

Bengaluru: C N R Rao Circle revamp to factor in IISc concerns

IISc director Govindan Rangarajan listed his concerns in a letter to the Karnataka chief secretary. He said the current modifications will block direct access for the IISc community and visitors from the main gate to the Malleswaram area.



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Currently, a traffic circle and a few traffic islands are in place at C N R Rao Circle. Finishing touches are pending. Credit: DH PHOTO / B K JANARDHAN

After some confusion over the redesign of the busy C N R Rao Circle, authorities have clarified that work will proceed. However, only after addressing concerns raised by the director of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), GBA chief commissioner M Maheshwar Rao told Metrolife. The modification is aimed at streamlining traffic and improving pedestrian safety.

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The circle, right outside IISc's main gate, connects traffic to Yeshwantpur, Mekhri Circle and Maramma Circle (Malleswaram). When Metrolife visited on Tuesday, a traffic circle and a few traffic islands were in place, but without finishing touches, such as road signs. Ashish Verma, professor of transportation systems engineering at IISc, who has designed the modifications, said the junction improvement began two months ago and has already been stalled twice, most recently around Ganesh Chaturthi.

IISc director Govindan Rangarajan listed his concerns in a letter to the Karnataka chief secretary. He said the current modifications will block direct access for the IISc community and visitors from the main gate to the Malleswaram area. It can also hinder VVIP movement. He called the alternatives unfeasible and urged the main gate to be kept "fully accessible". He further wrote that the proposed changes were not discussed with the IISc administration.

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However, Verma said he conceptualised the design and piloted it before Rangarajan took office in 2020. The initial design did not block access to Maramma Circle, but after a fresh pilot this April, the plan was revised to restrict it based on on-ground observations. He added that another IISc gate opens to Maramma Circle, and access from other gates add only 100-150 metres to commutes. Rangarajan could not be reached for comment.

Joint commissioner of police (traffic) Karthik Reddy reported clarity in traffic movement and smoother flow since the trials. Another officer said minor accidents on the Sadashivanagar-Yeshwantpur stretch fell from two or three a day to none, and traffic now clears by 8 pm instead of 8.30-9 pm.

Commuter reactions were mixed. One IISc staff dismissed the row as a "non-issue that may only bring a little discipline". A Peenya resident welcomed the change, pointing to buses that "crisscross and speed dangerously" through the junction.