

Mills log record billion-litre ethanol output in Uttar Pradesh

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The ethanol production in the current sugarcane crushing season (2022-23) has hit the billion-litre (bl) mark and is counting.

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“Rising ethanol production is helping the sugar mills in making faster payments to farmers,” said Sanjay Bhoosreddy, UP’s additional chief secretary for sugarcane and excise. The mills have settled nearly 75 per cent of their cane arrears in the current season, he added.

UP is the country’s biggest ethanol producer. A sugar byproduct, ethanol is used for a variety of purposes ranging from mixing in fossil fuel to pharmaceutical and chemical industries.

The state has about 85 operational ethanol distilleries, while the annual capacity is estimated at 2.45 bl. Sources say the UP distilleries have already received ethanol orders to the tune of 1.58 bl, thereby implying that the seasonal production would match the same and go further up based on prospective orders.

Ethanol produced in the state is exported to oil marketing company depots, both within and outside the state, for the Centre mandated 10 per cent blending in fuel.

UP sugar production has crossed the 10 million tonnes (mt) mark and is expected to exceed 11 mt by the time the state’s crushing operations culminate in May 2023, Bhoosreddy informed.

At present, about 49 of the total 120 sugar mills in UP are crushing sugarcane, while the remaining have closed for the season. Of the total 120 mills, the private sector leads the tally

with 93 plants, followed by the cooperative with 24 units and UP State Sugar Corporation with 3 units.

Meanwhile, UP Sugar Mills Association has joined hands with the World Bank to promote micro irrigation. The World Bank-supported Water Resources Group will develop a sustainable micro-irrigation model for the benefit of sugarcane farmers in 38 districts of the state.