

Gold Dealers' Disquiet Over Imports from Africa

Trade body alerts New Delhi on some refineries' sharp practice of buying duty-free gold from Tanzania and Guinea

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Mumbai: At a time the US government has cautioned against the trade in 'conflict gold', an old lobby of bullion dealers and jewellers in India has alerted New Delhi that some of the refineries in India are resorting to a sharp practice of importing dore (or, semi-pure) gold, free of customs duty, from least developed African countries like Tanzania and Guinea.

While there is no evidence that the dore bought by this group of refineries is 'conflict gold', which is illicitly mined and used to bank-roll private militias and mercenaries, the local bullion body has pointed out that such imports could disturb the market where other refineries are paying customs duty and trying to put in place international guidelines on 'responsible sourcing'.

This clutch of refineries are using the bilateral trade pacts that India

has with some of the poorer countries to source dore gold without duty.

"About a week ago, the Indian Bullion & Jewellers Association (IBJA) drew the government's attention to this. The import of such gold dore is being allowed by the

customs authority at zero duty where

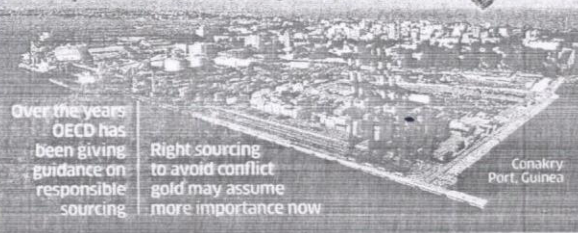
normal gold dore attracts a customs duty of 14.35%. A few refineries have already imported around 300 kg while we understand a big import consignment is being planned by a large local refiner.

While most of the refineries in India are taking efforts to follow the OECD guidelines on responsible sourcing, such questionable imports from poor African countries are being undertaken by few refineries. If unchecked, more refineries may do such imports. This also as-

Sourcing Concerns

India imports 800 tonnes of gold a year

About 40% of the imported gold is dore (semi-pure)



sumes significance in the light of the recent US advisory on gold trade and imports from Sub-Saharan Africa," said Surendra Mehta, National Secretary of IBJA, a 100-year old trade body.

Since gold dore can only be imported under a licence from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and in accordance with the rules for Import of Goods

at Concessional Duty (or IGCR), we fail to understand how gold dore from least developed countries are cleared with DGFT licence, said Mehta.

On June 27, 2023, the US Department of State issued a unique business advisory, highlighting the opportunities and specific risks linked to the gold trade across sub-Saharan Africa. The release advised

industry participants to "adopt and apply strengthened due diligence practices to ensure that malign actors, such as the Wagner group, are unable to exploit and benefit from the sector."

Sub-Saharan Africa produces 25% of the world's gold each year.

The US government, according to the World Gold Council, is taking action to ensure that illegally mined gold from the Africa region does not make its way into the formal supply chain.

Of the 800 tonnes of gold flowing into India, about 40% is dore gold. Of the 40-odd refiners in India, around 10 of them are undergoing the audit that would fully certify them for responsible sourcing. "It's a rigorous process and the certificate has to be renewed periodically. In the absence of such an audit, the Indian refiner has to depend on the certificate produced by the seller. Such certificates are given by the government agencies of the respective countries where

the gold is mined," said an industry official. "It would be wrong to question the sourcing of all the dore that's entering India from markets like the UAE. But going forward, the US advisory could drive refiners to go through the audit which looks into whether the mines are following the necessary rules," said the person.

Once bullion spot exchanges are operational in India, it's perceived that the sourcing process would become more stringent as the bourses would only accept the delivery of gold that is sourced from a kosher network of mines.

Despite the large production of gold in sub-Saharan Africa, there is very little refining and trading in the region. According to the US advisory, "The principal direct export markets for refining of gold from across sub-Saharan Africa are reported to be the UAE, Switzerland and India, though transparency in the sector with respect to these relationships remains limited."

