

Sabarimala pilgrimage rolls in the good times for KSRTC...



Sabarimala: The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is breaking its own collection records as the flow of pilgrims to Sabarimala increases. The corporation's revenue has crossed Rs 5.37 crore this pilgrimage season and the number of passengers it carried stands at 15.82 lakh.

The corporation has pressed into service KURTC's low-floor buses to run chain service between Pampa and Nilakkal. New 'Fast Passenger' and 'Super Fast' buses are used for long-distance services. Services on the low-floor buses earned the corporation Rs 3.45 crore while the long distance buses raked in Rs 1.92 crore

As many as 11,66,381 passengers boarded the KURTC buses while 4,16,034 travelled on the long-distance buses.

The corporation earned Rs 14.29 lakh from the chain service between Pampa and Nilakkal on Sunday alone. As many as 652 trips were run on a single day. Though 76 JNURM buses, 32 'Fast Passengers' buses and three mini buses were originally planned for the chain service, the corporation had to send 30 more buses from various depots to keep up with the rush.

As many as 327 buses reached Pampa from various places on Monday, while 368 buses carried pilgrims from Pampa to different points. The unexpected rush created huge problems at the bus stand which could accommodate only 150 buses. Unlike in previous years, the police did not let the corporation park buses on the side of the road between Chalakkayam and Pampa even after the bus stand was crowded with buses. The extra buses

were sent to Nilakkal to park, resulting in delays as they had to wait at the Chalakkayam toll gate for more than an hour while returning to Pampa.

SRTC authorities are concerned that a delay in providing services may prompt pilgrims to create a ruckus.

Among the Pampa special services, KSRTC's Chengannur, Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram depots were the clear winners. There were 2,324 buses to Chengannur. Kottayam had 1,144 and Thiruvananthapuram 1,147. Ernakulam had 746 buses going to Pampa.

Most of the pilgrims from other states get down at Kottayam or Chengannur railway stations. Their return journeys are planned from either Chengannur, Kottayam or Ernakulam railway stations. Buses from these three depots start services from the railway stations.

KSRTC sent the maximum number of inter-state buses to Tenkasi in Tamil Nadu. As many as 120 buses were put on service to the border town up to Sunday. There were 65 buses to Pazhani, 57 to Coimbatore, 31 to Madurai and 36 to Theni. As many as 33 buses were sent to Bengaluru.