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## Flyover cleared as steel not on green list

**Bosky Khanna**

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A steel flyover is not in the list of infrastructure projects that needs clearance from the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA). Despite this, SEIAA cleared the steel flyover project, from Basaveshwara circle to Esteem Mall, over Hebbal flyover.

Ramachandra, SEIAA member secretary, told *DH*, “The endorsement was given because the steel flyover is not in our purview. The BDA applied to us and we scrutinised the SEIAA rules. The list of infrastructure projects does not mention steel flyovers. Since

### ‘Extension violates buffer zone norms’

The plan to extend the contentious steel flyover from Hebbal to Esteem Mall, over the existing flyover on the Hebbal lake would be in violation of the provisions of the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority (KLCDA) Act, 2014 as well as buffer zone guidelines issued by the Karnataka High Court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

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we have nothing to do with it, the clearance was given.”

However, the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) wants to approach the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) for a relook at the project. But this may not be possible as the state government has

set November 1 as the date to lay the foundation stone for the flyover project.

“If the project was not under the SEIAA purview, the file should have been sent back and referred to the tree committee of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). But all that has not been done,”

said Ramachandra, also secretary of the Department of Forests, Ecology and Environment.

### Some not so happy

The decision has not gone down well with a few members of the forest department and SEIAA.

“We are approaching the MoEF to take a look into this and add steel flyovers and all types of infrastructure works in the list so that such projects can be stopped. We agree that what has happened is not correct and 812 trees will be lost,” said a SEIAA member on condition of anonymity.

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# Steel flyover extension violates buffer zone norms: Lake Authority

## HC order says 'no development zone' around 30 metres of lakes

**Bosky Khanna**

**BENGALURU:** The plan to extend the contentious steel flyover from Hebbal to Esteem Mall, over the existing flyover on the Hebbal lake, would be in violation of the provisions of the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority (KLCDA) Act, 2014, as well as buffer zone guidelines issued by the Karnataka High Court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

Highly placed sources in the KLCDA said that the Banga-

lore Development Authority (BDA) has to mandatorily take their permission before commencing the work on extending the flyover.

"If the steel flyover is extended without seeking our permission, we will file a criminal case against the BDA commissioner as this will violate the KLCDA Act, high court and NGT rulings on maintaining the buffer zone. So far the BDA has not consulted us," a senior KLCDA official told *DH* on condition of anonymity.

According to Section (2) of the KLCDA Act, a lake includes the water body, buffer zones,

inlets and outlets. The construction will be in violation of the Sections 14, 32 and 36 of the Act, which prohibit any activity on lakes and empower the KLCDA to issue directions to the government and penalise the violator, the official stated.

If the BDA wants to construct the steel flyover around the Hebbal lake, it will have to get exemption from the Supreme Court on the Karnataka High Court and NGT orders on buffer zones. Before that they will have to submit the detailed project report to the KLCDA for its approval.

The KLCDA team will review the project, inspect the lake site and then give its opinion. All this will take not less than two months, the official stated.

As per the BDA master plan, buffer zone should be 30 metres from the boundary of the lake. The NGT in its May 4, 2016, order stated that the buffer zone should be at least 75 metres. It is mandatory to maintain buffer zones around lakes as per the order passed by the Karnataka High Court in 2011. While passing orders in writ petition (817/2008) seeking protection of lakes, the

court said. This zone would be extended by two metres for every five hectares in case of lake areas beyond 40 hectares, the order said.

"Since the Hebbal lake is over 200 hectares, around 50 metres should be maintained as no development zone. The government and the BDA may face contempt action if they violate this," said Leo F Saldanha, Coordinator, Environment Support Group.

In fact, the Hebbal flyover and Ballari Road have been constructed in violation of the buffer zone guidelines.

**DH News Service**

# Flyovers, underpasses will only shift point of congestion, says mobility expert

"Time saved on steel bridge will be lost in Hebbal, Chalukya Circle"

**BENGALURU:** The car-ownership which was 100 for every 1,000 population has now gone up to 700. The city, which has 64 lakh vehicles, continues to register at least 1,500 new cars every day.

The percentage of car ownership is going to increase along with the growth in per capita income. Can the government build flyovers and underpasses to match the vehicle demand? Is it possible to satisfy the need of car owners?

