

NEWS FLASH –1st August, 2016

SUGAR

Drought-hit Maharashtra headed for 40% drop in sugar production

Area under sugarcane cultivation has shrunk from 10.5 lakh hectares to 7.8 lakh hectares; sugar production declines to 50 lakh metric tonnes from last year's 84.01 lakh metric tonnes.

The sugar production in Maharashtra is likely to drop by 40 per cent due to severe drought, coupled with crop diversification, across Marathwada and parts of Western Maharashtra. The projection report July (2016-17) shows the sugar production at 50 lakh metric tonnes. Last season, it was 84.01 lakh metric tonnes.

The 34 lakh metric tonne shortfall has raised fears of possible price rise between August and September.

The area under sugarcane cultivation also has shrunk from 10.50 lakh hectares to 7.80 lakh hectares. The primary reason cited for less cane cultivation leading to shortfall in sugar production is drought for the fourth consecutive year.

The Maharashtra State Sugar Federation has urged the Centre and the state to take note of these developments to avert price escalation in the domestic market. Their apprehensions arise from a steep rise in sugar prices at international markets due to low production of sugar.

The sugar price in month of July was Rs 3,319 per quintal.

Sources in the Ministry of Cooperation and Marketing said the Centre and the State were working out regulatory mechanism through policy measures to ensure stable sugar prices.

A senior officer in the ministry said good rains in July-August would help boost cane cultivation in the next season. The onset of festivals beginning from August would peak the sugar demand in the domestic market. Former cooperation and marketing minister and member of the state sugar federation Harshvardhan Patil warned the government to immediately intervene.

Patil said, "Apart from the drought, there are policy failures of the government both at the Centre and in the state."

Citing an example, he said, "The Centre's decision to withdraw the production subsidy in May was not a good move. Similarly, the aggressive campaign against sugarcane cultivation made the farmers to look for other alternatives crops or horticulture. They switched from cane growing to pomegranate and grapes."

Patil said only 100 out of 200-odd sugar mills would be in a position to operate from October-November if the Centre failed to intervene.

However, a cabinet minister said, "Our government is equally sensitive to the problems of farmers and also consumers. The sugar mills always press the panic button, which is not very realistic."

The minister said the government had launched the "beyond cane" campaign to encourage farmers to take alternative crops in severe drought-stricken areas. Even water management experts like Madhav Chitale has recommended ban on sugarcane cultivation and new sugar mills in the drought-hit Marathwada.

The Indian Sugar Mills Association report states overall sugar production across India would be 232 lakh metric tonnes. The reduction in overall sugar production is due to production fall in Maharashtra and Karnataka. It projects a marginal increase in Uttar Pradesh from last year's 23.02 lakh metric tonne to 23.35 lakh metric tonnes.

Maharashtra is among the worst hit registering decline from 84.01 lakh metric tonnes (last year) to present 50 lakh metric tonnes. In Karnataka, it dip from 5.10 lakh metric tonne to 4.15 lakh metric tonnes. However, Tamil Nadu shows increase from 2.50 lakh metric tonne to 2.65 lakh metric tonne.

(Source- <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/drought-hit-maharashtra-headed-for-40-drop-in-sugar-production-2946920/>, published on 1st August, 2016)

Co-gen/Power

Power ministers to meet in city

An international conference of power ministers will be held during 'SWITCH Global Expo 2016' that is being promoted and hosted by Gujarat Government's Department of Energy and Petrochemicals in Vadodara in October.

Power ministers from various countries will participate in the conference along with power ministers of Indian states during the expo which will be held with the theme of electrical engineering, power generation and innovation from October 6 to October 10.

While the expo is being held under Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited, Federation of Gujarat Industries (FGI) is the implementation and organizing partner.

During the exhibition, Union power minister Piyush Goyal is organizing the international conference of power ministers to improve cooperation in the area of energy. Goyal's quarterly meeting with power, coal and mines ministers of states will also be organized during the expo.

