NEED TO BECOME SELF-RELIANT IN ENERGY SECTOR

Aim for 100% ethanol blending: Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 21

ROAD TRANSPORT AND Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Tuesday that India should aspire to achieve 100% ethanol blending in the near future, as vulnerabilities in oil exports amid the West Asia crisis have made it necessary for the country to become self-reliant in the energy sector.

Gadkari further said the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency III standards, which will be implemented from April 1 next year, will have little impact on electric and flex-fuel vehicles.

"In the near future, India should aspire to achieve 100% ethanol blending... Today, we are facing an energy crisis due to the war in West Asia, so it is necessary for us to become self-reliant in the energy sector," he said, while addressing the Indian Federation of Green Energy's Green Transport Conclave.

In 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched petrol blended with 20% ethanol. Currently, Indian vehicles can run on E20 petrol with minor changes to the engine to prevent corrosion and other issues.

Countries like Brazil have 100% ethanol blending.

Gadkari said India relies on imports to meet 87% of its oil requirement. "We import fossil fuels worth ₹22 lakh crore, which is also causing pollution... So we need to work on increasing production of alternative fuel and bio-fuel," he said.

Noting that green hydrogen is the fuel of the future, Gadkari said there is a need to reduce the cost of running a hydrogen fuel station to make it financially viable. "Transport of hydrogen fuel is a problem. Also, we need to produce 1 kg of hydrogen at $1 dollar, to make India an exporter of energy," he said. The minister said that there is a need to produce hydrogen from waste.

He also pointed out that by focusing on the circular economy, India can create more employment opportunities.

While observing that there is a need to discourage the use of petrol and diesel vehicles, Gadkari said, "But we cannot force people to stop buying petrol and diesel vehicles." On growing concern on social media about E20, Gadkari said the petroleum sector is lobbying against this move.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari at the Green Transport Conclave in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

Govt mulls revamp of sugarcane order

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, April 21

THE CENTRE HAS released the draft Sugarcane (Control) Order 2026 to replace the 1966 regulations, aiming to reset the regulatory mechanism with a recognition of ethanol as a core output of sugar mills.

The draft also includes khandsari sugar, or a healthier variant of the sweetener, under the fair and remunerative price regime. Releasing the draft for wider consultation, the ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution has stated that due to technological advancement, there are multiple changes in the sugarcane sector that necessitate the revamp of the existing order.

The order said sugar units producing ethanol directly from sugarcane juice, syrup and B-heavy molasses will see every 600 litres of bio-fuel they produce counted as equivalent to one tonne of sugar — a provision which would alter price compliance and production quotas.

Industry sources said that the draft rules prohibit setting up of new sugar factories within the 25-km radius of an existing unit from the current norm of 15 km.

Dairy prices stable amid West Asia conflict: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 21

THE GOVERNMENT ON Tuesday said that prices of milk and dairy products have remained stable across the country with no interruption in supply despite the West Asia conflict.

There are "no issues" related to the supply of fuel, gas and plastic packaging material to the dairy sector, said Puja Rustagi, the director in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, at an inter-ministerial briefing on recent developments in West Asia.

She said the dairy industry has been advised to shift to piped natural gas from LPG wherever feasible.

"Milk procurement, processing and supply across the country have remained uninterrupted amid the ongoing West Asia crisis. Prices of milk and milk products are stable. No supply disruption has occurred in the market, and payments to dairy farmers have continued throughout the crisis period," Rustagi said.

India is the world's largest milk producer.

The country's total milk production stood at 247.87 million tonne during FY5.

The director informed that on Monday a meeting with state milk Federation and milk unions across the India was held to review the milk situation and monitor the impact of West Asia crisis on the dairy sector.

"...There are no issues related to the supply of fuel, gas and plastic packaging material to the dairy sector," Rustagi said.

Tougher disclosure norms for AI content proposed

THE GOVERNMENT ON Tuesday mooted stricter disclosure norms for AI-generated content, proposing tweaks to the IT Rules that would require clear and continuous labels identifying synthetically generated information to be visible throughout the entire duration of the visual display.

This would replace the earlier requirement of ensuring "prominent visibility" of AI labels under the IT Rules.

Adding this to the draft IT Rules amendment that, among other changes, also proposes to bring independent news creators on the Centre's radar and mandate compliance with advisories, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (Meity) has extended the deadline for stakeholder feedback to May 7 from the once-already-extended timeline of April 29, 2026. "In addition to the draft amendments already placed in the public domain, further changes have been proposed in Rule 3(3)(a)(ii), which requires continuous and clearly visible display of label for synthetically generated information throughout the duration of the content in visual display," the ministry said in a notice.

In another notice, it said the wording "ensures prominent visibility in the visual display" will be substituted with "ensures continuous and clearly visible display of such label throughout the duration of the content, in a visual display".

Earlier this year, the government tightened rules for social media platforms such as YouTube and X, mandating the takedown of unlawful content within three hours, and requiring clear labelling of all AI-generated and synthetic content.

Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), in a post on X, said: "... suggesting changes within the window of a pre-existing public consultation process in which thousands of Indians have voiced opposition is likely to result in, 'consultation fatigue' and at the very least demonstrates a pattern of ad-hoc policy making than one which accounts for structured and planned feedback." The digital advocacy group has been vocal in the past about changes in the IT Rules. —PTI

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