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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

# Rebuilding Ties: India's Re-engagement with Türkiye and Azerbaijan

THE HINDU

11 April 2026 · IR · GS2

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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## INTERVIEW ANGLE

*"When a country supplies weapons to a nuclear-armed adversary of India, should economic ties be completely severed, or is pragmatic re-engagement always the wiser long-term strategy?"*

## WHY IN NEWS

India and Türkiye held the **12th India-Türkiye Foreign Office Consultations** in New Delhi on **April 8, 2026** — the first such round since Ankara in 2022, ending a four-year gap. Days earlier, on **April 3, 2026**, India and Azerbaijan held the **6th India-Azerbaijan Foreign Office Consultations** in Baku — the first high-level contact since Baku's formal condemnation of India's Operation Sindoor. *The Hindu* editorial argues India must approach foreign relations with pragmatism over emotion.

## THE RUPTURE: OPERATION SINDOOR AND ITS DIPLOMATIC FALLOUT

The India-Pakistan conflict triggered by the **Pahalgam terror attack** (April 22, 2025 — 26 civilians killed) and India's subsequent **Operation Sindoor** (May 7, 2025) exposed the fault lines in India's relationships with Turkey and Azerbaijan with unusual clarity.

**Türkiye's actions** went beyond statements:

- Turkey supplied Pakistan with **Bayraktar TB2, YIHA, and Asisguard Songar drones** — all of which were deployed against India during the conflict
- Turkish military operatives were reported present in Pakistan in the lead-up to the strikes
- The Indian Army subsequently exhibited recovered Turkish drones as evidence of Ankara's material support to Islamabad

**Azerbaijan's response** was diplomatic:

- Baku issued a formal statement: *“We strongly condemn the military attacks on the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which have led to civilian casualties and injuries”*
- Azerbaijan’s solidarity with Pakistan triggered a sharp public backlash in India — “Boycott Turkey” and “Boycott Baku” trended on social media; industry bodies announced trade boycotts in May 2025

## THE CASE FOR RE-ENGAGEMENT

Despite this rupture, India has chosen to rebuild rather than freeze ties — and *The Hindu* editorial supports this approach on grounds of strategic pragmatism.

### Why Re-engage with Türkiye?

FACTOR	DETAIL
Trade volume	Bilateral trade: ~\$10 billion; significant Indian engineering and pharma exports
Defence acquisition	India-Turkey defence ties predate recent tensions; Turkish companies supply certain components
Regional connectivity	Türkiye’s geography at the Europe-Asia junction matters for India’s trade corridors
Counter-terrorism	Shared interest in countering Afghan-linked terror networks
Strategic hedge	Turkey’s NATO membership and simultaneous engagement with Russia gives it a value as a multi-aligned interlocutor

### Why Re-engage with Azerbaijan?

FACTOR	DETAIL
Energy corridor	Azerbaijan’s oil and gas (via BTC pipeline) feed into India’s energy diversification strategy
North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)	Azerbaijan is a critical node in the India-Russia-Europe connectivity route via Iran
Post-Sindoor goodwill	Azerbaijan assisted over 200 Indian nationals fleeing US-Israel strikes on Iran — a concrete act India cannot ignore
Countering Pakistan’s Islamic world outreach	Sustained Indian engagement with Muslim-majority states dilutes Pakistan’s influence in the OIC

## THE LIMITS OF EMOTIONAL DIPLOMACY

India's public boycott movements — while reflecting genuine public sentiment — carry real costs:

- **Tourism revenue loss:** Turkey was among India's top long-haul outbound destinations; Azerbaijan had become popular post-Baku Formula E and heritage tourism promotions
- **Trade disruption:** CAIT boycotts disrupted MSMEs with Turkey-linked supply chains (textile dyes, machinery parts)
- **Strategic signalling risk:** Permanent estrangement with two middle powers with significant regional influence is disproportionate to India's long-term interests
- **Reciprocal precedent:** If India cuts ties with every country that sides with Pakistan rhetorically, it would exclude a significant portion of the Islamic world — precisely the diplomatic space India is trying to penetrate

## WHAT REALISM DEMANDS

The editorial's core argument rests on a realist principle: **states do not have permanent friends or enemies, only permanent interests.** Türkiye and Azerbaijan made choices that harmed India — but India's response must be proportionate and strategically calibrated.

Re-engagement does not mean forgetting. India can:

- 1 Continue defence equipment reviews for Turkish-origin products
- 2 Raise the drone supply issue explicitly at the Foreign Office Consultations
- 3 Seek Azerbaijani support on INSTC implementation as a deliverable
- 4 Insist on counter-terrorism language in any formal bilateral framework

## UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — IR	India's foreign policy with West Asian middle powers; OIC dynamics
GS2 — IR	India's "Neighbourhood Plus" and extended neighbourhood policies
GS3 — Security	Turkish drone supply to Pakistan; Operation Sindoor implications
GS4 — Ethics	Ethics of pragmatic diplomacy versus principled foreign policy
Mains Keywords	Strategic autonomy, INSTC, BTC pipeline, OIC, middle power diplomacy, Operation Sindoor

May 7, 2025 — India's military strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan | Trigger: Pahalgam attack (April 22, 2025; 26 killed) | **Turkey:** Supplied Bayraktar TB2, YIHA, Songar drones to Pakistan | **Azerbaijan:** Formally condemned Operation Sindoor | **12th India-Türkiye FOC:** April 8, 2026, New Delhi | **6th India-Azerbaijan FOC:** April 3, 2026, Baku | **INSTC:** India-Russia-Europe corridor via Iran-Azerbaijan | **GS2:** International Relations

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