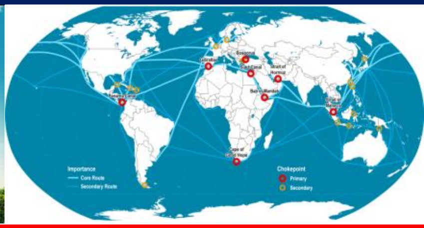
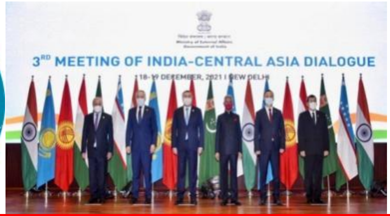
Association for Global Economic Development-India

Corporate Office: A/111, Mittal Court, Nariman Point, Mumbai -India 400 021.





Indian International News Express

23rd August 26 Mumbai-India

India bars Pakistan sugar imports despite 10-lakh-tonne duty-free window

New Delhi: India will continue to keep Pakistan out of its sugar import basket even as it opens a duty-free window for raw sugar to shore up domestic supplies, the government signalled on Friday, indicating that existing trade curbs on Islamabad will stay in force

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said "India's position and policy related to Pakistan is well known," responding to a question at a media briefing on reports that Pakistani sugar producers were keen to supply the Indian market.

The clarification came amid a steep rise in domestic sugar prices and worries over shrinking supplies. The Centre has decided to allow duty-free imports of 10 lakh tonnes of raw sugar to boost availability and ease price pressure.

Pakistan's sugar industry is reported to have pressed its government to explore shipping sugar to India following New Delhi's decision to open up duty-free imports. India, however, has ruled out any exemption from the trade restrictions in place against Pakistan.

On Wednesday, Pakistan floated a global tender to sell 1.05 lakh tonnes of sugar. "If India needs more sugar, there are enough options available in the global market. We don't need to source from Pakistan," a source said.

New Delhi had imposed a blanket ban on all direct and indirect imports from Pakistan in May 2025, after a terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam a month earlier.

India remains among the world's largest sugar producers and consumers, though domestic supplies can tighten periodically because of swings in cane output, diversion of sugar towards ethanol production, and shifts in mill-level output. Elevated domestic prices have prompted the government to look at imports as a means of augmenting supplies.

The 10-lakh-tonne duty-free window is expected to open up alternative overseas sourcing options for Indian refiners and traders. For Pakistani producers, the Indian market would have served as a significant nearby outlet at a time when Islamabad is also seeking to expand its sugar exports. (**Source: Chini-Mandi)**

India’s FTA

India-SACU trade pact talks revived

Trucks deliver containers to be loaded onto a ship at the port in Durban, South Africa

INDIA and the five-member Southern African Customs Union signed terms of reference yesterday to start talks on a preferential trade agreement, as New Delhi seeks lower tariffs on exports including cars, pharmaceuticals and industrial machinery.

The move revives talks between India and SACU, comprising **South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Eswatini,** after five rounds of negotiations between 2002 and 2010 ended without a deal.

The pact could become India’s first major trade agreement with an African regional bloc, giving Indian companies preferential access to a market of about 65 million people while helping SACU members expand exports to the world’s fastest-growing major economy.

The terms of reference set the scope, objectives and procedures for the negotiations. Unlike a comprehensive free trade agreement, a preferential trade pact typically cuts duties on an agreed list of products and is less likely to cover services, investment or intellectual property.

The talks come as South Africa considers raising duties on automobiles from India and China to 50 per cent from 25pc, threatening a key Indian export.

The terms will guide negotiators towards a “balanced, mutually beneficial and development-oriented agreement,” Ndiitah Nghipondoka Robiati, executive director at Namibia’s Ministry of International Relations and Trade, said after signing the agreement with Yashvir Singh, an additional secretary at India’s trade ministry.

India’s Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said he was confident SACU countries and India would ‘benefit immensely’ from a fair, equitable and balanced agreement that he hoped to finalise in the coming months.

