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Pink City – a nightmare for pedestrians

Describing China, *New York Times* correspondent Nicholas Kristof wrote 'In civilised countries, cars stop for people. In uncivilised ones, people stop for cars.' He could be talking about Jaipur where 40,000 cycle rickshaws, 17,000 autos, stray cattle, unauthorised encroachments, etc., add new dimensions to a strained pedestrian.

A pioneering project on the issue implemented by CUTS between November 2007 and October 2009 entitled 'Traffic Calming Strategies to Improve Pedestrian Safety in India' with focus on the city of Jaipur has now also evoked the attention of the local media. The attention has been strengthened in view of the resolve of the state government to make Jaipur a 'world class' city coupled with recent remarks of the Chief Minister that people should make walking a habit, which is also good for health.

It has been widely reported in press recently (not that it can not be seen by all) that even where footpaths have been provided for pedestrians in the city, these have been forcibly usurped by *dhabas* and even by public toilets, dairy booths, etc. constructed/ approved by Jaipur Nagar Nigam. In Tripolia and Chandpole *bazaars*, which are extremely crowded markets in the walled city, shopkeepers can be seen displaying their wares on the footpaths in front of their shops. Such uncontrolled and unmindful actions have only pushed the pedestrian deeper into insecurity.

Responding to this outcry, the Urban Development Department issued orders in January 2010 to remove obstacles to pedestrians and to initiate strong and deterrent action against officials who do not comply. Actual action taken and relief felt by the pedestrians, however, remains to be seen.

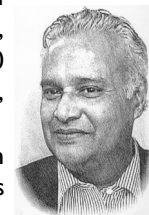
It is heartening to note that traders and *vyapar mandals* are themselves now coming forward and appealing and educating the concerned to make footpaths safe for pedestrians. Traders of the main arterial road of the city, MI Road, have come forward to prevent parking of cars and display of goods on the footpaths. They are also bringing to the notice of the government electric poles or junction boxes on the footpaths. The Nagar Nigam together with the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) and the Transport Department have joined hands in the matter.

These are well-intentioned small steps forward that do not address the overall big picture emerging from faulty road engineering. Increasing population and traffic have exerted immense pressure on the roads in the recent times. Roads have developed speedily but at the same time encroached on space for footpaths.

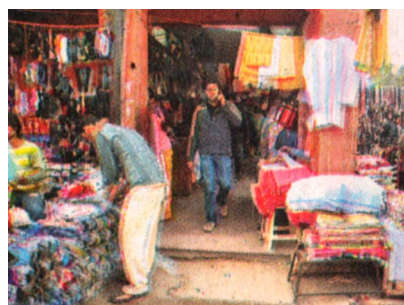
In addition to providing safe footpaths, there is a crying need for foot over-bridges and sub-ways in crowded areas in the vicinity of schools, colleges, hospitals, shopping malls, etc. As of now Jaipur boasts of only one sub-way near Ajmeri Gate. Foot over-bridges have been constructed at some places such as the Collectorate Circle, Narain Singh Circle and on the Tonk *phatak*. However, lack of public education on their usage to promote safety has resulted in pedestrians still using the roads below for crossing and remaining exposed to the vagaries of unruly traffic.

Something that adds to pedestrian's woes is wedding processions that stagnate traffic especially in the peak hours of the evening. It is a sensitive issue – but something that the city administration should act fast, in the interest of pedestrians.

It is time for the public, in general, and pedestrians, in particular to form opinion groups for spreading the culture of safety, making use of facilities available and pressurise the policy makers to take note of this malady and stimulating remedial action.



Pradeep S. Mehta
Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General



Source: Rajasthan Patrika

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Comprehensive Mobility Plan for Jaipur

To realise the dream of converting Jaipur into a 'world class city', among others, a better city transport system has been rightly identified as a necessary condition. The city boasts of an annual average growth of 4.5 percent and over the last decade, it has experienced growth in the range of 6-12 percent per annum. Additionally, the city is also the administrative and commercial hub of the state. Such prosperity has brought in its wake an increase in traffic load and road accidents. Traffic snarls have become a routine problem for Jaipurites.

Urban Development Minister Shanti Dhariwal told the Assembly replying to a calling attention motion informed that a task force has held three meetings in last five months in which chief town planners, architects, builders and trade, commerce and industry experts participated in the JDA's efforts to work out the draft of a Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP). A private advisor FeedbackVentures had already prepared a draft report on February 15, 2010, he said, adding the final draft would be readied by the end of March 2010. The CMP would be sustainable and long-term, and the Central Government would also share its financial liability.

The urban development ministry will table the CMP for approval of the Chief Minister.

The CMP is a transport sector master plan and investment programme for future transport projects in the city. It includes short, medium and long-term projects and stresses on public transport and non-motorised modes of transport. The project, along with Bus Rapid Transport System (BRTS) and Metro, will decide the future travel policy of the city. The CMP will be formally presented to the state government.



