

Assam engineer's forum bats for pragmatic flex-fuel policy



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Guwahati: All Assam Engineers Association (AAEA) appreciates the latest initiative taken by both the Union government in New Delhi and the State Government in Dispur to encourage the use of green fuel in all kinds of automobiles and urges the concerned authorities to launch a public awareness campaign about alternative fuel for the benefit of automobile users across India.

It may be mentioned that Union road transport & highways minister Nitin Gadkari has been advocating for ethanol mixed fuel (mostly with petrol/gasoline) for the vehicles. The minister recently asked carmakers across the country to introduce flex-fuel engines on a large scale. He argued that the ethanol mixed petrol will be cheaper and it would reduce the air-pollution drastically.

India today spends around rupees eight lakh crore annually on importing crude oil, gas and other petroleum products and the PM Narendra Modi-led central government decides to reduce the amount with the use of ethanol, methanol, bio-diesel, compressed natural gas, green hydrogen, and electric arrangements.

The optimum use of ethanol (also called ethyl alcohol or grain alcohol) in petrol-powered engines would financially benefit the farmers as the inflammable organic and colourless compound is prepared from the agricultural produce like grain, sugarcane, hemp, molasses, potato, etc. Presently, India has a maximum of 9 percent ethanol blended petrol in use.

Ethanol (symbol C_2H_5OH) burns in a cleaner way than petrol which usually leaves a significant volume of toxic carbon-monoxide (CO is generated due to incomplete combustion of fuel) in the air. Moreover, the low-level blend like 10% ethanol and 90% petrol can be used in conventional petrol engines. However, increasing the percentage of ethanol content (above 20) would require certain engine modifications.

“Assam government should formulate a pragmatic flex-fuel policy so that the local farmers can get higher benefits out of the initiative. We urge State Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to take the lead with necessary inputs from agriculture scientists, qualified engineers and other stakeholders,” said a statement issued by AAEA president Er Kailash Sarma, working president Er Nava J. Thakuria and secretary Er Inamul Hye.

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