THE BUS INSIDER

BY COACH BUILDERS INDIA

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SYNATY

From Bold Beginnings To Big Ambitions

VRL

CHARTERED SPEED

SIDDAGANGA TRAVELS

KPN TRAVELS

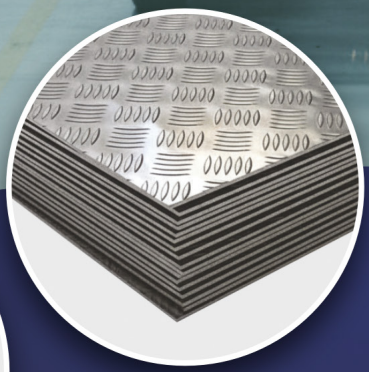
FRESH BUS

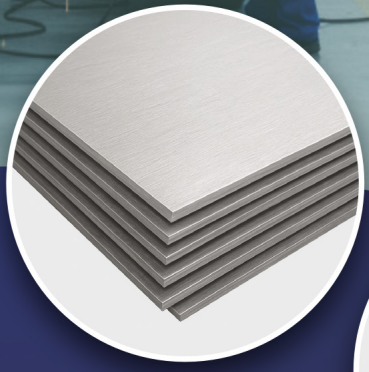


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Hello everyone,

A 100-bus order is a big number. But sometimes, the number itself is not the most interesting part of the story.

What caught my attention about Synaty Automotive's order from Okara Express was what sits behind those 100 buses. A new operator is entering the market with serious ambition, while a relatively young manufacturer is taking on its largest-ever fleet programme and committing to deliver the entire order within a demanding timeline.

That changes the nature of the conversation. And perhaps that is what makes this story so interesting.

The Indian bus industry is beginning to think bigger.

VRL is investing in 150 Volvo 9600 sleeper coaches to expand into new corridors. Siddaganga Travels is preparing for its next chapter through technology and automation. KPN Travels is gathering real-world insights from electric operations, while Fresh Bus tests whether electric buses can handle 600-km-plus overnight routes.

Different strategies, but a common thread: a bold willingness to invest in the future.

The definition of a good bus business is shifting. It is no longer only about how many buses you run. It is about understanding the passenger, running fleets efficiently, adopting technology quickly, preparing infrastructure, and consistently delivering on promises.

And with rapid growth comes greater responsibility. As fleets scale and routes lengthen, safety must stay at the centre of every decision. Engineering and regulation help, but real safety is built through discipline across design, manufacturing, maintenance, training, and daily execution.

This issue focuses on that exact transition—from capacity to capability, from operating buses to delivering complete mobility solutions, and from running fleets to building resilient businesses.

The industry is moving forward fast. The question now is how well we build the systems, people, and discipline to move with it.

Thank you, as always, for reading The Bus Insider and for continuing to share your stories with us.

Here's to growth, better buses, safer journeys, and the road ahead.

Cheers!!



Shivam Gautom

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OHM Global Mobility Adds 130 Electric Buses to Chennai's Public Transport Network



OHM Global Mobility, the e-mobility arm of Ashok Leyland and part of the Hinduja Group, has expanded its electric bus operations in Chennai with the launch of 130 new air-conditioned electric buses under Phase 2 of the Metropolitan Transport Corporation's (MTC) electric bus programme.

The buses were flagged off at the Tamil Nadu Secretariat in the presence of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, Transport Minister Vijay Tamilan Parthiban, Transport Secretary Nirmal Raj, MTC Managing Director D. Mohan and senior officials from OHM Global Mobility.

The 130 buses form the first batch of a larger deployment of 500 electric buses that OHM will supply and operate for MTC under Phase 2. The buses are manufactured by Switch, Ashok Leyland's electric vehicle subsidiary.

The latest deployment builds on OHM's experience with MTC under Phase 1. The company said its electric buses have already covered more than 3 crore green kilometres in Chennai, while its Phase 1 depots have achieved over 99% schedule adherence.

These operational results provide an important foundation as the city expands its electric public transport fleet. As the Phase 2 programme progresses, OHM will progressively deploy the remaining buses across Chennai while supporting fleet operations and maintenance. The company will also leverage its capabilities in electric mobility and Mobility-as-a-Service solutions as part of the programme.

The expansion highlights how electric bus adoption in Indian cities is increasingly moving from pilot deployments to larger, performance-driven fleet operations.

For Chennai, the Phase 2 rollout adds further momentum to the transition towards cleaner and quieter public transport while placing greater emphasis on operational reliability and fleet uptime.

> ***"The launch of the first 130 buses under Phase 2 marks an important milestone in Chennai's transition towards sustainable public transportation. Our experience in Phase 1 demonstrates that sustainability and operational excellence can go hand in hand. We are proud to build on this foundation with MTC and contribute to a cleaner, quieter and more comfortable public transport experience for the people of Chennai."***
>
> **Brijesh Gubbi Suresh**
> CEO, **OHM Global Mobility**

Synaty Automotive Secures India's First ICAT Certification for a 15-Metre Sleeper Bus



The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) has issued its first compliance certificate for a 15-metre multi-axle sleeper bus, developed by Synaty Automotive Pvt. Ltd. The certification marks a significant development for India's long-distance passenger transport segment, particularly as operators look towards larger and more specialised bus configurations.

The vehicle has been certified under AIS-119 and AIS-153, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR). The certificate was formally handed over by Saurabh Dalela, Director, ICAT, to Naresh Kumar Yadav, Managing Director, Synaty Automotive, in the presence of senior ICAT officials.

Designed specifically for long-distance passenger transportation, the 15-metre bus has been developed with emphasis on structural strength, emergency and fire safety, passenger movement and travel comfort. Synaty has also developed the platform in two configurations to address different operating requirements. The fully sleeper version offers 42 berths, while the hybrid configuration combines 21 berths with 42 seats. This gives operators the flexibility to configure the vehicle according to route characteristics, passenger demand and the type of long-distance service being offered. The vehicle has undergone testing and certification for applicable requirements covering vehicle safety, structural integrity, passenger accommodation and comfort under the relevant automotive standards and CMVR provisions.

Naresh Yadav, Managing Director, Synaty Automotive, expressed appreciation for the certification and said the achievement would strengthen the company's efforts to develop safe, reliable and comfortable solutions for long-distance passenger transportation.

The certification comes at a time when India's intercity bus market is seeing greater interest in premium sleeper formats and higher-capacity configurations.

The approval of a 15-metre multi-axle platform provides another option for operators looking to combine greater passenger capacity with the comfort requirements of long-distance travel.

The milestone also underlines the role of certification agencies such as ICAT in evaluating increasingly specialised passenger vehicle configurations and ensuring that new platforms meet prescribed safety and technical requirements before entering the market.

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Synaty Automotive Signs Its Biggest-Ever 100-Bus Order As Growth Moves From Capacity To Capability

By Niyorkona Saikia



Synaty Automotive has landed its largest order to date, with Bihar-based Okara Express ordering 100 buses. The complete order is targeted for delivery by 31 January 2027. The four-month delivery window makes the programme particularly significant.

It will require Synaty to coordinate procurement, production, manpower and quality across a fleet-sized order, rather than manage buses as individual projects.

The company's manufacturing systems, supplier network and ability to maintain consistency will now be tested at a scale it has not handled before.

For Naresh Yadav, Founder, Synaty Automotive, the larger ambition extends beyond increasing the number of buses coming out of the factory.

He believes the changing requirements of operators are creating space for manufacturers that can understand the complete requirement rather than simply execute a body-building job.

"The industry is moving towards customers looking for more than just a bus body. Our objective is to build Synaty as a solution provider, understanding the operator's requirement, developing the right product and delivering it with the quality, compliance and consistency required for the application," elucidates Naresh Yadav, Founder, Synaty Automotive.

**The turnover figures are approximate*

The more interesting part of Synaty's growth is what has changed behind the factory gates. As volumes have increased, so has the focus on product development, material planning, cross-functional coordination, quality control and the ability to deliver consistently within committed timelines.

Together, these changes have created the foundation for a business that is now operating at a very different scale.

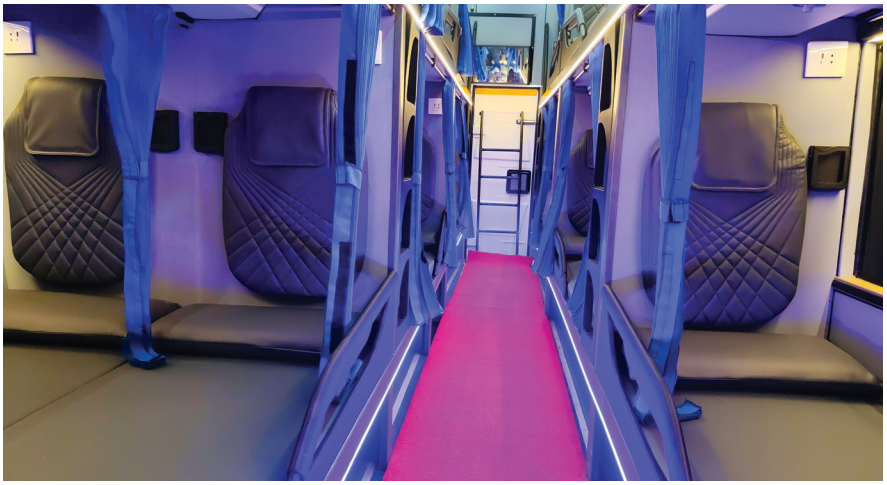
A Clear Trajectory of Growth

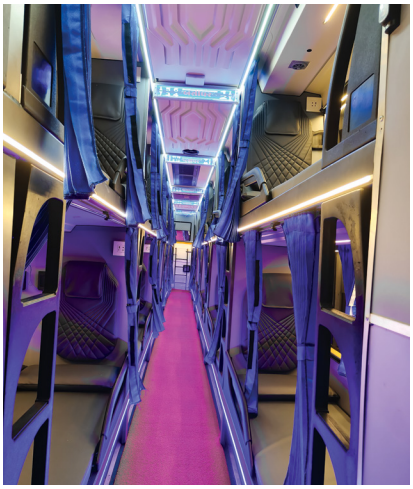
Synaty's turnover* has grown more than six-fold in three years, rising from ₹10 crore in FY2022-23 to ₹31 crore in FY2023-24. It climbed another 58% to ₹49 crore in FY2024-25 before reaching ₹62 crore in FY2025-26, a further 27% increase.

The company is now targeting ₹100 crore in turnover in the current financial year. If achieved, that would represent a further 61% increase over FY2025-26, underlining the aggressive pace at which the company is attempting to scale.

Naresh Yadav attributes its growth to customer acceptance, product development and its workforce, while operator feedback continues to shape product and process improvements. At the manufacturing level, the focus is increasingly on production planning, process optimization and early quality intervention - the processes that allow higher volumes to be delivered with greater consistency.











Building Trust Through Standardisation and Scale

The shift Synaty is attempting is broader than simply increasing production.

The company wants to position itself as a solution provider to operators, with product development driven by the application and operating requirements of the customer.

That means understanding how a bus will be used, what passengers expect from it, how operators will maintain it, and what level of compliance and standardisation is required.

This broader approach is also reflected in Synaty's commitment to regulatory compliance and industry standards.

The company has consistently been among the first to achieve AIS 153 certification across key bus segments, from 8-metre midi buses to 15-metre multi-axle sleepers.

