



2/2016

# CityMatters



## Do Traffic Laws Contribute to Road Safety?

In the recent past, many new traffic lights have been installed across the capital city of Rajasthan. One hopes that this move will help improve the driving habits of our vehicle drivers, which is a big NO. Many drivers continue to drive through red lights or in the opposite direction (and many a times speaking on their mobiles) creating a hazard for those who follow the rules.



Traffic enforcement is poor. My worry as a road safety activist is that things are going from bad to worse. My concern as a car driver is that if a crazy two wheeler driver hits me and sustains injuries or dies then I am held guilty because I am driving the bigger vehicle. If this trend of indiscipline on roads continues my worry is how the next generations will cope with it.

I travel abroad frequently for my work, and the road discipline that I see in poor African countries is starkly far better than India. They do not even honk when traffic is crawling. In India, we honk for no rhyme or reason, under some false assumption that since there is a horn it must be used. I feel ashamed and we claim that we are a 5,000 year old civilisation.

We were told that there will be close circuit TV cameras at traffic crossings in Jaipur and violators will be prosecuted. I have not heard of a single case. This is evident from the lackadaisical manner in which the Jaipur Police functions. They launched a Whatsapp number '7300363636' for citizens to send their complaints/ views etc. I sent one message sometime ago that the bigger vehicles were not allowed on the elevated road towards Jaipur on Ajmer highway and there was a ceiling barrier. The barrier has been removed and buses have started driving on the highway merrily.

I did not get any response from the Police to my message on Whatsapp for a long time, in spite of few reminders to the Whatsapp number and the Police Commissioner. Finally, I got a response that the matter is being resolved soon. That is yet to happen. Buses continue to ply on the elevated road.

The Whatsapp number for Jaipur Police and the facility was announced with great fanfare but my one experience only confirms our fears that things are not so hunky dory.

Reverting to the wildness of our drivers on the roads, I wonder how safe our pedestrians are. The city administration is also not worried about their safety. Every day I drive past the railway station crossing to reach my office, which allows a smooth flow of traffic after one side is shut off. But the smooth flow does not take into account the plight of the pedestrians who have to cross the road at the crossing. The poor guys have to dodge the traffic and carry on at their own peril.

If Jaipur has to become a world class city and is now getting funding under the SMART Cities Programme, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) etc., should we not make lives of our citizens safer and better. Or are we so insensitive that it does not matter.

*Pradeep S Mehta*  
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## Cleanliness Pledge of 100 hours

The day Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government completed two years in power was also the day all Ministers and bureaucrats had to take a 'Cleanliness Pledge'.



It started with an exhortation to follow in the footsteps of great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi who wanted a clean and developed India, and went on with the officials promising to volunteer 100 hours a year, or two hours a week, to work towards cleanliness.

The Ministers also pledged to initiate a quest for cleanliness in their families, localities, towns and villages and encourage 100 more people to take the pledge to devote 100 hours of their time towards cleanliness. (BS, 27.05.16)

## Half-a-Rupee: Hard to Find

Absence of circulation of 50 paisa coin is causing trouble to the Indian consumers who are forced to pay money, which is rounded off to a higher denomination. While the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintains that 50 paisa coin is still legal tender and should not be refused. However, as it is hard to find the coin with the shopkeepers so it is the consumers who are feeling the pinch.



One such perturbed consumer went to district Consumer Forum against McDonald's that was then ordered by the Forum to pay ₹8,000 for overcharging the customer along with legal expenses for charging 50 paisa extra from him. (DNA, 14.04.16)

## Skewed Sex Ratio Hazards

If an Indian immigrant couple in Canada is having two children, the likelihood of the third child being a girl is less likely. A Paper published in the journal 'CMAJ Open' notes that the skewed sex ratio among Indian immigrants in Canada has resulted in about '4,472 missing girls'.

