



**“The Five Pillars of Prosperity :
 Agriculture, Manufacture, Navigation,
 Information Technology, Commerce”**

GoG-AMA Centre for International Trade

February 2026 For Private Circulation Vol. 22 ♦ No. 2

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Editor’s Note

India ends year 2025 with two Free Trade Agreements



On December 18, 2025, India and Oman officially signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This landmark deal provides Indian exporters with zero-duty access to 98% of Oman’s tariff lines. It is

expected to significantly boost India’s industrial exports and services, particularly in sectors like petroleum products, textiles, and engineering goods, while opening a strategic gateway to the wider Gulf region. Experts project that total bilateral trade could cross \$20 billion by 2030, up from the ~\$10.6 billion recorded in 2025. In addition, following years of negotiations, India concluded a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with New Zealand on December 22, 2025. A major win for New Delhi was securing zero-duty market access for 100% of Indian goods while successfully keeping the sensitive domestic dairy sector on the “exclusion list.” In exchange, New Zealand committed to investing \$20 billion into India over the coming years. While bilateral trade was relatively modest at \$2.4 billion in 2024–25, the FTA is designed as a “force multiplier” for the next five years. Bilateral trade is officially projected to double by 2030, reaching approximately \$5 billion. SME analysts expect an even more aggressive trajectory, with targets to reach 4x the current levels (\$8–\$10 billion) by 2030, driven by the 100% duty-free access New Zealand granted to Indian goods.

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Editor: Suhayl Abidi

Highlight of the Month

Gujarat unveils Green Hydrogen Policy 2025 with Focus on Production, Jobs and Exports

The Gujarat government has announced the Green Hydrogen Policy 2025, setting out a detailed plan to turn the state into a major centre for green hydrogen production and exports over the next decade. Under the policy, Gujarat aims to build green hydrogen production capacity of 3 million metric tons per year by 2035. This will be supported by 30 gigawatts of electrolyser capacity and 75 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity. To meet these targets, the state is seeking investments of nearly Rs.5 trillion, or about \$55.6 billion, across the green hydrogen and renewable energy sectors. A major feature of the policy is the promotion of integrated green hydrogen hubs. These hubs will bring together hydrogen production, storage, transport and usage in one area with shared facilities. Each hub must produce at least 3 kilo tons of hydrogen per year, host a minimum of 10 industrial units, and include at least one hydrogen production plant. Coastal and port-linked areas have been given priority to support exports. Capital support of up to Rs. 350 million per hub will be provided for a limited number of projects.

Supporting International Trade through Education, Training and Research.

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Exports Hurt: States Flag Facility and Testing Gaps at Board of Trade Meeting



Exporters' challenges were flagged in a meeting of the Board of Trade chaired by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on November 25. IT'S not just high US tariffs that are hurting exports. Costlier raw materials, shortage of testing facilities to ensure products meet global quality standards, and lack of adequate shipping containers are all leading to loss of competitiveness of goods exports. BoT is an advisory body and suggests mea-sures related to foreign trade policy and procedural simplifications to boost trade.

The BoT meeting happened in the backdrop of slowing exports due to the steep US tariffs of 50 per cent, and both countries failing to conclude a trade deal till the fall of 2025. India was one of the first countries to initiate trade talks with the US when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Washington in February last year. The steep US tariffs, which came into effect on August 27, 2025, have dampened exports, and have triggered cancellations in orders and delayed

payment. There are also worries that these could result in orders moving to its competitors such as Bangladesh, Vietnam and China.

Exports dipped in October, but jumped 19 per cent in November driven by growth in exports of products that remain outside the tariff net. Labour-intensive goods, however, risk losing

market share as shipments of garments, footwear and other products are being replaced. New Delhi is aggressively pushing for newer markets and has signed as many as three free trade agreements, with Oman, New Zealand and the UK, in 2025.

Tariff & anti-dumping duty imposed by US

As per the minutes of the BoT meeting, Rajasthan said US tariffs have resulted in the "cancellation of orders" in the gems and jewellery sector and that "payments were also not coming". The Spices Board said that "US tariffs had created a crisis with a 50 per cent duty on oleoresin". Oleoresins help manufacturers achieve flavour and aroma in their final products.

