


Experts seek independent traffic cadre for Bengaluru

Urban expert V Ravichandar agreed that traffic planning expertise does not currently exist within the traffic police, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), or city corporations.

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One of the perpetually congested stretches near the Hebbal flyover. Credit: DH File Photo

Urban experts are pushing for dedicated transport and traffic cadre to solve Bengaluru's worsening traffic problems.



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Ashish Verma, Convener, Indian Institute of Science's Sustainable Transportation Lab, has called for sweeping structural reforms to fix Bengaluru's traffic crisis.

ABCDM approach

The professor criticised what he terms the "Anybody Can Do Mobility" (ABCDM) approach.

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"Everybody is a road user and therefore, everybody has an opinion. But opinion is not expertise," he said, warning that fragmented decision making is pushing cities towards an "unsustainable and unliveable" future.

Verma argued that urban mobility is a classic case of complexity science.

"When you connect transport to quality of life, equity, public health and liveability, it becomes even more complex. You cannot handle it casually. You need people with expertise," he said.

"For example, when you see who the chairman of Isro is, it is a scientist and not an IAS officer. Traffic and mobility demand the same type of expertise."

His key proposal is the creation of a dedicated Urban Transport Service Cadre at the central and state levels.

"Currently, traffic management is largely handled by the police, while transport agencies are headed by IAS officers. Traffic management and traffic law enforcement are two different things. Police should focus on enforcement. Planning and management require technical expertise. An organisation with highly technical work needs scientific leadership, not a general administrator," he said.

Citing global models such as Transport for London and the Singapore Land Transport Authority, Verma called for unified, technically led institutions integrating planning, public transport and infrastructure. He warned that without structural reform, Bengaluru's traffic crisis will only worsen.

Verma said he had taken the proposals to policymakers.

"We have met with Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and submitted detailed notes during pre-budget consultations with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the Chief Economic Advisor, and contributed to the Economic Survey chapter," he noted.

Urban expert V Ravichandar agreed that traffic planning expertise does not currently exist within the traffic police, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), or city corporations.

"It is a highly specialised field, involving road engineering, network flow science, road geometry and multimodal integration. Bengaluru needs a dedicated traffic expertise cell, and the ideal institutional home for this expertise is the Bangalore Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA)," he said.

Urban designer and architect Naresh Narasimhan said mobility planning should focus on reducing travel time, not just increasing vehicle speed, warning that adding road capacity is a flawed solution.

"Mobility matters will not be solved if it remains divided between parastatals, police and corporations. What Bengaluru needs is not another authority, but to make the BMLTA truly functional and powerful. Every major city has a unified land transit body that overrides fragmented departments and plans mobility scientifically," he added.