

# Maharashtra, UP, Karnataka have 96% share in sugar diversion towards ethanol

**Our Bureau**

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India's sugar mills have produced 257.6 lakh tonnes (lt) of sugar in the first five months of the current season starting October 2022 against 253 lt in the same period a year ago, up by 1.8 per cent, according to data released by the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA). The estimated pan-India diversion (in terms of sugar) towards the production of ethanol was 28.5 lt between October 1 and February 28 of the current season against 21.9 lt a year ago, up by over 30 per cent.

“While the top three States — Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka — together have 45 per cent share in the sugar produced so far, their combined share towards diversion for ethanol is 96 per cent. This needs some attention at policy level to encourage other States also to divert cane towards ethanol,” an industry expert said. Out of the total 528 operational sugar factories

in India this season, 38 per cent of them (198 mills) are in Maharashtra and together they have produced 95.2 lt of sugar so far, down from 97.2 lt in the year-ago period due to higher volume of sugarcane getting diverted for ethanol. The estimated diversion (in terms of sugar) towards the production of ethanol in the State was 9 lt against 7.2 lt a year ago, up by 25 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh, which has 113 mills in operation now against 112 factories year-ago, has produced 70 lt of sugar, up from 68.6 lt year-ago. The estimated diversion towards production of ethanol in UP was 9.7 lt as against 7.7 lt year-ago, up by 26 per cent. As many as 52 are operational in Karnataka as of February 28, against 60 in the year-ago period. The total sugar production has reached 51.2 lt up from 50.8 lt, the ISMA data show. Ethanol production in Karnataka has seen 40 per cent surge as 8.8 lt has been diverted towards the biofuel against 6.3 lt a year ago.