



UAE-India Food Security Corridor:

A Global Supply Chain Alternative

AKHTAR MALIK

December, 2023

UAE-India Food Security Corridor:

A Global Supply Chain
Alternative

December, 2023

Contents

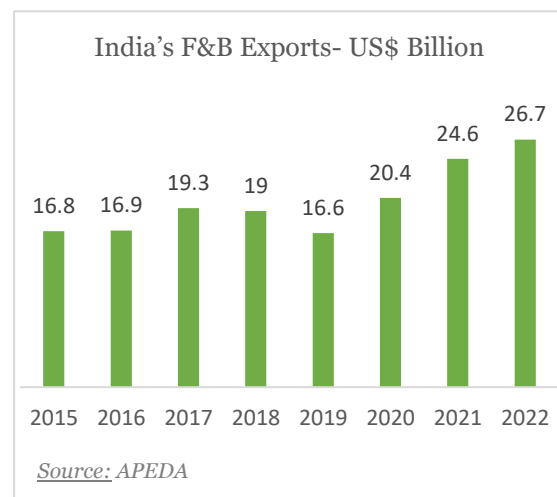
Introduction	5
Food Corridor	6
The IMEC Impact	10
Impact of CEPA.....	11
Opportunities.....	12
Opportunities for India	12
Opportunities for the UAE	14
Major Developments	15
Challenges	17
Way Forward.....	19

Introduction

An ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was announced during the recently concluded G20 summit. The initiative has been described as game-changing, historic, and a digital bridge across continents and civilizations. The trans-continental transport corridor is backed by the US, a signatory, along with India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the European Union, Italy, France, and Germany. The corridor will have two components: The east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe. Upon completion, railway lines will provide reliable and cheaper cross-border ship-to-rail transit than existing sea and road transport routes.

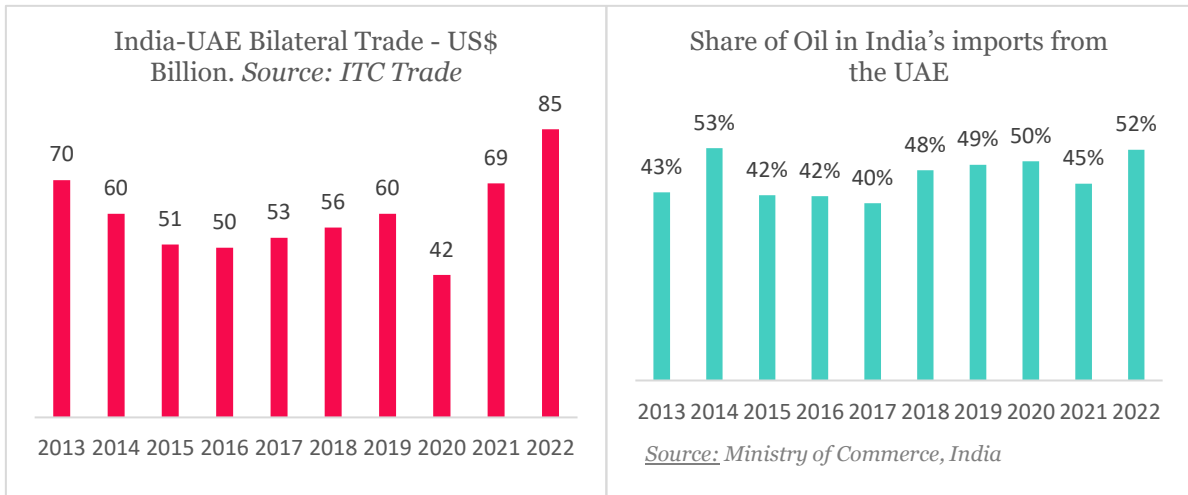
The announcement of this new corridor comes at a suitable moment for India and the UAE. The two countries have already strengthened their trade relations by signing a free trade agreement. They have also announced a food security corridor fitting into the larger IMEC. The complementarities of the two corridors need to be studied in detail to evaluate the benefits accruing from them. It becomes critical now to understand the food-security corridor in the light of the larger multi-nation initiative. India and the UAE would need serious commitment and planning on food security as it can be the official start of the larger IMEC.

In the financial year 2021-22, the UAE-India trade was about US\$ 85 billion. India is the UAE's second-largest trading partner, while the UAE is India's third-largest trading partner. A re-export hub, the UAE's re-exports to India are reported to account for about 47.5 percent of its total exports to India in 2021 (US\$ 11.5 billion).



