

Cabinet nod for 10,000 electric buses in 169 cities

PM e-bus Sewa scheme has an estimated budget of ₹57,613 crore, of which the Centre will provide ₹20,000 crore; 181 cities without organised bus services will get green mobility infrastructure

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a scheme to add 10,000 e-buses to city bus services across the country, and to shore up urban infrastructure under green mobility initiatives with a focus on cities having no organised bus services.

An e-bus is any bus whose propulsion and accessory systems are powered exclusively by a zero-emissions electricity source.

The PM e-bus Sewa scheme will have an estimated cost of ₹57,613 crore, of which the Centre will provide ₹20,000 crore and the remaining will be borne by the States.

It will support bus operations for 10 years, an official



Plan of action: Union Ministers Anurag Thakur and Ashwini Vaishnaw at a briefing in New Delhi on Wednesday. R.V. MOORTHY

statement said.

The scheme will be implemented in two segments, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said.

In 169 cities, 10,000 e-buses will be deployed using the public-private partnership (PPP) model; in 181 other cities, infrastructure

will be upgraded under the green urban mobility initiatives.

For cities in the first segment, depot infrastructure will also be developed or upgraded to support the new e-buses, including the creation of behind-the-meter power infrastructure such as substations.

7 railway projects worth ₹32,500 cr. given approval

To improve rail connectivity, the Cabinet approved seven projects estimated at around ₹32,500 crore. Spanning 35 districts in nine States — Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal — the projects will add 2,339 km to the existing network. » PAGE 15

For those in the second segment, the initiatives will focus on bus priority, infrastructure, multimodal interchange facilities, automated fare collection systems, and charging infrastructure.

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Cabinet nod for 10,000 e-buses in 169 cities

Cities with a population of three lakh and above will be covered under the scheme, including all the capital cities of Union Territories, and the northeastern and hill States.

States or cities will be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators. The Central government will support these bus operations by providing subsidies to the extent specified in the scheme.

Around 45,000 to 55,000 direct jobs are expected to be generated via the scheme, the statement said.

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India's first testing centre for unmanned aerial systems to be established in the State

The centre will come up on 2.3 acres at SIPCOT Industrial Park near Sriperumbudur. It will enable the State to be a significant contributor to the nation's self-reliance in aerospace, defence sectors

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

India's first Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drone) Common Testing Centre under Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS) will be established in Tamil Nadu. According to a communication issued by the State government, this centre would be established over an area of about 2.3 acres at the SIPCOT Industrial Park, Vallam Vadagal near Sriperumbudur. The testing centre would enable the State to be a significant contributor to the self-reliance of the country in the aerospace and defence sectors.

TIDCO had floated an RFP for identifying industrial partners for establishing this testing centre as a joint venture in compliance to the guidelines of the DTI Scheme. A consortium of companies consisting of Keltron, Sense Image Technologies, Standards



Testing & Compliance and Avishka Retailers had been chosen based on their response to the transparent bid process to partner with TIDCO for establishing the facility at an estimated cost of ₹45 crore.

T.R.B. Rajaa, Minister for Industries, Investment Promotion and Commerce, said, "Setting up India's first Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drone) Common Testing Centre here in Tamil Nadu showcases Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's commitment towards building a thriving defence and aerospace manufacturing ecosystem in the State."

He further said, "We are attracting investors in this

This centre will enable T.N. to become a preferred destination for defence, aerospace companies to set up their Indian operations

T.R.B. RAJAA,
Minister for Industries

sector by addressing the needs of the industry in an innovative manner. This testing centre will enable Tamil Nadu to become a preferred destination for aerospace and defence companies to set up their Indian operations. Many other suggestions were received at a round table held recently with representatives from these two sectors. We are committed to taking necessary action and positive outcomes will be seen soon," he added.

Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) is the nodal agency for the implementation of the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor

(TNDIC). As part of the implementation of the TNDIC, the government of Tamil Nadu has adopted a multi-pronged strategy. One of them is the creation of an enabling ecosystem including Common Testing Centres for the Aerospace and Defence Industry. Currently the non-availability of testing centres which can support the aerospace and defence standards outside DPSU/DRDO is an entry barrier for many organisations. TIDCO had planned to lower this barrier by establishing testing centres for multiple sub-domains which include Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

The testing for UAS (drone) is currently done component wise at different test centres which reduces the efficiencies of the organisations and also increases the cost. Such an integrated facility is available only with DRDO at Chitradurga, Karnataka, for its own use.



