

Technocrats offer remedies for Bangalore's problems

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BANGALORE, Jan 19
Traffic jams, endless traffic snarls, chaos during peak hours have become a daily affair in the Garden City. Amidst this, and, in a bid to tackle this major problem among others, the much hyped Bangalore Summit will be held on January 24.

While the panel members of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force are tight-lipped about the agenda in store for making "Bangalore better", some well-known technocrats of the City have suggested certain remedial measures to make the city a bearable one. And, they say lacking traffic problems should be accorded primacy.

The director of the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Prof Roddam Narasimha, who has been an advisor and member of various expert committees on development, feels that transport and energy sectors should be given top priority. He moots the idea of having a Bangalore-Mysore railway corridor to ease the pressure and congestion in Bangalore. He says that developing townships on the outskirts of Bangalore or along the corridor could go a long way in achieving the requisite result.

A ring-railway route around Bangalore is another innovative proposal to reduce the pressure on the City. "According to a study conducted by NIAS, having a second track along the present Bangalore-Mysore railway line



Mr C N R Rao

will cost only about Rs 300-400 crore, but, will double the rate of the flow of traffic", Prof Narasimha says.

The existing facilities could be utilised and the project completed on a war-footing. "The new international airport should also be located somewhere along the corridor so that both cities could utilise the airport. This concept is a success in the United States", he adds.

Dwelling on power sector, he said there is an immediate need to change the distribution system and reduce transmission losses. There is not enough experimentation and imagination in implementing schemes", he says.

Captive power generation stations, set up at various centres, could be asked to feed power to the grid. Modern methods could be used to control load voltage and power sources. "If we could tackle the various issues in a comprehensive manner, I do not see why we

cannot progress in a relative short period", he adds.

Renowned scientist C N R Rao, President, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research blames the lack of planning and short term plans for all of Bangalore's problems. Prof Rao has been residing in Bangalore for over six decades now.

"There has been no planning at all, the available facilities are also the off-shoot of something else. We have been implementing short-term plans to solve our immediate needs. But, this is no answer", he argues.

He says the agenda should be framed foreseeing how Bangalore will develop in the next two to three decades. "We can develop Bangalore on the Singapore model only by comprehensive planning and deciding now what we need



Prof Narasimha

for the future." He adds, "We should decide now what the needs of Bangalore will be in the next 25-50 years and then, work backwards to the present."

"An integrated approach is necessary. Decisions on the requirements of transport, housing, energy, water and other facilities should be taken now", he says. Other priorities on Prof Rao's list include restructuring of the education system and improving the efficiency of the power sector.

Renowned expert on surface transport, Prof CEG Justo, Emeritus Professor, Bangalore University, agrees that an efficient public transport system would ease the traffic congestion to a large extent. Prof Justo has been a member of many expert committees on road development. He was appointed technical advisor for the Municipal Bond Road project executed by the BMP.

He points out that high capacity

modern buses, with a carrying capacity of 120-300 people, could be introduced on many of the important routes on dedicated lanes in the city. "Most importantly, the routes should have feeder service that take the public to their destination. It is important that people adopt this system and they surely will adopt it if the system is efficient", he says.

"Ambitious mass public transport projects like the Elevated Rail Transit System are also necessary, but, it take years for completion. What we need today are immediate remedies to the traffic problems."

Prof Justo suggests a three-pronged strategy to improve the traffic flow and ease congestion on city roads. He feels that the existing facilities, with some improvement, can be utilised to improve Bangalore in a relatively short period.

For instance, Prof Justo says, the main purpose of adopting the one-way system on a majority of the roads in the city was to have a better co-ordination of traffic signals at various intersections for smoother flow of traffic. "But, that has not happened", he says.

"Immediate step should be taken to ensure that at least a platoon of vehicles move smoothly without being caught in signal snarls. What it takes is some co-ordination and that does not require money." The next step, he says, should be widening of roads, clearing bottle necks and construction of better pavements.