India is expected to seek duty concessions for automobiles and auto parts, pharmaceuticals, machinery, electrical equipment, chemicals and textiles, trade officials and industry representatives said. (Source: Economics Times)

India, Russia discuss higher education and identify areas for collaboration

In a recent meeting, India and Russia deliberated on their mutual interests in advancing higher education. Both countries expressed their commitment to strengthen collaborative efforts. Deepti Gaur Mukherjee had a constructive dialogue with Mogilevsky Konstantin Ilyich on Thursday, exploring various avenues for partnership. The Ministry of Education disseminated this news on Friday.

New Delhi: India and Russia discussed potential areas of mutual interest in higher education and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in the sector, the Ministry of Education said on Friday.

Deepti Gaur Mukherjee, Secretary in the Department of Higher Education, held an interaction with Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, Mogilevsky Konstantin Ilyich, on Thursday, the ministry said in a post on X.

"Both sides discussed potential areas of mutual interest and reaffirmed their intent to strengthen higher education cooperation between the two countries," it said.

Oman-India ties to move from trade to partnerships and Economic Ties

Oman and India are strengthening economic ties, moving towards strategic business partnerships. A new Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement enhances trade access for Indian exports. Bilateral trade saw a significant increase during the recent fiscal year. Exports to Oman rose substantially after the agreement's implementation. Oman now serves as a key gateway for Indian businesses expanding internationally.

Oman-India economic ties are poised to shift from traditional buyer-seller transactions to strategic business partnerships, with significant opportunities in trade, manufacturing, logistics, ports and investment, Oman's Consul General Mahboob Issa Al Raisi said.

"Oman is well positioned to serve as a gateway for Indian businesses seeing to expand into the Gulf, East Africa, and wider international markets...," he stated.

India and Oman signed the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** on June 1, 2026. The agreement provides duty-free access to 99.38 per cent of India's exports to Oman by value, covering 98.08 per cent of its tariff lines. Since coming into force on June 1, 2026, 783 Certificates of Origin have been issued. The number of tariff lines at the HS 8-digit level exported to Oman also rose from 2,879 in May 2026 to 3,371 in June 2026, while exports across these lines increased to USD 622.8 ..million in June from USD 402.7 million in May, as per government data.

International Business

India-based GMR Group still a go on Sangley airport project

Sangley Point International Airport (INQUIRER FILE PHOTO)

MANILA, Philippines — Indian infrastructure giant GMR Group remains committed to the long-delayed Sangley Point International Airport (SPIA) project but is still awaiting government clearances before it can proceed with identifying financing for the development. In an interview, Srinivas Bommidala, GMR business chair for energy and international airports, said the company's team had already undertaken two or three site visits in the past three months.

Our team, as far as we are concerned, we are pretty serious. But things have to move because it is connected to the Navy. We don't want to disturb the sovereignty requirements. We respect the local country's requirements," Bommidala said.

GMR officials have yet to identify a specific amount they would commit to financing the project as government clearances remain pending, although they said the company has been in continuous engagement with the government and the consortium involved in the project.