More than a compliance milestone, this reflects Synaty's focus on building a professionally managed, standards-driven organisation with the capabilities and scale to emerge as a leading player in the bus body-building industry. Naresh Yadav views compliance not simply as a regulatory requirement but as part of the discipline needed to build consistently at scale.

"Standardisation becomes increasingly important as we move towards larger fleet orders. When a customer approves a product, our responsibility is to ensure that the same engineering, specifications and quality are maintained across every vehicle," says Naresh Yadav.

For larger fleet programmes, craftsmanship is only the starting point.

The real test is whether the manufacturer can industrialise that quality, maintaining the approved specification, structural and safety standards and finish consistently across every vehicle, while meeting the customer's production and delivery schedule.

The Next Phase: Scale, Capability and Opportunity

Synaty is now evaluating where it can create a meaningful position in the next phase of bus electrification. The company is not looking at electric buses simply as another product category; it sees



the segment as requiring a different combination of technology, operating economics and after-sales capability.

Its approach is therefore centred on building the right ecosystem before committing to a larger scale-up. Technology partnerships, demonstrable operator demand, charging availability and dependable service support are among the conditions Synaty says will determine how aggressively it enters the segment.

The underlying strategy is pragmatic - identify where the technology and operating model make commercial sense first, and then build products around those applications rather than pushing a one-size-fits-all electric platform.

That approach reflects the larger philosophy emerging at Synaty: build capability around the changing needs of the operator rather than chase volume for its own sake.

> *"The industry is moving towards customers looking for more than just a bus body. Our objective is to build Synaty as a solution provider, understanding the operator's requirement, developing the right product and delivering it with the quality, compliance and consistency required for the application."*

NARESH YADAV
Founder, Synaty Automotive



Okara Express Wants To Put Bihar On India's Premium Bus Map

A new player is stepping into India's intercity bus market with big ambitions, launching with 110 buses to redefine premium bus travel to Bihar. With Bihar–Delhi as its launchpad, Okara Express plans to build a year-round network focused on comfort, safety, and reliability.

By Violina Pegu



For Okara Express, entering the intercity bus market is not simply about deploying a large fleet. The company is entering with a clear proposition: to build a premium, reliable, technology-enabled bus service connecting Bihar with major cities across India.

Founded in May 2025, the company is preparing to launch its first fleet of 110 buses with the Bihar–Delhi corridor at the centre of its initial network. But this is not being positioned as another seasonal bus operation. Okara Express wants to build a year-round premium brand around Bihar, combining newer buses, higher passenger comfort, technology, and reliable service.

A Market Waiting for a Reset

Shivam Singh, Founder & CEO, Okara Express believes Bihar has historically been underserved when it comes to quality intercity bus services. While premium bus operations have developed across several parts of India, he says the Bihar market has often been approached differently.

"I feel everyone keeps their worst buses for Bihar routes," he says. That perception is precisely what Okara Express wants to challenge.

"I want to change that perception altogether. I want Okara Express to put Bihar on the map. We will operate the most luxurious buses to Bihar. We will give the latest technology and the latest amenities in terms of safety and comfort to our passengers," he adds.

The initial choice of the Bihar–Delhi corridor is also deliberate. According to Singh, the market sees a significant influx of buses around Diwali and Chhath Puja, but the availability of high-quality services drops outside the peak season. Okara Express sees this as an opportunity to build a dedicated brand around the corridor rather than treat it as a seasonal market. The initial deployment will comprise 10 Volvo 9600 coaches and 100 sleeper buses.



The Volvo coaches have already been delivered, while the remaining fleet will enter service progressively, with the complete 100-bus order targeted for January 2027.

Building the Product Around the Passenger

Okara Express's initial fleet has been specified around comfort, safety and onboard service. The buses will feature full air suspension, safety systems aligned with the latest government norms, disposable bedsheets, blankets and pillows, welcome drinks and snacks, live GPS tracking and 24x7 customer support.

"We are giving the latest amenities to our passengers. The product is best in the market - fully air-suspension buses for comfort, built in accordance with the latest safety norms," says Singh.

For a new operator, this emphasis on the passenger experience is significant. Okara Express is not entering with an established brand or an existing network to fall back on. The first fleet has to establish what the brand stands for from day one.

Choosing the Partner

For a company building its first fleet, the bus body builder becomes an important part of the equation. Singh states that the team evaluated every reputed bus body builder before selecting Synaty Automotive.

The deciding factor was not simply the physical product. Singh says Synaty worked with Okara through the development process and helped shape the solution around its requirements.

"Synaty stood out," states Shivam Singh. **"They acted more like a solution provider than a bus body builder. They guided us at every step - helped us at every turn."**

Design, safety and passenger comfort were the primary considerations, followed by delivery timelines and after-sales support. The latter, in particular, was important for Okara Express.

> ***We want to change the perception of bus travel to Bihar altogether. We want to build a brand synonymous with reliability, comfort and trust, and show that Bihar deserves the same quality of intercity travel as any other part of India.***

SHIVAM SINGH
Founder & CEO,
Okara Express



"After-sales support is something that is yet to catch up in the Indian bus body-building industry. Synaty has a good reputation for after-sales support, and that was another reason why we chose them," he revealed.

The 100-bus order also comes with a demanding delivery schedule, with the complete deployment targeted for January 2027.

From Bihar to the Rest of India

For now, Okara's priority is execution. The company needs to get its first fleet on the road, establish its service proposition, and deliver the experience it has promised passengers.



But the longer-term ambition is considerably broader. Once the initial 100-bus deployment is complete, Okara plans to expand into more routes across India, while keeping Bihar at the centre of its network.

"We will start expanding our services pan-India, but the heart of it will stay in Bihar. We aim to connect every major city and state in India with Bihar," adds Shivam Singh.

That makes the 110-bus launch more than a fleet deployment. It is Okara Express's opening statement in a market it believes is ready for a different kind of bus operator and an attempt to build a premium intercity brand around a market that, in Singh's view, has been waiting for one.



Ashok Leyland Partners with Kerala Grameena Bank to Ease CV Financing

Ashok Leyland has partnered with Kerala Grameena Bank to provide vehicle financing facilities for customers purchasing its commercial vehicles in Kerala.

The partnership is aimed at offering more accessible and customised financing options, with flexible repayment structures tailored to customer requirements.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Viplav Shah, Head – LCV Business, Ashok Leyland, and Gundekar Harish Gangadhar Rao, General Manager, Kerala Grameena Bank, in the presence of Vimala Vijayabhaskar, Chairperson, Kerala Grameena Bank.

Under the partnership, Kerala Grameena Bank will provide end-to-end financing solutions to Ashok Leyland customers, covering vehicle loans with repayment options designed around individual requirements.

The move is particularly relevant for commercial vehicle buyers and fleet operators, for whom access to financing can directly influence fleet expansion and vehicle replacement decisions.

Vimala Vijayabhaskar, Chairperson, Kerala Grameena Bank, said the partnership would help the bank address the financing needs of commercial vehicle customers while extending tailored financial solutions to businesses across Kerala. Ashok Leyland offers a range of LCVs and MHCVs, including trucks and buses, while continuing to expand its portfolio of alternative-fuelled vehicles.

For commercial vehicle operators in Kerala, the partnership adds another financing channel as businesses look to invest in new vehicles, expand fleets and manage the capital requirements associated with fleet modernisation.

> ***A commercial vehicle is a significant investment for any business, particularly for small operators and fleet owners. By partnering with Kerala Grameena Bank, we want to make financing more accessible and give customers greater flexibility when investing in our vehicles. Our focus is not only on providing efficient products, but also on supporting customers through solutions that improve productivity and overall ownership economics.***
>
> **Viplav Shah**
> HEAD - **LCV BUSINESS, ASHOK LEYLAND**

Siddaganga Travels: 30 Years of Trust, Transformation And The Road Ahead

By Violina Pegu



Nearly three decades after starting out with just two buses, Siddaganga Travels and Logistics is entering another important chapter in its journey. The Bengaluru-based company will mark 30 years since its formal establishment in 1997 next year, with a business that has grown from a small tourist operation into a diversified passenger mobility company.

Over the years, Siddaganga has built its reputation around reliable service, fleet quality and long-standing customer relationships.

It grew to nearly 200 buses before the pandemic, rebuilt its fleet after COVID-19, and today operates across tourist, corporate, and intercity segments.

But the company is not looking at its 30th anniversary simply as a milestone to celebrate. It is using the next phase to rethink how the business can grow.

Technology and automation are becoming central to its operations, while electric buses and asset leasing are emerging as potential new growth areas.

In this conversation with The Bus Insider, **Manu Mahesh, Partner, Siddaganga Travels and Logistics,** discusses the company's three-decade journey, the lessons from intercity operations, and why technology, disciplined operations, and fleet quality will shape its next phase of growth.

Siddaganga is now approaching its 30th anniversary. Take us back to the beginning - how did the company start, and how has the business evolved over the years?

Siddaganga Tours and Travels began operations around 1995 and was formally established in 1997 by my father, A M Mahesh.





He started his career as a driver, built his own customer base, and gradually grew the business around tourist operations with just two buses. Later, my uncle, A M Shivakumar, joined as a co-owner.

Our focus on reliable service and a strong passenger experience helped the company grow steadily. From just two buses, we eventually built a fleet of nearly 200 buses before COVID-19.

However, the pandemic changed everything. When the business restarted in 2021, we decided to use the opportunity to completely refresh the company.

That was also when I returned from the UK and joined the family business. We started afresh with around 70 buses and rebranded the company as Siddaganga Travels and Logistics.

It was a new chapter for us, with a renewed focus on the fleet, operations, and technology.

Siddaganga had built a strong base in the tourist segment over the years. What made you see intercity as the right opportunity to explore in 2018?

To be honest, we have always been careful about entering new segments. But when aggregators started entering the industry, we saw an opportunity.

We looked at it primarily as a leasing business. With around 18 years of experience, we already had the people, systems, and operational infrastructure in place.

So, from our perspective, we were not really entering an entirely new business. We were taking what we already knew how to do well and applying it to fixed intercity routes.

The Minimum Guarantee model also gave us some revenue visibility and made the risk more manageable. That is what gave us the confidence to enter intercity operations.

The bus industry is now becoming increasingly competitive. How does Siddaganga approach differentiation?

We don't really try to differentiate ourselves. We just focus on doing our job well. Our service speaks for us, and over the years, that has helped us build a reputation in the market. I think that reputation is our biggest strength.

We are known for reliability and passenger experience, especially in the corporate segment. There are customers who will not take a trip without Siddaganga buses. For us, that trust is more valuable than anything we can put into a marketing campaign.

We have also chosen to operate at the premium end. We keep our buses clean, use quality interiors and invest heavily in driver training. We also renew our buses every four to five years. Since our tourist operations involve relatively lower mileage, we can maintain a younger fleet and keep the buses in good condition.

As Siddaganga moves into its next phase of growth, how is technology changing the way you operate the business and serve customers?

Technology is becoming a major part of our operations. Historically, the business has always been extremely hands-on, with my father and uncle personally inspecting new vehicles.



While that level of involvement is valuable, it is difficult to scale. Technology is now helping us change that.

We have developed an in-house mobile application through which customers can browse different types of vehicles and book the one they need. It works with both our own fleet and our agents' fleets, and is already live through our website, with a formal app launch planned soon.

