

DEVAN RAMACHANDRAN, J.

W.P. (C) Nos.15353/2022 & 18462/2022

Dated this the 11th day of July, 2022

O R D E R

The learned Special Government Pleader - Sri.Santhosh Kumar, submitted that, keeping in view the initiative of this Court, the Government has released Rs.20 Crores to the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) on 10.07.2022 as an interim measure; and that the High Level Committee has already begun its unofficial meetings. He explained that since the Legislative Assembly Session is till 21.07.2022, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has not been able to call for official meetings and take decisions. He submitted that, hence, if time is granted till 31.07.2022, the Government will be able to respond with suggestions that are practical and workable.

2. Sri.Deepu Thankan - learned Standing

Counsel for the KSRTC, submitted that, for the first time in several months at least, the KSRTC has shown a surplus of Rs.3.52 Crores last month and explained that this was on account of the fact that some expenditure has come down. He added that, if the KSRTC is able to make a few changes in its operation, it is impossible that the target of Rs.8 Crores a day from ticket collections can be achieved. He added that, in obedience to the earlier orders of this Court, the Unions of employees have stopped their agitation, at least in front of the offices of the KSRTC.

3. It is gratifying to this Court that the KSRTC is making efforts for its revival and that the Unions and the employees are also actively supporting it. The survival of the KSRTC is vital and not even a whispering mention of its closure at any point can be countenanced because it provides direct and indirect employment to large sections of

persons, while it is used by over six lakhs of people everyday for their travel. There can be no substitution to this through any other method, particularly in a welfare State.

4. That said, the basic amenities of the KSRTC will require to be modernized and bettered, particularly its wash areas, toilets and such other, so that more and more people will come back to the KSRTC for travel. This is "Back to 'KSRTC'" movement and this will certainly be possible with the initiatives that this Court is willing to oversee.

5. Sri.Deepu Thankan - the learned Standing Counsel for the KSRTC, submitted that within the means that the KSRTC has presently, it will certainly consider betterment of such facilities, thus encouraging people to travel with the KSRTC again and again. Certainly, this undertaking is welcome and I record it.

6. That said, while this Court passed

earlier orders with respect to the payment of salary in priority to that to be paid to the Supervisory Personnel, an inadvertent omission - because it is not brought to this Court's notice - was made with respect to the Sweepers, Part-time Sweepers, Garage Masdoor, Peon/Office Attenders - whether regular or on contract. These persons are from the lowest strata of the society and certainly require to be granted the same benefit, as was ordered by this Court in the case of Drivers, Conductors and such other.

7. I, therefore, modify the earlier orders by including the afore categories of persons also along with Drivers, Conductors, Mechanics and such other and direct that they also to be paid their salaries before the Supervisory Personnel.

8. As said above, since the learned Special Government Pleader says that the Government will be able to come back to this Court with affirmative decisions by the 31st of

this month, I deem it apposite to adjourn these matters to that date.

However, in the meanwhile, I direct the KSRTC to ensure that, as far as is practical, the salary to be paid next month be attempted on the 5th or at least by the 10th.

List on 02.08.2022.

Sd/-

H/O

DEVAN RAMACHANDRAN,

rp/SAS

JUDGE