The actual number of missing girls might be much higher given that the calculations based on the ratios did not

affect repeated induced abortions of female foetuses. The deficit in the number of newborn girls to Indian immigrants in Canada is around 200 per year. Unlike in the general trend of 103-106 boys per 100 girls, the proportion of male children increased according to the birth order among Indian-born mothers. (TH, 14.04.16)

## Dipa Vaults into History

Dipa Karmakar from the Indian state of Tripura took up gymnastics at the age of six on the insistence of her father who was a weightlifting coach in Agartala. She was scared of falling down and hurting herself but her father convinced her to persevere in the sport.

That decision turned out to be a life-changer for Dipa. In April 2016, the 22-year-old became the first Indian woman gymnast to secure an Olympic Games berth in artistic gymnastics at a qualifying event in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

Besides, she won the gold medal in the vaults final, the first time an Indian woman has clinched a gold in a global gymnastics event. (Tol, 19.04.16)

## Toy Joy Event

Toy Joy-a Jaipur-based startup is organising an event where Jaipurites can donate old toys to bring smiles and joy to underprivileged children by making them experience the happiness that comes with opening a present.

Toy Joy is the brain child of three teens namely, Anoushka Saboo (16), Rashi Chaudhary (16) and Aryamaan Lakhota (14). The girls manage the branch in Jaipur, while Aryamaan manages the one in Kolkata (West Bengal).

The idea came to the founders when they were excited to unwrap the presents they had received on their birthday and thinking about numerous Indian people who had never ever experienced this joy, the concept of Toy Joy came into being. (Tol, 28.05.16)

## Honesty is not Dead

A 26-year-old engineer from Kendrapara has set an example by returning ₹1.40 lakh to a man who had lost it. "Honesty is not dead". Shatrughna Moharana, a shop owner in Niali area of Cuttack district (Odisha) returned the lost bag with the money lead him to believe that there are still good souls in the world.

The honest engineer gave Moharana the entire sum of money, which was a huge amount for him. Moreover, with great difficulty, he had arranged the money and lost the bag carrying cash on March 26, 2016 in Cuttack.

(TH, 14.04.16)

## Famous Statues Masked

Famous statues across London, including the one of Horatio Nelson on Trafalgar Square to draw attention to the problem of air pollution are being masked by British environmental activists.

Two Greenpeace campaigners scaled the 52-metre high Nelson's Column to put a mask on the famous British Naval Commander. Masks were put on 17 statues, including Queen Victoria near Buckingham Palace, Eros at Piccadilly Circus and Winston Churchill outside the Parliament.



"Monitoring shows that if these statues were real people, many of them would often be breathing dangerous, illegal air", campaigner Areeba Hamid stated. (TH, 19.04.16)

## Poor Response of 'Dial 100'

A Delhi High Court judge has written to the Commissioner of Police about the poor response of 'dial 100' helpline service, based on his personal experience.

The letter by Justice Vipin Sanghi, also shared with High Court Chief Justice G Rohini, was converted into a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) after she took *suobb motu* cognisance of the issue of distress calls going unanswered.

In his letter addressed to top cop Sanghi narrated his 'poor personal experience' on April 29, 2016 when he was stuck for about 40 minutes in a big traffic jam in Vasant Kunj (Delhi). On calling 100 number at 10.12 PM to inform the police about the jam his call was not answered despite the helpline being an emergency response mechanism. (Tol, 11.05.16)



## 23 Percent Pollution Rise

Air pollution levels in Delhi rose to 23 percent during the second phase of the odd-even registration rule, from



April 15-29, 2016 over the previous 14 days (April 01-14, 2016), based on an analysis generated by IndiaSpend's #Breathe air-quality monitoring devices.

The odd-even scheme ended on April 30, 2016 the data indicated that it could not work in the long-term without additional actions. These include improving bus services, curbing factory and truck emissions and suppressing construction dust, which accounts for about half of the Delhi's air pollution. Moreover, wind speed and temperature also affect air quality. (BS, 01.05.16)

## Virtually Empty Homes

The minimalist lifestyle trend has been gaining popularity in the western world for a while now, but still life is far from the hardcore minimalism that Zen-loving Japanese have adopted in their quest to achieve a stress-free life.

