

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT:

Transport Dept

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER:

Times of India

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE : 7/4/21

Bus strike in K'taka from today, govt rules out pay revision talks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Nearly four months after disrupting the public transport network for three days, thousands of Karnataka transport corporation employees will go on an indefinite strike from Wednesday seeking revision in pay. Shutting the door on negotiations, the government on Tuesday said it would strictly deal with the strike and ruled out implementing recommendations of the 6th Pay Commission.

The strike is likely to affect city commuting as well as travel across the state since employees of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Karnataka State Road Transportation and its north-west and northeast arms are participating in the strike. The government will allow private operators to ply vehicles to ease pressure off the commuters.

"The government has agreed to eight of their nine demands and we have announced their implications. It is

"I urge the employees to withdraw the strike call since we have met most of their demands. However, **we cannot implement the 6th Pay Commission due to the financial crisis.** We've released ₹1,200 crore for transport employees' salaries despite the present grim situation

BS Yediyurappa | CHIEF MINISTER

not possible to meet their ninth demand the Pay Commission recommendations. We appeal to the employees to withdraw the call," chief secretary P Ravi Kumar said following a meeting of officials convened by chief minister BS Yediyurappa.

The employees' key demand is: Bring salary on par with government employees after implementing the Pay Commission recommendations. The government said it will increase the workers' salaries by 8% as interim relief.

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CM told us to be tough on strike: Official

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The government wants to effect an 8% salary hike immediately, but the election code of conduct (for April 17 byelections) prevents it. I've written to the Election Commission of India seeking its permission. The hike will be announced immediately if we get the approval; otherwise, we need to wait till the elections are over," said Ravi Kumar.

"The CM has instructed us to deal with the strike strictly. No talks; we'll take action against employees for violating the law (if they go

on strike)," he said, adding the norm of 'no work, no pay' will kick in.

He said the Disaster Management Act is already in force in the backdrop of Covid, which prevents congregation, and the government might invoke the Essential Services Maintenance Act and IPC sections, if necessary, to thwart the strike. Miscreants indulging in damaging public properties like buses will be punished, he added.

"We are taking all possible alternative measures to ensure smooth public transportation in the absence of RTC buses. Private bus oper-

ators and maxicab owners will be given routes and allowed to ply vehicles with fixed charges. We have requested the railways for special trains during holidays to destinations like Kalaburagi, Belagavi and Mysuru," said Ravi Kumar.

He said the government revises transport employees' salaries every four years and the Pay Commission takes 5-10 years. He said the government had spent Rs 2,100 crore on salaries during the lockdown and had issued an order to pay salaries till June despite the huge losses the transport corporations incurred.