

BBMP gives PM's advisor a bad name

The Palike named an underpass near IISc after Prof C N R Rao. It has been a work in progress for nearly four years now, leaving Rao cringing

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Cracking complicated chemical equations is a cakewalk for Prof CNR Rao, head of the Scientific Advisory Council to the prime minister. But when it comes to unravelling the workings of the BBMP, the scientist throws up his hands in despair. Case in point: The construction of an underpass near the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) that leaves the good professor cringing every time he passes it.

If you're wondering why Rao has a problem, here's why: The BBMP has named the underpass, conceived four years ago, after him. Rao told BANGALORE MIRROR: "I did not ask the BBMP to use my name for the underpass; they named it without my consent."

And adding insult to the injury is



BBMP approved the underpass in 2008, but work is still on, says Rao (above right)

the fact that the construction has turned out to be a never-ending one. "I had heard that it would be completed in six months," Rao said, "But work is

still going on. What a waste! I don't have any control on the BBMP and I do my work inside the campus, in a lab and with students. Sometimes, I even



advise the state government on various issues. But on this underpass, I have had no discussions with any officials."

The BBMP had approved the construction in 2008, but work at the ground level started only in January 2010. Three BBMP mayors and numerous officials have inspected the underpass work, which was supposed to have been completed by September 2011. But that deadline slipped by quietly and as of now, 30 per cent of the work is still pending.

So, what really is the problem? Mayor D Venkatesh Murthy said, "There was problem between the two contractors, but it has been sorted out. We have given a fresh deadline of March 2013. If the contractor fails to

finish the project, we will fine him."

Elaborating, BBMP's superintendent engineer K T Nagaraj said, "The project estimate was Rs 24 crore, but the bidder M/s Madha Hytech quoted 15 per cent more than the original amount. Now the Rs 30-crore contract has been awarded to him. As the work was stopped, we asked his joint venture partner M/s ECCI to execute the project. There was some hurdle over land acquisition from BWSSB and BHEL, but now that that has been cleared, work will be completed soon."

But Aramane Nagar ward corporator Dr M S Shivprasad is sceptical. "The officials have insulted Prof Rao's name by not completing it," he said.

"I have put a lot of pressure on officers, but don't see any progress. Now they claim the work will be completed by March 2013. If they meet this deadline, I will touch their feet," he added.

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Techies set up website featuring achievers

Aimed at motivating youngsters, a dozen software engineers have launched a website which features biographies of successful people

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MANGALORE

An apple falling from a tree gave the world its most influential scientist. Perhaps, a page on a website would inspire the next. A group of 12 software engineers have set up a website filled with stories on the lives of modern-day movers and shakers. Called KnowYourStar.com (KYS), the website features biographies of successful people ranging from magician Simon Pierro to Radhakrishna Adiga, all collected and compiled through interviews conducted by the techies themselves.

"Our tagline, 'Every saga...a spark for your success', says it all," Jaideep Rao, co-founder of KYS told BANGALORE MIRROR. Rao graduated from Manipal Institute of Technology this year and is currently working as a software engineer in a private firm.

"At the end of the day, we will be very happy if someone is motivated by our work. Though profiles of successful people are available elsewhere on the web, our aim is to let the world know how and what inspired them to achieve those feats. The response has been terrific and so has the feedback. People are even letting us know of achievers who can be featured on KYS."

Looking back on how it all began, Rao said, "Most of us were confused about the stream to choose. We wanted to strike a balance of profession and passion. At present, irrespective of fields, we are getting those achievers our site so as to show youngsters that even they can be achievers. This is what brought all of us together and the urge to help society keeps us going. Weekends are all about KYS and we enjoy it."

The team behind KYS is an enterprising one with members contributing with different skills. Sharath is the 'creative' one who comes up with the ideas, while Kiran, ex-faculty of MIT, is more mentor than co-founder. Kiran had launched his own start-up, TransInn Technologies, based in



Simon Pierro with Jaideep and Sharath

Udupi. Pranita (software engineer based in Pune) and Jennifer (software engineer from Bangalore) are the writers and contribute to content. Ashwin (MBA student in Alliance University, Bangalore) and Ragi handle marketing, Akshay is developing apps, Ruchi is responsible for the artwork, while Ikku, Kirane and Vinci help in building contacts.

"We complement each other and the website is the fruit of our team effort," said Rao. "Anyone willing to contribute can join the team."

KYS currently features about eight biographies, while another five are in the pipeline.

"To be honest, we are thrilled after every interview," Rao said. "Meeting a Kuchipudi legend, the inventor of indigenous prosthetic valves or the only Indian musician to have performed for the Queen of England is more than just exciting. Getting appointments with celebrities is difficult, but we convince them by explaining our motive. We have had disappointments, but have overcome them and learnt from our mistakes. The number of hits has increased and reader base is widening. A number of readers keep coming back which is a good sign."

So far, marketing has been word of mouth and since these techies are dealing with real-life stories, they have been slow and hard to come by. But the team is enjoying the work.

"Satisfaction levels are incredibly high," said Rao. "The best part? It has been unlimited fun."