



Agricultural and Processed Food
Products Export Development Authority



Government of India
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

India's Participation in *Gulfood* 2026

India
Country Partner

26TH - 30TH JANUARY, 2026

**Dubai Exhibition Centre, Expo City
and
Dubai World Trade Centre**

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एपीडा
APEDA

Executive Summary

India's participation in Gulfood 2026 (26-30 January 2026) at Dubai Exhibition Centre, Expo City, and Dubai World Trade Centre marked a historic milestone as the official Partner Country for the first time, showcasing the nation's agricultural diversity on an unprecedented scale. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, orchestrated this landmark event across 1,434 sqm of exhibition space double the previous year's footprint coordinating 161 APEDA-registered exporters from 25 states alongside 500+ other Indian participants.

The APEDA Pavilion featured Basmati rice, ten GI-tagged rice varieties, millets, pulses, processed foods, organic produce, spices, tea, and beverages, representing exporters, FPOs, cooperatives, startups, state entities, central boards, and export associations. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Shri Avinash P. Das Joshi (Secretary, MoFPI), HE Dr. Deepak Mittal (Ambassador to UAE), and Shri Abhishek Dev (Chairman, APEDA). A defining moment was the visit by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE, underscoring deepening India-UAE ties.

One of the key attractions in the APEDA pavilion was the 54-sq.m. Culinary Zone, curated by celebrity chefs Shri Harpal Singh Sokhi and Shri Vikas Khanna, showcased dishes using 10+ GI-tagged rice varieties, attracting thousands of visitors. In addition to this, Henna Art Station blended cultural soft power with trade promotion. Few Indian companies strategically chose Gulfood 2026 as the platform for launching new export-ready products. These product launches reinforced India's strategic transition from being a bulk agri - commodity supplier to establishing itself as a premium, innovation-led food brand destination.

APEDA's BHARATI Pavilion in DWTC's Startup Zone featured eight high-potential startups (selected from 100+ applicants). The pavilion was inaugurated by MoFPI Secretary and APEDA Chairman with Shri Yusuff Ali (Lulu Group) and Shri Irfan Allana (Allanasons Group). APEDA facilitated the startups to gain exposure through visits to DP World/AI Aweer Market and Lulu Hypermarket. The startups were also given an opportunity to present their solutions to UAE business professionals, facilitating knowledge exchange and venture collaboration at Indian Business Professional Council (IBPC) Focus Symposium.

Strategic B2G/G2G engagements included UAE Food Cluster roundtable, MoFPI Secretary's World Economy Summit keynote, fireside chat "India-UAE Food Supply Bridge" featuring CGI Dubai and APEDA Chairman, and MOCCA meeting on Food Safety MoU. India's participation received a comprehensive coverage throughout the event days. Coverage spanned 25+ Indian, 15+ UAE/foreign outlets, and 8+ video segments, generating substantial B2B leads and positioning India as an innovation-driven agri-food leader.

The Indian exhibition facilitated by APEDA collectively generated about USD 18.27 million trade deals and average 120-150 enquiries per exhibitor. There is a potential of conversion of additional business after negotiations. The Indian exhibitors attracted buyers from various geographies such as UAE, UK, USA, Europe, Africa, China etc. More than 90% exhibitors rated the event as highly successful for trade facilitation.

In a nutshell, India's participation at Gulfood 2026 as the official Partner Country represented a defining moment in the nation's journey toward global agri-food leadership, successfully positioning India as a trusted, innovation-driven, and sustainable global agri-food partner capable of meeting rising regional and global demand for quality, traceable, and culturally resonant food products.

1. About Gulfood 2026

1.1 Introduction

Gulfood is the world's largest annual food and beverage trade exhibition, serving as a premier platform for global Food & Beverage sourcing, innovation, and networking. Gulfood edition 2026 was held from 26 to 30th January in Dubai. For the first time ever, Gulfood unfolded across two mega venues - Dubai World Trade Centre and the newly expanded Dubai Exhibition Centre at Expo City Dubai - reshaping the scale and scope of global Food trade & sourcing. Dubai Exhibition Centre hosted the World Food Hall, Pulses, Grains and Cereals Hall and Gulfood Green etc. focusing on sustainability, innovation and future food systems whereas Dubai World Trade Centre hosted the Beverage Hall, Startup Hall, World Cuisine etc. focusing on sustainability, innovation and future food systems.

Spread across more than 2,80,000 sqm of space across both venues, the landmark edition brought together more than 8,500 exhibitors showcasing 1.5 million products from 195 countries, with 40% first-time exhibitors and the largest national participation to date from major producing markets including India, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United States etc. The mega event was sub divided into 12+ specialized zones such as meat and poultry, dairy, beverages, grains and cereals, seafood, fresh produce, health and nutrition, and emerging sectors like logistics and startups.

The global exhibition platform for innovation, digital disruption and next-generation leadership witnessed founders, investors and industry pioneers share the technologies, business models and ideas that will drive the next phase of growth across the global food ecosystem.



1.2 Countries Participation

The event featured participation with a total of 195 countries represented among visitors and exhibitors. Participation of the countries was categorized by scale and prominence, including official Partner Country, major national pavilions (large, curated groups), independent exhibitors/groups, and smaller delegations.

India led the largest participant overall as the official Partner Country. The event witnessed large scale pavilions from China, Turkey, Brazil, USA, Italy, France, Spain, UAE (host), Thailand and Vietnam. Other major pavilions were from Canada, Germany, UK, Netherlands, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan etc. The event also had delegations from Japan, South Korea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, South Africa, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Madagascar, Rwanda etc.

