

Govt may curb atta exports after imposing wheat ban

India has exported 29.70 LMT of wheat and 2.59 LMT of atta from 1 April to 14 June

Ravi Dutt
ravi.dutt@livemint.com
NEW DELHI

Wheat should not be converted to "excessive" amounts of atta for exports as wheat is a regulated commodity, food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Wednesday, indicating a possible curb on wheat flour exports.

About 30 LMT (lakh metric tonnes, or 3 million tonnes) of wheat have been exported during this quarter. Government officials said. A number of countries have approached India seeking wheat after the 13 May wheat export ban. Those requests are being considered, according to the official mentioned above.

"India has exported 29.70 LMT of wheat from 1 April to 14 June. During the same period 2.59 LMT of atta has been exported. India has allowed 1.5 LMT of wheat exports to Bangladesh after the 13 May exports ban," according to Partha S Das, joint secretary in the food ministry.

Trade experts said Bangladesh could be looking for more wheat imports from India as it not only buys nearly half the total wheat exported by India but also is an importer of wheat from Russia and Ukraine.

Official numbers showed that Bangladesh imported wheat worth \$1.8 bil-



According to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, India exported wheat worth around \$1 billion to Bangladesh in 2021-22. PTI

lion from Russia and \$610.80 million from Ukraine in 2020. According to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, India exported wheat worth around \$1 billion

through diplomatic channels. The requests are also driven by lower prices of Indian wheat compared to the international market.

The ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution said that wholesale prices and retail prices of vanaspati, soybean oil, sunflower oil and RBD palmolein have decreased over the week.

"With the edible oil prices beginning to show a downward trend and set to decline further, Indian consumers can expect to pay less for their edible oil. The falling edible oil prices will help in cooling inflation as well," Pandey said.

Major edible oil brands have reduced prices by ₹10-15 per litre, Pandey said. The maximum retail price of a 1 litre pack of Fortune Refined Sunflower Oil has been reduced to ₹210 from ₹220, while that of Soyabean (Fortune) and Kachi Ghani oil 1 litre pack has come down from ₹205 to ₹195, the government official said.

Cooking oil prices were set to soften after Indonesia, the world's biggest producer of palm oil, decided to lift the export ban. India used to import about 8 million tonnes of palm oil annually. The commodity accounted for nearly 40% share of India's overall edible oil consumption basket. Indonesia accounts for nearly 48 million tons of palm oil out of the 75 million tons produced globally every year.

On ration card portability under the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme, the secretary said it has been implemented across India now with Assam being the last state to implement the scheme.

State governments and Union ministries have been asked to use the data of ONORC for framing the right policies and programmes, Pandey said.

The data can be used in other schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, PM-KISAN and E-shram, the secretary contended. The inter-ministerial committee on agri-commodities chaired by food secretary monitors the prices and availability of agricultural commodities keeping in view the interests of farmers, industry and consumers, the ministry said.

'ATTA' EXPORT

ABOUT three million tonnes of wheat have been exported during current quarter

GOVT has asked not to convert wheat, a regulated commodity, into "excessive" flour

AFTER India banned wheat export on 13 May, many nations have approached India seeking wheat

to Bangladesh in 2021-22.

Mint had earlier reported that Indonesia, Oman, the UAE, Bangladesh, and Yemen are among countries that have requested wheat supplies from India