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CityMatters

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1983-2012

Defacing Signages



No parking signage on gate



Election Campaign



Wall Posters

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After the recent elections in our state one comes across mischievous instances of defacing the names of former Legislators, which were painted on the security gates of our colonies. Their names were painted because they financed the construction of the gates through their MLA development fund. The question arises that why were their names painted at all – after all the money is ours – the tax payers and not the MLAs. Firstly, the property becomes government property as per law. MLAs and MPs fund such asset building as a bribe to their voters, who do not necessarily oblige the elected person. Secondly, if at all their names were painted then they are entitled to let it remain. So many landmarks and schemes are named after one or the other politician in our country and do not get removed after they have moved on. It is another story that the Nehru-Gandhi family names are used for countless number of schemes and projects in our country. An RTI query was made by an activist to find out about the exact number, but the authorities could not give a definitive answer.



Speaking about defacement, one serious problem we see in Jaipur and elsewhere is that posters are stuck on road signs by many, many of them are by student leaders contesting elections including advertising for other goods and services. Thus trying to find the location or directions to steer us to our destinations becomes a nightmare. Our inertia ridden local authorities do not take any action at all to prosecute the offenders in spite of provisions in the Indian Penal Code, which includes fines and prison term. Other than enforcement, the city government can also provide dedicated space to stick posters, as in Bangkok. Moreover, to try and educate at least student leaders to stop defacing signages. Further, to publish notices regularly on the spots where the posters get stuck, so that people get forewarned, and encourage whistle blowers to inform the nearest police station. Finally, to strengthen the law that the advertiser invites prosecution along with the ones who stick up these posters. Then the advertisers will take care that their publicity is not used as defacing materials. We just need some imagination and will to ensure that our signages remain functional.

I have not spoken about our walls, which too are not spared by publicity announcements of all sorts. Even though they do not obstruct any signs, they are an eyesore. While most of the walls are privately owned, a large number belong to a public body, and serve as public urinals also. As parliamentary elections are around the corner, we will soon see parties competing with limited space on our walls. In West Bengal, political parties reserve the wall spaces for a period of time with markings and the poor owner dare not entangle with the party goons.

Another nuisance is the use of advertising through 'No Parking' signages on all gates: house or the colony gates. As if they are doing some service to the owners of the gate. Some gates have more than dozen of such no parking signs, which too are an eyesore and lose their value. As it is the traffic or civic sense of vehicle owners in Jaipur is abysmally low.

If our dream and aspiration is to make Jaipur a world class city, it is high time we started paying attention to these issues.

Pradeep S. Mehta
Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

Booming 'MyCity'

Mckinsey Report on Indian urbanisation claimed that the total population in Rajasthan's urban area would be 29.5 million in 2030, which was only 15.5 million in 2008. Under such circumstances, the Government and local bodies have a challenging task of dealing with the pressure on public amenities like hospitals, roads, police stations, schools, etc. and bringing prosperity.

For engaging citizens and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen the roots of local self-governance, according to the spirit of 74th Constitutional Amendment, CUTS in partnership with 'The Asian Foundation' launched the second phase of the successful initiative 'MyCity' replicating similar other activities in other eight wards of Jaipur.

This was an emphatic effort towards making the city convenient and prosperous. Jyoti Khandelwal, Mayor of Jaipur said that there is lack of synchronisation among the various Government Departments responsible for delivery of public services.

Implantable Chip to Lose Weight

Scientists are developing a computer chip that could be implanted in an obese patient's arm to help them lose weight. Biotechnologists skilfully combined different genes that produce particular proteins and reaction steps. They implanted the construct in human cells, which they then inserted into tiny capsules.



After the capsules with the gene regulatory circuit had been implanted in the animals the obese mice stopped eating and their body weight dropped noticeably, as a result.

The animals ate less because the implant signalled a feeling of satiety to them. Mice that received normal animal feed with a five percent fat content did not lose any weight or reduce their intake of food. (ET, 27.11.13)

Medical Negligence Compensation

The Supreme Court has awarded close to ₹6 crore to Kunal Saha, an Indian doctor based in the US – the highest yet in a medical negligence case. Saha had sued Kolkatas's advanced Medicare and Research Institute, after his wife who was treated there passed away in 1998.

In 2009, Infosys Engineer, Prashant S. Dhanaka was awarded ₹1 crore by the Supreme Court, after a routine operation

at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad, left him paralysed.