1.3 Key Sectors

The mega event featured 12+ specialized sectors pertaining to Food, Beverages and related technology & services at both the event locations.



The **key sectors** hosted following products:

- Beverages (juices, coffee, tea, functional drinks)
- Dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt, plant-based alternatives)
- Fats & Oils (edible oils, ghee, sustainable sourcing)
- Meat & Poultry (fresh/frozen, halal, processed)
- Seafood (fish, shellfish, aquatic proteins)
- Power Brands (global household names in packaged goods)

The **new and expanded zone** for the current event

edition included the following:

- Gulfood Logistics (cold chain, freight, warehousing)
- Gulfood Fresh (fruits, vegetables, chilled produce)
- Grocery Trade (wholesaling, retail staples)
- Rice, Pulses & Grains (bulk commodities, cereals)
- World Food (national pavilions, ethnic/specialty foods)
- Gulfood Startups (agri-tech, foodtech disruptors)
- Gulfood Green (sustainability-focused solutions)

The Tech & Thematic Hubs in the Gulfood housed cross-cutting areas integrated across venues including Gulfood.AI (AI, automation, blockchain); AgriTech (sustainable farming, robotics); Organic/Halal/Kosher/Free-From (specialty certifications) etc.



Overall event layout – The scale of participation of various stakeholders has been represented during Gulfood at both event venues.



2. India's Participation in Gulfood 2026

India's participation at Gulfood 2026 as official Country Partner represented a significant milestone, that acknowledged country's pivotal role in global food security and its reputation as one of the major and trusted international agri-food suppliers. The Country Partner status provided India with enhanced visibility, prominent branding across exhibition venues, dedicated conference sessions, and expanded business-to-business (B2B) engagement opportunities.

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India led India's participation, coordinating a showcase of over 600+ Indian exhibitors across both the venues. The large exhibition of diverse Agricultural & processed products underscored India's growing leadership in the global agri-food sector and reinforced the country's commitment to becoming the food basket of the world.

India's participation at Gulfood 2026 was strategically aligned with the India-UAE strong trade relations and Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which came into force in May 2022. The CEPA has significantly strengthened bilateral trade relations, providing Indian exporters with enhanced market access.

APEDA organized an extensive pavilion set up across various specialized sections of Gulfood 2026, including the following:

1. Pulses, Cereals and Grains Pavilion
2. World Food Pavilion
3. Beverages Pavilion
4. Gulfood Green Pavilion
5. Startup Zone

The APEDA led Indian Pavilion, measuring 1434 sqm, doubled in size compared to the previous year's participation, reflected the Government of India's commitment for scaling up India's presence in international agri-trade platforms. The exhibition featured participation of about 160+ APEDA registered exporters. The exhibitors represented diverse stakeholder groups. The details are as under:

1. Exporters and manufacturers of agricultural and processed food products
2. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and cooperatives
3. Startups and agri-tech innovators
4. Delegation from State government (State Govt. Departments & agencies)
5. Central Government Departments and Boards such as
 - Tea Board
 - Spices Board and
 - Turmeric Board
 - National Horticultural Board and CAMPCO under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
 - NCEL and NAFED under the Ministry of Cooperation

as well as several State Governments and State entities such as the

- Department of Agriculture, Government of Meghalaya
- Department of Agriculture, Government of Sikkim
- Markfed Punjab
- Sikkim-IFFCO
- Bihar State Milk Cooperative Federation Limited (COMFED) and the Department of Agriculture, Government of Bihar, and
- Uttarakhand Horticulture Board

6. Export Associations & Federations (The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), All India Rice Exporters Associations etc. showcasing basmati rice and cereal grains)



2.1 Geographic Representation & Products

The APEDA pavilion comprised representation from 25 states, reflecting India's vast agricultural and regional diversity. This wide geographic representation enabled the showcase of region-specific agri-products, Geographical Indication (GI) tagged products, organic produce, and value-added food products which demonstrated India's agricultural richness and cultural diversity.

