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# Operation Sindoor — First Anniversary: New Military Doctrine and Strategic Lessons

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# Operation Sindoor — First Anniversary: New Military Doctrine and Strategic Lessons

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## WHY IN NEWS

**May 7, 2026** marks the **first anniversary of Operation Sindoor** — India’s precision military strikes launched in the early hours of May 7, 2025, targeting **nine terrorist infrastructure sites** in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK). PM Modi marked the anniversary by changing his display picture on X to “Operation Sindoor.” Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** led national commemorations, calling the operation “a powerful symbol of India’s national resolve and strategic culture.”

## BACKGROUND — THE PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

DETAIL	FACT
Date of Pahalgam attack	April 22, 2025
Location	Baisaran meadow, Pahalgam, J&K
Casualties	<b>26 civilians killed</b> (mostly male Hindu tourists)
Perpetrators	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives with The Resistance Front (TRF) affiliation
India’s response	Operation Sindoor — launched 15 days later (May 6–7, 2025 night)

The Pahalgam attack was the **deadliest terrorist attack on Indian civilians since 2008 Mumbai attacks**, targeting tourists by religious identity and forcing victims to prove their religion before being shot.

## OPERATION SINDOOR — KEY DETAILS

PARAMETER	DETAIL
<b>Operation name</b>	Operation Sindoor
<b>Launch</b>	Night of May 6–7, 2025 (approx. 1:00–1:30 AM IST)
<b>Duration</b>	~25 minutes of active strikes
<b>Targets</b>	<b>9 terrorist camps</b> in Pakistan and PoK
<b>Targets included</b>	JeM HQ — Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan; LeT base — Muridke, Punjab, Pakistan
<b>Terrorist casualties</b>	At least <b>100 terrorists eliminated</b>
<b>Indian military losses</b>	None reported from the strike phase
<b>Conflict duration</b>	4 days total (May 7–10, 2025) — Pakistan sought de-escalation
<b>Historical precedent</b>	India’s deepest military campaign inside Pakistan since the <b>1971 war</b>
<b>Weapons used</b>	Precision-guided munitions, air-launched cruise missiles, drone strikes

### The Nine Targets

TARGET	LOCATION	GROUP
Markaz Subhan Allah	Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan	Jaish-e-Mohammed (HQ)
Markaz Taiba	Muridke, Punjab, Pakistan	Lashkar-e-Taiba (main base)
Sarjal / Tehra Kalan	Sialkot district, Pakistan	Multiple groups
Mehmoona Joya	Sialkot district, Pakistan	LeT-affiliated
Markaz Ahle Hadith	Barnala, PoK	LeT affiliate
Abbas camp	Kotli, PoK	Multiple groups
Maskar Raheel Shahid	Kotli, PoK	LeT
Shawai Nallah camp	Muzaffarabad, PoK	JeM training
Syedna Bilal camp	Muzaffarabad, PoK	Multiple

## STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE — NEW DOCTRINE ESTABLISHED

### 1. Crossing the Threshold

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Operation Sindoor broke the “**all or nothing**” **paradigm** that previously constrained India’s response to terrorist attacks. India demonstrated a **third option**: precision military action targeting only terrorist infrastructure, not Pakistani military assets, avoiding full-scale war.

### 2. Multi-Domain Warfare

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The operation integrated:

- **Air power** (Rafale jets, Mirage 2000)
- **Precision missiles** (SCALP cruise missiles, HAMMER bombs)
- **Loitering munitions / drones**
- **Electronic warfare and cyber operations**

### 3. Strategic Communication

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India’s messaging was carefully calibrated:

- Struck only terrorist camps, not military bases
- Announced operation publicly before Pakistani retaliation
- Framed it as an “anti-terror operation,” not war
- International community broadly accepted India’s justification

### 4. Compressed Escalation Management

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Pakistan’s military retaliated across the LoC for 3 days but sought de-escalation after India demonstrated willingness to escalate further. The episode showed that **nuclear deterrence does not prevent sub-conventional or limited conventional conflict** in the South Asian context.

## INDIA'S EVOLVING MILITARY DOCTRINE

PHASE	DOCTRINE	KEY FEATURE
Pre-2016	Strategic restraint	No cross-border military response to terror attacks
2016 (Uri)	Surgical strikes	Limited cross-LoC ground strikes — deniable
2019 (Balakot)	Air strikes	First air strikes inside Pakistan since 1971; acknowledged
<b>2025 (Operation Sindoor)</b>	<b>Precision deep strikes</b>	<b>Multiple targets; deep inside Pakistan; full acknowledgement; 25-minute campaign</b>

## UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — International Relations	India-Pakistan relations; cross-border terrorism; nuclear deterrence
GS3 — Security	Counter-terrorism doctrine; surgical vs precision strikes; multi-domain warfare
GS2 — Governance	National security decision-making; civil-military relations

**Mains Keywords:** Operation Sindoor, Pahalgam attack, surgical strikes doctrine, Bahawalpur JeM, Muridke LeT, cross-border terrorism, precision guided munitions, Rafale SCALP missiles, India-Pakistan nuclear threshold, multi-domain warfare, strategic restraint

### Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
Operation Sindoor date	Night of <b>May 6–7, 2025</b>
Pahalgam attack	April 22, 2025; <b>26 civilians killed</b>
Targets	<b>9 terror camps</b> in Pakistan + PoK
Duration of strikes	<b>~25 minutes</b>
JeM HQ struck	<b>Bahawalpur</b> , Punjab, Pakistan
LeT main base struck	<b>Muridke</b> , Punjab, Pakistan
Conflict duration	<b>4 days</b> (May 7–10, 2025)
Historical comparison	India's deepest military action inside Pakistan since <b>1971</b>
Doctrine evolution	Surgical strikes (2016) → Air strikes Balakot (2019) → Precision deep strikes (2025)
PM	Narendra Modi; DM: Rajnath Singh; CDS: coordinated joint operation

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