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Rail transport is neglected in India: Satish Chandran

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, July 1: It is disappointing to note that rail transport is neglected in the country, former Governor of Goa and former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, T R Satish Chandran said here on Saturday.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a seminar on 'Infrastructure - Transport, Watershed Management and Water Harvesting and IT in Construction Management', organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and the Alumni Association of Jadavpur University - Bangalore Chapter (AAJUB).

Urban transport system is a problem all over the world and in some

places, it has been subsidised. But in India, subsidy is unthinkable, he said.

Bangalore has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of vehicles. Of the 13.5 lakh vehicles that ply in the City, more than 10 lakh are two-wheelers. They are the crux of the problem, he said.

Watershed management can be achieved only if substantial contributions are made in the five-year plans, he said.

Honorary Professor of NIAS, Arcot Ramachandran, said any system of transport must be ecologically sustainable and financially viable.

Each city should have its own transport model, he said.

Speaking at the technical session

on 'Elevated Light Rail Transit System' (ELRTS), Bangalore Mass Rapid Transit Limited MD, N Vishwanathan, said the first phase of the ELRTS project would be finalised in the next one month after the ridership study report is completed.

Countries all over the world have the international standard gauge. Why don't we use it too, he asked.

The Centre has to deal with the railway sector and the State Government cannot do anything about it. The State can only deal with the tramways which come within the municipi-

pal limits of the City. "Once the Karnataka Tramway Act is passed, the State Government will get a statutory authority and the judiciary will give its approval," he said.

'Any system of transport must be ecologically sustainable and financially viable'

Speaking on 'Metro Bus System for Bangalore City', Bipin Gopalakrishna, Director, Security and Vigilance, BMTC, said the system is vital to decongest the City and improve the public transport system.

In the first stage, as a pilot project route, the metro bus system will run from Jayanagar to Shivajinagar. The network was designed by a Swedish

Company. Bangalore will have single and 'bi-articulated' buses by December, he said.

Elaborating on 'An Integrated Mass Transit System for Bangalore', V K Sibal, Group general Manager (Urban Transport), RITES Limited, New Delhi, said mass transit involves interchange of different modes of transport. There is a need to plan, and implement an integrated multi-modal mass transport system (IMMRTS) for Bangalore.

The advantages of IMMRTS are common ticketing and fare integration. It emphasises on uniform fare per kilometre. The same ticket would enable the public to travel in different modes, he said.