

Govt keeping a close watch on exports of wheat flour: Food secy

SANDIP DAS
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THE GOVERNMENT IS keeping a close watch on exports of wheat flour which has witnessed a surge since the ban on wheat shipments was announced on May 13, Sudhanshu Pandey, secretary, ministry of food and public distribution said on Wednesday.

"Exports of wheat flour are on the high side, if you compare with previous months," Pandey said. He said that the government is monitoring the domestic prices of both wheat and flour. According to the food ministry, 250,000 tonne wheat flour has been exported since April 1, 2022.

Trade sources said monthly exports of wheat flour at this time of year had been around 7,000 to 8,000 tonne. However, exports have seen a surge to around 100,000 tonnes since the wheat export ban was imposed. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal are some of the countries, wheat flour is mostly exported to.

In value terms, exports of wheat or meslin flour jumped 64% last fiscal from a year before to \$2.17 million, according to the DGCIIS data.

In the current fiscal so far, India has exported close to 3 million tonne (MT) of wheat. India shipped a record 7 MT of wheat worth \$2 billion in FY22,



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against just 2.1 MT worth \$0.55 billion in FY21.

Apart from allowing exports that were already backed by Letter of Credits, India is discussing proposals or requests from several countries for exporting wheat. These shipments would be to cater for the genuine need for food security through government-to-government (G2G) routes.

Sources said several countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, the UAE, South Korea, Oman and Yemen have approached India for wheat imports under bilateral arrangements between governments.

As the production of wheat has declined following heat wave conditions in March, the government had to curb exports to improve domestic supplies.

Agriculture ministry revised wheat production for the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) to 106 MT from its February's estimate of 111 MT.

After the export ban was imposed, Food Corporation of India tried to procure wheat again and could only get 800,000 as farmers had already sold their produce. FCI's wheat procurement drive for the current year fell by more than 54% to 18.8 MT till Wednesday from the year-ago level.

Meanwhile, the food ministry, in a statement, said that the wholesale prices and retail prices of vanaspathi, soyabean oil, sunflower oil and RBD palmolein have decreased over the week. "With the edible oil prices beginning to show a downward trend and are set to decline further, the Indian consumers can expect to pay less for their edible oils. The falling edible oil prices will help in cooling the inflation as well," according to the statement.