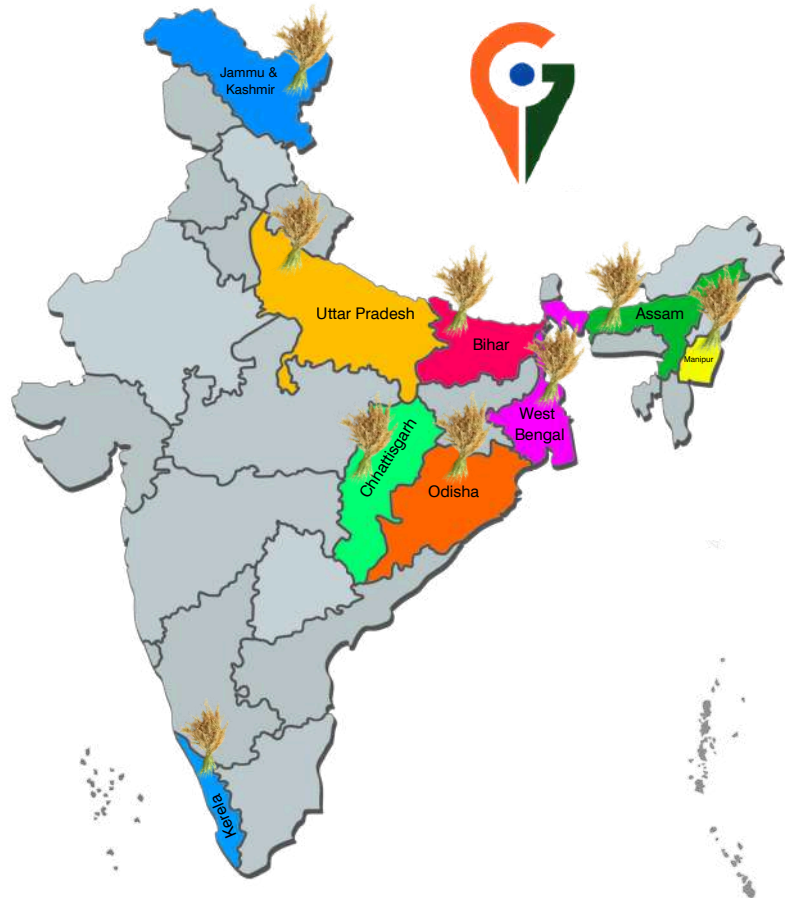
Category	Products
Rice	Basmati rice, 10+ GI-tagged Indian rice varieties
Millet	Various millet products and value-added preparations
Pulses	Multiple varieties of lentils and legumes
Processed Foods	Cereal preparations, Ready-to-Cook, Ready-to-Eat products
Fresh Produce	Fruits and vegetables
Groundnuts	Various processed products from Groundnut
Organic Products	Certified organic food items
Spices*	Turmeric, various spices and spice blends
Beverages	Tea, coffee, and other beverage products

**The Spice Board & Tea Board led the participation of Spices & Tea products respectively*

2.2 Geographical Indication (GI) Tagged Rice.

A major highlight of India's participation was the showcasing of GI tagged rice varieties. It was highlighted further through the APEDA's Culinary Zone. It featured live demonstrations and dishes prepared using 10+ Indian GI-tagged rice varieties.

1. Kala Namak (Uttar Pradesh)
2. Joha Rice (Assam)
3. Nagri Dubraj (Chhattisgarh)
4. Jeeraphool (Odisha)
5. Gobindo Bhog (West Bengal)
6. Mushqbudji (Jammu and Kashmir)
7. Katarni (Bihar)
8. Chak Hao Black Rice (Manipur)
9. Boka Chaul (Assam)
10. Adamchini Rice (Uttar Pradesh)
11. Kaipad Rice (Kerala)
12. Koraput Kala Jeera Rice (Odisha)



3. Key Highlights of Events & Activities at India Pavilion, Dubai Expo City

3.1 Official Delegation and Inaugural Ceremony

The Indian Pavilion set up by APEDA at Dubai Exhibition Centre, Dubai Expo City was inaugurated by Shri Avinash P. Das Joshi, Secretary of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India. He was joined by the Guest of Honour, His Excellency Dr. Deepak Mittal, Ambassador of India to the UAE. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by dignitaries including Shri Preetpal Singh - Joint Secretary, MoFPI; Shri Abhishek Dev - Chairman, APEDA and Dr. Neeraj Khairwal - Managing Director, India Trade Promotion Organization. All the dignitaries were welcomed with a traditional Indian dance performance at the APEDA Pavilion. Thereafter, a large no. of Indian exhibitors and trade representatives also joined the inaugural session of the Indian pavilion.





The Indian GI products like Saffron, Honey, Makhana, Jaggery, Petha, pulses etc. were also showcased at APEDA pavilion. The various Indian stalls were visited by the chief guest, guest of honour and the dignitaries after the inaugural ceremony.



The commodity boards such as Spice Board, Tea Boards also had an active participation to showcase India's strength in spice products.



The prominent trade bodies / associations of Indian Rice such as the REAI, AIREA etc. played a key role in showcasing all important Rice varieties of the country and demonstrated it through wet sampling at their respective stalls.



The dignitaries visited all the exhibitors' stalls at India pavilion and interacted with the exporters and the entrepreneurs and appreciated their efforts and products representing diverse & innovative Indian Food landscape.



The All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA) welcomed the dignitaries at their stall and discussed about the recent initiatives taken to enhance the export and trade of rice.



3.2 Visit of His Highness, UAE & Government of UAE at India Pavilion

APEDA pavilion Dubai Exhibition Centre, received an extraordinary highlight with the gracious visit of members of the UAE Royal Family and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, underscoring the deepening trade relations and cultural harmony between India and the United Arab Emirates. His Highness was received by the Ambassador Dr. Deepak Mittal and Chairman APEDA.



The visit served as a proud moment for the Indian agri-export fraternity, reflecting growing global appreciation and recognition of India's diverse and high-quality food products. The presence of the Royal dignitaries added a further aura of prestige and validation to the efforts of the participating Indian exporters, whose products represented the finest of India's agricultural landscape.



3.3 Indian food tasting and culinary zone

The Culinary Zone (spread in about 54 sqm area) at the APEDA Pavilion was a café-style area, themed with contemporary Indian aesthetics, served as a live cooking demonstration platform to showcase popular Indian and international dishes prepared using authentic Indian agri-products particularly 10+ GI tagged rice varieties.

Curated by celebrity chef Shri Harpal Singh Sokhi, the tasting zone featured dishes prepared using Indian GI-tagged rice varieties as mentioned above. The activity attracted a huge crowd from various countries.



The Indian pavilion also featured celebrity chef Shri Vikas Khanna which attracted a large crowd witnessing and tasting Indian Food.