Even as US tariffs have left out generic drugs, representatives from Goa flagged that "pharma exports had been affected due to tariffs. The Seafood Exporters Association also flagged a "significant drop in exports" to the US.

While the representative from Tirupur Exporters Association (TEA) stated that the government should subsidise the difference in the US tariffs on India and those with its competitors, the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India said that Market Access Initiative was not available for the last nine months and the utilisation of funds under Export Promotion Mission (EMP) would need to be expedited. EMP was announced in the Budget last year, with the Commerce and Industry Ministry announcing the modalities of the scheme only on December 31, 2025.

Beyond US tariffs, representatives also broached concerns over anti-dumping duties imposed by the US. Gujarat's representative expressed apprehension of an impact on exports due to the imposition of anti-dumping duty by the US. The Spices Board also raised concerns due to "anti-dumping and Countervailing Duties (CVDs)".

While the US has initiated most anti-dumping investigations against China, it has launched as many as nine probes on industrial items exported from India since July last year, including products such as hexamine, oleoresin paprika, certain freight rail couplers, and overhead door counterbalance torsion springs.

In November BOT meet, more than 120 representatives provided suggestions on the hurdles they faced.

Container shortages & lack of testing facilities

Assam's representative said tea exports from the state face hurdles due to "shipping line levies for empty containers" in the context of the state being landlocked. The representative highlighted the need for taking suitable action to ensure "competitive freight rates" from Inland Container Depot (ICD) Amingaon to Kolkata and urged the Department of Commerce to

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“engage with exporters so that they could use Amingaon as the preferred point of exports”. Gujarat’s representative also flagged the shortage of shipping containers and its impact on exporters.

Shortages of testing facilities were also flagged by a number of labour-intensive sectors and states. While Rajasthan said that “export samples go to Surat and other places for testing and therefore, there is a need for testing labs in the state”, Uttarakhand said that “there was no testing lab and exporters have to go to UP for testing”. Testing labs are crucial for exporters to ensure products meet international quality, safety, and regulatory standards and prevent costly shipment rejections.

The Seafood Exporters Association sought “Marine Products Export Development Authority and National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories accredited labs since the Export Inspection Council (EIC) did not have the requisite number of labs for testing. EIC is the official export certification body of India, which ensures the quality and safety of products exported from India. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) also reiterated the need for testing labs.

Access to input material & regulatory costs

While a MSME representative said prices of domestic raw materials remain 15-20 per cent higher than international prices, representatives from the textiles sector said that “the energy costs for spinning and manufacturing were higher by around 15-20 per cent, which needed to be compensated”.

“An industry representative indicated that the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) standards were being made applicable even for products, which are being exported to the US and the European Union, in line with their standards, as in respect of certain items, BIS standards are more complex,” the minutes of the meeting showed.

The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said restrictions on gold, platinum and silver were a source of concern. GJEPC sought an automatic route where duty benefits are not available. The council pointed out that the restriction has “made component imports more expensive”. “The representative from the ceramics industry in Morbi mentioned that the District Export Committees need to be monitored since the meetings were not being held regularly,” minutes of the meeting showed. Another industry representative said: “MSMEs had challenges with Quality Control Orders (QCOs), stating that QC inspectors must be facilitatory.”

Goyal on investments and quality

At the BoT meeting, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal underscored the importance of quality and said that India’s global reputation as a reliable exporter hinges on ensuring the highest standards in every product and consignment.

On the issue of labs, Goyal said that the lab in Santacruz Electronics Export Processing Zone (SEEPZ) is supported by Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) and there are Central Revenues Control Laboratory (CRCL) labs of CBIC. “GJEPC is looking at setting up labs and the State Governments would be urged to provide suitable building for setting up of such labs,” Goyal said.

