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E-Rickshaws in India: Battery Management and Regulation

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E-Rickshaws in India: Battery Management and Regulation

In July 2026, the government found something alarming: mobile apps that could remotely switch off an e-rickshaw's battery, mid-ride, from anywhere. It ordered them pulled from every app store. The episode exposed a regulatory story that goes back over a decade, from a total ban to a mandatory safety standard.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
31 July 2014

Delhi High Court bans e-rickshaws.

02
18.1 lakh

Registered e-rickshaws, November 2024.

03
AIS-156

Mandatory battery safety standard.

04
3 July 2026

Unauthorised BMS apps ordered removed.

L5M Vehicle category label for L5 electric three-wheelers under PM E-DRIVE. Registered e-rickshaws and e-carts are listed separately.

BMSBattery Management System.
AIS-156 Automotive Industry Standard for lithium-ion traction batteries.
CERT-In National incident-response agency.

Chapter 1: From Ban to Standard

Must Know

What an e-rickshaw is

- E-rickshaws are battery-powered three-wheelers.
- Registered e-rickshaws and e-carts are a separate scheme category from L5 electric three-wheelers.

The 2014 ban

- The Delhi High Court banned e-rickshaws on 31 July 2014.
- No law then covered their registration, insurance or driver licensing.
- The court cited this as a road-safety hazard.

The legal fix, step by step

- The Lok Sabha passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2014 on 18 December 2014.
- The Rajya Sabha did not take it up before it adjourned.
- An Ordinance giving driving-licence relief was promulgated on 7 January 2015.
- Separate CMVR notifications on testing, certification and registration were already dated 8 October 2014.
- It amended the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, to legalise e-rickshaws.
- This let States license e-rickshaw and e-cart drivers.

Scale today

- India had about 18.1 lakh registered e-rickshaws as of November 2024.
- That makes them one of the country's largest EV categories by volume.

AIS-156 battery safety

- MoRTH mandated AIS-156 on 27 September 2022. It is an Automotive Industry Standard for lithium-ion traction batteries.
- It became mandatory in two phases, from December 2022 and March 2023.
- It requires a microprocessor-based Battery Management System (BMS).
- It also needs cell-level protections, thermal-runaway testing and RFID-based traceability.

Remember: Ban 2014. Lok Sabha passes Bill December 2014. Ordinance January 2015. AIS-156 battery standard 2022. Remote-shutdown apps ordered out July 2026.

> **Quick check 1.** A mandatory battery-safety standard for e-rickshaws came before they were legalised. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 2: Subsidies and the BMS

Good to Know

Subsidy history

- FAME I ran from 2015 to 2019.

- FAME II ran from 2019 to 2024. Its original target was to support about 5 lakh electric three-wheelers.
- The Ministry's September 2024 summary reported 1,65,806 e-three-wheelers supported, with ₹1,116 crore.
- That is a reported figure for that date, not an audited final total.
- FAME II has ended.

PM E-DRIVE, the current scheme

- PM E-DRIVE lists registered e-rickshaws and e-carts separately from L5 electric three-wheelers.
- It offers ₹25,000 in the first year and ₹12,500 in the second.
- That is calculated at ₹5,000 per kWh of battery capacity.
- The window for registered e-rickshaws and e-carts runs until 31 March 2028.
- That is a longer runway than other electric three-wheeler categories get.
- See Electric Vehicles in India for the broader EV picture.

What a BMS does

- A Battery Management System protects a lithium-ion pack from overcharging, overheating and short circuits.
- It is the same component that unauthorised apps exploited to disable batteries remotely.

> **Quick check 2.** PM E-DRIVE, not FAME II, is the scheme currently funding e-rickshaws. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 3: Lessons from the Pattern

Great to Know

Adopt first, regulate later

- A cheap, informal technology spreads first.
- Regulation, safety standards and enforcement follow only after problems surface.
- E-rickshaws show this pattern clearly.

Cybersecurity reaches everyday hardware

- The 2026 BMS-app episode extended cyber concerns to everyday consumer hardware.
- Agencies built for large threats, like CERT-In and the National Cyber Coordination Centre, are now also policing battery apps for three-wheelers.
- See Cyber Crime and Cyber Security.

The Bluetooth flaw

- CERT-In flagged a Bluetooth weakness in some low-cost e-rickshaw BMS units.
- Default or missing credentials let outsiders connect and cut power remotely.
- See Electric Vehicles in India for that advisory.

