

India's Rice Export Surge after Lifting Curbs

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India's Rice Exports Latest News

- India, the **world's largest** rice exporter, witnessed a sharp rebound in rice exports in 2025 after the Union government lifted all export restrictions imposed during 2022-23.
- The move has significant **implications** for **global** food prices, **food security**, agricultural trade policy, and India's role in the Global South.

Key Developments

- **Sharp rise in rice exports:**
 - India's rice exports rose 19.4% in 2025 to 21.55 million metric tonnes, the second-highest on record.
 - This is close to the 2022 peak of 22.3 million tonnes. Exports had stood at 18.05 million tonnes in 2024.
 - Increased Indian supply pushed Asian **rice prices** to their lowest level in nearly a decade.
 - This has also reduced shipments from Thailand and Vietnam, India's key **competitors**.
- **Composition of exports:**

- **Non-Basmati rice:**
 - Exports surged 25% to 15.15 million tonnes. Major destinations are Bangladesh, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Djibouti.
 - This indicates India's role in food security for developing countries, especially Africa.
- **Basmati rice:**
 - Exports increased 8% to a record 6.4 million tonnes. Key buyers are Iran, UAE, and the United Kingdom.
 - This reflects strong **demand** for premium agricultural exports.
- **India's dominance in global rice trade:**
 - India exports more rice than the combined exports of Thailand, Vietnam, and Pakistan.
 - This reinforces India's position as a "**food security provider**" in the developing world.

Reasons for Export Rebound

- **Policy relaxation:** The government lifted the last export curbs in March 2025, including bans and minimum export prices. These curbs were earlier imposed to control domestic inflation and food prices.
- **Record domestic production:** Improved supplies due to record rice output, ensuring domestic availability.
- **Price competitiveness:** Indian rice is priced lower than Thailand and Vietnam, helping India regain lost global market share.

Overview of India's Rice Production and Exports

- **Production overview:**
 - **Leading producer:** India is the top global rice producer, surpassing China, accounting for roughly 40% of global supply.
 - **Major producing states:** Include Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, Punjab, and Chhattisgarh.
 - **Record output:** Production reached a record 137.8 million tonnes (LMT) in 2023-24, with forecasts for even higher output in 2025-26.
 - **Success is attributed to:** Favorable monsoons, increased planting area, technological advancements like the introduction of high-yielding dwarf varieties (e.g., IR-8, Jaya), and policy support. Though, India is facing scrutiny over **water-intensive** farming.
- **Export dominance:**
 - **Top exporter:** India leads the world in rice exports, often exceeding the combined exports of the next three largest exporters.
 - **Major destinations:** Key markets include Bangladesh, Benin, Nepal, UAE, Iran, and European nations, with new markets emerging.

Challenges and Way Ahead

- **Balancing domestic food security:** With export competitiveness. Strengthen buffer stock management to avoid abrupt export bans.
- **Risk of price volatility:** If exports surge during weak monsoon years. Adopt a predictable and transparent export policy to enhance farmer confidence.

- **Overdependence on rice exports:** May discourage crop diversification. Use rice exports as a tool of food diplomacy, especially with Africa and South Asia. Encourage value-added rice products to increase export earnings.
- **Climate risks:** Affecting future production consistency. Promote climate-resilient rice varieties and water-efficient practices.

Conclusion

- India's post-curb rice export surge underscores the country's pivotal role in global agricultural markets and food security.
- While competitive pricing and policy relaxation have strengthened India's export leadership, a calibrated approach balancing domestic food security, farmer welfare, and global responsibility will be crucial for **sustainable agricultural trade** governance.

Source: TH

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