For them, minimalism is not just about de-cluttering their living space, but also about evaluating what material possessions truly bring to their lives and focussing on the things that they consider important. Space has always been an issue in crowded Japanese cities, so from that point of view it makes sense that people try to keep their homes junk free. (OC, 21.06.16)

## Lightening School Bags

The lack of an on-campus canteen, which forces children to carry lunchboxes from home, and heavy books are some of the reasons a majority of students from unaided schools in Bengaluru (Karnataka) continue to stagger under the weight of their school bags. Children from Karnataka's unaided schools seem to carry the heaviest load, with an average weight of 5.6 kg a bag.

Students attending government schools carry the lightest load, averaging at 3.7 kg. These were some of the findings of a sample survey conducted by the Department of State Educational Research and Training (DSERT) in association with the Centre for Child and the Law, the National Law School of India University. (TH, 27.05.16)

## Next Uber – A Multicopter

The world's first certified multicopter lifts off in Bruchsal (Germany), marking a new era for aerial transportation. Just as the smartphone technology sparked new ideas for urban transportation – like Lit Motor's C-1, two-wheeled, self-balancing electric vehicle – drone technologies are pushing the future of personal travel to new heights.

The Volocopter VC200 made aircraft history on March 30, 2016 as the first certified multicopter to fly with a person onboard. Designed by German company e-vo, this electric aircraft gives people a glimpse into a future where, one day, ubers and taxis can travel above street traffic to their next destination. (OC, 28.04.16)

## Rise in Tiger Count after Decades

The number of wild tigers across the globe has increased for the first time in a century due to improved conservation efforts, wildlife groups stated. Data compiled by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Global Tiger Forum revealed that the global population of



wild tigers has risen to an estimated 3,890 from an all-time low of 3,200 in 2010.

“For the first time after decades of constant decline, tiger numbers are on the rise”, according to Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International. This is the first time the count of these endangered cats has gone up since 1900, when there were 100,000 tigers. (TNW, 11.04.16)

## Increasing Obesity by 2025

One in five adults could be obese by 2025, indicated a major survey that warned of a looming epidemic of 'severe obesity' with significant health and economic costs. The figure was set to exceed 1.1 billion by 2025.



Among men globally, obesity tripled from 3.2 percent of the population in 1975 to 10.8 percent in 2014 (some 266 million), and among women it rose from 6.4 percent to 14.9 percent (375 million), said the study. Of about 5 billion adults alive in 2014, 641 million were obese, it found. The figure was set to exceed 1.1 billion by 2025. (TH, 02.04.16)

## Ingenious Fitness Bus

London (UK) residents who are too busy to hit the gymnasium every once in a while will soon get the chance to work out during their commute, thanks to a fleet of ingenious fitness buses packed full of stationary bikes instead of seats, allowing commuters to spin at their hearts' content on their way to work.

The modified public transportation vehicles will feature stationary bikes instead of seats, allowing commuters to enjoy the ride on their way to work. These Buses will travel from four pick-up points in north, east, south and west London along the city's most popular commute routes, all the way to the I ride studio where riders can come in for a smoothie before work. (OC, 15.06.16)

## Turning Home to Library

Retired Filipino accountant Hernando Guanlao has found a wonderful way to spend all his free time – he has set up a small public library right outside his home and he regularly hands out books to poor children for free.

Hernando's library is very relevant to the society he lives in, where many children drop out of school to support their families. He said that he initiated the library to honour his parents and the only inheritance they left him – an insatiable love for learning.

Readers are allowed to take as many books as they like, and return them whenever they please. According to Hernando, “The only rule is that there are no rules”. (OC, 26.05.16)

## Tourism Department Awarded

The Department of Tourism (DoT), Government of Rajasthan has bagged the prestigious 'Lonely Planet Magazine India Travel Awards 2016' in the category of Best Indian Destination for 'Relaxation'.



