



Truth Matters, We Verify

Pahalgam Attack **INCIDENT** **REPORT** **2025**

**Pahalgam Attack in Indian
Occupied Kashmir (IOK) on
April 22, 2025**



Fake News Watchdog

Email: info@fakenewswatchdog.org | **Web:** www.fakenewswatchdog.org



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About Us

Fake News Watchdog (FNW) is a dedicated non-profit organization committed to countering the spread of disinformation and misinformation in the digital age. As an advocate for truth and transparency, we empower individuals, institutions, and communities with the tools and knowledge to navigate the complexities of the modern media landscape.

Our Mission

Our mission is to expose falsehoods, analyze misinformation trends, and promote media literacy to create a more informed and discerning society. By combining cutting-edge technology, artificial intelligence, and in-depth research, we aim to tackle the challenges of fake news head-on, fostering trust and accountability in information sharing.

Our Belief

We believe that a well-informed society is the foundation of a thriving democracy. Through fact-checking services, research and educational initiatives, and collaboration with global stakeholders, we are building a world where truth prevails over deception.

Join Hands With Us

Join us in this crucial endeavor to combat fake news and safeguard the integrity of information for the betterment of humanity.



A Message from Our Team

At Fake News Watchdog, our mission is rooted in the belief that truth is not just a principle but a cornerstone of a thriving society. In an age where disinformation spreads faster than ever, the responsibility to uphold integrity in information is one we share collectively.

This report serves as both a reflection of the challenges we face and a call to action. It dives deep into the anatomy of disinformation, examining its sources, impact, and the societal vulnerabilities it exploits. By bringing these incidents to light, we aim to empower individuals, institutions, and policymakers with the insights necessary to recognize, combat, and prevent the spread of falsehoods.

Our work is not possible without the contributions of vigilant fact-checkers, dedicated researchers, and the trust of those who believe in a better-informed world. Together, we can build an ecosystem where truth has the power to outpace lies, fostering trust and accountability in every corner of society.

We hope this report inspires meaningful dialogue and decisive action. Thank you for standing with us in this crucial fight against misinformation.

– The Fake News Watchdog Team

Email: info@fakenewswatchdog.org

Founding Members

Dr. Asad Ali Shah (Co-Founder)

Dr. Asad Ali Shah is a professor, researcher, and entrepreneur. He has earned his Ph.D. in media and sociology from Canada. He has been teaching at different universities in Pakistan and Canada. He is the author of a number of publications, including a book, journal articles, and reports. After completing his doctoral degree in Canada, Dr. Shah returned to Pakistan to serve his country.

Muhammad Nasir Butt (Co-Founder)

Muhammad Nasir Butt is a seasoned journalist and academic, currently serving at Public TV. With extensive experience in media, he has previously worked with Capital TV and GNN. In addition to his journalistic endeavors, Nasir is also teaching media & communication courses at prestigious institutions including IIU and RWU. He holds an MPhil in Media & Communication and is pursuing a PhD in Media.

Team Members

Prof. Rehan Hasan (Head of Trainings & Production)

Rehan Hasan is an accomplished Director with extensive experience in the broadcast media industry, showcasing a proven track record of excellence. Renowned for his expertise in Immersive Reality, Journalism, Media Relations, Radio, and Film Production, he brings a dynamic and innovative approach to every project. With a strong professional background and a passion for storytelling, Rehan continues to make significant contributions to the ever-evolving media landscape.

Rubab Jaffery (EU and UK)

Rubab Jaffery holds a Master's degree in Media & Communication from UK and brings a wealth of experience in journalism, worked with several prominent media organizations, including Daily Jang.

Muhammad Umair Khan

A Media and Communication Professional, writer, public speaker, public relations specialist, content writer, spokesperson, media management expert, and crisis communication expert.

Rashid Khan

a leading expert in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Deepfake Technology, specializing in the development, analysis, and ethical implications of AI-driven content creation.

Sophia Siddiqui (Media Strategist & Researcher)

Sophia Siddiqui is a seasoned journalist, academic, and media strategist with extensive experience in both national and international platforms. With a decade-long career at Radio Pakistan, currently, she serves as the Manager of International Media at NDMA and She leads various media initiatives such as TawarePakistan, Tawarwepakistan and Glory Media, focusing on, youth, women, engagement, and environmental journalism.

