

# A CONCRETE ROAD PLAN

Task force on quality assurance in public constructions, in its report yet to be submitted to government, says switching over from tar roads to concrete ones is the way forward



FILE PHOTOS

The task force has suggested laying of concrete roads as they last longer than the bitumen roads and are maintenance-free

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Potholes on the streets of IT city may soon be a thing of the past if the state government implements the recommendations of the task force on quality assurance in public constructions. Keeping in mind the longevity of concrete roads in Mumbai, the task force will soon give a report to the government recommending that shifting from tar to concrete roads would be better for a city like Bangalore.

Set up by the government to examine the quality of public construction, the task force members were recently directed to look into road construction within BBMP limits. After checking 20 per

cent of the newly laid out roads, the task force suggested that concrete roads are a better option. The recommendations would soon be submitted to the government.

"Concrete roads last longer than bitumen roads. Besides, there is no major difference in cost and concrete roads don't need maintenance. The more you go for bitumen road, the higher will be the cost and later you will have to invest on the maintenance and potholes too. So we suggested laying concrete roads," said Dr C S Vishwanath of Torsteel Research Foundation and Chairperson of the task force.

## ARTERIAL ROADS

The BBMP had planned to develop a total of around

1,500 km of arterial roads in various parts of the city this year. Determined to reach the target, the BBMP had finished almost 30 per cent of road works.

"Out of the entire project we have chosen nearly 20 per cent of the road project and experts have gone around and collected samples to assess the quality and the results will be out soon," Dr C S Vishwanath added.

The experts led by Dr B R Srinivasamurthy, a former professor at the Indian Institute of Science have visited Tumkur road, KLE college road, Aiyappa temple road at Jalahalli, Malleswaram main road, Banashankari road and Mathikere road for assessing the quality of work.

## CMH ROAD HARD TO WORK

Barely a few days after the collapse of a Bangalore Metro Rail pier on CMH road in Indiranagar, the task force on quality assurance in public constructions which visited the site, admitted that working on the project on CMH Road would be difficult for any contractor because of the narrow space. However, the task force maintained that last week's mishap was not due to technical error but happened because of the contractor's negligence, Dr C S Vishwanath said.

## HEAVY LOAD

"The contractor should have taken adequate care and must have supervised the work. The joining iron bars were not welded prop-

erly and the workers did not know about it. All the workers simultaneously came on to one side and due to the heavy load it collapsed," he added.

Commenting on safety measures at Metro Rail sites, Vishwanath said, "We have had an interaction with engineers and contractors. We have come up with a list of dos and don'ts which can be implemented at the work site. All the engineers have expressed their confidence and assured that they will not let any tragedy happen here."

He added that the Bangalore Metro project is lagging behind in schedule by at least six months but believed that as the work gains momentum, the delay can be made up.

IIT Madras technical fest from Sept 30



BANGALORE MIRROR BUREAU

Here comes an event to stimulate the students to exhibit their skills in the most challenging way. The 11th edition of Shastra, the four-day annual technical festival of IIT Madras, is beginning on Sept 30.

Shastra this year aims to evolve into a technical festival involving everyone, be it budding engineers, young entrepreneurs, future policy makers or technocrats. The fest would comprise three events: IIT Madras Sustainability Symposium, Start-up Showcase and DREAM - Disseminating Real Engineering and Minds. The symposium would be open to students from across the world.

## FOCUSED PLATFORM

According to the organisers, the event aims to engage young people from India and abroad in the task of formulating practical, feasible and specific proposals to tackle some of the challenges we face today and provide a focused and positive platform for constructive discussions centered on finding policy solutions for short and long term global issues.

Start-up Showcase would serve as a platform for aspiring entrepreneurs with promising business plans, giving them a chance to concretise them. It would aspire to support those with bright, creative and practical business plans to facilitate fresh thinking and encourage risk taking. DREAM would consist of a display of some of the most advanced technology as a display of industrial energy, practical capacity, and creative imagination.

This event aims at staging fascinating and exciting innovations and bringing technology to the masses, enabling them to encounter and experience the latest advances in varied fields of science. For more details, contact Rajendra B N over 09844298719, 09444505947.

# 'Scandalous' BBMP, frugal forest dept

COVER STORY

## ROOT MAP

These statistics, that come a fortnight after Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa dropped a bombshell by blaming the timber mafia for the massive tree-chopping exercise underway in Bangalore, is a pointer to the fact that all is not well in the saplings planting exercise too. Ironically, these statistics were presented by Yeddyurappa himself in the recently concluded legislature session while answering a question raised by Mahalakshmi Layout MLA N L Narendra Babu.

Speaking to Bangalore Mirror, Babu said: "Everything looks mysterious. They claim that they have planted several thousands of saplings, but in reality you hardly find any trees around. I had demanded the ward-wise break up of the expenditure in planting saplings, but they have not given it yet. Once we get to know about the ward-wise expenditure, then it



Gangs are involved not just in tree cutting, but also in planting of saplings, say experts

would become easy to find out the irregularities."

## ONLY ON PAPER

While politicians have no clue about the programme, environmentalists have alleged that the saplings exist only on paper. Vinay from Hasiru Usiru said, "There are gangs involved not

only in tree cutting but also in planting saplings. When we asked for detailed information about one area, the officials explained that they have planted more than 100 saplings. But all along the road, there were only 26 saplings. In many places, they have planted flower species like Hibiscus and Bougainvillea

which are just flower bearing creepers and not trees proper."

## 'WE DID OUR JOB'

Meanwhile, BBMP officials maintain that they have discharged their job. "There is a difference in the planting programme that we undertook and the planting programme undertaken by the forest department. It would be easier and more affordable for the forest department to plant lakhs of trees in an open area. But we have taken up avenue plantation which costs more than the forest department as we need to move around and find vacant places to plant saplings," explained a technical officer from the BBMP South Division.

## 'IT'S AN EYEWASH'

However, a retired IFS officer of the forest department contested this. "There is no difference. Both BBMP and Urban Forest department plant saplings in the same kind of

ambience. The forest department plants saplings along the roads, akin to BBMP's method. Then how can they spend so less and these people spend so much?" he asked.

"We used to provide tree guards covered with metallic mesh to safeguard tender saplings. But now they have even replaced that with just a few pieces of bamboo tied in a metallic wire. But if you look around the city, you will not find these guards? Nobody knows what is happening?" he added.

Former mayor and Congress leader M Ramachandrappa claims that it's all mere statistics and that in reality no work has happened. "Be it Cunningham Road, MG Road, Tumkur Road, Cubbon Road or Bellary Road, there is no sign of saplings being planted. I have seen only around 50 saplings across the city. Where are the two lakh saplings that the government says is there?" he asked.