

INDO-PAK BATTLE IN MAY

# ‘Intel failure’ leads Indian jets into ambush: report

DAWN ONLINE

India’s intelligence failure was central to the hour-long air battle between Pakistan and India in May, which led to the downing of Rafale aircraft by the Pakistan Air Force’s J-10 fighters using PL-15s missiles, according to a report.

Reuters interviews with two Indian officials and three of their Pakistani counterparts found that the performance of the Rafale wasn’t the key problem: central to its downing was an Indian intelligence failure concerning the range of the China-made PL-15 missile fired by the J-10 fighter. China and Pakistan are the only countries to operate both J-10s, known as Vigorous Dragons, and PL-15s.

The faulty intelligence gave the Rafale pilots a false sense of confidence that they were out of Pakistani firing distance, which they believed was only around 150km, the Indian officials said, referring to the widely cited range of PL-15’s export variant.

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Faulty intelligence about range of PL-15 missile gave Rafale pilots ‘false sense of security’
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Electronic assault on Indian communications systems reduced situational awareness: Pak officials

“We ambushed them,” the PAF official said, adding that Islamabad conducted an electronic warfare assault on Delhi’s systems in an attempt to confuse Indian pilots. Indian officials dispute the effectiveness of those efforts.

“The Indians were not expecting to be shot at,” said Justin Bronk, air warfare expert at London’s Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) think-tank. “And the PL-15 is clearly very capable at long range.” The PL-15 that hit the Rafale was fired from around 200km away, according to Pakistani officials, and even farther according to Indian officials. That would make it among the longest-range air-to-air strikes recorded.

India’s defence and foreign ministries did not return requests for comment about the intelligence mistakes. Delhi hasn’t acknowledged a Rafale being shot down, but France’s air chief told reporters in June that he had seen evidence of the loss of that fighter and two other aircraft flown by India, including a Russian-made Sukhoi. A top Dassault executive also told French lawmakers that month that India had lost a Rafale in operations, though he didn’t have specific details.

Reuters spoke to eight Pakistani and two Indian officials to piece together an account of the aerial battle, which marked the start of four days of fighting between the two nuclear-armed neighbours that caused alarm in Washington.

## Dormant Russia volcano erupts for first time in 450 yrs

AFP, Moscow

A volcano erupted for the first time in 450 years in Russia’s eastern Kamchatka region, the nation’s emergency authority said yesterday, days after one of the strongest earthquakes on record hit the region.

Pictures released by Russian state media show a towering plume of ash spewing from the Krashennnikov volcano, which last erupted in 1550, according to the Smithsonian Institution’s Global Volcanism Program. The plume is estimated to have reached an altitude of 6,000 metres, Kamchatka’s Ministry of Emergency Situations said.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is welcomed by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, Pakistan, yesterday. Sharif stated that the Pakistani and Iranian leadership are eager to raise bilateral trade volume between the two countries to \$10 billion as soon as possible.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Demonstrators, including WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge during a pro-Palestinian rally in Sydney, Australia yesterday, protesting Israel’s actions and ongoing food shortages in the Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP

# Ukrainian drones spark fire at Sochi oil depot

## 120 firefighters battle the blaze; Russian missile attack injures seven in Mykolaiv

REUTERS

More than 120 firefighters were trying to extinguish a blaze at an oil depot in the Russian city of Sochi that was sparked by a Ukrainian drone attack, regional Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said yesterday on the Telegram messaging app.

In the Krasnodar region on the Black Sea where Sochi is located, a fuel tank with a capacity of 2,000 cubic metres was on fire, Russia’s RIA news agency reported, citing emergency officials.

The Russian defence ministry said in its daily morning report on Telegram that its air defence units destroyed 93 Ukrainian drones



overnight, including one over the Krasnodar region and 60 over the waters of the Black Sea.

Rosaviatsia, Russia’s civil aviation authority, temporarily halted flights at Sochi’s airport to ensure air safety before saying on Telegram that flights resumed as of 0200 GMT yesterday.

Meanwhile, a Russian missile strike on the city of Mykolaiv in southern Ukraine injured at least seven people and destroyed or damaged dozens of homes and civilian infrastructure buildings, the regional governor said yesterday.

Two of the injured were hospitalised as a result of the late Saturday attack, Mykolaiv Governor Vitaliy Kim said on the Telegram messaging app.

Kim posted photos showing single residential buildings almost destroyed, with building debris spread around. He said 23 private homes, 12 apartment buildings and a post office were damaged.

## Saudi Arabia executes eight people

AFP, Dubai

Saudi Arabia has executed eight people in a single day, state media said, amid a surge in the use of the death penalty in the Gulf monarchy particularly over drug-related convictions.

The official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported that four Somalis and three Ethiopians were executed on Saturday in the southern region of Najran “for smuggling hashish into the kingdom”.

## Israeli ground troops conduct raids in Syria

### Renewed sectarian clashes in south Syria kill four

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel’s military said yesterday ground troops had operated in southern Syria, seizing weapons and questioning individuals suspected of arms trafficking, in the latest cross-border raid since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December.

A military statement said that troops had completed overnight “a mission involving on-site questioning of several suspects involved in weapons trafficking in the Hader area in southern Syria”, near the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights.

“Troops entered four locations simultaneously and located numerous weapons that the suspects had been trafficking,” the statement said.

Meanwhile, renewed sectarian clashes in southern Syria’s Druze-majority Sweida province killed at least four people yesterday, a war monitor said, in the first deadly incident since a ceasefire last month. Fighting also erupted around the city of Thaalaa, it said.



## China, Russia start joint drills in Sea of Japan

AFP, Beijing

China and Russia began joint naval drills in the Sea of Japan yesterday as they seek to reinforce their partnership and counterbalance what they see as a US-led global order.

Alongside economic and political ties, Moscow and Beijing have strengthened their military cooperation in recent years, and their relations have deepened since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

The “Joint Sea-2025” exercises kicked off in waters near the Russian port of Vladivostok and would last for three days, China’s defence ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The two sides will hold “submarine rescue, joint anti-submarine, air defence and anti-missile operations, and maritime combat”.

Four Chinese vessels, including guided-missile destroyers Shaoxing and Urumqi, are participating in the exercises alongside Russian ships, the ministry said. After the drills, the two countries will conduct naval patrols in “relevant waters of the Pacific”. China and Russia have carried out annual drills for several years, with the “Joint Sea” exercises beginning in 2012.

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Date: 03-08-2025

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## US agency probes special counsel who prosecuted Trump

AFP, Washington

US officials have opened an investigation into Jack Smith, the former special counsel who led two federal criminal cases against President Donald Trump, US media reported Saturday.

The Office of Special Counsel told The New York Times it was investigating Smith for potentially violating the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal workers from engaging in political activity while on the job.

Republican Senator Tom Cotton had reportedly asked the agency to investigate whether Smith’s actions had been designed to influence the 2024 election.

The agency, which monitors the conduct of federal employees, did not immediately respond to request for comment by AFP.

Smith was appointed special counsel in 2022, and charged Trump with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election and mishandling classified documents after leaving the White House.

Trump denied both charges and sought to frame them as politically motivated, accusing the Justice Department of being weaponized against him.

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Mohammad Ismail Hossain

Secretary [Joint Sec.]

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