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CM moves to set right city traffic woes

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Chavan orders pilot project on one road; similar plans for Pune, Nagpur

In an effort to decongest Mumbai's roads, Chief Minister Ashok Chavan has directed officials to conduct a pilot project on one major road in the city to streamline the public transport system and take the load off other main roads.

Chavan was speaking after a presentation on transport projects across the globe by former Mayor of Bogota (Columbia) Enrique Penalosa at the Mantralaya on Tuesday. Penalosa is credited with transforming Bogota's transport system by making it more pedestrian and environment-friendly.

Chavan asked the urban development department officials to identify one major road in Mumbai, on which a pilot project to streamline public transport and decongest the roads could be taken up. The findings of the project could later be implemented in Pune. He also asked officials to draw up similar, but separate, plans for Nagpur and Aurangabad.

According to officials, Mumbai has an estimated 17 lakh vehicles and the number is rising at 5.10 per cent annually. The city is already witnessing an overhaul of traffic systems with skywalks, plans for dedicated lanes through BRTS, new flyovers and multi-level parking.

Chavan also suggested that public opinion should be sought and included while drawing up the project as there is a possibility of opposition to the idea of a separate lane for public transport. Pedestrian roads, separate lanes for public transport and improving the quality of footpaths in the city were some suggestions put forward by Chavan.

During his presentation, Penalosa asked officials to bear in mind that by 2060, Maharashtra would witness 75 per cent urbanisation. He said like many major cities in the world, Mumbai could have separate lanes for bicycles. Penalosa had offered his assistance to officials as they draw up plans for the city.

The BMC is already in the process of appointing consultants for feasibility study on bicycle tracks. All traffic junctions across the island city, eastern and western suburbs will be studied and an area-wise local traffic management plan prepared with the help of traffic cops, MMRDA, MSRDC and PWD.