

# Sugar output may rise 24% to 25 mt in 2017-18: Isma

FC BUREAU

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SUGAR production in the country is estimated to rise 24 per cent to 25.1 million tonnes in the next marketing year, starting October, on higher sugarcane acreage, industry body Isma said on Thursday. Sugar output in India, the world's second largest producer after Brazil, is estimated at 20.2 million tonnes in the ongoing 2016-17 marketing year (October-September).

It is likely to rise in all states except Tamil Nadu, Indian sugar mills association (Isma) president T Sarita Reddy said on the sidelines of a Kingsman sugar conference here. "We estimate output at 25.1 million tonnes next season and an opening stock of 4 million tonnes. So, there would be sufficient availability of sugar in the country," she said. The annual sugar demand in India is 24-25 million tonnes.

In UP, she said, the production could rise to 10 million tonnes in the 2017-18 season. Sugarcane area is higher at 4.988 million hectares this year against 4.564 million hectares in 2016-17.

To boost domestic supply this year in view of fall in production, the government had allowed duty-free import of 500,000 tonnes of sugar in April-May.

Today, it further allowed imports of 300,000 tonnes of raw sugar at concessional duty of 25 per cent to check prices during the upcoming festive season.

International sugar organisation (ISO) executive director Jose Orive also said India's output will rise to 25 million tonnes from 20.5 million tonnes in 2016-17. The global output will rise by 7 per cent to 179.3 million tonnes and consumption by 1.7 per cent to 174.7 million tonnes, ISO said.

Sanjay Bhoosreddy, principal secretary, sugarcane development and sugar industry, UP, said the output in the state will rise to 10.3 million tonnes in 2017-18 from 8.8 million tonnes this year. He said crushing is expected to start in some parts of UP from October 10.

Meanwhile, the government on Thursday allowed import of 300,000 tonnes of raw sugar at concessional duty of 25 per cent to augment domestic supplies ahead of the festive season.

It had hiked import duty on sugar in July to 50 per cent from 40 per cent to curb dumping of the commodity in India as international prices fell.