

ELRTS feasibility study by February

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, Nov. 28.

UB Transit Systems Ltd (UBSTL), the company set up to implement the elevated light rail transit system (ELRTS) in the City, is likely to prepare a detailed feasibility study and financial analysis by February next.

It has completed the pre-development project studies including the project capital cost estimates, said the Executive Director of Bangalore Mass Rapid Transit Ltd (BMRTL), Mr. B.S.Chandrashekar Rao.

Participating in a panel discussion on the transport sector at a seminar on "Status of infrastructure in Karnataka - A year after," organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and the Jadavpur University Alumni Association here today, Mr. Rao said after the Government accepted the report, a "concession agreement" would be negotiated. An agreement was likely to be signed between the BMRTL and the UBSTL by the middle of next year.

He said a joint venture company would be

incorporated thereafter. The new company would carry out all further activities to bring the project to a financial "close" and then take up the actual construction of Phase I of the project covering a distance of 25 km.

In 1994, the ELRTS was estimated to cost Rs.4200 crores and a Phase I (Rs.1212 crores). These included the interest changes during construction and provision for inflation but not the cost of land. The revised cost of Phase I after detailed studies were completed was likely to be Rs. 2600 crores.

Rail corridor

The Divisional Railway Manager of the Southern Railways, Mr. K.K.Bajpayee, cited the example of Tamil Nadu where the State had agreed to bear the cost of gauge conversion. He said similar funding by the Karnataka Government would speed up work on the high-speed rail corridor between Mysore and Bangalore.

He said the Railways had sanctioned seven projects for constructing 1050 km of new lines and 383 km of gauge conversion in the State, besides doubling works at a cost of Rs.2100

crores. The amount was not adequate to complete these projects within 10 years, he said.

Mr. S.N.Venkata Rao, Advisor of the Konkan Railway Corporation, while hailing the proposal to double the line from Bangalore to Mysore suggested that it could be extended to Nanjangud or Chamarajnagar. Pressure on Bangalore and Mysore could be reduced by diverting developmental activities to this corridor.

Airports

Mr. R.N.Chawhan, Executive Director of the Karnataka State Industrial Investment and Development Corporation (KSIIDC), said the KSIIDC had appointed a firm to study the existing airports and airfields in Mysore, Hassan, Bellary and Hubli and development of the one at Gulbarga. Based on the study, it was proposed to upgrade the facilities there.

He said the private sector would be involved in all projects. An invitation would be extended to companies to participate during the Global Investors Conference to be held in March next. He said he was confident that work on the new Devanahalli airport would begin in six months.