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Title: Need to take suitable steps to commence the sugarcane crushing season simultaneously in Karnataka and Maharashtra.

SHRI S.D. MANDLIK (KOLHAPUR): Sir, it has been a policy of the State Government of Maharashtra to decide the date of starting of crushing season of sugar factories in Maharashtra and this is decided by a Committee of Ministers under the chairmanship of Chief Minister. This starting date is followed by all sugar factories in the State with minor variations.

For the last two years the sugarcane production in Maharashtra has gone down due to advent of disease called White Woolly Aphid. The availability of sugarcane to factories has therefore, gone down by almost 50 per cent.

My constituency of Kolhapur has common border with Karnataka State. There are a number of private and cooperative sugar factories in Karnataka State along the border. Since, these factories are located in different States, starting of crushing season is not under the Government of Maharashtra. However, these factories in Karnataka State tend to start crushing season much earlier than Maharashtra. They also take away lot of sugarcane from border areas of Maharashtra, thus creating a big shortage of sugarcane to factories located in Maharashtra. Since the end of monsoon season in both States is same, there is no reason for factories in Karnataka to start the crushing season early.

I urge the Central Government to amend the Sugar Control Order, 1966 and the Sugar Undertaking Takeover of Manufacture Act, 1978 through Parliament to enable Director(Sugar) to issue compulsory instructions for starting of simultaneous crushing season, thus avoiding cutting of immature cane.