

Maharashtra beats UP with record sugar output this season

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MAHARASHTRA IS LOOKING at record sugar production in the 2021-22 season, leaving its closest competitor Uttar Pradesh far behind. As of Monday, 197 mills in Maharashtra have crushed 1072.58 lakh tonne of cane to produce 111.16 lakh tonne of sugar. Uttar Pradesh has reported production of 78 lakh tonne of sugar so far this season.

Maharashtra sugar commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad said total production in the state is likely to touch 125 lakh tonne by the end of the season, the highest till date. The state had previously reported its highest production in the 2018-19 season at 107 lakh tonne. Maharashtra has already diverted 12-15 lakh tonne of sugar towards ethanol production.

Gaikwad said the current season is likely to stretch over 160-180 days and may continue till the end of May or beginning of June in some regions. Normally, crushing is

completed within 120 days. State cooperation minister Balasaheb Patil told the legislative assembly recently that there is a sugarcane glut in Beed, Jalna, Parbhani, and Satara districts. Experts attributed this to rise in per hectare production, which has crossed 125 tonne per acre this season.

Till date, 19 mills have stopped crushing operations for the season. Mills in Kolhapur and Sangli are expected to finish their season by March-end, while those in Pune and Satara are likely to

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do so by the end of April. However, mills in Marathwada, Ahmednagar, Solapur and Nashik are expected to continue their operations till the end of May. BB Thombare, president, Western India Sugar Mills Association, said Marathwada, usually among the first divisions to end the season, will continue crushing till the end of May. Area under sugarcane has gone up from 3.5 lakh hectare to nearly 5 lakh hectare in the region due to good rains and the promise of a guaranteed income, Thombare said.

