

## PEC builds bridges with Commissioner

The PEC Core Group interacted briefly but fruitfully with BMP Commissioner Mr Srinivas Murthy on Wednesday June 25<sup>th</sup>. It had been decided earlier that a meeting with Mr Murthy would be useful given the scope and range of the activities being undertaken by the PEC. He had some words of advise for the group.

During the interaction Mr Murthy called upon the PEC in particular and citizens in general to see what they could do for the city. Referring to the PROOF campaign he said, "So far you have been concerned with what the BMP is doing. We have had sufficient dialogue now and you know how the BMP works. Now see what you can do for the city."

It is true that as the city expands citizens would have to become more responsible, sharing the burden with the BMP. This could be the only way towards building a sustainable and fruitful partnership with the BMP. Sensitive citizenry conscious of not only their rights but their duties too would go a long way in making Bangalore a model city. The BMP, Mr Murthy said, had undertaken to plant 25,000 saplings all over the city but the onus of seeing that they develop into trees would fall on citizens. Often citizens do not bother to even care for the saplings in front of their house. This attitude will have to change if a partnership has to be built with the BMP.

In recent times the city has seen increasing commercial activity in residential areas. Mr Murthy squarely blamed citizens for this. He said, "Why is it that Indiranagar and Koramangala have become so commercial? It is because residents in these areas have, without a second thought, rented or sold their premises to software companies, shops and other commercial establishments." Disturbing trends which must change if the city is to maintain its character.



PEC core group members meeting with BMP Commissioner Srinivas Murthy

So can citizens build a long-term partnership with the BMP? "Definitely," said Mr Murthy, "the BMP will always be attentive to such a need." If the BMP can look after the mega projects it is citizens who will have to pay attention to things like maintaining the cleanliness of their areas.

"We have had sufficient dialogue and you know how the BMP works. Now see what you can do for the city. "

- Srinivas Murthy

Mr Murthy appreciated the efforts of the PROOF campaign and said, "It was definitely an opportunity to build bridges with intelligent and articulate citizens." Now that a sound foundation has been laid the time has come to build a stable and enduring superstructure.

The PEC members who interacted with the BMP Commissioner were Masood Hussain, Shantha CK, Ananda Rao, Srikanta, P J Thomas, Shivashankar, Vijaya Hiremath, SVLN Sharma, Madhusudan, Umesh Babu and Rajeev Yeshwanth. Jayanti Norohna from the HUB was also present.

- Rajeev Yeshwanth

### In this week's issue

2

View from the ground

3

Decongesting the city

4

Q & A

## What is PROOF?

PROOF is a public campaign launched on July 4 2002, by a collective of four organisations: Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Public Affairs Centre, Janaagraha and Voices.

PROOF envisions transparency and accountability in the financial operations of the government through a collaborative process, between the stakeholders of the city and the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike.

## What is the PROOF Energy Centre?

The Proof Energy Centre (PEC) is a committed group of individuals from across Bangalore who meet regularly to steer the activities of PROOF by discussion and debate with local communities.

## Who are the PEC co-ordinators?

The PEC members listed below are taking responsibility for special activities in community communications - they may need your help! If you would like to know more about their particular area of interest - or to help in any way - please call them directly.

**H.S. Srikantha**, Mini-discussion series  
t: 6585104.

**S.N. Shiva Shankar**, College activities  
t: 6507225.

**C. K Shantha & Masood Hussain**,  
Building Bridges t. 6572786  
e-mail: netmasood@rediffmail.com

**Rajeev Yeshwanth**, Talk About Proof  
e: rajwriter@hotmail.com

**Ananda Rao**, Proof Puttanna  
t. 6588132, e:mrarao@lycos.com

**P.J. Thomas**, Namma budget  
t: 5280311.

**G. Shivanna**, Kannada activities  
t: 2246036.

# View from the ground

*read about the PROOF media workshop*

*A workshop to sensitise the media to the PROOF campaign was held on March 15 at VVTowers. Three student interns at Voices report on it.*

We were already late. If that was not bad enough, the room was full with about forty people already in it. The press meet was under way; we had missed the initial speeches made by the speakers. One could see that everybody there was fully engrossed in what was going on. It was a strange feeling because by coming in late, it seemed like we had disturbed the intensity of the proceedings.

