

Cooking Oil Imports Down 28% YoY in January: SEA

Our Bureau

Pune: India's edible oil imports in January declined by 28% year-on-year, largely because of carry-over stock from the previous year, according to the Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA).

Increase in international prices of palm oil and the upcoming harvest of mustard crop are some of the other reasons that led to cut in the country's cooking oil imports.

According to SEA, import of cooking oil in January 2024--reported at little more than 12 lakh tonnes--is down by 28% compared with January 2023. "The overall import of cooking oils during the first quarter of the 2023-24 oil year (November-October) is down by 23% over the same period of the previous year," said SEA.

Sandip Bajoria, CEO of Sunvin Group, a broker and consultant of oils and oil-seeds, said the main reasons for the decline in cooking oil imports include "increase in prices of palm oil, the vessels of sunflower oil taking 15 days longer to

arrive due to the geo-political tensions around Suez Canal, and delay in harvest of India's cotton and paddy, which give raw material for production of cotton seed oils and rice bran used".

Excess availability of imported cooking oil in the country last year was another reason for the imports to decline in the first quarter of the current year.



"The imports have declined largely due to the excess availability of oil in India. During the Russian grain corridor deal uncertainty, Ukraine had pumped out most of its oil to India," said cooking oil analyst Gna-

nasekar Thiagarajan. "The subsequent months resulted in excess supplies, which was the main reason for declining imports. A good mustard crop is also seen discouraging imports."

India's import of sunflower oil has reduced in the recent months. However, importers say they expect the import of soyabean oil to go up from April when exports from Argentina are expected to increase sharply.