At present, patients can take medical negligence, under the Consumer Protection Act for deficiency in services. Complaints may also be made to the Medical Council of India. (BL, 24.10.13)

Thumbs up to 'Selfie'

Oxford Dictionaries announced that 'Selfie' is the 2013 word of the year edging out some stiff competition from 'twerk'. It publishes the mammoth Oxford English Dictionary (OED) styled as the definitive record of the English language and pointed that the usage of the word has increased 17,000 percent over the past 12 months.

"Selfie is defined as a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website". According to Judy Pearsall, Editorial Director for Oxford Dictionaries, social media sites helped to popularise the term,



with the hashtag selfie appearing on the photo sharing website Flickr as early as 2004, but usage was not widespread until around 2012, when Selfie was being used commonly in mainstream media sources.

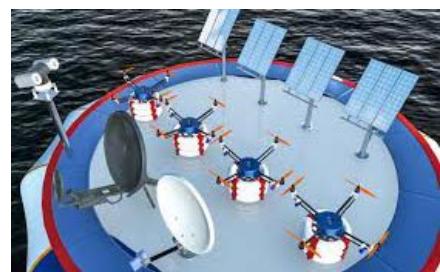
'Selfie' is not in the OED but the multi-volume dictionary is currently considering the term for inclusion.

(TH, 20.11.13)

Aerial technology for drinking water

The Ministry of Water Resources has, for the first time, started ₹41 crore Pilot Project to map aquifers, recognising the fact that water scarcity is endemic in India and it is important to save water. It will use specialised choppers to find clean drinking water. The mapping began recently in Dausa near Jaipur and will cover five more areas.

For the first time, aerial geophysical techniques are being used to cover a wide area and even inaccessible ones. Using a Danish Technology called Skytem, a specialised Euro chopper is



hooked below with a 30 m long probe, which has a huge frame of 300 sq. m. The chopper flies low – 3,500 km – and slowly at a speed of 60-80 km/hr, so that the frame doesn't swing too much.

Lars Jensen, Senior Field Manager, SkyTEM from Jaipur informs that this technique incidentally has been used to map half of Denmark. It has been used in Australia, Malaysia, Antarctica, South Africa and America. (Tol, 17.10.13)

2013 round up

In 2013, Japanese scientists grew human liver tissue inside a mouse and Australian researchers used stem cells to grow a kidney in a lab. These innovations will cut waiting time for transplants and get around the problem of immune rejection.

Even Google has launched balloons that can bring the Internet to people in the remotest places on earth, while so called 'cloud schools' are gearing up to remotely teach millions of children in the developing world. Such advances have brought global life expectancy to an all-time high. The average human can now expect to live more than twice as long as 100 years ago.

Though this sounds like progress but 2013 was a year of growing despondency. Wars raged, women and children were abused and enslaved, people went hungry and mass poverty persisted globally. *(Mint, 01.01.13)*

Know your boss

Y. V. Reddy, Chairman, 14th Finance Commission, Chief Guest at the launch of the book entitled 'Barons of Banking: Glimpses of Indian Banking History' by Bakhtiar Dadabhoy, took a crack at the debate on the Central Bank's independence.



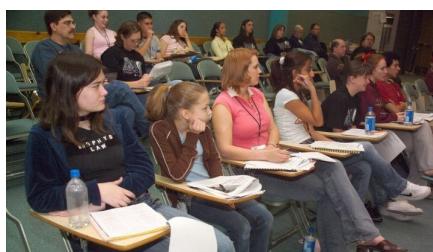
A former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor himself, Reddy was often asked about this and he responded: "The RBI is independent. The Governor is very independent. And I have taken the permission of the Finance Minister to say so". *(BL, 28.10.13)*

Out-educating Americans

US President, Barack Obama, stressing on the education reforms said that billions of people from countries like India and China are striving hard to 'out-educate' Americans in Mathematics and Technology.

He added that if workforce is not educated enough, it will be left behind and find it hard to get a job that pays a living wage. Being in a global economy, jobs can go anywhere. Companies are looking for the best educated people, wherever they live, and they will reward them with good pay.

Obama stressed that America needs a budget that is responsible, fiscally prudent, closes wasteful tax loopholes that do not create jobs and free up



resources to invest in things that actually help in growth of things like education and scientific research and infrastructure. *(FE, 26.10.13)*

Rising Legislators' assets

Inflation may have affected the common man, but it seems to have least effect on the elected Legislators' assets. The movable and immovable assets of MLA's have only increased. The average assets of the re-elected 67 MLAs has shot up from ₹1.69 crore in 2008 to ₹3.89 crore in 2013, according to a report prepared by Rajasthan Election Watch in Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The average asset growth of these 67 re-elected MLA's is 130 percent or by ₹2.20 crore. Fifty eight elected MLAs of BJP have shown an average asset increase of 130 percent or ₹2.36 crore. Assets of six Congress MLAs grew by 144 percent or ₹1.68 crore.

