The Pioneer
NEW DELHI | TUESDAY | AUGUST 18, 2026
BUSIN

# Bring back E10 for older vehicles:

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

India should bring back a petrol variant with a lower ethanol blend to protect millions of older vehicles, according to a Government adviser, marking one of the strongest calls yet from a senior official for greater consumer choice amid growing concerns over the country's ethanol policy.

E20 petrol, containing 20 per cent ethanol, was rolled out last year and has been the only petrol variant available for sale at fuel stations across India since April 1 as part of efforts to cut India's dependence on imported oil, support domestic agriculture and reduce emissions.

Some users, particularly of non-BS-VI vehicles, have, however, reported a drop in vehicular performance and damage to auto parts — a claim the government has repeatedly dismissed as far from the truth. Oil Ministry has maintained that it's not feasible to build and maintain infrastructure to supply multiple grades of fuel.

Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran, alongside Akash Poojari, who is a consultant in the Department of Economic Affairs, in an opinion piece said the evidence did not support widespread claims that E20 damages vehicle engines, but argued that the policy could pose problems for India's large fleet of older two-wheelers.


Dismissing complaints outright would be "a mistake because beneath the noise lies a real problem and a much larger question," they wrote in the Indian Express.

With a disclaimer that the opinion they were expressing was personal, the two authors said India has roughly 75 to 80 million older two-wheelers built before BS-IV that run on carburettors. A carburettor cannot sense the extra oxygen in the blend and adjust for it, so on E20, the engine draws in too little fuel for the air it draws in and runs hot.

Further, older rubber seals that are not rated for ethanol are a separate problem, as they degrade on contact with the fuel regardless of engine temperature, they wrote.

The authors recommended restoring a lower-blend fuel, such as E10, alongside E20 to protect older vehicles while allowing the government to continue its ethanol programme.

The Government should "protect the existing fleet while the retrofit programme catches up," the opinion piece said.

Ethanol contains less energy than petrol, meaning E20 can reduce the distance

## Optimus Pharma gets DCGI nod for psoriasis drug

Optimus Pharma, an arm of PE firm PAG-backed Sekhmet Pharmaventures, on Monday said it has received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India to manufacture and market tapinarof bulk drug and cream, used in the treatment of plaque psoriasis in adults. Optimus Pharma said it is the first company in India to receive permission from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to manufacture and market "tapinarof cream 1 per cent w/w" and the tapinarof bulk drug. Tapinarof cream 1 per cent w/w is a non-steroidal topical treatment for plaque psoriasis in adults, the company said in a statement.

Psoriasis is a chronic, non-communicable skin condition that the World Health Organization estimates affects at least 100 million people worldwide.

The Indian market is currently not served by the innovator, and Optimus, through its partners, will be the first to introduce this product to patients in India, the company said. *(PTI)*

# IRFC celebrates 80th Independence Day with patrioti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd (IRFC) celebrated the 80th Independence Day with great enthusiasm, dignity and patriotic spirit. On the occasion, Manoj Kumar Dubey, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), IRFC, unfurled the National Flag and addressed the officers and employees, calling upon everyone to connect the spirit of freedom with the larger goal of nation-building.

The celebration was attended by Ranjay Chaudhary, Director (Finance), Manish Chandra, Executive Director (HR), Deepa Kotnis, Executive Director (Finance), along with senior officers and employees of IRFC. In his inspiring address, CMD Manoj Kumar Dubey quoted the powerful

lines of renowned poet Dushyant Kumar. He emphasised that performing our responsibilities with honesty, efficiency, transparency and dedication is also an important form of service to the nation.

The CMD said that today's India is a nation of confidence, aspirations and immense possibilities. At such a time, every institution needs to think beyond its defined role and continuously explore new ways to contribute to the country's development journey.

He said that IRFC's journey is not limited to providing finance; it is also about providing financial strength and momentum

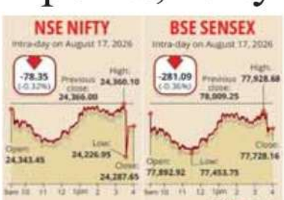
# Sensex drops 281 points, Nifty falls for 5th day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Mumbai

Benchmark Sensex dropped by 281 points, while the broader Nifty fell for the fifth straight session on Monday, due to selling in IT, FMCG, and telecom shares amid rising crude oil prices and persistent geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 281.09 points, or 0.36 per cent, to settle at 77,728.16. During the day, it dropped 555.5 points, or 0.71 per cent, to 77,453.75.

Falling for the fifth consecutive day, the 50-share NSE Nifty declined 78.35 points, or 0.32 per cent, to end at 24,287.65, taking the losses to the fifth




day. From the Sensex pack, Infosys, HCL Tech, Sun Pharma, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra and ITC were among the biggest laggards.

Tata Steel, Axis Bank, Reliance Industries and Bharat Electronics were among the winners.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 1.11 per cent to USD 89.50 per barrel.

"Indian equity markets ended marginally lower on Monday, extending last week's cautious tone as persistent uncertainty surrounding the US-Iran conflict and the absence of meaningful progress toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz kept investors on the sidelines," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

# Unemployment rate dips to 5.1% in July: Govt survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi


Overall unemployment rate among persons aged 15 years and above declined to 5.1 per cent in July 2026 from 5.5 per cent in the previous month, according to a Government survey.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO), released on Monday, the Unemployment Rate (UR) among persons aged 15 years and above was 4.5 per cent in rural areas, down from 5 per cent in the previous month. The urban UR remained almost steady at 6.7 per cent in July 2026 compared to 6.6 per cent in June 2026.

Compared with July 2025, the overall UR and rural UR remained broadly stable in July 2026, whereas the urban UR decreased by 0.5 percentage point from 7.2 per cent in July 2025.

Rural UR across genders and urban male UR declined, it stated. Among males aged 15 years and above, the overall UR declined from 5.3 per cent in June 2026 to 5.0 per cent in July 2026. This is also lower by 0.3 percentage points as compared to July 2025 (5.3 per cent).