

Reviewing **Indo- Pak** Bilateral Relations

Quarterly Monitoring Brief

January 2018 - March 2018

Bilateral relations between India and Pakistan remained tense throughout most of the first quarter of 2018. The year began with news of a meeting between the Pakistani and Indian National Security Advisers in the last week of December. There were also reports that a proposal for a meeting between Director Generals of Military Operations had been put forward but had not been finalized. In keeping with tradition India and Pakistan exchanged a list of prisoners and nuclear installations in the first week of January – a long standing confidence building measure that has survived several downturns in bilateral relations in the past.

This positive development was short-lived. In mid-January, the Indian army chief announced readiness to cross the border and attack Pakistan when necessary. The statement came in the backdrop of rising ceasefire violations along of the Line of Control and Indian escalation. Pakistan's Foreign and Interior Ministers, Khwaja Asif and Ahsan Iqbal, called the statement irresponsible. Tensions heightened as Indian Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh, at an election rally instructed Indian forces return a single fire by Pakistan along the LOC and WB with "limitless bullets". Indian Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj also dismissed the possibility of holding a bilateral cricket series.

In the beginning of January 2018, the Pakistani government seized control of charities and financial assets linked to Hafiz Saeed, chief of JuD. At the end of the month, in what the Pakistan Army claimed was done in national interest, Hafiz Saeed was placed under house arrest for a limited time as the Lahore High Court soon ordered Saeed's release and directed the Election Commission Pakistan to hear Saeed's case regarding his party's registration for the upcoming elections.

This quarter was also marred by ceasefire violations. In late January, chiefs of border forces from India and Pakistan met to find ways to de-escalate tensions. Despite this, ceasefire violations continued, including an attack on a van carrying school children in the Battal Sector controlled by Pakistan, and a militant attack in Jammu, controlled by India.

In early March 2018, Pakistan accused India of harassing its diplomats and their families in Delhi. India too leveled similar allegations of harassment by Pakistan. The severity and frequency of the harassment faced by diplomats in both countries was one of the highest in the last two decades, with videos of diplomats getting harassed surfacing online. During this time, India also rejected visas of more than 500 Pakistani pilgrims scheduled to go to Ajmer. This was against an agreed bilateral agreement on facilitating religious tourism between both countries.

In an attempt to ease escalating tensions, the two countries exchanged prisoners multiple times during the quarter. Bilateral relations seemed to be taking a positive turn towards the end of March. In what was an unprecedented move, Pakistan invited Indian military officials and diplomats to the military parade marking Pakistan Day. A few days later, the two countries discussed a proposal to allow a team of Indian doctors to examine prisoners in Pakistani jails. The month ended with India and Pakistan simultaneously releasing coordinated press statements reiterating the 1992 code of conduct for diplomatic staff and ensuring that harassment of diplomatic staff would cease.

Media Reports

Kashmir

04-01-2018 Police in India-held Kashmir = arrested four cricketers for playing the Pakistani national anthem before the start of a cricket match in Bandipora district.	Dawn
According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Indian forces committed ceasefire violation along the Working Boundary in Sialkot's Zafarwal sector, injuring three innocent Pakistani civilians in the unprovoked attack. In retaliation, Pakistan Army targeted and neutralized an Indian post, killing one Indian army soldier and injuring two.	Dawn
08-01-2018 Pakistan asked the United States why India was not on Washington's 'special watch list on the issue of religious freedom' despite unending bloodshed in Kashmir and grave violation of minorities' rights.	The Nation
13-01-2018 A soldier was killed as the armies of India and Pakistan exchanged fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.	Greater Kashmir
15-01-2018 Pakistan summoned India's deputy high commissioner in Islamabad after four Pakistani soldiers were killed in shelling by Indian forces in the disputed Kashmir region.	Reuters
17-01-2018 Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said there is no danger of a war with India though both countries should ensure there is no escalation of the situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. He also ruled out the possibility of action against Lashkar-e-Taiba founder Hafiz Saeed, saying there were no cases against him in Pakistan.	Hindustan Times
19-01-2018 Two civilians and an Indian soldier were killed and twenty more wounded in ceasefire violations in the border villages of Jammu region in Indian-administered Kashmir.	Al Jazeera
20-01-2018 Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged fire along the frontier in Kashmir, killing at least five civilians and a soldier.	The Nation
India and Pakistan summoned each other's envoys, accusing one another of violating a military ceasefire in the disputed Kashmir region and killing civilians in cross-border firing.	The Huffington Post

