

Pakistan suspends 1972 Simla Agreement: What is it and what will be the impact on LoC

TIMESOFINDIA.COM | Apr 24, 2025, 09:37 PM IST



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independent nation of Bangladesh, following India's intervention.

Pakistan on Thursday suspended the 1972 Simla Agreement as a reaction against stringent measures taken by India amid nationwide grief over the terrorist attack in Pahalgam. It was a significant peace treaty signed between the two countries after the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war.

What is the Simla Agreement?

Signed on July 2, 1972, in the aftermath of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, the Simla Agreement was aimed at restoring peace and normalising relations between India and Pakistan. The war had resulted in the secession of East Pakistan and the creation of the

The treaty, signed in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, was inked by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It was a significant diplomatic milestone, setting the tone for post-war reconciliation and outlining key principles to guide future interactions.

Poll

Do you believe Pakistan's suspension of the Simla Agreement will escalate tensions with India?

No, it won't change much Yes, definitely

What did the agreement say?

"The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan are resolved that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their peoples," the official statement read.

Key agreements:

- That the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relations between the two countries.
- That the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them.
- Pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations.
- That the pre-requisite for reconciliation, good neighbourliness and durable peace between them is a commitment by both the countries to peaceful co-existence, respect for each other's territorial integrity and

sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

- That the basic issues and causes of conflict which have bedevilled the relations between the two countries for the last 25 years shall be resolved by peaceful means.
- That they shall always respect each other's national unity, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality.
- That in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations they will refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of each other.

**AGREEMENT¹ BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF
INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
ON BILATERAL RELATIONS
(SIMLA AGREEMENT)
Simla, 2 July 1972**

1. The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan are resolved that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their peoples.

In order to achieve this objective, the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan

Key provisions of the Simla Agreement

Among the most critical outcomes of the Simla Agreement were:

Peaceful bilateral resolution: Both nations committed to resolving disputes through bilateral negotiations, without involving third-party mediation — a clause India has consistently highlighted in opposing international interference, especially in the Kashmir issue.

Line of Control (LoC): The agreement converted the 1971 ceasefire line into the Line of Control (LoC), effectively establishing a de facto border in Jammu and Kashmir. It emphasised that neither side would seek to unilaterally alter this line, thereby reinforcing the status quo.

Return of territory: India returned over 13,000 km² of land captured during the war, demonstrating goodwill and commitment to peace. However, it retained strategic zones like Turtuk and Chalunka in the Chhorbat Valley.

Recognition of Bangladesh: Though not immediate, the agreement set the stage for Pakistan's eventual diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh.

Why does the suspension matter?

Pakistan's move to suspend the agreement comes at a time when bilateral relations are already under significant strain. The abrogation of Article 370 by India in August 2019, which revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status, led to a diplomatic freeze between the two sides. Islamabad has since downgraded ties and repeatedly internationalised the Kashmir issue — in contrast to the bilateral approach prescribed in the Simla Agreement.

The suspension could mark a strategic shift in Pakistan's approach. It might now seek third-party involvement — possibly from the United Nations or allies like China or the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) — to internationalise the Kashmir conflict. This would be in direct contravention of the Simla framework.

Potential impact on the LoC

The LoC has long been a flashpoint between the two nations, frequently witnessing ceasefire violations, cross-border shelling, and infiltration attempts. If the mutual commitment to maintain the sanctity of the LoC under the Simla Agreement is no longer upheld, it could lead to increased hostilities.

India has not yet issued an official response to Pakistan's announcement.

What lies ahead?

The suspension of the Simla Agreement may not have immediate tactical consequences, but could open the door to greater diplomatic and military brinkmanship. It could undermine regional stability and could derail any remaining prospects of dialogue.