

Airport of international standard, what about the roads?

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THE Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) authorities, perhaps, will have to introduce helicopter services from the City to Devanahalli if the condition of the road were to remain the same. For, between the 21st century airport and the 20th century Bangalore, lies a 19th century road!

Though the Devanahalli International Airport will be ready by April 2, 2008, the question is will the infrastructure leading to the airport be ready on time as well? The distance from the centre of the City to the airport is over 30 kilometre plus another five kilometre ride, from the highway to the airport terminal. It will take much longer to travel to the airport from one's residence than from Bangalore to Delhi or even to Singapore by air.

Officials from the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) told this paper

that they had called for tenders, but the BIAL had some personal problems with the L-1 party (lowest bidding party). Thus, the tenders were cancelled and they have not received any intimation till date.

"According to the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Government of Karnataka, NHAI and BIAL, nothing has been finalised. Since we are a government body, we will follow the procedure and call for tenders in order to provide infrastructure. But, BIAL is a private body and can follow any procedure to complete works," the officials said.

"The project costs over Rs 45 crore and will take long to construct. The problem is not with the alignment, it's the personal conflict between BIAL and the bidder which is delaying," the officials added.

However, Chief Executive Officer, Bangalore International Airport Limited, Albert Brunner said that they are in constant talks with NHAI and every thing will be ready as per schedule. "A two-lane approach road

will be developed, parallel to the runway, linking the National Highway (NH)-7 to the airport terminal complex. This road will primarily serve as the passenger terminal and link all the airport facilities," he said. He added that there is a proposal by the NHAI to build a two-lane trumpet fly-over at the intersection of the main access road and NH-7. This will ensure smooth passenger flow to and from the airport and allow highway users to move unhindered.

Further, there is no integrated approach to develop roads keeping the international airport in focus. Though the roads are being developed by the Public Works Department (PWD), Bangalore Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (BMRDA) and Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited (KRDC), they all seem to be stand-alone projects.

There are also five proposed townships of BMRDA and four by Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise (NICE) which would add to the congestion.