Culinary Zone at APEDA Pavilion



3.4 Product launch at India Pavilion

New Products of few companies were launched during the event at APEDA pavilion. These product launches reinforced India's transition from bulk agri-commodity supplier to premium, innovation-led food brand destination.



New products of Just Organic Brand



Products of Aahara brand



Product launch of Burgandy Bagh Tea brand from Madhya Pradesh

3.5 The Henna Art Station at APEDA Pavilion

The Henna Art station at the APEDA Pavilion during Gulfood 2026 was a captivating cultural highlight that seamlessly blended India's rich heritage with modern trade promotion, drawing thousands of visitors to the India showcase at Dubai Expo City. As part of APEDA's strategic pavilion design for the event, a dedicated Henna Tattoo station complete with a standee and trained artists was set up in the common area to offer free, organic Henna (Mehndi) applications on visitors' hands. This initiative, mandated in APEDA's official Terms of Reference (ToR), featured sufficient manpower, natural materials, and equipment to ensure safe, hygienic sessions amid the bustling food trade fair.

The demo showcased intricate motifs floral paisleys, peacocks, and mandalas in rusty-red hues, educating global buyers on its natural, chemical-free origins while tying into APEDA's promotion of organic agri-products. Visitors, especially women from the Middle East, UAE locals, and international delegates, queued enthusiastically, turning the station into a lively photo-op zone that amplified India's soft power alongside basmati rice and millet displays.



4. India's Strategic B2G and G2G Engagements

High-level delegations from India's Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), led by Shri Avinash P Das Joshi, Secretary, MoFPI and APEDA officials held strategic sessions with UAE entities. Various B2G, G2G meetings and discussions were held during the event.

4.1 Roundtable Meeting on UAE Food Cluster

A round-table meeting was organized by the UAE Food Cluster at the Dubai Exhibition Centre (Expo City), bringing together senior GoI & APEDA officials, industry leaders, and strategic partners. The session was chaired by H.E. Dr. Maria Hanif Al Qassim, Assistant Undersecretary for Policies and Economic Studies at the UAE Ministry of Economy and Tourism. The event began with a keynote address, "Connecting India-UAE Food Cluster," delivered by Secretary MoFPI, and was followed by a strategic round-table discussion on India-UAE food linkages.



4.2 Keynote Address at Gulfood World Economy Summit

A keynote address was delivered by Secretary, MoFPI, Government of India during World Economy Summit. He underscored India's emergence as a global food leader, emphasizing value-added processing, resilient supply chains, and deepening UAE collaboration amid rising regional demand for Indian products. He also highlighted innovation-led growth opportunities under the India-UAE CEPA, positioning India as a trusted partner for sustainable food systems and co-manufacturing.



4.3 Panel Discussion at Gulfood World Economy Summit

The keynote address was followed by a high-profile fireside featuring Indian delegation and UAE Food Cluster head, which reinforced bilateral commitments to food security, traceability, and agri-tech integration—captivating policymakers and industry leaders. The topic of the discussion was “India-UAE: Building the World’s Most Trusted Food Supply Bridge”. It highlighted the strategic depth of India-UAE cooperation and set the stage for focused discussions on export opportunities.

Speakers



Sally Mousa, Senior Presenter - Forbes Middle East



Shri Abhishek Dev, Chairman - Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)



Saleh Lootah, Chairman - UAE Food Cluster



Satish Kumar Sivan, Consul General of India to Dubai and the Northern Emirate --

The panel comprised H.E. Shri Satish Kumar Sivan, Consul General of India (CGI), Chairman APEDA, and Mr. Saleh Abdullah Lootah, Chairman of the UAE Food & Beverage Manufacturers Group (FBMG) and Managing Director of Al Islami Foods. The discussion focused on strengthening bilateral food trade under CEPA, ensuring reliable & high-quality supply chains, exploring avenues for joint branding, private labels, co-manufacturing, and enhanced traceability. The key points highlighted during the session are as under:

- Strengthening bilateral food trade under CEPA
- Ensuring reliable, high quality supply chains
- Rising GCC demand for Indian value-added products
- Opportunities for joint branding, private labels & co-manufacturing
- Enhancing traceability, safety and sustainability



The event was followed by the launch of Study Report anchored by APEDA in collaboration with ICRIER.



4.4 B2G Meetings between Indian Delegation & Industry Leaders

The B2G meetings between the Indian government delegation—including Secretary MoFPI Shri Avinash P. Das Joshi and APEDA Chairman Shri Abhishek Dev—and industry leaders such as Shri Yusuf Ali (Chairman, Lulu Group) and Shri Irfan Allana (Chairman, Allanasons Group) during Gulfood 2026 held critical strategic importance for the Indian delegation, serving as a pivotal bridge between policy formulation and market execution in India's agri-export ecosystem.

The industry leaders offered perspectives on food processing, halal & other compliances, and value-added manufacturing—directly addressing key bottlenecks for Indian exporters entering sophisticated Middle Eastern markets and other International markets. These B2G interactions helped strengthening the international trade relations by aligning government export promotion with private-sector distribution ensuring reliable supply chains for high-value Indian produce and processed foods.



4.5 Meeting with Director of the Food Safety Department, UAE

The APEDA officials held a meeting with Mr. Abdullah Salem, Director of the Food Safety Department, and Ms. Aisha Al Amiri, Acting Head of the Animal Health Section, of the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA). The meeting witnessed productive discussions on strengthening bilateral trade in the agriculture and processed food sectors. Both sides also deliberated on the implementation of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Food Safety and Technical Requirements between India and the UAE.