We also have an in-house system that manages our operations and maintenance processes end-to-end. The objective is to use automation and better data to expand the business while maintaining the same standards we have always followed.



> **Three decades later, our biggest achievement is not the number of buses we have. It is the trust we have built along the way.**

A M Mahesh
Founder, Siddaganga Travels & Logistics





What is the focus for Siddaganga at this stage - expanding into new markets and opportunities, or strengthening the business and routes you already operate?

Expansion is a clear focus for us. We are looking at expanding our operations and entering new opportunities across the market. Our new software and automation systems will play an important role in this next phase, giving us better visibility, stronger data, and greater control as we scale.

The objective is not simply to become bigger. We want to build a business that can grow sustainably while maintaining the standards and customer experience Siddaganga is known for.

You have several initiatives in the pipeline. What can you tell us about what Siddaganga is working on right now and what is coming next?

There are several initiatives underway. In September, we began a new association with FlixBus. We are currently operating 16 new BharatBenz buses, and there is more to come.





We are also exploring entry into the electric vehicle segment and developing a platform that could eventually enable us to operate as a dedicated asset-leasing company.

For us, the priority is to get the data and systems right first. Once that foundation is in place, we can scale with greater confidence.

The industry is changing, and we believe the next phase of growth will come from combining strong people, disciplined operations, technology, and safe, well-maintained vehicles. That is the direction we are building towards.

Looking back at Siddaganga's journey so far, what do you believe has been most important in building the company to where it is today?

Customer focus has always been one of the biggest factors. We have always believed in creating value for our customers, listening to their feedback, and evolving the business around what they actually need.

Technology has also become an important part of our growth, particularly in recent years. After I joined the business, I spent about three years studying our operations and developing technology that could help us run the business more efficiently and prepare for the next phase of growth.

The other major factor is keeping our operations in-house. Maintenance and day-to-day operations are handled internally, and even customer issues are dealt with directly by the owners.

If there is a problem, even late at night, it does not simply go through a call centre. We take responsibility and handle it ourselves. That direct accountability has been a part of Siddaganga from the beginning.

> **"The fleet may change, technology may change, and the business may change. But our commitment to the customer cannot change."**

A M Shivakumar
Co-Founder, Siddaganga Travels & Logistics





Crestline Tech Mobility Secures AIS-153, Accelerates Its Bus Manufacturing Roadmap

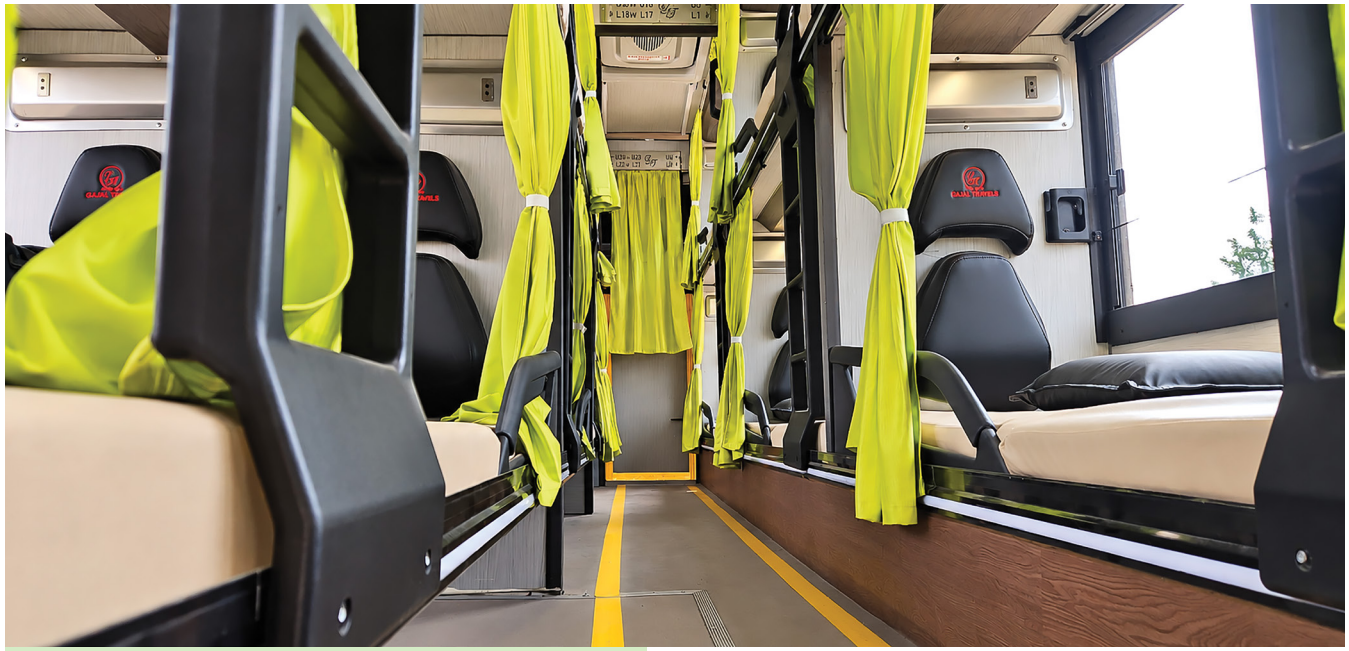
Crestline Tech Mobility Pvt. Ltd. has achieved AIS-153 certification for its bus-body configurations, marking an important milestone in the company's development as an Indian bus-body and mobility manufacturer.

For a company incorporated in 2025, the certification signals an early focus on building its product portfolio around the regulatory, engineering and safety requirements shaping the next phase of India's passenger mobility industry.

Based in Tumakuru, Karnataka, Crestline operates from the Vasanthanarasapura Industrial Area, where it is developing an integrated manufacturing ecosystem covering R&D, engineering, fabrication and bus-body production. The company currently operates a 3-acre R&D facility, while an 87-acre production plant is under development. The planned manufacturing setup is designed for an annual capacity of around 1,000 buses.

Compliance as an Engineering Foundation

AIS-153 certification comes at a time when regulatory compliance is becoming increasingly central to bus-body manufacturing. For Crestline, the certification is intended not simply as a statutory credential, but as a foundation for developing standardised engineering and manufacturing processes as the company scales. The certification adds to Crestline's work under other applicable automotive standards, including AIS-052 and



AIS-119, strengthening its compliance credentials as it develops relationships across the OEM, fleet and institutional transportation ecosystem.

"Achieving AIS-153 certification is an important step in our journey. It gives us a stronger engineering and compliance foundation as we expand our product portfolio and prepare for the changing requirements of the bus and mobility industry," says Mohammad Javeed, Founder & CEO, Crestline Tech Mobility Pvt. Ltd.

From Sleeper Coaches to Electric Mobility

Crestline's current portfolio includes luxury sleeper and seater buses, staff and employee transportation buses, route and public transport applications, along with customised configurations developed around operator and OEM requirements.

The company is also extending its engineering capabilities towards electric-bus applications. This reflects its broader approach of combining established bus-body manufacturing practices with emerging mobility requirements, including lightweight construction, passenger comfort, safety and more efficient vehicle engineering.

Building Capacity for the Next Phase

Crestline currently employs more than 70 people and has an annual production level of approximately 30 buses as it builds towards its larger manufacturing plans.

Over the next two to three years, the company intends to expand production capacity, strengthen quality-control and process-standardisation systems, and introduce a wider range of bus configurations. Its roadmap includes premium and sleeper coaches, institutional and public transport buses, customised fleet solutions and new electric-bus programmes. Alongside manufacturing expansion, Crestline plans to deepen its presence across Karnataka and other Indian markets while developing relationships with OEMs, fleet operators and institutional customers.

With AIS-153 compliance now established as part of its technical foundation, Crestline is looking to use the next phase of its development to scale from a new manufacturing entrant into a broader bus-body and mobility platform serving both conventional and emerging electric mobility requirements.



DECODING INDIA'S BUS FIRES

WHAT 606 INCIDENTS REVEAL

An independent review of media reports reveals recurring operating patterns, multi-bus exposure and the need to turn every serious fire into verified preventive action.

By Dr. V. Amudhan



An independent review of national, regional and local media reports identified 606 bus-fire incidents involving 759 buses in India between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2026. The incidents were associated with 303 reported fatalities and 1,131 reported injuries.

These figures are not comprehensive official statistics. They represent incidents identifiable through the reviewed media reports. Even with that limitation, the scale and recurring patterns support a clear conclusion - serious bus fires must lead to systematic investigation, verified corrective action, and shared preventive learning.



Figure 1 | The identified incidents show a substantial national burden, but the totals are media-reported and should not be treated as comprehensive official statistics.

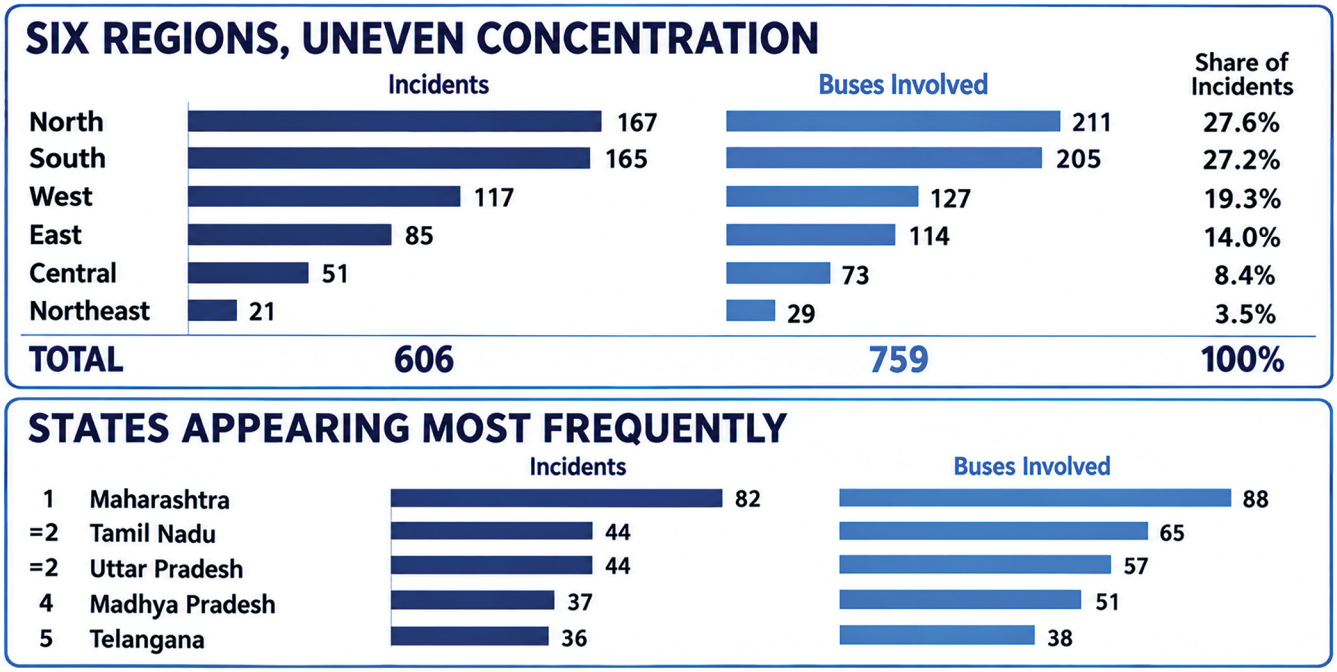


Figure 2 | North and South formed the two largest regional concentrations; Maharashtra recorded the highest absolute state total.

