

OFFICE OF RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Member of Parliament's statement on Government of Karnataka's decision to drop the controversial Steel Flyover project

Projects like the Steel-Flyover and Congress party have a mysterious relationship. After seeing the Congress Government's rule in Karnataka for 5 years and now Congress-JDS coalition from 1-year people have witnessed its exploitation of Bengaluru through contracts and misuse of public money and public assets.

I had opposed the steel flyover project ever since it was announced for the first time in June 2016. Having received several representations and requests from various citizens and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) expressing concerns over steel flyover project. I had also written to the then CM Shri Siddaramaiah to uphold the letter and spirit of 74th Constitution Amendment Act and ensure that citizens have their legitimate say in the development of our city. (<http://bit.ly/2N7heNY>)

The State Government's submission in High Court on 18 June 2019 that the steel flyover project will be dropped is a vindication of citizens' fight and legal battle to ensure that unilateral announcement of "projects" - without following due procedures, which are not transparent and are floated bypassing the constitutionally mandated MPC developing an overall city-wide plan - will be opposed.

Despite severe opposition from citizens, environmentalists and urban planning experts ever since it was first proposed in 2016 the Congress leaders kept on pushing it time and again. It must be pointed out to them that the steel flyover project was not only opposed by the Citizens of Bengaluru but also by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). This is not a political issue but an issue about the rights of those who live in Bengaluru.

Namma Bengaluru, a city of 12 million under the Congress has seen expensive gold-plated projects like TenderSure and Steel Flyover catering to small VIP areas while large parts of the city, where property tax paying citizens suffer from lack of proper basic road infrastructure. If the Government of Karnataka has the money to spend let us have an open transparent discussion on what the priorities of spending public tax payer's money should be.

Post-steel flyover I had written open letter to then Chief Minister on issues bothering Bengaluru and suggestions to ending apathy and corruption at different levels in the government and its agencies. All those points I made then are still relevant even today.

1. Immediately start the process of creating a multi-year plan for Bengaluru – that creates city-wide solutions for traffic, water, garbage, public health, child and women safety, environment and lakes, heritage etc. This plan should be developed by real experts and then discussed openly and transparently with citizens of the City. I urge him to act on this now.
2. To address the perception of rampant corruption – ensure mandatory disclosure of all present and future commercial contracts, tenders and land-use decisions of the government, government agencies in Bengaluru.
3. The RMP must go through the mandatory public consultation as per the clearly laid out guidelines of Supreme Court. Citizens must be given an opportunity to comment. All citizens' comments should be documented in a public domain with a reason for accepting or rejecting.
4. The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has gained the reputation of being a notoriously corrupt organization. Its whole conduct and decision-making during steel flyover must be investigated including that of certain people who were transferred out just before project was cancelled. Either disband or reform the BDA.

On the other hand, if the Chief Minister – as conceded by himself during several occasions - is pressured by circumstances in the coalition to not be able to discharge his duties, then the Government must candidly admit its inability to take care of its responsibility to its citizens and consider resigning to make way for early elections. – Because Bengaluru cannot tolerate for another 4 years, the same apathy and negligence of the last 6 years.

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLAMENT, RAJYA SABHA

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