

India and Pakistan trade fire after India launches airstrikes on Kashmir and Pakistan

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Islamabad, May 7 (RHC)-- India and Pakistan are exchanging heavy artillery fire across the line of control that divides Kashmir into Indian- and Pakistani-administered areas.

The cross-border fighting began after India launched a major military operation with a series of airstrikes on nine sites, including targets inside Pakistan. A Pakistani military spokesperson said the strikes killed at least 26 people and wounded dozens, including civilians. Among sites hit was a mosque in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Meanwhile, Indian officials say at least 10 people have been killed, and several wounded, by Pakistani attacks on Indian-administered Kashmir.

India's Foreign Minister Vikram Misri called India's attacks a "measured" response to the massacre last month of 26 people in the Kashmiri resort town of Pahalgam — an attack India blamed on militants backed by Pakistan's government.

Vikram Misri told reporters: "India exercised its right to respond and preempt as well as deter more such cross-border attacks. These actions were measured, nonescalatory, proportionate and responsible."

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called the Indian attacks "an act of war." Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has canceled an upcoming trip to Europe and is holding high-level Cabinet meetings.

Both India and Pakistan are armed with thermonuclear weapons. In a statement, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons warned: "A nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan would cause millions of immediate deaths in the region and have global consequences."

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