The relationship trajectory between India and the UAE has historically been dominated by energy-driven trade. However, in the present decade, the relationship has significantly shifted as the focus has shifted to newer areas of cooperation and diplomacy. The Gulf states are reciprocating India's "Look West" policy. An example is the UAE's policy to seek better engagement with its eastern neighbors, including India, due to a structural change in the global energy

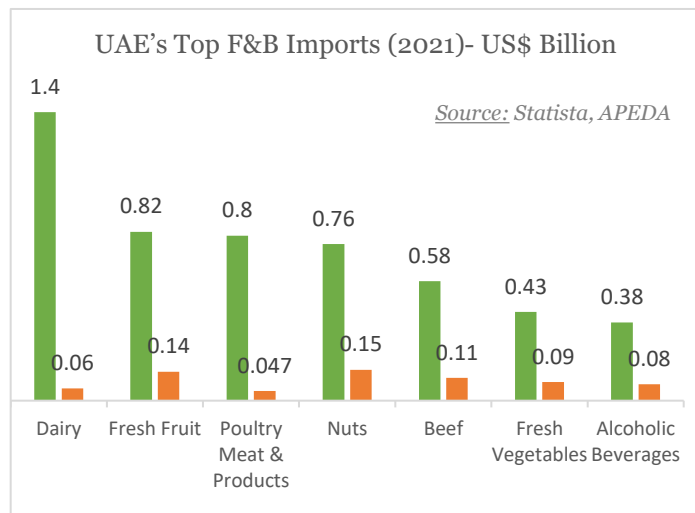
market wherein oil from the region is flowing more toward South, Southeast, and East Asia to countries like Japan, India, China, Singapore, and Thailand than trans-Atlantic markets.



The UAE and India also share regional and international peace and security concerns. In the ongoing war in Ukraine, both have repeatedly abstained from voting against Russia at the UN, signaling a shared understanding and approach. There is a consensus among the two nations that the security of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) are complementary and deserve a holistic and collaborative approach. Consequently, the UAE and other Gulf states are increasingly considering the East in general and India, particularly, for enhanced cooperation.

Food Corridor

The UAE and India have fostered cooperation through a massive US\$ 7 billion food security corridor, signed on February 18, 2022, on the sidelines of the



Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) during the virtual summit.

The agreement came into force on May 1, 2022. The India-UAE Food Corridor is an initiative to connect Indian farms directly to the UAE ports throughout the food production value chain. This concept originated organically considering the synergetic

relationship between the UAE's strategic need to ensure its food security and India's strategic imperative to increase the value of its food production.

The corridor's economic logic is also evident, as 80-90 percent of the UAE's food demand is met through imports. On the other hand, India is one of the world's top agricultural producers, with fertile lands, a suitable climate, and an expanding food production and processing sector. India's contribution to the top F&B imports into the UAE can be significantly improved and traded at competitive prices through the corridor.

With the prospect of tripling the food and agricultural trade between the two countries by 2025, the corridor seeks to ensure that the UAE achieves its target of zero hunger by 2051 and makes it a food export hub for neighboring regions. While the trade complementarities might have been the basis of the food corridor's conceptualization, the corridor's enormous geo-political significance has put it right up on the diplomatic landscape of the Eurasian region.

The food corridor initiative is part of India's overall "Look West" policy, where India sees the Gulf as a gateway to larger engagements with the West and African countries. The food corridor also reflects the UAE's growing diplomatic propensity toward its eastern neighbors, especially India. With the IMEC in the picture, seen as a counter to the Chinese BRI initiative, the food corridor also becomes a part of the overall strategic alignment in response to the BRI. The latter aspect of the food corridor might not be as critical to the UAE as it is for India.

The UAE's diplomatic normalization with Israel has further amplified the corridor's prospects. Israel and the UAE have signed a Free Trade Agreement to reduce tariffs on about 96 percent of traded goods. This agreement and India-UAE CEPA have the potential for extensive trilateral cooperation and business partnerships.

It will allow the three partners to utilize their distinctive capabilities in upcoming collaborations, such as creating a transregional order founded on technological prowess, potential for a healthy ecosystem, and economic complementarities.

The UAE places significant weight on tech products, where Israel holds a relative advantage.

Israel's contribution to the food corridor also derives from Israeli-Indian agricultural cooperation, which has been going on for over a decade. Israel has continuously worked with Indian farmers on innovative technologies developed – drip irrigation, advanced filtration, advanced water leakage detection, rainwater collection and treatment systems, and water security technologies – to improve India's agricultural production.

Following the September 2020 signing of the Abraham Accords, the normalization of UAE-Israel relations is now enabling the two powers to develop the project for a railway network that, with 300 kilometers still to be built in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, will connect the territories of the two countries. This would create an alternate route for Indian goods to reach the Mediterranean shores while putting the UAE at the center of this new connectivity framework. With Israel providing technological support, the UAE being the logistics gateway, and India being the production center, the food corridor's economic and geo-political success depends on the vital and intermeshed roles of the three countries.

