

Maharashtra sugar mill takes lead in making ethanol from cane juice

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A co-operative sugar mill in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra has taken the lead in producing fuel grade ethanol directly from sugarcane juice in the State, a senior official said on Thursday.

The Centre had, in July last year, allowed sugar mills to manufacture ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or intermediate product called B-molasses. The decision was taken to help mills divert cane juice for ethanol manufacturing during surplus years.

Maharashtra sugar commissionerate's joint director Sanjay Bhosale told PTI that Kolhapur's Tatyasaheb Kore

Warana Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd is the only co-operative sugar mill in the State which has started making ethanol from sugarcane juice.

Traditionally, in India ethanol is made from 'C-Heavy' molasses, but in July last year, the government gave permission to make ethanol from sugarcane juice and 'B-Heavy' molasses or B-grade molasses, he said.

The fuel grade ethanol that is produced directly from cane juice is fetching ₹59 per litre. This is going to be beneficial for the sugar industry that is facing crisis of excess stock of sugar, Warana co-operative group chairman and former minister Vinay Kore

said. The Kolhapur-based sugar mill is producing 70,000 litres of ethanol per day, another factory official said.

The government allowed fuel grade ethanol production from sugarcane juice with an aim to increase the earnings of sugar mills and help them in making full and timely payments to farmers.

Cane-based ethanol can be produced in three different ways directly from cane juice, from B-grade and C-grade molasses. Molasses is a viscous product obtained from raw sugar during the refining process.

Maharashtra is one of the leading sugarcane producing States.