A national burden with serious human consequences

Of the 606 incidents, 504 (83.2%) had no reported fatality or injury. Early warning, rapid evacuation, emergency response or favourable circumstances may have limited the consequences in many cases, although the media reports do not always establish which safeguards proved decisive.

The remaining incidents nevertheless produced a substantial human toll.

Catastrophic outcomes can emerge when fire growth combines with collision damage, delayed detection, constrained exits, sleeping passengers, combustible materials, or delayed rescue. Case-level investigation is needed to determine which factors were present and how they interacted.

Where incidents were concentrated

The incidents were distributed across India, but not evenly. North India recorded 167 incidents involving 211 buses, while South India recorded 165 incidents involving 205 buses.

Together, the two regions accounted for 332 incidents - 54.8% of the national total. West India recorded 117 incidents, East India 85, Central India 51, and Northeast India 21.

Maharashtra had the highest absolute state total, with 82 incidents and 88 buses involved. Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh followed with 44 incidents each. These are concentrations of identified reports, not exposure-adjusted risk rankings. Fair comparison would require fleet size, vehicle kilometres, trips, operating hours, fleet age, service intensity and consistent reporting coverage - denominators that were unavailable.

When and where the fires developed

Operating circumstances provide the first layer of evidence. In-motion fires accounted for 396 incidents - 65.3% of the total. Collision-induced fires formed the second-largest category, with 62 incidents involving 71 buses.

The difference between incidents and buses matters most in premises-based events. Thirty-nine depot or parking-area incidents involved 134 buses, while 13 workshop or maintenance incidents involved 41 buses.

One event can therefore expose several vehicles. Do not count additional buses as separate incidents, or assume they were destroyed without incident-level confirmation.

Origin zones reveal a major evidence gap

In 150 incidents - 24.8% of the total - the first-reported fire-origin zone remained undetermined.

Among identified physical zones, the engine compartment led with 139 incidents, followed by electrical or wiring compartments with 83, wheel,

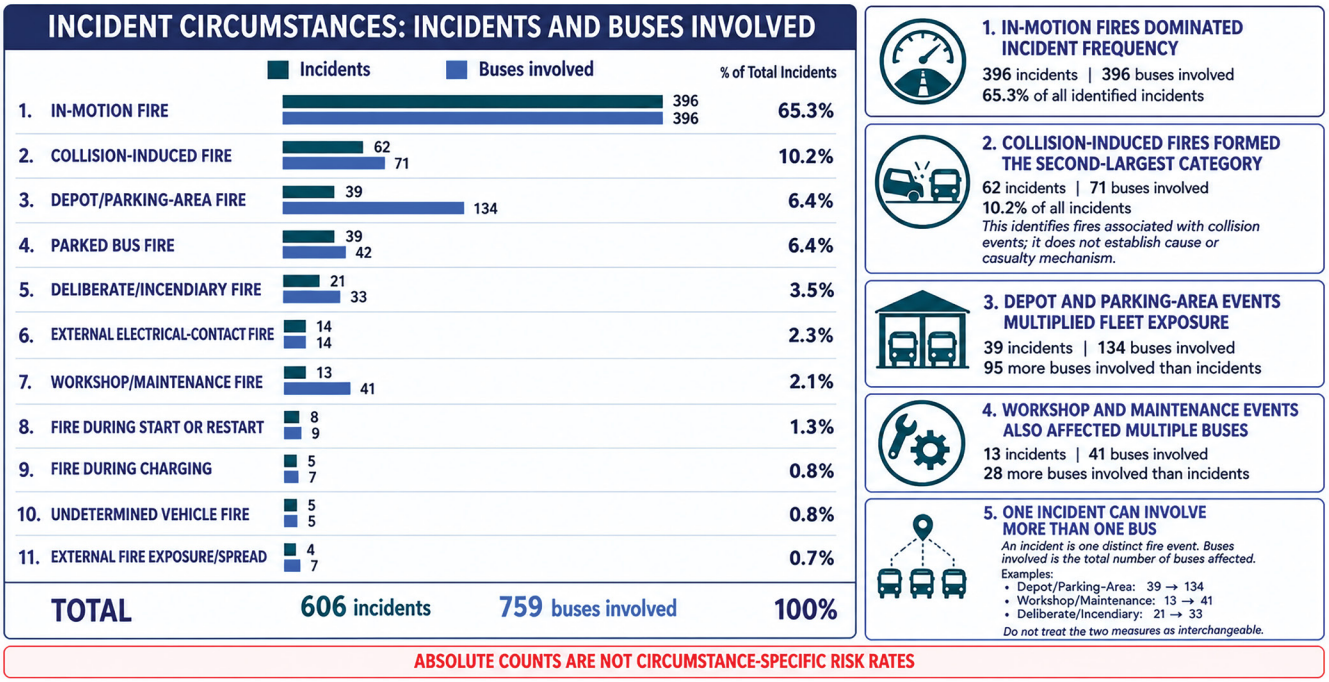


Figure 3 | In-motion fires dominated incident frequency, while depot and workshop events created disproportionate multi-bus exposure.

brake or tyre areas with 52, and fuel-system or fuel-tank zones with 39.

A reported origin zone is not automatically the ignition point. Witnesses may first see smoke or flames after heat has travelled from another location. Origin describes where fire was first reported; root cause explains why it started and developed. That distinction must survive every headline, caption, and technical discussion.

What the classifications reveal

The reviewed reports produced 13 fire classifications. Electrical-System Fire was the largest, with 195 incidents and 207 buses involved. The label does not mean "electric-bus fire", nor does it establish defective wiring as a confirmed root cause. Diesel, CNG and electric buses all contain electrical systems, and EV Traction-Battery Fire was recorded separately.

Undetermined Vehicle Fire was the second-largest classification, with 126 incidents involving 192 buses. Its scale is a warning about evidence quality. Descriptions such as "short circuit" or "technical fault" may originate from witnesses, operators, police accounts, or preliminary observations. They should not be treated as forensic conclusions unless supported by systematic technical investigation.

Different Evidence Calls for Different Interventions

No state led every measure, and absolute incident totals cannot establish comparative risk.

However, the documented patterns indicate different screening priorities. Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh may warrant broad examination because of incident frequency and reported human consequences, while Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh may require closer examination of severe-outcome incidents, including collision-fire development, evacuation, and post-crash rescue.

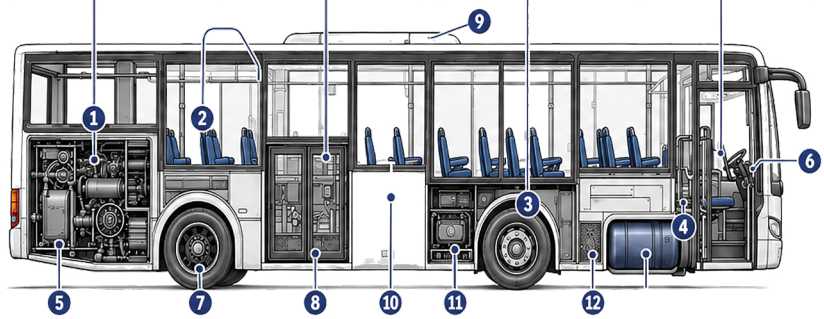
Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka may benefit from frequency-focused prevention, while Odisha, Haryana and Gujarat warrant continued targeted monitoring. These are author-proposed screening priorities—not official state-risk classifications—and must be validated against official incident records, fleet exposure and operational data before regulatory action.

Seven national actions for consideration

The evidence strengthens the case for a coordinated national framework. Seven actions merit policy consideration:

- Establish a national bus-fire incident database.
- Introduce a standard bus-fire investigation protocol.
- Conduct safety audits in states with substantial documented burdens.
- Audit electrical systems and post-registration modifications.
- Audit depot, workshop and parking-area fire safety.
- Develop exposure-based indicators using fleet size, kilometres, age, propulsion and service.
- Publish verified findings, safety advisories and corrective lessons.

IDENTIFIED PHYSICAL ORIGIN ZONES



OTHER IDENTIFIED PHYSICAL ZONES

5	LOW-VOLTAGE BATTERY COMPARTMENT	15 incidents	17 buses	2.5%	9	ROOF/HVAC/ROOF-MOUNTED EQUIPMENT	11 incidents	11 buses	1.8%
6	DRIVER CABIN/DASHBOARD	14 incidents	14 buses	2.3%	10	UNDERBODY/CHASSIS	7 incidents	7 buses	1.2%
7	HIGH-VOLTAGE TRACTION-BATTERY COMPARTMENT	13 incidents	15 buses	2.1%	11	TRANSMISSION/GEARBOX COMPARTMENT	4 incidents	4 buses	0.7%
8	PASSENGER CABIN	12 incidents	12 buses	2.0%	12	LUGGAGE COMPARTMENT	1 incident	1 bus	0.2%

OUTSIDE, MULTIPLE OR UNRESOLVED ORIGINS

CATEGORY	INCIDENTS (count)	BUSES (count)	% OF TOTAL INCIDENTS
A UNDETERMINED	150 incidents	194 buses	24.8%
B EXTERNAL SOURCE	36 incidents	58 buses	5.9%
C UNCLEAR/CONFLICTING EVIDENCE	14 incidents	35 buses	2.3%
D DEPOT/WORKSHOP AREA	8 incidents	34 buses	1.3%
E MULTIPLE/PROPAGATED ZONES	7 incidents	11 buses	1.2%
F WORKSHOP/HOT-WORK AREA	1 incident	15 buses	0.2%

1 THE LARGEST REPORTED ORIGIN CATEGORY WAS UNDETERMINED

150 incidents | 194 buses involved

24.8%

of all identified incidents

2 AMONG IDENTIFIED PHYSICAL ZONES, THE ENGINE COMPARTMENT LED

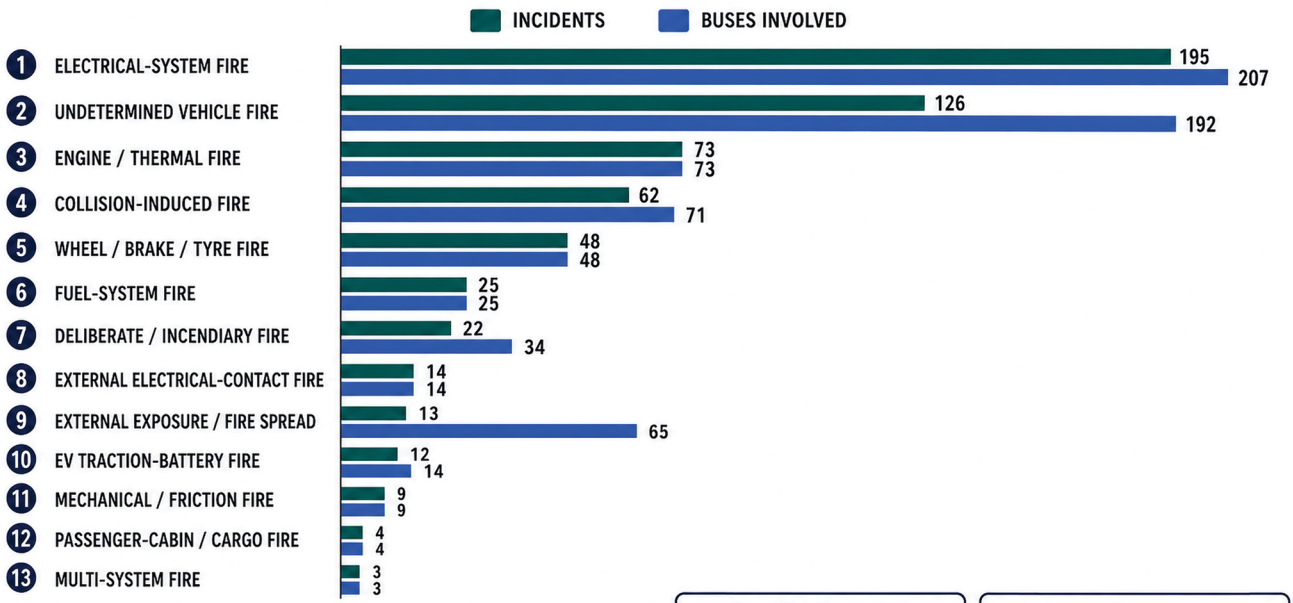
139 incidents | 141 buses involved

22.9%

of all identified incidents

Reported origin is not confirmed root cause. Reported origin identifies where fire was first observed or described; it does not establish the ignition source or failure mechanism.