On investments, the minister mentioned that Sembcorp of



Singapore is planning to set up a 1000 crore industrial park while other groups like EMMAR and Capital Land too were interested in setting up tourism and industrial park facilities. He asked state or UT governments to identify appropriate land parcels and compete for setting up of such parks.

“On the FTAs, the minister mentioned that India was negotiating Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with EU, US, Oman, New Zealand, Chile, Peru, Australia, Bahrain, GCC, EAEU, Canada and SACU. Moreover, PTAs were being considered with Brazil and Israel,” he said.

Following the press briefing after the BoT, Goyal during said that export growth is expected to register a growth going forward. Goyal stated that the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) would incorporate targeted schemes to help landlocked States enhance their competitiveness in the export sector. The Ministry of Commerce has begun implementing EPM to improve competitiveness of the exporters.

QCO Overhaul

The government last year also started overhauling Quality Control Orders (QCOs) which had hurt micro, small and medium enterprises with domestic prices of raw materials becoming costlier. Dozens of QCOs ranging from chemical intermediates, synthetic fibres to polymer resins that were adversely impacting the textile sector supply chain were rolled back. The Centre also revoked seven QCOs on key minerals, including nickel, copper and aluminium, after months of push back by the domestic industry.

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Profile of Bulgaria



Bulgaria is a small, open European economy that has transitioned from a centrally planned system to a market oriented structure, with services and industry as the main drivers of growth. As a member of the European Union (EU), it benefits from access to the single market, EU funds, and integration into European value chains, including automotive components, machinery, and IT services.

Economy and Structure

Bulgaria's economy is classified as an upper middle income to high income economy, with key sectors including manufacturing (machinery, metals, chemicals), agriculture, energy, transport, and a growing IT and business services segment. The country maintains a currency board arrangement and generally prudent fiscal policies, which have helped keep public debt relatively low by EU standards.

Per Capita GDP

In 2024, Bulgaria's GDP per capita in current dollars is estimated at about 17,400 US dollars, while in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms it stands around 34,000 US dollars. This places Bulgaria below the EU average but above its own historical levels, reflecting steady convergence with more developed EU economies over the last two decades.



International trade

As an EU member, Bulgaria participates fully in the EU customs union and common commercial policy, so its external trade is shaped by EU trade agreements and regulations. Its main trading partners include other EU states such as Germany, Italy, Romania, Greece, and non EU partners like Turkey and Russia, with key export items being machinery, electrical equipment, refined petroleum, metals, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products.

Trade with India and Indian exports

India–Bulgaria bilateral trade is modest in absolute terms but diversified, with total trade around 300–400 million US dollars in recent years. According to India's Department of Commerce and the Indian Embassy in Sofia, India's exports to Bulgaria were about 159 million US dollars in 2019–20, 170 million in 2020–21, and over 220 million in the latest reported year, showing overall growth despite fluctuations. Major Indian export items to Bulgaria include: Electric machinery and equipment, Tobacco and tobacco products, Plastics and plastic articles, Wool and related textiles, Stainless steel flat rolled products and other steel items, Woven cotton fabrics and other textile products etc. India's merchandise exports to Bulgaria in calendar year 2024 were about USD 216.9 million, and they have grown from roughly USD 170 million in 2020 to about USD 216–224 million by 2024, implying cumulative growth of around 27–30% over 2020–2024.

BUSINESS HANDBOOKS

- EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES IN EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION 2025
- TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND UV FOR SMES 2025
- GLOBAL MARKET FOR ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS AND PRODUCTS FOR MSME 2025
- GLOBAL MARKET FOR AUTO COMPONENTS (4TH EDITION)
- GLOBAL MARKET FOR FRESH HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS 2025
- EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM 2025
- GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS FOR SMES 2025
- THE RESURGENT AFRICA: A CONTINENT IN INDUSTRIAL TRANSITION 2025
- GLOBAL MARKET FOR BUILDERS' HARDWARE AND TOOLS 2025



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■ **MIAL's freight curbs may hit India's exports; cargo body warns disruptions**

India's air cargo agents have warned that the proposed 10 month suspension of freighter operations at the Mumbai airport — India's second-largest air cargo hub — could disrupt export flows, push up freight rates, and damage the country's reputation as a global cargo hub, Business Standard has learnt. The Adani Group-led Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) informed aviation stakeholders, including air cargo operators, on December 11 that Mumbai airport will completely suspend freighter flights from August 2026 to May 2027 to re-carpet its main runway, construct a new taxiway, and rebuild the apron used by freighter aircraft for loading and unloading. The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI) responded on December 19, urging MIAL to "immediately reconsider" the complete closure of freighter operations for such a "long period" and to work out a model that would allow operations to continue.

