

As agri trade with Pak freezes, India looks to other markets

The rising tension between India and Pakistan has affected trading of agri commodities between the two nations over the past few months. Exports of tea, cotton, tomatoes from India and import of dates, mangoes and onions from Pakistan have stopped completely after Pakistan formally snapped trade ties with India in retaliation against India's decision to withdraw special status to Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution.

With no immediate signs of trade relations getting better, traders are exploring other markets to ship their products.

In the first seven months of this year, India has exported 5.89 million kg of teas compared with 8.87 million kg in the corresponding period of the previous year, a drop of 33.59 per cent. Pakistan mostly imports teas from South India and some small quantities from Assam.

"Pakistan has completely stopped lifting teas from India. We are now looking at countries like Malaysia, Iraq and West African nations such as Mali and Burkina Faso to sell our teas," said Dipak Shah, president, South Indian Tea Exporters' Association.

India's cotton exports to Pakistan has risen fourfold to ₹5,182 crore in 2018 from ₹1,352 crore in 2008. Pakistan accounts for about 10 per cent of India's total cotton exports, which have grown almost four fold in the past decade.

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