

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.771
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23rd July, 2026

AVAILABILITY OF FUEL VARIANTS

771. SHRI JAI PRAKASH:

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that motorists are alleged to have been protesting and backlashing over reduced mileage, potential engine damage, and lack of fuel choice; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the action taken by the Government thereon?

ANSWER

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री
(श्री सुरेश गोपी)

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS
(SHRI SURESH GOPI)

(a) & (b) : The Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme has been implemented through a phased, scientifically validated and consultative process involving NITI Aayog, automobile manufacturers, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) and other technical institutions.

Ethanol is not a new fuel. It has been used globally for over a century, with countries such as Brazil operating higher ethanol blends for decades. In India, the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme commenced with a pilot in 2001, E5 was introduced in 2006, and although blending remained around 1.53% in 2013-14, it has since been increased progressively in a calibrated manner after creating the necessary production capacity, infrastructure and regulatory framework.

The Government has not received any widespread or substantiated complaints from vehicle manufacturers, automobile associations or consumer organisations regarding engine failure, fuel pump issues, corrosion, water contamination or other performance issues attributable to E20 fuel. The Government has, however, taken note of certain concerns raised in media and social media, which have been scientifically examined.

Extensive laboratory studies and field trials conducted by ARAI, SIAM, IOCL, IIP and automobile manufacturers covering parameters such as engine durability, drivability, startability, corrosion resistance, material compatibility, emissions and fuel efficiency have confirmed that E20 is safe for use under prescribed standards.

These studies also established that legacy vehicles do not exhibit any significant variation in performance or abnormal wear and tear due to E20. These extensive laboratory studies, field validation and real-world operating experience have not established any widespread adverse impact on vehicle performance due to E20 fuel.

The Government's assessment is based not only on laboratory research but also on large-scale experience after nationwide implementation. India witnesses approximately 8 crore vehicles visiting retail outlets every day (around 80% petrol vehicles).

E15+ blended petrol has been in widespread use for over three-and-a-half years and E19-E20 fuel for over two-and-a-half years. More than 20 crore two-wheelers and over 3 crore petrol cars have been operating on these blends without any verified evidence of widespread engine failure or vehicle breakdown attributable to ethanol blending. Manufacturer service data confirm that there is no abnormal corrosion, wear or reduction in vehicle life due to E20 fuel. Manufacturers continue to honour warranty obligations for vehicles using E20 fuel, providing further confidence in its safety and reliability.

A leading OEM serviced 2.84 crore vehicles during FY 2025-26, including approximately 1.5 crore vehicles that were not originally certified as E20-compatible, and reported no E20-linked corrosion, abnormal wear or reduction in component life. A leading 2-wheeler company has reported similar field experience. One OEM recently stated that data from 1.4 crore E20-operated vehicles tracked over an extended period showed no evidence of ethanol-induced corrosion. ARAI reaffirmed that vehicles undergo rigorous international-standard validation before reaching consumers.

With regard to mileage, studies by Government agencies and automobile manufacturers indicate that fuel efficiency is influenced by several factors, including driving conditions, driving habits and vehicle maintenance. Any reduction in fuel economy in certain E10-designed vehicles is generally limited to about 3-5%, while E20 offers a higher-octane rating, superior anti-knock characteristics, cleaner combustion and smoother engine performance.

According to SIAM and ARAI, E20 improves acceleration and ride quality while reducing carbon emissions. Ethanol's higher-octane number supports modern high-compression engines and its higher heat of vaporisation improves combustion efficiency.

The transition to E20 has also delivered significant national benefits. The Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme has saved over ₹1.97 lakh crore in foreign exchange, substituted nearly 316 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil, reduced around 952 lakh metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions and transferred over ₹1.66 lakh crore to farmers.

Accordingly, the Government's assertion that "no widespread issues" have been reported is based not on isolated instances but on the cumulative evidence of over 25 years of phased implementation, extensive scientific validation, continuous field experience across crores of vehicles, manufacturer service records, stakeholder consultations, and ongoing quality monitoring.

The Government examines claims circulated on social media in consultation with manufacturers and technical agencies. Many such claims have been found to be exaggerated, misleading or unsupported by technical evidence and no verified evidence of widespread engine damage due to ethanol blending has emerged.

In accordance with the Government's policy for implementation of the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme, Oil Marketing Companies have been directed to supply Ethanol Blended Motor Spirit containing up to 20% ethanol, conforming to the relevant Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) specifications, across all States and Union Territories.

Further, with effect from 1 April 2026, Ethanol Blended Motor Spirit with a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) of 95 has been notified under the relevant statutory provisions.

The Government's policy is to progressively transition towards cleaner, more efficient and environmentally sustainable fuels in line with the National Policy on Biofuels and India's energy security and emission reduction objectives.

Automobile manufacturers, component suppliers, SIAM, ARAI, testing agencies and Oil Marketing Companies were associated with every stage of the scientific evaluation and phased rollout of E20. E20 was rolled out only after successful validation of fuel systems, engine durability, drivability, reasonable material compatibility and emissions performance. These studies also established that legacy vehicles do not exhibit any significant variation in performance or abnormal wear and tear due to E20. Had automobile manufacturers not been fully satisfied with the results, they would neither have validated E20 fuel for older vehicles nor honoured warranty obligations.

Having been scientifically validated and accepted by the automobile industry after extensive testing, there is no proposal to revert to E0/E10 petrol. The objective of public policy is to move forward with a superior fuel, not return to an inferior standard.

The transition to E20 has been phased, consultative and scientifically validated, following extensive consultations with automobile manufacturers, ARAI, SIAM, Oil Marketing Companies and other stakeholders. Material compatibility, engine durability, fuel systems, drivability, emissions and performance were comprehensively evaluated before rollout.

Maintaining parallel nationwide supply chains for E0, E10 and E20 petrol across more than one lakh retail outlets would significantly increase logistics complexity, inventory and handling costs. Public policy must balance consumer convenience with energy security, environmental sustainability and farmer welfare.

Once a cleaner and scientifically validated fuel has been adopted, the objective is to move forward with better technology, not revert to an inferior standard.