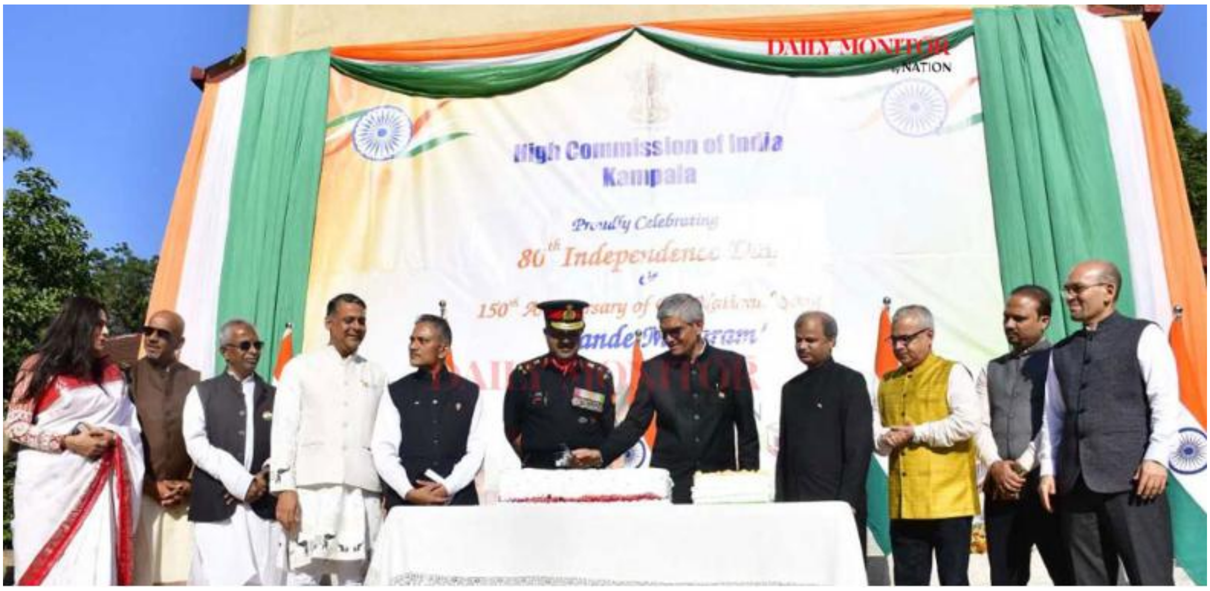
For now, GMR is conducting traffic and financial studies while awaiting the necessary clearances. GMR, which has an aviation footprint in the Philippines, first made its "firm commitment" to President Marcos in August last year to help develop the Sangley Aerocity and SPIA in Cavite. Sangley Point The project has been long delayed amid changes in the consortium and other technical issues.

GMR will come in as a partner of the Virata-Yuchengco-led SPIA Development Consortium, which in 2022 bagged the contract to build and operate the $11-billion airport.

The Indian firm also developed and previously operated Mactan-Cebu International Airport and now serves as its technical services provider. It likewise built Clark International Airport.Asked if the group plans to expand beyond Sangley, Bommidala said GMR was "more than happy" to invest.

Certainly, as a private investor, we'll be more than happy to look at good opportunities, including Sangley and other regional airports, which will be a win-win for both of us, between India and the Philippines," he said. INQ (**Source:**INQUIRER.NET)

India hails appointment of Sanjay Tanna to Uganda cabinet



- **India has also urged its pharmaceutical firms to invest in medicine manufacturing in Uganda. (Source: Monitor)**

