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Centre allows 99,500 tons of onion exports to six neighbouring nations

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CENTRE ALLOWS 99,500 TONS OF ONION EXPORTS

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PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday said it has allowed exports of 99,500 tonnes of onions, mainly sourced from Maharashtra, to six neighbouring countries despite the ban on shipments.

The Centre has also allowed exports of 2,000 tonnes of white onion cultivated, especially, for export markets in the Middle East and some European countries. On December 8, 2023, the government banned export of onions.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution said the government has "allowed export of 99,150 tonnes of onion to six neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka".

The export prohibition has been imposed to ensure adequate domestic availability against the backdrop of estimated lower Kharif and Rabi crops in 2023-24 compared to the previous year. The ban was imposed amid an increase in demand in the



international market, it added. The National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the agency for the export of onion to these countries, sourced the domestic onions to be exported through e-platform at L1 prices. NCEL has supplied to the agency or agencies nominated by the government of the

destination country at the negotiated rate on a 100 per cent advance payment basis. The offer rate of NCEL to the buyers takes into account the prevailing prices in the destination market and also international and domestic markets.

The quota allocated for export to the six countries is being

supplied as per requisition made by the destination country.

"As the largest producer of onion in the country, Maharashtra is the major supplier of onions sourced by NCEL for export," the statement said.

The government had also allowed the export of 2,000

tonnes of white onion cultivated, especially for export markets in the Middle East and some European countries.

"Being purely export-oriented, the production cost of the white onion is higher than other onions due to higher seed cost, adoption of good agricultural practice (GAP) and compliance to strict maximum residue limits (MRL) requirements," the statement said.

The procurement target for onion buffer out of Rabi crop 2024 under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) of the Department of Consumer Affairs has been fixed at 5 lakh tonnes this year.

The Central agencies, like NCCF and NAFED are tying up local agencies like FPOs/FPCs/PACs to support the procurement, storage and farmers registration to begin the procurement of any store-worthy onion.

A high-level team of the Department of Consumer Affairs, NCCF and NAFED visited Nashik and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra from April 11-13, 2024, to create awareness

among the farmers, FPOs/FPCs and PACs about the procurement of 5 lakh tonnes of onion for buffer stock.

To reduce the storage loss of onions, the department has decided to enhance the quantum of stocks to be irradiated and cold stored from 1,200 tonnes last year to over 5,000 tonnes this year, with technical support from BARC, Mumbai.

The pilot of onion irradiation and cold storage taken up last year has been found to have resulted in the reduction of storage loss to less than 10 per cent, the statement said.

In March, the Union Agriculture Ministry released the data for onion production. As per the data, onion production in 2023-24 (First Advance Estimates) is expected to be around 254.73 lakh tonnes compared to around 302.08 lakh tonnes last year.

This is due to a decrease of 34.31 lakh tonne output in Maharashtra, 9.95 lakh tonne in Karnataka, 3.54 lakh tonne in Andhra Pradesh and 3.12 lakh tonne in Rajasthan, the data showed.



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Govt allows export of 1 lakh tonnes of onion to six nations on govt-to-govt basis; NCEL buying the bulbs

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Soon after allowing export of 2,000 tonnes of white onion, the Union government on Saturday announced its decision to permit shipments of an additional 99,150 tonnes of onion to six countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Bahrain, and Mauritius. Despite the ban on onion exports since last year, the government has been allowing shipments of specific quantities in response to diplomatic requests.

The ban was imposed to ensure adequate domestic availability as kharif and rabi harvest in 2023-24 was lower. Opening exports assumes significance considering the reported discontent among growers over the continuing the ban on exports. The National Co-



operative Exports Limited (NCEL) has been the nodal agency for export of all prohibited agri produce including onion, sugar and rice.

Earlier this month in separate orders, the government had allowed export of up to 2,000 tonnes of white onion to West Asia and some European countries. It had allowed dispatch of 20,000 tonnes to the UAE and 10,000 tonnes to Sri Lanka. With the latest announcement, the total

quantity permitted so far in 2024-25 exceeds 1.30 lakh tonnes (lt).

A Consumer Affairs Ministry statement said that NCEL has been sourcing onion for exports through e-platform at L1 prices and supplying to the agency or agencies nominated by the government of the destination country at a negotiated rate on 100 per cent advance payment basis.

“The offer rate of NCEL to the buyers takes into account the prevailing prices in the destination, international and domestic markets. As the largest producer of onion, Maharashtra is the major supplier to NCEL for export,” it said.

RABI OUTPUT TO DIP

The Ministry said that the Rabi procurement target for the onion buffer, under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF), has been fixed at 5 lakh tonnes this year. Cent-

ral agencies such as NCCF and Nafed are tying up local agencies such as FPOs/FPCs/PACs to support the procurement, storage and farmers registration to begin buying of any store-worthy onion, the government said.

A high level Central team had visited Nashik and Ahmednagar in Maharashtra on April 11-13 to create awareness among farmers, FPOs/FPCs and PACs about the procurement of onion for buffer stock.

Rabi onion production is seen dipping 18 per cent to 193 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 (July-June) against 236 lakh tonnes year ago. Accounting for up to 75 per cent of annual production, Rabi onion is critical for domestic availability. Also, the Rabi crop has better shelf-life compared to Kharif onion and can be last till December.
