Govt auto-booking app likely within two months, CUMTA tells unions

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News

DT Next reported on 21 November 2026 that at a consultative meeting with auto-rickshaw unions on 17 November, the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA), through its member-secretary, said the government-backed auto-booking app could be rolled out within two months. Unions led by CITU, along with AITUC, AIUTUC and INTUC representatives, took part. The unions asked that fares follow the revised meter rates notified by the government, that passengers pay no extra service fee, and that drivers pay a nominal ₹15 per 24 hours. They also wanted only drivers with valid licences and auto permits to be registered, and no autos registered in private companies' names. Earlier, on 23 September 2026, DT Next reported that CUMTA was targeting June–July 2027, with the platform proposed as a public–private partnership and the technical-partner tender sent to the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Board for vetting; on 12 November The New Indian Express reported that CUMTA would float a national tender. The two-month figure is therefore an expectation voiced at a consultation, not a fixed launch date. CUMTA is considering a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to run the platform for autos and cabs, and making drivers stakeholders in it. Housing and Urban Development Minister B. Rajkumar announced the app, with digital meters, in the Assembly in August 2026. Drivers hope it will come as a Pongal gift.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Agency	Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA)
Law	CUMTA Act, 2010 (TN Act 44 of 2010); rules notified 2019
Meeting	17 Nov 2026 – consultation with auto unions
Launch	Likely within two months (said at the meeting); earlier target June–July 2027 (DT Next, 23.09.2026)
Union demands	Meter fares; no extra fee for riders; ₹15 per 24 h for drivers
Operator	Special purpose vehicle (SPV) – under study
Announced	Minister B. Rajkumar, August 2026
Earlier app	'Chennai One' – launched 22.09.2025; single QR ticket

Background

- The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority Act, 2010 (Act 44 of 2010) was passed to coordinate MTC buses, Metro Rail, MRTS and suburban trains in the Chennai Metropolitan Area; its rules were notified in January 2019. CUMTA launched the 'Chennai One' app on 22 September 2025 – one QR ticket for bus, metro and suburban rail.
- Concurrent List entry 35 covers 'mechanically propelled vehicles including the principles on which taxes on such vehicles are to be levied', while taxes on vehicles are in State List entry 57. So the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 is a Central law, while auto fares and permits are set by the State.
- Bengaluru's Namma Yatri app runs on the government-backed Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC); under its zero-commission model the whole fare goes to drivers. The National Common Mobility Card (NCMC – 'One Nation One Card'), launched by the PM at Ahmedabad on 4 March 2019 and built on RuPay, works for metro, bus, toll and parking.

Tamil Nadu link: An entirely Chennai story. CUMTA's job is to integrate all modes, including the Chennai MRTS (Beach–Chepauk, 1995), India's first elevated railway line; the 'Chennai One' app is also its initiative.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

DT Next reported on 21 November 2026 that at a consultative meeting with auto-rickshaw unions on 17 November, the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA), through its member-secretary, said the government-backed auto-booking app could be rolled out within two months.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Agency: Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA); Law: CUMTA Act, 2010 (TN Act 44 of 2010); rules notified 2019; Meeting: 17 Nov 2026 – consultation with auto unions; Launch: Likely within two months (said at the meeting); earlier target June–July 2027 (DT Next, 23.09.2026).

What is the background to this news?

The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority Act, 2010 (Act 44 of 2010) was passed to coordinate MTC buses, Metro Rail, MRTS and suburban trains in the Chennai Metropolitan Area; its rules were notified in January 2019.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. CUMTA, which coordinates Chennai's many transport agencies, was set up under an Act of which year?

A) 2005

B) 2007

C) 2008

D) 2010

Answer: D – Explanation: 2010 – Tamil Nadu Act 44 of 2010; its rules, however, were notified only in January 2019.

2. Bengaluru's zero-commission auto app 'Namma Yatri' runs on which government-backed open digital network?

A) ONDC

B) GeM

C) BHIM

D) FASTag

Answer: A – Explanation: ONDC – the Open Network for Digital Commerce, an initiative of the Commerce Ministry's DPIIT. GeM is the government procurement portal.

3. CUMTA is weighing a 'special purpose vehicle' (SPV) to run the app. What is an SPV?

A) A wing of the Transport Department

B) A statutory tribunal

C) A separate company formed for one project

D) A State-owned cooperative bank

Answer: C – Explanation: An SPV is a separate legal entity set up for one specific project – e.g. each Smart City's SPV is a company under the Companies Act, 2013.

4. Which was India's first elevated railway line, opened between Beach and Chepauk in 1995?

A) Delhi Metro

B) Kolkata Metro

C) Chennai MRTS

D) Mumbai Monorail

Answer: C – Explanation: Chennai MRTS – Beach–Chepauk in November 1995, later extended to Velachery. The Kolkata Metro (1984) was underground.

5. The National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), one card for metro, bus, toll and parking, is built on which card network?

A) Visa

B) RuPay

C) Mastercard

D) Amex

Answer: B – Explanation: RuPay – NPCI's domestic card network; 'One Nation One Card' was launched by the PM at Ahmedabad on 4 March 2019.

Sources: DT Next; Deccan Herald; PRS; IES Arthapedia; PIB; NPCI; ONDC; Andhra Pradesh Govt (Smart City SPVs); The Week (PTI, 22.09.2025, Chennai One); Southern Railway – sr.indianrailways.gov.in (Chennai MRTS); DT Next (23.09.2026); The New Indian Express (12.11.2026). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.