

Centre to push for flex-fuel vehicles amid supply crunch

Ministry to meet OMCs, automakers tomorrow

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The government is moving beyond E20 (a fixed blend of 20 per cent ethanol and petrol) fuel and advancing plans to adopt flex-fuel vehicles, at a time when supplies of conventional petroleum fuels face disruptions due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, *Business Standard* has learnt.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has convened a meeting on Saturday with oil companies, automobile manufacturers and industry bodies to firm up a road map for the rollout of flex-fuel vehicles and the supporting infrastructure.

Unlike E20 fuel, flex-fuel vehicles can run on a wide range of ethanol-petrol blends and can even operate on up to 100 per cent ethanol, depending on engine configuration. Currently, no company has launched a flex-fuel vehicle in India, as these models are more expensive than comparable petrol vehicles.

The meeting on Saturday will include state-run oil-marketing companies, such as

Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), along with industry bodies, including the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI), the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).

Automakers developing flex fuel vehicles, including Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI), Mahindra & Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, and Hero MotoCorp, have also been asked to participate in the meeting.

According to sources, discussions will focus on finalising timelines for the launch of flex-fuel vehicles by original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), assessing the readiness of fuel retail outlets to dispense with higher ethanol blends, and ensuring adequate availability of flex fuels.

Government officials said India has already adopted E20 fuel, and the current geopolitical situation has prompted a broader push towards fuels that can accommodate even higher ethanol content. Turn to Page 7 ►



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Flex-fuel vehicles, capable of running on varying blends of petrol and ethanol, are seen as a key lever to reduce crude oil imports and insulate the domestic market from global

supply shocks, they added. However, their rollout hinges on coordinated progress in vehicle manufacturing, fuel supply, and retail infrastructure.