21-01-2018 Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti appealed to India and Pakistan to make Jammu and Kashmir a "bridge of friendship" between them rather than a battleground. Union Home Minister of India Rajnath Singh said that India has shown that it can attack enemies with-in and without if need be.	Times of India The Express Tribune
23-01-2018 In wake of increased incidents of ceasefire violations across Line of Control (LOC) over the past ten days, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged both Pakistan and India to resolve the issue through a dialogue to avoid further casualties.	The News
25-01-2018 Chiefs of border forces from India and Pakistan met to find ways to de-escalate tensions after skirmishes on the Line of Control in Jammu region left several people dead.	The Nation
28-01-2018 Pakistan condemned the brutal and indiscriminate use of force by Indian forces that resulted in the killing of three innocent civilians and injuries to several others in the Ganowpora village of Shopian district in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK).	The Express Tribune
05-02-2018 In a tweet on Kashmir Day, Chief Of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa praised the resilient spirit of the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) and hoped for a successful outcome of their struggles for the right to self-determination.	Pakistan Today
10-02-2018 Indian Defence Ministry sources said that India is likely to raise the issue with the US of Pakistan's use of US-made anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) to target Indian troops along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. India has issued a "high alert" after an army base (Sunjuwan) in the Jammu region was stormed by armed militants that killed at least five soldiers and a civilian during a period of high tensions between the two nations.	The Times of India Express (UK)
15-02-2018 A Pakistani civilian was martyred when Indian forces targeted a school children van in Battal Sector along the Line of Control, DG ISPR said, and termed this target a violation of the Geneva Convention and ceasefire understanding. ISPR said that Pakistan Army destroyed an Indian army post along the Line of Control (LoC) while responding to firing by Indian troops targeting civilians. Five Indian soldiers were killed and many were injured.	The News Dawn
19-02-2018 ISPR said that Pakistan Army responded to unprovoked firing by Indian troops along the Line of Control, destroying an Indian post and killing two soldiers shortly after a minor Pakistani boy was martyred in Jajot.	The News

23-02-2018 ISPR released a statement saying that in a visit to the Line of Control (LoC) in Rawalakot Sector of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Defence Attaches from the US, UK, China, Turkey and Indonesia were briefed by Pakistan on atrocities committed by Indian forces along the LoC.	Geo News
25-02-2018 India and Pakistan exchanged artillery fire in the disputed Kashmir region forcing hundreds of people to flee, police in Indian Kashmir said.	Reuters
26-02-2018 Former Jammu Kashmir chief minister and National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah reiterated his call for engaging Pakistan in meaningful talks , saying that peace will remain elusive until the two neighbors sit together and work towards ending their differences in an amicable atmosphere.	The Indian Express
28-02-2018 Two Pakistani soldiers were killed by unprovoked firing by Indian troops across the Line of Control (LoC) said a press release issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).	Dawn
02-03-2018 According to Foreign Office spokesperson, Indian Deputy High Commissioner J P Singh was summoned to lodge a protest against ceasefire violations by the Indian forces.	The Express Tribune
03-03-2018 Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that cross-border infiltration through the Line of Control has been controlled to a large extent and the armed forces are "proportionately" retaliating to Pakistani actions. She also said that there is no rethinking on the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).	The Economic Times
05-03-2018 At the launch of a new website, Indo-Pak Conflict Monitor, diplomacy experts expressed their pessimism about the decrease of ceasefire violations across the LoC in the near future.	The Express Tribune
07-03-2018 Pakistan Army shot down an Indian spy drone hovering on Pakistan's side of the Line of Control (LoC), the ISPR said.	The Express Tribune
17-03-2018 Indian Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said no power in the world can take Kashmir away from India and if need be, forces can cross border to protect India's territorial integrity.	The Express Tribune
18-03-2018 Five members of an Indian family were killed and two injured by shelling from Pakistani troops along the Line of Control according to Indian army and police officials.	Reuters