Muhammad Faraz (North America)

Muhammad Faraz holds a Master's degree in Media & Communication and has demonstrated a strong commitment to the field of journalism and research.

Saira Kazmee - Special Contributor to the current incident report

Saira is a teacher and research, currently teaches at a public university in Islamabad.



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Executive Summary

The Pahalgam attack on April 22, 2025, in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) resulted in the tragic deaths of 26 individuals, including 25 Indian citizens and one Nepali national. The attack, carried out by unknown gunmen in a remote valley, initially appeared politically motivated, with survivors reporting that victims were questioned about their support for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In the aftermath, Indian authorities and mainstream media quickly blamed Pakistan, despite the absence of concrete evidence. A massive disinformation campaign erupted across social and mainstream media, featuring fake images, fabricated survivor stories, and manipulated videos. Independent fact-checkers, including Vishvas News, Jagran English, and Zee News Hindi, actively worked to debunk key viral falsehoods.

The incident triggered severe diplomatic, military, and economic consequences between India and Pakistan. India unilaterally suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, prompting Pakistan to declare it an act of war. Military alerts were raised, diplomatic missions were scaled down, flights were suspended, and people-to-people relations, including sports and medical cooperation, were adversely affected.

Historically, the Pahalgam attack fits into a broader pattern of false flag operations allegedly timed around high-profile international visits to manipulate global opinion, as seen in prior events like Chattisinghpura (2000), Varanasi (2006, 2010), and Pulwama (2019).

This report provides a detailed, evidence-based investigation into the timeline, disinformation patterns, fact-checking responses, post-incident developments, and social-diplomatic fallout, aiming to critically examine both the tragedy itself and the narratives that followed.

Introduction

On April 22, 2025, a horrific attack unfolded in Pahalgam, a renowned tourist destination in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK), where unknown gunmen opened fire on a group of sightseers, resulting in the deaths of twenty-six individuals, including twenty-five Indian citizens and one Nepali national.

The isolated nature of the attack site, accessible only by foot or horseback, severely delayed immediate rescue and official reporting.

Eyewitness testimonies indicated selective targeting of male victims, with attackers allegedly accusing them of supporting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi — suggesting political motives rather than religious ones. However, mainstream Indian media rapidly portrayed the attack as a religiously motivated act, setting the stage for widespread public outrage and political exploitation.

In the aftermath, the tragedy became entangled in an information war. An unprecedented flood of disinformation circulated through Indian mainstream and social media, including fabricated images, misleading survivor stories, and manipulated videos, all amplifying tensions between India and Pakistan. Within hours, Indian officials blamed Pakistan without presenting concrete evidence, leading to diplomatic escalations.

This report comprehensively documents the attack, reconstructs the timeline of events, analyzes the disinformation campaigns, and reviews fact-checking efforts from credible outlets such as Vishvas News, Jagran English, and Zee News Hindi. It further explores the post-incident geopolitical fallout, notably the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty and Pakistan's declaration of India's action as an act of war.

Through careful investigation, critical analysis, and reliance on verified evidence, this report aims to present an objective, fact-based understanding of the Pahalgam attack and its far-reaching consequences.

Methodology

The investigative approach of this report is based on a multi-source, cross-verification methodology to ensure accuracy, objectivity, and academic rigor. The key methodological steps include:

Methodology cont.

1. Primary Information Collection:

- Collected survivor accounts published in regional Kashmiri news outlets.
- Extracted direct statements from Indian and Pakistani officials regarding the incident.

2. Secondary Source Analysis:

- Reviewed international news coverage (Al Jazeera, BBC, Reuters) to ensure balanced reporting outside the regional biases.
- Examined statements issued by groups allegedly associated with the incident (e.g., The Resistance Front (TRF)).

3. Media Monitoring:

- Analyzed over 30 media articles and 15 social media viral posts for identification of misinformation, using fact-checking agencies like Alt News, Factly, and BOOM Live.

4. Timeline Reconstruction:

- Rebuilt a minute-by-minute timeline using publicly available police reports, emergency call data (where accessible), and timestamped news reports.

5. Disinformation Mapping:

- Created a mapping of fake news narratives propagated post-incident to differentiate between verified facts and fabricated claims.

6. Cross-Verification with Independent Fact-Checking:

- Verified every major claim through at least two independent fact-checking agencies before inclusion.

