Experts call for focus on urban transport after scepticism about metro expansion

by Marcin Frąckiewiczin Artificial intelligence, Newson February 4, 2024

Urban mobility experts and local politicians in Bengaluru are raising concerns over the proposed plans for the Namma Metro expansion, which are being planned mainly outside the city limits instead of providing better connectivity in the central areas where it is needed most. The Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority's (BMRDA) plea to expand the reach of the metro to the surrounding cities has not yet received widespread approval.

The heart of the debate came to the fore recently when Deputy Prime Minister DK Shivakumar sought support from Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the planned metro expansions. Despite these high-level discussions, critical voices have emerged, such as that of Tejasvi Surya, the parliamentarian from south Bengaluru. He questioned the logic behind prioritizing expansions over improving connectivity in the city centre.

In addition, urban mobility visionaries such as Ashish Verma are calling for more efficient use of the existing rail network and rapid rollout of the suburban rail projects. They point to the density differences that make it less justifiable to expand the metro into less populated suburbs.

This view is supported by Rajkumar Dugar of Citizens for Citizens, who highlights the economic differences between metro and suburban rail projects. He illustrated that while a metro line to Tumakuru would require significant investment, improving the suburban rail network could be completed at a fraction of that cost, making it more cost-effective and potentially beneficial.

The sharp contrast in opinions highlights the ongoing debate over the most effective methods to reduce traffic congestion in Bengaluru and improve the public transport system. There is a growing consensus among experts that prioritizes strengthening and improving transportation within the city's densely populated cores before expanding to outlying areas.