

Support the just struggle of BEST workers

Statement of Kamgar Ekta Committee, Mumbai 10th January 2026

Comrade workers,

All of you BEST workers across various unions, have decided to plan a united struggle for your just demands. We, from Kamgar Ekta Committee pledge our support to your just struggle. We also call upon all the working people of Mumbai and their organizations to support your struggle.

All the demands you are raising are not only to defend your rights as workers but to defend the rights of working people of Mumbai who are dependent on the BEST buses for their daily commute to work, schools, colleges and for other necessities.

Permanent employees and retired employees of BEST are facing numerous problems including delayed salaries and delayed pension. It has been reported that more than 1500 crore rupees of dues of permanent employees are yet to be settled by BEST. How can the BEST undertaking, which reportedly has around 70 thousand crore rupees of fixed deposits in banks, deprive you workers of your legitimate earnings? Hence your demand of urgent settlement of long pending dues along with interest is absolutely just.

Comrade workers,

All the other demands you are raising are basically against the policy of privatization of BEST bus services being pursued since 2019. Even before its actual implementation, since 2017 you have opposed this policy. A forum of working people of Mumbai, under the banner of Aamchi Mumbai Aamchi BEST (Our Mumbai, our BEST), and many other workers' organizations including Kamgar Ekta Committee have been demanding an immediate halt to the privatisation of bus transport.

Since the beginning of the privatization program, more than 150 bus routes, considered to be non-profitable, have been closed. The frequencies of buses on the remaining routes have been reduced. Private contractors of BEST have also started using smaller buses, as a result of which buses are over-crowded. As a result, the number of people using BEST bus service daily has dropped to around 30 lakhs, from more than 44 lakhs in 2009.

The BEST undertaking had around 4700 buses in its fleet in 2007. Since then, the number of buses owned by BEST undertaking has reportedly reduced to around 400 only, which is just around 16% of the total current fleet of around 2600 buses.

Comrade workers,

Your demand of immediately terminating all wet lease contracts and demand that the BEST undertaking should immediately invest to increase the owned fleet to 3337 buses, is hence in the interest of all the working people of Mumbai.

Just like any other Public Sector Enterprise, all the assets of BEST have been created by using people's money and labour of millions of working people over the years. Hence your demand that no BEST owned land should be sold to any private capitalist is also very correct and an important demand.

Comrade workers,

Since the launch of the program of globalisation, through liberalisation and privatisation in 1991-92, every public service to the people, be it electricity, water supply, health care, education or passenger transport, is treated as a burden on the government treasury. Various Central and State governments, irrespective of which political parties form the government, have been competing with each other in reducing government expenditure on public services and directly or indirectly privatising them. That is what has happened with the BEST public transport. The struggle against the privatisation of BEST transport services is a part of the struggle against the privatisation of any essential service, be it rail or bus transport, education, health or water supply.

This is because it is the capitalist class that is the real ruler of our country and the economy is oriented towards maximizing its profits at the cost of the workers, peasants and other toilers.

Efficient and affordable public transport is a fundamental right that belongs to all members of society. It is among the basic duties of the state to ensure its provision. It is not a privilege or a favour which can be given at one time and taken away at another time. In order to ensure that interests of working people become the sole aim of all policies and actions, it is necessary for the working class to work towards becoming the ruler of the country.

Immediately satisfy all the demand of BEST workers!

Reject privatization of BEST undertaking in any form!

BEST workers and working people unity Zindabad!