

Part of flyover will open to traffic in March '99

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: One part of the Sirsi circle flyover will be thrown open to traffic by March next year, Bangalore City Corporation (BCC) Chief Engineer Rame Gowda said here on Saturday.

Speaking at a seminar on 'Status of Infrastructure in Karnataka — A Year After' at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Mr Gowda said the stipulated time of completion of the project was March 1999, but it had been delayed 11 months.

However, the part of the flyover up to Royan Circle would be thrown open to traffic by March, 1999. The rest of the flyover would be completed by December.

Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) Commissioner Lak-

shmi Venkatachalam, who spoke on the progress of the outer ring road (ORR), said the 62-km circular road being constructed at a radius of 12-15 km from the city centre would be completed by 2001.

After the completion of a single carriageway of the 12-km Old Madras Road-Bellary Road stretch a few months ago, the BDA had secured a loan of Rs 180 crore from HUDCO for completion of the project in two phases.

In the first phase, the stretch of ORR from Tumkur Road to Hosur Road would be taken up at a cost of Rs 110 crore covering a distance of 37 km. BDA has fixed agencies for five packages costing Rs 67 crore and work has commenced. The remaining packages will be tendered shortly. ORR Phase-I would be completed by 2000-01.

In Phase-II, BDA would complete the ORR stretch between Mysore Road and Tumkur Road (11 Km) for which work would begin by 1999-2000.

Ms Venkatachalam said BDA had expedited the process of acquiring 200 acres of land needed for the construction of the ORR. It had secured Rs 40 crore for construction of grade separators under the Mega City Scheme, she added.

Meanwhile, work on the Intermediary Ring Road (IRR) between Airport Road and Koramangala, which had progressed well till now, was fraught with complications caused by court cases over the acquisition of land by the BDA, she added.

Ms Venkatachalam said the BDA was seriously considering the levy of betterment taxes or toll fee for the use of the ORR, to get re-

turns on the huge investment made on its construction.

Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation director Bipin Gopalakrishna, who spoke on urban transportation, said traffic congestion on Bangalore roads was a direct result of the failure of the BMTC to provide an efficient means of public transport.

Enumerating BMTC's problems, he said the Corporation was woefully short of buses. While the BMTC has 700 buses less than what is required, over 50 per cent of the existing fleet were obsolete that have plied over 7 lakh km. According to projections, the BMTC would need at least 2,000 buses in the next 10 years.

Mr Gopalakrishna said the cash crunch in BMTC was such that over Rs 8 crore of its Rs 15-crore

turnover was being used to pay staff salaries. Pilferage was of the order of Rs 25 crore per year, he added.

The BMTC had opened six new depots to reduce the present holding capacity of 200 buses per depot by half. It had allowed private buses to supplement its efforts and about 200 private operators would operate under BMTC colours (with their own vehicles and drivers, but BMTC conductors).

The BMTC had appealed to the government to increase the fares as the concessions being provided to different sections had become a burden on the Corporation.

The BMTC would commission a feasibility study to be done by a Swedish agency on modernising the chassis of buses to suit Bangalore's roads and commuters, he added.