The revised detailed project report (DPR) for BRTS is already under consideration. The mobility plan has been designed to meet the travel demands of the city expected over the next two decades. The primary aim is to provide to the public better and faster local transport. According to CMP survey, by 2031, population within Jaipur region will be about 67 lakhs. About 5.52 lakhs peak hour motorised trips will be required in the year, nearly 2.8 times more the present day peak hour trips.

The bouquet of proposals would cost about Rs16000 crores according to an estimate in the three-phase implementation plan coming to a conclusion in the year 2031. A major chunk of the expenses would be in the Metro, Monorail and BRTS projects. The CMP additionally envisions:

- ◆ Foot over-bridges at busy intersections such as Ajmeri Gate, Khasa Kothi, Sanganer airport General Post Office (GPO) and Transport Nagar
- ◆ Parking at GPO, Chougan stadium, Pratap Nagar, Kanota, Bagru and Dayanand Marg

- ◆ One-way traffic at places such as MI Road, Sansar Chand Road and other busy roads in the walled city
- ◆ Bus terminals in all four directions.
- ◆ Rail over bridges at Civil Lines and Shivdaspora
- ◆ Outer Ring Road around the city covering 145 kms with a 90-meter corridor, express service road and a Mass Rapid Transport route
- ◆ Bus shelters at every 500 meters in commercial areas
- ◆ Renovation of rail junctions at 10 places

A high-powered authority under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister has been recommended for policy decision-making in the implementation of the CMP with representation of the JDA, Roadways, Railways, Transport police and Nagar Nigam, etc.

The CMP looks good on paper but there is the proverbial slip between the cup and the lip that hold us back.

(ToI; Zeenews.com; RP; news.yahoo.com)

Controversial B-2 Bypass

The recently-inaugurated B-2 bypass connecting Agarwal Farm and Tonk Road has become controversial. The residents of Gopalpura area have formed an agitation committee demanding diversion of heavy vehicles from the bypass. The Gopalpura Road Vikas Mahasangh has also initiated a signature campaign and warned of further demonstration till their demands are met with.

The bypass had initially been opposed by the residents of Agarwal Farm but was given a green signal only when the JDA assured them to keep it free from heavy vehicles. An elevated road has also been proposed in the Agarwal Farm area. However, it will take a few years before it becomes operational. (DB, 17.01.10)

JDA Launches Expensive Scheme

As the real estate market struggles to get out of recession, the JDA has come up with a new residential scheme Swarn Vihar near Muhana terminal. Spread over an area of 52.64 hectares, the scheme is expected to come up with the highest reserve price demanded by the JDA.

The JDA has fixed a reserve price of Rs 6,200 per sq mt under the new scheme. The low income group applicants will be provided a relaxation while those in the upper income group will have to pay an additional percentage over the reserve price. As JDA raises the real estate price band, land in the city too is expected to become more expensive.

(Tol, 05.03.10)

Auto 'Crazy' in City



For the autorickshaw drivers of Jaipur, 'autocracy' is the rule. Four months back, the government had come up with a notification laying down that all autos

would henceforth be run on meters. But scores of autorickshaws are running without meters with some even daring to tell the commuters that they would not run on meter.

On the other hand, the concerned departments claim that all is well and autos are running on meters. At Gaurav Tower, it is a common practice for autorickshaw drivers to warn the commuters that they would run on meters only if the distance is more than 10 kilometers.

Though the transport department has directed the drivers to charge only the existing fares, but they sometimes do not carry the rate list and therefore commuters have to argue on the payable fare. (RP, 02.02.10)

Bio-gas to Save JMC's Money

After having reduced the power bill at Delawas sewerage treatment plant (STP) by Rs 13 lakh per annum, engineers have proposed the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) to make way for green power in all the existing and under-construction units of the plants at various places in the city's periphery.

The proposal also seeks to utilise the 120 million litres of water daily in irrigating parks and gardens around the city, thus saving the depleting water table of Jaipur city. Meanwhile, the experts have proposed to channelise the 120 million litres per day (MLD) of treated water from two units of STP at Delawas for irrigating the city's parks and gardens.

(Tol, 20.02.10)

Drive Against Illegal Construction

The JDA will soon begin a drive against illegal use of commercial land in the city. Under the drive, it will make an on-the-spot assessment of under construction buildings according to the approved plan.

Concerns have been raised on encroachments in Jaipur in various studies conducted for the future urban development projects. The widespread encroachment on roads has created problems in several areas. However, on the outskirts of city, the encroachment activities have now begun as an



organised land grabbing exercise.

