

Reviewing **Indo- Pak** Bilateral Relations

Quarterly Monitoring Brief

July 2018 - September 2018

Despite a hopeful start to the quarter, Indo-Pak relations ended on a hostile note after India cancelled a scheduled Foreign Ministers' meeting at the sidelines of the UNGA and engaged in threatening rhetoric calling for renewed escalatory action along the Line of Control.

Pakistan's general elections were held in July and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf was voted into power. In his victory speech, Khan expressed the new government's eagerness to engage in bilateral trade with India and resolve the Kashmir issue through dialogue. This friendly overture was soon overshadowed by a faux pax by the Pakistan Foreign Office where it claimed that Modi had offered to start a dialogue between the two countries. The Indian government denied any such invitations. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi had to retract his statement.

Former cricketer and Indian politician Navjot Singh Sidhu visited Pakistan in August to attend Khan's oath taking ceremony. What Sidhu had intended as a "message of love" invited a barrage of criticism from India. The BJP government termed Sidhu's visit to Pakistan as "shameful" particularly because his arrival in Pakistan coincided with the death of former Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He also came under fire for embracing Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff at the ceremony, with Indian opposition parties treating the embrace as a demoralizing and disrespectful move for Indian Armed forces. Hostilities from India spilled over into September, when in an incendiary statement, Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that countless Pakistani soldiers were being 'beheaded' by India.

In late September, Indo-Pak relations showed signs of improvement after Khan wrote to Modi proposing a meeting between the Pakistani Foreign Minister and Indian External Affairs Minister at the sidelines of the UNGA later that month, seeking a resumption of dialogue. Modi accepted the invitation however the Indian External Affairs Minister made it clear that this was "just a meeting" and should not be misunderstood as the resumption of dialogue.

In a major blow to Indo-Pak relations, the next day the Indian government called off the talks citing Pakistan's release of a postage stamp celebrating Burhan Wani as one of the reasons for the cancellation. The other reason was the killing a BSF soldier along the LOC three days earlier. Khan called the Indian decision to cancel talks "arrogant" and "negative". Pakistan's Foreign Minister also expressed his disappointment with the cancellation, saying that he was "deeply saddened" by what he considered to be an unprecedented diplomatic norm.

Tensions reached a crescendo when a day after the cancellation of these talks, Indian Army Chief Bipin Rawat threatened Pakistan with retaliation over its alleged involvement in the

killing of a BSF soldier. This incendiary remark was followed by a statement by Pakistan's DG ISPR who said that Pakistan will give a "befitting response" to whoever tests its patience. Another series of hostile comments from the Indian side further worsened relations. Bipin Rawat accused Pakistan of radicalizing Kashmiri youth, and alleged that "Pakistan is bleeding India with a thousand cuts." Several days later, Rawat also said that the time was ripe for another surgical strike in Pakistan. External Affairs Minister added to Rawat's aggressive statements expressing India's readiness to strike Pakistan to avenge the slain BSF soldier's death.

The atmosphere of almost persistent hostilities was briefly interrupted by Pakistan's announcement to open the Kartarpur border for Sikhs visiting Pakistan for pilgrimage. However, bilateral relations as a whole showed no signs of improvement as on the last day of the quarter, the Indian Army fired at AJK Minister's helicopter because it inadvertently crossed the line of control.

At the backdrop of the bellicose rhetoric dominating most of the quarter, Pakistan and India held talks regarding their water dispute. An Indian delegation visited Pakistan to attend the two-day Pakistan-India Permanent Indus Commission talks, but the two countries failed to reach a consensus.

Ceasefire violations and disturbances at the LoC and working boundary continued throughout the quarter, however, these were much lower than the violations witnessed in the first half of the year. The Indian Deputy High Commissioner was summoned by the Pakistani government several times to condemn ceasefire violations.

Media Reports

Kashmir

01-07-2018

A group led by the former Indian External Affairs Ministers, The Concerned Citizen's Group visited Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) and [warned of turbulence](#) in the area.

Dawn

01-07-2018

Indian [troops martyred three protesters](#), including a 16-year-old girl, in IoK as tensions rose ahead of the anniversary of the death of Burhan Wani.