5. Startup Zone Activities at India Pavilion, DWTC

APEDA's BHARATI Pavilion in the Startup Zone at Dubai World Trade Centre featured eight high-potential startups selected from 100+ applicants. Supported by Lulu Group and Allanasons, APEDA facilitated to provide an international exposure platform for eight selected Indian agri-food and export-enabling startups to test export readiness, validate buyer demand, and initiate structured global market engagement under BHARATI initiative.

The BHARATI Startup zone showcased these eight startups spanning value-added agri-food products, post-harvest and shelf-life technologies, SPS and food-safety solutions, dehydration and preservation technologies, and export-enabling platforms. Collectively, these startups represented multiple intervention points across the agri-export value chain—from farm-level sourcing and post-harvest transformation to compliance, risk mitigation, processing, packaging, and export-ready consumer products. Their participation provided a consolidated view of how Indian startups are engaging global buyers, distributors, retailers, processors, and institutional stakeholders in real market conditions.

5.1 Inauguration of BHARATI Startup zone

The BHARATI Startup Zone, set up within APEDA Pavilion, was inaugurated by Shri A P Das Joshi, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries; Shri Abhishek Dev, Chairman APEDA in presence of Industry leaders Shri Yusuf Ali – Chairman LULU Group and Shri Irfan Allana – Chairman, Allanasons Group.





5.2 Market Visit by the startups

APEDA also organized a curated field visit and market exposure program in Dubai for eight participating startups. The programme aimed at providing startups with first-hand exposure to key wholesale and modern retail ecosystems in the UAE, enhancing their understanding of market structures, buyer expectations, supply chain dynamics, and route-to-market models for Indian agricultural and food exports.

5.2. 1 Market Service Unit – DP World and Al Aweer Central Fruit & Vegetable Market

A visit was also organised to the Market Service Unit of DP World and the Al Aweer Central Fruit & Vegetable Market, one of the largest wholesale fresh produce markets in the UAE. The visit was hosted by Product and Marketing Division of DP World. They provided the participating startups with a high-level overview of the Al Aweer Market ecosystem, including its role in regional fresh produce trade, key sourcing geographies, buyer segments, and logistics integration. Following the briefing, the startups were taken on a guided walkthrough of the market complex, where they were exposed to:

- The overall layout and operational structure of the Al Aweer Market
- Cold chain and logistics interfaces
- The BLOOM Market, highlighting premium fresh produce handling and presentation practices



The visit enabled startups to gain practical insights into wholesale market operations, aggregation models, quality expectations, and scale requirements for exports into the Middle East market.

5.2. 2 LuLu Hypermarket – LuLu Silicon Oasis Mall

Another visit was organised to the LuLu Hypermarket located at LuLu Silicon Oasis Mall, representing the modern retail and large-format hypermarket segment in the UAE.

The delegation was hosted by General Manager, LuLu Silicon Oasis, along with his team. The LuLu team conducted a guided tour of the hypermarket, during which they provided a high-level overview of various facets of hypermarket operations, including the following:

- Product assortment strategy and category management
- Quality, packaging, and labelling requirements
- Consumer preferences and pricing considerations in the UAE retail market
- The role of private labels and imported products within the LuLu ecosystem



The startups were provided valuable exposure to modern retail expectations, buyer decision-making parameters, and go-to-market considerations for scaling exports through large retail chains.

5.3 Interaction of Startups with Indian Business Professional Council, UAE - Focus Symposium on the Food & Allied Industry

The Embassy of India in the UAE, in collaboration with the Indian Business & Professional Council (IBPC), organized an event 'Focus Symposium on the Food & Allied Industry' at the India Club, Dubai. The symposium focused on agro-food startups, with special emphasis on initiatives under the BHARATI programme. The keynote addresses were delivered by Dr. Sudhanshu, Secretary APEDA and Dr. Sahitya Chaturvedi, Secretary General, IBPC Dubai. This strategic business session aimed to foster knowledge exchange, venture collaboration, and mentoring support for emerging agro-food and agri-tech startups, thereby strengthening bilateral innovation and investment linkages between India and the UAE.



The eight startups presented their business ideas, solutions and products to the IBPC members and business professionals of UAE. They interacted with the members and had a rich cross learning experience.





5.4 Key Learnings of the startups

Across the eight startups, Gulfood 2026 generated credible and actionable business traction. Startups reported high volumes of structured meetings with global retailers, importers, distributors, agri-trading houses, processors, logistics players, certification agencies, and institutional stakeholders. Many of these engagements progressed beyond exploratory conversations into defined next steps.

Near-term opportunities identified include pilot exports of value-added food products, distributor onboarding in GCC markets, private-label and white-label collaborations, deployment of shelf-life enhancement solutions at packhouse and exporter levels, SPS-compliant treatment trials for high-risk commodities, predictive food-safety pilots, and decentralized dehydration or biological production deployments.

Beyond buyer meetings, the BHARATI Startup Pavilion enabled meaningful exposure to the broader export and trade ecosystem. Institutional interactions and curated engagements provided startups with insight into global sourcing practices, retail expectations, logistics infrastructure, compliance enforcement, and wholesale market dynamics in the UAE and GCC region.

