



A first-of-its-kind communication and outreach programme called Reaching Your Riders to improve public bus ridership launched

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New Delhi: In a major boost toward improving public transport operations in the country, a national public transport communications programme called Reaching Your Riders (RYR) has been launched. The programme is being initiated by GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) with the support of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), in collaboration with ITDP India.

The launch was done virtually by GIZ and ITDP India, in the presence of managing directors and senior officials from State Transport Undertakings (STUs) and Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs).

The programme is aimed to strengthen how India's public bus systems communicate with and engage their passengers during day-to-day operations. Implemented over a course of six months, the programme will work with public bus operators across the country.

Senior officials noted that with ridership recovering in the post-covid period and expansion of public bus services across the country, the programme presents a timely opportunity to increase public transport usage.

Programme helps improve passenger experience while infrastructure improvements ensue

Despite thousands of public buses being added year on year, gaps in information can still be a barrier for riders to use the service.

“India's mobility space is becoming increasingly savvy with riders wanting information on their fingertips. Knowing when the next bus comes has become almost a mandate for the new-gen users and STUs must be aware of best practices to emulate so that the bus



services communicate with people—both existing and potential,” Manjunath Sekhar, Director, Sustainable Urban Mobility, GIZ India.

The programme is building on a foundational guide called [Reaching Your Riders](#), developed in 2023, by ITDP India along with the Association of State Road Transport Undertakings (ASRTU). This programme focuses on three key goals: Inform (giving clear, real-time updates), Promote (building a brand people trust), and Engage (listening to passenger feedback).

Why is this important? For too long, taking the bus has felt like a guessing game; people often feel unseen or unheard while waiting or when things go wrong. By fixing how bus agencies talk to their riders, the intent is to take the stress out of the journey and turn a basic service into a reliable and trustworthy one that people actually want to use. When passengers are well-informed and their voices are heard, trust in public transport improve.

Programme to be implemented in three phases

Reaching Your Riders programme will have three phases: first, the kick-off of the programme followed by an assessment of the communication mechanisms in place in selected STUs.

The Ministry has already identified a cohort of ten STUs and SPVs, which include Chennai’s Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC), Pune & Pimpri Chinchwad’s Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML), Bhubaneswar’s Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), Surat’s Sitalink, Bengaluru’s Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), Mumbai’s Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST), Delhi’s Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), Telangana’s Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC), Kerala’s Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), and Kochi’s Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL).

These STUs/SPVs in the next phase, will next be taken for an international exposure visit to orient them to best practices and practical solutions adopted by leading public bus operators. Once this is done, in the second phase, an application process will commence, where the STUs from the cohort can apply for the pilot implementation programme. In the third and final phase, four STUs/SPVs with the highest potential for improving their services will be selected and shall receive technical support for the pilot.



“In many Indian cities, there is a ‘silent’ acceptance that bus travel involves struggle. We need to move from a system that just moves people to one that actually speaks to people because a bus is only truly reliable when a rider feels seen, informed, and safe. To do that, this programme is aimed at building capacity of 10 STUs and SPVs to develop holistic communication and outreach plans through a combination of online and in-person training workshops, along with exposure visits to learn from best practices, and provide direct support to these agencies in implementing a tangible pilot project,” emphasised Kashmiria Dubash, Deputy Director, ITDP India.

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Graphics:

Reaching Your Riders National Public Transport Communications Programme

Phase 1: Kick off and communications strategy

Phase 2: Exposure visit and application submission

Phase 3: Pilot intervention

Selected STUs/SPVs

1. Chennai’s Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC)
2. Pune & Pimpri Chinchwad’s Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML),
3. Bhubaneswar’s Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT),
4. Surat’s Sitalink,
5. Bengaluru’s Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTCL),
6. Mumbai’s Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST),
7. Delhi’s Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC),
8. Telangana’s Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC),
9. Kerala’s Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), and
10. Kochi’s Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL)



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About GIZ India

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been working with partners in India for sustainable development since 1971. As Germany's largest development partner, India collaborates with GIZ across key areas such as energy, environment, climate change, and sustainable urban and economic development. Commissioned mainly by the German Federal Ministries BMZ, BMUV, and BMWK, GIZ supports the Government of India in advancing flagship initiatives like Smart Cities, Clean India Mission, and Skill India towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

About ITDP India

ITDP India provides a wide range of technical and strategic support to national, state, and city governments—helping them design and implement people-centric transport systems. Our expertise spans technical advisory, data-driven research, knowledge publications, and capacity-building programmes. We focus on enabling cities to develop efficient, high-quality public transport systems—including electric mobility solutions—while also prioritising safe and accessible infrastructure for walking and cycling. Our work supports traffic reduction mechanisms, low emission zones, and the development of integrated mobility plans that promote cleaner air, reduced congestion, gender responsive mobility, and improved quality of life.