

# 10K e-buses for 100 cities to boost mobility

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**New Delhi:** The Union cabinet on Wednesday approved the 'PMe-Bus Sewa' scheme to provide financial support for operation of 10,000 electric buses in 100 cities that have 3-40 lakh population. The Centre will provide Rs 20,000 crore financial assistance out of the total estimated investment of Rs 57,613 crore.

The approval came more than two-and-a-half years after it was announced in the 2021-22 Budget speech. An-

nouncing the initiative, Union minister Anurag Thakur said the scheme will be on public private partnership (PPP) mode and will support bus operations for 10 years. It will give "priority to cities having no organised bus service". The 100 cities will be selected through a "competition" among 169 eligible candidates. Big cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Surat and Kolkata won't be covered as these have more than 40 lakh population. The scheme has two components — augmenting the city bus service and

green urban mobility initiatives (GUMI). Sources said under the first segment, the states or cities will float tenders for operation of electric buses by private players on an operational expenditure (opex) model. The private operators will procure buses and quote operation cost per km to recover their investment and operational expenditure. The city authorities or transport corporations will pay the approved per km operation cost to the operators, something on the lines of cluster bus service in Delhi.