Forest Dept. prohibits exhibition of exotic animals in private aviaries, petting zoos

Department has sought clarification from the Union Environment Ministry as to what permits are valid for the public display of exotic animals; until then, forest authorities have been directed to ensure that those in possession of these animals do not exhibit them; conservationists welcome move

Rohan Premkumar
UDHAGAMANDALAM

All privately-run aviaries and petting zoos in Tamil Nadu face closure by the Forest Department, which has sought clarity from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) as to what permits are valid for the display of animals in public.

Private collectors of exotic animals have, till recently, exhibited animals through a licence obtained from the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) and by voluntarily declaring possession of the animals through the PARIVESH portal of the Environment Ministry. These declarations, however, do not allow for the exhibition of wildlife to the public, while the AWBI licences are only for pets like cats and dogs,



Local District Forest Officers have been directed to ensure that all aviaries and petting zoos in possession of CITES-listed species across the State do not exhibit them to the public. M. KARUNAKARAN

officials said.

Exotic animals are those listed in appendices I, II and III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

(CITES), and included in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Tamil Nadu Chief Wildlife Warden Srinivas R. Reddy said the Forest Department has now sought

clarity from the Ministry as to what permits would be required for private collectors to exhibit exotic animals for the public. While a breeders' licence, which can be obtained from the

Forest Department, would allow the breeding of exotic animals, Mr. Reddy said no breeders' licences had been granted by the department so far.

The Local District Forest Officers have been directed to ensure that all aviaries and petting zoos in possession of CITES-listed species across the State do not exhibit them to the public.

Inspection to be held

In the Nilgiris, District Forest Officer (Nilgiris Division) S. Gowtham said the local range officer had been instructed to check whether the owner of one such exotic bird park at Fern Hill in Udhagamandalam had any permit to exhibit CITES-listed species. If the owner did not have a valid licence, the birds could not be exhibited, the official said.

Conservationists have

welcomed the clampdown on private aviaries. A conservationist from the Nilgiris applauded the department's proactive approach to safeguarding exotic animals, most of which are trafficked into the country, leading to populations in their native habitats declining.

"Over the years, breeding and sale of exotic birds and animals have become hugely lucrative businesses, with these aviaries and animals have become hugely lucrative businesses, with these aviaries proving to be instrumental in increasing public demand for exotic animals. Closing these aviaries could help quell local demand for exotic birds, and could play a role in helping conserve species in the wild, such as the endangered species of birds like conures, parakeets, macaws as well as reptiles and mammals," said the conservationist.

Chandrayaan-3 takes another crucial step closer to moon

ISRO performs spacecraft's final orbit reduction manoeuvre; after separation of the propulsion module and lander today, both will embark on their respective journeys; soft landing on Aug. 23

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

After being together for 34 days on-board the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft, the propulsion module and the lander module will part ways on Thursday and embark on their respective journeys.

"It's time for preparations as the propulsion module and the lander module gear up for their separate journeys. Separation of the lander module from the propulsion module is planned for August 17, 2023," the ISRO said on Wednesday after successfully performing the fifth



A new image of the moon captured by the Chandrayaan-3 released by the ISRO on Wednesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and final orbit reduction manoeuvre.

The propulsion module will separate from the lander while in orbit.

According to ISRO, Chandrayaan-3 consists of a lander module, a propulsion module and a rover with the objective of deve-

loping and demonstrating new technologies required for inter planetary missions.

"The lander will have the capability to soft land at a specified lunar site and deploy the rover which will carry out in-situ chemical analysis of the lunar surface during the course of its mobility. The lander and the rover have scientific payloads to carry out experiments on the lunar surface," the ISRO said.

After the separation of the two modules, a series of complex braking manoeuvres will be executed to facilitate a soft landing in the south polar region of the moon on August 23.