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Band-aid solutions won't work, need long-term vision to end Bengaluru's traffic mess: Experts

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BENGALURU: Authorities are now on an overdrive announcing measures to ease traffic bottlenecks in 10 most congested areas of the city.

Experts and road users, however, feel that ad hoc diversions and building flyovers and underpasses are not a sustainable solution for traffic woes. A case in point: Kundalahalli underpass. The project, which missed multiple deadlines, opened last month but it has only helped in shifting congestion to another junction.

* Ashish Verma, professor, transportation systems engineering, Indian Institute of Science (IISc)

Ten junctions are not generating traffic but motorists are passing through them from one point to another so it requires a network-level solution. At best, what they could do is some low-cost solutions like modifying signal timings, correcting geometric deficiencies and channelisation of islands/medians. They are keen to announce more flyovers and underpasses which have failed everywhere in the city. The government should observe bus priority week with more buses, free rides and dedicated BMTC lanes.

* Urban mobility expert Ashwin Mahesh

It's not possible to reduce congestion at a few junctions with some ad-hoc plans. Any plan needs to address network effects. But they keep applying band-aids where surgery is needed. This is like a health plan for knees alone. And if anyone asks, the answer is 'knees are important'. We don't have a Bengaluru development minister or a Bengaluru planning body. We don't have a way of integrating our thinking about mobility with other aspects like location of housing, employment, schools, childcare, etc. But we have projects and announcements. Where will the money come for these measures since they were not announced in the state budget? If they divert money, then other projects will suffer. The state has a full-fledged decongestion plan for the city

in Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP) which is still on the backburner. When there is a CMP ready, the government should first implement measures suggested in it.

* Sanjeev Dyamannavar, a commuter rail activist

The government is coming up with solutions without addressing the root cause of the problem. Traffic jams at Hebbal are mainly during 8.30am-11am and 4.30pm-8pm. Now, 15-20 traffic cops have been deployed for traffic diversion plans, which is a pointless exercise. In fact, congestion on the road has increased after these changes. There are no footpaths, taxi-auto bays, street lights and FOBs in that junction. They could add one more lane from airport side towards city side at a lesser cost in a short duration.