The News

09-07-2018 Government forces patrolled deserted streets and sealed off the hometown of Burhan Wani in anticipation of widespread anti-India protests and clashes in the disputed	Dawn
01-08-2018 Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire by firing on Indian posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, drawing retaliation from the	Hindustan Times
02-08-2018 The Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) issued a statement condemning the ceasefire violation along the line of control (LoC) by the Indian forces in the Mandal Sector which led to the death of 35-year-old woman. FO spokesman Dr Mohammad Faisal also summoned the Indian Deputy High Commissioner J P Singh in this regard and conveyed Pakistan's condemnation of the unprovoked violations.	Dawn
07-08-2018 Four soldiers and two suspected rebels were killed in a gun battle between India and Pakistan along the Kashmir border, the Indian army said.	First Post
14-08-2018 Indian officials claimed that Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire in Tangdhar sector in Kupwara district.	First Post
18-08-2018 Director General (SA & SAARC) Dr Mohammad Faisal on Saturday summoned the Indian Deputy High Commissioner J P Singh and condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations by the Indian forces along the Line of Control (LoC) in Dana	Express Tribune
29-08-2018 A total of 1,686 ceasefire violations along Line of Control (LoC) had been committed by Indian Army since January 1, 2018 to date, Minister for Defence Pervez Khattak told Senate on Wednesday.	The News
05-09-2018 The Pakistani Foreign Office summoned Indian Deputy High Commissioner JP Singh to register a protest against ceasefire violations by Indian border forces in the Kotkotera Sector along the Line of Control (LoC) that led to the death of a Pakistani civilian.	Pakistan Today
15-09-2018 The Indian forces killed five suspected rebels during a gun battle in IoK, triggering violent anti-India protests in the disputed region.	Dawn
20-09-2018 India lodged a protest with Pakistan over the killing of a BSF jawan along the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir, during talks at the level of Directorate of Military Operations.	The Statesman
27-09-2018 Addressing an annual meeting of the OIC, Sardar Masood Khan, President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) called upon UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on Jammu and Kashmir to find diplomatic ways of ending carnage of Kashmiris and facilitating a just and lasting solution to the Kashmir.	Pakistan Observer

Economic Relations

24-09-2018

Imran Khan [called for trade between India and Pakistan](#) but said that this move should not be construed as weakness.

Express Tribune

Pakistan's business community [strongly condemned](#) India's decision to call off the

The News

25-09-2018

The World Bank [released a report](#) that estimates that trade between India and Pakistan is currently a mere \$2 billion whereas without trade barriers it could reach \$37 billion.

Dawn

05-04-2018

After receiving confirmation that India has completed the controversial Kishanganga hydropower project, [Pakistan asked the World Bank](#) to recognize its responsibility under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 to address its concerns over two disputed projects.

Dawn

Bilateral Relations

02-07-2018

The J&K police [announced its decision](#) to ask Pakistan to identify the killers of Shujaat Bukhari.

Times of India

Pakistan and India [exchanged a list](#) of 53 civilian prisoners and 418 fishermen in its custody. India asked Pakistan to expedite the release of 9 civilian prisoners and 229 Indian fishermen who have completed their sentences or whose nationality is confirmed. India also handed Pakistan a list of 249 civilian prisoners and 108 fishermen.

The Times of India

Indian NSA Ajit Doval [underscored India's contention](#) that not enough has been done to check cross-border and state-sponsored terrorism.

Times of India

05-07-2018

Imran Khan has said that while ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif tried to improve Indo-Pak relations, the ["aggressive anti-Pakistan posture"](#) of the Indian government resulted in the current stalemate between the two neighbours.

New Indian Express

06-07-2018

After four Pakistan scholars were denied Indian visas for the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) – an academic conference held this year in Delhi, scholars from top universities around the world [registered their protest](#).

The Indian Express

26-07-2018

Imran Khan said that his government would [favour improving ties](#) with India especially in the field of trade, and resolving the "core issue of Kashmir" through talks. He said that the two countries should resolve Kashmir issue through dialogue without resorting to blame-game.

India Today

31-07-2018 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Imran Khan on Monday to congratulate him on his party's victory in the Pakistan general election, with both men discussing the need for regional peace.	Reuters
06-08-2018 Gates of the Khokhrapar-Munabao border were briefly opened after 12 years to take the body of a Muslim woman to India who had died in Pakistan on July 25.	Express Tribune
11-08-2018 Indian High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria called on Pakistan's prime minister-in-waiting Imran Khan and discussed bilateral relations and voiced the Indian leadership's concerns over terrorism and cross-border infiltration.	Money Control
13-08-2018 New Delhi agreed to support the Afghan government build the Shahtoot Dam near Kabul, more than two years after completing the Salma Dam at Herat province of western Afghanistan.	Deccan Herald
14-08-2018 India's Border Security Force (BSF) and Pakistan Rangers exchanged sweets at Attari-Wagah border on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day.	The Nation
17-08-2018 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan offered condolence at the demise of former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and said the best way to honour the "towering leader" is by establishing peace between India and Pakistan. Former Indian cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu arrived in Pakistan to attend Imran Khan's oath taking ceremony, and said he had come to the country "with a message of love" and to become a part of Khan's happiness.	Hindustan Times Dawn
18-08-2018 Sidhu's visit to Pakistan drew criticism from India and as he was targeted for attending the swearing-in ceremony of Imran Khan, with the BJP describing his visit to Islamabad as "shameful". Sidhu's hug with the Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa during the ceremony also came under fire with the opposition parties asking him "whether he remembered the sacrifices made by the Indian soldiers at the border".	Dawn
19-08-2018 In his media conference after Imran Khan's oath-taking ceremony, Sidhu said the army chief told him of plans to open the route to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan for Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary in 2019. He also mentioned the desire to open the route to Nankana Sahab — one of the many Sikh pilgrimage sites in Pakistani province of Punjab.	The Indian Express