(Source- <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/Power-ministers-to-meet-in-city/articleshow/53483009.cms>, published on 1st August, 2016)

Master Plan ready for making Chandigarh model solar city

Chandigarh will be the first model solar city of the country. Power minister Piyush Goyal has informed the Lok Sabha that master plan has been already prepared. The solar city cell has also been established.

The minister further said that UT Administration, Chandigarh has empaneled 48 Solar Power Aggregators from whom any resident of Chandigarh can install Rooftop Solar Power Plant and can avail 30% subsidy. Solar rooftop power plants of aggregate 7.70 MWp capacity are installed on 145 government buildings till May in this city.

(Source- <http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/master-plan-ready-for-making-chandigarh-model-solar-city/53447818>, published on 29th July, 2016)

Tata Power's South African JV commissions 134 mw wind and energy farm

Tata Power's 50:50 JV with Exxaro Resources in South Africa, namely Cennergi (Pty) achieved commercial operations for its 134 MW Amakhala Emoyeni Wind Farm Project on Thursday.

Tata Power Company's joint venture in South Africa has commissioned a 134 megawatt wind energy farm in the country, the Tata group utility said in a press statement on Friday.

Tata Power's 50:50 JV with Exxaro Resources in South Africa, namely Cennergi (Pty) achieved commercial operations for its 134 MW Amakhala Emoyeni Wind Farm Project on Thursday.

Cennergi was selected as the preferred bidder for two wind projects under the second window of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme by the South African government. The statement said that Cennergi's second wind project is expected to go into commercial operations shortly.

"Tata Power has been pursuing growth opportunities in India and overseas. The commissioning of Amakhala Wind farm, Tata Power's first wind project outside India, marks the company's continued progress on its objectives of enhancing non-fossil based generation portfolio up to 30-40% of its total generating capacity and thereby creating value for its stakeholders," said Anil Sardana, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Power.

(Source- <http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/tata-powers-south-african-jv-commissions-134-mw-wind-and-energy-farm/53453484>, published 29th July, 2016)

Speed up setting of solar mobile towers: Rawat to Centre

Setting up these mobile towers in the border districts of the state, located mostly in hilly terrain will lead to a much more dependable mobile connectivity, which is a must considering their strategic location.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat has asked Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to expedite work on setting up low power solar battery-operated mobile towers in the border districts of the state, considering their strategic location.

Rawat also reiterated the state's old demand for new satellite phones in view of its vulnerability to natural disasters.

Setting up these mobile towers in the border districts of the state, located mostly in hilly terrain will lead to a much more dependable mobile connectivity, which is a must considering their strategic location, Rawat said at a meeting with the Home Minister in New Delhi yesterday.

The Home Ministry proposes to set up low power solar battery-operated mobile towers at ITBP and SSB checkposts along the international border in Uttarakhand.

Citing the state's vulnerability to natural disasters, Rawat also asked the Home Minister to expedite the process of providing satellite phones to the state for the sake of better co-ordination among different departments in crisis-like situation.

(Source- <http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/speed-up-setting-of-solar-mobile-towers-rawat-to-centre/53435587>, published on 28th July, 2016)

35 hydro power projects awaiting concurrence by CEA: Govt

Of the 50 proposals received from various states for setting up hydro power projects, 35 are awaiting the CEA concurrence or appraisal, Parliament was informed today.

"Presently, 50 proposals for setting up of hydro electric projects have been received from various states in Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for concurrence/appraisal," Power Minister Piyush Goyal informed the Lok Sabha.

The minister further said that 15 hydro electric projects (HEPs) have been concurred by CEA.

"As per Section 7 of the Electricity Act 2003, any generating company may establish, operate and maintain a generating station without obtaining a license/permission under this Act, if it complies with the technical standards relating to connectivity with the grid," the minister said.

Accordingly, sanction of the government is not required for setting up of thermal power projects. However, for setting up of hydroelectric power projects, the detailed project reports (DPRs) are required to be submitted for concurrence of CEA, he said.

Quote of the day

Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors where there were only walls.
- Joseph Campbell