

Mystery Surrounds Drone Strikes on Indian Separatist Bases in Myanmar



A series of drone attacks in Myanmar's Sagaing region on Sunday, July 13, has brought renewed attention to the volatile borderlands, with Indian separatist groups claiming significant casualties and attributing the strikes to the Indian Army. However, Indian authorities have swiftly denied any involvement, leaving the true perpetrator of the aerial assaults shrouded in uncertainty.

The United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I), along with Manipur's Revolutionary People's Front (RPF), issued statements alleging that their mobile camps in Myanmar's "Naga Self-Administered Zone," close to the India-Myanmar border, were targeted. They claimed that over 150 drones, reportedly of Israeli and French manufacture, were deployed between 2 AM and 4 AM. The outfits reported the deaths of three senior ULFA-I leaders, Lieutenant General Nayan Medhi (alias Nayan Asom), Brigadier Ganesh Asom, and Colonel Pradip Asom, with 19 cadres sustaining injuries. A particularly grim detail emerged with the claim that two leaders were killed in a subsequent missile attack during the funeral rites for Nayan Asom.

In response to these grave accusations, the Indian Army has firmly refuted any role in the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Mahendra Rawat, Defence Public Relations Officer in Guwahati, stated, "There are no inputs with the Indian Army of such an operation." Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma further reinforced this denial, asserting that no attack originated from within Assam and that state police were not involved.

The conflicting narratives have led to speculation regarding the origin of the strikes. While the separatist groups directly point to Indian forces, security sources in India suggest an alternative possibility: the ongoing civil conflict within Myanmar. These sources indicate that the widespread

civil war has led to a breakdown of state control in many border areas, resulting in shifting alliances and frequent clashes among various ethnic armed organizations and the Myanmar military. In this complex environment, attacks on insurgent camps could plausibly stem from internal Myanmar dynamics rather than external military action.

Indian separatist groups have long utilized Myanmar's porous border regions for sanctuary and operational bases. While India has previously conducted cross-border operations with Myanmar's military, such as "Operation Sunrise" in 2019, official acknowledgment of the current incident remains elusive. The lack of independent confirmation from either side contributes to the mystery surrounding these latest aerial attacks, leaving observers to consider the multifaceted challenges inherent in securing the volatile India-Myanmar frontier.