India-UAE Business Expansion Forum: The next growth for Indian SMEs

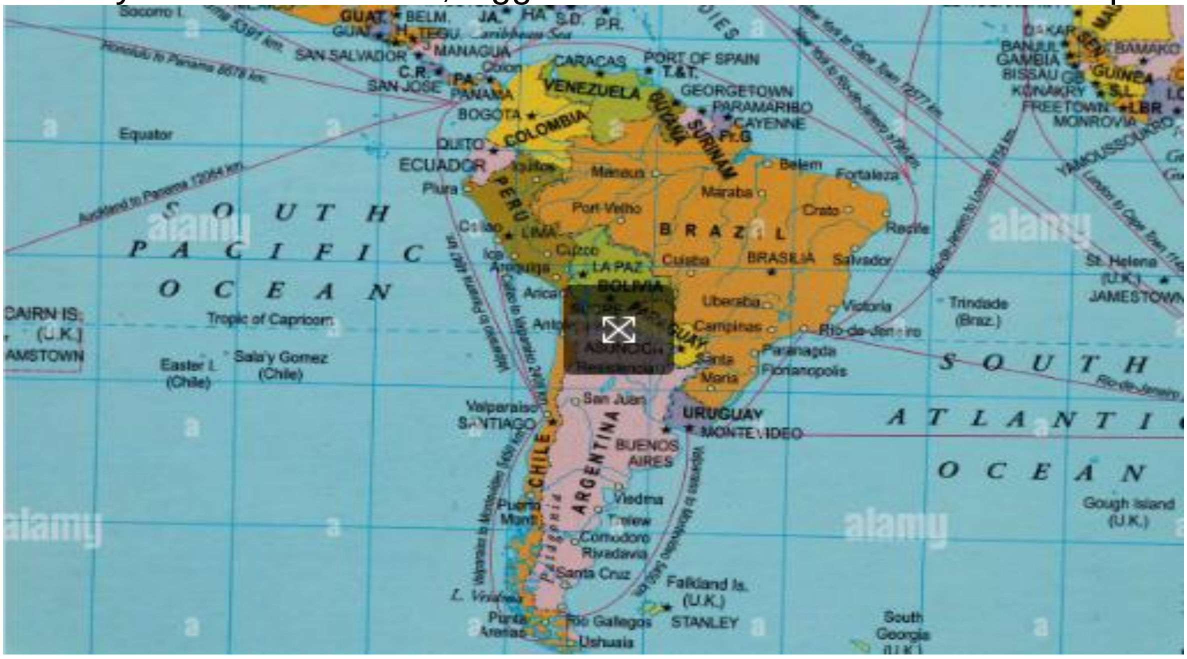
As Indian businesses look beyond exports towards building a lasting international presence, the India-UAE Business Expansion Forum will explore what it takes to scale globally through the right markets, structures and partnerships.

For many Indian small and medium enterprises (SMEs), international growth is no longer a novelty. From manufacturing and engineering to textiles, trading, pharmaceuticals, electronics and consumer goods, businesses across sectors have spent years building export relationships, entering overseas markets and expanding their customer base beyond India.

Among the destinations increasingly featured in these conversations is the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Located along major trade corridors linking Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, the UAE has become an important base for companies seeking to manage regional operations, support international trade and access multiple markets from a single location.

It is against this backdrop that the India-UAE Business Expansion Forum, presented by Ajman Free Zone in association with *The Economic Times*, will bring together exporters, manufacturers, trading companies, entrepreneurs and business leaders in Chennai on 24 August 2026 and Delhi-NCR on 26 August 2026.