Leading the pack among re-elected are Ashok Parnami, the BJP legislator from Adarsh Nagar who has registered a staggering growth of 627 percent in assets from ₹3.66 crore in 2008 to ₹22.95 in 2013. *(Tol, 15.11.13)*

Being right Vs. being happy

What is better for a healthy married life: to be right or to be happy?

To decode the effect of being right vs. being happy on a couple's quality of life, researchers at the University of



Auckland, New Zealand involved a married couple living in their own home for their study.

The authors decided that the female participant would prefer to be right and the male participant would prefer to be happy. So the man was asked to agree with his wife's every opinion and request without complaint. Even if he believed the female participant was wrong, the male was informed of the intervention while the female participant was not. Quality of life was measured on a scoring scale of 1 to 10.

After 12 days, it was found that the male participant's quality of life score fell from 7 out of 10 at the start of the study to three on day 12. However, the female

participant's quality of life increased from 8 to 8.5 on day six. It seems that being right is a cause of happiness, and agreeing with what one disagrees with is a cause of unhappiness. *(BL, 18.12.13)*

Banyan tree transplanted

Chennai Metro Rail Limited, in association with other state agencies has successfully transplanted a huge 120 year old banyan tree in the premises of



the Government Kilpauk Medical College. The tree was uprooted during the recent rains in the city.

A huge pit was dug with a 15 metre circumference and five metre depth. Unfortunately, heavy rain filled the pit with water. Fire service personnel helped in draining out water from the pit, according to K. Elanthiraiyan, Public Relation Officer of Metro Rail.

Moreover, the tree had a girth of 11 metres and weighed 20 tonnes after removal of branches. *(ET, 25.10.13)*

More FIRs against agents

The noose is tightening around some agents from Jaipur, Kerala and Mumbai who were accused of sending 82 Indians to Saudi Arabia allegedly on fake papers. After an FIR was registered in Jaipur, more police complaints were filed against agents in Delhi and Devali town in Tonk District in Rajasthan.

Half a dozen labourers approached Delhi Police's economic offences wing recently and gave a complaint in writing.

The complaints are being registered by some of the 82 labourers who returned after going through four months of ordeal in Saudi Arabia. They were sent allegedly on forged documents on the promise of lucrative jobs. On reaching the destination, they came to know that the company they were supposed to work did not even exist.

(Tol, 15.10.13)

Citizen Forum Formed

Noose is going to be tightened around engineers and Urban Development Corporation (UDC) against any negligence during road construction work. Now during road renewal, names of the concerned



engineers, their contact numbers will be displayed for the convenience of the people.

Despite spending 600 crore Rs on road repair and construction every year one rain washes away the roads. These instructions were given by the Additional Chief Secretary, G. S. Sandhu to JDA, and concerned Housing Board Officers. He also said that the renewal work will not be affected by the code of conduct.

Another initiative in this direction is that before laying the coal tar layer, an estimate of the traffic load will also be conducted. For this, three level examination comprising Benkelman Beam Deflection, Excel LoadTest and Traffic Survey will be done.

(DB, 12.10.13 & RP, 27.10.13)

Smart Driving Licence

After issuing registration certificate like smart card, the dealers of the city can allot only a number and not the registration certificate (RC) to the



owners of the vehicles. On the basis of the number, Regional Transport Office will print RC like smart card, which will be sent to the owners through post. On the RC, there will be digital signature of the DTO (District Transport Office). Thus owners will get rid of giving file charge to the dealers.

This system is being practiced in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat etc. This will

be helpful in controlling fake licence and RC.

The Smart Card licence will have inbuilt hologram and 64 KB chip. Address, date of birth, blood group and mobile number of the licence holder will also be there on the licence. (DB, 31.12.13)

Sudden Spurt in Crimes

There is a sudden rise in petty crimes from pickpocket to robbers snatching away cash bags, hand bags and other valuables in and around Jaipur. The poor inter-district police coordination and lethargic patrolling is the reason of the rise in crime rate.

In October itself at least 100 vehicles have been lifted while at least 50 cases of theft have been registered in various police stations in the city.

