

India chases away Pakistan copter breaching airspace

Peerzada Ashiq

It was carrying PoK Prime Minister for a condolence meeting

The Army on Sunday said the troops manning the Line of Control (LoC) in the Pir Panjal Valley's Poonch district opened fire at a Pakistani helicopter, which was carrying Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider, after it violated the airspace agreement signed by the two countries.

"The air violation was noted around 12.10 p.m. and committed by a Pakistani helicopter in the Poonch sector. It was a white helicopter and was flying very high. The air sentries at the forward location engaged it with small arms," said the Jammu-based defence spokesman Lt. Col. Devendra Anand.

'PM is safe'

An aide of Mr. Haider was quoted by Pakistani media as saying that he was flying to Haveli on that side of the LoC for a condolence meeting at the house of PoK Minister Choudhary Aziz on his brother's demise.

Mr. Aziz hails from an area close to the LoC.

"The bullets did not hit the helicopter and the PM is safe," the official told local media.

However, the incident was not confirmed by Pakistani High Commission officials.

Sources said the Pakistani military helicopter flew for nearly five minutes within 250 m of the LoC and hovered over the Gulpur sector before turning back.

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“If it had been a green helicopter, the response would have been different,” said an Army official posted in Poonch.

A video shot on a mobile phone, which went viral on social media, shows a white helicopter flying near a mountain ridge and being fired upon by the troops from the Indian side of the LoC. The Army has not confirmed the authenticity of the video.

1 km limit

Helicopters are barred from coming within 1 km on both the sides of the LoC as per the agreement.

The incident comes a day after Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged fire on the LoC in north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

“Infiltration attempt by militants and ceasefire violation by the **Pakistan** Army in the Tangdhar sector was reported on Saturday evening. Our forces retaliated strongly and foiled the infiltration bid under covering fire by Pakistan Army. No damage, injury or casualty on our side,” said the Srinagar-based Army spokesman Rajesh Kalia.

Meanwhile, Northern Army Commander Lt. Gen. Ranbir Singh arrived in the Kashmir Valley on Sunday and reviewed the security situation in the wake of recent counter-terrorist operations, “which led to elimination of many militants.”

Source: The Hindu