

EXPRESS The Indian EXPRESS Newsline

E-MAIL: delhinewsline@expressindia.com | Phone: 23702100-07 |

NEW DELHI | FRIDAY | JUNE 6, 2008

LSE study group approves of BRT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Planners of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor and the Delhi government have a reason to smile.

The corridor has been given a stamp of approval by Phillip Rode, executive director of Urban Age Programme, a joint initiative of the London School of Economics (LSE) and Deutsche Bank. The programme has studied urbanisation in dif-

ferent cities across the world. "I think Delhi has to think more rationally. In the limited available space, buses running in the BRT corridor carry more passengers than even the Metro," Rode said. He was speaking at the launch of "Integrated City Making", the summary of a detailed study on urbanisation in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore, carried out by the Urban Age Programme.

Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit was scheduled to attend the release but couldn't due to

an emergency meeting on LPG cylinder prices.

Talking about car owners, who have complained about limited space on the corridor, Rode said: "It is definitely going to hurt a little but Delhi does not have an alternative."

Rode pointed out that Delhi does not have an efficient taxi system even as cities like New York have strengthened such services as part of public transport to take pressure off the roads. "We have to understand that we cannot ask people to leave behind

their cars unless we provide the same comfort. A strong taxi service would also reduce parking conflicts significantly," he said.

Delhi also lacks pedestrian spaces. "I have a habit of taking a stroll every evening. But in Delhi it is impossible. The footpaths are uneven and the side lanes are dangerous for walking. I rather stay in my hotel room than explore the beautiful Connaught Place," Rode said. This despite the fact that 32 per cent of Delhi walks to work.

The Urban Age researchers have also taken a note of the mad rush in which the Delhi government is building infrastructure around the Capital for the upcoming Commonwealth Games.

"Governments in the US and Europe are tearing down flyovers even as the Delhi government is building them endlessly. The problem with such rushed construction of infrastructure is that quite often you end up making wrong choices in a hurry," Rode said.