

INDIA BANS ALL IMPORTS FROM PAK

NEW DELHI, May 3 (PTI)

INDIA has imposed a complete ban on imports of all goods from Pakistan with immediate effect on the grounds of national security and public policy, following last month's terror attack in Pahalgam, according to a Government order.

Though the 200 per cent import duty imposed on Pakistani goods in 2019 after the Pulwama terror attack had effectively halted direct imports, the latest decision also prohibits the entry of Pakistani goods routed through third countries.

India's exports to Pakistan in April-January 2024-25 stood at USD 447.55 million, while imports were meagre USD 0.42 million. These imports were limited to niche items like figs (USD 76,000), Basil and Rosemary herbs (USD 16,856), certain chemicals, and Himalayan pink salt. The imports were USD 2.88 million in 2023-24. A provision

has been added in Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 "to prohibit direct or indirect import or transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan with immediate effect until further orders", the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification dated May 2.

It added this restriction is imposed in the interest of "national security and public policy". Any exception to this prohibition will require approval of Government of India, the order said.

Inserting the provision under the heading "Prohibition on Import from Pakistan" in the FTP it said:

"Direct or indirect import or transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan, whether or not freely importable or otherwise permitted, shall be prohibited with immediate effect, until further orders". The decision follows a terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, in

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India will take firm, decisive actions against terrorists: PM

NEW DELHI, May 3 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reaffirmed India's unwavering resolve to act decisively against terrorism and those who support it.

His statement came amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following the horrific terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, where over 26 innocent civilians were killed.

Speaking during a joint press conference with Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves

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India SUSPENDS exchange of mail, parcel services with Pakistan

NEW DELHI, May 3 (PTI)

INDIA on Saturday suspended exchange of all categories of mail and parcels from Pakistan through air and surface routes amid escalating tensions between the two nations over the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people.

The order suspending the services was issued by the Department of Posts that operates under the Ministry of Communication.

Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike.

Border skirmishes continue for 9th day

JAMMU, May 3 (PTI)

THE post-to-post small arms firing between India and Pakistani troops continued in different sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir for the ninth consecutive night, officials said on Saturday. However, there was no casualty in the border skirmishes initiated by Pakistan troops in violation of the ceasefire agreement.

This was the nine consecutive nights of unprovoked firing from across the border, which had mostly restricted to LoC. There was only one incident of firing along the International Border (IB).

Pak test-fires Abdali missile

■ By Sajjad Hussain
ISLAMABAD, May 3 (PTI)

PAKISTAN on Saturday announced that it has conducted a successful training launch of the Abdali Weapon System — a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 450 km, amid heightened tensions with India following the Pahalgam terror attack.

"The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness

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Aus PM Albanese wins 2nd three-year term

MELBOURNE, May 3 (AP)

PRIME Minister Anthony Albanese has become the first Australian prime minister to win a second consecutive three-year term in 21 years. Opposition leader Peter Dutton conceded defeat in Saturday's election, saying, "We didn't do well enough during this campaign, that much is obvious tonight, and I accept full responsibility for that."

"Earlier on, I called the Prime Minister to congratulate him on his success tonight. It's an historic occasion for the Labour Party and we recognise that," he added. The Australian Electoral Commission's projections gave Albanese's ruling centre-left Labour Party 70 seats and the conservative opposition coalition 24



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his partner Jodie Haydon talk with volunteers at a polling booth in his electorate in Sydney on Saturday. (AP/PTI)

seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form governments.

Unaligned minor parties and

independent candidates appeared likely to win 13 seats.

Australian Broadcasting Corp's respected election analyst Antony Green predicted Labour

would win 76 seats, the coalition 36 and unaligned lawmakers 13. Green said Labour would form a majority or minority government and that the coalition had no hope of forming even a minority government.

Energy policy and inflation have been major issues in the campaign, with both sides agreeing the country faces a cost of living crisis. Opposition leader branded DOGE-y Dutton

Dutton's conservative Liberal Party blames government waste for fuelling inflation and increasing interest rates, and has pledged to ax more than one in five public service jobs to reduce government spending.

PM MODI CONGRATULATES ALBANESE ON RE-ELECTION AS AUSTRALIAN PM: PRIME

Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated Anthony Albanese on his resounding victory and re-election as Prime Minister of Australia, and said he looks forward to working with him to further deepen the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

"Congratulations@AlboMP on your resounding victory and re-election as Prime Minister of Australia! This emphatic mandate indicates the enduring faith of the Australian people in your leadership," Modi said on X.

"I look forward to working together to further deepen the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and advance our shared vision for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific," he said.

PM Modi announces USD 200mn for modernisation of Angolan Armed forces

NEW DELHI, May 3 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced a USD 200 million defence credit line for Angola and expressed commitment to act firmly and decisively against terrorism and their backers, an assertion that came days after the Pahalgam terror strike.

Modi made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco that focused on ramping up overall bilateral ties, including in areas of digital public infrastructure.