Various DCPs (Deputy Commissioner of Police) on being asked about the increase in the rate of crime said that the PCR (Police Control Room) vans were mobile, especially during the festive seasons and according to Ravi, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), their focus is to keep their PCR vans moving in order to cover a larger distance. (Tol, 24.10.13)

Automated Bill Mandatory

To sort the issue of providing less petrol to the customers, the system of 'No Print No Delivery' (NPND) has been introduced. Under this system, an automated bill has to be issued after filling petrol in one vehicle then only other vehicle can be dealt. After taking the bill from the NPND disposing machine, it is essential to take a print of the same.



Moreover, for monitoring the working of the petrol pumps, in 10 months the Industry Department has scrutinised on an average, 109 petrol pumps that also only once. Every now and then, there are consumer complaints regarding less supply of petrol but according to the statistics

of the Department, this has been proved at one petrol pump only.

(DB, 01.11.13 & 29.10.13)

Pvt. Schools Livid

The private schools in Rajasthan are up in arms against the State Education Department for considering only tuition fees for reimbursement for the students admitted, under Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009.



Currently, the Education Department teams are conducting inspections of private schools with regard to admissions, under the Act. During the inspections, the teams had refused to consider fees charged, under heads like development, sports, library, examination and caution money.

B. L. Natiya, President of Vidya Bharti Society said that the Education Department has refused to reimburse the charged fees, under different heads other than the tuition fees. That was unjust as the schools would be in big financial trouble if the Department does not change its stand. (DB, 22.10.13)

Green Buses In Pink City

To promote green technology and attract passengers to make use of public transport, the Jaipur City Transport Service Limited (JCTS) will soon introduce articulated and hybrid (battery operated) buses in the city.



According to the officials, a total of four buses, including two articulated and two hybrid buses, will be procured in the new fleet of JCTS. For this, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) has sanctioned 286 buses for the city. The Union Ministry of Urban Development has made directions to promote these buses as they will be

environment friendly and have to replicate the metro experience in the bus transport sector.

One articulated bus can carry nearly 150 passengers. It has a single-deck design and comprises two rigid sections linked by a pivoting joint. The approximate cost of these buses would be around ₹1.5 crore.

(Tol, 19.12.13)

Campaign against Adulteration

The Health Department will be launching a campaign against adulterated food items during the Diwali festival. If any person is found



involved in selling or manufacturing adulterated food items will face action, under Food Safety and Standard Act 2006.

The officials are being asked to keep an eye on the food items made of milk and dairy products as they

may be adulterated. Moreover, the Department officials will also check if duplicate items of reputed companies are being sold in the market. Action will also be taken against the owners who keep their shops in an unhygienic condition.

The Department has also directed the officials in each district to inspect at least 8 to 10 shops and restaurants daily and send their reports. The Department will be more alert in districts like Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur, which share boundaries with other states.

(Tol, 14.10.13 & 26.10.13, RP, 28.10.13)



Metro Updates

Trial Deadline Crossed

The Jaipur Metro rail is set to miss its extended November 2013 deadline for trial runs on account of Diwali. The Metro trials were scheduled to be conducted by the Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) between Nov 11 and 26.

The DMRC was planning to complete all the civil work before December 2012 for RDSO to conduct the trials but due to various setbacks, the civil construction is not expected to be completed within the stipulated time period. The DMRC official also indicated that initially the train will run only between Mansarovar and Railway Station.

(Tol, 06.11.13)

Wiring on Ramp

The coaches of the fourth train reached Jaipur from Bangalore and were boarded on the Depot tracks. According to Atul Gadgil, Metro Chief General Manager, the ramp and the elevated corridor will be charged together with 25000 volt current soon after their electrification.

All the preparations for trial runs have been made. A day before the instructions from Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) are received, metro will be boarded on elevated corridor. The task of ramp overhead electrification from Mansarovar Depot to Station has been completed, after examining the wiring. (RP, 07.09.13)

Metro to Run by Jan.

Already lagging behind from its target, Jaipur Metro is also far from its commercial execution. The trial run was held on the elevated corridor on September 18 and it was then estimated that by the end of December, Metro will start giving its services.

On account of incomplete work from Shyam Nagar Station to Ram Nagar, the oscillation trial has also been postponed. After getting a nod from Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO), the JMRC also has



to get an approval from the Railway Security Commission, Mumbai. Only after acquiring this assent, people can travel in the Metro. Under such circumstances, Metro is expected to run by January end.