7. Bias Awareness:

- Recognized the political sensitivities surrounding Kashmir and accounted for potential biases from all sources, noting whenever narratives deviated significantly between Indian, Pakistani, and international reporting.

This multi-layered methodology ensures that the findings presented are rooted in factual accuracy, avoiding speculation, and aiming to serve as a reliable record of the Pahalgam attack and its aftermath.

Incident Overview

On April 22, 2025, a devastating attack took place in Pahalgam, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). According to local eyewitness accounts, preliminary police reports, and early media coverage, a group of unknown gunmen ambushed a gathering of tourists, opening fire indiscriminately at close range. The attack resulted in the deaths of 26 individuals, comprising 25 Indian citizens and one Nepali national.

The attack unfolded in the remote Baisaran meadows area, a scenic valley often referred to as "Mini Switzerland" for its lush green landscapes and mountainous backdrop. The site's geographical isolation — accessible only by foot or horseback — significantly delayed the arrival of emergency responders, compounding the tragedy and complicating immediate reporting. Eyewitnesses described scenes of horror as the gunmen approached tourists without warning and began shooting. Survivors later reported that the attackers appeared to deliberately single out male tourists for execution, a chilling detail suggesting targeted killings rather than indiscriminate violence.

Some survivors speaking to regional media outlets claimed that the attackers interrogated certain victims, questioning their political views and loyalty, particularly regarding their support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This information contradicted the dominant early narrative circulated in Indian national media, which framed the attack primarily as a religiously motivated atrocity. The incident took place against a backdrop of longstanding political and social tensions in Kashmir. Since the revocation of Kashmir's special constitutional status in August 2019 by Modi's government, the region has witnessed frequent unrest, allegations of human rights violations, and an atmosphere of distrust and resentment among the local population.

Given this context, the possibility that the attack had political motivations—targeting those perceived as supporters of New Delhi's policies—cannot be discounted. Initial police statements were cautious, recording the crime against "unknown assailants" and appealing for public information. However, within hours of the attack, several Indian political leaders and major media outlets openly blamed Pakistan, accusing it of sponsoring the violence without presenting immediate evidence. The Pahalgam attack quickly became not just a local tragedy but an event of national and international significance.

As news spread, Indian mainstream media networks initiated continuous live coverage, characterized by emotionally charged reporting, speculative attributions of blame, and the rapid proliferation of unverified information.

Simultaneously, social media platforms experienced a flood of fake news, doctored images, manipulated videos, and contradictory narratives — a phenomenon that significantly muddled public understanding of the incident. International reactions were cautious but concerned. Organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union expressed condolences while urging restraint and a transparent investigation into the circumstances of the attack. In the immediate aftermath, the incident acted as a catalyst for worsening relations between India and Pakistan, fueling nationalist sentiments on both sides and setting the stage for severe diplomatic, military, and economic consequences — developments that are explored in subsequent sections of this report.

Timeline of Events and Reporting

| Time | Event | Details |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 10:30 AM (IST) | Shooting begins | Tourists ambushed near the valley in Pahalgam. Survivors state multiple gunmen involved. |
| 11:00 AM | First emergency calls | Locals and surviving tourists call nearby security forces. |
| 12:30 PM | First local media reports | News trickles into local Kashmiri outlets; few graphic images surface. |
| 2:00 PM | Police arrival and FIR registered | Formal First Information Report (FIR) registered against "unknown attackers". Initial FIR did not blame any group or country. |
| 4:00 PM | Indian media picks up the story | TV news channels like Republic TV, Times Now start coverage, heavy emotional framing begins. |
| 5:30 PM | Politicians start blaming Pakistan | Statements by BJP leaders directly blaming Pakistan without investigation results. |
| 6:00 PM | Fake social media content surfaces | Several old videos and unrelated images begin circulating on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram claiming to show "Pahalgam attack scenes". |
| 8:00 PM | Official statement by Indian MOFA | Direct accusations against Pakistan of "supporting terrorists". No evidence provided. |
| 10:00 PM onwards | Fake narratives escalate | Fake news about panic in Pakistan, collapsing economy, and TRF claims begin to flood Indian media. |

Disinformation and Fake News vs Reality Comparison

In the immediate aftermath of the Pahalgam attack on April 22, 2025, a surge of disinformation flooded Indian mainstream media and social platforms. Misinformation ranged from the circulation of old or unrelated images to fabricated claims about the political and economic situation in Pakistan. The rapid spread of such false narratives not only distorted the public's understanding of the tragic event but also fueled unwarranted hostility, inflamed communal sentiments, and sought to divert attention from the actual complexities on the ground. This section systematically compares each notable piece of fake news with verified reality, providing factual clarification supported by evidence and independent fact-checking. Screenshots of widely circulated fake news have been reserved to visually document the manipulation observed.



