

India's agri exports worth \$1 bn exempted from tariff hike in new Trump waiver

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (IANS)

INDIA'S agricultural exports to the US, valued at around \$1 billion, will be exempt from the tariff hikes after President Donald Trump announced a tariff cut on nearly 200 food products to make them more affordable for US consumers, following a political back-

lash over rising prices. The food products that stand to gain in the US include coffee, tea, tropical fruits, fruit juices, cocoa, spices and bananas.

"India's agricultural exports to the US stood at \$2.5 billion in FY25, of which around \$1bn is exempted now," Director General, Directorate General of

Foreign Trade (DGFT) Ajay Bhadoo said on Monday.

The Commerce Ministry said that spices worth \$358.66 million, 50 processed food items valued at \$491.31 million, and tea and coffee to the tune of \$82.54 million will be exempt from the 50 per cent tariffs levied on Indian goods by the United States.

16th Finance Commission submits reports to Murmu

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI)

CHAIRMAN of the 16th Finance Commission Arvind Panagariya on Monday submitted to President Droupadi Murmu the panel's report, recommending the share of States in the net tax collected by the Centre over five years beginning April 1, 2026.

The report will be tabled in Parliament during its upcoming Winter Session from December 1 and made public thereafter.

"Members of the 16th Finance Commission, led by its Chairman, Arvind Panagariya, called on President Droupadi Murmu and submitted the Commission's report for 2026-31," Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on X.

Led by Panagariya, Finance Commission members -- retired bureaucrat Annie George

Mathew, economist Manoj Panda, SBI Group Chief Economic Advisor Soumya Kanti Ghosh and RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar -- and Secretary to the Commission Ritvik Pandey also presented a copy of the report to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The 16th Finance Commission's recommendations with regard to the formula for sharing taxes for five years, starting from 2026-27 to 2030-31, will be crucial.

The 15th Finance Commission, under NK Singh, had recommended that states be given 41 per cent of the divisible tax pool of the Centre for a five-year period -- 2021-22 to 2025-26, which is at the same level as was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission headed by YV Reddy.

**To
be tabled
in Winter
Session of
Parliament**

India-UK military exercise 'Ajeya Warrior-25' begins in Rajasthan

JAIPUR, Nov 17 (PTI)

THE eighth edition of the India-UK joint military exercise 'Ajeya Warrior-25' commenced at the Mahajan field firing ranges in Rajasthan's Bikaner district on Monday. Conducted under a United Nations mandate, the bilateral exercise focuses on counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban environment.

The 14-day exercise will conclude on November 30.

"The exercise brings together 240 personnel with equal representation from the Indian Army and the British Army. The Indian Army is being represented by troops of the Sikh Regiment," a defence spokesperson said in a release. "Training over the next two weeks will include joint mission planning at Brigade level, integrated tactical drills, simulation-based scenarios and company-level field training exercises replicating real-life counter-terror contingencies.

India, Russia looking at finalising new pacts, initiatives during Putin's visit to New Delhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI)

INDIA and Russia are looking at firming up a number of agreements, initiatives and projects to add more substance to the ties during Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi early next month.

As part of the preparations for the visit, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday held extensive talks in Moscow with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. "This particular occasion, for me, is all the more important as we prepare for President Putin's visit to India for the 23rd annual summit," Jaishankar said in his opening remarks at the meeting.

"A number of bilateral agreements, initiatives and projects are under discussion in various



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Russian MFA Reception House in Moscow on Monday. (PTI)

fields. We look forward to their finalization in the coming days," he said. "These will certainly add

more substance and texture to our Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership," he added.

In his comments, Jaishankar also said that India supports recent efforts to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Jaishankar said India-Russia ties have long been a factor of stability in international relations. "Its growth and evolution is not only in our mutual interest but also in that of the world," he said. The two sides also exchanged views on global issues.

"We will also be exchanging views on the complex global situation with the openness that has always characterized our ties. This includes the Ukraine conflict, as also the Middle East and Afghanistan amongst others," Jaishankar said in his remarks.

The External Affairs Minister is currently in Moscow to hold talks with his Russian counterpart Lavrov.

'Manipur situation has significantly improved since President's Rule'

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (IANS)

CHIEF of the Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday said that the situation in Manipur has undergone a major transformation, with a marked decline in violent incidents since early this year.

Speaking at the Chanakya Defence Conclave 2025, General Dwivedi said, "As far as Manipur is concerned, when the incidents happened in May 2023, they caused me deep personal pain, because I have worked in Manipur myself. It hurt me to see such a beautiful State, which felt like heaven to me, in such a condition."



Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi speaks during the Chanakya Defence Dialogue, in New Delhi, on Monday. (PTI)

"But since President's Rule was imposed in February 2025, what has changed is that people's mutual trust, as well as their trust in the Government, has started to improve. There has been significant improvement since then," he added.

He referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit, recalling that the PM had described Manipur as a "gem of India".

The Indian Army Chief said, "When PM Modi visited in September, that too helped change things on the ground. If the situation continues to improve, the President will also be visiting soon."



Hasina sentenced to death

DHAKA, Nov 17 (PTI)

BANGLADESH'S deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was on Monday sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal for "crimes against humanity" over her Government's brutal crack-down on student-led protests last year.

In its verdict that followed a months-long trial, the country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) described the 78-year-old Awami League leader as the "mastermind and principal architect" of the violent repression that killed hundreds of protesters. It also handed the death sentence to former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on similar charges.

Hasina has been living in India since she fled Bangladesh on August 5 last year in the wake of the massive protests.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal also handed DEATH PENALTY to ex-Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal. Both Hasina and Kamal charged with "CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY"

She was earlier declared a fugitive by the court.

(Contd on page 5)

India remains committed to best interests of people of B'desh: MEA

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI)

HOURS after a special tribunal in Bangladesh sentenced ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to death, India on Monday said it noted the verdict and that it will engage constructively with all stakeholders considering peace, democracy and stability in the neighbouring country.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India remains committed to the best interests of people of

Bangladesh. "India has noted the verdict announced by the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh concerning former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," the MEA said.

"As a close neighbour, India remains committed to the best interests of the people of Bangladesh, including in peace, democracy, inclusion and stability in that country," it said.

However, it did not comment on Dhaka's call to extradite Hasina.

Rigged tribunal: Sheikh Hasina

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI)

SENTENCED to death after a trial in absentia in Bangladesh, a defiant Sheikh Hasina on Monday charged that the judgement has been made by a "rigged tribunal" established and presided over by an "unelected Government with no democratic mandate".

In a strongly-worded statement, the 78-year-old Awami League leader said the "politically motivated"

(Contd on page 5)