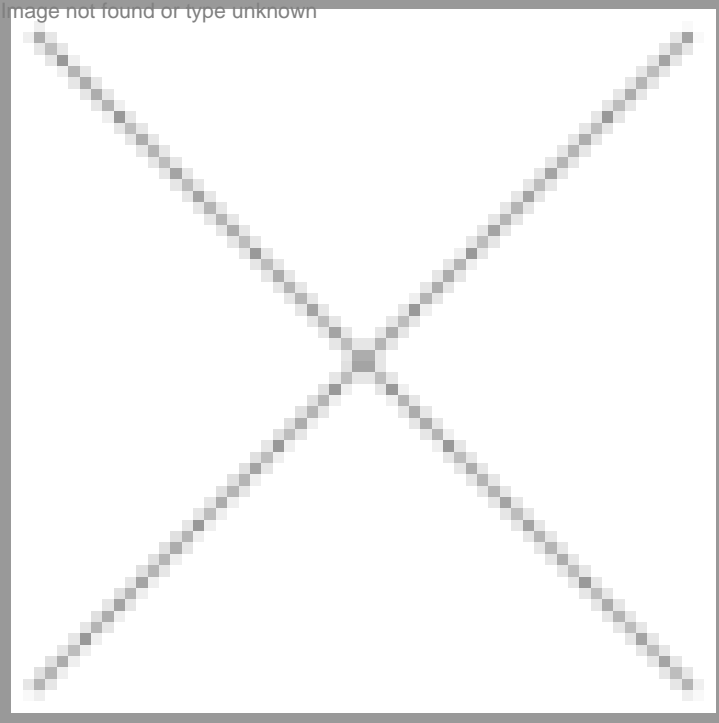


## Ram Naik launches Gasohol in India

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Ram Naik, minister of petroleum & natural gas, Government of India, launching the supply of five percent ethanol blended petrol, said that Gasohol would be supplied in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh starting from 1 January 2003, as part of the Government's decision to cover the entire areas of the first phase nine states and four contiguous union territories fully by June 2003.

Naik said that this would help sugarcane farmers and would support in building up the oil security apart from benefiting the environment. The states that are covered under the first phase include Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh and four Union Territories of Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Pondicherry.

The minister maintained that preparedness of state governments, oil companies, sugar co-operatives and other Agencies was reviewed from time to time. Though oil companies have completed their arrangements in this regard, the state governments other than Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh could not develop the infrastructure to produce anhydrous ethanol and sought more time.

The official sources reported that in response to the tenders floated by oil companies for ethanol requirements of three months from January to March 2003, there is a short fall of about 35,000-kl anhydrous ethanol. Maharashtra is the only state where infrastructure has been developed fully to meet the requirement. As the current total consumption of gasoline in these nine states and four union territories is about 4.6 million tones per year, the requirement of ethanol at five percent blend ratio works out to 320-350 million liters.