

UP sugar mills have ₹2,800-cr cane dues pending for 2020-21 season

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EVEN AS SUGAR crushing has entered the second month of the season, five sugar groups in Uttar Pradesh — Bajaj Hindustan, Simbhaoli, Modi, Yadu and Rana — along with six individual mills, still have around ₹2,800 crore cane arrears pending for the 2020-21 season (October-September).

Of the 27 defaulter sugar mills, the maximum pending dues of ₹1,800 crore are to be cleared by the 14 sugarmills of the Bajaj group, followed by ₹370 crore by the Modi group, ₹250 crore by the Simbhaoli group, ₹34 crore by the Rana group and ₹33 crore by the Yadu group. The six individual sugar mills together owe around ₹228 crore.

Taking action against the defaulter mills, the state government has lodged FIRs against at least five mills under IPC Section 420 and Sections 3 and 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, for not paying farmers their dues despite directions by the government. According to an official, the officials of the Bajaj



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Hindusthan Sugarmill in Palia, in Lakhimpur Kheri district were booked for criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust for not paying dues to the farmers. The mill was accused of “financial exploitation” of farmers and fuelling “discontent” among them by not paying them their dues for over a year.

“Cane price payment is the top priority of the government and we are regularly monitoring the payment at the highest level, and strict action will be taken against the negligent

sugar mills,” said Sanjay Bhoosreddy, cane and sugar Commissioner.

It may be mentioned that UP is the country's largest sugar producing state, accounting for almost 47% of the country's total production. The state's 120 sugarmills support nearly 65 lakh farmers.

Irked over the delay in the settlement of dues by Bajaj Sugar Mills, sugarcane farmers in several districts, including Gola and Palia of Lakhimpur Kheri district, have been protesting since last ten days and have threatened to intensify the stir if their dues were not cleared by the end of the month.

“We have been left us with no option but to hold dharmas. As per law, our dues must be cleared within 14 days of purchase of sugarcane. But it's almost 10 months since the crushing season ended but our dues are still not being cleared. We have been forced to take loans to make ends meet. The condition of farmers is pathetic and we are on the brink of committing suicide,” said Arvind Kumar, a farmer from Lakhimpur Kheri.

