

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

ON

THE PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

(APRIL 22-23, 2025)

MEDIA COVERAGE, MISINFORMATION AND NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

**कलमा नहीं पढ़ने पर आतंकियों ने
25 पर्यटकों को गोलियों से मारा**



**आतंकियों ने नाम पूछा
कलमा पढ़ाया, गोली मारी**



**बंदूक की नोक पर नाम पूछा
कलमा पढ़ने को कहा
सुनते ही हिंदू को मार दी गोली**



**धर्म पूछा, गोली मारी..
अब बदले की बारी**



National Media Coverage from 22-23 April

TV Channel	Total Episodes	Intent	Hate Mongering
Zee News	11	How did it Happen?	Who Did it?
Aaj Tak	20	What circumstances led to this?	Who was responsible?
ABP	13	How did this come about?	Who executed the action?
R Bharat	12	How did this situation arise?	Who is the offender?
News 18	18	What prompted this occurrence?	Who committed the act?

Overview of the Attack.

On April 22, 2025, a horrific terrorist attack occurred in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, killing 26 people, predominantly Hindu vacationers. The intruders, disguised in police uniforms, allegedly demanded that victims recite religious terms before killing any who refused. This incident has been described as one of the bloodiest attacks on civilians in the region in recent memory.

Media Coverage and Framing

Zee News, Aaj Tak, ABP News, Republic Bharat, and News18 all provided significant coverage of the attack, showing many programs over the course of two days.

Headlines such as:

"Kalma Nahi padha to goli maar diya" (shot for not reciting the Kalma) and

"Hinduon ka narsanghar" (Hindu slaughter) were widely circulated, stressing the religious and communal dimensions of the occurrence. This framing has been criticized for potentially inflaming communal feelings and overshadowing the larger context of the incident.

Internationally, publications such as the BBC were chastised for using language like "militants" rather than "terrorists," prompting the Indian government to openly oppose this nomenclature. Additionally, 16 Pakistani YouTube channels were banned for allegedly promoting misinformation and provocative video about the incident.

Few media headlines



Misinformation and disinformation

Following the attack, misinformation spread rapidly on social media channels. Old recordings and photographs were recycled and incorrectly attributed to the incident, including AI-generated images of victims in agony. For example, a video of a couple dancing, shot days before the attack, was misidentified as one of the victims' "last video". Fact-checking organizations such as BOOM and Factly have disproved several such claims, emphasizing the role of AI and old film in disseminating misleading narratives.

**धर्म पूछा... फिर मारी गोली
अब चुकाना पड़ेगा हिसाब !**



**पैट उतारी, नाम पूछा, गोली मार दी
पहलगाम में कपल के साथ दहशंदगी**



In Pakistan, a systematic disinformation campaign was discovered, involving pro-government and pro-military accounts. This effort used AI-generated deep fakes and edited films to shift blame away from Pakistan-based terrorist groups, especially Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its proxy, The Resistance Front (TRF), who initially claimed credit but later reversed their assertion. The quick dissemination of this edited content highlighted the power of AI-driven propaganda to shape public perception and incite greater violence.



National Security and Diplomatic Responses

Following the attack, India implemented a series of national security measures to prepare for any escalation. The Ministry of Home Affairs has announced a nationwide emergency readiness practice, codenamed Operation Abhyaas, for May 7, 2025.

This exercise aims to improve India's preparedness in the face of new and complex threats resulting from increased tensions with Pakistan. The drill covered 244 districts and included testing air raid sirens, preparing bomb shelters, simulating blackouts, and teaching residents in emergency response protocols.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke by phone with US President Donald Trump, who offered his sympathies to the victims of the terrible terror attack in Pahalgam. The presidents also discussed the current ceasefire deal under Operation Sindoor and larger regional security issues.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) denounced the terrorist assault in Pahalgam on April 22, emphasizing the importance of financial support in aiding terrorism.

The Indian government responded to the spike in misinformation by implementing comprehensive remedies. These included digital surveillance, blocking Pakistani news stations and social media accounts that disseminate misinformation, giving recommendations to Indian media encouraging restraint in coverage, and suspending the Indus Waters Treaty. This multi-pronged strategy demonstrated India's commitment to countering disinformation and preserving national security.

Socio-economic Impact

The incident had a significant impact on the tourism industry in Jammu & Kashmir, resulting in a dramatic fall in bookings and affecting local companies. To honour the victims of the Pahalgam terror assault, the Delhi administration postponed all public events for two days. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta offered her sympathies and underlined the nation's loss.

Protests were staged in Muslim-majority areas of Kashmir, including Srinagar, Pulwama, Shopian, Pahalgam, Anantnag, Baramulla, and other towns. Demonstrators voiced anguish and fury, describing the incident as a blow to Kashmiriyat and condemned the violence, shops and businesses closed down in solidarity.

Calls for in-depth reporting

Critics believe that focusing simply on the criminals and ignoring the underlying social, political, and historical reasons fails to address the primary causes of such acts. Comprehensive investigations are encouraged to better grasp the larger background and develop long-term solutions. Media outlets are encouraged to take more nuanced and investigative techniques when reporting on such situations.

Conclusion: An Analysis of Contemporary Information Warfare in the Pahalgam Terror Attack

The Pahalgam terror assault on April 22, 2025, which killed 26 civilians, is more than just a terrible security event; it is a prime example of how terrorism functions in the digital age by occupying both the physical and information realms at the same time.

The coverage of the attack demonstrated how media narratives have evolved into extensions of terrorist tactics. With communally heated headlines like "Kalma Nahi padha to goli maar diya" and "Hinduon ka narsanghar," Indian news outlets like Zee News and Republic Bharat turned a security incident into a religious discussion. This framing ran the risk of escalating the very sectarian tensions that terrorists want to sow, even as it reflected the attackers' apparent targeting techniques. The usage of "militants" by the BBC instead of "terrorists" caused diplomatic problems on a global scale, demonstrating the significant political ramifications of editorial language choices.

As an example of how digital platforms have become into battlefields for cross-border information warfare, 16 Pakistani YouTube channels were banned for disseminating false material.

Hours after the incident, conflicting narratives including disinformation efforts, terrorist sympathizers, and governmental actors were broadcast on social media sites. Chinese-sponsored disinformation after India's retaliatory "Operation Sindoor" exposed how regional wars now draw information manipulation from around the world, extending the destabilizing effects of terrorist strikes well beyond their immediate impact.

In addition to forcing a reevaluation of counterterrorism tactics, the attack seriously questioned India's Kashmir normalization narrative. More importantly, it took resources away from India's larger strategic goals in the Indo-Pacific, showing how regional terrorist attacks may upend national strategic priorities and put pressure on international alliances.

An example of how terrorism has developed into a multifaceted issue where narrative control is just as strategically significant as physical violence is the Pahalgam incident.

Viral social media material and extended programming cycles have made tragedy a commodity, indicating that media coverage has evolved into a crucial element of terrorist tactics.

The incident makes it clear that security measures alone are insufficient to combat modern terrorism. Comprehensive strategies that address media accountability, information warfare, and the digital environment that can either amplify or constrain terrorist goals are needed. Creating media practices that support democratic discourse while thwarting manipulation by terrorist groups and their state supporters is the challenge.

The Pahalgam attack eventually shows how terrorist attacks in our globalized society become focal points for larger information wars that jeopardize not only immediate security but also international relations, democratic discourse, and regional stability. Narrative warfare is as important to the success of countering such threats as conventional security solutions.

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