

# India test-fires advanced underwater naval mine

NEW DELHI, May 5 (PTI)

INDIA has successfully test-fired an advanced underwater naval mine designed to enhance the Navy's capabilities against modern stealth ships and submarines.

The development came amid increasing tensions between India and Pakistan over the Pahalgam terror attack. "The Defence Research and Development



Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Navy have successfully undertaken combat firing (with reduced explosive) of the indigenously designed and developed Multi-Influence Ground Mine (MIGM)," the Defence Ministry said on Monday.

It said the the system is an advanced underwater naval mine developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.

The MIGM is designed to enhance the Indian Navy's capabilities against modern stealth ships and submarines. Bharat Dynamics Limited, Visakhapatnam and Apollo Microsystems Limited, Hyderabad are the production partners for the system. Complimenting DRDO, Indian Navy and the Industry, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the system will further enhance undersea warfare capabilities of the Indian Navy.

# Israel approves plan to capture Gaza

■ By Tia Goldenberg and Sam Mednick

TEL AVIV, May 5 (AP)

ISRAEL approved plans on Monday to capture the entire Gaza Strip and remain in the territory for an unspecified amount of time, two Israeli officials said, in a move that if implemented would vastly expand Israel's operations in the Palestinian territory and likely bring fierce international opposition.

Israeli Cabinet Ministers approved the plan in an early morning vote, hours after the Israeli Military chief said the army was calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers.

The new plan, which the officials said was meant to help Israel achieve its war aims of defeating Hamas and freeing hostages held in Gaza, also would push hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to southern Gaza, what would likely exacerbate an

already dire humanitarian crisis. Since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed in mid-March, Israel has unleashed fierce strikes on the territory that have killed hundreds. It has captured swathes of territory and now controls roughly 50% of Gaza. Before the truce ended, Israel halted all humanitarian aid into Gaza, including food, fuel and water, setting off what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis in nearly 19 months of war. The ban on aid has prompted widespread hunger and shortages

have set off looting.

The Israeli officials said the plan included the "capturing of the strip and the holding of territories." The plan would also seek to prevent the militant Hamas group from distributing humanitarian aid, which Israel says strengthens the group's rule in Gaza. It also accuses Hamas of keeping the aid for itself to bol-

sters its capabilities. The plan also included powerful strikes against Hamas targets, the officials said.

The officials said Israel was in touch with several countries about President Donald Trump's plan to take over Gaza and relocate its population, under what Israel has termed "voluntary emigration" yet which has sparked condemnations from Israel's allies in Europe and the Arab world.

One of the officials said the plan would be implemented gradually. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing Military plans.

For weeks, Israel has been trying to ratchet up pressure on Hamas and prompt it to show more flexibility in ceasefire negotiations. But international mediators trying to bring the sides toward a new deal have struggled to do so.



# India to soon get Russia-made stealth frigate

**New Delhi:** India will soon get its second powerful warship built in Russia, a multi-role stealth frigate packed with weapons and sensors, which will follow its sister ship INS Tushil commissioned in Dec last year, reports **Rajat Pandit**.

With India flexing its naval muscles in Arabian Sea, Navy and DRDO Monday successfully undertook combat firing — with reduced explosives — of the indigenously developed underwater 'multi-influence ground mines' designed to destroy enemy submarines and stealth warships. "The system will further enhance undersea warfare capabilities of Navy," defence minister Rajnath Singh said.

The new 3,900-tonne frigate, which will be commissioned as INS Tamal, in turn, is likely to be handed over to Navy at Kaliningrad after the completion of all its crucial trials in a month or so.

India in Oct 2016 had inked an umbrella agreement with Russia for four upgraded Krivak-III class frigates, with the first two to be imported for around Rs 8,000 crore. The other two, Tripud and Tava-sya are being built at the Goa Shipyard with transfer of technology at an overall cost of around Rs 13,000 crore. These four new warships will add to six such Russian frigates already inducted in Navy.

Designed for blue water operations across the spectrum of naval warfare in the four dimensions of air, surface, underwater and electromagnetic, these frigates are armed with an array of advanced weapon systems. The weapons include the Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles, whose strike range has been extended to 450-km, the vertically-launched Shtil surface-to-air missiles with enhanced ranges, and anti-submarine torpedoes and rockets, among others.



