

Allow biodiesel fuel to be sold as branded item: Emami

New Delhi, August 30: FM-CG major Emami group has asked the government to allow the company to sell biodiesel fuel as a branded item in the market and to set up its own dispensing units for the product in the country. "The Union petroleum min-

istry as well as the ministry for new and alternative energy must work out on a solution to make all biodiesel projects in India viable. Or else, all investments will go waste," Emami Group director Aditya Agarwal told PTI.

Seeing biodiesel's prospects as an alternative fuel, several entrepreneurs are investing and betting big on it, he said.

The group firm Emami Biotech, which aims to become Rs 1,000-crore company by the end of this fiscal, has earmarked an investment of

Rs 400 crore in jatropha plantation project over the next five years in Oromia, Ethiopia. "The company will take up plantation of bio-fuel crops (jatropha) and other edible and non-edible oil seeds on 100,000 acres of land which has been allotted to Emami

Biotech by Oromia Investment Commission," Agarwal said. Emami Biotech has already possessed 27,500 acres of land and work has begun on it involving a capital outlay of about Rs 120 crore, he added. The company was earlier selling biodiesel fuel to

state government organisations and other institutions. However, following a letter from the ministry of petroleum, the company has stopped selling the fuel.

Aggarwal said India has a dozen biodiesel producers and have made a total invest-

ment of about Rs 1,200 crore to install capacity and have brought at least 700,000 hectare of land under jatropha cultivation. The company, which plans to set up its own pump stations in Kolkata, said pricing the product has been a major

challenge for selling the fuel in market.

"Pricing is a major deterrent for private players like us in selling the fuel. Besides, our hands are tied in selling it in the open market due to government restrictions," he said. *PTI*