Energy efficiency facilitation desks for MSMEs: Minister Mathan Raja

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News

Daily Thanthi reported on 17 November 2026 that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Mathan Raja announced 'Energy Efficiency Facilitation Desks' in the first phase to help MSMEs cut power costs and raise productivity and competitiveness. FaMe TN (Bureau for Facilitating MSMEs of Tamil Nadu), a Section 8 company under the State MSME Department, has called for Advisory Staff for the desks at Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore and Cuddalore. The desks will assess energy use, guide energy audits, advise on efficient motors, compressors, boilers, cooling and lighting, guide on renewable energy including solar, load management and energy storage, and give details of Union and State schemes and bank loans. This is also expected to ease peak-hour demand and support long-term energy security. After the pilot desks are evaluated, the initiative may be extended to other districts.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Initiative	Energy Efficiency Facilitation Desks
Minister	Mathan Raja – MSME Department
Places	Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Cuddalore (FaMe TN notice)
Advisory staff	Engaged by FaMe TN (Section 8 company, MSME Dept)

Point	Details
Services	Energy audit, efficient equipment, solar, schemes, loan guidance
Benefit	Lower power bills; lower peak demand
National law	Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (amended 2022)
National Energy Conservation Day	14 December

Background

- Energy-efficiency bodies: the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power was set up in 2002 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001. Since 2006 BEE has run the 'Standards and Labelling' programme that gives appliances a 'star rating'. The 2022 amendment paved the way for a carbon credit trading scheme. 14 December is observed every year as National Energy Conservation Day.
- Schemes: the UJALA scheme launched in 2015 by EESL (Energy Efficiency Services Ltd, a joint venture of public sector companies) supplied LED bulbs at low prices. The 'Perform, Achieve and Trade' (PAT) scheme for large industries allows trading of energy-saving certificates.
- Economy – MSMEs: since 2020 MSMEs are classified on a composite 'investment in plant and machinery + annual turnover' basis (limits were raised in the Union Budget 2025); registration is on the 'Udyam' portal. District Industries Centres (DICs), started in 1978, serve as single-window support centres for small industries.
- Science: motors, compressors and boilers account for a large share of factory power use; efficient motors (IE3/IE4), variable frequency drives (VFDs) and LED lighting can save much electricity. 'A unit saved is (nearly) two units generated' is a common saying in the energy sector.

Tamil Nadu link: This is an announcement of Tamil Nadu's MSME Department. Neyveli in Cuddalore district (Cuddalore is one of the desk locations) has India's largest lignite mines and NLC India's thermal power stations. Tamil Nadu is among the States with the most MSMEs in India.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Initiative: Energy Efficiency Facilitation Desks; Minister: Mathan Raja – MSME Department; Places: Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Cuddalore (FaMe TN notice); Advisory staff: Engaged by FaMe TN (Section 8 company, MSME Dept).

What is the background to this news?

Energy-efficiency bodies: the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power was set up in 2002 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which body runs the 'star rating' labelling programme for electrical appliances in India?

A) CEA

B) BEE

C) EESL

D) CERC

Answer: B – Explanation: Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power – 'Standards and Labelling' since 2006. CERC regulates power tariffs.

2. What did the UJALA scheme, launched in 2015, supply to people at low prices?

A) Solar pumps

B) Smart meters

C) Induction stoves

D) LED bulbs

Answer: D – Explanation: LED bulbs – through EESL, a PSU joint venture; efficient fans and tube lights were added later.

3. Since 2020, on what basis are micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) classified?

A) Number of workers

B) Export earnings

C) Land area

D) Investment + turnover

Answer: D – Explanation: A composite of plant-and-machinery investment and annual turnover; registration on 'Udyam'. Earlier it was investment alone.

4. On which date is National Energy Conservation Day observed in India?

A) 14 December

B) 22 March

C) 5 June

D) 22 April

Answer: A – Explanation: 14 December – coordinated by BEE. 22 March – World Water Day; 5 June – World Environment Day; 22 April – Earth Day.

5. A variable frequency drive (VFD) fitted to a factory motor saves power by matching what to the load?

A) Insulation class

B) Wire thickness

C) Motor speed

D) Earthing

Answer: C – Explanation: Motor speed – set by varying supply frequency. In fans and pumps power varies with the cube of speed, so a small speed cut saves much power.

Sources: Daily Thanthi (17 Nov 2026); FaMe TN – fametn.com (Advisory Staff notice); Bureau of Energy Efficiency; PIB (UJALA; MSME classification); NLC India; DT Next (Minister Mathan Raja). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.