

F.No.1/14/2019-EPL-I
Government of India
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
Department of Commerce
(EPL-I Section)

Subject: - Major Achievements of the Department of Commerce during August 2020.

I. Trade Performance

- Despite Covid-19 induced slowdown in exports, the following commodities showed resilience and witnessed double digit growth in exports in July 2020: Rice (47.99%), Iron ore (39.61%), Oil seeds (32.61%), Oil meals (28.44%), Meat, dairy & poultry products (22.14%), Fruits & vegetables (21.01%), Drugs & pharmaceuticals (19.53%), Coffee (14.27%), Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items (12.92%).
- Exports-other than POL and Gems & Jewellery in July 2020 were valued at USD 20.37 billion, as against USD 19.70 billion in July 2019, an increase of 3.40%.
- The trade deficit during for July 2020 was USD 4.83 billion as compared to the deficit of USD 13.43 billion in July 2019, a decrease of (-) 64.06%.

II. Export Promotion Councils

- Concurrence of the Department of Commerce has been conveyed to Ad Hoc Committee of Domestic Council, vide letter dated 25.08.2020, to form a Federation of Associations of G&J sector.
- In an effort to address the challenges posed by the pandemic situation and tap new opportunities, virtual exhibitions are being organised for Indian textiles in global markets. The 40th India Carpet Expo was organized by Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC) from 21st to 25th August 2020. In the Expo about 367 buyers from 61 countries and 191 buying agents across the globe participated.

III. WTO

- As part of the initiative to improve quality ecosystem and regulate imports, Department of Commerce has been working with various /Departments to bring a focus list of products under regulation. In pursuance of this, 155 items have been notified till August end from the selected list of 371 items, and more are in the pipeline. A total of 13 SPS and TBT notifications were notified to WTO in the month of August 2020, majority of them being telecom products.

- With a view to enhancing capacity within the department for future trade negotiations, 69 officials of DGFT have been identified for intensive training from 11.08.2020 which is being jointly conducted by CWTOS, CRT and CTIL, on 32 different tracks.

IV. Bilateral Cooperation

- During Covid-19, the exporters exporting products to Bangladesh faced difficulties in sending physical copy of Certificate of Origin (CoO). With the intervention of Department of Commerce, the issue was promptly resolved with the Bangladesh Authorities. National Board of Revenue (NBR), Bangladesh extended the date for acceptance of digital CoOs instead of physical certificate under SAFTA till 31 December 2020.

V. Plantation

- The export of Coffee during August 2020 vis-a-vis August 2018, has increased by 4.23% in terms of quantity (20120 MT to 20971 MT) and by 15.48% in terms of export earnings (Rs.297.66 lakhs to Rs.343.75 lakhs).
- The Rubber Board has commissioned 10 laboratories for testing of Dry Rubber Content (DRC) of rubber latex through the companies promoted by Rubber Board in lieu of seven closed down Regional Soil Testing Laboratories (RSTLs).
- The Rubber Board conducted 199 field training programmes on topics such as plantation upkeep, low frequency tapping, controlled upward tapping, mushroom culture, beekeeping etc., which has benefited 1484 farmers.
- The Rubber Board carried out Rubber culture operations in 1816.38 ha of rubber plantations benefitting 3,486 rubber growers under the convergence with MGNREGS.
- The Spices Board has signed a MoU with National Cooperative Development Cooperation (NCDC) to promote and develop spice related co-operatives with holistic approach on strengthening value chain enhancement including exports on 18th August, 2020.
- Commerce Secretary inaugurated two Spices Processing Units viz. M/s. Spicexim Corporation and M/s Raami Agro Traders at Spices Park, Guntur on 27.08.2020 through online platform. Spices Board is putting all the efforts to make the Guntur Spices Park functional & promote local entrepreneurs through Agriculture Universities, etc.

VI. APEDA

- APEDA has signed MoUs with AFC India Ltd and National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) to facilitate the Farmer Cooperatives/FPOs and development of clusters under Agri Export Policy.

- APEDA organised a Virtual Buyer Seller Meet for Indian exporters in association with EOI, Abu Dhabi. E-Catalogue containing details of the exporters, importers etc. was also released. Trade negotiation for fresh fruits & vegetables, processed fruits and vegetables, basmati and non-basmati rice and organic products took place.
- The second round of meetings, through Video Conferencing, was organized in 22 clusters notified under AEP with all the stakeholders. The progress made in the clusters was reviewed. Clusters like Theni, Anantpur, Nagpur & Varanasi have shown growth in export.

VII. Export Credit and Insurance

During August 2020, the achievements of Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) are as below:

• Value of Exports supported (Business Covered)	:	Rs.41,156 crores
• Gross Premium Earned	:	Rs.76 crores
• Number of new buyers added	:	1,208
• Number of policies issued	:	1,243
• Number of claims paid	:	50
• Claims paid Amount	:	Rs. 97 crores

VIII. DGFT

- Regional Authorities of DGFT have issued total 14308 Authorisations/ Scrips under FTP Schemes i.e. Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), Advance Authorisations and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) during the month of August, 2020.
- Export Policy was amended to the extent that all ventilators including any artificial respiratory apparatus or oxygen therapy apparatus or any other breathing appliance/ device are made “free” for export.
- Export Policy is amended to the extent that the export policy of 2/3 Ply Surgical masks, medical coveralls of all classes and categories (including medical coveralls for COVID-19) is amended from “Restricted” to “Free” category and these coveralls (including gowns and aprons of all types) are now freely exportable.

IX. Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- Total transaction value on GeM portal has crossed Rs. 61,409 Crore as on 31st August 2020. There are 120,402 (25.31%) MSMEs vendors registered on GeM Portal as on 31st August 2020. Further, 8002 Product categories and 138 service categories have been created.

- The Hon'ble Minister for Commerce & Industry inaugurated the National Public Procurement Conclave (NPPC) 2020 on GeM Establishment Day to bring all the buyers, sellers, experts and industry leaders together on one platform.
- GeM signed MoUs with State Government of Goa and Karnataka for procurement of goods and services through GeM portal. The State of Kerala, Sikkim and Rajasthan will also be signing MoUs shortly.
- For faster and transparent procurement to fight COVID-19, following steps have been taken:
 - New business rule to stock out sellers who do not update stock within 48 hours of notification for specific categories has been implemented.
 - Shorter duration Bids (reduced to 3 days from 10 days) with shorter delivery period (reduced to 2 days from 15 days) for specific categories has been enabled. Creation of shorter duration bids (3 days) for services on GeM has been enabled.
 - Prioritization of Product/Brand Approval for COVID-19 categories in the Queue Management System and taking them up on highest priority.
 - Extension of delivery period by 30 days beyond expiry of original Delivery Period.
 - Creation of a new page for tracking COVID-19 categories and the number of sellers.
 - Introduction of Delivery Lead Time Filter for L1 purchase up to INR 5 lakhs. This will help the buyer in filtering sellers with the lead time for supply suited to a buyer's needs.
- A total of 78 Webinars were held exclusively for MSME / STARTUPS / ARTISANS / WEAVERS / SHGs for capacity building and on-boarding on GeM, benefitting 4296 participants in association with Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Indian Chamber of Commerce, MSME Associations under Industries Dept, DICCI MSME Webinar, SC/ST MSEs, NSIC-North Zone, Goa State Industries Association etc.
- Total 13,438 users (7050 buyers & 6388 sellers) have been provided online (due to COVID-19) training for capacity building in the month of August 2020.