India eyes critical minerals, bigger markets in South America trade push



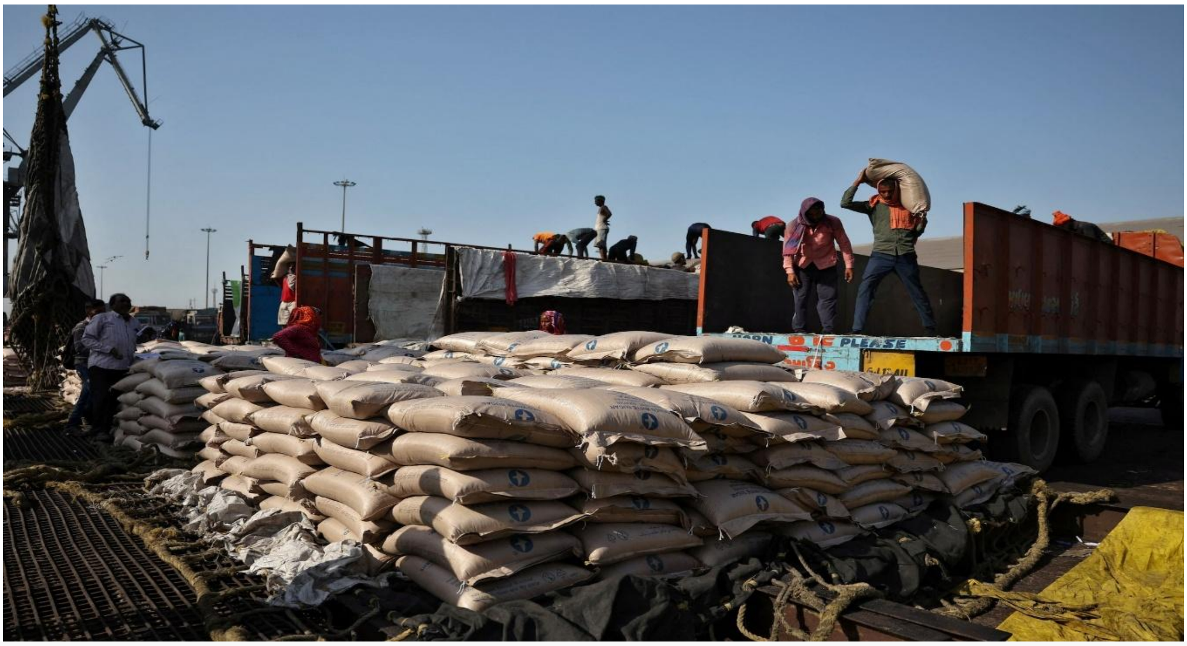
India is strengthening trade ties with South American nations like Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal will chair joint trade meetings in Argentina and Brazil. Talks for a comprehensive trade agreement with Chile are in advanced stages. Discussions will also cover expanding the preferential trade agreement with Mercosur. These efforts aim to diversify India's export markets and boost bilateral trade.

New Delhi: India is enhancing its focus on South America as part of its trade diversification strategy, particularly Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, which present significant export opportunities and are expected to strengthen trade ties during Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal's visit from August 24 to 28, an official said.

New Delhi: India is enhancing its focus on South America as part of its trade diversification strategy, particularly Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, which present significant export opportunities and are expected to strengthen trade ties during Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal's visit from August 24 to 28, an official said.

The official said trade pact talks between New Delhi and Santiago are at an advanced stage, and only a few issues need to be resolved.

India allows duty-free imports of 1 million metric tons of raw sugar



- **Mills and refiners can import raw sugar duty-free until October 31**
- **Global sugar prices jump 4% after India announces import plan**
- **Refiners allowed to sell already imported sugar in local market**
- **Pakistani Traders eager to export sugar to India**

MUMBAI India will allow duty-free imports of 1 million metric tons of raw sugar, a commerce ministry notice said on Thursday, as the government seeks to bring down record-high domestic prices in the world's biggest sugar-consuming country.

The notice allows for the imports between now and October 31, ahead of India's festival season when consumption in India peaks because of demand for traditional sweets.

Sugar prices in India have risen by nearly 40% in two months as lower production has tightened supplies, forcing India to import sugar for the first time in nearly a decade. Benchmark white sugar futures in London and raw sugar futures in New York jumped by as much as 4% after India announced plans to allow duty-free imports on Thursday. India imposes a 100% duty on sugar imports.

PORT-BASED REFINERIES SET TO SELL TO INDIA

India has a handful of port-based sugar refineries that import raw sugar duty-free for refining and export the resulting white sugar.

The government has allowed these refiners to apply for the 1 million ton import quota that would allow them to sell refined sugar made from raw sugar they have already imported in the domestic market until the end of October, the order said.

The result could be to quickly add around 300,000 tons to the local market, a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm said, asking not to be named because he was not authorised to speak publicly.

However, a New Delhi-based dealer with a global trading firm said India was likely to import raw sugar mainly from Brazil, with shipments taking nearly two months, meaning the imports will boost domestic supplies from October rather than immediately.

Sugar mills and refiners with functional capacity to convert raw sugar into white sugar must apply between August 21 and August 28 for the tariff-rate quota that allows imports at zero duty, the order said.

Preference will be given to importers that undertake to complete imports by October 15, the order said.

While international prices rose in reaction to news of increased Indian buying, for India the import decision should cap the domestic rally, Ashok Jain, president of the Bombay Sugar Merchants Association, said.