Israel-India Agri-Cooperation

- Between 2012 and 2015, Israel established 29 agricultural centers of excellence across India as a platform for rapidly transferring technology and best practices. In 2019 alone, an estimated 150,000 Indian farmers received training at these centers.
- Israeli crop protection company *ADAMA Agricultural Solutions* is one of India's top firms in the industry, operating a formulation plant in Gujarat and a research and development center in Hyderabad.
- The Israeli leader in agricultural structures for novel farming, *ProFit Agro Ltd*, launched its first Indian Hydroponic Raft System in Bengaluru in 2019.

The food corridor also strengthens the India-UAE strategic partnership in line with both countries' environmental and sustainability commitments. Both countries are very committed to their environmental and sustainability commitments, evident from the efforts to promote compatibility, joint development, and co-production through a triparty initiative between India, the UAE, and France. The three parties concurred that the trilateral effort would act as a forum for advancing initiatives in the energy sector, emphasizing solar and nuclear energy, and in the battle against climate change and preserving biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean Rim.

The three countries are exploring the possibility of working with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to pursue concrete, actionable clean energy, environment, and biodiversity projects. The corridor also aligns with the Agriculture Innovation Mission (AIM) for Climate. The UAE and the US jointly launched this initiative at the 26th UNFCCC COP26 to address climate concerns. It brings together a coalition of 50 countries to significantly increase and accelerate agricultural innovation over the next five years.

The corridor evolved organically based on the complementarities between the two countries. However, it caught global attention in July 2022, when the India-Israel-UAE-USA (I2U2) Summit featured the food corridor prominently, leading to the impression that the corridor is a geo-economic contrivance of a US-partnered Middle East Quad.

The I2U2 grouping discusses areas of mutual interest, such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security. The UAE-Israel-India trilateral partnership in the food corridor promises a robust future. It could serve as the basis of a more extensive commercial configuration in the western half of the Indo-Pacific with the addition of other Arab Gulf countries from the greater Horn of Africa region.

For the US, participation in the India-Middle East Food Corridor is a strategic requirement, forming an essential part of Washington's approach to the Arabian Sea and the wider Indo-Pacific. Although the US is becoming a participant through the IMEC, the strategic power of the India-Middle East Food Corridor derives from the fact that it developed organically among the Asian countries through private sector and joint venture investments cultivated via bilateral public-private partnerships.

Lastly, the UAE is hosting the UNFCCC (COP28) from November 30 to December 12 later this year. The corridor allows the UAE to showcase its climate change and sustainability commitment.

The IMEC Impact

The announcement of a multi-modal connectivity framework at the recently concluded G20 summit will significantly contribute to the success of the food corridor. With the help of the IMEC's overarching connectivity model, the food corridor can transform from a bilateral initiative to a global alternative to the food supply chain. When materialized, the IMEC can facilitate the food corridor in myriad ways, including:

- ***Reduction in transit time and logistics cost:*** The new connectivity architecture under IMEC spans Eurasia's southern rim from India's Arabian Sea coast through the UAE's ports via Saudi Arabia and Jordan to Israel's Haifa port as its Mediterranean terminal. It is estimated that with this new connectivity, Indian goods shipped to the UAE's ports will reach major markets and manufacturing centers of Europe 40 percent faster than via the Suez Canal route.¹ This puts the UAE at the heart of the emerging multi-modal commercial corridor that could radically reconfigure trade patterns, transit times, and logistics costs.
- ***Technological & financial investments:*** Countries signatory to the IMEC can support the initiative with financial investments at the production (agricultural support) and logistical levels. With Israel already helping India with its low production challenges and the UAE supporting some food parks, the remaining countries can financially support similar initiatives in other parts of India. Currently, the food corridor is envisaged to cater to the UAE's food demand; with a broader set of markets, the production and logistics support needs to be enhanced proportionately. This would require huge investments, which can be leveraged using the larger IMEC framework.
- ***Enhanced trade opportunities:*** With more countries engaging in the food corridor, India and the UAE would benefit from increased trade opportunities. The food corridor will facilitate the movement of goods, including agricultural