Indian Crude Imports from Russia Drop 6.5% in June

dt. 4/7/23

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New Delhi: India's imports of crude oil from Russia fell 6.5% in June after reaching a record high in May, while those from Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the US increased, according to energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

India imported 1.8 million barrels per day (mbd) of Russian crude in June. China imported 1.6 mbd of seaborne Russian crude in June, 12% more than in



May, and Europe took 0.42 mbd, 28% more than in the previous month.

The share of Russian oil in overall imports declined to 39.5% in June from 43% in May

The share of Russian oil in India's overall imports declined to 39.5% in June from 43% in May. Russia's share still nearly equalled the combined share of Iraq (18.6%), Saudi (16.1%), and the US (5%), the next three largest suppliers to India.

"India's imports of Russian crude have receded in June off the back of lower exports from Russia.

"There remains much uncertainty as to whether Russia will stick to its production cuts or ramp up its production in the coming months, given the importance of oil revenues for the country," said Serena Huang, an analyst at Vortexa.

Russia's Crude Exports Rebound as Signs of Cuts Elusive

The ECONOMIC TIMES dt. 05/07/23

Bloomberg

Russia's seaborne crude oil flows to international markets rose sharply last week to hit a seven-week high and indicate that the previous week's drop was maintenance-related.

Crude flows through Russian ports jumped by about 1.3 million barrels a day in the week to July 2, as flows through two key export terminals bounced back, following a well-established pattern that previously has been related to maintenance. Bigger shipments were seen from all regions, but the largest gains came from the Baltic and Pacific ports, which had been the hardest hit in the prior week's slump.

Russia plans to cut crude export flows in August by 500,000 barrels a day in an effort that it says is intended to help keep the global market balanced. Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak didn't give a baseline for the export reduction. A subsequent statement from Novak's

office indicated that output would be scaled back by a similar amount.

So far, there has been little evidence that an initial output cut that was due to come into effect in March retaliation for Western sanctions imposed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had any material impact on crude flows out of the country. In the latest four-week period, seaborne exports were still running about 25,000 barrels a day above their average level in February, the baseline month for that reduction, despite the slump in the week to June 25.

Crude flows to India, which has emerged as the biggest buyer of Russia's seaborne flows, appear to be slipping as the country starts to reach the limits of its Russian purchases. Shipments exceeded 2 million barrels a day in May, but are set to average at least 50,000 barrels a day less than that in June. The gap could be even wider if some of the vessels currently heading to Asia, but yet to signal a final destination, end up in China.



'Nimbus SPB' a Russian oil products tanker, floats in the Finnish Gulf past the headquarters of Gazprom in St. Petersburg, Russia. — AP

On a four-week average basis, overall seaborne exports in the period to July 2 edged up by 12,000 barrels a day to 3.4 million barrels a day. The impact of the previous week's slump in shipments will be felt in four-week average flows until late July.

Weekly data are affected by the scheduling of tankers and loading delays caused by bad weather. Port maintenance can also disrupt exports for several days at a time.

All figures exclude cargoes identified as Kazakhstan's KEBCO grade. Those are shipments made by KazTransoil JSC that transit Russia for export through the Baltic ports of Ust-Luga and Novorossiysk.

The Kazakh barrels are blended with crude of Russian origin to create a uniform export grade. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kazakhstan has rebranded its cargoes to distinguish them from those shipped by Russian companies.

Transit crude is specifically exempted from European Union sanctions.

Four-week average shipments to Russia's Asian customers, plus those on vessels showing no final destination, edged higher to 3.12 million barrels a day in the period to July 2 from 3.08 million barrels a day in the four weeks to June 25.

While the volumes heading to India appear to have declined from recent highs, history shows that most of the cargoes on ships without an initial destination eventually end up there or in China. But even if all the ships yet to show a final destination head to India, shipments to the nation would still be down by about 250,000 barrels a day from their peak in May. The equivalent of 354,000 barrels a day was on vessels showing destinations as either Port Said or Suez in Egypt, or which already have been or are expected to be transferred from one ship to another off the South Korean port of Yeosu. Those voyages typically end at ports in India or China.

