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40 sugar mills in Maha apply for manufacturing sanitiser

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AROUND 40 SUGAR factories in Maharashtra, including cooperative and private, have applied for the permission to manufacture sanitisers as there is a supply shortfall in the market, following the Covid-19 outbreak, top officials of the Western India Sugar Mills Association (Wisma) said.

BB Thombare, president, Wisma, said he had already written to the association members highlighting the need for mills with distiller units to supply ethyl alcohol/ENA(extra neutral alcohol)/ethanol to sanitiser manufacturers and more importantly, the units to begin manufacturing sanitisers after obtaining necessary permissions and licences from the authorities. The industry has responded positively and around as many as 40 mills with distillery units either have applied or are

applying for the licences, he said.

The government has simplified the process and the licence is received within 24 hours of the online application, he said.

The sugar industry is getting into the manufacture of sanitisers as a social cause and due to huge shortfall in the supply in the market. Millers do not require to make any major change to their existing plants and just require a mixing and bottling plant, he said. Most factories normally have stocks of 25 lakh litres of alcohol that could be used for the manufacture of sanitisers, Thombare said.

Accordingly, factories could manufacture anywhere between 1,000 and 5,000 litres of sanitisers per day, he said. The ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution has issued a notification directing state governments to enhance production of hand sanitisers and ensure its availability.