



आमची मुंबई आमची बेस्ट

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

Statement issued by citizens' forum Amchi Mumbai Amchi Best against the handing over of BEST depots to builders

The C.M.'s ambitious plans to redevelop BEST depots by handing them over through long-lease to builders who will build malls, residential buildings, theatres, shopping complexes on them etc. is the last nail in the coffin of the BEST undertaking. The C.M. promises that the land will not be sold and will remain with the BEST. What he does not say is that once commercial complexes are built on the depot land there will be no space left to park the BEST fleet of buses and workshops required for their maintenance. Also, the space required for facilities for the staff like good, hygienic canteens, resting rooms, changing rooms and washrooms will be compromised and commercial complexes will get priority as the builder will aim at maximising his profit.

Amchi Mumbai Amchi Best, a citizens' forum that has been consistently opposing the bit by bit privatisation of the BEST undertaking under the pretext of reducing its loss and helping it to gain profit, strongly opposes this move by the state government to give away the land of the depots. The depot land is public land and required for housing a larger fleet of BEST owned buses along with all its subsidiary requirements. The 26 depots in Mumbai have been built with the sheer hard work and sweat of the BEST workers. The government cannot give it away like this.

Besides, the revenues of redevelopment are never going to boost bus services, as the very fact of depot redevelopment tells us that they are dismantling the BEST. The entire process of running down BEST has been in order to privatise not only the public transport services but the land as well.

Public transport systems all over the world are not expected to make a profit and are subsidised by the government as an essential service for the citizens. Just a three-day strike by the BEST staff from the midnight of June 18th, 2026 brought the government to the negotiating table. There was chaos in Mumbai and commuters were stranded as a large section of the population cannot afford to travel by the metros and the suburban railway is already over-burdened. Yet the government did not give any written assurance to fulfil the just demands of the staff and threatened them by slapping the MESMA (Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act) on them. If the government agrees that the BEST provides an essential service to the citizens of Mumbai then why has it not given it a subsidy and why has it run it to the ground so that their attempts at privatising it can be justified?

Amchi Mumbai Amchi Best demands that the budget of BEST be merged with that of the BMC which is the richest municipal corporation in the country, to resolve all the problems of the BEST undertaking. If the state government and the BMC claim to be working for the welfare of the majority of Mumbaikars they should prove it by subsidising a safe, affordable, comfortable and reliable public transport system and increase the number of BEST owned buses to 6,000 and gradually 10,000 so that citizens can travel comfortably in them without overcrowding and without having to wait endlessly for a bus.

Stop long-leasing (giving away) BEST Depots for commercial use! This is public property.

Stop catering to the Builder lobby and focus on development for the people of Mumbai!

Stop procuring defective electric buses from dubious contractors which the drivers are not able to control, leading to terrible accidents endangering the lives of the citizens of Mumbai!

We support the just demands of the workers for payment of dues and better working conditions and will support their struggle to realize those demands. Till then the struggle goes on!!

Amchi Mumbai Amchi Best

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Mumbai