A livelihood issue too

- Most drivers are low-income operators.
- Safety rules need enforcement that does not push informal, unregistered vehicles further underground.

Exam Edge

Previous Year Questions

A recent UPSC question tested the CERT-In reporting window.

Chapter 4: Exam Traps

Great to Know

Do not scramble the sequence

- Delhi banned e-rickshaws first, in 2014.
- The Lok Sabha passed an amendment Bill in December 2014. An Ordinance followed in January 2015.
- Only years later did a mandatory battery-safety standard, AIS-156, arrive in 2022.

Do not cite FAME II as current

- FAME II ran 2019 to 2024 and is over.

- PM E-DRIVE is the scheme now. Its incentive is ₹25,000 then ₹12,500, worked out per kWh.
- It has its own 31 March 2028 deadline.

Chapter 5: Current Affairs

Great to Know

Unauthorised BMS apps ordered removed, 3 July 2026

- The government ordered unauthorised BMS apps removed from app stores.
- These apps had enabled unauthorised remote control of e-rickshaw batteries. (Source: PIB)

The wider cybersecurity framework, 22 July 2026

- In a Lok Sabha reply, the Ministry of Electronics and IT detailed an integrated cybersecurity framework. (Source: PIB)
- It includes the National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC).
- It includes CERT-In, the national incident-response agency under Section 70B of the IT Act, 2000.
- It includes the National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC), which detects and shares cyberspace threats.
- It includes the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC), under Section 70A of the IT Act.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and MeitY's ISEA project round out the framework.

> **Think it through: Why is a battery app a safety risk, and not just a convenience?**
>
> A BMS controls the power. An app that can reach it can also switch the power off. On a moving vehicle, that is dangerous.

Quick Q&A

Which court banned e-rickshaws in 2014?

Delhi High Court.

Vehicle category?

L5M.

Battery safety standard?

AIS-156.

Current subsidy scheme?

PM E-DRIVE.

CERT-In reporting window?

6 hours.

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1. On 31 July 2014, why did the Delhi High Court ban e-rickshaws in the capital?

A. A manufacturing defect was found

B. No law covered their registration, insurance, or driver licensing

C. They exceeded a speed limit

D. They caused excessive air pollution

See answer ↓

2. Which Bill did the Lok Sabha pass on 18 December 2014 to legalise e-rickshaws?

A. The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2014

B. The Environment Protection Act, 1986

C. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019

D. The Information Technology Act, 2000

See answer ↓

3. AIS-156, mandatory for e-rickshaws since 2022-23, is a safety standard covering what?

A. Tyre pressure monitoring

B. Passenger seating capacity

C. Lithium-ion traction batteries and their Battery Management Systems

D. Driver licensing exams

See answer ↓

4. Under the PM E-DRIVE scheme, until when does the incentive window for registered e-rickshaws and e-carts run?

A. 31 March 2027

B. 31 March 2028

C. 31 March 2026

D. 31 March 2030

See answer ↓

5. On 3 July 2026, why did the government order the removal of certain e-rickshaw Battery Management System (BMS) apps from app stores?

A. The apps were not available in regional languages

B. The apps let unauthorised users remotely disable e-rickshaw batteries

C. The apps drained batteries faster than advertised

D. The apps violated a data-localisation rule

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** The court called unregulated e-rickshaws a road-safety hazard, since no law at the time covered their registration, insurance, or driver licensing. ↑ Q1
2. **A.** The Lok Sabha passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2014, on 18 December 2014. It was not an enacted law then. The Rajya Sabha did not take it up. An Ordinance followed on 7 January 2015. Act 3 of 2015 replaced it on 19 March 2015. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** AIS-156 mandates a microprocessor-based BMS, cell-level protections, thermal-runaway testing, and RFID traceability for lithium-ion traction batteries, including in e-rickshaws. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** PM E-DRIVE treats e-rickshaws and e-carts separately from e-3W L5 vehicles. The L5 subcomponent closed on 26 December 2025. Support for registered e-rickshaws and e-carts continues until 31 March 2028. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** The apps had enabled unauthorised remote control of e-rickshaw batteries, prompting the removal order and a wider Lok Sabha briefing on India's integrated cybersecurity framework. ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2

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