FIRE CLASSIFICATION: INCIDENTS AND BUSES INVOLVED



GRAND TOTAL: 606 INCIDENTS | 759 BUSES INVOLVED

LARGEST REPORTED CLASSIFICATION
ELECTRICAL-SYSTEM FIRE
195 INCIDENTS | 207 BUSES

SUBSTANTIAL SHARE REMAINED UNDETERMINED
UNDETERMINED VEHICLE FIRE
126 INCIDENTS | 192 BUSES

Classification is not confirmed root cause. Media-reported classifications may be preliminary; only a technical or forensic investigation can establish the cause.

About the Analysis: This independent analysis reviewed national, regional and local media reports published between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2026. Each identified event was counted as one incident; where one event affected several buses, the number of buses involved was recorded separately. Where reports differed, the most consistently supported available figure was used. Casualty totals include all persons reported as affected. The findings represent identifiable media-reported patterns and are not comprehensive official national statistics.

SEVEN PROPOSED NATIONAL ACTIONS

#	ACTION	PROPOSED LEAD	SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME	REQUIRED OUTPUT
1	NATIONAL BUS-FIRE INCIDENT DATABASE	MoRTH	NIC + State/UT Transport Departments	IMMEDIATE INITIATION	Standard digital reporting platform
2	STANDARD BUS-FIRE INVESTIGATION PROTOCOL	MoRTH	Technical/testing agencies + States + police and fire services	IMMEDIATE INITIATION	Uniform investigation procedure
3	HIGH-BURDEN STATE SAFETY AUDITS	MoRTH + concerned States	Transport Departments + STUs + operators + audit teams	3–6 MONTHS	State findings and corrective-action plans
4	ELECTRICAL AND POST-REGISTRATION MODIFICATION AUDITS	State/UT Transport Departments	Testing agencies + manufacturers + body builders + operators	3–6 MONTHS	Verification of wiring, auxiliary loads and alterations
5	DEPOT, WORKSHOP AND PARKING-AREA FIRE-SAFETY AUDITS	STUs + bus operators	Transport Departments + fire services + local authorities	WITHIN 6 MONTHS	Depot fire-risk register and emergency plan
6	EXPOSURE-BASED BUS-FIRE INDICATORS	MoRTH	States + STUs + operators + registration and statistical agencies	WITHIN 12 MONTHS	Rates by registered buses, bus-kilometres, age, propulsion and service
7	PUBLICATION OF FINDINGS AND SAFETY LEARNING	MoRTH	States + investigators + manufacturers + operators + technical institutions	ANNUAL AND INCIDENT-BASED	Annual report and major-incident advisories

Colours indicate the proposed implementation sequence—not urgency ratings or statutory deadlines.

MoRTH: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways | **NIC:** National Informatics Centre | **STUs:** State Transport Undertakings | **State/UT:** State or Union Territory

AUTHOR-PROPOSED ROADMAP—NOT AN ANNOUNCED GOVERNMENT PLAN
The institutional roles, timeframes and outputs are proposed for policy consideration; they are not confirmed assignments, statutory deadlines or approved government commitments.

MoRTH could provide national coordination, supported by State and Union Territory transport departments, the National Informatics Centre, testing agencies, police, fire services, State Transport Undertakings, operators, manufacturers, body builders and technical institutions.

These roles and timeframes are author proposals for policy consideration - not announced commitments, statutory deadlines or approved government assignments.

From reporting to preventive learning

A national database is necessary, but reporting alone will not prevent the next fire. Investigation must distinguish operating circumstances, reported origin, fire classification and root cause. Corrective action must then be assigned, completed and independently verified. Verified findings should inform vehicle design, maintenance, inspection, evacuation, emergency response and training. An investigation should not end with administrative file closure.

It should end with evidence that the corrective action is complete, effective and sustained - and with lessons shared across the bus system.

Counting fires establishes the scale of the problem. Prevention begins when investigation leads to corrective action, independent verification and shared learning. Only then can the lessons from one fire help prevent the next.



About The Author

Dr. V Amudhan is a Global Public Transit Governance Expert with over 33 years of experience in public transport, mobility governance and transport safety across India and abroad. He serves as an Independent Director and Governing Board Member in multiple Indian State Transport Undertakings and is a widely published thought leader on sustainable mobility, predictive maintenance, transit safety, and transport policy reforms.

JSW Enters Electric Commercial Mobility with AMPSTAR



JSW Group has entered India's electric commercial vehicle market with the launch of AMPSTAR, a new brand from JSW Greentech Limited that will design, manufacture and sell electric buses and trucks.

Positioned as a full-stack electric commercial mobility offering, AMPSTAR will go beyond the vehicle itself, bringing together charging infrastructure, operating solutions, financing and after-sales support.

Customers will also have flexibility across power configurations ranging from 150 kW to 500 kW, along with ownership models including outright purchase, leasing and Battery as a Service (BaaS).

AMPSTAR vehicles will be manufactured at JSW Greentech's 90-acre greenfield facility at AURIC, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra.

The integrated facility has an annual production capacity of 15,000 electric buses and trucks. It will feature a pre-treatment and electro-deposition (PT-ED) process for bus manufacturing, an automated truck-cabin line and an integrated battery ecosystem.

The company says its vehicles have been engineered specifically for Indian operating conditions, with JSW Greentech developing the base logic, software and algorithms for the electric drivetrain in-house.

The platform features a double-cooling battery system and a high-strength monocoque chassis designed for Indian road and climatic conditions. The initial product roadmap will cover a broad range of applications. On the bus side, AMPSTAR plans to offer vehicles from 7 metres to 18 metres, catering to staff transportation, city, intercity and school mobility.

On the truck side, the company will begin with a 55-tonne tractor-trailer, with tippers and fixed-body dump trucks planned for subsequent expansion.

With the launch, JSW is entering a commercial vehicle segment where vehicle technology, charging, financing and fleet operations increasingly need to work together. AMPSTAR's full-stack approach puts the customer's complete operating journey at the centre of its electric mobility proposition.

> ***"AMPSTAR is built around a simple ambition - to make electric commercial mobility a practical and compelling choice for India, with the economics, technology and support customers need to make the transition."***
>
> **Sajjan Jindal**
> CHAIRMAN - **JSW GROUP**

A Bigger Bet On Better Bus Travel: VRL's Next Growth Chapter

VRL's 150-coach Volvo 9600 order signals a major expansion push built around the growing demand for premium, reliable intercity travel. Shiva Sankeshwar, Director, Vijayanand Travels, discusses changing passenger expectations, the opportunities ahead, and VRL's strategy for building its next phase of growth.

By Violina Pegu



Vijayanand Travels Private Limited (VTPL), part of the VRL Group, has placed a historic order for 150 Volvo 9600 luxury sleeper coaches - the company's largest-ever coach order. But the significance of the investment goes beyond the size of the fleet addition.

VRL sees a clear shift in passenger behaviour. Comfort, reliability and the overall quality of the travel experience are becoming increasingly important, with more passengers willing to pay for a premium journey. The new coaches will support expansion into new states and corridors, while also adding frequency on routes where demand has outgrown existing capacity.

The order also comes at an interesting point for the industry. Operators are navigating rising expectations, regulatory challenges, infrastructure gaps and the transition towards new-energy buses, while the premium intercity segment continues to evolve.

In this conversation with The Bus Insider, Shiva Sankeshwar, Director, Vijayanand Travels Pvt. Ltd., discusses the thinking behind the 150-coach investment, the changing premium travel market, the challenges facing bus operators and where VRL sees the intercity industry heading.

VRL's 150-coach Volvo 9600 order is a significant commitment to the premium intercity segment. What is the larger strategy behind this investment?

This order is not a one-off decision. It reflects where we see the Indian intercity travel market heading. Post-COVID, we have seen a genuine and lasting shift in how Indians think about travel. There is now sustained demand for premium and luxury travel experiences, rather than these being occasional splurges.





People are willing to pay for comfort, and they are becoming increasingly discerning about who they travel with. This order is our way of doubling down on that shift and ensuring VRL is positioned to lead it, rather than simply participate in it.

Is the 150-coach order primarily about capacity expansion, fleet replacement, or entering new markets and corridors?

It is definitely about expansion, not replacement. Only a small portion of the order accounts for retiring some of our older Volvos. The bulk of it is new capacity. We are entering new states, opening new corridors, launching new schedules and adding frequency on routes where demand has already outgrown our existing fleet. This is a growth order first and foremost.



Premium intercity travel was once largely seasonal. What changes in passenger behaviour and demand are giving VRL confidence in the segment today?

A few years ago, premium intercity travel was largely seasonal. It was a few months of the year, tied to specific holiday periods. That has changed. Long weekends have become a genuine driver of travel demand throughout the year. More importantly, customers who have experienced a better standard of service now expect that as the baseline rather than the exception.

Once passengers experience that level of comfort and reliability, their preferences change permanently. They do not want to go back. We are responding to that shift rather than simply predicting it.

What does this investment say about your outlook for India's premium intercity bus market? Are passengers willing to pay more for comfort and reliability?

Passengers are absolutely willing to pay more for comfort, reliability, and a genuinely premium experience. The data around us supports that clearly, and this order is a direct bet on that trend continuing. We see the premium segment of Indian intercity travel continuing to grow from here.



What are the biggest challenges facing bus operators in India, and which require the most urgent intervention?

Compliance and safety regulation is one of the biggest challenges. Registration norms and related processes are not always structured in a way that is cooperative with operators trying to invest in better and safer fleets.

There is also a perception problem. Buses are sometimes viewed as a lower-tier or less safe mode of travel, when the reality is different. Buses move far more people per unit of road space than private vehicles, and the industry deserves more enabling policy support because of that efficiency, not less.

Dynamic pricing is another area. It is a fair, economics-driven industry practice, based on the same principle followed by airlines and hotels. However, it still faces resistance and non-cooperation in some quarters that does not reflect the underlying economics. Beyond these, infrastructure gaps and the pace of new-energy adoption are also important challenges.

What will drive the next phase of growth in India's premium intercity bus market?