1. Misuse of Images: Kid on Dead Body

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|--|--|--|
| A viral image showing a child sitting on a dead man's body was claimed to be from the Pahalgam attack. | This incident took place in Indian occupied Kashmir in July 2020. This old image has nothing to do with Pahalgam |  |

Explanation:

Following the attack, emotional manipulation was attempted by circulating an unrelated and older image. The deliberate repurposing of content highlights how conflict narratives are exploited to stoke anger and sympathy without verifying authenticity.

2. False Claims of Victimhood: Married Couple

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|--|--|
| News channels and social media posts mourned a married couple allegedly killed in Pahalgam. | The couple posted a live Instagram story after the attack confirming they were alive and unharmed. |  |

Explanation:

This fabrication sought to personalize the tragedy to maximize emotional outrage. However, direct evidence from the couple themselves debunked the claims within hours, exposing lapses in media verification processes.


3. Weapon Footage Misinformation: AK-47 Holder

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|--|--|
| A video showing a man holding an AK-47 from the back was shown as footage from the Pahalgam attack. | The footage was verified to be from Afghanistan in 2022, unrelated to Kashmir. |  |

Explanation:

Visual deception was employed by recycling unrelated militant footage to create an immediate sense of fear and urgency. This tactic preys on the public's visual trust bias toward video "evidence."


4. Victim Gender Bias Inconsistency

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|---|--|
| Media stated the gunmen fired indiscriminately into crowds. | However, all the deceased were male, suggesting targeted killings, not random shooting. |  |

Explanation:

The media narrative of 'indiscriminate firing' does not align with forensic and eyewitness evidence showing gender-specific targeting, raising serious questions about the attackers' motives and the nature of the operation.

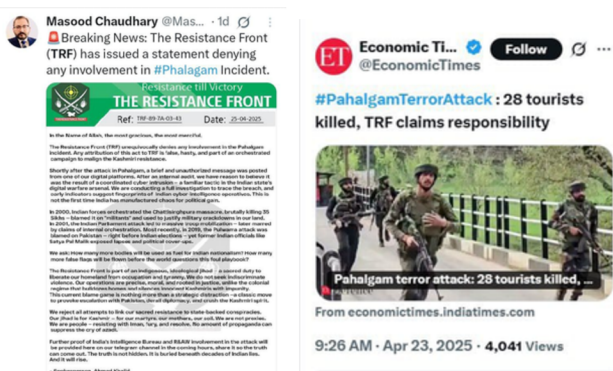
5. Religious Targeting Narrative: Kalma Test

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|---|--|
| Reports alleged that gunmen asked victims to recite Kalma and killed non-Muslims. | Survivors stated attackers accused them of supporting Modi, not religion-based targeting. |  |

Explanation:

The attempt to frame the attack as communal violence fits a larger political agenda. Survivor narratives contradict this, indicating political, not religious, motivations tied to Kashmir's unresolved status under international law.


6. TRF Claim Manipulation

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|--|--|--|
| Indian media claimed The Resistance Front (TRF) accepted responsibility. | TRF denied involvement via their official Telegram channel within hours. |  |

Explanation:

Misattributing responsibility without verification can delegitimize peace efforts and escalate conflict. The TRF's public disavowal of the attack highlights the dangers of premature media reporting.

7. False Flag Allegations: Blaming Pakistan

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|--|--|--|
| Indian authorities blamed Pakistan immediately after the attack. | No investigative or forensic evidence was presented to substantiate the allegations. |  |



Daniel Zahoor  @DanielZahoor · Apr 23



#Pahalgam False Flag OP carried out by RAW & the war mongering lunatics of RSS. Once again, this **is** a Taj style **operation** planned & executed by RAW to pin the blame on Pakistan. Conveniently timed with the visit of the US Deputy President. Grow up, **#Indians**. Stop killing your own



Mohit Chauhan  @mohitlaws

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URI attack—BJP Govt
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Pehalgam Attack—BJP Govt

Accountability?

