

# India issues demarche to Pak, launches diplomatic offensive

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In a major diplomatic offensive against Islamabad after the Pulwama terror attack, India held a briefing for envoys of 25 countries, including from P5 nations ~ USA, China, Russia, UK and France ~ to highlight Pakistan's role in using terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

Before the briefing, foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale summoned Pakistan High Commissioner to India, Sohail Mahmood, to his South Block office and issued a very strong demarche over the attack in which at least 40 CRPF personnel were killed in Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Pakistan must take "immediate and verifiable action" against Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and immediately stop any groups or individuals associated with terrorism operating from its territories, Gokhale told the Pakistani envoy.

He also told Mahmood that India rejected the statement made by the Pakistan Foreign Ministry yesterday dissociating Islamabad from the Pulwama outrage. It was also pointed out to him that Pakistan-based JeM had already owned responsibility for the strike. India also



Photos of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief, Masood Azhar are trampled underfoot during a protest in Mumbai. AFP

called its High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ajay Bisaria, back to New Delhi for urgent consultations.

Gokhale met 25 heads of mission (HoMs) based in New Delhi to brief them on the Pulwama attack. According to sources, all the HoMs were left in no doubt about the role played by JeM in the Pulwama strike and India's demand that Pakistan ceases forthwith all support and

financing of terror groups operating from its territory.

India's neighbours ~ including Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Bhutan ~ and other key countries ~ such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Russia, Germany, Canada, UK, Australia and Canada ~ have come out in strong support of New Delhi in the wake of the Pulwama attack.