

Govt plans wheat export push in 9 nations

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Amid speculations that India might ban wheat export, the Centre will send trade delegations to nine countries to explore possibilities of boosting the grain's export.

Delegations will be sent to Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Turkey, Algeria and Lebanon, the commerce and industry ministry said on Thursday. India has set a target of a record 10 million tonnes of wheat export in 2022-23, amid rising global demand for the grain globally due to the crisis in Ukraine.

The ministry has already set up a task force on wheat exports with representatives from various ministries, including commerce, shipping and railways, and exporters under Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). The department of commerce will organise a series of sensitisation meetings on exports in major wheat growing states such as Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The APEDA organised one such interactive meeting with various stakeholders includ-



ing farmers, traders and exporters in Karnal, Haryana for promotion of wheat export and ensuring shipment of quality produce.

The development comes at a time when India's wheat production in 2022-23 is expected to fall by almost 5.7 per cent to 105 million tonnes from an earlier estimate of 111.32 million tonnes. Official purchases are set to halve to just 19.5 million tonnes. However, the Centre said it won't impose any curbs on exports as year-end closing stocks are seen adequate after meeting all requirements.

Amid rise in the demand for Indian wheat in the global

market, the government has advised farmers, traders and exporters to follow all the quality norms of importing countries so that India emerges as a reliable supplier of wheat globally.

"We are extending our support to all stakeholders in the wheat exports value chain for boosting shipment from the country," M Angamuthu, chairman, APEDA, said.

According to official estimates, India exported 7 million tonne of wheat in 2021-22, valued at \$2.05 billion. Of the total shipment, around 50 per cent was exported to Bangladesh in the last fiscal year.

Flour millers seek steady raw material supply to keep prices in check

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Wheat flour owners during a meeting on Thursday urged the Centre to ensure steady supply of raw materials at affordable rates to prevent prices from flaring up. There was no official communication about the meeting from either side, but sources said the government assured the flour mill owners that it was aware of the situation and the stock position in the country, and that there was no need to panic.

"It was a very free and

frank discussion, without any prejudice... and we (flour millers) clearly explained our concerns on the availability of wheat and the price at which it is being purchased," a senior industry official who participated in the deliberations told *Business Standard*.

He said the government has assured them that the situation won't be allowed to go out of hand and regular meetings between the flour owners and government will be held in future as well to assess the situation.

Recently, Egypt, which is one of the world's biggest importers of wheat, had agreed to source wheat from India. "Egypt imported 6.1 million tonnes of wheat in 2021 and India was not part of the list of accredited countries which can export wheat to Egypt. More than 80 per cent of Egypt's wheat imports esti-

mated to be close to \$2 billion in 2021 were from Russia and Ukraine. APEDA has already communicated to exporters to register with Egypt's public procurement agency — General Authority of Supplies and Commodities, which manages wheat and sugar imports to the north African country," the statement said.