● IMPACT OF US SANCTIONS

Payment delays dampen basmati exports to Iran

West Asian country's share in exports falls

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, July 4

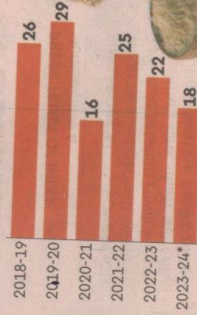
INDIA'S BASMATI RICE exports to Iran, which has been the largest importer of aromatic long-grain rice from the country for several years, have slowed recently, due to a delay in the settlement of payments to the West Asian country under the US' sanctions.

Rice exporters said that the delays in settlement have been especially long in recent months as rupee reserve built up from the oil exports to India has depleted and a chunk of payments is being routed through third currency payment system using Dirham via Dubai.

"It's a complex process to get payment for basmati rice exports to Iran," a leading exporter of rice from Haryana said on the condition of anonymity. He said that it would not be easy to replace Iran, which had share of 22% in the 4.55 million tonne (MT) of basmati rice exports from India. According to trade data, India's exports

BASMATI RICE EXPORTS

% share of Iran in volume



Source: DGCIIS, *Apr-May



of basmati to Iran in the first two months of the current fiscal have been flat at 0.15 MT compared to the same month's previous fiscal. The share of Iran in the total basmati rice exports which was 29% in 2019-20 to 18% in April-May in the current fiscal.

Rice shipments to Iran had got a boost when India launched a rupee settlement mechanism from April 2012 with Iran to avoid sanctions from the US and EU. As part of the initiative, state-owned UCO Bank tied up with Iranian lenders — Parsian, Pasargad, Saman and EN Banks — for settlements of dues.

The system of rupee settlement continued till 2019 after India stopped buying crude oil

from Iran. Importers in Iran are currently settling payments using traders' accounts based in Dubai. Out of the total exports of 4.55 MT of Basmati rice last fiscal, the top five countries had the share of Iran (22%), Saudi Arabia (21%), Iran (8%), United Arab Emirates (7%) and Yemen (6%).

Industry sources said that major exporters of basmati rice are has stopped shipment to Iran due to payment settlement issues. A senior official confirmed that while there is a barter system of rupee payment for India's exports of banana and imports of apples from Iran, for basmati rice exports most of the payments are through a third currency payment system.

Govt's multi-pronged exports strategy to focus on key markets and products

TARGETED DRIVE. Roadshows will be held in 12 nations to promote auto, medical devices, pharma, textiles

Amiti Sen
New Delhi

With Indian exports on a downslide as demand from key markets continues to shrink, the government is working on a multi-pronged export strategy that will focus on export promotion by holding exhibitions and roadshows in about a dozen countries to begin with, including the US, the UK, the UAE and Russia.

It will also work simultaneously on promoting domestic manufacturing with an eye on exports, said senior officials.

"There are about 40 countries, out of the roughly 200 countries that India trades with, that account for 85 per cent of the country's exports. Concentrating on these countries can lead to a more fo-



CLOUDED PROSPECTS. Goods exports fell 10.3 per cent in May 2023 to \$34.98 billion, the fourth straight month of decline

cussed approach towards export promotion.

"We are working out trade and investment strategy to promote exports focussing on 12 countries in the first phase," per an official tracking the matter. The focus countries of the first phase also include Brazil, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Ger-

many, Sweden, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea.

The commodities that are to be promoted in the initial phase include auto, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, textiles, food processing, tourism, electrical items, the source added.

The territorial divisions of

the Department for Promotion of Investment and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Commerce Department, together with Invest India and Indian Missions, are working on organising roadshows, exhibitions and buyer-seller meets in the 12 identified countries, said the source.

FALL IN DEMAND

India's goods exports fell for the fourth straight month by 10.3 per cent (year-on-year) in May 2023 to \$34.98 billion, as demand in key markets such as China, the US and the EU declined. "Since demand in most of India's major markets is down, the government hopes to grab a bigger share of the identified markets, which hold a potential for growth, through various promotional measures," the source added. The

Commerce Department has also identified major conferences that will be held over the next 5-6 months in India, such as the World Spice Congress and World Food Show, which will also have reverse buyer-seller meets, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal pointed out recently during a media interaction.

