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## Russia and Sri Lanka halt India grape access

Access stopped for Indian table grapes midway through season amid phytosanitary concerns



**E**xporters from India have had access halted to Russia and Sri Lanka midway through the season due to requirements for stronger pest control from each destination.

India is currently on track for a record export year with a projected 11 per cent increase in volume for the April 2018 to March 2019 period.

While Sri Lanka is a minor destination for Indian table grapes, Russia takes good volumes and last year imported 27,434 tonnes.

Access to other European markets remains in place, however, The Indian Express reported a collapse of prices at farm-gate level following the incident.

Vilas Shinde, chairman of the Nashik-based Sahyadri Farms, said plant quarantine issues have been raised by both Russia and Sri Lanka. "Both the countries have asked for declaration of the entire area as pest-free," he said.

Shinde said the necessary documentation needs to be completed by the agriculture department's plant quarantine department. "Sri Lanka's

requirements have been met and we are waiting for them to revert, however, in the case of Russia, the work is yet to be done," he noted.

The suspension of market access is not the sole reason for India's table grape price collapse this season; good volumes in the grape-growing state of Maharashtra, coupled with weakened domestic and international demand overall, are also to blame.