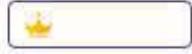


Uttar Pradesh picks Maharashtra plan to make oxygen at ethanol plants

Mohammed Akhef / TNN / Updated: May 11, 2021, 10:09 IST



The ethanol plant at the Dharashiv Sugar Mill in Osmanabad which has commenced India's first trial to produce medical oxygen.

AURANGABAD: [Uttar Pradesh](#), a big sugar producing state, has decided to follow [Maharashtra](#)'s path to produce oxygen at its sugar mills to meet the rising demand for treatment of Covid patients.

The Dharashiv Sugar Mill in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra has already started the country's first trial to produce medical grade oxygen at ethanol plants at sugar mills. Once operational, it will be replicated at almost all sugar factories in the state.

There are 195 sugar factories in Maharashtra, out of which, 137 have ethanol plants. Whereas there are over a dozen standalone ethanol plants across the state. This process is likely to turn Maharashtra's sugar bowl into an oxygen bowl amidst the ongoing pandemic.

UP's additional chief secretary for state excise, sugar industry, cane development department and sugar commissioner [Sanjay Bhoosreddy](#) told TOI, "We are implementing the Osmanabad pattern at 15 of our state excise owned distilleries cum ethanol plants. We aim to generate 300 metric tonne of oxygen from them."

He added that this set-up will be done with support and assistance of [National Sugar Institute](#), as well as Pune based Vasant Dada Sugar Institute. Bhoosreddy said they are keeping a close watch on the developments here.

"Till the time ethanol plants start generating oxygen, UP's state excise and sugar industry and sugarcane development department have started installing oxygen generators in each of the 75 districts based hospitals for catering to the needs of covid patients," he said.

The 1988-batch IAS officer said that out of the 61 ethanol plants in UP, 15 are owned by the state excise department. "The ethanol plants having 60 KL capacity will generate 20 MT of oxygen, while the ones with 120 KL capacity will generate 40 MT of oxygen. The required machines and equipments are being sourced from Taiwan," said Bhoosreddy.

Sources said the union government officials have also reached out to the Dharashiv Sugar mill authorities to know the developments in the pilot project and its feasibility.

Professor Sanjay Patil, who is head and technical advisor at VSI's department of alcohol technology and biofuels, said that the UP sugar commissioner had sought the pilot project's details and they had readily sharing them.

Dharashiv sugar mill owner Abhijit Patil said, "We are ready for production, just awaiting medical clearance stating that the produced oxygen is of medical grade and fit for medical use."

He said that the delay in getting equipments from Taiwan has delayed the production by at least three days. The mill is expected to produce 20 metric tonne of medical oxygen daily.