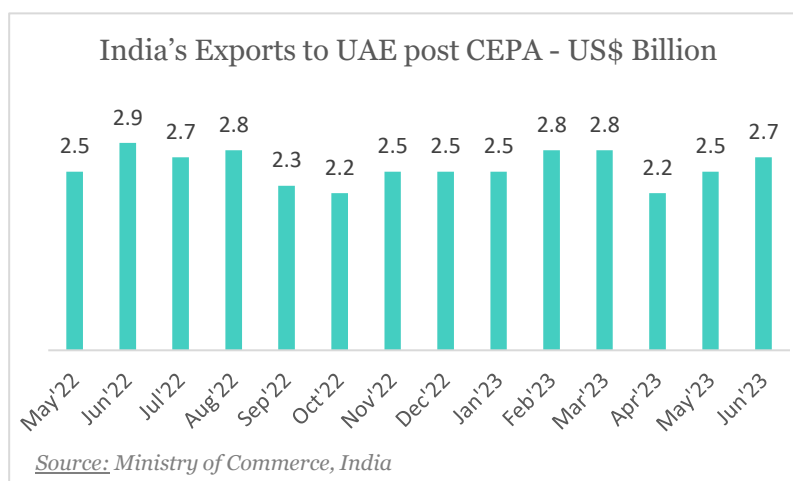
¹ India's Arab-Mediterranean Corridor: A paradigm shift in the strategic connectivity to Europe (South Asia Scan)

products, by improving infrastructure, reducing trade barriers, and streamlining operational procedures.

- **Diversification of food supply:** Such a corridor could lead to a more diversified and reliable source of food supply for the UAE. It would also potentially open up new markets for Indian agricultural products in the UAE and beyond as the economic corridor expands into Europe.
- **Regulatory alignment:** IMEC will involve regulatory alignment and standardization of procedures among participating countries. This will simplify the import and export of food products, ensuring food safety and quality standards compliance. Without IMEC, these alignments must be done with each country, which would be time-consuming.

Impact of CEPA

The UAE-India relationship has developed beyond a one-sided dynamic to become a comprehensive bilateral growth story propelled by consistency, commitment, and action. With the signing of the India-UAE



CEPA, both countries are entering a period of strengthened economic and trade cooperation.

The India-UAE CEPA, which encourages trade through duty elimination on over 97 percent of its tariff lines, accounting for 99 percent of Indian exports to the UAE in value terms, is expected to accelerate the growth of annual bilateral non-oil trade to US\$ 100 billion and trade in services to over US\$ 15 billion in five years. The CEPA is also expected to generate one million jobs in India's export-oriented industries like textiles, handloom, gems and jewelry, and leather and footwear.

After the CEPA signing, some sectors have seen continued growth. However, data for the last 14 months post the start of CEPA the Indian exports to the UAE have been stagnant. The sluggish growth of India's export trajectory may bear an influence of

macroeconomic headwinds, such as the conflict in Ukraine, rising inflationary pressures, global growth slowdown and consequent reduced demand, and reduction in global merchandise trade. However, the static export growth must be deeply examined to understand the problem.

Opportunities

While the trade and economic benefits of the food corridor initiative are apparent, the two countries are pursuing this cooperation's strategic and diplomatic gains. The establishment of the food corridor necessitates the development of infrastructure, logistics networks, and storage facilities. This presents opportunities for both countries to attract investment in transportation, cold chain logistics, food processing, and packaging facilities, leading to job creation and economic growth. Thus, the India-UAE food security partnership benefits from multiple points of convergence.



Opportunities for India

The Indian food industry, which accounts for over six percent of GDP, 13 percent of exports, and six percent of all industrial investment in the nation, is the fifth-largest in the world. India is working arduously to support the food processing businesses to improve the agriculture sector exponentially, contribute significantly to doubling farmers' income, and make the government's "Make in India" effort successful.

The objective to decrease food waste and increase the value of the agriculture sector is crucial. Adding value to the food processing industry is important because, given its large population, there is a limit to how much India can export. Focusing on value-added products can result in higher incomes. Gains can be made from harvesting products with higher market value and in demand in the international market.

The food corridor can stimulate agricultural development in India by creating demand for specific products in the UAE market. This can incentivize Indian farmers to produce a broader range of crops and invest in modern agricultural practices, leading to increased productivity and higher income generation. For instance, the India-UAE food corridor will benefit up to two million Indian farmers and create up to 20,000 new employment opportunities within the next three years.

As part of the larger “Start-up India” project, the food and beverage (F&B) processing industry is attracting domestic and international investors and has been hailed for its potential to tackle food security in India and the UAE. Developing a strong supply chain would enable start-up businesses to set up their food processing infrastructure, minimizing post-harvest losses and increasing value addition.

The UAE-India CEPA also includes a chapter on digital trade that discusses opportunities to harmonize e-commerce and digital trade between the two nations. This is significant because, with an estimated annual gross merchandise value of US\$ 350 billion, India is predicted to overtake China as the third-largest online retail market in the world by 2030.

There were just two food parks in India in 2014. However, as of year-end 2021, almost 24 mega food parks are operational. Centralized food parks are increasingly becoming more critical as they make it possible to add the necessary value to the agricultural goods that India exports. They also significantly contribute to lowering food waste.

