

IAF Downs Pakistan Drone On Rajasthan Border

NEW DELHI/JAIPUR: An Indian Air Force Su-30 MKI on Monday shot down a Pakistani Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) in the Nal sector on the International Border in Rajasthan on Monday, sources said.

The Sukhoi-30MKI reportedly brought down the drone by using an air-to-air missile soon after it was detected by Indian radars, sources said. The debris of the missile fell inside Pakistan

at Fort Abbas, near Bahawalpur, where proscribed terrorist Jaish-e-Mohammed's headquarters is located, sources said.

However, it was later clarified that these were extra fuel tanks dropped by PAF fighters on patrol. Fort Abbas is located close to Rajasthan border.

Meanwhile looking at the debris, panic buttons were pressed in Pakistan. Even speculation of the air strike 2 went viral on Pakistani twitter users.

Sources confirmed that this was the second drone which attempted to violate the Indian air space. On Feb 27, another Pakistani drone had tried air space violation in Anupgarh.

However, it didn't come close, and hovered on Indian borders reportedly with an aim to divert the attention of Indian forces. "Later they intruded into Indian territories through J&K's Nowshera

the same day. So this time, when we saw a UAV, we scrambled and shot it down," confirmed a source. Earlier in the day, IAF chief B.S. Dhanoa had claimed that the operations were still going on as he refused to go into details about the aerial engagement between the two forces.

Sources said that the forces continued to be on high alert along with air defence systems to deal with any eventuality.

Pakistan Minister Quits Over Tirade Against Hindus

LAHORE: A Provincial Pakistani minister has resigned after criticizing the country's minority Hindu community in the wake of heightened tensions between Pakistan and India over Kashmir.

Government spokesman Shahbaz Gill said Fayyazul Hassan Chohan, information minister in Punjab, stepped down on Tuesday.

Chohan drew condemnation over a speech in which he conflated Indians with Pakistan's Hindu community and made derogatory remarks against their religion.

Chohan referred to the Hindu community as "cow urine-drinking people. We are Muslims and we have a flag, the flag of Maula Ali's bravery, the flag of Hazrat Umar's valour. You (Hindus) don't have that flag, it isn't in your hands," he had said. "Don't operate under the delusion that you're seven times better than us. What we have, you can't have, you idol worshippers," he said.

Chohan's comments prompted the ruling Tehreek-e-Insaf party to call for his resignation.

Pakistanis Rally Against India

LAHORE: Supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami, a religious political party, chant slogans during an anti-Indian rally in Lahore, Pakistan, on Sunday.

Residents near the border in the Kashmir region said they were seeing a slight lull since a dangerous escalation between Pakistan and India erupted last week bringing the two countries close to war. Tensions rose after Pakistan-based terrorists killed Indian troopers in a suicide bomb attack. (AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary)



59 Killed In Afghan Floods

KABUL: At least 59 people were killed and another 143 injured as flash floods struck Afghanistan following heavy rains in the country, officials said. Kandahar and Helmand provinces were the most affected by the floods that hit the country following heavy rains last Saturday.

"In the past three days, 59 people were killed and another 143 people injured in flash floods and heavy rains in nine out of the 17 provinces in different parts of the country," the operations chief for the State Ministry for Disaster Management, Ahmad Khan Nafi, told Efe news.

Nafi said the number of casualties

could change as communication systems had been disrupted in many parts of the country.

At least 2,000 houses were destroyed in floods, besides, schools and hospitals, Hashmat Khan Bahaduri, spokesman for the State Ministry for Disaster Management said.

Bahaduri said hundreds of trapped people have been rescued and taken to temporary camps by the Afghan security forces.

He said about 8,000 families have been provided food and other assistance. Although the rain has stopped and water receded, displaced people were still staying at temporary camps.

Ayodhya: Mediation Verdict Reserved

NEW DELHI: A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its order on sending the contentious Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid Ayodhya title dispute case for mediation even as Hindu parties and the state of Uttar Pradesh opposed the court's suggestion.

The five-judge Constitution Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice S.A. Bobde, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice S. Abdul Nazeer reserved the order as some of the Hindu parties and Uttar Pradesh sounded sceptical about the outcome of the mediation.

"Arguments on the issue of reference to mediation are closed. Arguments concluded. Orders reserved," the court order said.

"It is about mind, hear and healing the relationship. We have read history and know history. We have no control over what had happened in the past... Babar invading, whether there was a mosque or temple. We are only concerned with resolving the dispute," Justice Bobde said.

He also made it clear that the court was conscious of the impact of the issue on the body polity. The court also indicated that the mediation proceedings would not be open to media reporting.

The court is hearing of a batch of cross petitions challenging the 2010 Allahabad High Court verdict trifurcating the disputed site and giving one party each to the Nirmohi Akhada, Ram Lalla and the Sunni Waqf Board.

US Ending Preferential India Trade Program

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump has announced that he is ending India's \$5.6 billion trade concessions under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme, accusing New Delhi of not providing Washington "equitable and reasonable access" to its markets.

The US Trade Representative's Office (USTR) said that the preferences will end in 60 days after notification to Congress and the Indian government. India is the largest beneficiary of the GSP exporting goods worth \$5.6 billion to the US under the programme. The USTR said: "India has implemented a wide array of trade barriers that create serious negative effects on US commerce." The total India-US trade was \$126.2 billion in 2017, with a \$27.3 billion deficit for the US. India's total exports were worth \$76.7 billion and the end to GSP affects only a small part of it limited to \$5.6 billion.

Return Diego Garcia To Mauritius, UK Told

NEW YORK: Mauritius has won a case against Britain at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) involving decolonisation of the strategically important island of Diego Garcia, which is home to a US military base. Britain must give Mauritius control of the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean, the ICJ said on Monday. The court in a majority opinion, which included Judge Dalveer Bhandari of India, said decolonisation of Mauritius "was not lawfully complete" when it attained independence because Britain carved away the Chagos Archipelago from it and retained control over it.

The opinion, which is non-binding, handed down by the majority of 13 judges said Britain "is under an obligation to bring to an end its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible"

'Copter Crash Kills Nepal Tourism Minister

KATHMANDU: A helicopter flying in bad weather crashed into a mountain in Nepal on Wednesday, killing all seven people on board, including the country's tourism minister, officials said.

Home Ministry spokesman Ram Krishna Subedi said rescuers had reached the crash site. The bodies of Tourism Minister Rabindra Adhikari and his bodyguard were identified, but the other five bodies were charred, Subedi said.

Adhikari, 49, became tourism minister in March 2018 after the Nepal Communist Party won parliamentary elections. The helicopter belonged to Nepal-based Dynasty Air.



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