Pakistani Sugar in Indian Market?

According to senior member of the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association, Pakistan's sugar industry has urged the government to explore ways to export sugar to India after the Centre allowed duty-free imports of the commodity. With sugar prices surging in India amid tightening domestic supplies, Pakistan sees an opportunity to tap the Indian market and offload its surplus stocks. (**Source:Reuters and India Today)**

South African Citrus Gains Wider Access to Indian Market

South African citrus exporters have secured expanded access to the Indian market after Indian authorities approved additional cold-treatment options for fresh citrus, following nearly a decade of technical negotiations.
The move is expected to improve fruit quality and provide exporters with greater flexibility in managing shipments. South Africa already exports citrus to India under several fruit-fly treatment protocols. The newly approved cold-treatment options provide exporters with additional choices for meeting India's phytosanitary requirements while maintaining the quality of fruit during transportation.
The development is particularly important for the logistics of long-distance citrus shipments.

India's trade deficit widens despite 19.6% export rise

- *India's merchandise exports rose 19.6 per cent on-year in July to $44.2 billion, but imports rose 17.5 per cent to $76.2 billion.*
- *The goods trade deficit widened to $32.0 billion, keeping cost and currency pressures in focus for sourcing teams.*
- *Readymade garments, leather, gems and jewellery declined, while growth in cotton yarn, fabrics, and manmade yarn and fabrics moderated.*

India’s July goods trade deficit widened even as merchandise export growth accelerated, making trade flows a key monitor for textile, apparel and retail supply chains exposed to import costs and overseas demand. Labour-intensive export segments tracked in the analysis remained under pressure, with readymade garments (RMG) and leather products declining on-year.

India’s merchandise exports accelerated 19.6 per cent on-year in July to $44.2 billion, compared with 15.5 per cent growth in June, Crisil Intelligence said in its August 2026 first-cut trade analysis, citing Ministry of Commerce and Industry, CEIC and Crisil data. The increase was led by petroleum exports, which rose 68.0 per cent compared with 8.9 per cent in June, reflecting elevated global crude oil prices and prolonged uncertainty in West Asia. Core export growth eased to 14.9 per cent from 15.3 per cent.

Merchandise imports grew 17.5 per cent on-year to $76.2 billion in July, lower than June’s 31.0 per cent growth, Crisil Intelligence said. Oil imports grew 17.7 per cent compared with 40.0 per cent in June, while core imports rose 20.3 per cent compared with 31.4 per cent. Gems and jewellery imports recorded a shallower decline of 2.2 per cent, compared with a 7.9 per cent fall previously. Import growth moderated because of slower growth in transport equipment, electrical and non-electrical machinery, chemicals, non-ferrous metals and electronic goods imports.

As a result, the merchandise trade deficit widened to $32.0 billion in July from $30.4 billion in June and $27.9 billion a year earlier, according to Crisil Intelligence. Preliminary estimates cited in the analysis suggest services trade remained resilient, with the surplus widening slightly to $17.0 billion from $16.4 billion a year earlier.

Crisil Intelligence expects India’s current account deficit (CAD) to widen to 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product in fiscal 2027 from 0.6 per cent in fiscal 2026. It said higher crude oil prices will remain the key driver of the goods trade deficit, and expects crude oil prices to average $82-87 per barrel this fiscal compared with $70.3 per barrel in fiscal 2026. (**Source:Fibre2Fashion News Desk)**

Indian auto: an export boom and a supply crunch

Indian carmakers seeing a massive surge in EV exports to Europe while simultaneously struggling to meet demand at home? Driven by Maruti's European export boom, automakers are seizing a huge global opportunity. Yet domestically, supplier fires, severe weather, and spiking raw material costs have created a supply crunch—forcing companies into a high-stakes race to add factory capacity while balancing electric vehicles with thriving CNG lineups.

