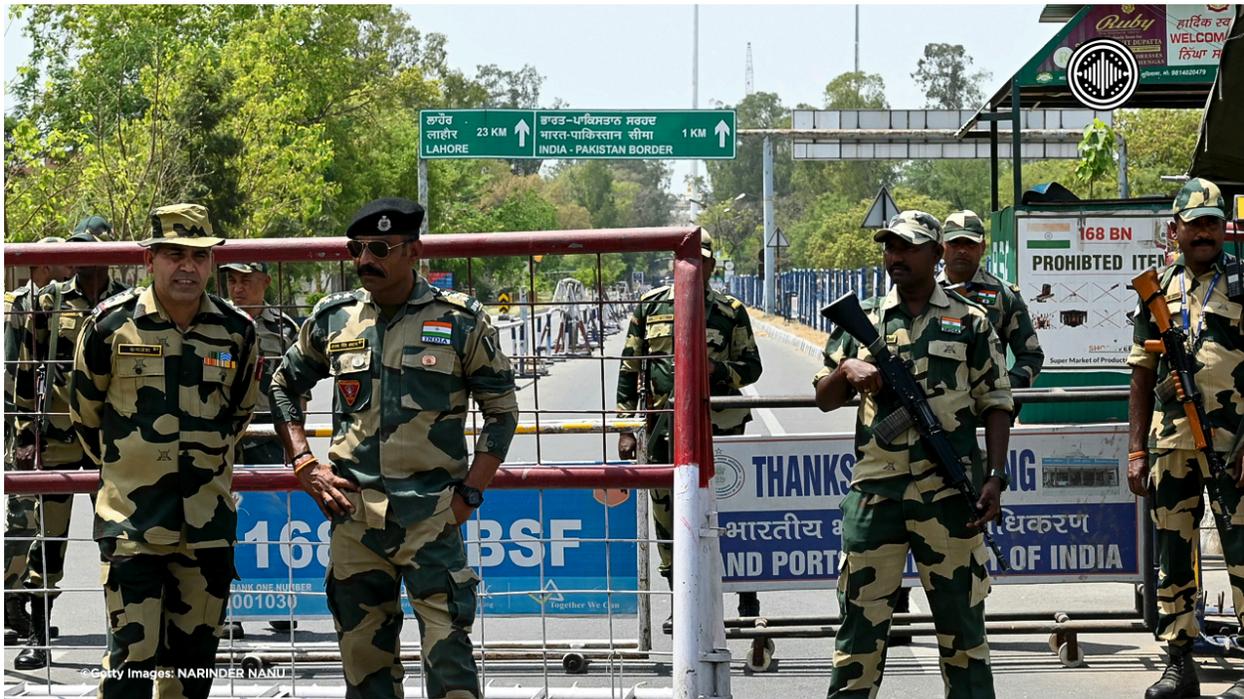


India Neutralizes Militants Behind Tragic Kashmir Tourist Attack



Indian security forces have successfully eliminated three suspected militants believed to be responsible for the brutal April attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, which resulted in the deaths of 26 tourists. The operation, dubbed "Operation Mahadev," was conducted in a forested area on the outskirts of Srinagar earlier this week, marking a significant development in the ongoing efforts to counter terrorism in the region.

The April 22 attack saw armed militants indiscriminately open fire on tourists in the scenic Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam. The victims, predominantly Hindu, included several newlywed couples. This heinous act, the deadliest of its kind in Kashmir in over two decades, sent shockwaves across India and led to a brief but intense military confrontation between India and Pakistan. India consistently asserted that the perpetrators were Pakistani nationals and that the attack was orchestrated from across the border, a charge Islamabad has denied.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah confirmed in Parliament that the three slain militants were Pakistani nationals and their identities were verified through forensic and ballistic tests, matching cartridges found at the attack site. Additionally, locals who had provided shelter and food to the gunmen before the April massacre reportedly identified the bodies. The eliminated individuals are believed to include Suleman alias Faizal Jatt, Hamza Afghani, and Zibran, with Suleman identified as a key commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant group.

"The terrorists who killed our citizens have been neutralized," Home Minister Shah declared, emphasizing the government's resolve in ensuring national security. He also detailed "Operation Sindoor," a broader initiative launched after the Pahalgam attack to dismantle the infrastructure supporting such terror activities.

The successful conclusion of "Operation Mahadev" brings a measure of closure for the victims' families and shows India's unwavering commitment to combating cross-border terrorism. While the immediate threat posed by these individuals has been neutralized, the broader challenge of ensuring lasting peace and security in Kashmir remains a critical focus for India's security establishment. This operation serves as a clear message that those who target innocent civilians will be pursued and brought to justice.