

DRI busts illegal import of more than 73,00,000 kg of Pakistan-origin rock salt; four arrested

Operation Deep Manifest exposes a transnational smuggling network modus operandi to circumvent India's import prohibition on Pakistani goods

Posted On: 14 OCT 2026 4:09PM by PIB Delhi

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has once again unearthed a large-scale scheme to circumvent India's prohibition on the import of goods originating in or exported from Pakistan. Under "Operation Deep Manifest".



DRI detected the import of **295 containers carrying 7,311 metric tonnes of Pakistan-origin Industrial/Himalayan Rock Salt**, with an estimated market value of around Rs. 30 crore. The consignments were routed through Colombo Port, Sri Lanka, and falsifying their

origin by using fabricated certificates of origin and invoices issued by UAE-based entities.

Acting on specific intelligence, DRI launched a coordinated, fortnight-long operation between 26 September and 11 October 2026, conducting searches at linked premises in Gandhidham, Adipur, Veraval, Panipat, Pune, Patiala, Delhi and Mumbai.



Investigation revealed that nine importers had brought in the 295 containers through Mundra and Kandla ports since March 2026, in violation of the prohibition. Out of the total 295 containers detected, five containers carrying 140 MT of Industrial/Himalayan Rock Salt, valued at Rs. 24.41 lakh, have been seized at Kandla Port. In addition, sales proceeds amounting to Rs. 20.96 lakh held in the importers' bank accounts have been seized.

Preliminary investigation has uncovered a transnational network involving entities owned by Pakistani, UAE, Sri Lankan and Indian nationals. The network allegedly coordinated the shipments and supporting documentation to disguise the Pakistani origin of the goods. Fabricated invoices issued by Dubai-based firms were used to support the transactions. Significantly, Bills of Lading relating to the Pakistan-Sri Lanka leg of the shipments and customs declarations filed with Sri Lanka Customs expressly mentioned Pakistan as the country of origin and India as the final destination. The Certificates of Origin submitted by the importers were found to be fabricated.

Four persons have been arrested under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962: two proprietors/partners of importing firms, a Customs Broker's G-card holder, and the owner of a Dubai-based supplier who had also established and operated an importing firm in his father's name.

In a similar crackdown last month, DRI seized over 362,000 kg of Pakistan-origin dry dates packed in 13 containers imported by a Mumbai-based firm at CFS Ambad, Nashik.

These cases highlight the evolving methods used by transnational networks to circumvent India's import prohibition on Pakistani origin goods through third-country routing, false declarations of origin, fabricated trade documents and opaque financial arrangements. DRI remains committed to identifying and dismantling such networks and safeguarding India's economic and national security interests.

Following the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, the Government of India imposed a complete prohibition on the direct or indirect import or transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan, in the interest of national security and public policy, vide DGFT Notification No. 06/2025-26 dated 02.05.2025.

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