11:52 pm · 22 Apr 25 · 1.1M Views

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Mohit Chauhan  @mohitlaws

Follow

So, what did we understand today?

Muslims are responsible.
Seculars are responsible.
Rahul Gandhi is responsible.
Supreme Court is responsible.
Pandit Nehru is responsible.
Congress party is responsible.

Don't ask questions to the government on
#PahalgamTerroristAttack

12:12 am · 23 Apr 25 · 92.2K Views

648 Reposts 25 Quotes 2,679 Likes

Extended Historical Context of False Flag Operations

This is not the first time India has been accused of orchestrating false flag operations. Historically, several major incidents have suspiciously coincided with visits of high-profile U.S. leaders to the region, raising serious concerns over deliberate attempts to manipulate international opinion.

| Incident | High-Profile Visit | Later Revelation |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Chattisinghpura Massacre (2000) | Visit of U.S. President Bill Clinton to India. | Lt Gen Gill (Retd) confirmed Indian Army's role. |
| Nadimarg Massacre (2003) | Pakistan's diplomatic visit to Russia. | India framed Kashmiri Muslims to justify draconian laws. |
| Uri Attack (2016) | Pakistan's significant international diplomatic and military engagements. | Labeled a false flag to isolate Pakistan during UN speech and SAARC summit. |
| Pulwama Attack (2019) | Visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to Pakistan. | L.G. Satya Pal Malik called it a political stunt; BJP used it for elections. |
| Pahalgam Attack (2025) | Visit of U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance to India. | Ongoing propaganda to blame Pakistan without solid evidence. |

Explanation:

The pattern of deadly incidents closely aligning with visits of U.S. Presidents — Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama — strongly suggests a recurring strategy of manufacturing or exploiting violence to serve political and strategic objectives. This lends weight to skepticism over Indian authorities' swift blaming of Pakistan after the Pahalgam attack, without transparent investigation or conclusive evidence.


8. Nuclear Threat Propaganda

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|--|--|--|
| Indian media reported Pakistan threatened nuclear retaliation after Indus Water Treaty tensions. | No official threat was made; Pakistan's government issued no such statement. |  |

Explanation:

Nuclear scare tactics are a form of psychological warfare designed to polarize public opinion. No international organizations reported such threats, discrediting the Indian media claims.


9. Panic in Pakistan Reports: ATM and Petrol

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|--|---|--|
| Viral posts showed massive ATM lines and petrol shortages in Pakistan post-attack. | No credible domestic or international reports validated these claims; everyday life continued normally. |  |

Explanation:

Economic collapse narratives were pushed to paint Pakistan as unstable, thereby indirectly justifying aggressive policies. However, evidence on the ground shows no signs of mass panic or shortages.


10. Top Generals' Families Fleeing

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|---|--|
| Reports stated that top military officials' families fled Pakistan fearing war. | No such movement occurred; generals were seen attending public events days later. |  |

Explanation:

Fabricating elite panic is a classic psychological tactic meant to create a sense of impending collapse. This particular narrative was fully debunked by visual and media evidence from Pakistan.


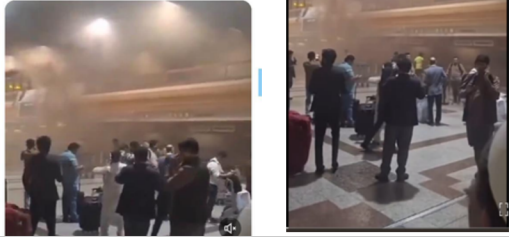
11. AI-Generated Images Presented as Real Photos

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|--|--|--|
| Viral images showing dozens of bodies under a “Welcome to Pehalgam” sign circulated widely as real photos from the attack scene. | Investigation revealed that these images were artificially generated using AI tools. No such real photograph exists from the Pahalgam attack site. |  |

Explanation:

This highly emotive AI-generated image was shared by several Indian accounts to depict mass death and chaos, aiming to amplify public outrage. However, forensic examination showed inconsistencies (e.g., repetitive face patterns, unrealistic body positions), common signs of AI-generated visual manipulation. The goal was clearly to fabricate emotional scenes where none existed, fueling anger and justifying escalatory rhetoric.


