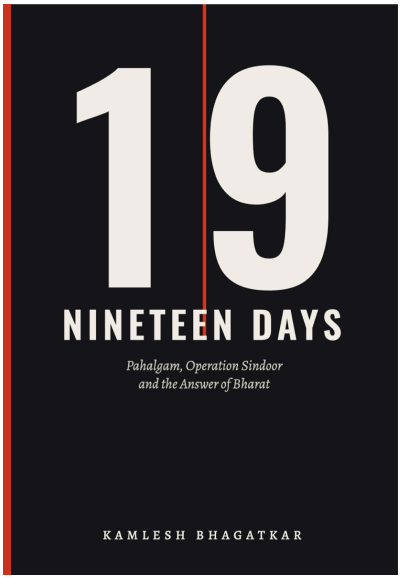
DEFENCE

NINETEEN DAYS: WHAT OPERATION SINDOOR CHANGED FOR INDIA

By **Kamlesh Bhagatkar**, *Author & Geopolitical Analyst · 9 November 2026*

On 22 April 2025, terrorists walked into the Baisaran meadow near Pahalgam and asked tourists their religion before shooting them. Twenty-six people were killed. Most were men on holiday with their families. Their wives and children watched.



Nineteen days later, on 10 May, the guns between India and Pakistan fell silent. What happened in between is the subject of my next book, *Nineteen Days*. I have spent months reading every official statement, briefing and report I could find. Here is what I believe those nineteen days changed.

1. Terror now has an address, and a price

For decades, the pattern was familiar. An attack, a wave of anger, diplomatic protests, and then slowly, nothing. Pakistan counted on that pattern.

This time India broke it. Within a day, the Indus Waters Treaty was put in abeyance, the Attari border was closed and Pakistani visas were cancelled. And in the early hours of 7 May, Operation Sindoor struck nine terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including the headquarters of Jaish-e-Mohammed in Bahawalpur and Lashkar-e-Taiba in Muridke.

The message was clear: an attack on Indian civilians will be treated as an act of war, and the camps that plan it are not safe anywhere.

2. Made in Bharat passed its biggest test

When Pakistan answered with waves of drones and missiles aimed at Indian cities and bases, India's air defence held. Systems like Akash and the Akashteer network, built in India, worked alongside imported ones. BrahMos, developed jointly with Russia and built in India, struck targets with precision.

For years, defence self-reliance was a slogan. In May 2025 it became a fact that our soldiers relied on in real combat. That matters far beyond one conflict. Every country watching now knows that India can defend itself with weapons it makes at home.

3. The briefings told the world a story about India

Many people will remember the press briefings given by Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh. Two women officers, one Muslim and one Hindu, explaining calmly and precisely what India had struck and why.

The terrorists in Pahalgam tried to divide Indians by religion. The answer came from Indians standing together in uniform. I do not think any statement could have answered them better.

4. Restraint is also strength

India hit what it set out to hit: terror infrastructure first, and then, when Pakistan escalated, its military airbases. When Pakistan's military asked for a halt, India agreed on its own terms, through a call between the two Directors General of Military Operations.

Some people wanted the fighting to go on. But a country that can stop when its goal is met, and not before, is showing control, not weakness. That control is what makes the next deterrent believable.

Why I am writing this book

News moves fast. In a year, most people will remember Operation Sindoor as a headline. I want to record it as a story: the families of Pahalgam, the planners, the pilots, the engineers who built our weapons, and the decisions taken in those nineteen days.

Countries remember what they write down. I want this chapter of our history written from the point of view of Bharat.



Kamlesh Bhagatkar

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