Engagements with large agri-business groups, logistics players, retail chains, and business networks expanded startup understanding of end-to-end export corridors. Interactions facilitated through business councils, diaspora networks, and ecosystem stakeholders further broadened access to advisors, investors, and market intermediaries, complementing direct buyer engagement.

These exposures were cited by startups as critical in grounding their export strategies in operational and regulatory realities rather than theoretical market assumptions. As APEDA continues to strengthen the BHARATI initiative, the Gulfood 2026 experience served as a practical validation and learning exercise, informing future startup selection, mentoring focus, and market-linkage design—grounded firmly in startup-reported outcomes and real market response.

6. Participation of Tea Board at Beverage Hall, DWTC

The Tea Board of India Pavilion at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) was inaugurated by Chairman APEDA. The inauguration included interactions with tea associations and participating companies at DWTC, along with live tea tasting sessions. The inauguration included interactions with tea associations and participating companies at DWTC, along with live tea tasting sessions.



7. Impact Assessment Note on Business Outcomes and Trade Facilitation Achieved through the Exhibition at Gulfood 2026

The exhibition witnessed strong participation and generated significant commercial outcomes for participating exhibitors facilitated by APEDA. The large volume of buyer enquiries, confirmed trade deals, and positive exhibitor feedback indicate that the event was highly effective in promoting India's agri and processed food exports and strengthening trade engagement with international markets.

Buyer Enquiries & Discussion

The level of buyer engagement during the exhibition was notably high. Exhibitors reported receiving a substantial number of enquiries from international buyers, reflecting strong interest in Indian products. Many companies received between 100 to 300 enquiries during the event, while some exhibitors reported more than 300 enquiries and a few even crossed 500 enquiries. On an average, each exhibitor received approximately 120–150 enquiries. Where both enquiry and order details were available, around 10–18% of enquiries translated into confirmed orders, with some companies achieving conversion rates exceeding 20%. A large share of the enquiries was for bulk quantities and container-level orders, indicating that buyers were exploring serious trade opportunities rather than only preliminary discussions.

Business value generated by the Exhibitors

In terms of commercial outcomes, the exhibition generated a considerable amount of confirmed business. Based on the figures shared by exhibitors, the total confirmed trade generated during and immediately after the event is estimated at around USD 18.27 million.

Several companies reported deals ranging between USD 200,000 and USD 1.5 million, particularly in key export categories of APEDA scheduled products. In addition to confirmed orders, a significant number of negotiations are still underway. These include discussions on trial consignments, product approvals, container-level orders, and price negotiations. If these ongoing discussions materialize into confirmed transactions, the overall business generated through the exhibition is expected to increase further and may exceed an additional USD 7–8 million in the coming months.

Indian Products which attracted the international buyers

The range of products that attracted strong buyer interest was diverse and reflected India's broad agricultural export basket. Spices and rice, including both Basmati and non-Basmati varieties, emerged as the most sought-after commodities and generated the highest number of enquiries and orders. Significant interest was also observed for dehydrated onion and garlic, pulses, oilseeds, peanuts, sesame, and makhana. In addition to traditional commodities, buyers showed increasing interest in value-added and health-oriented products such as ready-to-eat (RTE) foods, ready-to-cook (RTC) items, millet-based products, health drinks, and processed fruit products. This trend highlights the growing global demand for convenient, nutritious, and processed food options.

The profile of buyers interacting with exhibitors was also encouraging. Many buyers showed serious intent to establish long-term trade relationships, requesting product samples, negotiating pricing, placing trial orders, and expressing interest in visiting manufacturing facilities. Some buyers also sought assistance related to product registration and compliance requirements in their respective markets, indicating the potential for sustained trade engagement beyond the exhibition period.

Buyer Countries

Geographically, the exhibition attracted buyers from a wide range of international markets. The Middle East accounted for approximately 60–65% of the total interactions, with the United Arab Emirates emerging as the most active market, followed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman. In addition to the Gulf region, buyers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Africa (including Kenya, South Africa, and Morocco), China, and Russia also participated and expressed interest in sourcing Indian products. This broad geographical participation demonstrates the exhibition's effectiveness in strengthening India's presence in established export markets while also opening opportunities in emerging regions.

Exhibitor's Feedback

Exhibitor feedback further reflects the overall success of the event. Out of around 110 exhibitors who shared their feedback, nearly 98% reported that the exhibition was useful and helped them generate real business opportunities. Most participants highlighted the value of direct interaction with international buyers, the opportunity to explore new markets, and the ability to negotiate trade deals across multiple product categories. While the feedback was largely positive, some buyers raised concerns related to pricing competitiveness, product shelf life, and regulatory requirements in certain GCC markets. These insights indicate areas where targeted support and follow-up could help further strengthen export outcomes.

Overall, the exhibition proved to be commercially successful, generating strong confirmed business, creating a robust pipeline of future trade opportunities, and attracting serious buyers from key global markets. The combination of high enquiry volumes, significant business transactions, diverse product interest, and strong exhibitor satisfaction demonstrates the effectiveness of the event in promoting India's agricultural and processed food exports and enhancing the global visibility of Indian products. With sustained follow-up and engagement, additional business outcomes are expected to materialize in the coming months.

