



India Takes Centre Stage at Gulfood 2026 as Country Partner with Largest Global Presence

Over 500 Indian Companies Participate at Gulfood 2026 as GI Rice Dishes Take Spotlight at APEDA Culinary Zone

Eight Indian Startups Showcase Agri-Food Innovation at Gulfood 2026 Under APEDA's BHARATI Initiative

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 26 JAN 2026 8:52PM by PIB Delhi

India marked a strong and strategic presence at Gulfood 2026, the world's largest annual food and beverage trade exhibition, as the Country Partner, underscoring its growing leadership in the global agri-food and processed food sector. India has the largest participation at Gulfood 2026 among all participating countries, both in terms of the number of exhibitors and total exhibition area.

Key products being showcased by India at Gulfood 2026 include Basmati rice, more than ten Indian GI-tagged rice varieties, processed food products, millets, groundnuts, tea, spices, turmeric, organic products, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Indian Pavilion was inaugurated today at the APEDA Pavilion, Dubai Expo City by Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Shri A. P. Das Joshi, in the presence of Ambassador of India to the UAE, Dr. Deepak Mittal, and other senior dignitaries of the Government of India, including Chairman, APEDA Shri Abhishek Dev, Managing Director, ITPO, Dr. Neeraj Kharwal, along with a large number of exhibitors from India.

The UAE is the largest market for APEDA's scheduled products and serves as a gateway to the Gulf region, which is the largest destination for India's agricultural exports. The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement has had a significant impact on bilateral trade, particularly in the food processing industry and agricultural exports.

While India has traditionally maintained a strong presence at Gulfood, the 2026 edition marks India's largest-ever participation, with more than 600 Indian companies exhibiting across a wide spectrum of categories including staples, fresh produce, processed foods, beverages, agri-tech, and food processing. As Country Partner, India has been accorded prominent branding across exhibition venues under a unified design theme, along with dedicated conference sessions and enhanced B2B engagement opportunities.

APEDA has taken an exhibition space of nearly 1,500 square metres across various pavilions of Gulfood, including Pulses, Cereals and Grains, World Food, Beverages, and Gulfood Green, where more than 170 exhibitors are showcasing their products. These include participation from entities under the Department of Commerce such as the Tea Board, Spices Board and Turmeric Board; organisations of the Government of India including the National Horticultural Board, 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 Government of Meghalaya, Markfed Punjab, Sikkim–IFFCO, Bihar State Milk Cooperative Federation Limited (COMFED), the Department of Agriculture, Government of Bihar, and the Uttarakhand Horticulture Board.

In addition, more than 500 Indian companies, largely institutional and large players, are participating independently across both exhibition venues.

A major attraction at Gulfood 2026 is the Indian food tasting and culinary zone at the APEDA Pavilion, curated by celebrity chef Shri Harpal Singh Sokhi. The zone features dishes prepared using ten Indian GI-tagged rice varieties, including Kala Namak from Uttar Pradesh, Joha from Assam, Nagri Dubraj from Chhattisgarh, Jeeraphool from Odisha, Ambemohar from Maharashtra, Gobind Bhog from West Bengal, Mushqbudji from Jammu and Kashmir, Katarni from Bihar, Chak Hao Black Rice from Manipur, and Boka Chaul from Assam, along with Biryani presented by the All India Rice Exporters Association.

Another significant highlight of India's participation at Gulfood 2026 is the presence of eight startups under APEDA's BHARATI initiative, Bharat's Hub for Agri-tech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Enablement. These startups are showcasing innovative agri-food and agri-tech products and technologies with support from industry partners M/s LuLu Group and M/s Allanasons. The BHARATI initiative has been launched by APEDA to strengthen export capabilities of startups engaged in the agri-food and agri-tech sectors.

India's participation as Country Partner at Gulfood 2026 reflects the nation's commitment to delivering high-quality, safe, sustainable, and innovative food products to global markets. The Indian Pavilion highlights India's strengths across fresh and processed foods, beverages, cereals, millets, wellness products, and export-enabling technologies, and is expected to further strengthen trade relations, enhance buyer engagement, and position India as a trusted global food partner, in line with the Government's vision of making India the food basket of the world.

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