

# Maha sugar mills seek permission to continue crushing in lockdown

**NANDA KASABE**  
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**THE MAHARASHTRA STATE Cooperative Sugar Factories Federation (MSCSFF) is seeking permission from the state government to complete the crushing season of 2019-20 amidst the lockdown announced by the Centre, according to top officials of the federation. The crushing season has reached the last stages according to the officials.**

Some 26 factories in the state are still functional and these need to continue since the season is in its last leg and cannot be stopped in the middle, Sanjay Khatal, MD of the federation said. The federation is writing to the Maharashtra sugar commissioner to allow the movement of cane within the districts, he said, adding that Sant Tukaram Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana faced problems when the factory's vehicles were stopped by the police.

As on March 15, only 55.85 lakh tonne of sugar could be produced in the state, down 44.2% from 100.08 lakh tonne that it had produced by



the same period last year. Far fewer number of mills in the state crushed the cane this year — 146 against 195 last year — while there was also a delay in the crushing season and much lower yield as crops were damaged due to unseasonal rains between October and November.

As per the latest data available with Maharashtra sugar commissioner, mills in the state have crushed 501 lakh tonne of sugarcane to produce 558.49 lakh quintals of sugar. According to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma) the daily rate of crushing in the current season in Maharashtra is significantly lower than last year. Also, mills that are now operating will be closing earlier than last year.

Ajit Chougule, MD, West-

ern India Sugar Mills Association, in a letter to the commissioner of sugar, said that transportation of sugarcane from member farmers to their sugar mills is important and therefore necessary orders are requested from the commissioner for district collectors and superintendents of police.

Khatal said that a couple of mills have also applied to the FDA for licences to commence sanitiser production. The Western India Sugar Mills Association has also asked to its members to respond to the appeal of the Centre and state government for immediate and sufficient supply of ethyl alcohol/ENA/ethanol to the sanitisers manufacturers on top priority. All sugar mills having distillery units are likely to start the production of sanitisers in bulk as well as retail packing basis by complying to the simple formalities of its license from the state controller of drugs and state excise department.

As per market reports, some 10 mills from Uttar Pradesh have already applied for licences to manufacture sanitisers.

