

India tells X to block over 8,000 accounts

AFP, Washington

India has ordered X to block over 8,000 accounts, the platform said Thursday, adding that it was reluctantly complying with what it described as government-imposed "censorship."

The move appears to be part of India's sweeping crackdown targeting social media accounts of Pakistani politicians, celebrities and media organizations amid deadly confrontations between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

The order, which X said includes demands to block international news organizations and other prominent users, comes a day after Meta banned a prominent Muslim news page on Instagram in India at New Delhi's request.

It said that in most cases, the government had not specified which posts from the accounts violated Indian laws.



Indian villagers react while waiting for transportation as they evacuate, following overnight Pakistani artillery shelling in Uri, about 100 km from Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

China-made Pak J-10 downs two Indian fighter jets Say US officials; Delhi has not acknowledged loss of planes

REUTERS, Islamabad Washington

A top Chinese-made Pakistani fighter plane shot down at least two Indian military aircraft on Wednesday, two US officials told Reuters, marking a major milestone for Beijing's advanced fighter jet.

An Indian Air Force spokesperson said he had no comment when asked about the Reuters report.

The performance of a leading Chinese fighter jet against a Western rival is being closely watched in Washington for insights into how Beijing might fare in any showdown over Taiwan or the wider Indo-Pacific.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was high confidence that Pakistan had used the Chinese-made J-10 aircraft to launch air-to-air missiles against Indian fighter jets - bringing down at least two.

Another official said at least one Indian jet that was shot down was a French-made Rafale fighter aircraft. Both officials said Pakistan's F-16 aircraft, made by Lockheed Martin, were not used in the shootdown.

Delhi has not acknowledged the loss of any of its planes and instead said it carried out successful strikes against what it said was "terrorist" infrastructure inside Pakistan.

World powers from the US to Russia and China have called for calm in one of the world's most dangerous, and most populated, nuclear flashpoint regions.

In France, Rafale manufacturer Dassault Aviation consortium, which makes the Meteor air-to-air missile, could not immediately be reached for comment.

While Reuters reported on Wednesday that three Indian planes went down, citing local government officials in India, this marks the first Western confirmation that Pakistan's Chinese-made jets were used in the shootdowns.

Pakistan's Defense minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, told Reuters on Thursday that the J-10 was used to shoot down three French-made Rafale planes, which were newly acquired by India. Altogether, Pakistan says it downed five Indian planes in air-to-air combat.

The Rafale and the model of the J-10 used by Pakistan are both considered generation 4.5 fighter jets, placing them at the leading edge of combat aircraft.

Western analysts and defense industry sources said the live use of some of the advanced weapons that could be deployed in future major power conflicts would be scrutinized in minute detail, but emphasized it was too early to draw firm conclusions.



Leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, watch Russian service members marching past during a flower-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Victory Day, marking the 80th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two, in central Moscow, Russia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

INDO-PAK ESCALATION Conflict offers rich intel opportunity for China

Analysts believe Beijing's extensive satellite network is deployed to deeply scrutinise Indian actions in real time

REUTERS, Hong Kong

The conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir offers a potentially rich intelligence harvest for China in its own rivalry with India as it gleans data from its fighter jets and other weapons used in action by Pakistan.

Security analysts and diplomats say China's military modernisation has reached a point where it has the ability to deeply scrutinise Indian actions in real time from its border installations and Indian Ocean fleets as well as from space.

"From an intelligence perspective, this is a rare target of opportunity right on China's borders involving a key potential adversary," said Singapore-based security analyst Alexander Neill.

Security analysts say both sides have taken steps to strengthen their military facilities and capabilities along the border, but it is also from above that China packs an intelligence gathering punch.

The London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) notes that China now fields 267 satellites - including 115 devoted to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and a further 81 that monitor military electronic and signals information. It is a network that dwarfs its regional rivals, including India, and is second only to the US.

"Both in terms of space and missile tracking capabilities, China is much better off now in terms of being able to monitor things as

they happen," said Neill, who is an adjunct fellow at Hawaii's Pacific Forum think-tank.

China's defence ministry did not immediately respond to Reuters' questions about the deployment of its military satellites and other questions about its intelligence gathering.

Pakistan's military media wing and information minister did not immediately respond to a request

includes us," he said.

