

Nearly 170 cities to flaunt e-buses in ₹57,613 cr plan

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The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the ₹57,613 crore PM-eBus Sewa initiative to augment the use of electric buses in 169 cities.

Anurag Thakur, Union minister, sports, youth affairs and information and broadcasting, while announcing the Cabinet decision, said: “A total of ₹57,613 crore will be spent to get around 10,000 new electric buses.”

The scheme will augment city bus operations, under which priority will be given to cities having no organised bus service.

Out of the ₹57,613 crore outlined for the scheme, support of ₹20,000 crore will be provided by the Centre, the Cabinet statement reads. The scheme will cover cities with 300,000 and above population, according to Census 2011. These include all the capital cities of Union Territories (UTs), north eastern and hill states. The e-buses will be provided under the PPP mode for 10 years.

A total of 181 cities will also be supported for development of charging infrastructure under the Green Urban Mobility Initiatives.

The move aims to help the Centre’s plan to deploy 50,000 e-buses under the National Electric Bus Program and achieve 40 per cent e-bus penetration by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2070. The Cabinet note did not provide any clarification on the nodal ministry for the scheme. However, senior officials said that it is likely to come under the purview of the ministry of housing and urban affairs.

Rlys to get ₹32K cr for track expansion push

DHRUVAKSH SAHA

New Delhi, 16 August

As part of the Centre’s infrastructure push, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved seven proposals by the ministry of railways to expand the rail network in various parts of the country, at an estimated cost of ₹32,512 crore.

“The projects covering 35 districts in nine states — Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal — will increase the existing network of railways by 2,339 km. This will provide employment of 70.6 million man-days to the people of the states,” a statement by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) said.

According to the national transporter, these are essential routes for transportation of varied baskets of commodities such as foodgrains, fertilisers, coal, cement, fly-ash, iron and finished steel, clinkers, crude oil, limestone and edible oil, among others.

With the railways looking to increase freight revenues, the capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of 200 million tonnes per annum (mtpa).



The capacity augmentation works will result in freight traffic of 200 mtpa more

U-turn on freight corridor stretch

The projects include a quadrupling of lines between Sonnagar in Bihar to Andal in West Bengal. Interestingly, before this development, the above mentioned stretch was an important part of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), which will now be built as regular, mixed-use rail tracks.

Business Standard had reported in April that the Centre had decided to end its pursuit for a private player to operate the Dankuni-Sonnagar stretch of the corridor and pump in ₹12,000 crore from its own coffers for the stretch.

