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KANARA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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9th February 2026

Shri Darshan H.V., I.A.S
Deputy Commissioner & District Magistrate & Administrator M.C.C.
Dakshina Kannada District,
Padil,
Mangaluru – 575 007.

Dear Sir,

Sub: Concerns regarding the civic advertising tender for bus shelters,
gantries and cantilever signage.

Greetings from the Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Mangaluru.

The recently floated tender for the development of bus shelters, gantries and cantilever signage with advertisement rights in Mangaluru has raised serious concerns among local stakeholders, civic observers and long-standing service providers. Beyond questions of design and revenue, the tender touches on broader issues of fairness, transparency, democratic legitimacy and the long-term character of the city.

Tender issued in the absence of an elected council

Mangaluru City Corporation is currently functioning without an elected council, as the term of the corporators has ended and elections are awaited. In this context, initiating a large, long-term project that will shape public spaces, advertising rights and the city's streetscape for years without deliberation by elected representatives raises important concerns. Decisions of this scale ideally require democratic oversight and policy direction, not merely administrative approval.

Absence of public consultation

It is equally concerning that no public hearing, stakeholder consultation or citizen feedback process appears to have been conducted before floating this tender. Bus shelters, gantries and advertising structures directly affect commuters, pedestrians, shopkeepers, residents and road users. Moving ahead with a city-wide advertising infrastructure project without seeking public opinion weakens participatory governance and risks eroding public trust. Urban infrastructure should be shaped with citizens, not imposed upon them.

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Eligibility conditions that exclude local vendors

The requirement of a minimum ₹18-crore standalone turnover from advertisement business effectively excludes all local Mangaluru-based vendors. Local firms have successfully designed, erected and maintained civic infrastructure for decades. Public procurement should encourage MSMEs and local enterprises, not eliminate them through disproportionate eligibility criteria.

Previously, the Corporation followed a package-based model that divided advertising media into smaller lots, enabling participation by MSMEs and vendors with modest turnover. This inclusive approach has been bypassed without explanation, raising legitimate concerns.

Bundling of assets and risk of monopoly

The tender bundles 150 major public assets under a single concessionaire, effectively granting exclusive control over Mangaluru's outdoor advertising ecosystem. This risks monopolisation of public visual space, reduces competition and creates long-term dependency on a single private operator. There is a growing perception that the tender structure may favour a large out-of-city vendor.

A more equitable approach would be to divide the project into multiple packages to ensure fair participation, competition and accountability. Entrusting the entire city to a single concessionaire also creates a significant operational risk. In the event of non-performance or poor performance, the entire city would be adversely affected.

A multi-vendor model would encourage healthy competition in both design and service delivery and provide operational resilience—if one vendor fails to perform in a particular zone, vendors from adjacent zones can step in to ensure continuity. The city's past experience with a single-vendor model in waste disposal has already highlighted the risks of over-dependence on one operator. This reinforces the importance of avoiding similar monopolistic structures in this project.

Subjective technical evaluation

Bidders are required to secure a minimum of 75 marks in the technical evaluation, with significant weight given to development plans, designs and methodology. These parameters are inherently subjective, and the tender does not specify clear, measurable benchmarks for evaluation. Such discretion creates scope for bias or preferential treatment and undermines confidence in a fair and transparent process.



Visual impact on the city

Mangaluru is a coastal, green and heritage-sensitive city. Large-scale proliferation of gantries, cantilevers and LED advertising structures could lead to severe visual pollution and erosion of the city's identity. There is no indication that a visual impact assessment or urban carrying-capacity study has been conducted.

Traffic safety and environmental concerns

Mangaluru's roads are already narrow and congested. Additional overhead structures may obstruct visibility, distract drivers and increase accident risk. The tender also lacks a robust framework for tree protection and environmental safeguards, raising concerns about tree cutting, canopy trimming and long-term ecological impact.

Overlooking proven local capability

Local vendors possess deep knowledge of coastal weather conditions, monsoons, soil behaviour and traffic patterns. They provide faster response times, generate local employment and remain directly accountable to the community. Marginalising them in favour of distant monopolies risks turning civic infrastructure into a purely extractive commercial exercise.

Recommendations and Way Forward

Bus shelters and signage are essential public amenities, not merely advertising platforms. Decisions affecting public space must be guided by democratic legitimacy, transparency, competition, environmental sensitivity and local inclusion.

We respectfully urge that the tender be paused and reconsidered; that elected representatives be involved once the council is constituted; that public opinion be sought; that eligibility and evaluation criteria be revisited; that monopolisation be prevented by unbundling the project; that pending allotments be honoured; and that Mangaluru's urban and environmental character be protected.



- 4 -

**Development must be inclusive and democratic never exclusionary,
discretionary or imposed without public consent.**

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,
For **KANARA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

P. B. AHMED MUDASSAR
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Confederation of Indian Industry (Southern Region), Bengaluru/Chennai. | Bangalore Chamber of Industry & Commerce, Bengaluru. | Indian Merchants' Chamber, Mumbai.

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