reaffirmed its response was due to the Pahalgam attack and maintained its stance against third-party mediation.





In the wake of crisis, the need for bipartisanship

The terrorist attack in Pahalgam, on April 22, 2025 has once again shaken our collective conscience, reminding us of the fragility of peace in a region.

We need to recognise the critical importance of bipartisanship —both in shaping our response and in ensuring that national security does not become another theatre for political posturing.

In the wake of crisis, the need for bipartisanship

The terrorist attack in Pahalgam, on April 22, 2025 has once again shaken our collective conscience, reminding us of the fragility of peace in a region long burdened by the weight of history. As India grieves the loss of innocent lives and strengthens its resolve against terror, we must also recognise the critical importance of bipartisanship — both in shaping our response and in ensuring that national security does not become another theatre for political posturing.

There is a distressing pattern that emerges whenever India faces a crisis of this nature: political parties, instead of closing ranks in defence of the nation, often resort to scoring points — weaponising grief for electoral advantage rather than forging a unified front. We saw this after the Pulwama attack in 2019, where swift retaliatory action became intertwined with campaign narratives. That was perhaps inevitable, since the general election was only weeks away from being called, and the national discourse swiftly veered from security imperatives to domestic politicking. But there is no doubt that this cycle weakens our ability to formulate a cohesive and long-term strategy, one that can fortify our defences without compromising our democratic integrity.

Security beyond partisan interests

The challenge before us is clear: terrorism is a scourge that demands a decisive, well-coordinated response, not knee-jerk reactions shaped by party ideologies. Whether dealing with counter-terror operations, diplomatic negotiations, or intelligence reforms, decisions must be made collectively, informed by strategic foresight rather than short-term gains. National security is too vital an issue to be circumscribed by party affiliations; it must transcend ideological divides.

Take, for instance, the Kargil conflict of 1999 — a moment when India, despite political differences between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Opposition Congress, stood together in defence of the nation. The war effort saw bipartisan cooperation, ensuring that security strategies were aligned with national interests rather than partisan agendas. The Opposition, led by Congress President Sonia Gandhi, largely supported the government's military response. She praised the armed forces, stating: "The bravery of our soldiers in Kargil has made every Indian proud. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten." Similarly, when India conducted surgical strikes in 2016 in response to the Uri terror attack, it was done with clear messaging — demonstrating strength without overstepping into prolonged conflict — and the nation was united in applauding the action across political lines.



Shashi Tharoor
is a fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress), Lok Sabha, for Thiruvananthapuram, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, and the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author of 27 books, including 'The Battle of Belonging: On Nationalism, Patriotism, and what It Means to Be Indian'

As India strengthens its resolve to fight terror, it is crucial to ensure that national security does not become another theatre for political posturing

Recent global history is replete with examples of bipartisanship across political divides in response to terrorism in various democracies. Following the September 11 attacks, both parties in the United States recognised the need for a more unified approach to national security, and a bipartisan effort ensured a swift and coordinated response to terrorism. After the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch in 2019, then New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern led a bipartisan effort to reform gun laws. Within weeks, the government passed legislation banning military-style semi-automatic weapons, with support from both major parties. More recently, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, bipartisan support emerged across Western Europe for military aid to Kyiv and sanctions against Russia. Traditionally neutral countries such as Sweden and Finland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with broad political consensus across party lines.

The greys are now blacks and whites

These examples highlight how, despite political differences, nations can unite in times of crisis to prioritise security, unity and effective action. Should Pahalgam and its aftermath be any different?

When I first became Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, I declared that "there is no such thing as a Congress foreign policy and a BJP foreign policy; there is only Indian foreign policy, and Indian national interests." I was reminded of a famous episode of Indian diplomatic history in 1994, when Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao picked Opposition Leader (and then Chairman of the External Affairs Committee) Atal Bihari Vajpayee to lead the Indian delegation to present India's case on Kashmir, and counter Pakistan's falsehoods, at a United Nations session in Geneva. The Congress Minister of State for External Affairs, Salman Khurshid, was named as A.B. Vajpayee's deputy. Later, as Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee recalled with amusement just how bewildered the Pakistani governing class was at seeing an Opposition leader representing his nation's interests at such a prestigious forum, and at such a crucial moment. But such, he concluded, is our "vichitra lokmantra" — as clamorous and chaotic as it is miraculous and mesmerising.