Honestly, it is not any single factor. It is the convergence of several factors - rising incomes, better highway infrastructure, changing travel preferences and genuinely better bus products - all moving in the same direction at the same time. That combination is what will compound growth in this segment over the next several years.

Where does VRL see its next major growth opportunity - deeper penetration in existing markets or expansion into new states and long-distance corridors?

Both, honestly. We are going deeper into markets where we already operate, adding frequency and new schedules where demand has outpaced supply, while simultaneously entering new states and new long-distance corridors. It is not an either/or for us.

The industry is moving towards electric and other alternative-powertrain buses. Where does new-energy technology fit into VRL's long-term fleet strategy?

The industry is clearly moving towards electric and alternative-powertrain buses, and we are watching that closely.

Right now, however, the charging and infrastructure ecosystem for intercity electric operations is simply not mature enough to support it at scale. When that infrastructure does arrive, we intend to be among the first operators to adopt it. We would rather be ready and waiting than playing catch-up.





Looking ahead five years, what will a successful intercity bus operator need to do differently from today and where does VRL want to position itself in that future?

Success will not just be about the quality of the service itself. It will be about reliability end-to-end and how well an operator understands and serves the customer across the entire journey, not just the hours they spend on the bus.

The pre-journey, during-journey and post-journey experience all matter. It is about how you communicate with the customer, how you bring them back and how well the entire ecosystem around the trip matches what that customer actually needs.

Operators who build that full ecosystem, rather than simply providing a good bus, are the ones who will define the next five years of this industry. That is exactly where we want VRL to be.











Shivam Coach Builders: Raising the Bar for India's Next Generation of Buses

By Violina Pegu

The Indian bus body-building industry is changing faster than ever. Safety regulations are becoming more demanding. Operators are asking for more sophisticated coaches. Passengers want better comfort. And for body builders, the old formula of building a strong body and adding interiors is no longer enough.

For Gujarat, Ahmedabad-based Shivam Coach Builders, this shift is creating both pressure and opportunity. The company traces its roots back to 1996, when Om Prakash Jangid and Gopal Jangid started Shivam Motor Body Builders. More than two decades later, the second generation stepped into the business. Sitaram Jangid, Managing Director, Shivam Coach Builders, joined the family enterprise in May 2018 after completing his engineering studies.

Today, Shivam operates from a 2.5-bigha facility with machinery and capabilities covering body structures, panelling and interiors.

The company currently has an annual production capacity of around 150–200 vehicles.

Sleeper coaches form the core of its business, although the company also builds luxurious seater buses and modified vans. Its coaches operate across India including Gujarat, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Indore, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Ayodhya and Rajasthan. Its customer base



includes Ashok Travels, Abhinandan Travels, Goel Travels, Kabra Travels, Khajuraho Travels, Adinath Travels and Sarkar Upkar Travels among others.

The Bus Is Becoming More Than a Body

Walk through the specification sheet of a modern intercity coach and the change is obvious. Washrooms, panic buttons, emergency hooters, better seating, improved materials, lighting and increasingly sophisticated interiors are becoming part of what operators expect.

"Passenger expectations have changed significantly. Today, operators are asking for features that were not even considered essential a few years ago. Washrooms are becoming common in sleeper coaches, while panic buttons and emergency hooters are also being demanded. For us, the challenge is to provide these features without compromising on safety, quality or the overall cost of the bus."

Jangid says fire-retardant materials have been part of the company's construction approach from the beginning, including in areas such as wiring, PU, cloth and resin. The company is also increasingly evaluating materials based on their long-term performance rather than simply their appearance.



"I joined the business in May 2018, and my focus from the beginning was to upgrade the way we worked. We invested in a new plant, brought in better machinery and started looking at the business from a more structured and technology-driven perspective."

Sitaram Jangid
Managing Director,
Shivam Coach Builders





Compliance Comes with a Cost

Shivam Coach Builders has applied for AIS 153 certification, with certification work progressing across its seater and sleeper applications. For the company, compliance represents an important step towards building coaches that meet the evolving regulatory framework.







"We want our buses to be built according to AIS 119, AIS 153 and AIS 052 and to follow the government requirements properly. But for a smaller body builder, certification also brings a major increase in engineering, testing and production costs."

Jangid estimates that a bus that previously cost around ₹60–65 lakh can become significantly more expensive once additional compliance, testing and related requirements are factored in. For operators working with tight margins, even a few lakh rupees can become a difficult conversation.



The Bigger Ambition

The company's next challenge is scale. Jangid wants to double production capacity, strengthen the workforce and establish Shivam as a recognised name in India's coach-building industry.

Established players such as MG, Veera and Satrunjay represent the kind of recognition and scale he wants to build towards.

For Shivam, the road ahead is therefore about more than producing more buses. It is about building the capability to compete in an industry where safety, technology, compliance and passenger experience are becoming inseparable.

The family business that started in 1996 is entering its next phase. This time, the ambition is not just to build coaches. It is to build a name.





FlixBus Expands South India Network with 120 Bus Growth Plan



FlixBus is entering its third year of operations in South India with plans to add 120 buses across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, as the intercity mobility company looks to build a denser network across the region. The company entered South India in September 2024 with Bengaluru as its initial regional hub. Since then, South India has become a significant part of its India operations, with more than half of FlixBus' current network now located in the region.

The latest expansion will focus not only on adding new destinations but also on increasing capacity across established intercity corridors. More than 60 of the 120 additional buses are expected to operate to and from Hyderabad, strengthening the city's position as a key hub within the network.

FlixBus said network capacity originating from Bengaluru increased 260% year-on-year in September 2026. Hyderabad recorded a 159% increase, while Chennai's network capacity doubled during the same period.

The company has also introduced a new Hyderabad–Puducherry connection using Volvo sleeper coaches. Further expansion will bring destinations such as Guntur, Coonoor and Ooty into the network. Hyderabad will remain a major focus of the expansion. The city is already connected to Bengaluru, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Chennai and Tirupati, with the additional buses expected to strengthen existing corridors while creating more connections across neighbouring states.

FlixBus' growth model also relies on partnerships with regional bus operators. The company works with local operators while providing network planning, technology, ticketing and marketing capabilities. This allows it to expand its network while integrating regional operators into a larger intercity mobility platform.

The expansion signals a shift in FlixBus' South India strategy from establishing a presence to building greater network depth, with higher capacity and more intercity connections across key southern markets. With 120 additional buses planned, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai are set to play an increasingly important role in FlixBus' South India network.

> ***"South India has become a significant part of FlixBus India's journey. The next phase is about building network density, connecting more cities and increasing capacity to make intercity travel more accessible and dependable."***
>
> **Surya Khurana**
> MANAGING DIRECTOR, **FlixBus INDIA**

Beyond the Comeback: What KPN Travels Has Learned From Going Electric



The first phase of KPN Travels' electric journey was about making the decision. The company had already made that decision clear: diesel was out, electric was in, and the business was being rebuilt around a new operating model.

Now, the more interesting question is what happens after the buses hit the road. With its electric coaches having crossed around 55,000 km, KPN Travels has moved beyond the early excitement of electrification and into a more useful phase, learning what electric intercity operations actually demand. The experience has brought lower maintenance, new charging routines, strong passenger interest and a clearer understanding of where the economics work.

It has also reinforced one of KPN's biggest lessons from the transition: an electric bus is only one part of the equation.



Charging infrastructure, vehicle utilization, seating configuration and a deep understanding of the technology are equally important.

In this conversation with The Bus Insider, R Sarvesh, Executive Director, KPN Travels, discusses what the company has learned from its electric operations so far, how passengers are responding and why infrastructure could ultimately determine the success of intercity electrification.

After moving completely away from diesel, what has changed most in KPN Travels' day-to-day operations, particularly in maintenance?

The biggest change has been in maintenance. At this stage, we are seeing almost zero major maintenance requirements, although it is still too early to make a long-term assessment.

Over the last months, we have not experienced any major breakdowns in our vehicles. There were some minor teething issues in the beginning, particularly around battery charging.

We had to understand the right charging pattern to keep the vehicles operating continuously.

Once we understood these requirements, the process became quite straightforward. We have also had the usual small electrical complaints, but nothing significant.

One of our biggest advantages is that we have our charging network across Tamil Nadu. Hence, we have been able to get product-specific support at our depots and for our vehicles, which helped us manage these issues effectively. Overall, we expect maintenance to remain significantly lower than with diesel vehicles.

Our vehicles have now crossed around 55,000 km, and we are not seeing any major issues.

The area we are watching closely is battery degradation. We are currently seeing around 2.7–3% degradation, but these are among the first battery packs, so we still need more operating history to understand how degradation will behave over time.

> ***"The future of electric intercity mobility will depend on infrastructure, utilisation and the wider operating ecosystem."***



R. Sarvesh
Executive Director,
KPN TRAVELS

What have the first months of electric operations taught you about the real economics of running electric intercity buses?

One of the realities we have experienced is the time involved in charging. Even with ultra-fast charging, there is roughly a 35–45-minute impact on a trip.

There are some customers who are hesitant because of that additional time. But interestingly, there is also a large number of passengers who specifically prefer electric buses and choose the service because it is electric.



The comfort is a major factor. There is significantly less noise and vibration, and passengers do not experience the same level of headaches or discomfort associated with long journeys in noisy vehicles.

From an operational perspective, vehicle availability has also been higher than with our diesel vehicles, which has been a strong positive for us.

The operating cost is another advantage. Because the OPEX is somewhat lower, we have more flexibility in pricing. That allows us to operate at lower price points while still maintaining the economics of the service.

Have you seen a measurable change in passenger behaviour since introducing electric buses?

Yes. We are seeing a significant number of repeat customers. When we were operating diesel vehicles after COVID, we were not particularly satisfied with the repeat-customer performance. Today, we are seeing many more passengers using the service repeatedly.

It is difficult to separate how much of that is because of the electric bus and how much is because of KPN's brand and operating standards. We have always had a strong focus on cleanliness, vehicle quality and service because we are a legacy operator.

So, electric mobility combined with our existing brand proposition could be contributing to the stronger customer response.

I have personally travelled in these vehicles and, as a passenger, I find them very comfortable. The absence of vibration makes a significant difference. Personally, I now prefer them to Volvo coaches in terms of the travel experience.

KPN has invested heavily in its own charging infrastructure. What has the company learned from building and operating that ecosystem?

Charging infrastructure has been a completely different learning curve from operating buses.

We learned that setting up charging stations, particularly in Tamil Nadu, involves its own set of complexities, from identifying suitable locations and managing power requirements to ensuring reliable day-to-day operations.

It was a steep learning process, but it has given us a much better understanding of how the infrastructure needs to be designed, deployed and operated efficiently. We have now launched a new brand as a Charge Point Operator, and we are open







to providing charging solutions to other commercial operators, including buses and trucks.

If an operator needs an additional charger at a particular location and can provide a committed volume, we are also open to installing the required infrastructure there for them.

What would you tell other private operators considering a move to an all-electric fleet?

If you are moving to an all-electric fleet, I believe you should have your own charging infrastructure wherever possible.

I understand that not every operator can make the scale of investment we are making. But at the very least, operators should have charging capability at one of their endpoints rather than being completely dependent on somebody else's infrastructure.

There will always be situations where one vehicle is waiting for a charger while another needs to charge. A reliable CPO can help address that, but operators need to understand how the entire system works.

