Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Government – to operate all its 525 electric buses by a private bidder soon

The private bidder will own, maintain and operate the e-buses, which is a major shift from the usual practice of operation by the state transport corporations (STC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation</th>
<th>Number of buses</th>
<th>Assured kilometres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Villupuram</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6 lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.2 lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>7.84 lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumbakonam</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6.6 lakh – 7.2 lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madurai</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7.2 lakh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**TWO MODELS**
- 9-metre length
  - Seating capacity 32
  - Standing capacity 20
- 12-metre length
  - Seating capacity 40
  - Standing capacity 30

**SUCCESSFUL BIDDER**: Will supply one bus in each category for a one-week trial. Cost: ₹90 lakh - 1.7 crore. Range: 150-300 km for every charge.

**GOING GREEN**: Interior of an electric bus that was flagged off by Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniyam in August this year.

**TIMELINE**
- Sale of tender: September 24
- Pre-bid meeting: October 10
- Last date for submitting bids and opening date: October 24

**TN’S FIRST GROSS CROSS CONTRACT (GCC)**
- There will be no outright purchase
- A Gross Cost Contract (GCC) will help govt understand technology better without risks
- WHAT IS GCC?
  - Bus will be owned by the operator (successful bidder) and not state transport corporation
  - Bus will be operated by bidder’s crew and not STC employees
  - Agreement will be signed on routes and fares
  - STC will collect ticket fares from passengers and pay the operator for every kilometre

**KEY CHALLENGES**
- Opposition from unions as reported in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
- Enforcing the contract; getting STCs on board
Also, the state government will not purchase the buses outrightly
Instead, it will sign a gross cost contract (GCC) between STCs and the successful bidder
The state government will be the final authority in planning of bus routes and fares
The state transport corporations will collect fares from passengers and, in turn, will pay the operator for every kilometre.
Earlier, Tamil Nadu’s first e-bus was flagged off in August this year in Chennai.
In the same month, the Union government sanctioned 525 e-buses for eight cities in TN — Coimbatore, Salem, Tiruppur, Erode, Vellore, Trichy, Villupuram and Thanjavur — under FAME-II (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) scheme of the Centre

**NATIONAL**

**Power Minister R.K. Singh – approves the new guidelines for the electric vehicle charging infrastructure**

- As per the new norms, there must be at least one charging station in a grid of 3 x 3 km in all megacities and one charging station every 25 km on both sides of highways.
- The first phase of the plan (1-3 years) will cover all megacities with a population of more than four million as per the 2011 Census along with all expressways and highways connected to these megacities.
- The second phase (3-5 years) will cover other big cities such as State capitals.
- To assist inter-city travel and long range and heavy duty EVs, fast-charging stations for vehicles such as buses/trucks shall be installed every 100 km.
- Private charging at residences/offices shall be permitted, with the decision of using fast or slow chargers resting with consumers.

**INTERNATIONAL**

**Ecuador, a South American country - announced to leave the 14-nation ‘Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries’ (OPEC) group from January 1, 2020 due to financial problems**

- The move is a part of the government’s plan to reduce public spending and generate new income.
- Ecuador produces more than 5,54,000 barrels of crude oil per day.
- It joined the OPEC in 1973, but left it in 1992 due to huge membership fees and again rejoined in 2007.
- Early this year, Qatar left the membership of OPEC on January 1, 2019.
INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth - jointly inaugurated phase-1 of Mauritius Metro Express through video conference recently

✓ In 2016, India has extended a special economic package of USD 353 million to execute five other Indian assisted projects in Mauritius.
✓ In July 2017, Larsen & Toubro was awarded the contract at USD 565 million to design and construct the Metro Express project.
✓ India is assisting the construction of Upadhyay Training Centre, the Subramania Bharati Eye Centre, the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre and Swami Vivekananda International Conference Centre in Mauritius.
✓ Similarly, India has inaugurated some projects in Nepal through video conferencing.
✓ South Asia’s first cross border oil pipeline was inaugurated by PM Modi and Nepali PM KP Sharma Oli through a video conference recently.

ECONOMY

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – cuts repo rate by 25bps and lowers growth rate estimate to 6.1%

✓ RBI’s fourth bi-monthly monetary policy for 2019-20 was announced by its Governor Shaktikanta Das on October 4, 2019.
✓ The move to cut repo rate to a 9-year low was the fifth successive cut done this year in order to boost demand and accelerate the economic growth.
✓ The six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) decided to cut interest rates by 25 basis points (bps) to 5.1%, with five members voting in favour of the quantum and R.H. Dholakia for a 40 bps cut (100 bps = 1 percentage point).
Subsequently, the Reverse Repo rate reduced to 4.9%.
The bank rate continues to stand at 5.4%
It has also reduced the country’s growth forecast for the fiscal year to 6.1% — which would be the lowest in 7 years — from its earlier estimate of 6.9% in the August review
The five repo rate cuts that have taken place during RBI governor Shaktikanta Das’s tenure collectively add up to 135 basis points (bps).

INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Teachers Day – October 5

The day is observed by the UNESCO with the aim to acknowledge the significant role of teachers across the world
World Teachers’ Day is co-convened in partnership with UNICEF, UNDP, the International Labour Organization, and Education International.
Established in 1994, it commemorates the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which is a benchmark standard regarding the rights and responsibilities of teachers
The Theme of World Teachers Day 2019 is Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession
On this day, the teachers and retired teachers are honoured for their special contribution