

# Policy on biofuel for aviation sector soon, says Nitin Gadkari

Gireesh Chandra Prasad  
gireesh.p@livemint.com  
NEW DELHI

India will soon frame a policy supporting the use of biofuels from non-edible oils for powering jet engines, road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari announced on Monday after SpiceJet said it had successfully flown a turbo-prop jet from Dehradun to Delhi on biofuels.

The petroleum ministry will move a proposal and the civil aviation ministry will set the standards for biofuels to be used as jet fuel, the minister said. The move is part of the Modi administration's efforts to cut down on carbon emissions and lower oil imports, Gadkari said in the presence of petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan, civil aviation minister Suresh Prabhu and science and technology minister Harsh Vardhan. They were at an event where budget airline SpiceJet announced a successful demonstration of its bio-fuel powered turboprop jet flight from Dehradun to New Delhi. The aircraft was a 78-seater Q400 Bombardier and the journey took 45 minutes.

The fuel was developed by the Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) in Dehradun.

Fuel standard non-edible oils have to be produced on a commercial scale for the idea to fructify and this will depend on the demand from the aviation industry.

SpiceJet chairman and managing director Ajay Singh said biofuel has the potential to reduce the cost of airline operations by 15-20%. "This can dramatically alter the aviation sector in India. Biofuel is incredibly clean and, once commercialised, it can improve the livelihood of farmers," said Singh.

SpiceJet is the only airline in India to have explored aerial operations powered by biojet



ABHIJIT BHATLEKAR/MINT  
Road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari

fuel and intends to undertake operations using a blend of 75% aviation turbine fuel and 25% of biojet fuel, which has the potential of reducing carbon emissions by 15%, the company said. The fuel is made from Jatropha crops.

"This fuel is low cost and helps in significantly reducing carbon emissions. It has the potential to reduce our dependence on traditional aviation fuel by up to 50% on every flight and bring down fares," said Singh.

The technology for making biofuel from non-edible oil-seeds is available and the proposed policy will help commercialise the technology, Gadkari said. "We also have to decide on

the tax rates and the incentives to be given," said the minister. "It is the start of a new era," he said, referring to the test flight using biofuel.

Environment protection was central to the government's policy making, Prabhu said. Policy makers are working on a civil aviation action plan 2035 that will make the sector fully environment friendly, he said.

India has pledged to reducing emissions intensity of its gross domestic product by a third by 2030 from 2005 levels. As part of an overall strategy to reduce emissions, India is expanding its renewable energy capacity, promoting alternative fuels such as methanol and biofuels and is encouraging the use of less polluting natural gas in the economy.

**Petroleum ministry to move proposal and civil aviation ministry will set standards for biofuel to be used as jet fuel**