

## **Fake news prompts Pak Defence Minister to threaten Israel with nuclear strike: report**

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**Islamabad:** Instigated by a fake news report that his Israeli counterpart had threatened "nuclear retaliation" for Islamabad's role in Syria, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif threatened Israel that his country could use nuclear weapons too.

### **Fake news prompts Pak Defence Minister to threaten Israel with nuke strike**

As per a report in the New York Times, a fake news story prompted Pakistan Defence Minister to threaten to go nuclear.

In a post on Twitter, Mr Asif lashed at Israel after a false report - which the minister apparently believed - that Israel had threatened Pakistan with nuclear weapons.

"Israeli def min threatens nuclear retaliation presuming pak role in Syria against Daesh," the minister wrote on his official Twitter account, using an Arabic acronym for ISIS. "Israel forgets Pakistan is a Nuclear state too."

The NYT report said Mr Asif appeared to be reacting to the fake news article published on awdnews.com, which was titled 'Israeli Defense Minister: If Pakistan send ground troops to Syria on any pretext, we will destroy this country with a nuclear attack'.

The article had appeared on the website on December 20, alongside articles with headlines like 'Clinton is staging a military coup against Trump'.

The fake story about Israel even misidentified the country's Defence Minister, attributing quotations to a former minister, Moshe Yaalon. Israel's current Minister of Defence is Avigdor Lieberman.

The Israeli Defence Ministry responded on Twitter to say the report was fictitious.

"The statement attributed to fmr Def Min Yaalon reg Pakistan was never said," the ministry wrote in Twitter post directed at Mr Asif.

The Israeli ministry added in a second post: "Reports referred to by the Pakistani Def Min are entirely false."

The NYT report added that the proliferation of fake news stories, spread on social networks and produced by a variety of sources including pranksters, foreign governments and enterprising individuals who hope to receive advertising revenue by driving traffic to their websites, has become an increasingly serious problem.

A North Carolina man was arrested this month after firing a gun at a Washington pizza parlor, because investigators said he was investigating claims in fake news articles that the pizzeria was at the center of a child sex slave ring linked to Hillary Clinton.

- (With PTI inputs)