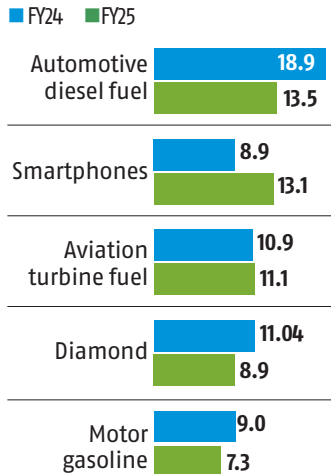


Smartphones 2nd-largest export category, now

SHIPPED OVERSEAS

Exports during April–November period (in \$ billion)



Source: Department of commerce

SURAJEET DAS GUPTA

New Delhi, 22 January

Smartphones have emerged as India's second-largest export category, according to harmonized system (HS) codes used for international trade classification by the World Trade Organization (WTO). The segment is now vying for the top spot, challenging automotive diesel fuel exports.

Commerce ministry data reveals that smartphone exports reached \$13.1 billion in the April–November period of FY25, securing the second position among HS code-based export categories. This represents a 46 per cent increase over \$8.9 billion in smartphone exports during the same period of last financial year. In FY24, smartphones ranked fourth during the April–November period but have now climbed two spots to second place.

Apple Inc, through its iPhones, accounted for two-thirds of India's smartphone exports during the period under review, underscoring the impact of the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

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Smartphone exports narrowing gap with auto diesel fuel

Automotive diesel fuel, India's top export item for long, was \$10 billion ahead of smartphones during April-November FY24. However, in FY25, this gap has narrowed sharply to just \$400 million for the corresponding period.

Smartphone exports have seen remarkable growth since FY19, when they stood at a modest \$1.6 billion and ranked 23rd among HS code export categories. The introduction of the PLI scheme two years later attracted global giants, including Apple's vendors Foxconn, Pegatron, and Wistron, which established major iPhone manufacturing facilities in India. Samsung also expanded its export operations. Smartphone exports rose to \$2.9 billion in FY20, placing the sector at 14th in the export rankings. Over the next two years, exports continued to gain momentum, reaching \$3 billion in FY21 and \$5.7 billion in FY22, elevating the category to the ninth spot.

The growth trajectory further accelerated in FY23, as



SMARTPHONE EXPORTS

Year	Rank based on HS code	Export value (\$ bn)
2019-20	14	2.9
2020-21	9	3
2021-22	9	5.7
2022-23	5	11
2023-24	4	15.6
2024-25(April-Nov)	2	13.1

Apple's key vendors — Foxconn, Tatas, and Pegatron — significantly ramped up production, and the value of smartphone exports nearly to \$11 billion in FY23, propelling the category to the fifth position. By the end of FY24, smartphone exports had reached \$15.6 billion, ranking

fourth, behind automotive diesel fuel, diamonds, and aviation turbine fuel.

Although export rankings for April-December FY25 are yet to be released, smartphones have already achieved \$15.35 billion in exports, almost equalling the total figure for all of FY24.