■ **Maersk revised Dry Port Surcharge (Export) rates for key Indian inland locations**

To continue offering our broad portfolio of services and high level of reliability, we are introducing the charge Dry port Surcharge - Export (DPS) - India Locations via India Port of Loading to World for 20 DRY and 40 High DRY Containers with Effective from 01st December 2025 for Regulated Countries & Non-Regulated Countries. Some of these ICDs are Panipat, Pantnagar, Patli, and Pali, effective December 19, 2025, reducing charges significantly

(e.g., from INR 12,075 to 5,000 per 40' dry container) to improve export competitiveness.

Maersk's December IMEA Market Update highlighted new reefer rail services launched in late November, including ICD Sanand to Pipavav Port (weekly, 43 x 40' reefers) and ICD Palwal's first reefer block train, boosting cold-chain exports from Gujarat and Northern India.

■ **Air freight from India to Asia and Europe remained stable through December**

The Indian air cargo market is undergoing significant disruption following steep U.S. tariff increases. India's exports to the U.S.—its largest destination—fell 37.5% from May to September, with major declines across key sectors: smartphone exports dropped 58%, engineering goods fell 16.7% year over year (y/y) in October, and textiles and apparel also experienced substantial reductions. Even previously tariff-free categories—nearly one-third of India's exports to the United States—fell 47% in the same period, demonstrating the broad impact beyond directly tariffed goods.

Despite these headwinds, underlying air cargo demand remains resilient. Projections call for 6–9% annual growth through 2029, driven by a structural shift toward air for high-value, time-sensitive goods. Pharmaceuticals, smartphones, and other advanced technology products increasingly rely on air to navigate tariff uncertainty, global trade tensions, and disruptions such as the Red Sea crisis that have eroded the reliability of ocean transport.

Infrastructure investments are also reshaping market potential. India now operates over 160 airports, supported by major policy programs

including the National Logistics Policy, PM GatiShakti, and Make in India. However, cargo handling is still heavily concentrated at six major hubs, creating bottlenecks during peak periods. New freighter operators like Pradhaan Air Express are adding alternative capacity and supporting network diversification.

GUJARAT EXPORT SECTORS

■ **Gujarat's Fisheries Sector - Export Value Surges 10X**



Gujarat's fisheries sector is experiencing a remarkable expansion, supported by rising production, soaring exports, and strategic government investments. The value of fish exports from the state has climbed from US\$6.98 million in 2001 to over US\$66.97 million in 2023–24, marking a nearly tenfold rise over two decades. With an average annual marine fish output of 8.56 lakh metric tonnes over the past four years, Gujarat has solidified its position as India's second-largest marine fish-producing state. Sector experts attribute a significant share of this growth to the revitalisation of Dholai Port in Navsari, which has evolved into a major fisheries hub since the Department of Fisheries assumed control of its operations in 2007. To accelerate momentum, the Gujarat government has rolled out a US\$18.11 million fisheries development package. The initiative focuses on enhancing shrimp farming, cold-chain and storage facilities, cage culture systems, and value-added by-product processing — all aimed at modernising marine infrastructure and strengthening the export value chain.

