

India's Curbs On Malaysian Palm Imports Stir Up Edible Oil Trade

Reuters

LONDON:- India's halt on Malaysian palm oil imports has disrupted global edible oil trade flows, with Indonesia diverting supplies to feed India, Malaysia rushing to tap markets left behind by Jakarta, and India substituting palm with other oils.

India, the top global palm oil buyer, imposed restrictions on imports of refined palm oil last month, a move sources said was retaliation against Malaysia's criticism of New Delhi's actions in occupied Kashmir and a controversial citizenship law. Traders had also held off buying crude palm oil from Malaysia.

Malaysia's latest palm export data revealed the impact of India's restrictions, with shipments to India in January falling 85 per cent from a year earlier to 46,876 tonnes, the lowest since 2011.

India accounted for nearly a quarter of Malaysia's total palm oil exports last year and has been the biggest buyer of Malaysian palm oil for five years.

To compensate, Malaysia dialled up shipments to other destinations, with exports to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Ghana — markets that have traditionally bought heavily from Indonesia — all increasing in January by more than 100pc from the same month in 2019.

"A rebalancing is happening in the palm oil market," said a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm.

"European and price-sensitive Asian buyers are switching to Malaysia from Indonesia due to



lower prices."

Indonesian prices have climbed to a rare premium to Malaysian levels this year, on expectations of higher Indian purchases.

Lee Yeow Chor, chairman of state agency and industry body the Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC), said lower stockpiles in Malaysia have so far cushioned producers from the full impact of India's drop off.

"Right now, the situation for Malaysia is not critical. We are still tight on stocks [...] (India

may buy more from Indonesia. But that will open up a vacuum somewhere in the market elsewhere," Lee said. Malaysian stockpiles are at a two-year low.

Lee said Malaysia was looking to expand market share in the Middle East, Africa and South-east Asia.

Data from the Malaysia Palm Oil Board shows Malaysia sold 170,802 tonnes of palm oil to Pakistan last month compared to 80,660 tonnes a year earlier. It also sold 12,527 tonnes to Bangladesh, up from 575 tonnes the year before, Indonesia was the biggest supplier to these markets last year.

India shifting from palm Benchmark palm oil prices rose by 60pc from July to December last year, though they have fallen recently on concerns over Indian demand and the coronavirus outbreak in China.

India, a price-sensitive market, had slowed palm purchases in the last three months because of the rising prices.

A narrowing spread between the price of palm oil and that of other oils has also encouraged substitution. India's imports of palm oil in January fell 27pc from a year ago to 594,804 tonnes, while soy oil and sunflower oil imports jumped 40pc and 51pc, respectively, data from the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) showed.

That pushed palm oil's share in India's edible oil import basket to 51pc in January, the lowest since June 2018.

B.V. Mehta, executive director of the SEA, said Indonesian suppliers could lower prices to retain buyers or India would continue to buy more rival oils.

"It can't charge a hefty premium consistently over Malaysian supplies. Whenever a gap between palm oil and soft oils narrows, Indian buyers shift to soft oils," he said.

Us, China, Russia Making World More Dangerous: German President

Germany's president took an indirect swipe at United States President Donald Trump on Friday in accusing Washington, China and Russia of stoking global mistrust and insecurity with a "great powers" competition" that could threaten a new nuclear arms race.

In opening remarks at the annual Munich Security Conference, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier deplored the three big powers' approach to global affairs and, without naming Trump, took issue with his vow to "make America great again".

"Great again' — even at the expense of neighbours and partners," quipped Steinmeier, a

former Social Democrat foreign minister whose comments on foreign policy carry authority.

As foreign minister in 2014, he was central to the so-called "Munich consensus" when German leaders said Berlin was ready to assume more responsibility in global affairs. Steinmeier pressed that point again on Friday, but not before bemoaning the foreign policy approaches of Russia, China and the US.

"Russia [...] has made military force and the violent shifting of borders on the European continent the means of politics once again," he said in the text of a speech for delivery at the opening of the conference.

Three Indians Test Positive For Coronavirus On Diamond Princess Ship

The India Embassy in Japan on Friday said that a third Indian national has tested positive for novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, on-board the quarantined cruise ship Diamond Princess.

The embassy tweeted the latest update on Indian nationals on the ship and attached a health bulletin saying: "As of 14 February 2020, altogether 218 people have tested positive for COVID-19, including 3 (three) Indian crew members. All 218 people, including Indian nationals have been taken to hospitals for further treatment and quarantine."

According to the embassy, no other Indian national onboard the cruise ship has developed

any symptoms of the infection.

