

Cluster buses make more bucks than DTC buses

PRAGYA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After being mired in multiple controversies, cluster 1 buses that were flagged off in May this year have a reason to cheer. "The buses under this cluster have registered 20 per cent higher profit than the DTC buses plying on the same routes. This profit percentage is registered for July and August. However, with too few buses, it is too early to predict whether the profit levels are steady," said PK Gupta, Special Commissioner of Transport. Currently, a fleet of 100 buses are plying on five routes - 411, 419, 469, 522 and 534. These orange-coloured low-floor buses had been launched in a phased manner by the concessionaire Star Bus Pvt Ltd.

"Though a meagre fleet at present, our 100 buses ferry



around 1,10,000 passengers and cover 2,180 kms daily. Compared to DTC buses, our buses save a lot on dead mileage as these buses

don't have to report back to the Millenium depot for the shift handover during lunch hours (1 am to 3 am). The handover takes

place at the last station of the route itself. These hours subsequently translate into high earning hours, as during this slot, most of the DTC buses are off the roads. This also saves 1.5 hours of earning time for these buses daily," said SN Sahay, Managing Director, DIMTS.

He further said, "Our buses are recording an average profit of ₹1,500 per day per bus more as compared to a non-AC DTC bus running on the same route. The gross earnings from each bus is registered as ₹8,420 per day. Electronic ticketing machines have played a major role in plugging revenue leakages and translating into better profits. Though the cost per km per bus was ₹57 in the month of August, it has been reduced to ₹53 per km per bus."

The buses in the simultaneous

clusters 2, 3, 4 and 5 that were delayed to hit the roads due to non availability of depot space, are expected to start their operations by December. "We are expecting around 300 buses from these clusters to hit the roads by the end of December," added Gupta. The green light comes after a plot in Kanjhawala has been cleared for these buses to park. Indraprastha Logistics, a group of Blueline operators, is the concessionaire for the cluster 2, which will operate in south-east areas such as Okhla and Kalkaji. The other four clusters have been awarded to AB Grain Spirits Pvt Ltd, which has been operating in mainly UP till now.

Apart from this, talks with the concessionaires for the clusters 6, 7, 8 and 9 are on the final stages. Only the financial details have to be worked out.