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Bengaluru Citizens Protest Against Metro Fare Hike, Demand Immediate Rollback

Activists, students and citizens gathered at the Citizen's Convention Against Metro Fare Hike, organised by the Bangalore Metro Commuters' Association.



A speaker addresses the convention convened to condemn the metro fare hike and demand an immediate rollback (ETV Bharat)



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Bengaluru: A large gathering of activists, students and citizens concerned convened at the Citizen's Convention Against Metro Fare Hike, organised by the Bangalore Metro Commuters' Association (BMCA), an affiliate of the Save Bangalore Committee.

The convention, held to address the steep rise in metro fares, saw participation from experts, including Dr Ashish Verma, Dr Sudha Kamath and Dr Meghna Verma, who collectively condemned the fare increase and demanded its immediate rollback.



Citizens Protest Against Metro Fare Hike in Bengaluru (ETV Bharat)

The recent fare hike by the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has sparked widespread outrage among commuters. Initially projected at a 45% increase, the actual hike reached nearly 100%, making metro travel unaffordable for many.

"This move is not just unethical, but also unjustifiable," said Aishwarya, a representative of the Save Bangalore Committee. "The metro was introduced as a public-friendly transport option, but now, the pricing contradicts that promise."

Following the fare increase, metro ridership has reportedly dropped by nearly 1,00,000 passengers daily. Many commuters have opted for alternative transportation modes such as BMTC buses, despite their fare hikes, or have reverted to private vehicles, further exacerbating Bengaluru's notorious traffic congestion. "The whole purpose of the metro was to ease traffic and reduce pollution. But now, higher fares are pushing people back to private vehicles," noted student activist VN Rajashekar.

Students and working professionals have been particularly affected. "Many of us depended on the metro for our daily commute, but now we are forced to find other options," said Vaishnavi, a college student. Teacher Kalavati echoed these concerns, emphasising that public transport should remain accessible to the middle and lower-income groups.

Speakers at the convention criticised both the State and Central governments for their handling of the fare hike, accusing them of shifting blame instead of providing solutions. "The metro should be a public service, not a profit-making enterprise," said Dr Gangadhar from the Save Bangalore Committee. "If the government can waive off massive loans for corporations, why can't they subsidise metro fares for common citizens?"

Concerns were also raised over the lack of public consultation before implementing the fare revision. "Did the BMRCL or the government engage with Civil Society groups before making this decision?" questioned N Ravi, another committee member. "Such unilateral decisions are undemocratic and unfair to commuters."

The Save Bangalore Committee, along with several Civic Groups, has demanded a complete rollback of the fare hike. They dismissed the 10% discount offered on select routes as a mere token gesture. "First, they increase fares by 100%, and then they offer a 10% reduction—this is nothing but deception," said Sunil Kumar, a student.

"This is not just a protest; it is a movement," concluded Aishwarya. "We will not stop until public transport remains truly public and affordable for all." As a next step, the convention resolved to meet Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and submit a memorandum to both the State and Central governments. The decision to engage with the authorities was seen as a crucial step in urging the government to reconsider the fare hike and address public grievances. The Save Bangalore Committee also called upon citizens to unite against the fare hike and continue protests until a fair resolution is achieved.