Over 100 illegal constructions were demolished and 45 illegal commercial activities were stopped in January 2010 by the JDA enforcement squad. In various activities, nearly 180 bigha of precious government land was secured and legal notices were issued in 44 cases. (Tol, 11.02.10)

New Multi-level Parking Lots

Congested roads and the lack of proper parking space may be a thing of the past soon. The Ministry of Urban Development is commissioning seven new parking projects in the city. In the



first phase, six multi-level parking lots with space for 5,400 cars will begin at a total cost of Rs 305 crore. These projects will be on public-private partnership basis.

Traders and businessmen from Johari Bazaar have also given a proposal for an under-ground parking in the market. The same is being examined by the Urban Development Department.

(HT, 09.01.10)

Metro by March 2013

Metro rail in the city will start operating from March 2013. Ground level work will begin in March 2010, and the project will be completed by March 2013. The proposed route will be a 9-km long elevated track connecting Mansarovar to Chandpole. This will be part of the 12 km

long East-west corridor from Ramganj to Mansarovar via Badi Choupar, Choti Choupar, Chandpole, Ajmer Road, Gopalpura Bypass, New Sanganer Road and Mansarovar.

The government has given its nod on the final module. Soon the project will be sent for cabinet clearance following which it will be sent to the Centre for funds. In the first phase, 28.5 km-long Metro corridor will be constructed at a cost of Rs 5,300 crore, including 12 km East-west corridor and 16.5 km long North-South corridor from the Jawahar Circle to Jal Mahal.

Of the total 28.5 km proposed route, only 6.5 km will pass through the walled city and in order to maintain the heritage look of the old city, the entire stretch will be constructed underground. Outside the walled city, the Metro will mainly run on elevated tracks.

(RP, 16.01.10 & DB, 17.01.10)

No Mobile Network Connectivity!

With the increase in competition, mobile service provider companies are competing with each other, causing the consumers to suffer. Mobile operators are issuing SIM cards in a large number but are not bothered about the network problems. Therefore, consumers are facing network related problems every day. Several times they have to rush to their terraces to attend a call.

Calls are disconnected in between. Connectivity problem has mainly been experienced in Prithviraj Nagar, C-scheme, Jawahar Nagar, Near Monilek Hospital, Sitapura and SMS hospital. However, mobile operators deny that there is any such problem.

(RP, 12.01.10)



BRTS on the Anvil

The Urban Development and Housing Minister Shanti Dhariwal approved three routes for BRTS which would complement the Metro rail transportation system planned for the city.

Three routes have been identified for the BRTS. The first route would run a 24-km distance and cover Chokhi Dhani-Sanganer-New Sanganer Road-Kisan Dharma Kanta-Ajmer Road-Queens Road before culminating at Sodala.

The second route would run a 31-km distance covering Chokhi Dhani-Goner Road via Mahatma Gandhi Hospital-Mahal residential scheme-Jagatpura overbridge-Balaji crossing and turn towards Jawahar Circle. Another leg of this route would end on the Kumbha Marg.

The final route would cover a stretch of 4 km from C-Zone bypass to Harmada. This stretch is already well laid out and complete up to Panipench area near Bani Park. The government is yet to decide if the area between Bais Godam and Sodala will be covered under the BRTS project.

(DB & RP, 03.02.10)

Garden Theatre in the City!

The Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot inaugurated the Garden Theatre and Cafeteria of JDA on Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg. The theatre established on a seven acre land at a cost of Rs 3.5 crore and has a seating capacity of about 600 people. The park also has water-harvesting structures to raise groundwater level.

Gehlot termed the theatre a 'gift to the city people' and announced that sewerage treatment plants, each with a capacity of one million litres will be constructed at Central Park, Ramniwas Garden and Jawahar Circle. He further said that making Jaipur a world class city is not an easy task and people need to contribute to cleanliness.

(RP, 20.01.10)

Mono Not to Replace Metro

The monorail will not replace metro rail in the city as was speculated earlier. It would mainly function as feeder to metro rail. The idea is to introduce monorail on routes where availability of space is a problem and transport service needs to cover short distances.

Elevated tracks for monorail could be squeezed into the medians dividing the roads therefore requiring less space, and passenger fares in monorail will be at par with existing fare of city buses. Travel time on monorail is also expected to be shorter than on the metro rail. It will run on solar power.

(HT, 19.01.10 & DB, 26.01.10)

Dashed Hopes

After the failure of the ambitious water project that promised to end water woes of the citizens of Jaipur, the people have lost hope. The Rs 14,00 crore Bisalpur project promised Jaipur a 24-hour supply of drinking water, but despite the project



kicking off in 2009, residents are still getting water once a day.

A person in the city requires 150 litres of water daily, while currently the department is supplying only 120 litres per day. Between March-October 2009, 60 MLD of water was supplied to Jaipur and residents got the supply twice a day.

In addition to this, Jaipur received only 40 percent of the rain that it usually does, during the monsoons – 157mm as against the 564mm.

(HT, 09.03.10)

Sources: HT: Hindustan Times; Tol: Times of India; DB: Dainik Bhaskar; RP: Rajasthan Patrika