

Sparks fly as frustrated citizens take on govt rep

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Organised by Citizens of Sankey on Tuesday, the event saw over 200 residents of Vyalikaval, Malleswaram, and Sadashivnagar turn up to express their concerns.

Pralhad presented the government's flyover proposal, explaining why it was necessary to avoid traffic congestion in the area. But angry citizens argued that the project was poorly planned and bound to fail and bombarded Prahalad with queries. Unable to control the crowd, moderator Prakash Belawadi requested the attendees not to resort to unruly behavior and not to attack the guest who was there by invitation.

'Won't solve traffic problem' With a detailed presentation, Dr Ashish Verma of IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab illustrated that the flyover would only shift the point of congestion, not address it. He said the solution should be people-centric and not vehicle-centric, adding that flyovers do not account for the effects of transport on tailpipe emissions, energy requirements, environmental and ecological impact.



'Give buses a chance'

"Bus is the solution," said Shaheen Shasa, co-founder of Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike.

"The road space that a car uses to transport one person is 38 times more than what a bus uses. If there is congestion and only limited road space, we have to think about reducing the number of vehicles. Instead, we go on investing thousands of crores in building flyovers when it takes only Rs 1,300 crores to buy 3,000 buses for the city. The policies are counterintuitive. People's travel demand has to be studied before traffic planning."

While retired botany professor Ravindra Reshme spoke of the need for a government that listens to its people, senior advocate Harish Narsappa shared the legal points that highlighted that the Sankey flyover was not a part of the revised Bangalore Master Plan 2015.



Concerned citizens had submitted a letter to the BBMP Commissioner on January 13, 2023, asking for alternative solutions. A petition started on January 8 has now amassed 25,000 signatures.

On the ecological consequences

"We need to strike a balance between ecological concerns and mobility issues. How we can address the ecological concerns will be taken to experts. We are not one-sided, but open to suggestions. We have to look at the larger picture."

— B S Prahalad, BBMP chief engineer

'Concerns not being heard'

"The government did not carry out a public consultation. So, citizens had to organise a meeting to discuss this flyover project. The presentation by experts only confirmed that the flyover will destroy our locality and worsen traffic. The officials seem adamant about going ahead with this project even though BMLTA has not approved it. Our concerns are not being heard."

—Kimsuka Ramesh Iyer, one of the members of Citizens for Sankey