20-08-2018 Speaking ahead of the first meeting of Khan's cabinet, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said it was vital to resume talks between Pakistan and India. Modi wrote a letter to Imran Khan expressing India's commitment to improving ties, and said, "India is looking for constructive and meaningful engagement with Pakistan." Pakistan's FO spokesperson clarified that Modi had not made any offer for dialogue in his first letter after Khan assumed office.	Reuters Times of India Times of India
21-08-2018 Imran Khan proposed dialogue with India to resolve long-running disputes between the two nuclear-armed rivals, including over the Kashmir region. Imran Khan expressed gratitude to Sidhu for visiting Pakistan, and says India and Pakistan should resume dialogue.	Voice of America
22-08-2018 Navjot Singh Sidhu should be "beheaded" for hugging an "enemy nation's Army chief" said Sanjay Jaat, a man who claims to be the district convener of Bajrang Dal's Agra unit.	SBS
23-08-2018 Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan today said that Pakistan stands with the people of flood ravaged Kerala who have suffered a devastating spell of flood and offered to extend 'humanitarian aid' to the southern state.	Times of India
25-08-2018 Army contingents from Pakistan and India are taking part in a joint counter-terrorism exercise as part of multi-national war games in Russia	Express Tribune
27-08-2018 India and Pakistan will discuss the resolution of a dispute over sharing river waters this week, officials said, setting off the first official negotiations between the two countries since newly-elected Prime Minister Imran Khan took charge. Pakistan said that it will reiterate its serious objections over two controversial water storage and hydropower projects being built by India during two-day Pakistan-India Permanent Indus Commission talks scheduled for Aug 29-30 in Lahore.	Bloomberg Dawn
28-08-2018 A nine-member Indian delegation arrived in Lahore on 28th August for a two-day Pakistan-India Permanent Indus Commission talks scheduled for August 29-30.	Dawn
30-08-2018 Talks between Pakistan and India on the issue of water distribution ended in a deadlock as the visiting delegation from New Delhi refused to give in to Islamabad's objections over the violation of Indus Waters Treaty 1960.	Pakistan Today

31-08-2018 The two-day parleys of the Permanent Indus Water Commission failed after India rejected Pakistan's stance to stop construction of its two water projects on Chenab River, leaving Islamabad to explore the third party option for resolving the issue.	The News
13-09-2018 India's first 'smart fence' pilot project, which entails deploying laser-activated fences and technology-enabled barriers to plug vulnerable gaps along borders, will be formally launched by Home Minister Rajnath Singh on 17 th September, 2018 along the India-Pakistan border.	Tribune India
18-09-2018 Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the heads of Pakistani soldiers are being cut-off , however, are not being displayed.	Zee News
19-09-2018 Indian officials said that a BSF jawan was brutally killed by Pakistani forces. "The body of the jawan bears three bullet injuries and his throat has been slit. This is an unprecedented action that has happened with the Indian forces along the IB and the Pakistani troopers are behind this. The BSF and other forces will undertake a counter-action at a suitable time," an Indian official said.	India Today
20-09-2018 Khan wrote to Modi seeking a resumption of dialogue , proposing a meeting between Pakistan's Foreign Minister and India External Affairs Minister at the sidelines of the UNGA towards the end of September.	Times of India
India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj will meet Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi during the United Nations General Assembly in New York but "this is just a meeting , not talks or resumption of dialogue," the Ministry of External Affairs said.	The Economic Times
While there is jubilation amongst the Sikh community in India related to the likely opening of Kartarpur Corridor , the Foreign Office spokesman said that so far no formal communication between the two countries has taken place.	The News
India on Thursday rejected Prime Minister Imran Khan's proposal of hosting SAARC summit in Islamabad.	Pakistan Today
The issue of Pakistan opening the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara corridor will figure at the meeting between India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session later this month, a senior Indian official said on Thursday.	Gulf News