(RP, 15.11.13)

Uniform Designs Released

The JMRC has unveiled the uniform designs for its staff, laying emphasis on 'gender equality'. The uniforms will have a dash of pink, the colour attached to the identity of the city.

The JMRC Chairman and Managing Director, Nihal Chand Goyal released the designs prepared by Jaipur-based Arch Academy of Design, at a ceremony in Khanij Bhavan. He said that the male and female junior engineers, maintenance staff and train operators will look 'almost alike' in their uniforms.

(TH, 16.11.13)

Come Out and Claim the Road

Sunita Narain*



On our overcrowded and chaotic roads, planning for cycle tracks and keeping sidewalks clean and clear will take lots of effort. I have absolutely no illusions that this will be easy to plan or to implement.

I am writing this column lying in bed, recovering from an accident that broke my bones. I was hit by a speeding car while cycling. The driver fled from the scene after the accident in the car, leaving me bleeding on the road. This is what happens again and again, in every city of our country, on every road – as we plan without care for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. These are the invisible users. They die doing nothing more than the most ordinary thing like crossing a road. I was more fortunate. Two cars stopped, and strange helped me and took me to the hospital where I received the treatment. I will be back, fighting fit.

And this is one such battle that needs our combined attention. We cannot lose the space to walk and cycle. After the accident, my relatives and friends have berated me for being so reckless as to cycle on Delhi's roads. They are right. We have built city roads only for cars to move. Cars rule the road. There are no dedicated lanes for cycles; there are no sidewalks. The little stretches that do not exist are either dirty or taken over by parked cars. Roads are exclusively for cars and the rest hardly matter.

But cycling and walking are difficult not just because of poor planning but it is also because of the mind set that only those who move in a car have status and road rights. Anyone who walks or cycles is considered poor, wretched and destined to be marginalised, if not obliterated. This is what we must change. We have no option but to reinvent mobility, as I keep repeating. Toxic among in Delhi, recently, reached a new peak. Last month, World Health Organisation declared air pollutants, a human carcinogen. We must realise that this pollution is not acceptable as it is killing us and no longer softly or slowly. But if we are serious about combatting air pollution, we have no option but to think about restraining the growth of cars and learn how to move people, not the cars.

When the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) began its campaign against air pollution in the mid-1990s, it did everything conventional. It pushed to improve the quality of fuel; improve emission standards of vehicles; and to put the inspection and maintenance systems for checking tailpipe emissions in place. It also pushed a leapfrog solution:

the transition to compressed natural gas (CNG) for grossly polluting vehicles, such as diesel buses and two-stroke auto rickshaws. That made a difference. There is no doubt that the quality of air would have been worse, even more deadly, without these steps.

But this is not good enough. Pollution levels are rising again, inexorably and inevitably. All research points to one cause and one big solution: building transport systems differently. We also have the option of doing this. We still haven't motorised; nor have we built every flyover or four-lane road. Most importantly, much of India still takes the bus, walks, or cycles – in many cities as much as 20 percent of the population bikes. We do this because we are poor. Now the challenge is to reinvent city planning, so that we can do this as we become.

For the past few years, this is exactly what we have been working on – how to bring back integrated and safe public transport options to our cities, so that even we own a car, we don't have to drive it.

That is where we are failing. Today, there is talk of transport, cycling and pedestrians 'needs'. But it is empty talk. Every time there is an attempt to convert a part of the road into a cycle track, the proposal is virulently opposed. The argument is that it cannot be done because it will take away space from cars and will add to congestion. But that is exactly what we need to do – reduce lanes for cars and add space for buses, cycles and pedestrians. This is the only way to get out of the ever-growing car bulge on roads.

This takes courage of conviction. On our overcrowded and chaotic roads, planning for cycle tracks and keeping sidewalks clean and clear will take lots of efforts. I have absolutely no illusions that this will be easy to plan or to implement. Just think of the double bonus: getting rid of the most noxious source of pollution will result in clean air and having the option to get some exercise while commuting will mean healthy bodies.

This is what we have to fight for. And we will. I hope all of you will join us in making the right to cycle and walk with safety non-negotiable.

* Excerpts from Director General CSE, New Delhi, Sunita Narain's Write up in Business Standard Nov. 10, 2013

Sources: BL: The Hindu Business Line; BS: Business Standard; DB: Dainik Bhaskar; ET: Economic Times
FE: Financial Express; PTI: Press Trust of India; RP: Rajasthan Patrika; TH: The Hindu; Tol: Times of India