This export boom clashed with everything else happening in Indian autos. Customers wanted more cars than factories could build. Raw material costs were climbing. One supplier caught fire, and a few others were simply short-staffed. And in the middle of all of it, every major carmaker was spending heavily to add capacity they couldn't fill fast enough.

EV exports
India's electric passenger-car exports went from barely 1,300 units in Q1 FY26 to over 10,800 units in Q1 FY27. Europe alone accounted for most of it, with Spain the single largest buyer at over 4,000 units.
Almost all of this boom traces back to Maruti Suzuki's eVITARA, which wasn't even part of India's car export base a year ago. Commercial shipments to Europe only began in August 2025, with just over 2,900 units. By March 2026, cumulative shipments had crossed 25,000 units. By May, it passed 35,000 to 46 countries.(Source: Linkendin)

India Emerges as Potential Steel Supplier for Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is exploring steel imports from India as it seeks to reduce logistics costs and diversify its sources of supply, according to an industry official. The landlocked Central Asian country currently imports around 1 million tonnes of steel annually, including TMT bars, largely from China.

Logistics costs are a major factor behind Uzbekistan's interest in Indian steel. Shipping steel from China to Uzbekistan through sea-based routes can cost as much as US$100 per tonne, in addition to the price of the steel itself. Indian supplies could offer an alternative route with potential cost advantages. The potential trade opportunity could strengthen India's position as a steel supplier to Central Asian markets.

India's Buffalo Meat Exports Poised to Surpass $6 Billion in FY27

India's buffalo meat exports are on course to cross the $6 billion mark in FY2026-27, after shipments surged strongly in the previous financial year and continued to gain momentum during the opening quarter of the current fiscal. Exports of buffalo meat reached $5.1 billion in FY2025-26, registering a 25.6% year-on-year increase.

The growth has accelerated further in FY27, with exports rising 66.6% year-on-year to nearly $1.5 billion during April-June 2026, according to trade data.

A Commerce Ministry official said India crossed the $5 billion milestone for the first time last fiscal and is now on track to exceed $6 billion in FY2026-27. The export growth is not limited to higher volumes. Indian exporters have also recorded a significant improvement in the value realised per tonne.

India set for record soyoil imports as Russia-Ukraine war disrupts sunflower shipments

India's soyoil imports are expected to reach a record 620,000 metric tons in August, about 46% above the current marketing year's monthly average, as competitive prices and disruptions to sunflower oil shipments from the Black Sea encourage refiners to increase soyoil purchases ahead of festive demand, traders said.

Mumbai: India's soyoil imports are set to hit a record high in August as competitive prices prompt refiners to boost purchases for festive demand, while disruptions to sunflower oil shipments due to the Russia-Ukraine war push buyers to switch oils, dealers said.

Soyoil imports in August are likely to rise to 620,000 metric tons, nearly 46% above the average monthly imports of 424,549 tons so far in the current marketing year, which began in November, according to four traders directly involved in trade deals. The traders did not wish to be named in line with their companies' policies.

In recent months, Russia and Ukraine have increasingly targeted each other's port and maritime infrastructure in and around the Black Sea, disrupting grain and vegetable oil shipments and reducing export capacity.

Russia and Ukraine account for most of India's sunflower oil imports, which are likely to fall to 180,000 metric tons in August, the lowest since February 2026 and down 28% from a month earlier, the dealers said.

Around 150,000 tons of sunflower oil originating from the Black Sea and scheduled for shipment in August and September have been delayed because of the conflict, one of the dealers said.

Along with **Kandla and JNPT ports on the west coast, Krishnapatnam and Kakinada ports** in southern India are now receiving soyoil shipments, one of the dealers said.

Compiled by Dr.Sham Choughule through various sources for private circulation

Director

(International Business, Tourism, and Maritime Transport)

Shamc2001@yahoo.co.in

Association for Global Economic Development-India

Corporate Office: A/111, Mittal Court, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021.

23rd August 2026