

chaoscorridor

'Keeping buses on the left may not work'

International expert on BRT projects says Delhi's solution faulty

Atul Mathur
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DELHI GOVERNMENT may claim that shifting bus lanes to the left on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor will help, but experts working on BRT projects elsewhere are not very sure.

Walter Hook, executive director of New York-based Institute for Transportation and development Policy (ITDP), who was in the city to attend a seminar on transportation here, expressed his reservations with the idea. "Having bus lanes in the middle of the corridor is a good idea. It reduces chances of conflict with other motorised vehicles. Once you shift them to the left, they will be subjected to a lot of obstruction in the form of other vehicles turning left," he said.

Hook also said it would add to the problem of the traffic signal system. Signalling on BRT corridor here, he said, is already a problem. "Six minute waiting time at traffic intersections is a very long time. In Bogota, where traffic pattern is similar to that of Delhi, the waiting time at traffic intersections is three minutes. I think that needs to be re-worked," said Hook.

ITDP is working on projects related to transportation reforms, low cost public transports, including BRT system, pedestrian issues and traffic demand management in Asian, African, Latin American and East European countries.

Hook and his three colleagues were in Delhi to attend a seminar on 'Bus Rapid Transit and Non-Motorised Transportation in Indian Cities: problems, solutions and the road ahead', organised by the ITDP's India chapter.

Appreciating the government's efforts to provide a separate cycle and pedestrian tracks along the BRT corridor, Hook said efforts should be made to make bus movement faster. "There are too many bus routes on this corridor and buses turning right. That needs to be rationalised to help in simplifying traffic signalling," said Hook.

He added that buses on this corridor "handle a decent 12,000 or so passengers per direction per hour, which is quite high, but buses move at a very slow speed at 13-14 kilometre per hour, which is quite slow in comparison to 20 km per hour universal standard". Hook also suggested that bus bays should be pulled back 60-70 metres from traffic intersections to streamline traffic.

ITDP AT WORK

- Introduced modernised cycle-rickshaws in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur
- Fighting a case in the SC against ban on cycle rickshaws in the walled city
- Giving technical assistance to BRT projects in India, China, South Africa, Tanzania and Senegal
- Working on bicycle planning in Mexico
- Healthcare logistics in Africa
- California bike project
- Promoting cycling in Africa