

KMRL, IISc Bengaluru ink pact for research on sustainable urban mobility

By blending KMRL's real-world transport know-how with IISc's cutting-edge tech, like AI and simulation models, they aim to tackle issues like traffic jams and pollution head-on

By BL Kochi Bureau

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Ashish Verma, Professor of Transportation Planning and Policy, IISc Bengaluru, exchanging documents with M P Ramnavas, Director (Projects), KMRL for joint research on sustainable urban mobility. Loknath Behera, Managing Director, KMRL looks on.

Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to undertake joint research and implementation in the areas of sustainable urban mobility and public transport systems.

The MoU aims to combine KMRL's practical experience in developing and operating multi-modal urban transport systems with IISc's advanced, data-driven and empirical research expertise.

The partnership will focus on sustainable mobility planning, transport operations, and the application of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, simulation modelling and intelligent decision-support systems.

Loknath Behra, MD, KMRL, said the collaboration would support Kochi's transformation into a more liveable, sustainable and resilient city.

"Mobility has a direct impact on air quality, public health, accessibility and overall quality of life. Through this collaboration with IISc, KMRL aims to adopt a systems-based and science-driven approach to urban transport planning. The research outcomes will help us design integrated solutions for metro rail, water metro, canal-based transport and other mobility initiatives, ensuring equitable access, reduced congestion and lower carbon emissions," Behra said.

Real-world challenges

Ashish Verma, Professor of Transportation Planning and Policy, IISc Bengaluru, said the collaboration is focused on solving real-world urban challenges through evidence-based research.

"Mobility is not just about transport — it is deeply connected to public health, air quality, climate resilience and urban liveability. Our research brings a strong empirical and systems-based perspective, using real-world data, simulation models and AI-driven tools to assess the impact of transport interventions on accessibility, equity, congestion, emissions and disaster resilience. We see Kochi as an ideal city to demonstrate how sustainable, livable and resilient urban mobility can be achieved," Verma said.

Verma said that IISc has developed advanced frameworks and intelligent simulation models that allow policymakers to test transport interventions in a virtual environment before implementation. These tools help optimise public transport networks, service frequency, mode share, EV charging infrastructure and traffic management strategies.

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