

Centre set to allow import of 300,000 tonnes of raw sugar at 25-30% duty

COGENCIS

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The government is likely to allow import of 300,000 tonnes of raw sugar at 25-30 per cent import duty, a senior government official said today.

A notification on the matter is likely by Wednesday, the official said. Currently, sugar attracts an import duty of 50 per cent, making imports commercially unviable.

On Monday, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan had said the government is likely to soon take a decision on import of sugar to augment domestic supplies, as stocks are expected to fall to critically low levels.

"This time, the import would be allowed only in the ports of south zone as there is acute sugar shortage in States such as Tamil Nadu," the official said. Mills in drought-hit

southern India are likely to operate below capacity this season due to scarcity of cane.

In April, the government had allowed import of 500,000 tonnes of duty-free sugar under the tariff rate quota.

The imports then were also subject to zonal quantity restrictions. The government had allowed import of 300,000 tonnes duty-free raw sugar in the south zone via

Tuticorin, Chennai, Mangaluru, and Kakinada ports, 150,000 tonnes in the west zone via Kandla and Mumbai ports and 50,000 tonnes in the east zone through Haldia and Paradeep ports.

The government had later added Visakhapatnam and Gangavaram ports in Andhra Pradesh and Karaikal port in Puducherry to the list of ports where imports were allowed.

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