The awards given in 2016 in other categories are on culture, adventure, value, wildlife, food and drink, family and best emerging destination. Notably, in 2014 also, the Rajasthan Tourism had bagged the 'Lonely Planet Award'. This award is yet another testament of Rajasthan's new aggressive multimedia marketing campaign and strengthening of tourism infrastructure. (DNA, 16.05.16)

## Medical Negligence Compensation

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has asked the Sevayatan Hospital, Jaipur (Sodala) to pay a compensation of ₹4.5 lakh for medical negligence. The order of Commission came after the petitioner Govind Sharma of Jhotwara challenged ₹2 lakh compensation that was awarded by the state Commission.

The matter pertains to the death of petitioner's 22-year-old wife soon after delivering twins on October 13, 1998. It stated that the complainant's wife had delivered twins and she was quite anaemic, but proper care was not taken because of which she died due to postpartum hemorrhage.

(Tol, 10.04.16)

## Adieu to 'Lady of Harley'

People from all walks of life bid a tearful adieu to the renowned motor biker of Jaipur Veenu Paliwal known as 'Lady of the Harley', who died in an accident in Madhya Pradesh's Vidhisha district. While on a country tour Veenu lost control over her Harley Davidson bike, which slipped off on the road.

Most of the people, of which majority of them were bikers who knew Veenu personally, were mum and in shock. "She was also a great teacher and a good human being", said a biker of Jaipur. Likewise, a good number of people on twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook paid their tributes to the leading lady.

(Tol, 14.04.16)

## No Foreign Tours for Babus

Against the routine practice of flying abroad or travelling to cooler destinations, the state bureaucrats in 2016 might have to sweat it out in the scorching summers of Rajasthan.

Not many IAS officers have applied for leaves to go out of station



till date due to hectic schedule of the government programme till July 2016 and by that time peak summer months would have already ended.

In addition, sources informed that usually during summers, a large number of bureaucrats submit their leave applications, limiting to less than half a dozen. (DNA, 11.05.16)

## JDA's High Budget

The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) has proposed a budget of ₹2,700 crore for the financial year 2016-2017, which is nearly 42 percent higher than the previous year.

As per the proposal, a major portion, ₹1,825 crore has been allocated to carry out developmental work in the city.

For drainage and sewerage works, the civic body has proposed to spend ₹154 crore. The JDA has many big projects this year including elevated road, renovation of Dravavati river, project affected persons (PAP) corridor, etc. (Tol, 14.04.16)

## Research on Eminent People

The Governor and the Chancellor of the Universities of Rajasthan, Kalyan Singh stated that there it is essential for the state universities to conduct a research on the local eminent personalities of Rajasthan, so that the society can get to know about the sacrifices made and courageous work done by them.

According to sources, most probably, this is for the first time in the country when an initiative has been taken to initiate research on the personality and work done by the local heroes like Bhamashah, Maharana Pratap, Rana Sanga etc.

(DNA, 28.05.06)

## WiFi@Railway Station

In an effort to bring Jaipur Railway Station at par with international standards, WiFi facility was started at the Jaipur Railway Station. A total of 51 access points have been installed at the station to access WiFi, which would allow 70 people to get connected at a time to each access point.



This would further allow passengers to watch High Definition (HD) quality videos with the help of smart phones as well as procure information about the arrival as well as departure of trains from the station. The WiFi facility will facilitate the visitors at Jaipur railway station with hi-tech internet facility of international standards. (DNA, 15.05.16)

## Mayors' Learning Platform

Mayors' Conference was organised by CUTS on April 28, 2016 in Udaipur (Rajasthan) with the support of 'The Asia Foundation' and in collaboration with the Department of Local Self Government, Government of Rajasthan and Udaipur Municipal Corporation.

