

# Sugar output may dip 10% in 2013-14: Govt

New Delhi, June 11: Sugar output in the country is projected to drop by 10% to 22 million tonne (mt) in the 2013-14 marketing year starting October, mainly due to lower sugarcane output in drought-affected states, food minister K V Thomas said today.

Sugar production in the next year would be just enough to meet the annual demand of 22 mt. But there would not be any problem in sugar supply as the country would have good quantity of carryover stock, he said.

Sugar production of India, the world's second largest producer and biggest consumer, in the ongoing 2012-13 marketing year (October-September) is pegged at 24.5 mt and could even reach 25 mt.

"As per the agriculture ministry's estimate, sugar production is expected to be down by 10% in the 2013-14 marketing year," Thomas said.

The sugar production is estimated lower as sugarcane output is likely to be affected, especially in drought-hit Maharashtra and Karnataka, he added. The latest estimate on sugar output is almost in line with



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that of the US department of agriculture (USDA), which recently projected an 8% fall in India's sugar production at 23.2 mt for the 2013-14 marketing year.

According to the USDA, sugar production could decline by 26% in Maharashtra to 5.87 mt and 14% in Karnataka at 2.69 mt in 2013-14. On increasing import duty on sugar from the current 10%, Thomas said that there has been such a demand from the sugar industry, but no decision has yet been taken.

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