

{ \$405 BILLION EXPORTS MARKET }

Govt aims to grab 10% agri exports market

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NEW DELHI: The government is preparing a five-year action plan to grab 10% of the \$405 billion exports market of 20 farm produce such as mangoes, banana, ghee, buffalo meat and alcoholic beverages, which could be unveiled by the Centre after the general elections, officials aware of the development said.

According to Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), India's current market share in these 20 items is a mere 2.3% or \$9.04 billion, which could be ramped up significantly to boost farmers' income without hurting country's food security as they do not include regulated items such as rice and wheat, they said. This is part of the government's plan to make India the third-largest economy of the world, one of them said. The current regime has tasked bureaucrats to prepare development agenda of respective ministries for the next five years. The next government will unveil these strategies in the first 100



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days of its term, he added.

The strategy is also important to make up for about 5-6% year-on-year dip in exports of agricultural items in 2023-24, he said. "The fall in agri exports was mainly due to export curbs on regulated products such as non-basmati rice, wheat, maize, onion and tomatoes, mainly to ensure adequate domestic supply and check inflation," he said.

"The strategy will also have space to quickly export surplus quantities of regulated products such as onion and potatoes so that farmers do not face glut sit-

uation," a second official said. The strategy is being prepared by the commerce ministry along with its arm APEDA after stakeholders consultations.

Rajesh Agarwal, additional secretary in the department of commerce, confirmed the development. The plan will have "whole of government approach", factoring in inputs of related ministries and state governments, he said. Exports of agricultural products are necessary to boost farm income, Agarwal said.

India's agricultural GDP grew

by only 0.7% in 2023-24, down from 4.7% in 2022-23, as global headwinds such as the Red Sea crisis and Ukraine conflict hit exports, according to APEDA. The state-run agency, which is responsible for only 52% of India's overall agri exports, saw 6.85% fall in outbound shipments at \$22.4 billion in April-February 2023-24 compared to \$24 billion in the same period of 2022-23.

The 20 identified products include fresh grapes, banana, pomegranate, watermelon, mangoes, guava, onion, green chilly, capsicum, okra, garlic, groundnut, alcoholic beverages, cashew nut, buffalo meat, natural honey, ghee, jaggery and confectionary. APEDA chairman Abhishek Dev said.

These items have huge export potential in countries such as US, Malaysia, Canada, Russia, Germany, France, Korea, China, Indonesia, Japan, Italy, Belgium and the UK.

To reduce logistics costs while maintaining quality of fruits and vegetables during transport, APEDA is working on sea protocols for individual items.