30-03-2018 Indian BSF said it may have a "limited confrontation" with Pakistan on the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir in April, soon after the harvest season is over. The BSF also said multiple infiltration bids by Pakistan along the International Border (IB) have been foiled in recent past.	Times of India
31-03-2018 Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to initiate a dialogue process with Pakistan at the earliest as reconciliation and dialogue with Pakistan are the key to peace.	Times of India
Economic Relations	
23-01-2018 Pakistan ranked 47th, 15 points ahead of India, in the Inclusive Development Index (IDI) 2018 of the World Economic Forum.	Pakistan Today
30-01-2018 In light of increased hostilities between India and Pakistan, traders from both countries met in Bangkok and resolved to recommend their respective governments to take measures, like banking facility, for enhancing trade between the two nations.	The Indian Express
26-02-2018 India invited Pakistan's Commerce Minister Pervaiz Malik to participate in the informal WTO ministerial meeting taking place in Delhi on March 19-20. Malik confirmed his attendance.	Pakistan Today
04-03-2018 According to Chairman Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zubair Motiwala, India has succeeded in slashing Pakistan's market share in Afghanistan by 50 percent.	Dawn
17-03-2018 Pakistan decided not to attend a World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting hosted by India , because of growing tensions caused by the ongoing diplomatic standoff.	The Express Tribune
23-03-2018 In a press conference, Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal asked India to reap China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's benefits instead of criticizing it.	Dawn
Bilateral Relations	
26-12-2017 The National Security Advisors of the two countries met secretly in Bangkok.	Dawn

27-12-2017 Indian spy, Jadhav's meeting with his family in Islamabad sparks a diplomatic spat between the two countries , as India accuses Pakistan of harassing his family and putting words in the convict's mouth. Pakistan denies these charges. BJP MP Subramanian Swamy said that India should wage a war against Pakistan to avenge the intimidation and humiliation that Jashav's family faced in Islamabad, and added that destroying Pakistan is the only permanent solution that India has.	Al Jazeera The Times of India
01-01-2018 Under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities, 1998, India and Pakistan exchanged a list of nuclear installations and facilities. Along-with this, the two countries also exchanged a list of prisoners.	The Express Tribune
02-01-2018 Pakistan seized control of Hafiz Saeed's charities and financial assets.	Al Jazeera
04-01-2018 In a video released by Pakistan, Jadhav says that an Indian diplomat accompanying his mother and wife shouted at them . India dismissed the video as propaganda. Spokesperson of the ministry of external affairs, Raveesh Kumar said that this video was part of Pakistan's practice of putting out coerced statements on video.	The Economic Times (India) BBC
07-01-2018 In what was a goodwill gesture, Pakistan freed the second batch of 147 Indian fishermen who had been in jail in Karachi for the last eight months for fishing in Pakistan's territorial waters.	The Express Tribune
11-01-2018 Pakistan raised objections over India's decision to launch its 100th satellite , saying that because of its dual nature, civilian and military, the satellite could negatively impact regional strategic stability.	The Times of India
12-01-2018 India's Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said the Indian force is ready to cross the border carry out an operation in Pakistan if asked by New Delhi.	Pakistan Today
13-01-2018 DG ISPR said that Pakistan's nuclear deterrence is the only thing stopping India from war . This statement came after General Bipin Rawat's statement from the day before. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Khwaja Asif declared Bipin Rawat's statement irresponsible and tantamount to an invitation to war , adding that India is welcome to test Pakistan's resolve.	Geo News The Express Tribune
14-01-2018 Pakistan's Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal termed Bipin Rawat's statement as irresponsible , and said that countries with nuclear weapons are expected to behave responsibly.	Pakistan Observer