In his media statement, the Prime Minister said Laurencos visit to India not only gives a new direction to the bilateral relations but also strengthens the



India-Africa partnership.

"I am pleased to announce India's USD 200 million defence credit line to support modernisation of Angola's Defence forces," he said.

The Prime Minister also said that there was a discussion on repair, overhaul and supply of defence platforms as well.

India will also share its capabilities with Angola in the areas of digital public infrastructure, space technology and capacity building, Modi said.

"We have also decided to further strengthen our relations in areas of healthcare, diamond processing, fertiliser and critical minerals."

The Prime Minister also said, "We are committed to taking firm and decisive action against terrorists and those who support them."

Highlighting the importance of ties between India and the African Union, he said, "We are partners in progress. We are pillars of the Global South."

(L) President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco and his wife Ana Dias Lourenco during the ceremonial welcome of the Angolan President, at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, in New Delhi. (R) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and others during a joint press meet after delegation level meeting, at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Saturday. (PTI)

70 pc voter turnout recorded in first phase of Assam panchayat elections

GUWAHATI, May 3 (PTI)

AVOTER turnout of 70.2 per cent was recorded in the first phase of the panchayat polls in Assam, officials said on Saturday.

The first phase of polling was held on Friday at 12,916 booths in 14 districts, and 89.59 lakh people were eligible to cast their votes, they said.

Voting began at 7.30 am and ended at 4.30 pm, but those who had entered the booths within that time exercised their franchise till late in the night, they added.

A few incidents of violence were reported from the Cachar district, but polling was peaceful in the remaining places, officials said.



People wait to cast their votes during Panchayat elections at Baraigram in Karimganj on Friday. (PTI)

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WAVES Bazar a boon to small film producers

■ By Kaushik Bhattacharya
MUMBAI, May 3

SHATRUGHAN Patra, an independent filmmaker from Bhubaneswar, Odisha, was searching for an opportunity to present his film idea to big production firms of the world and India for the last many months. But he failed to get appointments from such firms as they hardly entertain such small producers here in our country. The Government of India announced the WAVES Bazar, the flagship event of World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit 2025 (WAVES 2025) a few months ago. The announcement was like a dream come true for Patra as he got a chance to share his ideas before such big companies under WAVES Bazar.

WAVES 2025, which is a brain child of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave the first ever opportunity to such small



film producers of the country to meet with big firms and do Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with them.

WAVES Bazaar is the revolutionary global market initiative of the Summit, which has emerged as a powerful platform for international collaboration in the media and entertainment industry. Designed to connect creators with investors, buyers, and collaborators across borders,

WAVES Bazaar is poised to transform India into a strategic hub for content commerce.

WAVES Bazar received tremendous response from such content creators all over the country and the response in the very first edition of WAVES 2025, encouraged the Government to host this event a mega level next year, claimed Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting during a press briefing on Friday.

The Bazaar garners over Rs 800 Crore in Deals and Unveils Major International Alliances, informed Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, I&B at WAVES in Mumbai today. In its inaugural edition, WAVES Bazaar brought together leading players from over 22 countries—including South Korea, Japan, USA, Germany, Russia,

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IICT sign LOIs with global giants to work together in AVGC-XR sector

■ By Kaushik Bhattacharya
MUMBAI, May 3

ON THE third day of World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit 2025 (WAVES 2025), in a landmark initiative, the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) launched a series of high-impact collaborations in the encompassing Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) sector with global industry leaders.

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WAVES 2025

Indian Air force conducts night combat drills on Ganga Expressway airstrip in UP



The Indian Air Force (IAF) conducts take-off and landing exercises on the Ganga Expressway, in Shahjahanpur on Friday. (ANI)

SHAHJAHANPUR, May 3 (PTI)

THE Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted night-time combat drills involving fighter jets on the country's first expressway airstrip on the Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur district, officials said Saturday.

The drill, which took place between 7 pm and 10 pm on Friday, saw fighter jets Rafale, Sukhoi, Jaguar, and Mirage-2000 simulate touch-and-go landings and combat operations on the 3.5-kilometre airstrip near Piru village under the Jalalabad Police Station limits.

Superintendent of Police Rajesh Dwivedi told PTI, "Multiple fighter jets carried out successful sorties as part of a night operational exercise. The drill involved precision landings, coordinated take-offs, and tac-

tical operations by jets such as Rafale, Sukhoi, Jaguar, Mirage-2000, and M-32."

More than 250 CCTV cameras were mounted on and around the airstrip for surveillance and security. "This ensures safe operations and quick response in case of any untoward incidents," he said. Traffic was halted for nearly three hours on the Bareilly-Etawah route that intersects the expressway while the sorties took place.

Dwivedi said that some fighter pilots landed on the airstrip through ropes from their jets and then boarded cars parked nearby, as part of an exercise.

"Despite strong winds and unfavourable weather during the day, the drill was completed successfully, with the night operations proving to be smoother and more efficient," he added.