

Will public transport fare hike trigger more traffic chaos in Bengaluru?

Many fear BMRCL's decision to hike fares without increasing trains will discourage people from travelling by Metro

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Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister has been pushing for tunnel roads and double-decker flyovers in the city

After a 15 percent increase in bus fares, [Metro fares in Bengaluru are set to rise](#), and [auto-rickshaw fares](#) are also expected to follow suit.

The IT capital, already grappling with [traffic gridlocks](#), is likely to see further congestion, as experts fear that the hike in fares will prompt more people will switch to private vehicles.

"The percentage of the Metro fare hike is not very clear yet, but even a 20-25 percent increase would be substantial. Similarly, BMTC has also raised its fares by a substantial 15 percent. This will likely reduce the share of public transport usage. The choice of transport mode people make in response to such substantial fare hikes will affect ridership and the public transport mode share," Ashish Verma, convener of the Sustainable Transportation Lab at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) told *Moneycontrol*.

With a population of 14 million, Bengaluru now has 1.14 crore registered vehicles, including 77.2 lakh two-wheelers and 23.6 lakh cars. Considering the city's 14,000 km road network, Bengaluru's vehicle density is now around 869 vehicles per km, leading to gridlock situations.

BENGALURU'S TRAFFIC STORY

14,000 Km
road network

14 million
population

12 million
registered vehicles

40,000
intersections

Total vehicles in Bengaluru (as of Dec 2024)

- Two-wheelers: 8.16 million
- Cars: 2.49 million

Total: 12.1 million vehicles

BENGALURU'S VEHICLE DENSITY IS 869 VEHICLES PER KM

Total BMTC buses: **6,340**
Bengaluru needs 16,800 buses based on the guideline of 120 buses per 1 lakh population

Total Metro Network: **76 km**
Bengaluru's 14 million population would require 140 km of Metro, based on the guideline of 1 km per 1 lakh population

TOMTOM REPORT

- Second most congested city in India in 2024
- Third most congested city in the world in 2024

<h4>Average travel time per 10 km</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 minutes 10 seconds • 50 seconds longer than in 2023 	<h4>Average speed</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.6 kmph • 0.4 kmph slower than in 2023
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RUSH HOUR

<h4>MORNING</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time taken to travel 10 km: 38 minutes 50 seconds • Average speed: 15.5 kmph • 55% congestion level 	<h4>EVENING</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time taken to travel 10 km: 41 minutes 59 seconds • Average speed: 14.3 kmph • 68% congestion level
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EXTRA TIME SPENT DRIVING IN RUSH HOURS (2024)

- 117 hours (4 days, 21 hours)
- 7 hours 53 minutes more than in 2023

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"People are likely to shift to transport modes where the cost of travel for the same trip or origin-destination pair is comparatively lower. Most bus passengers will likely switch to two-wheelers if they have that option. BMTC and Metro fares have generally been higher than the cost of using a two-wheeler, and this fare hike will make it even more attractive. Even car users, who might have earlier found Metro to be a reasonable alternative, may switch back to their cars due to the fare increase," Verma said.

"Bengaluru already has one of the highest number of two-wheelers in India. One reason for this could be that two-wheelers have a better chance of cutting through traffic. Finding parking for two-wheelers is also comparatively easier. So even if people own cars, they may still prefer to use their two-wheelers for these reasons".

Also, read: [Kolkata is India's most congested city in 2024, Bengaluru ranks 2nd: TomTom report](#)

According to the traffic index released by TomTom, a Kutch location technology specialist, Bengaluru is the second most congested city in India in 2024, after Kolkata, and the third most congested city in the world in 2024.

While Bengaluru's traffic police and some experts question the methodologies adopted by TomTom, there is no denying the city's traffic problem. One of the main reasons for the city's broken transport system can be highlighted with these numbers: Bengaluru would need 16,800 buses based on the guideline of at least 120 buses per 1 lakh population, but it has only 6,340 buses. For Bengaluru's population of 14 million, 140 km of Metro would be required, based on the guideline of 1 km of Metro per 1 lakh population, but it has only 76 km of operational network.

Unlike Mumbai and Chennai, Bengaluru lacks a dedicated suburban rail system. While the Union Government sanctioned a 1,480-km (four corridors) suburban rail project with a six-year deadline (2026), the Rail Infrastructure Development Company (K-RIDE), the executing agency, does not have a full-time MD. In fact, only two of the four corridors have issued civil work orders, and their deadlines have now been pushed to March 2027.

Also, read: [Union minister Somanna proposes two new railway terminals near Bengaluru; suburban rail deadline pushed to March 2027](#)

Why the Metro fare revision is untimely

While the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) board approved a proposal to increase Metro fares in a meeting on January 17, it is yet to announce when the fare hike will come into effect and by how much. "We will reveal the new fare structure shortly," a senior BMRCL official said.

Also, read: [After bus fare hike, Bengaluru Metro fare to increase as BMRCL board gives nod](#)

Currently, the minimum token fare is Rs 10, and the maximum fare is Rs 60. Smart card users receive a 5 percent discount, which was reduced from 15 percent in 2020. The last fare revision was in 2017, following the completion of Phase 1 (42 km). Since then, the network has expanded to 76 km, including the Purple Line (Challaghatta-Whitefield) and the Green Line (Silk Institute-Madhavara).

Many are questioning the timing of the hike. Shashi B K, a regular Metro passenger, said, "This hike is a joke on commuters in the context of not adding a single new coach, not improving frequency. We travel like sardines, and all new lines are inordinately delayed. I urge BMRCL to hold back until Phase 2 is completed."

"Not only the fare, but also the costs people pay due to delays—such as wasted time, higher costs of commuting with other expensive modes, and loss of productivity—are significant. Commuters are never stakeholders for BMRCL and heads must roll for delays," he added.