

Karnataka decided to recruit 2,257 drivers for the NWKRTC

The State Cabinet, which met for the first time after the recent reshuffle, has hiked salaries of 1.15 lakh employees of the four government-run Road Transport Corporations (RTCs) by 8 per cent with effect from January 1, 2016.

The hike will cost Rs. 1,131 crore to the State-run RTCs — Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), North-West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC), and North-East Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NEKRTC). The hike will be applied for the next four years (till 2019).

Briefing presspersons on the Cabinet decisions, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister T.B. Jayachandra said the decision to hike salaries was taken following profits made by RTCs, particularly the BMTC. In another decision, the BMTC was allowed to raise a Rs. 388-crore loan from financial institutions for purchasing 1,000 buses. The government will give Rs. 152.99 crore towards the interest subvention. It was decided to recruit 2,257 drivers for the NWKRTC.

Earlier, the KSRTC Staff & Workers' Federation had urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah not to allow the RTCs to announce an "unilateral wage revision". It said the corporation has to have bipartite discussion to reach an industrial settlement on wage revision. Federation general secretary H.V. Ananthasubba Rao said there should be an "amicable settlement" before placing the 8 per cent hike proposal before the Cabinet.

The Cabinet approved the release of Rs. 20 crore for the purchase of private lands within forest areas to establish elephant corridors. Administrative approval was given for construction of a new engineering college in Talkal, Yelaburga taluk in Koppal district, with an estimated cost of Rs. 100 crore, he said.

The Cabinet authorised the Chief Minister to recommend names of dignitaries for the Padma awards to be conferred on the eve of Republic Day next year. A total of 6.25 acres of gomala land in Ramanagaram would be given to the Kurubara Sangha, Gandhinagar, for development of educational institution, and to set up a Kanaka Bhavan, Mr. Jayachandra said. The State Cabinet will meet every Wednesday, the Minister added.