The DPIIT and Department of Commerce are working together in building synergies between domestic manufacturing and exports, said Barthwal. "What we are emphasising on is 'make in India' and 'make for the world'. Whatever we are making in India should not be just focussed towards domestic consumption, but should also have export-orientation. We are looking at how to forge an alliance in terms of investment and trade," he said.

Amazon expects \$8 billion in exports from India this year

Firm has 125K exporters from more than 200 cities

ARYAMAN GUPTA

New Delhi, 5 July

E-commerce major Amazon on Wednesday said it is on track to enable \$8 billion in cumulative exports by the end of 2023, up 60 per cent from \$5 billion last year.

The firm now has 125,000 Indian exporters from more than 200 cities under its Amazon Global Selling Programme, which was launched in 2015.

Of this, more than 1,200 exporters on the programme crossed ₹1-crore sales in 2022, the company said while unveiling its Exports Digest 2023 report.

These developments are in line with the company's target of crossing the \$20-billion mark in exports by 2025. This has been doubled from its previous target.

The programme, Amazon said, has allowed exporters to sell over 266 million 'Made-in-India' products through Amazon's 18 international marketplaces. The US, the UK, Canada, France, Spain and Italy were among the top marketplaces for Indian exporters.

"In the last 12-24 months, we have seen a lot of emerging marketplaces like UAE, Australia and Japan as robust destinations where our sellers are listing their products," Bhupen Wakankar, director, global trade at Amazon India, told *Business Standard*.

"These markets are growing a lot faster than established ones," he said. There is, however, still room to grow in established markets as well, Wakankar added. "We are not doing anything specific that incentivises or focuses on emerging markets. We are very clear

that the technology available for exporters to established markets is available to the ones focusing on emerging markets as well. Many of our sellers are operating in multiple marketplaces," he said.

The states, which saw the maximum number of exports on the program, include Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. In 2022, Amazon's highest-growing export categories included toys — which saw over 50 per cent growth, home and kitchen products (35 per cent growth), and beauty products (25 per cent). Furniture and luggage witnessed growth of 20 per cent each.

"We are seeing a lot of growth in categories like toys, leather goods, ayurveda products and even furnishing. These new and emerging sectors are growing much faster than traditional categories such as home products, which include bed sheets, bed covers and rugs," Wakankar said.

Amazon said that it is witnessing "remarkable growth" from smaller cities. Exporters from 25 cities cumulatively crossed \$10 million in sales in 2022.

For instance, cities like Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan cumulatively crossed \$13 million in sales from exports last year and Haridwar crossed the \$23-million mark during the same period.

"The MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) sector, which contributes significantly to our economy, plays a critical role in achieving our vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat," said MSME Minister Narayan Tatu Rane.



BHUPEN WAKANKAR

Director, global trade,
Amazon India

The Economic Times. Dt: 06/07/23

Amazon to Sail Past \$8-b Mark in Cumulative India Exports in 2023

Amazon Global Selling doubles down on \$20b Indian export target by 2025, set a year ago

Our Bureaus

Bengaluru | New Delhi: E-commerce major Amazon is set to surpass \$8 billion in cumulative exports from India by the end of 2023, the firm said in a statement on Wednesday.

The Seattle-headquartered firm has reached 125,000 exporters through the programme, officially called Amazon Global Selling, since inception, the statement said. Of them, over 1,200 exporters had crossed ₹1 crore in sales in 2022, it added.

"The idea is to provide Indian exporters with the same tools and level of support that domestic sellers enjoy in their respective international

Heading Out

• Amazon launched 'Amazon Global Selling' in India in 2015 to help Indian exporters sell abroad

• Programme has over 1.25 lakh Indian exporters from across the country

• Over 1,200 exporters on the programme made over ₹1 crore in sales in 2022

• US, UK, Canada, Germany, UAE, France among top destinations for Indian exporters via Amazon

• Over 266 million Made in India products exported through the programme since its launch in 2015

Toys saw the greatest growth among all product categories

35%, beauty at over 25%, and luggage at over 20%, the firm said in the statement.