Sadly, this episode has not been repeated in the last three decades, as our politics has turned ever more rancorous and bitter. There is very little mutual respect and friendship on display between the ruling party and the Opposition. The core assumption of democratic politics is supposed to be that both sides understand that the other is as committed to the national interest as itself, even if they disagree on how best to

ensure the nation's well-being. In that sense the two sides are not enemies but adversaries. But that assumption has yielded to a bitter polarisation in recent years. One could, of course, argue that this is merely a natural consequence of the pushes and pulls that are inevitable in a democratic polity. But the Indian discourse has taken on extreme hues that imperil any possibility of consensus. The Overtone's Window of political mobilisation (in other words, what is considered acceptable in the political arena) has become more vengeful, driven by resentment and an obsession to expiate past wrongs. And social media has emerged as an important tool for divisive discourse, through which the political benefits of this polarisation are reaped. From public debates to dinner-table conversations, the greys have given way to Manichean blacks and whites.

The result is that in recent years, political discourse on security has frequently devolved into blame games, sidestepping the actual need for strategic recalibration. India's relationship with Pakistan, though complex and fraught, requires clarity. There can be no ambiguity in condemning acts of terror; the line between national security and political point-scoring is not a thin one. It is in India's interest to unite in the response to terror, because a perception of division at home always emboldens the enemy. Inflammatory rhetoric, though politically expedient, serves no substantive purpose. If India is to emerge as a responsible power, it must ensure that its politics is mature, that the nation always comes ahead of party interests, and that its diplomacy walks in step with defence preparedness — balancing deterrence with restraint, security with stability, and democratic politics with national unity.

Need for a non-partisan security doctrine

What India needs today is a structured national security doctrine that remains insulated from electoral cycles — one that provides a clear vision on counter-terrorism, intelligence-sharing, and strategic deterrence without becoming a tool for political one-upmanship. Policies regarding defence, zero-tolerance of terror, the security of the homeland, regional strategy and global diplomacy, must be formulated with bipartisan consensus, ensuring that they remain consistent, regardless of which party is in power.

True political leadership demands statesmanship over populism, clarity over chaos. If our lawmakers recognise this imperative, they will understand that safeguarding India's security is not a party matter but a collective responsibility. In moments of grief and crisis, let bipartisanship be the force that unites us — not just in words, but in action. The promise of a secure, stable, and resilient India depends on it.

Issue:

Every time there's a terror attack, instead of standing united, political parties start blaming each other or using it to gain public support.

We saw this after the Pulwama attack in 2019, where swift retaliatory action became intertwined with campaign narratives. That was perhaps inevitable, since the general election was only weeks away.

Security beyond partisan interests

Terrorism is a scourge that demands a decisive, well-coordinated response, not knee-jerk reactions shaped by party ideologies.

Examples of Unity from the Past

- **Kargil War (1999):** Despite political rivalry, the government and Opposition stood together.
- **Surgical Strikes (2016):** All parties supported the response to the Uri attack.
- **International Examples:**
 - ◆ **USA after 9/11:** Both parties came together to strengthen security.
 - ◆ **New Zealand (2019):** All parties supported quick gun control after a terror attack.





- ♦ **Ukraine Crisis:** Western nations united politically to support Ukraine and oppose Russia.

Lessons from Indian History

- ♦ In 1994, PM Narasimha Rao (Congress) sent **Atal Bihari Vajpayee (BJP)** to the UN to represent India on Kashmir.
- This showed that **India can rise above party politics** in national interest.
- Sadly, such unity hasn't been seen much in the last 30 years.
-

The Problem Today

- Politics has become bitter and personal.
- Parties act more like **enemies** than **adversaries**.
- Social media has made the political environment even more **divisive**.
- Every issue is made black-or-white, right-or-wrong, without space for grey areas or dialogue.

What's the Risk?

- When India looks **divided at home**, it encourages **enemies** like terrorists.
- Loud political fights don't help the country — they distract from real security planning.