ANNEXURES

Media Outreach and Press Coverage and Indian Media Coverage

S.N.	Media Outlet / Source	URL	Brief Description	Type of Media
1	Press Information Bureau (PIB)	https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2218903&reg=6&lang=1	Official release on APEDA-led pavilion expansion to 1,434 sqm with 161 exhibitors across categories like processed foods and startups.	Digital/Govt Press
2	DD News (English)	https://ddnews.gov.in/en/india-to-showcase-agri-food-strength-at-gulfood-2026-with-161-	Pre-event preview of India's partner country status and APEDA pavilion highlighting regional diversity and GI products.	Digital/TV News
3	DD India	https://ddindia.co.in/2026/01/india-showcases-agri-food-sector-at-gulfood-2026-as-partner-country/	Live coverage of APEDA pavilion activities, exhibitor scale and UAE CEPA trade linkages.	Digital/TV News
4	DD News (BHARATI Pavilion)	https://ddnews.gov.in/en/bharati-pavilion-showcases-indian-agri-food-startups-at-gulfood-2026/	Focus on APEDA's BHARATI Pavilion featuring 8 agri-tech startups with Lulu Group and Allana support.	Digital/TV News
5	All India Radio / NewsOnAir	https://www.newsonair.gov.in/india-participates-as-partner-country-at-gulfood-2026-in-dubai-for-first-time-in-its-31-year-history/	Audio/web report on first-time partner country participation with doubled pavilion size.	Digital/Radio
6	The Economic Times	https://economictimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-to-showcase-agri-products-at-gulfood-2026-in-dubai-with-	Details 161 exhibitors from 25 states in APEDA pavilion, aligned with India-UAE CEPA.	Digital/Print
7	NewsDrum (PTI-based)	https://www.newsdrum.in/business/over-161-exhibitors-participating-in-food-show-in-dubai-apeda-11035284	Reports APEDA coordination of exhibitors and pavilion growth reflecting export demand.	Digital

S.N.	Media Outlet / Source	URL	Brief Description	Type of Media
8	Public TV (English)	https://english.publictv.in/india-to-present-diverse-agri-food-ecosystem-through-	Highlights diverse ecosystem in APEDA pavilion including BHARATI startups.	Digital/TV
9	India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF)	https://www.ibef.org/news/india-takes-centre-stage-at-gulfood-2026-as-country-partner-with-largest-global-presence	Covers India's record 600+ exhibitors and largest pavilion space under APEDA leadership.	Digital/Trade Promo
10	All India Radio / NEWS ON AIR OFFICIAL (YouTube)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY0Zr1ctM7c	APEDA Chairman Abhishek Dev interview on India's rising global agri-food role and UAE CEPA benefits at Gulfood 2026 (2:10 min).	TV/YouTube Video
11	NEWS ON AIR OFFICIAL - Gulfood India showcase	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f82KXiiPx5Y	India pavilion inauguration coverage featuring 161 exhibitors from 25 states led by APEDA across both Dubai venues (2:39 min).	TV/YouTube Video
12	DD India (YouTube)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLJJirTMEcc	DD India 24x7 international channel coverage of India showcasing agri-food sector at Gulfood 2026 as partner country (1:47 min).	TV/YouTube Video
13	APEDA Official Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5kuSARnvx0	APEDA promotional video announcing India as partner country at Gulfood 2026 with focus on agri-exports (1:51 min).	Official YouTube Video
14	DSGuruji (Educational YouTube)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WPT1boMXMg	Educational explainer on India becoming partner country in global food trade, role of APEDA and export opportunities (3:45 min).	YouTube Educational
15	MPEDA Official Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuHHoawzUzk	MPEDA post-event testimonial compilation from India Pavilion exhibitors on successful buyer connections and market expansion (7:14 min).	Official YouTube Video

S.N.	Media Outlet / Source	URL	Brief Description	Type of Media
16	APEDA	https://www.instagram.com/apedamoc/p/DT-j7rrEo6s/	India is showcasing its agri-food strength at #Gulfood2026 as the Partner Country, marking a major step in the nation's growing leadership in the global food trade. Led by APEDA, India is presenting itself as a reliable, quality-driven, and sustainable sourcing destination.	Digital
17	APEDA	https://www.instagram.com/apedamoc/p/DUC4K5PjOdo/	The BHARATI Startup Zone, set up within the APEDA Pavilion, was inaugurated by Shri Avinash Joshi, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Shri Abhishek Dev, Chairman, APEDA, at the Dubai World Trade Centre.	Digital
18	CGI Dubai	https://www.instagram.com/india_in_dubai/p/DUDdR_sk65x/	Shri. Avinash Joshi, Secretary, @mofpi_goi and CG Shri Satish Kumar Sivan attended the UAE Food Stakeholders Cluster Meeting on the sidelines of #gulfood2026 .	Digital
19	CGI Dubai	https://www.instagram.com/india_in_dubai/p/DUFdagOk78A/	Strengthening 's global presence in the food processing and agribusiness sector.	Digital
20	Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi	https://www.instagram.com/india_in_uae/p/DUINBbKACm6/	Productive discussions held between senior officials of APEDA and UAE Ministry of Climate Change & Environment on strengthening trade in agriculture and processed food sector. They also discussed the implementation of the MoU on Food Safety and Technical Requirements signed recently between the two countries.	Digital
21	ANS / News Reports	https://ianslive.in/india-marks-strong-presence-at-gulfood-2026-in-dubai-	Showing India's leadership and expansive presence across food sectors at Gulfood 2026.	Digital/Print

