



Daughter of slain CRPF jawan Mohan Lal pays her last respects in Dehradun, Uttarakhand on Saturday. VINAY SANTOSH KUMAR/HT



Villagers carry the coffin of CRPF jawan Sukhjinder Singh at Gandiwind Dhattal in Amritsar, Punjab. SAMEER SEHGAL/HT



Bereaved family members of CRPF jawan H Guru at their residence in Doddi village of Mandya district, Karnataka, on Saturday. PTI



Kin of slain CRPF jawan Ram Vakeel perform the last rites in Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, on Saturday. PTI

# India moves to isolate Pakistan

**RETALIATION** Officials prepare dossier on Islamabad's terror funding, restrict medical visas to Pak citizens

Sudhi Ranjan Sen, Rajeev Jayaswal and Rezaul Laskar  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Dossiers for global circulation on Islamabad's role in the Pulwama attack, tighter visa rules for Pakistani citizens coming to India for medical treatment, and a 200% increase in duties on goods imported from the country are part of New Delhi's plans to tighten the screws on its neighbour over Thursday's terror attack that left 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel dead.

The customs duty increase was announced by Union finance minister Arun Jaitley on Saturday as foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and secretaries of the external affairs ministry held meetings with several envoys, including ambassadors from the Association of Southeast Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council and Central Asian and African nations.

India launched a diplomatic offensive against Pakistan on Friday, a day after the Pulwama attack, when Gokhale met 25 heads of missions, including the P5 or five permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and France —

besides South Asian countries and key partners such as Israel, Japan and South Korea.

Also on Friday, India withdrew the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status it gave to Pakistan in 1996, which offered the neighbour a guarantee that it wouldn't be treated any differently from other trade partners of India. "Upon withdrawal (of MFN), basic customs duty on all goods exported from Pakistan to India has been raised to 200% with immediate effect," finance minister Arun Jaitley wrote on Twitter on Saturday.

Orders to remove security detail of "separatist leaders" have also been issued by the government. "Only a few have security cover, it will be removed in coming days," a senior officer who did not want to be named said.

The government's tighter medical visa rules is for security reasons, two officials aware of the developments said. The curbs on medical visas is likely to end Pakistanis' access to cheap and quality medical facilities in India. An immediate option is to demand additional documents, including an endorsement by Pakistan's foreign ministry, to ensure only genuine patients can enter India for medical treatment, one of the



The government is planning to tighten medical visa requirements for security reasons. HT FILE

officials quoted earlier, said.

At present, cases of organ transplants, particularly liver and kidney, require authentication by Pakistan's foreign ministry. The purpose is to ensure that an organ donor is donating his or her organ voluntarily, the official said. Dr Sanjeev Bagai, chairman, Nephron Clinic, said medical visa norms for patients from Pakistan were tightened after the September 2016 attack on an Army brigade headquarters in Uri. Now, they are expected to be blocked completely.

"Patients from Pakistan prefer India because of better clinical results at one-tenth the cost (in developed countries). India is nearer, there is no language barrier, currency availability is not an issue and they get better fol-

low-up services," he said.

Indian defence experts said it was necessary to immediately suspend all kinds of visas so that ordinary citizens pressure Islamabad to stop protecting terrorists on its soil. "Visas on all possible grounds — family, medical, trade, etc. — must be stopped for a reasonable period to enable Pakistan's ordinary citizens to realize what their state has been up to," said Deba Mohanty, a New Delhi-based defence and strategic affairs expert.

In 2015-16, about 1,921 medical visas were issued to Pakistani nationals, 58,360 to patients from Bangladesh and 29,492 to those from Afghanistan.

The dossier that New Delhi is putting together will contain evidence of Pakistani involvement

not only in the Pulwama attack, where the Jaish-e-Mohammad has claimed responsibility, but also in training, equipping and guiding terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir and even in mainland India, officials said.

The Cabinet Committee on Security — the highest decision-making body on security, chaired by the Prime Minister and comprising the defence, home and external affairs ministers — met on Friday and decided to launch a massive diplomatic effort to isolate Pakistan. In their Saturday meetings, Gokhale and the other secretaries rejected Pakistan's denial of involvement and highlighted its role in "using terrorism as an instrument of its state policy", said an official familiar with the development. Reacting to Pakistan foreign secretary Tehmina Janjua's remarks denying involvement in the attack, external affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar described Islamabad's call for an investigation into the strike as "preposterous".

"Jaish-e-Mohammed has claimed responsibility for the attack. The organisation and its leadership are located in Pakistan. Lashkar-e-Taiba and other terror groups have welcomed the news of the attack. These groups are also based in Pakistan. Pakistan cannot claim it is unaware of their presence and their activities," Kumar said.

Also on Saturday, Iran expressed its support after a

meeting with foreign minister Sushma Swaraj. "Iran & India suffered from two heinous terrorist attacks in the past few days resulted in big casualties. Today in my meeting with Sushma Swaraj the Indian FM, when she had a stopover in Tehran, we agreed on close cooperation to combat terrorism in the region. Enough is enough!" tweeted Seyed Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister.

Notably, after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks when 10 Pakistan-based terrorists took the sea route to attack India's financial capital and killed 166 people, New Delhi had sent nearly a dozen dossiers, including the DNA samples of the terrorists, to Islamabad with a demand that Pakistan investigate and book those behind the attack. And earlier, India had given evidence of Pakistan's role in supporting terror groups to the international community.

Pakistan hasn't acted against these groups despite international demands, "especially groups and individuals proscribed by the UN and other countries", Kumar said. "The links to Pakistan are clear and evident for all to see. Its own ministers have shared the same podium with UN-proscribed terrorists," he added. As the suicide bomber had issued a video declaring himself a member of JeM, India has "no doubt that the claim is firmly established", he said.