

Delhi Bully On The Road

Manas Gupta

Honk, blare, honk! This is the language of Delhi roads. It's a place where every one aspires to cuss like Virat Kohli in an Anurag Kashyap film and drive like Michael Schumacher in a Rohit Shetty opus. Of course, decent drivers do exist in the capital city. They can be found in the same place you get polite Delhiites, unicorns and dragons.

The thing is, everyone in Delhi is always in a tearing rush. Delhi is always in a tearing rush. In fact, traffic jams can safely be called a part of our national hurly-burly. Okay fine, knock off the word 'safely'.

BOTTLENECK BRIDGES

One thing the Delhi government does well is to build flyovers. If someone happens to visit the city after years, he'll have to take the flyover down memory lane. A flyover is also used like a container to store cars stuck in a jam for hours or to bypass traffic lights, which as we explained above, has already been mastered by the public. Synonym for a flyover: Dinosaur's back.

ANIMAL ANOMALIES

Another serious problem one encounters is the animal population. Cows are just bullies. They behave as if they own the carriageway and arrogantly chew cud, judge your poor driving skills, ignore those horns and waste precious fertilizer on the concrete road. Let's not even start on the buffalos. They're convinced they're the authentic Mercedes Bhains. I say join the cattle battle and beat the cows at their own game. Stand with them in the middle of the road and chew bubblegum. That'll show 'em. There's also a dog menace but Maneka Gandhi is in power, best to keep mum.

FAST & FURIOUS

The quintessential Delhiite lives life in the fast lane. Well, he does weave in and out of the other lanes too, without using the indicator, but it's the fast lane that he loves, turning the rat race into his own personal contest, blaring loud music and a louder horn, and bullying the poor pedestrian. This species is known to be prone to bouts of road rage, fuelled by adrenalin, money, booze and an exaggerated sense of self-importance. I feel adding an IQ test to the driving licence exam may go a long way in making the roads idiot-proof.

DAD THING YOU DO

Consider the traffic signal. Ubiquitous ugly poles that most Delhiites feel should be done away with. It's ironic after all that a traffic light cannot make traffic light. Since we're all hell-bent on jumping the signal anyway, one should just paste a sticker on the windshield that warns the policeman about which top cop or minister you know, or just play the 'my daddy strongest' card. One look at the magic sticker and presto, the cop will go from issuing challans to nonchalance.

You could also stick a press sticker on your windshield, but that doesn't work (believe us, we know). Besides, going strictly by the stickers, everybody and his uncle's uncle seems to already be a part of the Fourth Estate.

AUTO PILOTS

This brings us to one of the CM's favourite topics. Autorickshaws Auto (aw-toh, noun): A rickety three-wheel vehicle whose driver is allergic to using the meter, obsessed with driving down the centre of the road and addicted to the word 'no'. "Chandni Chowk challenge?" "No."

"India Gate?" "No."

"Should I call the cops?" (Smirks) "No."

"What's your name?" "No." The one good thing about the 'Automan Empire' is the ads carried on autos. These posters and poems (which often go from verse to worse) are usually entertaining. I once saw an ad on an auto that said, "Lose weight now. Ask me how." So I asked the auto driver. He said, and I am paraphrasing, "Run, you fat ***".

RULES? HA HA

One fails to understand the need for speedbreakers on city roads. In fact, all you need is to run enough DTC buses on these roads. The frequency with which they break down and cause jams does away with the need for speedbreakers. Heck, while we're at it, we might as well do away with no-parking signboards and no-horn zones near schools and hospitals. We're proud Delhiites. Don't you

dare tell us what to do.

ACTION PLAN

- 1 The new motor vehicles bill, which provides for stringent penalties for traffic violations, should be supported by all political parties and passed quickly
- 2 A heavy component of driving lessons and community service should be involved in disciplining road users
- 3 Repeat offenders should be publicly shamed and model road users honoured
- 4 Police should be given a free hand to interpret the law and find innovative solutions like recommending cancellation of driving licence
- 5 Road rage of any kind and particularly targeting traffic policemen should invite harsh action and penalties
- 6 Traffic rules and driving manners should be a part of school curriculum

