

High fuel prices: Govt lays hope on electric buses

BY MIKE SEBALU

The government has officially launched an electric transport system that will see electric buses begin operations on selected routes across Kampala starting this Thursday, in a move aimed at easing public transport challenges and reducing reliance on costly fuel.

Unveiled by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation during the closure of a week-long science exhibition in Kololo, Kampala, the initiative introduces eight electric buses in its pilot phase, with authorities saying deployment on additional routes will be guided by demand.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister

of State for Science and Technology, Ms Monica Musenero, said the introduction of electric buses is part of the government's response to rising global fuel prices.

"All Ugandans know that globally, there is a challenge of fuel. To alleviate this crisis, we had to introduce electric buses," she said, adding that the initial roll-out will help the government study the market before scaling up.

The Minister of Works and Transport, Gen Katumba Wamala, said the government has already set an ambitious plan to expand the e-mobility system nationwide, targeting all 14 cities with about 1,500 buses by June 2030.

"As already said, by June 2030, the plan is to roll out this service across the nation, making all 14 cities benefit with

about 1,500 buses," he said.

Gen Katumba added that beyond easing mobility, the project is expected to create employment opportunities and offer affordable transport, with fares projected at around Shs2,000.

"This transition is an engine for wealth. It will create jobs at every level because all these systems will be run by people," he added, urging the public to invest in complementary services such as park-and-ride facilities and maintenance centres.

The Minister of State for Kampala, Mr Kabuye Kyofatogabye, said the electric buses could help address the long-standing public transport challenges in the capital.

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port. Though challenges remain, step by step we shall get there," he said.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Development, Mr Opolot Okasai, said the roll-out aligns with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Law, which promotes prudent energy use and a shift towards renewable sources.

"One of the ways of conserving energy is moving to renewables, and this pro-

gramme is a fulfilment of that policy direction," he said.

The development builds on Uganda's growing investments in electric mobility. According to the 2025 e-mobility outlook report, the government has invested about Shs658 billion in the sector between 2018 and 2025 across at least 10 companies.

In a related development, state-owned Kiira Motors Corporation, State recently secured a deal worth about \$150 million to supply 450 electric buses to a South African company, following a successful 13,000-kilometre demonstration drive from Kampala to Cape Town, using the Kayoola e-Coach.

The roll-out of electric buses marks a significant step in Uganda's transition to cleaner, more sustainable urban transport, as authorities seek long-term solutions to rising fuel costs and congestion in the capital city, Kampala.