Centre to decide on extra sugar exports after reviewing supplies

TAKING STOCK. State sugar commissioners to meet next month to evaluate production, demand

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The government is likely to decide next month if it should allow exports above the 60 lakh tonnes (lt) allowed till May 31, after assessing the domestic production scenario since the crushing of sugarcane is still going on, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Thursday.

The Food Ministry has allocated a mill-wise export quota totalling 60 lt for the current 2022-23 season (October-September), which need to be shipped by May 31. India had exported record 110 lt of sugar in the previous season.

Mills have dispatched 30 lt of sugar for exports, out of which 18 lt have already been shipped out of the country while 5 lt are in the pipeline, Chopra said, adding that the entire allotted quota might be exported by May. "We are open to revisiting the export quota. Depending on the domestic production and internal requirement, we will take a fresh call in the next month when we sit with sugarcane commissioners of states," Chopra said. Pointing out divergent production estimates from different sugar associations for the current season he said a clear picture would emerge by the end of this month or early next month.

Production would not be lower than 340-345 lt, said Subodh Kumar Singh, Additional Secretary in Food Ministry. This means there is potential for some additional quantity to be exported, he said.

According to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), mills have entered into contracts to export 55 lt so far, whereas production has reached 156.8 lt as on January 15 against 150.8 lt in year-ago period. Indicating there is no need to raise the minimum selling price of sugar from the current ₹31/kg, the Food Secretary said the mills are earning good revenue from different streams including sweetener and ethanol.

20% ETHANOL BLENDING

He expressed confidence that the target of 20 per cent blending would be met by sourcing ethanol from different feedstock including sugarcane and grain.

CAUTIOUS OUTLOOK

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- Mills have dispatched 30 lt of sugar for exports, out of which 18 lt have already been shipped out of India
- Production likely to be about 340-345 lt