It took a while to make sense of what was going on. By this time Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan of Janaagraha was on the podium. As he is known to be an engaging speaker, it was a pleasure to listen to him. Although his Kannada is not top notch, his speech was enthralling. He spoke about how PROOF began and the importance of the Right to Information Act. This was supplemented with examples, which supported his stand on the campaign.

Mr. Vinod Vyasalu of CBPS concentrated more on the technical aspects, regarding the details of the budget, as that is his area of expertise. He also spoke of how the PROOF campaign was not popular enough in Bangalore where as people in Mexico knew well about the campaign and how the media was invaluable in reaching out to more people. He gave credit to the BMP for being so open and co-operative with the citizens.

The next speaker Mr. B.L. Shankar, Chairman of the Legislative Council, was more critical about the way the BMP functioned. He felt that citizens were not treated as individuals, but were tagged with regard to their caste, religion, etc. He also said that it was now time to give the different departments of the BMP to qualified people so that money could be better utilized. However, Mr. Shankar was all praise for the campaign. He said it was good that the BMP is now becoming accountable for its actions, as it would be advantageous for the citizens.

This press-meet was useful as it gave the media an idea of the campaign and the quarterly budget debates. It also gave the campaign partners an opportunity to express their point of view.

**Next PEC Meetings :**  
**July 11th at 6.00 pm**

**Listen to PROOF Puttanna**



**On AIR FM 101.3**  
**between 8 and 8.15 pm every**  
**Wednesday**  
**Next programme: July 2**

# Decongesting the city

Mr Murlidhar Rao  
is a PEC member

By Murlidhar Rao

At the Q4 public discussion held in May, the Commissioner, Mr M R Srinivas Murthy, stated that BMTC should introduce at least 1000 'quality' buses to encourage private vehicle users to opt for public transport. While that is a very welcome suggestion, the question arises as to why it shouldn't be taken to its logical conclusion.

The emphasis is on quality, and for that, we all know that competition is a must. So, the answer is to open out the bus operations to the private sector, perhaps on the lines of the 'policy' outlined below.

After an initial period of a few months for settling down, Bangalore will have the best and most cost effective public transport system ever, as envisaged in the 'likely scenario' outlined below.

## The possible policy could be framed on the following lines:

1. Public bus transport sector to be opened out totally.
2. The classifications such as stage carriages, contract carriages, maxi cabs, etc to be withdrawn, and annual license fees charged on the basis of the vehicle floor area.
3. All bus stands to be taken over and run (or better still- leased out to professional contractors) by local bodies, like the BMP.
4. Service providers to be free to choose the routes they wish to operate on, as also the schedules. RTO to be empowered to impose restrictions only in the case of overcrowding of routes/ roads.
5. Service providers to be totally free to adopt their own fare tables. There are to be no restrictions on fares, whatsoever.

6. Public bus transport vehicles to be maintained in exacting road-worthy condition. No public bus transport vehicle to be more than 10 years old.

7. Traffic authorities, throughout the state, to ensure top priority for movement of public bus transport vehicles.

8. Policing of public bus transport vehicles to be made very strict, with penalties for over-speeding, rash & negligent driving, drunken driving, over-loading, etc.

9. An efficient bus transport system (with government and private players operating in open competition) to form the backbone of the public transport system. In large cities, these to be supplemented by METRO rail as the situation warrants.

## The likely outcome could be the following:

1. Corporates like TVS, Ashok Leyland, etc, alongside the present contract-carriage operators like Blueline, VRL, Sharma Transports, KPN, etc, apart from co-operatives like those formed by ex-servicemen, likely to come on the scene with hundreds of buses, catering to all kinds and classes of demand.

2. The resulting competition will automatically drive the different service providers to come up with innovative schemes encouraging people to switch over to public transport.