The other important factor is utilization. For this business model to work, you need to run the vehicle sufficiently.

We believe 600–700 km of daily running is important. Without that level of utilization, the economics become difficult.

Operators also need to understand the product they are buying. You cannot approach an electric bus in exactly the same way as a diesel bus. You need to understand the charging cycle, the battery manufacturer, the battery technology and how the entire charging ecosystem works.

With diesel, you can procure a bus, build the body and start operating relatively quickly. With electric, the infrastructure has to be ready first. That is why I would say the product is only about 40% of the equation. The rest is the infrastructure around it.





Lightweight Bus Structures & The EV Range Paradox: India's Heavy Lifting Problem

By Mohit Garg



India's electric bus rollout is now large enough to have real momentum behind it.

Under the PM-eBus Sewa scheme, the Centre has committed ₹57,613 crore to deploy 10,000 electric buses on a public-private partnership model to augment city bus operations across urban areas.

On the ground, adoption is climbing steadily but from a small base: India registered 3,616 electric buses in 2024 against roughly 41,000 diesel buses, giving electric buses a 6.2% overall market share and 12.5% share within the Heavy Passenger Vehicle segment. That number kept climbing through 2025.

But as fleets grow, so does a mechanical problem: heavier batteries are squeezing the payload these buses were meant to carry.

The Weight Nobody Budgeted For

Battery packs sized for realistic Indian route lengths run into hundreds of kilograms to several tonnes, and that mass has to be absorbed somewhere, usually the axles, tyres and suspension. Indian bus construction already operates inside a tightly defined envelope: the AIS:052 bus body code, AIS:153 safety requirements, and the Urban Bus Specification issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and



Highways all set strength, dimensional and safety parameters that a heavier electric powertrain has to fit inside rather than override.

Add a battery pack without cutting weight elsewhere, and the trade-off shows up either as fewer passenger seats or as a chassis running closer to its rated limits than a diesel equivalent ever did.

Regenerative braking compounds the mechanical stress. Electric buses put more torque and braking load through their tyres than a conventional diesel drivetrain, which means tyre wear accelerates earlier in the vehicle's life, a maintenance cost that shows up regardless of which market the bus operates in.

Shedding Kilos to Buy Back Kilometres

This is why aluminium bus bodies have moved from a novelty to a serious engineering answer in India specifically.

A study published by ARAI, found that aluminium bus designs achieved more than 30% weight reduction compared to steel-structured buses of a similar class, with fuel efficiency improving by a minimum of 8% and maximum of 10% in field-level trials, all while staying compliant with AIS:052, AIS:153 and MoRTH's Urban Bus Specification.

That's a rare thing: a lightweighting result that was actually validated against India's own regulatory framework rather than borrowed from a European or Chinese study.

The US Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Office has repeatedly found that a 10% reduction in vehicle weight can improve energy efficiency by roughly 6-8%, since less mass means less energy spent on acceleration and rolling resistance. Applied to a 12-metre electric bus doing stop-start city duty, exactly the profile most Indian STU routes run, that's the difference between finishing a day's schedule on one charge and needing an unscheduled top-up.

The Real Cost Per Kilometer

The payoff isn't just range, it's money, and India has its own numbers rather than a borrowed benchmark.

A life-cycle cost analysis built around Indian bus operating conditions found that the total cost of ownership of an electric bus, calculated over





a 25-year life cycle, works out 5-10% lower than a comparable diesel bus. Lighter bodies push that gap even further: less structural weight means less load on tyres and brakes, which softens the wear that regenerative braking already speeds up. It also means less electricity used per kilometre - still the biggest recurring cost for any state transport undertaking running an electric fleet.





What This Means for India's e-Bus Bet

India's electric bus programme is still small in absolute numbers, which is exactly why the material choices being made now matter so much.

ARAI's own validated results show that lightweighting isn't a future promise, it's already producing double-digit efficiency gains inside India's existing regulatory standards.

As PM-eBus Sewa pushes deployment further, the manufacturers building lighter, aluminium-first structures are the ones best placed to deliver range and passenger capacity together, rather than forcing state transport undertakings to keep choosing between the two.



About The Author

Mohit Garg is the CEO & Managing Director of INALCO and a recognised leader in India's aluminium sector. With over a decade of experience across ferrous and non-ferrous industries, he drives the company's strategic growth and industry influence. Known for his clarity of vision and decisive leadership, Mohit is shaping Inalco's role in the future of aluminium manufacturing.



SWITCH Mobility Strengthens Delhi E-Bus Presence With 840-Bus Order

SWITCH Mobility has secured an order for 840 electric buses from Antony Road Transport Solutions under Phase I of the Government of India's PM E-Drive scheme. The buses will be deployed with the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and Transport Department, Delhi, for passenger transportation across the national capital.

The order comprises 420 9-metre and 420 12-metre AC electric buses, giving the deployment a mix of vehicle sizes suited to different urban passenger transport requirements. Antony Road Transport Solutions has been selected as the operator for Delhi under the CESL PM E-Drive Phase I tender.

The buses are based on SWITCH Mobility's EiV platform and feature electric powertrains, regenerative braking and modular battery configurations. Dual-gun fast charging is designed to support quicker charging turnaround and fleet utilisation.

Passenger-focused features include spacious interiors, comfortable seating, USB charging and low-floor access. Safety systems include Fire Detection and Suppression Systems along with multi-level battery protection.

The deployment will also use SWITCH Mobility's SWITCH iON connected fleet management platform, providing real-time vehicle monitoring, diagnostics and fleet management capabilities. For a large electric bus fleet, such connected systems can support vehicle health monitoring, operational visibility and day-to-day fleet efficiency.

For Antony Road Transport Solutions, the order marks a major expansion of its electric bus operations in Delhi. Jimmy John, Director, Antony Road Transport Solutions, said the company's long-term relationship with Ashok Leyland and its association with the Hinduja Group were key factors behind the order.

"We believe this partnership will go a long way towards supporting the NCR's sustainable mobility journey," said John.

Ganesh Mani, CEO, SWITCH Mobility, said the order reflects growing confidence in electric mobility for large-scale public transportation. He highlighted the deployment of 9-metre and 12-metre buses as an opportunity to address varied passenger mobility requirements while supporting the shift towards cleaner transportation.

The 840-bus order adds another large-scale electric bus deployment to Delhi's public transport network and allows SWITCH Mobility to deploy its electric bus and connected fleet technologies at significant scale.



Beyond 600 Km: Fresh Bus Opens A New Frontier For The Electric Bus Industry

By Shivam Gautom

Fresh Bus has launched a Bengaluru–Hyderabad AC sleeper service, marking its first route of more than 600 km and its entry into long-haul electric bus operations. The company will operate 13.5-metre all-sleeper air-conditioned electric buses with 36 sleeper berths on the route.

The service will feature two planned ultra-fast charging halts, with each charging session expected to take approximately 15 minutes.

But this is more than a route expansion or another electric bus launch. In the intercity segment, electric buses are still largely associated with shorter routes, where charging can be planned around depots and terminals. Fresh Bus is now putting that model to a much bigger test with a 600-km-plus overnight journey between two of South India's major business and technology centres.

The Bengaluru–Hyderabad service will test whether electric buses can deliver a dependable, comfortable and commercially viable long-distance travel experience, while keeping charging integrated into the journey rather than making it a disruption for passengers.

According to Sudhakar Chirra, Founder and CEO, Fresh Bus, the route was intentionally chosen for the strong and diverse travel demand between the two

cities, while also allowing the company to build on its experience with shorter electric intercity routes.

"The corridor allows us to take what we have learnt from shorter intercity routes and apply that experience to a longer journey. For us, Bengaluru–Hyderabad is not just about adding another route, but understanding how electric mobility can work at scale on longer intercity corridors," he stated.

Planning The Long-Haul Operation

For Fresh Bus, the key consideration was ensuring that the entire operation was built around reliability and passenger comfort.

The company therefore approached the Bengaluru–Hyderabad service as a complete operating system rather than simply an electric bus deployment.

"We had to ensure that the charging plan, planned mid-journey halt, driver rostering, safety systems and passenger experience all worked together. The objective was to make the journey as predictable and comfortable as possible for passengers," said Sudhakar Chirra.

The Charging Infrastructure Behind The Route

The Bengaluru–Hyderabad service will use 13.5-metre sleeper buses manufactured by Veera Vahana Udyog, equipped with a 320 kWh battery pack and an advertised range of around 300 km.





Fresh Bus has partnered with Exponent Energy to support the charging infrastructure. The route will use 1.5 MW rapid-charging infrastructure, with charging planned at intervals of around 300 km.

The company has planned two ultra-fast charging halts along the route. The locations have been selected based on the overall route, operating requirements and passenger convenience.

Each charging session is expected to take approximately 15 minutes, allowing Fresh Bus to integrate charging into the journey schedule while keeping charging time minimal and ensuring a seamless passenger experience.

Turning Charging Into Part Of The Journey

The challenge is not simply to charge the bus. It is to do so without making passengers feel that they are waiting for the bus to charge. Fresh Bus has planned the two charging halts as part of the natural rhythm of the journey. While the bus charges, passengers can take a short bio break, stretch and refresh before continuing their journey.

"The charging schedule has been planned around the natural requirements of a long-distance journey. Rather than treating charging as an additional stop purely for the bus, the mid-journey halts also allow passengers to stretch, refresh and take a break," said Sudhakar Chirra.



For a sleeper service, this becomes particularly important. The objective is to make the charging halt feel like a planned passenger break rather than an operational interruption.

"The aim is to ensure that the charging process fits into the overall journey without making the passenger feel that they are waiting specifically for the bus to charge," he added.

The Next Mile For Electric Intercity Mobility

For Fresh Bus, the real test of Bengaluru–Hyderabad is not simply whether an electric bus can cover more than 600 km. The company wants to demonstrate that, with the right operating model and charging ecosystem, electric buses can become a viable option for long-haul intercity travel.

"A year from now, we would like this route to demonstrate that electric buses can deliver a safe, reliable, comfortable and commercially sustainable long-haul travel experience," Sudhakar Chirra said.

The company also wants to use the experience to understand what can be replicated across other 600–700 km corridors. That is where the significance of Bengaluru–Hyderabad extends beyond Fresh Bus.

Electric buses have already established a presence in city transport and shorter intercity operations. The next question is whether they can make the transition into India's long-distance overnight intercity segment. Bengaluru–Hyderabad is now a practical test of that proposition. If charging, passenger experience, reliability and economics can work together on a 600-km-plus corridor, the learnings could provide a roadmap for the next phase of electric intercity mobility. For Fresh Bus, it is one new route. For the industry, it could be the beginning of a much longer journey.

The EV–Diesel Equation: Where The Economics Stand

"The economics of an electric sleeper have to be looked at over the entire operating cycle, not just the initial investment.

Based on our operating data, a conventional diesel sleeper costs approximately ₹67.4 per kilometre to operate, while our electric sleeper is around ₹50 per kilometre. That represents a difference of nearly 30%, with lower energy costs being the primary driver.

At the same time, an electric bus can cost nearly twice as much as a comparable diesel bus, so the business case cannot be built on energy savings alone.

On the Hyderabad–Bengaluru route, we estimate that a diesel bus can incur fuel costs of around ₹7 lakh per month. For an electric bus, the energy cost can be nearly one-fifth of that.

