

The Times of India

17 thousand ST employees to get back their jobs, says Raote

PIMPRI CHINCHWAD: Nearly 17,000 employees of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation, who had been removed for various reasons, would soon be reinstated.

State transport minister Diwakar Raote said this on Wednesday during a three-day state transport drivers training programme at Central Institute of Road Transport. Drivers will also get a compensation of Rs 10 lakh in case of accidental death, he added.

Of the 1.1 lakh employees of the state transport corporation, 36,000 are drivers.

The training programme would focus on defensive driving techniques, stress management, financial stability and other relaxation programmes.

Raote, who is also the president of MSRTC, said that for the first time, drivers have come to the training with their better halves.

"About 17,000 employees were removed for frivolous reasons. It is necessary that they should be reinstated. If the employee goes to the court, it (court) asks the management to reinstate the employee. The management, however, appeals to higher courts. The employee does not have the finances to move to higher courts," Raote said, adding that a decision has now been taken to reinstate the employees by withdrawing five salary increments.

Drivers undergo a lot of stress because of inadequate facilities at rest rooms and bad condition of toilets, he said. Officials and staff have to be responsible for providing adequate facilities.

Officials should take the employees into confidence and sanction leaves wherever possible. He cited numerous examples of how drivers are stressed because of frivolous reasons such as dysfunctional wipers in some buses, vehicles suffering mechanical breakdowns and nearby depots refusing to attend to the breakdown.

The minister blamed senior officers for not taking care of the drivers and employees, saying that he had been receiving calls at midnight from

drivers about inadequate facilities. "All this needs to be changed drastically," he said.

The minister added that in case of accidental deaths, drivers will get a compensation of Rs 10 lakh. Passengers also get a similar compensation. For this, bus ticket fares have been increased by just one rupee, he said. Raote added that Union railway minister Suresh Prabhu has recently adopted the same idea.

Raote also said that new AC buses would be procured for rural areas. The fares would be affordable for commuters, he said.

About illegal transport, the minister said that the regional transport office has to take action but a shortage of staff is hindering the process.

MSRTC managing director Suryakant Ambadekar, Central Institute of Road Transport's Ashish Mishra and chief of Institute of Driving Training and Reseach K Madhavraj were also present.