3. At the lower end, you will have the 'Janata' services, stopping at all bus stops enroute, and charging the barest minimum (which in all possibility will be much lower than BMTC's present charges).

4. At the upper end, you will have the A/C deluxe services (possibly with broad, reclining seats, newspapers & magazines for reading, etc) catering to corporate executives, and operating from say Whitefield to Residency road, with just some 5 stops in-between.

5. In between, you will have a wide spectrum of services, with each service provider making known his USP through the local media.

6. Even within a Jayanagar or a Indiranagar, you will have mini-buses operating in given circuits, catering to the local shopping and other needs of the residents.

7. The usage of two-wheelers and cars will reduce drastically, at least for commuting, leading to decluttering of city roads, reduction of air pollution, spread of population from city centres to out-lying areas, promotion of the healthy practice of walking and an appreciable drop in the monthly family transport budget.

## Your voice

write in and tell us your views



I really like the PROOF Puttanna show because it is very informative. It gives the listener relevant information and gives the listener a platform to voice his opinions.

Instead of limiting the show to Wednesday 8 p.m. you should try to broadcast the show on other days of the week as well. Also it would be very nice if you could make the PROOF Puttanna show a phone-in show so that the listener could interact more with the show. This would make the show much more appealing.



Mr. Arunachandra, prizewinner, episode 34, PROOF Puttanna



## Write away!

Would you like to write here about your viewpoint on issues surrounding governance, transparency and accountability? Send your article to the address or e-mail on the back of this newsletter.

# Q & a your questions answered

Get to know all about the 2<sup>nd</sup> college workshop between July 12-14, 2003

**Q** Q1. Why is the PEC organising the workshop?

**a** Today's students are tomorrow's citizens and it is imperative that they need to be sensitized to civic issues. It is only when we have sensitive citizenry that the city can progress.

**Q** Q2. Where is the workshop being held?

**a** The workshop is being held at the NMKRV college auditorium in Jayanagar 3<sup>rd</sup> block.

**Q** Q3. How long is the workshop?

**a** The workshop will last from July 12-14, more specifically two and a half days. On the 12<sup>th</sup> it will start at 9.30 and go on till 5.30. On the 13<sup>th</sup> the participants will spend the day on fieldwork, visiting various places in the city to gather information. On the 14<sup>th</sup> all participants will assemble at 2 pm and each group will make presentations on their findings.

**Q** Q4. Who can participate in the workshop?

**a** The workshop is open to all undergraduate and graduate students in the city.

**Q** Q5. What will the workshop be about?

**a** The aim of the workshop is to create sensitive citizenry. Participants will be briefed on the PROOF campaign and how they can play an active role in it. There will be many presentations and exercises like quizzes and essay writing for the students. The theme of the workshop is 'We and our City – Naavu, Namma Nagara'.

**Q** Q6. Who will be the keynote speakers at the workshop?

**a** Keynote speakers at the workshop will include BMP officials, environmentalists and PROOF partners.

**Q** Q7. What can the students expect to get out of the workshop?

**a** At the end of the programme, apart from being sensitized to participatory governance, all the students will be awarded a Certificate of Participation.

**Q** Q10. How many colleges have been invited to the workshop?

**a** About 25 colleges have been invited. A minimum of 2 students and a maximum of 5 students are expected to represent each college.

**?** Do you have a question to ask PROOF? Please send any question about the campaign to us at the address or e-mail printed at the bottom of this page.

■ Want a copy of the first, second, third or fourth quarterly report with PROOF analysis?

■ Want to know the latest development in the PROOF campaign?

■ Want to know more about the PROOF partners and how you can get involved in some of their other activities?

For answers to all of these questions contact us NOW!

## How to contact PROOF at VOICES

write: PROOF, 165, First Floor, 9th Cross, 1st Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore - 560 038

tel: 91-80-5213902/03

fax: 91-80-5213901

e-mail: proof\_voices@vsnl.net

www.voicesforall.org  
design : Paula Daly

TAP coordinator:- Rajeev Yeshwanth.

