

People's Convention Opposes Proposed Bengaluru Tunnel Road Project

Residents, researchers and civil society members threatened to continue their movement till the proposed Rs 42,000-crore Bengaluru Tunnel Road Project is scrapped.



Scientists discussed the risks of the proposed road project (ETV Bharat)



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Bengaluru: A citywide people's convention on Sunday questioning the scientific basis, economic burden and environmental risks of the proposed Rs 42,000-crore Bengaluru Tunnel Road Project.

Organised by the 'Save Bangalore Committee' (SBC) at SCM Hall in Bengaluru, the event saw participation from around 200 residents, researchers and civil society members.



Around 200 residents, researchers and civil society members attended the convention (ETV Bharat)

G Shashikumar, convener of SBC, said the tunnel road is “unscientific, fiscally irresponsible, and environmentally destructive.” He warned that the project cost could rise from Rs 42,000 crore to nearly Rs 70,000 crore, pushing future generations into long-term tax and toll burdens.

He argued that the project would carry only 1,800 car passengers per hour, while the metro can move 69,000 and BMTC buses about 1.75 lakh people in the same time. “If the aim is to ease traffic, the investment should go into metro, suburban rail and BMTC, not into a tunnel that benefits a small number of car users,” he said.



Researchers questioned the scientific basis of the project (ETV Bharat)

Shashikumar also alleged that the DPR contains plagiarised data and over 120 major flaws, and fails to consider risks in areas like Lalbagh, Hebbal Lake and Sankey Tank.

In a video message, **Prof Ashish Verma** of IISc said the project mirrors an “American model that does not suit Indian cities,” pointing out that US cities have larger land area and lower population density. He said the high toll, estimated at up to Rs 300 per trip, would make the road accessible only to a few. “This is not the mobility model Bengaluru needs,” he said, urging the government to expand the metro and suburban rail network.



Speakers warned the project cost will rise pushing people into long-term tax and toll burdens (ETV Bharat)

Scientist Emeritus T V Ramachandra of IISc warned that tunnelling through Bengaluru's hard rock formations could disrupt aquifers permanently. “The environmental cost will be irreversible and will hit the city's water security,” he said.

He added that Bengaluru has already lost 88 percent of its vegetation and 79 percent of its water bodies, which has caused heat stress, rainfall disruptions and flooding. “The city is not prepared for intense rains. Any further disturbance to the terrain will worsen the situation,” he cautioned.

Prof C P Rajendran, Emeritus Scientist at NIAS, described the project as “economically and environmentally unscientific.” He said tunnelling in ecologically sensitive regions without detailed geological studies can cause long-term damage, comparing it to similar risks seen in Himalayan projects.

Urban planning expert Prof M N Srihari said the tunnel road model works in coastal cities, not in Bengaluru. “This project serves private car users and does little for public transport. It violates basic mobility principles,” he said.

Former Head of Geology at Bangalore University, Prof Renuka Prasad, said the absence of a detailed geological survey is alarming because the city sits on Peninsular Gneiss rock, which requires careful assessment before any deep excavation.

Civic activist Kathyayini Chamaraj said the tunnel is a “waste of public money” that prioritises private cars over public needs. She urged the government to focus on BMTC, suburban rail and last-mile connectivity.

Other experts and public figures, including former Advocate General Ravivarma Kumar, Dharmanand and geology professor Srinivas were among the other attendees at the convention.

SBC member Rajesh Bhat said the committee, which has worked on civic issues for three decades, will intensify its campaign. “This citizens' movement will continue until the project is scrapped,” he said.