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■ **Pharma exports set for healthy growth as innovator drugs go off patents in five years:**

Pharmaceutical exports are expected to continue on a healthy trajectory over the next few years with products worth over \$250 billion poised to go off patents by 2030, said Pharmexcil Vice-Chairman Bhavin Mehta. "We are going at around 5-6 per cent (data up to/inclusive of September) and I think growth will be sustained because [the] next 5 years molecules almost of \$250 billion are going off patent... All of the big guys are preparing to launch most of the molecules in the regulated markets," Mehta told businessline, indicating that exports could see a "good leap" as products go off-patent protection, there are more launches of generic versions of these products, making it available to more patients. In the next couple of years, he said the pharmaceutical industry would build on the twin engines of domestic growth at about 9-11 per cent and the opportunity that awaits from off-patent drugs in exports, he said. The domestic market is growing at about 8-9 per cent. On both fronts "we are doing pretty fine", he added. Pharmaceutical exports were pegged at \$ 30.47 billion for the year 2024-25.

■ **India can expand exports to Russia from \$5 billion to \$35 billion by 2030: GTRI:**

India has the potential to raise its merchandise exports to Russia from about \$5 billion to nearly \$35 billion by 2030, according to a GTRI report, as President Vladimir Putin's visit to Delhi places renewed focus on narrowing the wide trade gap between the two countries. The report shows that even though bilateral trade is touching \$70 billion, India's exports stay below

\$5 billion while imports from Russia remain dominated by crude oil. In FY2025, India exported goods worth \$4.9 billion but imported \$63.8 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$58.9 billion. Crude oil alone formed \$50.3 billion of these imports, turning the trade relationship into one centred almost entirely on energy. The GTRI Report explains that India supplies only 2.4 per cent of Russia's \$202.6 billion import market. It notes that Russia is a large global buyer in many categories where India is also a major exporter, yet India's share remains very small. This, the report says, is where the opportunity lies. Food and agriculture show the widest gaps. Russia imported \$13 billion worth of food items in 2024, but India's exports across fruits, oils, meat and dairy together stayed under \$250 million. Even in areas where India is a strong global exporter, such as meat, oilseeds and fruits, its share in Russia is mostly below five per cent. Processed food is similar, with India's sales remaining very limited despite strong global capability. The pattern continues in consumer goods and chemicals. Russia imported \$3.13 billion of perfumery and essential oils and \$1.07 billion of soaps and detergents, but India's presence stayed below three to four per cent in most segments. Pharmaceuticals, although India's biggest export category to Russia, also reflected low penetration. Russia imported \$11.8 billion worth of medicines in 2024, while India's share was \$413.5 million, despite being one of the world's largest pharma exporters. Textiles, apparel and footwear show some of the sharpest mismatches. Russia bought billions worth of fibres, fabrics and clothing, yet India's exports were a fraction of its global strengths. Big consumer industries

like vehicles, furniture and toys displayed the same pattern, with India supplying only tiny amounts to a market that buys heavily from the world. The report states that expanding India's exports will not depend only on identifying high-potential product lines but also on fixing payment challenges.

■ **India's smartphone exports to US jump over 300% in October:**

India's smartphone exports to the US jumped more than threefold in October to \$1.47 billion, rebounding sharply despite tariff uncertainty and global geopolitical tensions. Overall, India's global smartphone exports rose 49% to \$15.95 billion in the same period.

■ **Trump signs Biosecure Act, lifting Indian pharma stocks:**

Indian pharmaceutical stocks surged on December 19, 2025, after US President Donald Trump signed the Biosecure Act into law as part of the fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act. The legislation, which restricts US federal agencies from contracting with certain Chinese biotech firms, sent the Nifty Pharma index up 0.65% to close at 22,751, as investors bet on supply chain shifts favoring Indian contract development and manufacturing organizations.

President Trump signed the NDAA on December 18, capping a months-long legislative process that saw the Senate pass the measure 77-20. The Biosecure Act, embedded within the defense bill, prohibits executive agencies from using biotechnology equipment or services from designated "biotechnology companies of concern," including entities on the Department of Defense's Section 1260H list of Chinese military companies.