All three Indians, who have tested positive for the disease, have been contacted by the Embassy of India in Tokyo and are under treatment at the medical facilities. "Their health conditions have been confirmed to be stable and improving," said the embassy in the health bulletin.

SC Issues Notice To J&K Admin

high court by anybody on your behalf? Verify whether anything is pending there," the bench told Sibal and asked him to file an affidavit in this regard.

The senior advocate told the court that nobody has filed anything in the high court on their behalf and the bench can record his statement on this.

"No counter affidavit is required in the matter as grounds of detention are already there," he said.

After issuing notice, the bench said the matter will be heard after three weeks.

Sibal urged the court that the matter be heard next week as it is a habeas corpus petition concerning liberty of an individual.

When Sibal said that it would delay the matter, the bench said, "You have waited for so long. Wait for 15 more days.

Sibal said there was no delay on their part as Omar was in detention since August last year. "She (Sara) has not waited for one year. He was in detention. He is now in preventive detention under the PSA. Kindly have it next week. It is a fresh detention order," he said.

To this, the bench said, "It can't be heard overnight. Sorry."

While talking to reporters after the hearing, Sara said all Kashmiris should have the same rights as other citizens of the country.

She said she was hopeful of an early hearing as it was "a habeas corpus case and the relief would be sooner".

She said that she and her family had full faith in the justice system.

"We are here because we want all Kashmiris should have the same rights as the citizens of India and we are waiting for that day," she said and did not take any further questions from journalists.

Sara had on February 10 approached the apex court challenging her brother's detention under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, saying the order was "manifestly illegal" and there was no question of him being a "threat to the maintenance of public order".

The plea sought quashing of the February 5 order detaining Omar, who was chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir from 2009-14, under the PSA and also his production before the court.

Sara has said that exercise of powers by authorities under the CrPC to detain individuals, including political leaders, was "clearly mala fide to ensure that the opposition to the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution is silenced".

The plea said that on the intervening night of August 4-5, 2019, Omar was put under house arrest and it was later learnt that section 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 was invoked to justify it.

It said that at no point of time in his "prolific political career", he has resorted to or indulged in conduct unbecoming of a "conscientious public figure".

The grounds of detention against Omar claim that on the eve of reorganisation of the state, he had allegedly made attempts to provoke general masses against the revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A.

Omar, who has been junior foreign minister and commerce minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led Cabinet in 2000, was served with a three-page dossier in which he was alleged to have made statements in the past which were "subversive" in nature.

Visiting EU Envoy Calls For

foreign envoys know about the situation in the Union Territory.

The EU official said the programme included meetings with civil and military authorities, some political representatives as well as selected representatives of civil society and the business community.

Last month, the government had taken 15 envoys to Jammu and Kashmir but the European countries had declined to be part of it.

After announcing reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and withdrawal of its special powers, India imposed severe curbs including on movement of people as well as on mobile telephone and internet connectivity. The crackdown drew international criticism with several countries expressing concerns over the situation in Kashmir.

Erdogan Likens Kashmir Situation

address to the National Assembly and Senate, which was his record fourth address to the Pakistani Parliament over the years.

In September last year, Erdogan raised the Kashmir issue during his address at the United Nations General Assembly.

Reacting to his remarks in the UN, India said it "deeply regrets" the statement of Turkey on the Kashmir issue, and termed it an internal matter.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar called upon Turkey to have a proper understanding of the situation in Kashmir before making further comments.

India revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5. Reacting to India's move, Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties with New Delhi and expelled the Indian High Commissioner.

India has always maintained that Jammu and Kashmir is its integral part and ruled out any third party mediation, including either from the UN or the US, saying it is a bilateral issue with Pakistan.

42-Day Amarnath Yatra

that a 42-day yatra would commence on 23rd June, 2020, an auspicious day of Jagan Nath Rath Yatra as per Hindu calendar, and conclude on Shraavan Purnima (Raksha Bandhan) on 3rd August, 2020," Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), Bipul Pathak said here.

The decision was taken during the 37th meeting of the board held at Raj Bhawan here and presided over by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu who is also the chairman of the SASB.

The registration for the yatra will begin from April 1.

Considering the success of the pilot project of online registration of limited number of yatis in 2019, the board decided to increase the quota of online registration, a spokesman of the board said.

No person below the age of 13 years and above the age of 75 years shall be permitted to undertake the pilgrimage, he said.

Instructions were also issued to ensure that the yatra routes and camps remain plastic-free, the spokesman said.

India, Pak Troops Trade Fire

was killed and four other villagers were injured, they said.

The injured have been taken to a hospital, they said.

Indian troops guarding the border retaliated bitterly resulting in an exchange of fire, which continued till reports last came in, they said.