Deputy Mayor of Kota, Sunita Vyas elucidated the implementation of several schemes related to urban governance and challenges on the ground. In addition, Manju Bala Purohit and K K Gupta, Chairperson of Banswara and Dungarpur districts of Rajasthan shared best practices of the urban local bodies (ULBs).

Satyarupa Shekhar, Director, Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), Chennai presented data driven approaches for city planning and management.

## WhatsApp Helpline No.

Aiming at having a direct interaction with the city public where people can not only give update on any crime but can also share their feedback and complains on police behaviour at traffic points, Police Stations, the Commissioner of Police Sanjay Agarwal has launched a 24x7 monitored WhatsApp helpline number for the public.

Sharing the number '7300363636', Agarwal said, "See, the helpline number 100 of the police control room and its activities will remain same whenever people will use it". (Tol, 14.04.16)

## Ambitious Smart City Project

After Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated through video conferencing the ambitious Smart City project in 20 cities, including Jaipur. The Jaipur Municipal

Corporation (JMC) will launch a slew of services toeing the Smart City guidelines.

"Solid waste management and cleanliness are our primary concern in the smart city project and we are also planning to improve transportation facilities in the walled city", said V Saravana Kumar, the CEO of Jaipur Smart City Ltd. (DNA, 13.05.16)

## Real Estate on Decline

In a clear signal that the real estate sector is not performing well for the economy of Rajasthan, the revenue generated through stamp duty and registration has been below the expectations of the Rajasthan government.

Though monetary increase in the revenue through stamp duty and



registration, the increase is less than 10 percent. In the financial year 2015-16, the revenue earned through stamp duty and registration was ₹3,233 crore whereas in the financial year 2014-15 this figure was ₹3188 crore. (DNA, 13.05.16)

## Emerging Designing Hub

For design industry, the 'World Crafts City' Jaipur has a special resonance. A hunting ground for designers and architects, both from India and abroad, the rich heritage of India's crafts has been an inspiration for their popular creations.

The manufacturers engaged in this industry need more exposure to gain visibility and acceptability on the national and international levels. Blending the rich legacy of crafts in Rajasthan, designers from India and abroad have created great products and concepts. (Tol, 04.04.16)



## Metro Updates



### More for Metro Ride during Peak Hours

Commuters who use the Jaipur Metro (Mansarovar to Chandpole route) will have to pay higher fares during peak hours from April 2016.

The Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) has fixed peak hours between 5 PM and 9.40 PM. The decision to increase the fare during peak hours was taken in the 26<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of (JMRC) recently.

A senior JMRC official said, "The Metro operation will start at 6.40 AM daily as JMRC will run 134 trips everyday. The non-peak hours have been fixed from 6.40 AM to 5 PM. The hours between 5 PM and 9.40 PM will be considered peak hours". (Tol, 01.04.16)

### Chinese Team Keen in Phase-II

The JMRC has got a new ray of hope for construction of Jaipur Metro phase II, under public private partnership (PPP) as a Chinese delegation has shown interest to invest in the project.

A Chinese delegation led by Nicholas Hou, President of Hupion Sourcing Ltd, met Vasundhara Raje, Chief Minister of Rajasthan and expressed an interest to invest in Jaipur Metro.

The JMRC Project Director, Ashwini Saxena said, "The delegation has shown interest in construction of Phase II. The delegation was briefed about the project". (Tol, 19.04.16)

### Govt. Moots Underpass

Commuting from Sanganeri Gate to Jorwar Singh Gate and vice-versa will be convenient, if Rajasthan's government's new proposal to construct a subway beneath the heritage walled city for easing vehicular traffic turns into a reality.

In a bid to avoid congestion in the walled city and preserve heritage, the state government is mulling over a proposal to construct a 2 km underpass connecting these two points.