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- **India's trade deficit narrows to a five-month low of \$24.53 bn in Nov as exports to US pick up:** India's merchandise trade deficit declined to five-month low of \$24.53 billion in November, driven by a fall in gold, oil and coal imports, while exports to the US picked up, government export and import data released on Monday showed. Indian merchandise exports to the US rose nearly 10% month-on-month to \$6.92 billion in November, the data showed.
- **India's textile exports grow 9.4% in November:** India's textile and apparel exports saw a significant rise in November 2025, reaching USD 2,855.8 million. This marks a 9.4 percent year-on-year growth. Key segments like ready-made garments and handicrafts showed strong performance. Overall sector size is estimated at USD 179 billion for 2024-25. Cumulative exports for January-November 2025 also registered a slight increase.
- **India's marine exports rise 16% in Apr-Nov despite US tariff:** According to an official note, rise in exports of marine products in the current fiscal reflect both a diversification in export destinations and a structural shift in global sourcing trends, as buyers in Asia and Europe increasingly turn toward Indian suppliers for consistent quality and competitive pricing. Despite being hit by the US' tariff, India' marine products exports increased by over 16% to \$ 5.75 billion in April – November, 2025-26 on year because of a surge in shipment across several new markets, according to official data released on Monday. In November, 2025, India exported marine products valued at \$ 0.87 billion, an

increase of 15% compared to a year ago.

- **Export promotion measures launched to offset tariffs:** The government said it is taking steps to reduce the impact of the tariff hike imposed by the US administration on Indian goods. These measures, which include launching an export promotion mission, will enhance diversification and resilience of the country's trade, it said. He said immediate relief has been given through trade relief measures of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the announcement of the credit guarantee scheme for exporters, enhancement of domestic demand through GST reforms, and negotiating Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with more countries.

- **Over \$3 billion of Indian exports could become tariff-free under FTA with Oman:** Indian textiles, chemicals and other exports worth more than \$3 billion to Oman could become tariff-free, with New Delhi and Muscat set to sign a trade deal on December 18, the second day of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Gulf nation. The agreement will provide a boost to trade as around 83.5 percent of Indian exports, valued at \$3.42 billion in FY25, face a tariff of about 5 percent in Oman. Though bilateral trade between India and Oman crossed the \$10-billion mark in FY25, India's exports at \$4.1 billion have significant headroom to expand in high-value sectors such as engineering goods, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, food products, textiles, and electronics.

GUJARAT TRADE NEWS

- **Gujarat dyes and intermediates sector sees early signs of demand revival:** Gujarat-based manufacturers of dyes and intermediate chemicals are cautiously optimistic about a demand recovery in the coming months, as global supply chain

disruptions ease and overseas markets begin to stabilise. Industry representatives note that operating conditions, while still challenging, have improved compared to the pre-festive period. Capacity Utilisation Improves After Diwali According to Ankit Patel, Vice-Chairman, Chemexcil, manufacturing units are currently operating at an average capacity utilisation of 55–60%, a marked improvement from below 50% before Diwali. Textiles and Leather Demand Picks Up Meanwhile, demand from downstream sectors such as textiles and leather has started to show positive momentum. Patel noted that a resolution of US tariff-related issues could further boost global trade flows. However, he cautioned that ongoing geopolitical tensions continue to weigh on demand from key European markets.

- **Weak Rupee Boosts Export Competitiveness:** Highlighting the export outlook, Bhupendra Patel, Chairman, Chemexcil (Gujarat Region), said the depreciation of the rupee has made imports more expensive but has also improved overall industry sentiment in recent months. He explained that while tariff challenges persist, the weaker rupee has turned into a "blessing in disguise" for exporters. As a result, Indian dyestuff manufacturers have become more competitive globally, enabling them to offer better pricing and benefit from improved margins amid a strong dollar. Strong Export Orientation Across Markets Currently, nearly 60% of dyestuff exports from Gujarat cater to markets such as Europe, Bangladesh, the Middle East, China, Hong Kong, Dubai, Indonesia, and Turkey. This diversified export base continues to support the sector despite short-term trade headwinds.

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■ **Russia's Sberbank seeks to boost imports, labour migration from India after Putin's visit:**

Russia's Sberbank is boosting trade with India, focusing on imports and skilled workers. The bank is facilitating deals with over 6,000 Indian firms new to Russian trade. Payments are being made in national currencies, bypassing sanctions. Russia seeks to increase bilateral trade.

