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ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Indian Express ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 7/4/21



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa chairs a meeting with transport department officials on Tuesday | EXPRESS

## Transport strike: Govt acts tough, says no negotiations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
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AS transport corporation employees are going ahead with their indefinite strike from Wednesday, impacting services across the state, the government on Tuesday rejected their demand for salaries recommended by the Sixth Pay Commission and warned them of strict action if they go ahead with the strike. The government, however, agreed to give an 8 per cent hike in salaries as an interim measure and is waiting for the Election Commission to clear it.

Appealing to the employees not to go on strike, Chief Secretary P Ravi Kumar said, "No Work, No Pay" policy is in force and the government is mulling imposing the Essential Services Maintenance Act. "People can-

not gather in groups and if they do, action will be taken under Disaster Management Act. We will also slap cases under Police Act, the Indian Penal Code, ESMA against them."

He said it is not possible to consider the employees' demand for higher salaries and the government will not negotiate with the employees. "The chief minister made it clear that we need to take strict action. We appeal to them not to go on strike," he said after attending a meeting chaired by CM BS Yediyurappa.

The Government has fulfilled eight out of nine demands of the employees and agreed to give an 8 per cent hike in salary as an interim relief, and nothing more can be done. Since the model code is in force because of the bypolls, Ravi Kumar has written to the Election Com-

mission seeking its clearance.

State road transport corporations are incurring a loss of Rs 4 crore every day and despite that, the salaries are not delayed, he said. The number of people commuting by BMTC buses has reduced from 45 lakh to 20 lakh and it is likely to decrease further with Covid numbers increasing.

The government has made alternative arrangements by allowing private buses, school buses, vans and other transport vehicles to operate from Wednesday. He said that those damaging public property will be dealt with severely. Action will be taken against anyone, including farmer leader Kodihalli Chandrashekar, if they issue provocative statements, he added. Kodihalli is at the forefront of the transport strike.



Due to the poll code, it is not possible to revise the pay scale of KSRTC employees. If they stick to their decision of launching the strike, alternative arrangements like allowing private bus operators will be made so that people do not suffer

Laxman Savadi, Deputy Chief Minister and Transport Minister