

# Agri exports to touch \$53 bn despite curbs

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**DESPITE THE DENT** from curbs on exports of rice and other farm produce, India's agriculture exports this financial year are expected to reach the last year levels of \$53 billion, a senior official said on Thursday.

"We expect that we would reach that level in spite of \$4.5 billion-\$5 billion impact due to the restrictions," additional secretary in the commerce ministry Rajesh Agrawal told reporters on Thursday.

The government this year banned exports of non-basmati rice and put curbs on sugar and onion exports.

Last year India exported \$11.14 billion of rice.

In April-November, rice exports declined 7.65% to \$6.5 billion.

Though only basmati rice exports are now allowed, there has been an increase in export volume and value realisation.

He said the government is promoting exports of products like bananas and value-added millet products to new global destinations. "In the next three years, we are hoping to increase banana exports to \$1 billion from \$173 million at present," Agrawal said.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority has devel-

## TRADE NUMBERS

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■ The aim is to take fruits and vegetables export to **\$1 bn**



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■ India's share in global trade in alcoholic drinks is

**\$325 mn**



■ The target is to raise the exports of spirits to **\$1bn** in the next three years

oped a protocol for exporting bananas by sea. The first shipment has been sent to the Netherlands and newer destinations will be added.

This sea protocol is a big breakthrough as it reduces costs. Earlier, shipments were going via air. Banana is the most traded fruit in the world with total trade at \$16 billion.

In other fruits and vegetables, the export growth has been 15% this year and in the next three years aim is to take it to \$1 billion.

Demand for meat, dairy and poultry products registered a healthy growth rate during April-November and importers from more countries have shown an interest in

produce from India.

Alcoholic beverages are another area on which the government wants to focus. The global trade in alcoholic drinks is more than \$100 billion and India only has a share of \$325 million. The aim is to increase the exports of spirits from India to \$1 billion in the next three years.

The two key free trade agreements (FTAs) that are being negotiated with the UK and the European Union (EU) has a significant chapter on trade in wines and spirits.

While both the UK and EU are seeking access to Indian markets on preferential tariffs, India too is negotiation easier terms for its spirits industry.