21-09-2018 New Delhi on Friday called off a meeting between the Pakistani and Indian foreign ministers on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), just a day after confirming the development. Pakistan's FM, Shah Mehmood Qureshi expressed disappointment at India's decision to call off a meeting planned to be held at the side-lines of the UNGA, and alleged that the Indian government was forced to call off the talks due to "internal pressures". Reacting to the cancellation of meeting between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan in New York, former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti tweeted that the calling off talks is bad for Kashmir.	Dawn Times of India Kashmir Images
22-09-2018 Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan called the cancellation of talks between India and Pakistan "arrogant" and "negative". Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that he was "deeply saddened" by India's decision to cancel talks, and said that a precedent for trampling diplomatic norms as India did does not exist. Indian army chief Bipin Rawat on Saturday threatened Pakistan with 'retaliation' over its alleged involvement in last week's killing of a border guard and policemen in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Responding to Indian Army Chief's provocative comment, Pakistan's DG ISPR said, "If someone tests our patience, we will give a befitting reply to them and not disappoint the nation."	Al-Jazeera Dawn Express Tribune Express Tribune
23-09-2018 Army chief General Bipin Rawat said that Pakistan has intentionally caused trouble in Kashmir Valley by radicalizing its youth and also claimed that Pakistan's peace proposal is a farce as long as it refuses to act on terror emanating from its soil. The Indian and Pakistani governments have accused each other of sabotaging peace talks in the latest spat over militancy in the Kashmir region. India announced its decision to launch a radio service to counter Radio Pakistan's cross-border reach.	Times of India Times of India Express Tribune
24-09-2018 Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met with World Bank President Jim Yong Kim on the sidelines of United Nations General Assembly and raised the issue of the construction of water reservoirs by India in violation of Indus Waters Treaty.	The News

25-09-2018 Indian army chief said that the time is ripe for another surgical strike in Pakistan. Speaking at the SAARC meeting held at the sidelines of the UNGA, Pakistan's Foreign Minister expressed displeasure over India's non-serious attitude, saying that India's hostile behaviour is obstructing the progress of the entire region, and is contrary to the very purpose of the association.	Dawn The News
26-09-2018 India has postponed inspection of its two hydropower projects — 1,000MW Pakal Dul and 48MW Lower Kalnal — by Pakistani experts on the pretext of some local issues.	Dawn
27-09-2018 Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi briefed the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Contact Group on the Indian acts of continued aggression and atrocities in occupied Kashmir, and said, "We urge the Human Rights Council for an expedited action to constitute the commission of inquiry to investigate gross human rights violations in India-held Kashmir."	Express Tribune Dawn
28-09-2018 Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh, during his address at the annual session of the PHD Chamber of Commerce in a veiled reference to Pakistan said, "The SAARC has suffered because of one nation, and that nation continues to give problems... You cannot indulge in terror against countries with whom you want to take the grouping forward."	The Economic Times
29-09-2018 Interacting with reporters, Sharma confirmed that the kidnapping and killing of BSF head constable Narendra Singh on September 18 by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) was the first ever such attack on the International Border (IB). Briefing the audience about the long outstanding issues with India, Qureshi clarified that Pakistan wanted to "resolve outstanding issues with India through dialogue but the Indian government has wasted an opportunity for the third time — each time with flimsy excuses". India's Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh claimed that 'something big' had happened against Pakistan in the past two days, but refused to disclose the development. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa discussed the threats hurled by Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat in which he vowed to give a befitting reply if a war was imposed on the country.	Times of India Dawn Pakistan Today The Nation

30-09-2018 Indian Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said that India wants good relations with all its neighbors, but Pakistan needs to take initiative and stop using its soil for promoting terrorism against India. Rejecting Indian allegations linking Pakistan to terrorist acts, a Pakistani diplomat said that the breeding grounds of terrorism in the region are, in fact, the “RSS centers of fascism” – India’s right-wing, Hindu nationalist and paramilitary organization. In sheer violation of all diplomatic norms and standard operating procedures (SOPs) agreed between Pakistan and India, the Indian army Sunday fired at the official chopper carrying Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan when it inadvertently crossed over the Line of Control (LoC) in the limits of Haveli area of AJK.	The Indian Express Pakistan Today First Post Pakistan Today
01-07-2018 India welcomed the move to place Pakistan on the FATF grey list and expressed its hope that Islamabad will take measures to address international concerns of terrorism on its soil.	Times of India