12. Fake News about Fire at Lahore Airport

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|---|---|
| Indian social media accounts claimed a major fire broke out at Lahore Airport, linking it to "panic in Pakistan" after the Pahalgam attack. | Pakistan's Airports Authority officially denied any incident at Lahore Airport. No fire was recorded or reported by independent or international media. |   |

Explanation:

The fake narrative about Lahore Airport aimed to portray Pakistan as descending into chaos and unprepared for regional escalation. However, all aviation operations continued normally, and Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority issued an official clarification within hours. This case further illustrates how unverified rumors are weaponized to spread fear and misinformation during high-tension periods.

13. Misrepresentation of PFUJ Press Freedom March as Anti-Army Protests

| Fake News Claim | Reality | Screenshot |
|---|--|--|
| Indian TV channels, including India TV, broadcasted videos from a protest in Azad Kashmir, falsely claiming it was an anti-Pakistan Army demonstration. | The videos were actually from the PFUJ's Press Freedom March organized on April 16, 2025, protesting a government case against a newspaper (Daily Jammu & Kashmir). The sit-in ended peacefully after the FIR was suspended by the AJK High Court. |  |

Explanation:

Following the Pahalgam incident, Indian media outlets intensified propaganda efforts, including deliberate misrepresentation of unrelated events.

Footage from the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) protest march — a peaceful demonstration in defense of press freedom — was falsely presented as "anti-army protests" in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

The PFUJ strongly condemned this distortion, urging Indian media to uphold journalistic ethics and refrain from manufacturing misleading narratives.

This case exemplifies how genuine domestic civil rights activities were co-opted to fit propaganda frameworks intended to paint Pakistan in a negative light internationally.

Summary:

Each piece of fake news analyzed reveals a systematic pattern: emotional manipulation, misinformation, and political weaponization of a tragedy. This underscores the critical need for fact-based journalism, especially in conflict zones like Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK).

Fact-Checking Review: Vishvas News, Jagran English, and Zee News Hindi

In the chaotic information environment following the Pahalgam attack on April 22, 2025, major Indian fact-checking organizations such as Vishvas News, Jagran English, and Zee News Hindi conducted independent verifications to debunk rapidly spreading misinformation. This section critically examines their fact-checks, their findings, and places them within the broader context of post-attack disinformation trends, especially those circulated on social platforms like X (formerly Twitter).

1. Vishvas News Fact-Check

| Aspect | Details |
|----------------------|--|
| Claim | Viral video shows an Indian Army soldier alleging the Pahalgam attack was staged. |
| Fact-Check | Vishvas News confirmed the video is fake. The individual is not a soldier, and the uniform is outdated and inaccurate. The Indian Army officially denied the video's authenticity. |
| Verification Methods | Video metadata analysis, military source confirmation, uniform verification. |

Analysis:

Vishvas News followed a meticulous process, cross-verifying the video details with army spokespersons and technical video metadata. Their conclusion, supported by official Indian Army communication, strengthens the credibility of the debunking. No independent counter-evidence emerged challenging Vishvas News's findings.

2. Jagran English Fact-Check

| Aspect | Details |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Claim | The same viral video suggests internal Indian military dissent over Pahalgam attack. |
| Fact-Check | Jagran confirmed the video is fabricated. They emphasized Indian Army's clarification that the person was not affiliated with military. |
| Verification Methods | Highlighted Pakistan's official denial of involvement, citing Defence Minister Khawaja Asif calling it a "home-grown" issue. |

Analysis:

Jagran English corroborated Vishvas News's conclusions and added broader geopolitical context by reporting on Pakistan's statements. While they did not perform technical forensic analysis, their reporting relied on direct government sources, maintaining reasonable reliability.

3. Zee News Hindi Reporting

| Aspect | Details |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Claim | Zee News Hindi covered the attack, TRF's alleged responsibility, and released sketches of suspects. |
| Fact-Check | Zee News did not specifically fact-check the fake viral sketch (e.g., linking a sketch to Babar Azam) but did cover official sketches released by security forces, which were authentic. |
| Verification Methods | Affirmed The Resistance Front (TRF)'s claimed involvement and survivor testimonies emphasizing religious identification checks. |

Analysis:

Zee News Hindi reinforced the narrative of a genuine attack but did not directly address some disinformation (like the fake sketch). Their heavy reliance on official sources means their reporting is credible, although it might lack independent verification on social media claims.