18-01-2018 New Delhi test-fired Agni-V intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) taking it another step forward toward its eventual induction into the Strategic Forces Command (SFC). Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammed Faisal said that India's huge arms build-up poses a threat to regional peace, according to Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khawaja Mohammed Asif, the "nexus" between India and Israel adds to this threat.	The Express Tribune Arab News
18-01-2018 New Delhi test-fired Agni-V intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) taking it another step forward toward its eventual induction into the Strategic Forces Command (SFC).	The Express Tribune
21-01-2018 The Indian Premier said that India takes an issued based approach to its foreign policy, rather than one based around any nation, denying claims that the country's foreign policy revolves around Pakistan.	The Express Tribune
30-01-2018 Pakistani government ordered Hafiz Saeed to be placed under house arrest.	The Express Tribune
01-02-2018 DG ISPR said that Hafiz Saeed and four of his aides have been detained in national interest.	The Express Tribune
02-02-2018 Hafiz Saeed backtracked from his earlier statements alleging Indian and American involvement in his house arrest, and claimed that he was detained by the Pakistani government in an attempt to stop him from raising the Kashmir issue.	Pakistan Today
03-02-2018 An Indian Minister said that he has ordered Indian forces to fire countless bullets in return of a single fire from Pakistan.	Express Tribune
05-02-2018 Pakistan's Interior Ministry said that India might target installations of CPEC to sabotage the multi-billion project, and informed Gilgit-Baltistan's home department of India's plan.	The Economic Times
06-02-2018 Pakistani authorities said that they want to record statements of 24 people part of Jhadav's spying network as they consider adding the charge of "crimes against Pakistan" to the terrorism charges Jhadav already faces. A four-member Pakistani team of counter-terrorism and intelligence specialists visited New Delhi to attend a multilateral meeting.	The Express Tribune Samaa

07-02-2018 Pakistan's Ambassador to UN, Maleeha Lodhi denounced a campaign by India, Brazil, Germany and Japan to get permanent seats in UNSC for defying 21st century ethos of representation and accountability. Vinay Katiyr, parliament member of BJP said in a statement that all Muslims in India should go to Pakistan or Bangladesh, and that it was Muslims who partitioned India on religious lines.	Daily Pakistan Pakistan Today
08-02-2018 Pakistan's Interior Minister, Ahsan Iqbal said that India could have a hand in the target killing of a Chinese national in Karachi, and stressed in an interview with BBC that Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav had admitted that India desired to sabotage CPEC projects.	Express Tribune
09-02-2018 An official of the Indian Air Force was arrested on Thursday for sharing classified information with the ISI agents masquerading as models on Facebook.	Dawn
10-02-2018 Contrary to the stand taken by China and India, Pakistan announced its adherence to UN's principles on the Maldives crises, and refused to grant its support to the administration of Maldives' President, Abdulla Yameen.	Express Tribune
12-02-2018 Indian diplomat turned politician, Mani Shankar Aiyar, said that India-Pakistan issues can only be resolved through dialogue, and while Pakistan has been supportive of such a policy, New Delhi has not.	Express Tribune
14-02-2018 Pakistan's Defence Minister, Khurram Dastgir said that India's anti-Pakistan rhetoric was harmful for normalization of ties between the two countries and counterintuitive for the creation of a peace lobby. The statement came after Indian Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman's threat to make Pakistan pay for a militant attack on a military camp in Sunjuwan.	The News
15-02-2018 Pakistan's advisor to the PM on finance, Miftah Ismail blamed India for the United State's motion to place Pakistan on a global terrorist-financing watch list.	
21-02-2018 General Bipin Rawat said that Pakistan, with China's support, is waging a proxy war on India through a planned influx of people from Bangladesh in India's north-eastern region to keep the region disturbed.	The Times of India
28-02-2018 Pakistan voiced concern over India's development of sophisticated drone technology on the lines of the US predator drones for surveillance and reconnaissance purposes.	The Times of India
02-03-2018 India's leftist, Marxist party, CPI-M, criticized Modi's policy towards Pakistan, and said that dialogue between the two countries is essential for solving the Kashmir issue.	Dawn

