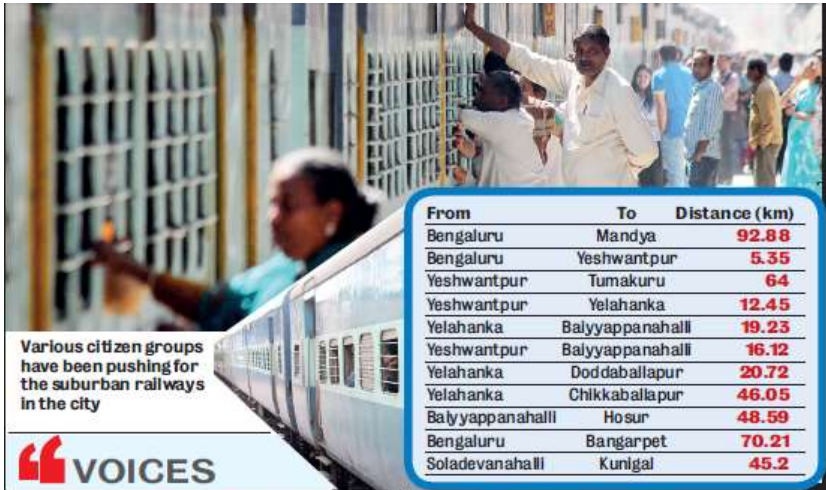


CABINET GIVES THE GREEN SIGNAL TO SUBURBAN RAIL

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Flagging off a new mode of transport to decongest the worsening traffic in and around Bengaluru, the state cabinet on Wednesday approved the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project Phase 1-A. The project will be implemented during the next three years, at a whopping Rs 1,745 crore. This will be a joint venture between the state government and Indian Railways and will connect several district and taluk headquarters adjoining the IT city.



Various citizen groups have been pushing for the suburban railways in the city

VOICES

A dream realised at last

It is amongst the most positive action that the state government has initiated in the past five years since the DPR was filed over the suburban railways. Placing responsibility on the commissioner DULT to monitor the work executed for the completion of the suburban railway phase-1 in a time-bound manner puts an agency in charge of the project. The Cabinet approval is a big push. We hope the state government and the SWRM works in tandem to complete the projects on time. After the MoU was signed in January, some positive steps have been also initiated by SWRM like the project of doubling of the Yeshwanthpur and Hosur line project that is with the railway board for approval. We hope that soon the state and railways will come on a consensus on connecting the city to the airport via the suburban railway.

Sanjeev V Dyamannavar
(Praja RAAG, an advocacy group that has been pushing for suburban rail)

From	To	Distance (km)
Bengaluru	Mandya	92.88
Bengaluru	Yeshwantpur	5.35
Yeshwantpur	Tumakuru	64
Yeshwantpur	Yelahanka	12.45
Yelahanka	Balyappanahalli	19.23
Yeshwantpur	Balyappanahalli	16.12
Yelahanka	Dodaballapur	20.72
Yelahanka	Chikkaballapur	46.05
Balyappanahalli	Hosur	48.59
Bengaluru	Bangarpet	70.21
Soladevanahalli	Kunigal	45.2

Form SPV at the earliest

For the proper implementation of a suburban railway that is the need of the city, the state and the railways need to reach on a consensus. But the implementation of the two new projects is a positive step towards connecting city with a network of trains and now the focus should be on forming the special purpose vehicle at the earliest.

The state government's approval is a big step towards the implementation of a suburban railway network and it will also benefit people from Mandya, Tumakuru and Hosur. I would call it the victory of people's power as things have moved really fast after we sat on a day long dharna at Whitefield Railway station in February last year. Now, we have to see if the railway that comes under the central government also reciprocates in the same manner. But, the positive thing is that elections are due in the state and the union budget is being announced today. Hence we will keep our finger crossed for things to be executed in the right earnest.

Krishnaprasad S (Karnataka Railway Vedike)

Acknowledging that the demand for transportation in Bengaluru is so high and no existing mode of transport can meet the growing demand, the state cabinet favoured the implementation of suburban railway system covering 440.8 km. Briefing the reporters Law Minister TB Jayachandra said, "The project will be implemented on a joint equity basis with both the state and Indian Railways contributing to the project. The Directorate of Urban Land Transport will be the nodal agency that will monitor and supervise over the project." The cabinet has approved setting up of a special purpose vehicle (SPV) aligning with the suburban policy of Railways.

"Out of the total cost a 20 per cent (Rs 349 cr) will be borne by the state government. There will be a total of 58 trains offering 116 services. Each train will have a capacity to carry 1,800 to 2,000 passengers per trip," Jayachandra revealed. Sources in the state government revealed to BM that the project works within the operational area of Railways will be executed by the Railways while the state government has to procure rakes.

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