

## Gadkari Dismisses Ethanol Concerns, Challenges 'Petrol Lobby' Propaganda



Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has launched a strong defense of India's ethanol-blended fuel program, directly challenging claims that the fuel damages vehicles. During a Business Today summit, Gadkari dismissed concerns circulating on social media as "propaganda" by what he referred to as the "petroleum lobby." He issued an "open challenge," asking for anyone to "show me one damaged car" that has had issues due to using E20 petrol, which is a mix of 20% ethanol and 80% gasoline. His remarks reinforce the government's commitment to ethanol as a key component of its strategy to reduce fuel imports and combat pollution.

The minister's comments come amid ongoing public discussion and a recent clarification from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, which also stated that E20 fuel does not cause significant engine damage or performance loss. While the government acknowledges a marginal dip in mileage, up to 2% in newer cars and around 6% in older vehicles, it maintains that these issues are minor and can be mitigated through routine maintenance. The Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) have both endorsed the rollout of E20 after extensive testing.

Gadkari highlighted the broader economic benefits of the ethanol program, noting its positive impact on the agricultural sector. He stated that the price of maize, a key feedstock for ethanol production, has surged from ₹1,200 to ₹2,600 per quintal, leading to a threefold increase in maize cultivation in states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. This, he argued, has boosted farmer incomes and has the potential to increase the agriculture sector's contribution to GDP from 12% to 22%.

The push for ethanol is a central part of India's plan to achieve energy independence. The government has aggressively advanced its blending targets, achieving the 20% blending goal well ahead of its 2030 deadline. Gadkari's steadfast support and the government's consistent messaging underscore a determined effort to transition the country's transportation sector toward a more sustainable and domestically sourced energy solution.