

Traffic woes

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Some years ago, coming to the state capital was no hassle as work could be combined with pleasure and the time could be considered a mini vacation with evenings spent visiting relatives and friends, doing a bit of shopping and going on drives from Itanagar to Naharlagun and other nearby places. But nowadays the traffic chaos, the potholed roads, the long snaking line of cars, haphazard parking etc has completely changed the atmosphere and sucked dry the pleasure of being in the place. Even small tasks like vegetable shopping seems a daunting undertaking here taking into account heavy slow moving traffic and long wait to reach the market areas.

Other than staying away from the roads, the traffic cannot be helped, but it can be made bearable if all the drivers and pedestrians follow the rules and maintain

basic etiquette. Imagine getting stuck in the traffic for hours, waiting patiently and following the rules while slowly inching your way at a snail's pace towards your destination and suddenly a car zooms past into the oncoming traffic without a thought for the patiently waiting and creating a bigger jam further along the way, because there is no space for a third car in a two lane road. The open indifference of the driver in not noticing the waiting cars causes more trouble for all as the wait becomes longer.

Stuck in the traffic, you sit observing the world around you while you are forced to sit still waiting and see that a rag picker who is picking plastic bottles along the way and carrying a huge sack of his pickings is keeping up with you as you have travelled one kilometer in an hour and later crosses you. The ridiculousness of the situations makes you want to laugh and cry too as you have

worked hard and saved to afford the luxury of sitting and travelling in an air conditioned car, while a person walking is travelling faster than you!

One other way of whiling away your time while you are stuck in traffic is to watch people in two wheelers zooming past without wearing any protective gear and without any concern for the oncoming traffic. You start thinking how I wish something would happen so that they learn a lesson... you check your negative thoughts but cannot help it every time the same happens. The same negative thoughts occur when bikers speed and overtake, cutting into your lane and almost touching your car. The rider acts like the king of the roads driving on empty roads swerving this way and that while car drivers have to act swiftly on seeing a bike suddenly appear from nowhere. A bit of awareness on the dangers of rash driving, sense of self

preservation, knowledge on traffic rules, common sense on how and where to park and where not to so that it does not inconvenience others etc will go a long way in making driving in the roads here bearable, even if it does not solve the traffic problems.

A car owner takes pride in keeping the car clean and shiny but getting it dusty and grimy with use is inevitable and expected. An unexpected source of getting your car dirty in the capital city is to come under a pedestrian overbridge and getting spit on. A big red spit stain on the spic and span wind shield of your car is an eye sore and can spoil your mood. One other mood spoiler is the bad parking practice prevalent here. You see cars parked haphazardly along the roadside so that a space that could be utilized to park multiple cars properly is occupied by just one car, cars double parked blocking the way for the other car to leave, cars

parked on pedestrian ways, on drains, on both sides of the roads making the roads narrower etc.

Who do we blame for the traffic woes in the capital city of the state? The Rain Gods for washing away and worsening the condition of the roads, the authorities for not keeping up with the Rain Gods and maintaining the roads in time, the huge number of car owners who all want to travel in their own cars, the drivers who do not obey the traffic rules, the commuters who have to travel to and fro from Itanagar to Naharlagun and back for their work... Whoever we assign the blame on, we have to appreciate and salute the traffic police and traffic wardens who can be seen regulating the traffic breathing in the toxic fumes and dust, standing in the rain or under the scorching sun diligently doing their duty day after day. *(The contributor is DIPRO, Upper Subansiri)*