

Police Offer Protection to Bangalore Metro's encroachment of Lalbagh

A day after the Police confirmed with *Hasiru Usiru* that they would ensure that Bangalore Metro would be allowed into Lalbagh only if they had full legal rights, a massive police force was mobilised today to protect the violating agency and allow it to fell trees. Clearly, the message is that if a Government agency violates the law, then the police will still protect them.

Distressingly, the Police offered protection to the violating Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) to fell several more trees inside Lalbagh Botanical Gardens, even when BMRCL was unable to demonstrate that they have legally got possession of 1135 sq. metres of this infamous garden. Thereby, questionably ignoring the complaint filed on Monday by *Hasiru Usiru* that the ongoing work in Lalbagh was illegal and the police ought to protect public property from such encroachment.

Only last week, three bonded children were found working on the Metro construction site and one of them was rescued by the Child Welfare Committee. This should have shamed any agency into lawful action, but the Metro authorities seem immune to any violation of law.

Clearly, the fact that has now been revealed in the Detailed Project Report of the Bangalore Metro that Lakshman Rao Park will be substantially ruined for locating an electric sub-station, an Integration Area (read bus stands, auto stands, parking zones, shopping areas, etc.) and also a Metro rake yard. Local residents have no clue that this is what India's loveliest boulevard will be reduced to.

Such reallocation of public parks is not a concern of local residents alone. If Lalbagh which is amongst the most protected monuments of plant biodiversity collected from all over the world loses its sanctity, and Lakshman Rao Park can be so easily lost, it is not too long before Bangalore loses the very lustre that brought it so much investment.

We are convinced that the Metro authorities have not at all brought these details to the attention of the Chief Minister and the Cabinet. It is well established that the Legislature has also been kept in the dark on this issue. It is no wonder then that the people of the city have no option but to continue their protest.

Hasiru Usiru will continue its protests against such blatant violation of the rule of law and destruction of parks and public commons. We are clear that a Metro can be built without any need to destroy Lalbagh and Lakshman Rao Parks, even with an elevated track, as is revealed in the attached image.

Hasiru Usiru has called for the next protest on 9th May 2009, Saturday, at 8.30 am at Lakshman Rao boulevard. Hundreds are expected to participate in this protest and ensure the Metro will be built respecting the rule of law and without destroying Lalbagh and Lakshman Rao boulevard.

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