Chinese military intelligence teams would be eager to garner information on any Indian use of air defences and launches of cruise and ballistic missiles - not just in terms of flight paths and accuracy but command and control information, analysts and diplomats say.

Any deployment of India's BrahMos supersonic cruise missile



for comment on any information sharing with China. Pakistan has previously said it has an "all-weather strategic, cooperative partnership" with China.

India has not commented on the issue, but its top diplomat in Britain, High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami, told Sky News on Thursday that China's relationship with Pakistan was not a concern for India.

"China requires a relationship with all of its neighbours, that

- a weapon it developed jointly with Russia - would be of particular interest, some analysts say, given they do not believe it has been used in combat.

China has also beefed up its intelligence gathering at sea. It has been increasingly active in the Indian Ocean in recent years, with China deploying space tracking ships as well as oceanographic research and fishing vessels on extended deployments, open source intelligence trackers say.

Trump fires librarian of US Congress

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump has fired the country's top librarian, a senator said, cutting short the term of the only woman and first African American to take on the role.

New Mexico Senator Martin Heinrich shared an email late Thursday that he said Carla Hayden had received informing her of her termination from the role of librarian of Congress "effective immediately."

Hayden was nominated to manage the world's largest library in 2016 but has been criticized by conservatives, including members of the American Accountability Foundation lobby group, which has accused her of seeking to "indoctrinate America's children with radical sexual ideologies."

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Israel intercepts missile launched from Yemen

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's military said it intercepted a missile launched from Yemen yesterday, with AFP journalists reporting explosions heard in the Jerusalem area.

"Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in several areas in Israel, a missile launched from Yemen was intercepted," a military statement said after earlier announcing it had "identified the launch of a missile from Yemen toward Israeli territory".

Meanwhile, some 200 seafarers aboard more than 15 ships stuck for weeks off Yemen's port of Ras Isa are preparing to offload cargoes and leave thanks to a ceasefire deal between Houthi militia and the US, maritime and labour union sources said on Thursday.

Still, threat levels for shipping remained high given the Houthis' confirmation that Israeli-related assets remained open to attack and the attendant risks to broader shipping, maritime officials said.

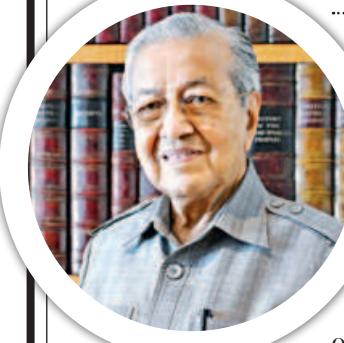
Ships with no connection to Israel had been targeted in the past with no certainty of safe passage, reports Reuters.

President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday the US would stop bombing the Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen as they had agreed to stop targeting US ships in Red Sea waters off the Arabian Peninsula country.

However, the deal does not cover close US ally Israel, the Houthis stated on Wednesday.

Malaysian ex-PM Mahathir blasts 'old world' Trump

AFP, Putrajaya



Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad is giving President Donald Trump three months before his fellow Americans force him to rethink his stringent global tariff strategy, accusing the US leader of "living in an old world".

Speaking to AFP in an interview two months ahead of his 100th birthday, the plain-speaking Mahathir said: "Trump will find that his tariffs are hurting America, and the people in America will end up against him."

The US president's stop-start tariff rollout will hit Asian nations hard - including Malaysia, which faces a 24 percent levy in July unless the two countries can strike a deal.

"It's going to cause America a lot of problems, so I give Trump three months," said Mahathir, who ruled Malaysia in two stints lasting nearly a quarter of a century.

Still working a five-day week from his office in the administrative capital Putrajaya, the sprightly nonagenarian remains as outspoken as ever.

"Donald Trump is irrational. I don't think he thinks carefully about what he's doing," said Mahathir.

"His policies on migration -- and also trying to reduce the cost of government, sacking thousands of people -- all these things are not good."

"It will not make America great," he said, taking a jab at Trump's MAGA election slogan.

Asked what he thought of some of Trump's foreign policies -- proposing to take over Greenland and seize control of the Panama Canal -- Mahathir said the US leader was "living in an old world".

Throughout his long career, Mahathir was a proponent of a "Look East" policy -- pushing Malaysians to find solutions in Asia rather than depending on Western nations.