This is the argument Dr Ashish Verma, mobility expert and associate professor, department of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Science, raised during the technical session on "No Steel Flyover." The public



Volunteers count the votes against the steel flyover at a public consultation organised by Citizens for Bengaluru at Rotary House of Friendship on Sunday. *DH PHOTO*

meeting was hosted by the volunteer group, Citizens for Bengaluru, on Sunday.

"Flyovers, underpasses and road-widening projects are not a sustainable mobility solution. These are only short-term and populist measures and the point of congestion will shift from one place to another. The situation will be the same with elevated toll expressway where the time saved on steel flyover will be lost

in Hebbal and at Chalukya circle," said Verma, who is also president, Transportation Research Group of India.

He argued that the personalised mode of transport will not come down unless there is a good public transport facility. "Car is seen as the symbol of wealth in our society. The number of car ownership is going to increase and the road capacity will come down. The govern-

## 41,848 say Steel-flyover-beda

Meera Mukund (67), a resident of Basavanagudi, is among the 41,848 people who have spoken up against the steel flyover project. A ballot box campaign conducted by the Citizens for Bengaluru (CfB) group on Friday has recorded the opinion of 41,848 people, including 10,204 residents of north Bengaluru. They all said, "Steel-flyover-beda." Collecting the opinion of citizens along with their names, mobile phone numbers and addresses was one of the action plans adopted by the volunteers besides planning a massive rally in the coming days. Sumedha Choudhery, 14, from Bannerghatta Road, said she too opposed the project and asked her classmates to register their voice as 812 trees will be axed for the project.

ment should instead focus on traffic management and public transportation," he said and added that the world's top liveable cities have good public transport.

"We have to learn from the mistakes committed by many developed countries which also underwent the vicious circle of congestion earlier and then took the path of sustainable mobility," he said. He gave the example of The Netherlands

where almost 60% of the people in Amsterdam use bicycle to commute.

"The government should stop the madness of constructing and expanding more and more roads and flyovers. Improving infrastructure to promote public transport, cycling and walking is the need of the hour. And, we certainly have the opportunity to leapfrog," he noted.

**DH News Service**

## VOICES AT PUBLIC CONSULTATION



### Why 2010 project being activated now?

I am not an expert on town planning. But I came here as a student of democracy. If the project, which was conceived in 2010, is a viable traffic solution, why did the government not initiate it after coming to power in 2012? Why now? The

Congress, which knows it will lose the next election, wants to make as much money as possible. The government's fascination for big projects is prompted by kick-backs. Larger the project, larger the cut. The steel flyover is nothing but foolish and fraudulent.

**Ramachandra Guha, historian and author**

### No sense of belongingness

Do they speak Kannada? Are they from outside? Where are you from? These are some of the questions we get to hear in Bengaluru. It has become very difficult to mobilise people to fight for any cause in the city. Unlike in Mumbai and Kolkata, there is no sense of belongingness here. We have politically failed to create shared public spaces. The civil society should work towards it.

**Dr Sundar Sarukkai, philosopher and author**



### Just one tree for every seven people

As against the ideal ratio of eight trees per person, there is only one tree for every seven people in Bengaluru. For a population of nearly one crore, there are only 14.78 lakh trees. The urban sprawl has resulted in a 1005% increase in

built-up area, 88% decline in vegetation and 79% decline in water bodies. There is gross mismanagement of natural resources and the next generation will be deprived of greenery, making the city unlivable. The government should decongest the city and develop infrastructure in other districts.

**Prof T V Ramachandra, Indian Institute of Science**

### Raise the issue in next session

Not a single expert of merit has endorsed the steel flyover project. The consultant who prepared the detailed project report is apparently blacklisted in four states. If the JD(S) and the BJP are truly against the project, they should raise the issue in the next legislature session and make sure that it does not take off.

**Prakash Belawadi, actor**



## Social media campaign to clear doubts on project: CM

**MYSURU, DHNS:** Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said the state government has launched a social media campaign to clear "negative" ideas on the steel flyover project and educate the people on the benefits of having the flyover.

"We will explain the facts about the project and advantages of the bridge through social media," Siddaramaiah told

reporters at Mysore Airport in Mandakalli near here. Siddaramaiah said the state government had gathered people's opinion in June and 73% of them had supported construction of the bridge.

Bengaluru Development Minister K J George has held a meeting with Union Minister D V Sadananda Gowda and BJP MLAs in this regard, he added.