

SEA to ink pact with Thai palm oil industry to boost trade

Our Bureau

Mangaluru

The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Thai Palm Oil Crushing Mills Association next month to foster cooperation and mutually beneficial trade opportunities between Indian importers and refiners and Thai producers and exporters of crude palm oil.

BV Mehta, Executive Director of SEA, said a 19-member delegation of importers and refiners led by SEA President Ajay Jhunjhunwala was on a comprehensive study tour of Thailand's

primary oil palm cultivation region in Surat Thani during August 23-27.

LOGISTICS INSIGHTS

The delegation engaged in a series of business-to-business meetings with prominent Thai crushers, refiners, and exporters of palm oil in Surat Thani, facilitating a understanding of the capabilities of Thai producers and exporters. The itinerary also included a visit to Krabi Port, providing valuable insights into the logistics of supplying crude palm oil to India, he said.

The delegation held discussions with senior Thai government officials, including Tama-



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sak Wicharaya, Deputy Secretary General to the Prime Minister for Political Affairs; Burin Sukphisal, member of the Thai Palm Oil Policy Committee; and Supatra Sawaengsri, Director at the Department of International Trade Promotion

of the Ministry of Commerce in Thailand. He said these interactions focussed on the Thai government's long-term oil palm development policies and the potential for expanded bilateral trade through increased exports of crude palm oil to India.

SEA, in conjunction with its associate Solidaridad, extended an offer to assist the Thai palm oil crushing industry in establishing a sustainable palm oil framework tailored to local conditions. The proposal was met with a positive reception, he said.

ANNUAL VEGOIL IMPORTS

"The signing of the MoU between SEA and the Thai Palm

Oil Crushing Mills Association will take place during SEA's 60th year celebration on September 28 in Mumbai," Mehta said, adding the event will be attended by a prominent delegation from the Thai palm oil complex.

India's annual vegetable oil imports, totalling over 14 mt, encompass a substantial share of palm oil products. Of this, around 8-8.5 mt is sourced primarily from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Thailand has emerged as an important player in this market, with its crude palm oil production at around 3.2-3.5 mt annually. Of this, around 1 mt is exported, predominantly to India.