# Aus govt to continue working on cutting net migration, hiking min pay for skilled workers

Lubna Kably | TNN

Australia's immigration policy under PM Anthony Albanese's Labour govt will continue to prioritise skilled workers to meet market needs while curbing net migration. With the Labour Party's re-election, the country will continue on its path of reducing net-migration, increasing salary thresholds for skilled visa programmes, and raising visa fees for international students.

The Indian diaspora is the second largest in Australia, with over 8.5 lakh Indian-born residents as of June 2023—more than twice the number of 3.8 lakh as on June 30, 2013.

However, tighter visa norms have seen annual visa allotments drop. In 2023-24, only 50,516 student visas were issued to Indian nationals, down from 1.02 lakh in the previous year. Similarly, the number of temporary skilled employment visas issued had dropped from 27,402 to 18,397.

In Dec 2023, the Australian govt announced that net migration will be halved within two years from a record high of



Labor Party supporters cheer for PM Anthony Albanese in Sydney

5.1 lakh by imposing tougher tests on international students and focusing on workers with high skills attuned to market needs. The net overseas migration numbers were projected to fall to 2,50,000 in 2024-25; followed by 2,55,000 in 2025-26 and 2,35,000 in 2026-27.

Teresa Liu, managing partner (Australia & New Zealand) at Fragomen, a global immigration law firm, said, "We expect the current set of reforms on the Skilled Visa Program and the migration strategy reform agenda to continue. The main takeaway for aspiring employees and indeed employers or Indian businesses doing business in Australia, is that from a policy perspective, it is largely business as

usual. However, the more 'mundane' or expected changes in occupation lists and salary thresholds are expected to be announced in July."

Last Dec, Australia introduced the 'Skills-in-demand' visa and replaced the earlier regime. This visa offers pathways for 'specialist', 'core', and 'essential' skills occupations. As part of ongoing reforms, salary thresholds for the core skills occupations will rise from AUD 73,150 to AUD 76,515, while the specialist skills income threshold will rise from AUD 135,000 to AUD 141,210. These changes will impact employers and prospective employees, requiring them to plan ahead, added Liu.

Last year, the Australia govt failed in its earlier attempt to cap student intake, however, an increase in visa fees come July seems imminent. The current fee of AUD 1,600 was set in July 2024, which was a 125% increase from the previous fee of AUD 710. Their revised outlook includes a plan to increase the application fee for an Australian study visa by AUD 400 to stand at AUD 2,000.



# Russia fully backs India's fight against terrorism, Putin tells Modi on phone

NEW DELHI, May 5 (PTI)

**RUSSIAN** President Vladimir Putin on Monday conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a phone call that Russia fully backs India's fight against terrorism and that the perpetrators of the Pahalgam terror attack must be brought to justice.

In the conversation with Modi, Putin "strongly condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam" and conveyed condolences at the loss of innocent lives, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a social media post.

A Russian embassy readout said Putin described the terror attack as "barbaric" and that both the leaders emphasised the need for an "uncompromising fight" against terrorism in all its manifestations.

It also said that the President accepted the Prime Minister's invitation for the annual India-Russia summit to be held in India this year. Putin was among the first world leaders to condemn the April 22 terror attack that killed 26 civilians.

The Russian President conveyed deepest condolences on the loss of innocent lives and expressed "full support" to India in the fight against terrorism, Jaiswal said. "He emphasised that the perpetrators of the heinous attack and their supporters must be brought to justice," the MEA spokesperson added.

*(Contd on page 5)*

## Japan offers 'full support' to India

NEW DELHI, May 5 (PTI)

**INDIA** and Japan on Monday pitched for united global efforts to confront terrorism in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh condemning Pakistan's policy of "cross-border" terrorist activities targeting India.

The Pahalgam terror attack of April 22 figured prominently in talks between Singh and his visiting counterpart General Nakatani that largely focused on boosting India-Japan defence ties in new areas including tank engines and aero engines.

"Singh condemned Pakistan's state policy of cross-border terrorism against India, perpetrated through state and non-state actors," the Defence Ministry said in a readout.

"He stated that such attacks destabilise regional peace and security. Rajnath Singh called for a unified stand against terrorism and the state-sponsored actions that perpetuate it," it said.

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# DAY-11: Pak resorts to unprovoked firing

## Indian troops retaliate as Pak fires at 8 forward sectors along LoC

JAMMU, May 5 (PTI)

PAKISTANI troops resorted to unprovoked firing in eight forward sectors along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, violating ceasefire agreements and prompting retaliation from Indian troops, officials said on Monday.