"Selection is one of the biggest strengths of Indian sellers... especially in categories like consumables, where you have premium spices and teas, or in Ayurvedic products and essential oils," Wakankar said, adding that products in categories such as leather goods and apparel were also gaining wide acceptance.

"From high-thread-count bed-sheets to leather goods to automotive parts, we are seeing an increasing response to the kind of brand-building exercise Indian sellers are engaging in," Wakankar added.

markets," Bhupen Wakankar, director of global trade at Amazon India, told ET.

The firm also reiterated the Indian export target of \$20 billion by 2025 set a year ago—doubled from the previous target.

"I believe the marketplace is still extremely large, and we're still riding the wave of e-commerce exporters from India getting onto the global bandwagon in the same spirit that sellers from the US or China did a few years ago," Wakankar said, when asked about the risk from recessionary pressures in the near future on such exports.



BHUPEN WAKANKAR
Director of global trade, Amazon India



The idea is to provide Indian exporters with the same tools and level of support that domestic sellers

enjoy in their respective international markets



Business Line. Dt: 07/07/23

Rice exports up 10% in April-May, basmati shipments gain 21%

Vishwanath Kulkarni
Bengaluru

Indian rice exports were off to a good start in the current financial year with volume of shipments increasing by about a tenth in the first two months to over 3.67 million tonnes (mt) compared with 3.36 mt in the same period a year ago on strong demand for basmati rice.

Basmati rice shipments during this period were, up 21 per cent at 8.30 lakh tonnes (lt) against 6.85 lt a year ago. Similarly, non-basmati rice shipments, despite curbs on broken rice and export duty, were up by 6 per cent at 2.84 mt against 2.67 mt.

Basmati shipments to West Asia, the main market for the aromatic rice registered an increase of 13 per cent at 6.15 lt against 5.43 lt a year ago on higher demand from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates. However, shipments to

countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen declined. Exports in dollar terms to West Asia were up 22 per cent at \$665 million (\$545 million in the year-ago period).

GAIN IN OTHER REGIONS

To other geographies such as European Union and Asian countries, basmati

tonnes (16,407 tonnes) on demand from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Belgium.

The basmati export value to the EU during April-May was up 196 per cent at \$52.61 million (\$17.74 million). In Asia, countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal among others stepped up the purchase of the aromatic rice with volumes rising to 15,339 tonnes (6,995 tonnes).

Similarly, in the case of non-basmati rice, shipments to Africa during April-May were up at 20.96 lt (15.49 lt), while exports to West Asia recorded a 24 per cent growth at 2.20 lt (1.77 lt).

"There is a good demand. Despite certain restrictions, shipments are growing," said B.V. Krishna Rao, President, The Rice Exporters Association. India has placed curbs on exports of 100 per cent broken rice and has levied a duty of 20 per cent on white and brown rice exports since September 8, 2022.



shipments more than doubled during these two months. Shipment volumes to the European Union were up 154 per cent at 41,644

Businessline. Dt: 07/07/23.

Steel exports dip 6% to 2.05mt in Q1FY24

SHARP FALL. Competitive pressures from China on the price front resulted in drop in steel export volumes across key markets: Sources

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

India's finished steel exports saw an over 6 per cent drop in the April-June period of FY24 to 2.05 million tonnes (mt), on continued pressure, in orders across key global markets and price competitiveness with China. Finished steel exports in the year-ago period stood at 2.19 mt.

Sequentially, exports dropped 28 per cent in June to 0.5 mt, as against 0.7 mt of steel shipments reported in May, provisional data from the Union Steel Ministry, accessed by *businessline*, show. Export volumes decreased 21 per cent in June 2023, over the period last year.

INCREASING IMPORTS

On the other hand, imports increased 19.5 per cent in Q1FY24 to 1.4 mt year-on-year (y-o-y); while June shipments coming in were up 6 per cent over May, to 0.48 mt. On a y-o-y basis June import



volumes were up over 7 per cent.

However, the country remained a net exporter of steel. Exports outstripped imports by 0.65 mt during the April-June period.