The real question, therefore, is how these savings translate over the life of the vehicle. Occupancy, utilisation, maintenance, financing, charging and overall route performance will all play an important role."

Sudhakar Chirra
FOUNDER & CEO,
FRESH BUS



From Two Buses to a North India Network: The Prince Travels Story

By Violina Pegu



Some bus companies are built around a business plan. Prince Travels began with an unexpected bus journey.

In 1992, founder Jagdish Raj Prince missed his train from Delhi to Amritsar and had to travel by bus instead. The experience left a lasting impression. Just six days later, he bought two new buses and launched a service between Amritsar and Delhi.

The response was immediate.

What began as a two-bus operation soon expanded into Jammu and Katra. Prince Travels established a strong presence on these corridors, eventually running multiple services to Delhi, Jammu and Katra. More than three decades later, the company is headquartered in Amritsar and operates a 24-bus fleet across 11 routes.

Today, the business covers destinations across Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Built on Reliability

For Prince Travels, growth has been closely tied to one word: reliability. Garvit Matta, Proprietor, Prince Travels, says the company's relationship with its passengers has been built over years of consistent

service. He has also grown up around the business, giving him a perspective that connects the company's past with its present.

But he points to another important factor, the people behind the operation.

A significant part of the company's workforce has been with Prince Travels since its early years. That continuity, Matta believes, has helped create a level of familiarity and trust with passengers that cannot be built overnight.

Creating Demand, Not Just Following It

Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir remain among Prince Travels' strongest markets. But the company is increasingly looking beyond its traditional corridors.

Routes to Ujjain, Vrindavan, Manali, Kasol, Haridwar and Nainital are relatively new additions from Amritsar. Matta sees an opportunity in destinations where fewer operators currently offer direct services.

That expansion also reflects a broader approach to the market. Prince Travels believes customer service has to evolve with changing passenger behaviour, particularly as social media increasingly influences travel choices.

For Matta, staying relevant means adapting rather than resisting change.



> *"Our biggest strength has always been reliability. Customers have seen me grow up with the business, while many of our staff have been with us from the very beginning. That long-term relationship is what has helped us build lasting trust."*

Garvit Matta
Proprietor, Prince Travels





The Cost of Running a Bus

Like operators across the country, Prince Travels faces a range of challenges beyond simply filling seats. Matta points to fuel prices and toll costs as significant pressures on the business. He also believes the industry needs greater discussion around route pricing, particularly when private bus fares are compared with government services.

His view is that industry bodies and stakeholders need to work towards a more sustainable pricing framework that recognises the actual cost of operating intercity buses.

Safety Starts with the Bus

For Prince Travels, passenger safety begins well before the bus reaches the highway. The company places considerable importance on selecting the right bus body builder and using bodies manufactured with strong, high-quality materials. Matta believes the quality and strength of the bus body are fundamental to creating a safer passenger environment.

This focus on the fundamentals extends to passenger service as well. As travellers become more informed and access to information becomes easier, Matta believes honesty and fair service have helped Prince Travels retain customer loyalty.

From North India to the Country

The next ambition is significantly bigger. Having established a network across much of North India, Prince Travels now wants to take its operations beyond the region and build routes across the country.



It is a significant step from where the company began in 1992 - with two buses and an unexpected journey from Delhi to Amritsar.

Three decades later, the destination has changed. The philosophy, however, remains much the same: serve passengers well, build trust and keep moving forward.

Why Passenger Safety Will Define the Future of Bus Mobility

As India's bus ecosystem evolves, safety is moving beyond compliance. From fire protection and driver monitoring to smarter engineering and digital oversight, a new safety ecosystem is taking shape.

By Sanyam Gandhi

India's public transport ecosystem is entering a phase of rapid transformation as cities expand, mobility demand rises, and road infrastructure evolves to support growing commuter volumes.

Each year, the country records over 450,000 road accidents, many involving two-wheelers, cars, and pedestrians, reflecting persistent challenges such as congestion, speeding, and uneven road discipline. Within this wider safety environment, buses account for only a small fraction of total accidents and fatalities, reaffirming their position as one of the safest and most dependable modes of mass transport.

With passengers depending on buses every day, even isolated incidents can have negative consequences. As India's national bus fleet now exceeds two million vehicles and ridership rises across urban and intercity routes, the sector stands



PC: Sheena Buses and Coaches



at a pivotal moment where strengthening safety systems, improving operational discipline, and accelerating technology adoption have become central to the country's mobility growth.

India's Evolving Public Transport Landscape

India's mobility patterns have evolved significantly over the past decade. Urbanisation is accelerating, and Tier-II and Tier-III cities are witnessing a growing reliance on public buses.

As intercity travel demand continues to rise, commuters are increasingly seeking affordable and reliable alternatives to private vehicles. The return of pre-pandemic ridership across several regions reflects renewed confidence in public transport, while placing greater responsibility on operators to maintain consistent safety standards.

National programmes such as PM e-Bus Sewa and FAME are encouraging private participation in fleet modernisation, electric mobility and digital integration. In this context, safety is not merely a regulatory requirement but a fundamental pillar of mobility planning. Infrastructure upgrades, modern bus terminals and the introduction of accessible buses reflect a broader shift towards a more organised, technology-enabled and commuter-centric public transport ecosystem.

Technology as the Backbone of Scalable Bus Safety

Technology is transforming safety across India's bus ecosystem. Manual supervision and periodic inspections are increasingly being replaced by real-time data, automation and Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled monitoring. GPS-based speed governance, vehicle health diagnostics and centralised operational dashboards enable operators to identify risks early and respond proactively. Many city transport undertakings now operate 24/7 command centres that monitor vehicle movement, speed, schedule adherence and operational anomalies, improving response times and overall fleet discipline.

Digitisation has also strengthened day-to-day safety compliance. Digital pre-trip checklists help verify the readiness of fire extinguishers, emergency hammers, first-aid kits and emergency exits before every journey.



Passenger safety has further improved through high-visibility signage, simplified instructions and multilingual communication, making critical safety information more accessible to a diverse commuter base.

As electric buses become mainstream, technology is playing an even greater role in fleet safety. Continuous monitoring of battery health, thermal performance and charging patterns enables operators to detect irregularities early, providing a level of preventive oversight that was not possible with conventional fleets.



Addressing Emerging Risks: The Safety Challenge of Sleeper Buses

As intercity travel grows, sleeper buses are becoming increasingly popular for overnight journeys. However, their design presents unique safety challenges that the industry must address proactively. The enclosed layout, stacked berths, narrower aisles, and reduced vertical clearance are believed to significantly slow evacuation during emergencies, particularly in fire-related incidents.

A stronger emphasis on engineering and construction standards is therefore essential. Faster evacuation pathways, wider and clearly marked exits, improved aisle design, and safer access from upper berths are expected to be integral to sleeper bus architecture.

Fire detection and suppression systems must also be designed to respond quickly and operate effectively across both engine compartments and passenger areas, with special attention to enclosed sleeping zones. As sleeper buses continue to expand across highways, aligning safety regulations



and engineering standards with their unique design is believed to help ensure that enhanced comfort is supported by equally robust passenger safety measures.

Key Safety Improvements Shaping Bus Travel

1. Fire Safety with Smarter Engineering

Fire safety has emerged as a critical area of reform. AIS-135 mandates Fire Detection and Alarm Systems (FDAS) and Fire Detection and Suppression Systems (FDSS) in engine compartments, with newer provisions extending coverage to passenger cabins.

In 2022, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) further strengthened norms by requiring water-mist–based fire protection systems in Type-III and school buses.

Demonstrations by DRDO's Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES) have shown that such systems can detect and suppress fires within seconds, significantly reducing escalation risks.

However, as of today, only school buses and intercity seater buses are required to have FDSS mandatorily.

2. Improving Driver Behaviour Through Monitoring and Training

Driver behaviour remains a key determinant of safety. IoT Driver Monitoring Systems (DMS) are increasingly being deployed to track fatigue, distraction, and attentiveness using infrared sensors.

These systems provide real-time alerts and generate behavioural data that supports targeted training and continuous upskilling.


PC: Synaty Automotive

Industry studies consistently highlight fatigue and speeding as major contributors to heavy-vehicle incidents, reinforcing the importance of technology-backed monitoring and structured training programmes.

3. Smarter Passenger Communication and Digital Oversight

Passenger safety is strengthened through clearer communication and faster response mechanisms.

High-visibility signage, simple evacuation graphics, illuminated markers, and multilingual instructions improve preparedness during emergencies.

Digital tools such as mobile alerts, apps, emergency buttons, and 24/7 helplines connected to command centres enable quicker assistance and better transparency.

Real-time tracking and battery-health dashboards further enhance operational discipline and early risk detection.

These measures create a more connected and responsive safety environment.

Safety as the Foundation of India's Mobility Growth

As India advances toward cleaner, smarter mobility, safety has become a defining pillar shaping both policy and commuter trust.

From advanced fire protection and IoT driver monitoring to improved engineering standards for emerging formats like sleeper buses, a comprehensive safety ecosystem is taking shape.

This shift reflects a move away from compliance-driven thinking toward a culture of continuous improvement, where technology, training, and design work together to protect passengers.

These efforts are essential to building a public transport system that is not only efficient and scalable but also resilient, responsible, and ready to support millions of commuters in India's rapidly evolving mobility landscape.

About The Author



Sanyam Gandhi is the Whole-Time Director of Chartered Speed Limited, one of India's leading bus passenger mobility companies. A Mechanical Engineering graduate from Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Germany, he drives the company's technology-led and sustainable mobility vision. Since joining the Board in 2018, he has spearheaded innovation, advancing electric mobility, operational excellence, and integrated transportation solutions for a cleaner, smarter future.



For bus operators, passenger comfort goes beyond the seat. Quality linen, bedding and interior accessories can significantly shape the travel experience, especially on sleeper and premium services.

Rajesh Reddy & Co. has built its business around this requirement. Founded by Rajesh Reddy in August 2025, the company focuses specifically on the requirements of bus operators rather than treating bus linen as conventional home bedding. Its portfolio includes premium bedsheets, comforters, blankets, pillows, pillow covers, synthetic and linen fabrics, along with customised interior solutions.

"Bus interiors cannot be treated like ordinary home furnishings. They have to withstand constant use, frequent washing and demanding operating conditions, while still delivering the comfort passengers expect," says Mr. Reddy.

Designed for the Bus

The company's products are developed around the practical requirements of sleeper and intercity buses. The product line includes Premium Bedsheets, Comforters & Blankets, Pillows, Pillow Covers and Premium Hospitality Linen, to name a few. The company also provides custom fabric, colour and sizing, fleet-level bulk supply, bus interior accessories, pan-India delivery and dedicated support for fabric-related issues.

From Supply to Support

Rajesh Reddy & Co. aims to make bus-linen procurement more reliable for operators. Its offering includes free logo embroidery, free transportation across India for eligible orders and a one-year fabric warranty. The company also provides replacement support in cases of fabric damage during washing.

Its customer base includes operators across Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Raipur, Mangalore, Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, Amritsar, Madurai and Vizag.

With service presence in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Jaipur, Delhi and Kolkata, the company is building a wider pan-India network.

The next phase will focus on expanding its bus-interior product range, developing new bedding and fabric solutions and working with more operators.

Its long-term ambition is to become a one-stop partner for bus interiors and passenger-comfort accessories, backed by consistent quality, timely supply and after-sales support.

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