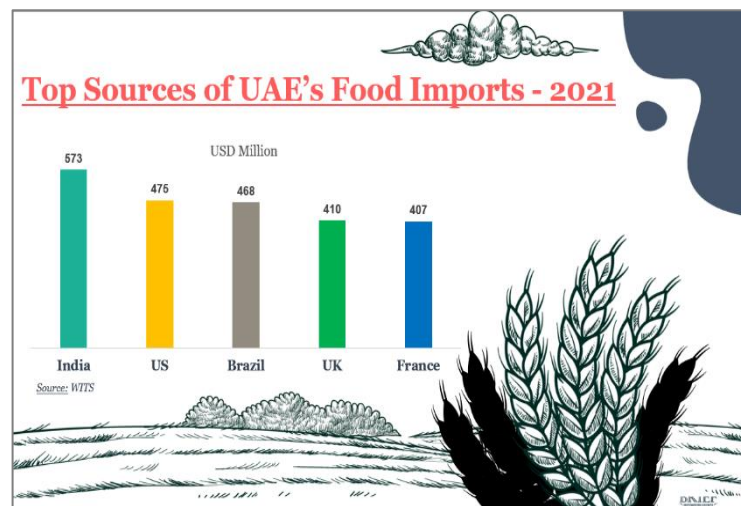
The corridor has garnered a US\$ 2 billion investment that uses Israeli and American climate-smart agricultural, clean, and renewable energy technologies to help maximize agricultural yields. In turn, they assist in combating food poverty in South Asia and the Middle East. Farmers and enterprises engaged in food processing and retailers are expected to profit from these investments.

Due to the UAE’s infrastructure support, India can play a significant role in the Global South by providing extended support to other developing countries in Africa and Asia through technology partnerships, joint research on drought-resistant crops, and promoting climate-smart agriculture. There will be more robust and diverse avenues for agricultural exports.

Additionally, India will have direct access to UAE markets. The Dubai Multi Commodities Center, the biggest free trade zone in the UAE, established Agriota, an agri-trading and commodity platform to link Indian farmers with food firms in the UAE. It provides millions of Indian farmers with the opportunity to connect directly with the UAE's food ecosystem (processing businesses, dealers, and wholesalers), helping them stock their agricultural goods in Emirati stores. The corridor can also act as a template for other sectors and use the UAE's geo-strategic position to reach other countries, promoting exports.

Opportunities for the UAE

According to 2021 data, India is the UAE's largest import partner for food products. It faces close competition from Brazil, the US, and the UK when exporting food and allied products to the UAE. Through the food corridor, the UAE, heavily dependent on food imports, can achieve food



access and security, end hunger, improve nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture, and be ready to confront future supply chain crises. This latter part became significantly important after the supply chain crisis emanating from the Russia-Ukraine war adversely impacted UAE food imports.

The year 2022 was arguably a breakout year for food and agriculture. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, food security shot to the top of the geo-political priority list. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) declared for the first time that it will create a plan by COP28 to cut emissions from food and agricultural systems in line to prevent temperature increases above 1.5°C.

The UAE hosting COP28 strengthens its initiatives to integrate climate action into its domestic, foreign, and national economic strategies. It can bring together public and private sector partners to tackle the climate challenge and make agriculture more sustainable, equitable, and resilient. As the first country in the region to ratify the Paris

Agreement and the first to commit to an economy-wide reduction in emissions and announce net zero emissions by 2050, the UAE is committed to strategic initiatives in climate action. The food corridor provides an opportunity for the UAE to show its commitment and also promote climate-sensitive initiatives.

Dubai's ever-expanding gastronomy industry, comprising a plethora of home-grown eateries, fine dining institutions, Michelin-starred restaurants, and neighborhood favorites, positively impacts the growth of food tourism globally. To sustain this industry, the UAE requires an uninterrupted food products supply, which the corridor can ensure. The UAE is home to a sizable Indian diaspora community of about 3.5 million people, whose food habits drive the demand for Indian food items.

The UAE's contribution to the India-UAE food security partnership lies in its strategic location between Asia and Europe. There are advantages to be reaped beyond preserving and diversifying India's food supplies. Israel plans to set up manufacturing in the UAE, which can serve as India's food export gateway to West Asia, the African region, and beyond – markets where Israel has struggled to gain a foothold. This alone accounts for a 30 percent increase in the import and export of products to and from the UAE.