Sources said, there has been competitive pressures — on the price front — primarily from China, for Indian mills, across key markets in Europe, Middle East and Vietnam, which has resulted in drop in export volumes. For instance, China's export offer quotes are said to be in the range of \$555 per tonne (FOB Rizhao); against which Indian mills are quoting \$568/569 per tonne (FOB East Coast).

On the other hand, imported offerings coming in from China is around \$581 per tonne (CFR West Coast).

"There was impact of holidays in the Middle East too which saw a drop in volumes," the trader said adding that current recessionary trends continue to exert price pressure on Indian mills.

EXPORT NUMBERS

As per the Ministry's report, non-alloyed steel exports witnessed a 3 per cent-odd drop y-o-y in Q1FY24 to 1.82 mt (vs 1.89 mt in Q1FY23); while sequentially it dipped 31 per cent to 0.43 mt (vs 0.63 mt in May). June volumes were down 9 per cent, y-o-y.

Dip in stainless steel and alloy exports were sharper. For Q1FY24, exports in the category dropped 25 per cent, y-o-y, to 0.23 mt. It was at 0.30 mt in Q1FY23. June volumes in the segment was down 57 per cent y-o-y. But, on a sequential basis, export of stainless steel was up 3 per cent to 72,000 tonnes in June.

Monsoon Watch



SIGNIFICANT RAINFALL (in mm)

Amritsar	43
Sri Ganganagar	24
Meerut	34
Mukteshwar	24
Santacruz	25
Ratnagiri	47
Goa	30
Bajpe	73

Met Coke Imports Under Probe for Safeguard Duty

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has initiated an investigation to consider imposing a safeguard duty or quantitative restrictions on imports of low ash metallurgical coke (met coke) on complaints from the local industry.

The probe has been initiated following petitions from BLA Pvt Ltd, Jindal Coke Ltd, Sasrastra Fuels Pvt Ltd, Vedanta Malco Energy Ltd, and Visa Coke Ltd, DGTR said in a notice.

The petitioners alleged there is a "sudden, sharp, significant, and recent" increase in volume of met coke imports, which has started causing serious injury to domestic industry and is posing a threat of further aggravated injury. They have sought imposition of safeguard duty for one year.

Met coke is used as a primary fuel in furnaces of steel, chemical, ferro alloy, and pig iron plants.

DGTR will investigate imports of the commodity from April 2022 to March 2023.

According to the complaint, met coke imports increased 40%, or by one million metric tonnes,



DGTR will investigate imports of commodity from April 2022 to March 2023

year on year during April to December 2022.

"The market share of imports relative to total demand has also increased from 42% in 2021-22 to 52% of total demand in April 2022-December 2022, on annualised basis," it claimed.

The domestic players said they could not match prices of imported met coke from certain countries because of a spike in prices of coal - from which met coke is made - globally due to sanctions imposed by various countries on imports from Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.

But China benefited from this development due to its proximity to Russia by gaining the freight advantages, they said.

Also, while there was an increase in freight rates post Covid-related lockdowns globally, met coke producers in Australia, China, and Indonesia did not face a rise in procurement costs due to domestic availability of coal, they said. This allowed these countries to export met coke at a lower rate and injure India's domestic industry, the local industry claimed.

As Russian shipments stagnate, India ups crude oil imports from the US

DIVERSIFYING SOURCES. With OPEC+ announcing cuts, India eyes new suppliers to limit West Asia reliance

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

India's new bonhomie with the US is evident even in the oil purchases.

As crude oil imports from Russia stagnate, India is gradually increasing its import of the critical commodity from the US, which is clawing back its lost share.

According to energy intelligence firm Vortexa, India's crude oil imports from Russia fell 8 per cent month-on-month to 1.798 million barrels per day (mbd) in June, from a record 1.96 mbd in May, reportedly due to voluntary production cuts by the world's second largest producer.

STEADY RISE

On the other hand, Vortexa's data also show that imports from the US have been inching up consistently since March. In January, India imported 406,000 barrels per day (bpd) from

India's crude oil imports from Russia vs the US



Source: Vortexa

the US, which nosedived to 244,000 bpd a month later, and then steeply to 100,000 bpd in March.

