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## 'Enough flyovers, focus on public transport'

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By **Melvin Mathew**

The recent proposals to build double and triple-decker flyovers and sky buses have only managed to draw ire from the public. Experts say that government officials need to disincentivise private transport usage and should focus on mass rapid transport systems (MRTS).

The proposals had come up during a meeting of Minister of Road Transport and Highways (Morth), Nitin Gadkari with Chief Minister as a way to decongest the city.

But experts told Bangalore Mirror flyovers with both Metro and highways might be counter-productive. "Multi-deck flyovers might decongest the roads for a temporary period. We are still at a nascent level of car ownership as compared to developed economies. Our country's average is 20 cars per 1,000 people and Bengaluru might be 150-200 cars per 1,000 people. More flyovers will only encourage private vehicle ownership and increase emissions. These are only temporary solutions and increasing MRTS usage is the only solution. To decongest roads, officials need to desensitise private vehicle usage by increasing the cost of purchase and usage," said Dr Ashish Verma, Convenor, IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab (IST) Lab.

Mentioning the case of existing expressways, he highlighted how such measures have been ineffective in decongestion but have added to creating bottlenecks in other areas.

He added that in addition, having metro and highways in multi-deck flyovers could position the Metro as a slower mode of transport. "With the need to stop at multiple stations, the Metro rail would seem a slower mode of transport in comparison to road transport. This will be a counterproductive measure to promote MRTS.

Invariably, more commuters would shift to private vehicle ownership," added Dr Verma.

### [Chief Minister's 'master plan' to decongest Bengaluru](#)

"The new authority will be formed after passing a relevant bill in the next Assembly session. This authority will coordinate with National Highways Authority of India, BBMP, BDA, BMRDA, BWSSB, BMRCL, railways, PWD, and others. If we have a comprehensive master plan then most of the city's issues will be solved," he said.

With many projects yet unfinished, civic activists urged officials to complete existing projects before picking up new ones.

"As far as public transport is considered, we have BMTC, Metro and suburban rail. BMTC is enduring heavy losses, Metro construction has been limited and time-consuming, and the suburban rail project has not even started yet. While such measures could be effective, we don't want the other projects delayed," said Rajkumar Dugar of C4C.

Urban experts also urged the need to build a comprehensive development plan (CDP) taking into account a holistic view of transport systems. "We need to assess the collective efficacy of these measures. The efficacy

of Metro, BMTC, flyovers and suburban rail alone cannot be thought of in silos. The CDP developed by BDA hasn't been effective. We need a plan encompassing road and water where transport is a small part of it," said Vijayan Menon, President of Citizen Action Forum.

Public transport activists said the proposals may lead to reducing use of public transport. "The city cannot handle any more construction. We have already built 50-odd flyovers. There is a need to focus on increasing mass public transport usage," said Srinivas Alavilli, Civic Participation, Janaagraha.