07-03-2018 The Lahore High Court directed Pakistan's government not to arrest or put Hafiz Saeed under house arrest. Hafiz Saeed also requested the court to stop the government from taking any action against him or his organization, claiming that it was being pressurized by India and America. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Khwaja Asif approved the proposal to exchange prisoners on humanitarian grounds.	The Indian Express Dawn
09-03-2018 After the Lahore High Court ordered ECP to hear Hafiz Saeed's case for registering his party for elections, India expressed shock at what it called Pakistan's attempt at mainstreaming a Mumbai terror attacks mastermind.	The Economic Times
09-03-2018 After the Lahore High Court ordered ECP to hear Hafiz Saeed's case for registering his party for elections, India expressed shock at what it called Pakistan's attempt at mainstreaming a Mumbai terror attacks mastermind.	The Economic Times
11-03-2018 Pakistan accused India of harassing its diplomats and their families, and threatened to call them back if the harassment did not cease.	Dawn
13-03-2018 Indian Army told Lok Sabha that Pakistan and China were modernizing their armies, and because of budgetary constraints, the Indian military was unable to, and that India was in danger of a two-front war.	Hindustan Times
15-03-2018 New Delhi alleged that Indian diplomats were facing harassment in Pakistan and were being prevented from discharging their duties.	Times of India
16-03-2018 Amid rising harassment allegations by both sides, Pakistan recalled its High Commissioner to Delhi for consultations. The Lahore Court ordered an explanation from the federal government for the banning of Hafiz Saeed's organizations, and freezing of their assets.	Guardian Dawn
18-03-2018 Manmohan Singh and Congress criticized BJP's policy towards Pakistan, saying that it had no roadmap for the future, and that the government had not made a significant effort to improve relations between the two countries. They also said that there was no shift in Pakistan's policy of using cross-border terrorism as an instrument of state policy.	Indian Express
19-03-2018 India refused to grant visas to 500 pilgrims hoping to attend a religious congregation marking the death anniversary of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, adding a blow to Pak-India relations.	Express Tribune
21-03-2018 Pakistan advised India to stop creating a hostile atmosphere of war. The Indian Home Ministry told the parliament that the ISI is training Sikhs to carry out terrorist activities in India.	Dawn Times of India

22-03-2018 Pakistan's FO spokesperson said that India has been sent all proofs of Pakistani diplomats' harassment, and that Pakistan has also lodged complaints with the Indian government. Reports claimed that China has sold Pakistan a powerful missile tracking system, and that this deal could speed up Pakistan military's development of multi-warhead missiles.	Dawn Times of India
23-03-18 In an unprecedented move, the Pakistan Army invited the Indian Defence Attaché and senior diplomats of the Indian High Commission to attend a military parade to mark Pakistan Day.	Express Tribune
26-03-2018 India and Pakistan discussed a proposal to allow a team of over 20 Indian doctors to visit Pakistan and examine prisoners.	Times of India
29-03-18 As per Indus Water Treaty's requirement, Pakistani and Indian delegations for the Permanent Indus Commissions meet for their 114th meeting to discuss water treaty dispute, and the resolution of outstanding issues.	The Nation
31-03-18 In a significant move to ease tensions, India and Pakistan released coordinated press statements reiterating the 1992 code of conduct for diplomatic staff and ensuring that harassment of diplomatic staff would cease.	Times of India
Media & Culture	
01-01-2018 Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj denied the possibility of a bilateral cricket series, even on neutral venues.	Geo News
23-03-2018 Bhagat Singh Foundation in Pakistan celebrated the 87th death anniversary of freedom fighters Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukh Dev. The foundation said that a small event was held this year because of a negative campaign led by Modi.	Daily Times