



India-Pakistan split deepens with train travel block

August 09, 2019

India has urged Pakistan to review its decision to downgrade diplomatic ties over the withdrawal of special status to Kashmir, as its neighbor halted the main train service between the two countries.



The Pakistan-India border has seen friction many times before. And Kashmir now, as in the past, has had as good a view as any. There is no cross-border trade currently passing here, after Pakistan put a stop to it. Their main train service to India has also been halted - and Indian films banned. Pakistan is furious at the Indian government's decision to revoke Kashmir's special status - part of a bid to integrate the Muslim-majority state with the rest of the country. On Thursday, India urged its neighbor to think again, and said it's time to restore diplomatic ties and trade.

PRESIDENT, INDO-FOREIGN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, B.K. BAJAJ, SAYING:

"This (suspension of India-Pakistan trade) will have no effect on India. We have wanted friendship with them at all the times but it is their wish to close border. The economy of India is so big that for us it is not an issue. Their economy is small by comparison so it will affect them."

Caught in the middle of it all, Shabana Kausar and her five children.

They live barely four kilometers from what's known as the Line of Control, the ceasefire line that divides the nuclear-armed rivals.

Shabana's husband runs a small business in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

He visits them at weekends.

MOTHER, SHABANA KAUSAR, SAYING:

"There is enough room members to hide easily. But at times we have to accommodate neighbors as well who don't have these bunkers. So, we all come and hide here to safety."

India and Pakistan have twice waged war over Kashmir - and in February engaged in an aerial clash. Many here fear more of the same, in this bitterly contested state.