However, in April, India's imports from the US rose to 119,000 bpd and then to 138,000 bpd a month later. The shipments then grew a healthy 62 per cent to hit 224,000 bpd in June.

According to OPEC's monthly oil market report, India's total crude imports has slipped from the highs

seen in February to an average of 4.8 mbd in April. This represents a m-o-m decline of 55,000 bpd, or about 1 per cent. Year-on-year, crude inflows fell 0.4 mbd, or around 8 per cent.

As per the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), India's cumulative crude oil imports during April and May stood at almost 40 million tonnes (mt), of which 6.9 per cent was from North America.



Before the Russia-Ukraine conflict began in February 2022, North America's share was around 14 per cent. India had begun importing crude oil from the US in the second half of 2017.

AMONG TOP 5

According to Commerce Ministry data, India imported \$4.9 billion worth of crude oil from the US in FY20, making it India's

fourth top supplier. In FY21 and FY22 as well, the US held that spot supplying cargoes worth \$5.40 billion and \$11.32 billion, respectively.

It slipped to the fifth place in FY23 with imports slipping to \$10.18 billion.

S&P Global Commodity Insights, in a January 2023 report, said the US' share in India's crude oil basket rose from 5-6 per cent in April 2022 to around 10 per cent in November 2022.

Similarly, a joint study by KPMG India and the American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham) India said that triggered by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC)+ announcement on cutting crude oil output, India is looking to diversify its sources and is majorly focussing on limiting its reliance on West Asian crude. This state of affairs has largely benefited the import of crude from the US which, of late, has witnessed an uptick, the study, released in May 2023, added.

Exports by Tier -2, -3 cities rising, says Amazon Global Trade chief

Aroosa Ahmed
Mumbai

E-commerce major Amazon is seeing a pick-up in exports from Tier-2 and -3 cities in India through its Global Selling programme.

Exporters from Haridwar in Uttarakhand accounted for exports of \$23 million on the platform in 2022, while those from Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, exceeded \$13 million, from Kolhapur in Maharashtra topped \$4 million and from Neemuch in Madhya Pradesh crossed \$1 million.

Overall, exports from 25 cities crossed \$10 billion in 2022.

PAN-INDIA TREND

"Amazon Global Selling has a footprint in 200 plus cities and the cities that are doing \$10 million are the ones people don't primarily think of for exports and especially



e-commerce exports. Sri Ganganagar, Kolhapur and Erode in Tamil Nadu are some of the places. This is giving us confidence that it is a pan-India trend," Bhupen Wakankar, Director of Global Trade, Amazon India, told *businessline*.

Amazon Global Selling programme was started in 2015 and has 1,25,000 exporters on the platform. The company expects \$8 billion in exports by the end of 2023 and cumulative exports of \$20 billion by 2025.

In 2022, the company stated that 'Made in India' brands, including Indus Cosmeceuticals Private Limited (beauty and wellness), Aadvik Foods (con-

● REACHING OUT

Amazon Global Selling programme was started in 2015 and has 1,25,000 exporters on the platform.

sumables), Native Fab (home textile), SG Enterprises (toys), Handicraft Home (home décor), and Luxmi Estates, gained popularity in the international market.

The company saw the toy category grow over 50 per cent year-on-year in 2022 and is also seeing an uptick in exports of personal care products, and essential oils. The beauty segment rose 25 per cent year-on-year while the kitchen segment saw a 35 per cent year-on-year growth.

"We are seeing deep diversification over the last 18-24 months, where categories like Ayurveda products, essential oils,

health and beauty care products are emerging and growing faster," Wakankar said.

While the UK, the US and Europe have been stable markets for Indian exporters, the company is witnessing demand from emerging markets, too. "In the last 12-17 months, three-four markets including the UAE, Australia and Japan, are growing a lot faster compared to the established one," he said.

Further, the company is using Machine Learning to help its exporters sell products, "It is a laborious task for a human to list their products across different countries with translations in multiple languages. We have built a pillar that is ML-enabled and can enable cross-listing in multiple languages. If the listing is in English, we can translate English into German and Japanese," added Wakankar.