An Indian soldier was killed and three others were injured as the two estranged armies traded fire in Degwar sector of Poonch on Saturday last week.

On Monday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Rajya Sabha that Pakistan army was involved in a total of 3,479 ceasefire violations along the Jammu and Kashmir border in 2019.

Singh had said that 13 Indian Army personnel and two soldiers of the Border Security Force (BSF) were killed in action in 2019 due to ceasefire violations (CFVs) and cross border firing (CBF).

"In January, February and March, there were 216, 251 and 275 CFVs, respectively by Pakistan along the Jammu and Kashmir border," Rajnath Singh had said.

"In October, November and December, there were 398, 333 and 393 CFVs, respectively by the neighbouring country along the border," he had added.

At 190, the lowest number of CFVs in 2019, were observed in the month of June, according to the statistics presented by the defence minister in Rajya Sabha.

Ex-Militant Held For Former

was killed in a blast outside the same mosque ahead of Friday prayers on April 8, 2011. Gazali, a resident of Beerwah in Budgam district, was a co-accused in the murder case and was currently on bail.

Pleasant Weather In Kashmir,

winds in the morning and evening. People were seen enjoying sunny weather at parks and gardens, including at Lal Chowk, the nerve centre of this summer capital.

The intensity of the heat was high, as compared to previous days, much to the delight of people.

The minimum temperature at Srinagar was recorded at 2.2 degrees, while it was 1.6 degrees, one degree and 0.9 degree at Kokernag, Kupwara and Qazigund, respectively.

Gulmarg, about 55 km from here in north Kashmir, was coldest in the valley at minus 5.6 degrees minimum temperature. The experts said this will help snow to melt slowly.

At Pahalgam, the minimum temperature was minus 2 degrees, a Met spokesperson said here.

BJP, Oppn Trade Barbs Over

"When nation is paying homage to martyrs of dastardly Pulwama attack, @RahulGandhi, a known sympathizer of LeT & Jaish-e-Mohammad, chooses to target not just the government but security forces as well. Rahul will never question real culprit, Pakistan...,"

Rao said on Twitter.

"This is an insult to martyrs who sacrificed their life for the country. Congress has done this in past as well and people taught them a lesson for this blunder. Such remarks by Rahul Gandhi help Pakistan counter India on international platforms," added his party colleague Shah Nawaz Hussain.

On February 14, 2019, 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel were killed when a jeep laden with explosives hit a convoy of vehicles carrying security personnel on the Jammu-Srinagar highway at Lethpora in Pulwama. The jeep was driven by Jaish-e-Mohammed militant Adeel Ahmed Dar, inquiries revealed.

Paying his "heartfelt homage" to the martyrs of the "ghastly attack", CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury wanted to know what had been done for the survivors and the families of those who had laid their lives down for the nation.

"Modi and the BJP directly asked for votes in the name of the martyrs of Pulwama," he said.

"Where is the Inquiry report one year on after the terror attack? Who has been held accountable for the loss of so many lives and the massive intelligence failure? #Pulwama," Yechury asked on Twitter.

CPI-M leader Mohammed Salim demanded justice and asked how 80 kg of RDX crossed the international border.

"We don't need a memorial to remind us of our incompetence. The only thing we need to know is how 80 kg of RDX got past the international borders to the 'most militarised zone on earth' & exploded in Pulwama. Justice for Pulwama Attack needs to be done," Salim said on Twitter.

24 Militants Killed Since Jan:

Dilbagh Singh who called on Union Minister Jitendra Singh here.

During the meeting, Singh briefed the minister about the current security scenario in the Union Territory.

The DGP informed the minister that militancy-related violence in Jammu and Kashmir had come down by 60 per cent in less than one and a half months in 2020, as compared to the same period in 2019, the government officials said.

At the same time, there has been no major law and order or stone pelting incident at encounter sites or during burials of slain militants, the minister was informed.

Officials said a detailed presentation was made before the minister highlighting that up to February 13 in the current year, 24 militants have been killed.

This is in addition to the arrest of 12 operatives involved in grenade attacks in Srinagar and other areas, and the arrest of 43 over ground workers (OGWs) who were providing all kind of assistance and logistical support to various cadres of different militant outfits.

Of the 24 militants killed so far in 2020, the DGP's report indicated that 10 militants were affiliated with the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), three militants had recently infiltrated the UT and were killed at Ban Toll Plaza, Jammu and 11 were from Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) outfit.

The minister appreciated the performance of the security forces and close coordination between Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) and the paramilitary forces, saying it had become much more cohesive and effective after the imposition of Governor's rule and creation of the Union Territory, officials said.

He also expressed satisfaction that in the