■ **Cabinet approves India-Oman FTA text:**

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the India-Oman free trade agreement that is expected to be signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to that country from December 17-18. The draft of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was approved by the lower house of Parliament of Oman on Wednesday. With the CEPA, India will get access to 98% of its products in Oman and significant access in services. Oman's import duty ranges from 0 to 100% along with the existence of specific duties. 100% duty is applicable on specific meats, wines and tobacco products. Other than trade investment flows between the two sides are also expected to benefit from the agreement. Oman is the third largest export destination among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The bilateral trade between the two countries stood at \$ 10.6 billion with India's exports at \$ 4.0 billion and imports at \$ 6.5 billion.

■ **0% duty on 100% exports: India secures trade deal with New Zealand:**

India and New Zealand on Monday announced the conclusion of talks on a Free-Trade Agreement (FTA), under which Wellington will grant zero-duty access to 100 per cent of Indian exports and commit \$20 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) over the next 15 years. India, in return, has offered liberalised duties across 70 per cent of tariff lines, covering 95 per cent of New Zealand's exports to India in

value terms. Duties will be eliminated immediately on 30 per cent of tariff lines once the agreement comes into force, including products such as wood, wool and sheep meat. As much as 29.97 per cent of tariff lines are on the exclusion list, reflecting India's sensitivities. These include dairy products such as milk, cream, whey, yoghurt and cheese; animal products other than sheep meat; vegetables including onions, chana, peas and corn; as well as almonds, sugar, artificial honey and other items.

■ **Australia, UAE FTAs deliver gains for Indian exporters, but competition bites in many segments:**

India's recent free trade agreements with Australia and the United Arab Emirates have produced a mixed—but largely encouraging—outcome, with Indian exporters gaining market share across a substantial portion of product categories, even as meaningful losses persist in several others. A Moneycontrol analysis of post-FTA trade data shows that both agreements have helped Indian firms deepen their presence where competitiveness, scale and tariff preferences aligned—but have also exposed vulnerabilities in segments where these advantages were weaker. Since the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) came into force, India has strengthened its export footprint across a wide swathe of the Australian market. India's share of Australia's imports rose by more than one percentage point in 857 product categories, covering nearly 79 per cent of the total traded value analysed. In practical terms, this suggests that across most economically significant product lines, Indian exporters were able to leverage tariff concessions, clearer regulatory pathways and improved market access to expand their presence. However, the gains were far from universal. In 2,072 product categories, India's share of Australian imports declined by more than one percentage point. These

setbacks point to areas where Indian firms may be struggling on pricing, product standards, logistics, or scale, or where domestic Australian producers and third-country suppliers have outperformed. Sectorally, India recorded notable gains in passenger vehicles, diamonds and pharmaceuticals, while losing ground in categories such as cast articles of iron and steel, highlighting uneven competitiveness across manufacturing segments.

■ **UAE: Larger market, tougher competition:**

India's experience under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) follows a similar pattern, though with sharper competitive churn. Indian exporters increased their import share by more than one percentage point in 1,597 product categories, accounting for about 61.5 per cent of the total traded value examined. The gains are concentrated in sectors where India already had commercial depth and where tariff reductions amplified existing strengths—particularly manufactured goods, processed commodities and value-added segments. At the same time, the UAE market has proven more competitive than Australia's. In 2,564 product categories, India's share fell by more than one percentage point, suggesting stronger competition from alternative suppliers and the challenges of sustaining momentum in a highly diversified, price-sensitive hub that is deeply embedded in global supply chains.

What the FTAs really show: Taken together, the data underscores a critical point: preferential trade agreements alone do not guarantee lasting export gains. While tariff elimination and improved access can deliver early advantages, sustained success depends on competitiveness, quality, scale, branding and supply-chain reliability. The experience of Australia and the UAE suggests that FTAs can widen the playing field—but exporters still need to win on fundamentals to prevent erosion over time.