4. Broader Context: Disinformation Trends on X

| Trend | Description |
|--------------------------------|---|
| False Flag Accusations | Posts claiming the attack was orchestrated by Indian agencies (e.g., RAW). |
| Fake Soldier Video | Viral fake video debunked by Vishvas News and Jagran English. |
| Fake Sketch Circulation | Sketch manipulated to mock India's investigation, falsely linked to famous personalities. |
| Victim Misreporting | Incorrect reports about survivor status; dead victims found alive. |
| Hashtags Used | #PahalgamAttack, #FalseFlagOperation, #PahalgamTruth. |

Analysis:

Disinformation trends post-Pahalgam reflect a complex battle over narrative control between pro-India and pro-Pakistan camps. While Indian fact-checkers effectively debunked specific viral pieces (e.g., fake soldier video), some broader false flag theories continue circulating without definitive resolution. Caution remains essential when analyzing social media claims due to rapid spread of unverified content.

Summary of Fact-Checking Findings

| Fact-Checker/ Outlet | Main Finding | Reliability Comment |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Vishvas News | Debunked fake soldier video. | Highly reliable (used forensic analysis + army confirmation). |
| Jagran English | Confirmed video fake + added context about Pakistan's response. | Reliable (source-based, moderate technical analysis). |
| Zee News Hindi | Affirmed attack's authenticity and TRF's role. | Reliable for official narratives, limited independent debunking on viral sketches. |

The fact-checking efforts analyzed above reveal a dual-layered information struggle post-Pahalgam: while official Indian narratives were reinforced by reputable fact-checkers, significant disinformation, particularly on social media, persisted. Accurate and methodical fact-checking remains vital to counter the weaponization of narratives in conflict regions like Kashmir.

Post-Incident Developments

The tragic Pahalgam attack on April 22, 2025, not only resulted in immense human suffering but also triggered a rapid and dangerous escalation in political and military tensions between India and Pakistan. In the hours and days following the attack, the regional dynamics evolved sharply:

1. Suspension of the Indus Water Treaty by India

In an unprecedented move, on April 24, 2025, India unilaterally announced the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty — a historic water-sharing agreement brokered by the World Bank in 1960.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs cited Pakistan's alleged "continued sponsorship of terrorism" as justification.

The suspension immediately raised concerns about potential water wars in an already volatile region where the Indus river system is vital for Pakistan's agriculture and drinking water.

International Reaction:

The United Nations and the World Bank expressed "grave concern" and urged restraint, warning that altering water arrangements could destabilize South Asia further.

2. Pakistan's Reaction: Declaration of an "Act of War"

Pakistan's government responded swiftly and strongly, with the Foreign Minister and Defence Minister jointly declaring India's action an "act of war" on April 25, 2025. Pakistan condemned both the blaming of Pakistan for the Pahalgam attack without evidence and the Indus Treaty suspension as coordinated acts of aggression.

Islamabad warned that such unilateral steps could lead to "grave consequences", including military responses if necessary.

Pakistan also launched an official complaint to the UN Security Council, demanding intervention to stop what it called India's "water terrorism."

3. Heightened Military Alerts

Both India and Pakistan placed parts of their militaries on high alert.

The Indian Army increased troop deployment in sensitive zones of Kashmir, while Pakistan's military visibly strengthened border posts across the Line of Control (LoC).

Media on both sides reported "full combat readiness" though no direct conflict had erupted by April 26, 2025.

4. Economic and Diplomatic Fallout

- India announced the suspension of bilateral trade with Pakistan for the foreseeable future.
- Pakistan declared it would downgrade diplomatic relations, recalling its envoy from New Delhi.
- Several countries, including China, the United States, and Russia, issued calls for maximum restraint amid fears of escalation.

5. Media and Public Sentiment

Indian media celebrated the Treaty suspension as a "decisive move" against terrorism.

Pakistani media framed it as "water aggression" and "environmental terrorism," with analysts warning about "existential threats" to Pakistan's survival.

On social media, hashtags like:

- #IndusWaterTerrorism
 - #ActOfWar
 - #SaveIndus
 - trended in Pakistan, while in India, hashtags such as
 - #NoWaterForTerror
 - #AvengePahalgam
- trended widely.

6. International Mediation Attempts

By April 26, 2025, quiet backchannel diplomacy involving the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Qatar reportedly began to prevent escalation.