Major Developments

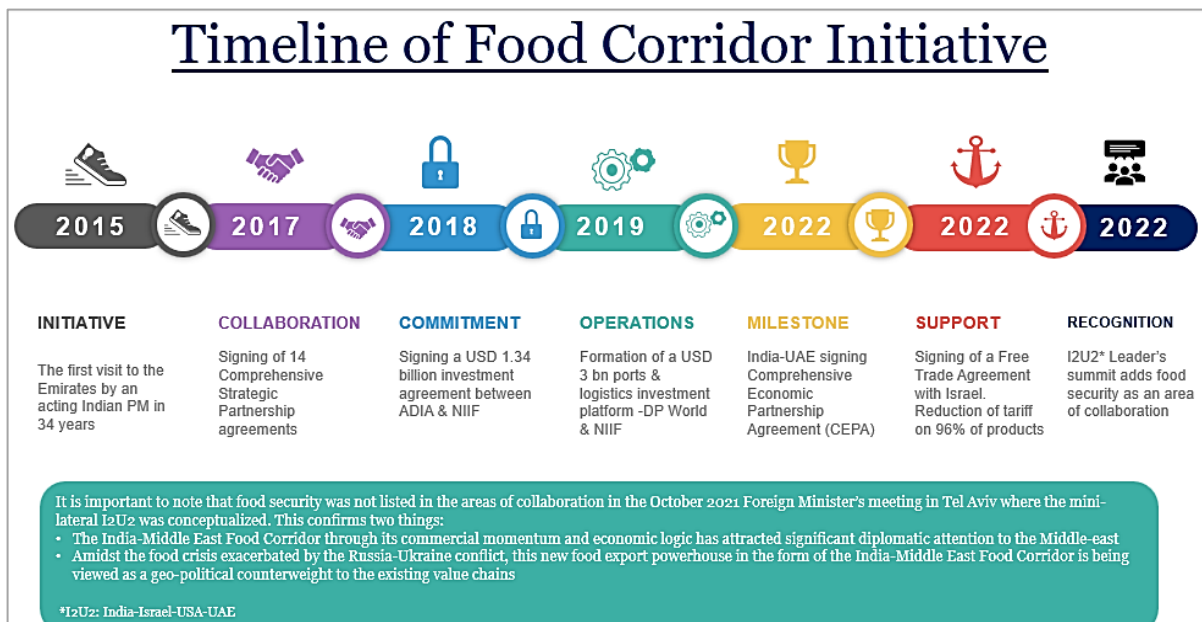
The starting point of the transforming relations between India and the UAE can be attributed to the Indian prime minister's visit to the UAE in 2015, after a gap of 34 years for an Indian prime minister. The two countries signed 14 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreements (CSP) in 2017. Three CSP agreements addressed India's strategic food priorities by creating UAE-India cooperation frameworks in food processing, maritime transport, and freight logistics and warehousing.

These agreements serve as the springboard for the UAE's development of the logistics and distribution infrastructure of the corridor. In 2019, two years before the 2021 Covid-19-induced food supply disruptions and well before the food supply shocks brought on by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the UAE and India established a massive US\$ 7 billion project to create an India-UAE food corridor, thus actualizing several of the CSP commitments.

The initiative assumed its shape when, in September 2019, the Dubai-based real estate giant Emaar Group coordinated the US\$ 7 billion (AED 25 billion) of investments by 2022, including a US\$ 5 billion investment in food parks and similar facilities in different Indian cities. The regions of Kutchh in Gujarat, Aurangabad in Maharashtra, and Pawarkheda in Madhya Pradesh were identified for the proposed food parks. The remaining US\$ 2 billion was reserved to be invested in contract farming, sourcing of agricultural commodities, and related infrastructure.

Dubai-based global supply chain leader DP World started spearheading the effort to provide integrated supply chain solutions for foodstuff transportation and storage to enable the corridor to operate. Previously, in 2018, DP World and India’s sovereign wealth fund, the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), set the foundation for these investments by forming a US\$ 3 billion port and logistics investment platform called Hindustan Infralog Private Limited (HIPL).

In December 2020, the Dubai-based conglomerate Sharaf Group announced that it was planning an investment of upward of US\$ 1 billion in the food corridor. Sharaf Group, which operates in over 40 countries and maintains diverse operations in the shipping, logistics, supply chain, and retail sectors, has already invested over US\$ 300



million to build logistics infrastructure services, warehousing, and storage to support the food corridor. The Abu Dhabi-based retailing conglomerate Lulu Group, which currently sources vegetables, fruit, fish, and meat from India, is involved with establishing the corridor, as are other Emirati firms.

The Dubai Multi-Commodities Centre has created an agriculture trading platform called Agriota to link Indian farmers with food companies in the UAE. Through this platform, the UAE can purchase food grains, fruits, and vegetables directly from farmers in India to be delivered to the UAE-financed mega park processing facilities being constructed in the country.