Need for a non-partisan security doctrine

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e-Zero FIR initiative

The government has launched a new system called the e-Zero FIR initiative to tackle **financial cybercrimes** more effectively.

How Does It Work?

- If someone **loses ₹10 lakh or more** in an online financial fraud and reports it through:
 - ♦ the **1930 cybercrime helpline**, or
 - ♦ the **cybercrime.gov.in** portal,

**Amit Shah
launches
e-Zero FIR
initiative**

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) has introduced a new system that automatically converts financial cybercrime complaints with a fraud value above ₹10 lakh, and registered on the 1930 helpline or cybercrime.gov.in portal, into first information reports (FIRs). The e-Zero FIR initiative has been launched on a pilot basis first in Delhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday.

An FIR will now be registered automatically.

This is called an **e-Zero FIR**.

The system has been **launched as a pilot project in Delhi**.

How Does It Work Technically?

It involves connecting three systems:

1. **I4C's Cybercrime Reporting Portal** (where the complaint is filed),
2. **Delhi Police's e-FIR system** (to register the FIR digitally),
3. **National Crime Record Bureau's tracking system** (to monitor and track criminals).





Understanding India's relationship with Turkey and Azerbaijan

Context:

After Turkiye and Azerbaijan supported Pakistan following the Pahalgam attack, many Indians began **boycotting travel and trade** with the two countries:

- **Tour bookings** to Turkiye and Azerbaijan saw mass cancellations.
- **Indian tour operators withdrew offers** and packages.
- **Social media campaigns** calling for a boycott gained momentum.
- Top Indian institutions like **IIT Bombay, IIT Roorkee, and JNU** suspended ties with Turkish universities.

Turkiye, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan

- Turkiye and Pakistan have a **strong defense relationship**.
 - ♦ Turkiye has been exporting **artillery and armoured vehicles** to Pakistan since the 1990s.

They support each other diplomatically:

- ♦ Turkiye supports Pakistan on Kashmir.
- ♦ Pakistan backs Turkiye on Cyprus.
- In 2020, Turkiye supported Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

India's Position

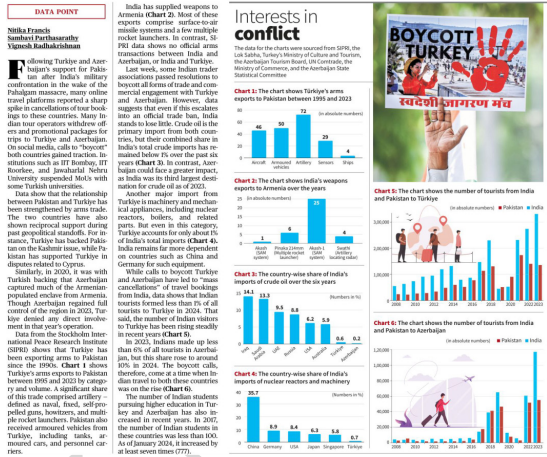
- India exports weapons to Armenia, mainly missile systems and rocket launchers.
- No arms deals exist between **India and either Turkiye or Azerbaijan**.

Trade Impact

- **India imports very little** from Turkiye and Azerbaijan:
 - ♦ Crude oil imports from them are **less than 1%** of India's total.
 - ♦ Machinery imports from Turkiye are also **about 1%**.
- But India is a **major buyer** of Azerbaijan's oil —
- any trade cut would **hurt Azerbaijan more**.
- On the **night of May 7–8**, Pakistan **launched drone and missile attacks** targeting the **Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab**.
- The **Indian Army successfully intercepted** and stopped these attacks.
- Pakistan **specifically targeted** the Golden Temple, a **sacred Sikh shrine**, aiming to provoke religious tensions.

Understanding India's relationship with Turkey and Azerbaijan

Data suggests that even if an official trade ban is issued against these two nations, India stands to lose little





Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib)

- The **Golden Temple**, also called **Harmandir Sahib** or **Darbar Sahib**, is the **holiest shrine of Sikhism**.
- Located in **Amritsar, Punjab, India**.
- Built in **14th century** by **Guru Arjan Dev Ji**, the **5th Sikh Guru**.
- Guru Arjan installed the scripture of Sikhism inside the new gurdwara in 1604.

