



आमची मुंबई आमची बेस्ट

सार्वजनिक वाहतुक व्यवस्थेच्या अधिकारासाठी
Defending people's right to public transport!

To:

1. Chief Minister, Government of Maharashtra
2. Commissioner, Bombay Municipal Corporation
3. BMC Standing Committee

Subject: Immediate attention required to save the lives of commuters, pedestrians, conductors and drivers and the BEST-public bus service

Aamchi Mumbai Aamchi BEST is a Mumbai commuters' organization actively advocating to improve the public bus transport in Mumbai since 2017. We call upon the Government of Maharashtra and the Bombay Municipal Corporation to implement the recent **national call for prioritising public transport use** and reducing private vehicles. There is an urgent need to address the public transport needs of Mumbai city and ensure the provision of affordable, reliable, safe, punctual, transport services to all areas of the city.

The major road infrastructure projects over the past decade, have largely focused on easing travel for private vehicles and operators who cater to the better off people in the city. It is time to prioritise public transport to address the needs of the other millions of hardworking citizens and to address the current fuel and economic crisis for them. Besides the local train service, **Mumbai's BEST buses are the only other lifeline for millions of people** that include the elderly, children, women, patients, disabled persons, and the workers who contribute to all core sectors of the city's economy.

With a population that requires at least 12,000 buses, the city currently has only 2,792 BEST buses. Many buses are therefore dangerously overcrowded and commuters are pushed towards private vehicles that are more costly and also choke the city roads.

Complete Failure of the Wet Lease Model: Threat to life of people

The commuters and ordinary citizens are also paying the heavy price of loss of lives in various BEST bus accidents. In May 2026 alone at least 10 accidents or maintenance related problems were reported¹. On 8th June 2026 there were two accidents with fatalities in Dadar and Kandivali involving BEST buses. Between January 2023 and December 2025 BEST buses were involved in 958 major accidents resulting in 77 fatalities and 217 injuries.

The trajectory of the system since the wet-lease model was adopted shows that it has failed miserably. The contractors cut corners for their profit by not maintaining the buses as compared to the high maintenance of the older BEST-owned buses. The contract drivers are not given adequate training, leading to them losing control and causing terrible accidents. They are also underpaid and overworked. The result is that many innocent people have lost their lives due to these accidents - people walking on the footpaths, waiting for buses at bus stops or just crossing the road have been mowed down.

It is obvious that the electric buses provided by the contractors are not mechanically sound. In May 2021 the Chairman of the BEST committee wrote to the administration regarding the faults in the newly acquired electric buses. He listed problems that could compromise the safety of the buses like – the doors taking long to shut, brakes not working immediately on being applied, the horn being more audible inside the bus than outside and the battery running out sooner than expectedⁱⁱ.

The major concerns with regards to the wet-lease system include the following:

- a) Public safety and comfort
- b) Deteriorating quality of service with respect to serpentine queues, long wait times, cancellation of routes, irregularity and overcrowding.
- c) Extremely poor working conditions for the contract employees who drive buses under gruelling schedules, poor salaries and stressful conditions.
- d) Failure to substantially address the financial issues of BEST. It has been observed that BMC had to provide increased financial assistance to BEST even after the wet leasing of services.

BMC To Ensure Funding for BEST as an Essential Service

Despite a BMC budget of ₹74,427.41 crore for the financial year 2025-26ⁱⁱⁱ from which the local train service receives Rs 3000 crores subsidy every year, there is no parity in the approach to the BEST buses which also cater to lakhs of commuters^{iv}. Between the years 2019 to 2025 BMC has provided a total of ₹10411.52 crores to BEST as a loan instead of providing a subsidy for this essential service.^v

According to the affidavit filed by the Maharashtra Government's Urban Development Department in the Bombay High Court in January 2025, the responsibility for bearing the expenses incurred by BEST lies with the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, in accordance with Section 134 of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888. The BEST Committee and the Municipal Corporation Committee have both approved funding by BMC, vide BEST Committee Resolution No. 116 dated 27 November 2024, and the Municipal Corporation Committee of Mumbai Resolution No. 1165 dated 27 February 2025.

Dues and capital expenditures amounting to ₹12,143.61 crores as per Administrator, MCGM approval dated 12 February 2024 require to be cleared urgently^{vi}. Additionally, to ensure an efficient service, BEST depots must be retained as public land and preserved for a publicly owned bus service with workshops for maintenance of the buses and facilities such as clean, hygienic canteens, rest rooms, and changing rooms for the staff.

We call upon the Commissioner and State government to ensure that BEST is fully funded and save the BEST bus service with its related assets to strengthen this valuable public service.

We the citizens strongly demand the following important measures to ensure an adequate public bus transport system in the city:

- **The wet-lease system should be scrapped immediately; the lives of the citizens of Mumbai should be endangered no more!**
- **BEST should increase its fleet to at least 12,000 mechanically sound buses owned and maintained by the BEST.**

- **The dues of all the BEST employees should be paid immediately, and contract workers should be regularized after mandatory and adequate training.**
- **The BMC must ensure funding for BEST to run efficiently and clear its deficits.**
- **The handing over of public properties of depots to private players must be stopped immediately!**

Sincerely,

Aamchi Mumbai Aamchi BEST Joint Action Group

Copy to:

1. The General Manager, BEST
2. BEST Committee

AMAB Joint Action Group

Aamchi Mumbai Aamchi BEST, Democratic Youth Federation of India, Humanist Centre (Dahisar & Borivali), Disha Students' Organization, Fridays for Future Mumbai, Habitat and Livelihood Welfare Association, Jan Haq Sangharsh Samiti, Janvadi Mahila Sangathan, Lokraj Sanghatana, Loktantrik Kamgar Union, CITU, All India Trade Union Congress, Students' Federation of India, Mulbhut Adhikar Sangharsh Samiti (MASS), Nagari Niwara Vichar Manch, Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Nivrut Kamgar Sanghatana, Pudhe Chala, Purogami Mahila Sanghatana, Bhadekaru Kriti Samiti, Sarva Shramik Sanghatana, Janata Kendra, Purogami Vidarthi Sanghatana

ⁱ <https://www.facebook.com/MumbaiLiveNews/posts/mumbai-sees-over-950-bus-accidents-in-3-years-best-reviews-wet-lease-model/1313348597614949/>

ⁱⁱ <https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/opinion/what-has-set-best-on-fire/articleshow/130861856.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.bhaskarenglish.in/business/news/countrys-richest-municipal-corporations-bmc-elections-heres-a-look-at-the-countrys-richest-municipal-corporations-136944251.html>

^{iv} <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/rly-min-centre-gives-3k-cr/yr-subsidy-for-mumbai-local-trains/articleshow/129685240.cms>

^v Loksatta dated 11th June 2026

^{vi} **Reference:** Memorandum No. Secretary/3573/2024 dated 07.02.2024