

# BEST service: AC mini buses now deliver food to poor

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**Mumbai:** BEST has turned its AC mini buses into good Samaritans. Instead of keeping them idle at depots, the buses are being used to deliver at least 80,000 food packets to the poor and those who have no means of income or possibility of getting a meal during the lockdown.

Most of the buses have their seats intact and can deliver 1,500 food packets per trip. But a few have had their seats removed so that they can carry 5,000 packets per trip. The buses can be spotted all over Mumbai. At night, they are parked outside railway stations, from where they commence their journey the following day, picking up food parcels from NGOs, local MLAs and other do-gooders.

A slum resident said, "We are excited when we see the chhotu buses arrive near our slum (Vijay Nagar in Mulund-West). It is a saviour for us for it gets us warm meals."

A BEST official said the buses were always a hit with commuters and were instrumental in the undertaking's daily ridership going up by over a lakh a few months ago.

Commuters could travel



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by paying just Rs 6 for a comfortable AC ride in these buses, which were operating in middle class colonies as well as in upmarket areas like Nepeansea Road and Peddar Road.

When the bigger buses were deployed to ferry essential workers during the lockdown, AC minis were being used to ferry foreign nationals to the airport, from where they took special flights back to their countries, sources said. The minis were also used to ferry doctors and nurses. Now they are tending to the poor.