The M/S Abha Narayan Lamba Associates, a consultant agency that is conserving heritage monuments is working on a proposal to plan an underground subway for a smooth traffic movement below extremely congested route. (Tol, 04.05.16)

### Stage II to be Completed by March 2018

The 2.4-km second stage of Jaipur Metro is expected to be completed by March 2018, in which advanced technology has been employed with an eye on preserving the city's rich heritage.

"We have completed one tunnel already, which is *Badi Chaupar*. The second tunnel is about to be completed. We are right on schedule and the completion date is around March 2018", said Christopher Mark Cooper, Project Leader of the Jaipur Metro.

Furthermore, phase IB is aimed at providing the Metro services in the more inward and congested but significant areas of Jaipur. (FE, 05.06.16)

## Rajasthan First to Pass 'Titling' Law

Pretika Khanna\*

*Vasundhara Raje-led government in Rajasthan has managed legislative approval for a landmark legislation which will provide statutory backing to land records*

The Vasundhara Raje-led government in Rajasthan has passed a landmark legislation providing statutory backing to land records, effectively guaranteeing land and property ownership. This will create an efficient and transparent modern land market, provide certainty of tenure and end litigation that often mires development projects. Once an individual is accorded legitimate rights to land, which at present can be disputed, their ability to trade these rights improves dramatically.

The legislation, The Rajasthan Urban Land (Certification of Titles) Bill, 2016, was passed by the state assembly through a voice vote.

Previously, the Raje government had pioneered amendments to labour laws, which were subsequently adopted by other states and eventually even by the Union government.

It is likely that other states will pass similar Titling laws, much in the same way they rushed to reform their own labour laws after Rajasthan did so. Moreover, a Titling law is both consumer and industry-friendly, and also empowers poor, often marginal farmers.

Before the Rajasthan law was passed, India did not guarantee titles. The only proof of ownership was (and, in other states, still is) proof of a transaction between a buyer and a seller or property tax receipts. All these can be legally challenged, and usually are, holding up both industrial and development projects, from hardware parks to low-cost housing.

"The Bill will boost land acquisition in the state and also benefit authorities as no capital expenditure will be required from their end", said a senior Rajasthan government official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The second legislation, Rajasthan Land Pooling Schemes Bill provides for easy aggregation of small land holdings. It argues that land holdings in Rajasthan are small and in irregular parcels and that this impedes the development of

adequate infrastructure. "Thus if schemes are designed for large parcels of land, more efficient and effective planning can be achieved", the Bill added.

The Bill provides for land for infrastructural development and enables the government to consolidate small land holdings. The land holders, in return, will get an equivalent share of development land. There are other advantages as well – most notably, better, and smart urban planning.

The Bill said, "construction of new building, new structure or new installation that might be used for residential, commercial, public and semi-public, industrial, warehousing purposes shall not be deemed to be an operational construction within the meaning of this clause".

Rajasthan's Titling reform comes at a time when the National Democratic Alliance government has given a push for urbanisation with various schemes including development of smart cities, the Atal Mission

for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and housing for all.

In 2014, the Rajasthan government took the lead in pushing labour reforms that sought to give companies greater flexibility in hiring and firing of employees and make it tougher for registration of labour unions, seeking to attract greater investment. The opposition party Congress said the latest legislation will only benefit the rich.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government is trying to project it as a pro-development Bill but in reality it will only benefit the corporate and the rich. What will happen is they will take these lands and hand them over to developers or private builders", said Congress MLA Ramesh Meena, deputy leader of the opposition in Rajasthan assembly. "Eventually, this will lead to an increase in the prices of land and corruption".

(\*Journalist with Mint. This article was published in Mint on April 15, 2016)



As a major step towards good governance and 'Ease of Doing Business', we have brought in 'The Rajasthan Urban Land (Certification of Titles) Bill, 2016'.

– Vasundhara Raje

Sources: BS: Business Standard; DNA: Daily News & Analysis; FE: The Financial Express; OC: OddityCentral  
TH: The Hindu; Tol: The Times of India; TNW: The National World