

Vir Das will perform at Pheonix MarketCity on October 15
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'Two-Seater Melodies' talk about their experiences
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● Dull future



CHAOTIC Experts say that the proposed steel flyover project along Bellary Road will lead to serious ecological imbalance.

A greying face

The proposed steel flyover from Basaveshwara Circle to Hebbal to provide a seamless commute to Kempegowda International Airport has been viewed by environmental experts and other citizens as another unnecessary inconvenience to the public. More than 800 trees that are more than 50 years old and some buildings of historical value will be razed to the ground.

If the two flyovers along Bellary Road and the elevated road towards the airport haven't helped, people wonder how this new project will ease traffic. Environmental experts say the proposal to plant 10 trees for each tree being cut will not compensate for the existing canopy.

Environmentalist B N Viswanath points out that the city has already lost a lot of tree cover in the name of development.

"Bengaluru was once called the airconditioned city but the authorities haven't bothered to bring back the old glory by retaining the existing green cover or planting new trees. Even if we plant 10 times the trees — and let us say all of them survive — the present two generations will not see its

benefits (if they can be called benefits). This is because cutting trees has become a continuing process," reasons Viswanath. He feels the existing small and medium steel flyovers don't benefit many either. "It will not help the general public but only benefit politicians and contractors involved in the project," he adds.

Tree lines are required in Bengaluru to keep the increasing pollution in check.

Despite petitions filed and public outrage against the project, the government authorities seem keen on going ahead with it. TV Ramachandra, associate faculty, Centre for Infrastructure, Sustainable Transportation and Urban Planning, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, Indian Institute of Science, points out that there has been an increase in concrete area (paved surfaces), with the loss of 88 per cent of green cover and 79 per cent of water bodies over the last four decades (1970 to 2016).

"The city is on the verge of becoming unlivable with this kind of senseless, irresponsible and unplanned growth. If we continue this way, the landscape consist of 95 per cent of paved surfaces. This is unacceptable as there will not be sufficient and clean air and water or a clean environment," explains Ramachandra. He says no government project has compensated for the tree loss satisfactorily so far.

"The city has 14.78 lakh trees for 95 lakh people. This means for every person there are seven trees. But to remove only respiratory carbon, we should have eight trees per person. The government must stop wasting public resources and take the city towards a healthy status," he adds.

While experts warn that the proposed project will lead to serious ecological imbalance, citizens too don't see the need for it at the cost of cutting down so many trees. Shruithi Umesh, a chartered accountant, thinks it would be better if the government could chalk out alternative routes to divert traffic and ease the congestion than add to the existing flyovers.

"The proposed flyover will benefit only those going to the airport. It has taken so many years for 800 trees to grow and planting new saplings will not make up for their loss," says Shruithi. She also points out that

planting more trees will control the rising pollution levels. "We see so many people affected with respiratory disease so we need more trees to survive the increasing traffic and pollution," she says.

There are a lot of people who carpool and cycle to work, like V P Bijoy, an employee with Dell Technology. He has signed a petition opposing the construction of the steel flyover.

"The authorities should concentrate on widening the roads, providing proper pedestrian paths and effectively managing the traffic flow rather than undertaking such massive projects that only cater to the interests of a small group. Most of these trees that will face the axe are more than 50 years old and cutting them is not the way forward," reasons Bijoy.

The need of the hour, says Ramachandra, is to decongest the city.

"Flyovers are being proposed without proper assessment just to spend public money. We need to decongest the city and get back the city from the clutches of land, water and waste mafia," he says.

Nina C George

● Smooth ride

'I can put on or shed 10 kg easily'

Actor Suraj Gowda believes in exploring his talent as a performer and trying out new things. With projects lined up back to back, this young artiste is content with his journey so far. While he waits for 'Siliconn City' to start, in a candid chat with Tini Sara Anien, he talks about what else is in the pipeline.

How has 2016 turned out for you?

I'm very happy about how things have turned out. This year has proved to be really good for me. I had a release in January, 'Kahi' is releasing in November, 'Pradesha Samachara' is in the process of being shot and I start shooting for 'Siliconn City' soon.

'Kahi' would have been your launch film and it has been a long wait...

The wait was worth it. My character teaser was released recently and it was trending on YouTube. It's really nice to see that people haven't forgotten about the movie and are supporting it just like they were initially. The genre is completely different from that of 'Maduveya Mamatheya Kareyole' — that was a love story-cum-family entertainer. But 'Kahi' is a thriller, where I play an extreme character. It's a movie based more on performance than glamour.

Tell us about 'Siliconn City'...

It is a big movie with a big starcast. The movie is about two brothers, played by me and Srinagar Kitty. The movie will cater to a wide audience with its thrilling script that also weaves in family sentiments.

When did you listen to the script?

Srinagar Kitty and I work out at the same gym. He happened to approach me with the script and the moment I heard it, I was more than happy to be a part of it.

How excited are you?

I was looking to do a project like 'Siliconn City' as I had to break out of the chocolate-



NEW ROLE Suraj Gowda

I am excited about the different shades I play in 'Siliconn City' Suraj

boy pattern. I always wanted to do a role that makes or breaks the movie. I want to do roles that require me to perform differently. I love the team I will be working with as there is a lot of positivity around. They are confident and know what they want. Srinagar Kitty is a seasoned actor and a big name in the industry. It's great to share screen-

space with him.

How different is your role?

Though I can't reveal much, I am excited about the different shades I will be playing in the movie. I play a 19-year-old in the movie and I am working towards looking that young. My character matures through the movie and thus the look changes as the movie advances.

Will the film also have action scenes?

The movie is different throughout and has scenes

which are action-packed. I have been practising kick-boxing and martial arts for a while and it doesn't take a lot out of me. I can work around my body easily. If required, I can put on or shed 10 kg easily within a given time.

Why is the movie called 'Siliconn City'?

As the name suggests, the movie revolves around Bengaluru. Though the movie will be shot in the city I live in, one is not conscious of the location when in front of the camera. Acting is an out-of-the-body experience.

● Strong words

'Please don't jump on us'

Preity Zinta says she does not like the way photographers pounce on her to take pictures as it makes the actor uncomfortable. The 41-year-old star slammed the increasing paparazzi culture in the country, saying these days no one politely asks for a photograph.

In a series of tweets the actor wrote, "I would like to tell everyone (specially the photographers with big flashes) that lurk in the dark a few things. Please don't jump on us or push our parents or kids or friends and family for a photo. Ask politely or you will never get a proper photo!" She further said that photographers should not 'make news' saying that stars misbehaved with them, because if their bodyguards push lensmen, they have a valid reason.

"If a star's security pushes you there is a good enough reason that you deserved it so stop making news about how badly behaved we are. Please. If I don't want to be photographed I will hide my face.



Not because I have had a bad surgery, or have no makeup or whatever. It just means no. It's my face, my life and my choice! If I'm dying to be photographed I will post it on twitter or Instagram so please be polite or okay bye." Preity was quick to take on body shamers, writing, "Next time you take my picture don't look for body parts you can circle or put in a loop later on to body shame me and make money for you?? You and Me — we both have to live here."

"If you are more considerate and decent, you will probably get great images and leave the kids alone. I hope I could represent every actor and star in this dialogue with the other side. I am making a genuine attempt so things can go smoothly," she said.

OUTSPOKEN
Preity Zinta

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