

Australia resumes Indian prawn imports, easing worries of farmers

KV Kurmanath

Hyderabad

Australia's lifting of the ban on unpeeled prawn imports from India gives a breather to prawn farmers in the country, who are suffering heavy losses due to the 50 per cent tariffs imposed by the United States.

While this move by Australia opens up a new market for prawn farmers, the volumes are not high.

India shipped out 38,000 tonnes of prawns Down Under in 2022.

The move supports the industry's goal of diversifying exports to offset US tariff losses, but Indian players are likely to face tough competition from Vietnam, Thai-



and, Indonesia and China.

CAVEATS AHEAD

The export opportunity, however, comes with a rider. All export consignments must be tested by a competent authority locally for white spot and yellow head diseases.

"After that, when the consignments arrive in Aus-

tralia, they will be quarantined and a sample will get tested for the diseases again," Ravi Kumar Yellanki, MD of Vaisakhi Bio-Marine and Vaisakhi Bio-Resources and the President of the All India Shrimp Hatchery Association (AISHA), told *businessline*.

The ban on exports came into force in 2016 and exports were reinstated in 2018. Indian exporters, however, have not focused much on this market as the US market was more lucrative.

Nara Lokesh, Andhra Pradesh Minister for IT and Human Resources, who is currently visiting Australia, announced on Tuesday night that the host country had granted its first import approval for unpeeled Indian

prawns. The announcement comes as part of his ongoing visit to Australia, where he has been holding meetings with government officials, investors and the seafood trade.

Australia had long restricted unpeeled prawn imports from India following detection of white spot virus — a major setback for exporters, especially farmers and traders in north Andhra Pradesh seeking to regain market access after US tariff losses. "A long-standing hurdle for Indian seafood exporters has been Australia's restrictions on unpeeled prawns due to white spot virus detection. Today, the first import approval for Indian prawns has been granted," Lokesh said on X.