In January 2021, DP World began construction of a free trade zone facility five kilometers from India's largest seaport, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), with 93,000 square meters of covered storage, temperature-controlled warehouses, and state-of-the-art cargo handling facilities, designed to help spur the food corridor's integration. In 2022, a milestone was achieved when India and the UAE signed the CEPA in a virtual summit.

During the summit, two MoUs were inked between India and UAE firms – one between the Agriculture and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA) and DP World & Al-Dahra (an agri-business firm headquartered in Abu Dhabi) on the food security corridor initiative. Several funds from the Middle East, especially the sovereign wealth funds, have already placed huge bets on India, and the country's higher returns have driven the investments.

Trade Restrictions

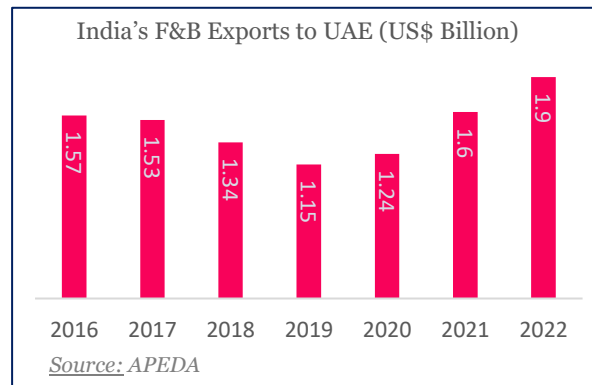
In April 2022, India emerged as a reliable alternative source of a steady food grain supply to the world, facing a shortage due to the Russia-Ukraine war. However, a few days later, the government announced restrictions on wheat exports to ensure sufficient domestic supplies. This was followed by an imposition of a 20 percent export duty on non-basmati rice, followed by a complete export ban in July 2022. After that, the government banned the export of broken rice from September 2022 to ensure sufficient domestic consumption stocks and to control the soaring food prices.

Challenges

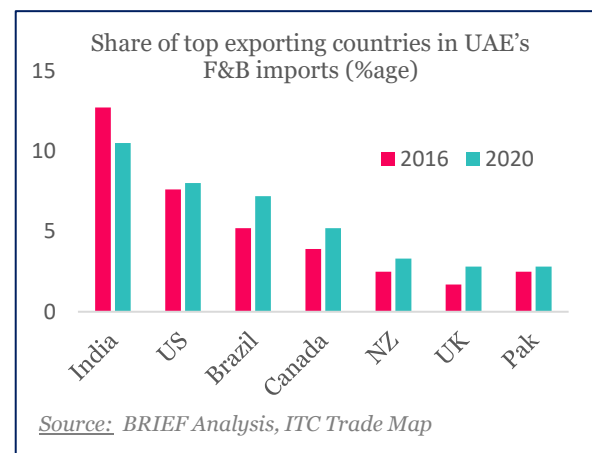
The food corridor initiative is expected to take the UAE further from its oil dependence and enormous geo-political significance. However, it is essential to note that India will be the most critical part of the connectivity architecture. The centrality of India in the food corridor initiative must be emphasized. India's credentials to become an agri-

export powerhouse are solid. However, becoming an alternate supply of global food grains will not be easy because India has an enormous 1.4 billion population to feed.

India ranks 107th out of 121 nations in the Global Hunger Index 2022 (down from the index of 101 in 2021). The country's hunger level is profound, with a score of 29.1. The pressure of domestic food security on agricultural production can be gauged by the fact that while India is the world's second-largest food-producing country, its share in the global food and agriculture trade is a mere 2.2 percent (in value terms).² The pressure of feeding its large domestic population has sometimes led to bans on the export of food items.



In 2022, India banned the export of wheat, non-basmati rice, broken rice, and sugar to ensure sufficient stocks in domestic markets and arrest soaring food prices. Notably, India accounts for 40 percent of the global rice trade.³ The export ban by India, therefore, has come to affect nearly half of the world's population, for whom rice is the staple food. This seriously concerns India's ability to maintain a continuous flow of food exports and the food corridor being developed as an alternate global food supply chain.



Further, bilaterally, Indian food and beverages exports with the UAE, its second-largest export destination, have been static over the past decade. India's share in the UAE's F&B imports has been falling, while other exporters like the US, Brazil, and Canada have been rising. The corridor initiative targets the agri-trade tripling between the UAE and India in the next five years.

² OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2022-2031

³ <https://thewire.in/agriculture/wto-member-states-ask-india-how-long-it-intends-to-ban-rice-wheat-exports>

However, NITI Aayog, India's apex think tank, does not share the same optimism. It suggests that India's demand-supply position regarding agricultural commodities may not have a considerable surplus to spare for global markets, even in 2032-33. Other factors contributing to low agricultural exports are low productivity, decreasing average land holdings, food wastage, low mechanization, inadequate logistical infrastructure, subsistence Agri practices, etc.

