

+ We have achieved 12% ethanol blending target for 2022-23: Oil Minister HS Puri

Our Bureau
New Delhi

India has achieved the target of blending 12 per cent ethanol with petrol during the current ethanol supply year, which concludes in October 2023, Oil Minister HS Puri said on Thursday.

In ESY 2022-23 (December 2022–October 2023), the government had set a target of achieving 12 per cent ethanol blending with petrol. The target for next year — ESY 2023-24 (November 2023–October 2024) — is 15 per cent.

“(Oil) Secretary Pankaj Jain told me that we have already done 12 per cent this month, which was our target, and we are well towards reaching our target of 20 per cent biofuel blending by the calendar year 2025,” Puri said while launching reference fuels produced by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).

Several advancements, such as the expedited implementation of fuel blending, moving the ambitious target of achieving 20 per cent



IN THE ELITE LEAGUE. Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, at the launch of India's first reference fuel, in New Delhi on Thursday **PTI**

blending from 2030 to 2025, and the sale of E20 blended fuel at over 5,000 petrol outlets, are a significant step in reducing emissions, he added.

The Minister noted that, apart from interest in producing ethanol from sugar-based producers, the maize industry is equally keen.

“I think the rate of use of maize is so high that it is impressive. Today, meeting blending targets for biofuels

is not an anxiety point. By the end of the 2025 calendar year, 20 per cent blending will be easily done,” he noted.

The percentage of ethanol blended with petrol by the oil marketing companies (OMCs) had declined to 11.72 per cent in August this year from 11.77 per cent in July on account of a lack of availability of feedstock such as rice. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

(MoPNG) attributed the decline in blending to the discontinuation of Food Corporation of India (FCI) rice from July 2023.

It led to a spike in the prices of feedstock, which are domestic food grains (DFG) and maize in the market. This resulted in reduced supplies of grain-based ethanol by 2.5 to 3-crore litres per week. Lack of supplies too impacted the functioning of grain-based distilleries, with operations halted for more than a month.

For the ESY 2022-23, the oil marketing companies (OMCs) floated a tender for 599.7 crore litres of ethanol, against which letters of intent (LoIs) for 564.45 crore litres were issued as of August 2023.

REFERENCE FUELS

The indigenously developed product by Indian Oil meets Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) specifications, substitutes imports, and is available at a better price with reduced lead time. Puri commended the efforts by the IOC's R&D team for indigen-

ously producing reference fuels, which are used for the calibration and testing of vehicles by automobile manufacturers and testing agencies such as the International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) and the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI).

Reference fuels (gasoline and diesel) are premium high-value products, and their demand in India is currently met by importing from other countries.

“The consumption of reference fuels, as they are specialised fuels, is around 150 kilo litres annually. The IOC has started making it. So we are importing 150 kilo litres, which will now stop. Globally, there are only three companies that make reference fuels. My assessment is that once we complete this project, India will become a major exporter of reference fuels. First, we are looking at meeting our requirements and slowly but surely going in the direction of meeting regional requirements,” the minister said.