

Efforts on to introduce ethanol in agriculture, construction equipment: Nitin Gadkari

Synopsis

The Union road transport and highways minister said the country imports petroleum products worth Rs 10 lakh crore to meet the requirements in the energy and power sector, and in the next five years, the demand may go up to Rs 25 lakh crore, which will affect the economy.



Union Minister [Nitin Gadkari](#) on Saturday stressed on the need to switch to alternative fuel like [ethanol](#) and said efforts are on to introduce ethanol in construction and [agriculture](#) equipment.

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Gadkari was speaking at the state-level Sugar Conference 2022 organised by Vasantdada Sugar Institute in Pune.

"Alternative fuel is the future. After electric scooters, cars and buses, soon we will have electric tractors and trucks. I am going to launch these soon," Gadkari said.

Diesel-based agriculture equipment should be made petrol based and flex engines can be converted to run on ethanol, he said, adding that efforts are on to introduce ethanol in [construction equipment](#) as well.

Highlighting the need to shift from sugar production to ethanol, the minister said, "The rise in sugar demand across the globe is temporary. When the price of crude oil goes up to \$140 per barrel, Brazil produces ethanol from sugarcane, increasing the demand for sugar from India. When the price of crude oil dips to \$70 to \$80 per barrel, Brazil starts producing sugar."

When crude oil becomes cheaper, sugar prices will also come down drastically, he said.

Gadkari also asked Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar to set up ethanol pumps in Pune, to help farmers sell the fuel directly.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who addressed the conference virtually, said sugar producers in the state were facing several problems.

"We have to follow Brazil for market research. They (Brazil) conduct surveys and accordingly choose a crop in a year. Times are changing and accordingly, we should adopt technology. The future will be ethanol," Thackeray said.

Sugarcane workers are important, and the Gopinath Ustod Kamgar Mahamandal has been formed to help resolve issues faced by them, he said.

The chief minister further said cultivators must consider adopting micro-irrigation for sugarcane crop, as water is a valuable resource and rainfall is unpredictable.