The United Nations called out climate change and extreme weather events as the key factors driving growing food insecurity. Moreover, India's agriculture heavily depends on monsoon as about 57 percent of agriculture is rain-fed. Irrigation facilities are inadequate and mainly limited in the major river basin. Although water resources are plenty, they are not properly used and equally distributed. Inadequacy in irrigation in drought-prone states of India manifests distress among farmers, and thus, yields of crops remain below average.

Grain production is steadily increasing due to advancements in production technology, but improper storage results in high losses in grains. India grows large-scale fruits and vegetables and ranks the world's second in production. Seasonal availability of these crops is high, and often they are unused. Farmers struggle to obtain the input cost of their crops. Due to a shortage of cold storage, fruits and other commodities go mostly unharvested during the growing season. Additionally, it results in low pricing, preventing farmers from getting their true returns.

Considering the significance of the food corridor for the UAE and the prevalent challenges that limit the potential of exports in India, the UAE must have a deep and continuous engagement across stakeholder levels with the agricultural value chain in India. The UAE entities must better understand the situation on the ground to have better visibility and control of operations and associated timelines and costs.

Way Forward

The food security corridor is a promising endeavor that requires careful planning, collaboration, and investment from both countries. Such a corridor would require a consistent and reliable supply of food products from India, seamless farms-to-market logistics, integration between Indian producers and consumers in the Gulf, improvement in the infrastructure and operations of the entire logistics chain,

government collaboration to ensure that the projects are completed in time and necessary support for the producers to improve the yield and propel the exports.

It may be easier said than done. The corridor's initial stages require commitment and cooperation from various stakeholders. An evaluation of the past years would be a good way to start. It will give a realistic picture of the prevailing scenario – the status of food parks, logistics augmentation at ports and warehouses, product lists agreed upon, stakeholders involved, etc. With the announcement of the IMEC framework, more stakeholders will be interested in the food corridor. However, it also adds questions that need to be answered:

- What would be areas of cooperation among states involved?
- What are the prospects of inviting financial and technical investments from IMEC partners?
- Role of private stakeholders in the overall architecture?
- Should the UAE or GCC countries drive it as their food security is more import-dependent?
- How do countries that are part of both IMEC and BRI participate in the food corridor?

There is a dire need to develop relevant literature on the corridor. Therefore, to begin with, the initiative needs an exclusive platform that will develop research, share knowledge, create spaces to bring together public and private stakeholders in the two countries, initiate discussions and dialogues, and guide policy establishment on issues and challenges facing the corridor. The primary aim of this platform would be to translate the existing challenges into opportunities for cooperation between the two countries. A multi-tier engagement between entities in the UAE and stakeholders in India needs to be planned to achieve this objective. This initiative would involve the following activities:

- **Research:** Conducting joint research projects and studies in the form of regional strategy papers, policy briefs, sector profiles, product profiles, etc. This would help better understand the industry, trade, and bilateral cooperation while creating a pool of knowledge that can be shared with wider stakeholders. The research projects shall identify gaps/challenges and suggest measures to

streamline the value chain, including value addition, timelines, costs, regulations, and procedures.

- Understanding how the food security corridor can feed into the larger IMEC and benefit the two nations.
 - Begin with a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the corridor's economic, logistical, and agricultural aspects.
 - Evaluate the infrastructure requirements, including transportation, storage, and processing facilities.
 - Identify the food products included, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and meat products.
 - Streamline trade procedures and reduce trade barriers to expedite the flow of goods.
- **Dissemination of information:** Sharing the research outcome with stakeholders through events (online and offline) in respective countries with participation from key stakeholders. The knowledge sharing will help create a favorable constituency for the corridor among stakeholders. It will also facilitate the participation of other research and public policy institutions to further deep dive into this topic.
 - **Multi-level interactions and engagements:** Adopt a multi-layered approach for holding extensive interactions with stakeholders, focused on strengthening the cooperation, building value chain-based collaborations, and assessing their benefits. This must be done by organizing inter-country and intra-country stakeholder discussions and interactions promoting discussions in academic circles. This would be helpful in seamless business operations and exploring new opportunities for engagements within and outside the sector.
 - **Advocacy/diplomacy:** Continuous engagements with the respective governments of both countries promote stronger relations and a favorable business environment for the corridor through relevant policies, regulatory mechanisms, and procedures.

Creating an India-UAE Food Security Corridor is a complex undertaking that requires both nations' commitment and cooperation from various stakeholders. With careful planning, investment, and sustained effort, it can contribute significantly to food security for both countries and serve as a model for similar initiatives globally.