S.N.	Media Outlet / Source	URL	Brief Description	Type of Media
22	Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi	https://www.instagram.com/india_in_uae/p/DUINBbKACm6/https://www.instagram.com/india_in_uae/p/DUA59bWCTGi/	Amb @d.mittal73, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Shri Avinash Joshi and Chairman, APEDA, Shri Abhishek Dev inaugurated the India Pavillion at Gulfood 2026.	Digital
23	SRE News Article	https://www.sre.co.in/news-details/eod-4643503	Highlights 161+ Indian exhibitors, expanded pavilion, and startup showcases under APEDA's leadership.	Digital/Print
24	Rediff Moneynews – Exhibition Coverage	https://money.rediff.com/news/market/gulfood-2026-161-exhibitors-at-dubai-food-show/40902020260127	Summarises Indian participation with focus on product categories and export readiness themes.	Digital
25	Rediff Moneynews – Agri Exports Showcase	https://money.rediff.com/news/market/india-at-gulfood-2026-dubai-agri-exports-showcase/40689520260123	Describes India's role as Partner Country and its strategic export promotion aligned with India-UAE CEPA.	Digital
26	Suryaa News Coverage	https://www.suryaa.com/174890-gulfood-2026-india-to-showcase-diverse-agri-food-ecosystem.html	Provides contextual details on India's pavilion, product range and BHARATI startup zone visibility.	Digital

UAE & Other Foreign Media Coverage

S.N.	Media Outlet / Source	URL	Brief Description	Type of Media
1	Gulfood Official Site	https://www.gulfood.com/country-partner-india	Announces India as partner country represented by APEDA, emphasizing CEPA and pavilion for agri-food strength.	Digital/Event Site
2	Gulf News	https://gulfnews.com/business/retail/gulfood-2026-set-to-become-dubais-largest-food-trade-show-1.500413147	Quotes APEDA Chairman on India's largest delegation (>600 exhibitors) and pavilion commitment to UAE ties.	Digital/Print
3	Zee TV Middle East	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNH6OWfGLPY	Zee Connect Season 15 feature on Dulari Foods at Gulfood 2026 showcasing Indian food businesses' global expansion (6:36 min).	TV/YouTube Video
4	Gulfood Official YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37RpU46-VdU	Official Gulfood 2026 promotional video highlighting two-venue expansion at DWTC and Dubai Expo City (1:09 min).	Official YouTube Video
5	WAM	https://www.wam.ae/en/article/bn4kww5-dubai-becomes-the-global-headquarters-food-trade	The report highlights Gulfood 2026's expansion into two mega venues (Dubai World Trade Centre and Dubai Exhibition Centre), with 8,500+ exhibitors from 195 countries and more than 1.5 million products showcased, reinforcing Dubai's role as a major global food hub.	Digital
6	WAM	https://www.wam.ae/en/article/byftekx-mohammed-bin-rashid-tours-gulfood-2026	Coverage of the official tour by UAE leadership, underscoring the event's scale, global participation, innovation showcases, and the UAE's commitment to advancing food systems, trade connectivity, and sustainable supply chains	Digital
7	Khaleej Times	https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/photos-sheikh-mohammed-tours-gulfood-2026-dubai	Coverage and report of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's visit, highlighting Gulfood 2026's expansion across two venues with participation from 195 countries and 8,500 companies.	Digital

Social Media Coverage: APEDA Official Handles

As part of the comprehensive social media strategy, APEDA's Branding Division executed targeted promotional activities across its official platforms—Instagram, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn—to amplify India's participation as Partner Country at Gulfood 2026. The details of pre-event, during-event, and post-event initiatives are as under:

INSTAGRAM		
DATE	TYPE	CONTENT
22-01-2026	Motion Graphic	3 Days to go
23-01-2026	Motion Graphic	2 Days to go
24-01-2026	Motion Graphic	1 Days to go
26-01-2026	Post	Inaugural details along with photographs
28-01-2026	Post	India's participation during Gulfood along with India Pavillion photographs
28-01-2026	Post	Gulfood World Economic Forum - Panel Discussion Details along with photographs
28-01-2026	Collaborative Reel with COMNET	Interview of Chairman APEDA on "India at Gulfood"
30-01-2026	Reel	Chef Harpal Sokhi
3/2/2026	Influencer Reel	Mr. Kuldeep Khare

TWITTER (X)		
DATE	TYPE	CONTENT
22-01-2026	Motion Graphic	3 Days to go
23-01-2026	Motion Graphic	2 Days to go
25-01-2026	Repost-DoC	Official Announcement post
26-01-2026	Repost-DoC	India-Country partner
26-01-2026	Repost-DoC	APEDA at Gulfood
26-01-2026	Repost-DoC	India's Innovation Showcase
26-01-2026	Tweet	India Pavillion Inauguration
26-01-2026	Repost- All India Radio News	Interview of Chairman APEDA
26-01-2026	Repost-PB/SHABD	Interview of Chairman APEDA
27-01-2026	Influencer Reel	Mr. Kuldeep Khare
28-01-2026	Tweet	Inauguration of BHARATI Pavillion
28-01-2026	Repost-DoC	AGRI-FOOD Startups
28-01-2026	Repost-DoC	AGRI-FOOD Strength
28-01-2026	REPOST-INDIA in DUBAI	Gulfood World Economic Summit
28-01-2026	TWEET	Gulfood World Economic Summit
29-01-2026	Repost-MoFPI	BHARATI Startup Pavillion
29-01-2026	Repost-MoFPI	Gulfood World Economic Summit
30-01-2026	Repost-INDIA IN UAE	Discussion On Food Safety

Glimpses of Indian Branding as Country Partner at the Expo venue





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