This marks the 11th consecutive night of Pakistan's unprovoked firing along the LoC, amidst heightened tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad following the killing of 26 people in the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam.

"During the night of May 4 and 5, Pakistan Army posts resorted to unprovoked small arms fire across the LoC in areas opposite Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, Mendhar, Naushera, Sunderbani, and Akhnoor in J&K," a defence spokesperson in Jammu said. "The Indian Army responded promptly and proportionately," he said.

The firing was initiated by Pakistani troops across five border districts -- Jammu, Rajouri, and Poonch in the south of the Pir Panjal ranges in the Jammu region, and Baramulla and Kupwara districts in the Kashmir valley -- overnight.

Initially beginning with unpro-



A security personnel keeps vigil amid high alert in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, in Srinagar on Monday. (PTI)

voked small arms firing at several posts along the LoC in Kupwara and Baramulla districts of north Kashmir, Pakistan swiftly expanded its ceasefire violations to the Poonch sector and subsequently to the Akhnoor sector of the Jammu region.

This was followed by small arms firing at several posts along

the LoC in the Sunderbani and Naushera sectors of Rajouri district. Subsequently, the firing expanded to the Pargwal sector along the International Border in Jammu district.

The ceasefire violation by Pakistan occurred despite the fact that the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs)

### Terrorist hideout busted in Poonch; IEDs, wireless sets seized

MENDHAR/JAMMU, May 5 (PTI)

SECURITY forces unearthed a terrorist hideout in a forest area in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, leading to the recovery of five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and two wireless sets, officials said on Monday.

All the ready-to-use IEDs, weighing between half-a-kg and five kg, were destroyed in a controlled explosion on-the-spot, thwarting terrorist plans to set off explosions in the border district, the officials said.

The hideout was busted dur-

ing a joint search operation by Army and special operations group of J&K police at Suranthal in Marhote area of Surankote late Sunday evening, the officials said.

While two IEDs were found planted inside steel buckets, three others were packed in tiffin boxes, the officials said.

In addition, the officials said two wireless sets, five packets containing urea, one five litre gas cylinder, one binocular, three woolen caps, three blankets and some trousers and utensils were recovered from the hideout.

of India and Pakistan spoke over the hotline amidst Pakistan's unprovoked firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir on April 29.

It is understood that the Indian side cautioned the Pakistani side about the unprovoked firings during the exchanges.

Since the night of April 24, just hours after India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty following the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistani

troops have been resorting to unprovoked firing at various places along the LoC in J&K, starting from the Kashmir valley.

On April 24, Pakistan blocked its airspace for Indian airlines, closed the Wagah border crossing, suspended all trade with India, and stated that any attempt to divert water meant for Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty would be considered an "Act of War."



# Japan's House of Representatives-led team winds up 3-day visit to Assam

■ Hon'ble Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, Smt. @GorlosaNandita, along with senior officials, bid them farewell at Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport," the Chief Minister's Office posted on X

GUWAHATI, May 5 (PTI)

A HIGH-level delegation of Japan, led by its Speaker of House of Representatives Nukuga Fukushima, concluded a three-day visit to Assam on Monday, during which they held discussions with the Chief Minister and visited several places.

State Cabinet Minister Nandita Gorlosa, along with top officials, bid farewell to the delegation at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport here.

"The esteemed Japanese delegation, led by Hon'ble Speaker of the House of Representatives, H.E. Nukuga Fukushima, concluded their three-day visit to Assam. Hon'ble Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, Smt. @GorlosaNandita, along with senior officials, bid them farewell at Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport," the Chief Minister's Office said in a post on X.

The over 50-member delegation had reached Guwahati on Saturday evening.

Soon after arrival, Fukushima and his team had met Chief

Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and discussed various issues of mutual interest, and later attended a dinner hosted in their honour by the Governor and the Speaker of the Assam Assembly.

The delegation had on Sunday visited an upcoming Japan-assisted skill training centre and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, both at Amingaon, and Tata's proposed semiconductor plant at Jagir Road.

This was the fourth high-level delegation visit to the State since Sarma had toured Japan in February, the Chief Minister said on Sunday.

The Japanese Ambassador to India came twice, an industry delegation attended the Advantage Assam business summit, and a team of intellectuals were also here for a meeting.