However, no public breakthroughs were achieved by that time.

Summary of Post-Incident Effects

The Pahalgam attack thus became not just a terrorist incident but a geopolitical flashpoint, risking:

- Environmental insecurity (via water conflicts),
- Diplomatic collapse between India and Pakistan,
- Potential military confrontation,
- Heightened mistrust globally over South Asia's stability.

Consequences and Fallout of the Pahalgam Attack

The Pahalgam attack of April 22, 2025, not only claimed innocent lives but also triggered a chain of severe social, diplomatic, and economic consequences between Pakistan and India.

The fallout extended beyond the political realm, impacting ordinary citizens, sports, medical relations, and cross-border movement. Key developments included:

1. Forced Return of Families

Pakistani families visiting India and Indian families present in Pakistan were advised to return to their home countries immediately.

Particularly affected were Indian Muslims who had traveled to Pakistan to meet relatives; many were forced to cut their visits short under rising tensions.

2. Threats to Pakistani Medical Patients

Pakistani patients receiving medical treatment in India faced growing threats and hostility.

One notable case involved a Pakistani family whose two children, aged 7 and 9, suffering from congenital heart disease, were forced to interrupt their life-saving surgeries amid safety concerns.

3. Cancellation of Cricket Series

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the immediate cancellation of any proposed cricket series with Pakistan, further deteriorating already fragile sporting ties between the two countries.

4. Withdrawal of Indian Broadcasters from Pakistan

Indian media broadcasters, who had traveled to Pakistan to cover the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Match 10, were abruptly ordered to return, leading to incomplete media coverage and heightened distrust between the two sports communities.

5. Discrimination Against Muslims in India

Reports emerged of increased hostility towards Muslims within India.

For example, a Muslim laborer employed at a Hindu temple was reportedly dismissed solely based on his religious identity, highlighting the rising communal tensions.

6. Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty

On April 24, 2025, India formally notified Pakistan of its decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, raising grave concerns over potential water shortages, especially for Pakistani farmers relying on the river system for agriculture.

7. Reduction of Diplomatic Relations

India downgraded diplomatic relations with Pakistan by removing security barricades around the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and reducing embassy staffing levels.

8. Expulsion of Pakistani Military Advisers

Pakistani military officers working at the Pakistan High Commission were ordered to leave India immediately.

Indian authorities further hinted that additional Pakistani diplomats could be expelled in the coming days.

9. Suspension of Flight Operations

Both India and Pakistan suspended flight operations between the two countries, causing severe disruptions for passengers, creating travel chaos, and affecting families on both sides of the border.

10. Surge in Public Hatred and Hostility

The attack exacerbated already strained relations between the peoples of India and Pakistan.

Public anger, hate speech on social media, and rising hostility deepened the mistrust and further undermined prospects for peace.

Conclusion

The Pahalgam attack of April 22, 2025, was a tragic event that claimed the lives of innocent tourists and shook the already fragile stability of Indian Occupied Kashmir.

While the attack itself was devastating, the post-incident developments reveal an even more complex and troubling picture – one where truth, politics, and propaganda intertwined.

Evidence collected shows that disinformation campaigns immediately followed the attack, involving:

- Circulation of misused images,
- Fake survivor stories,
- Fabricated video footage falsely implicating Indian soldiers,
- Manipulated sketches mocking the investigation.

Independent fact-checkers like Vishvas News and Jagran English systematically debunked key viral claims, while Zee News Hindi validated the core facts about the attack and TRF's alleged involvement. However, the persistence of false flag narratives and unverified social media accusations points to the broader challenges of maintaining narrative integrity in conflict zones.

The geopolitical consequences of the attack were swift and dangerous: India's suspension of the Indus Water Treaty – a cornerstone of regional water security – escalated the situation, with Pakistan declaring it an act of war and threatening potential retaliation. Both nations heightened military readiness, while diplomatic ties deteriorated sharply.

In sum, the Pahalgam attack transitioned rapidly from a localized act of violence to a major flashpoint threatening regional peace.

This case underscores the critical need for:

- Accurate journalism,
- Evidence-based policymaking,
- Cautious diplomatic engagement,
- And resilient fact-checking efforts in times of crisis.

Only by separating fact from fabrication can policymakers, media, and the public hope to prevent such tragedies from spiraling into full-scale conflict.

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