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Teetering trucks in city turn troublesome

SNEHA JHA
Bangalore—Some trucks in the city carry load over the permitted limit, causing a potential safety hazard not only to their vehicles but also to the road users and passenger vehicles. This action is illegal as per the Motor Vehicle Act (1988). Most of these trucks carry construction materials like sacks of cement, sand, bricks, stones and granite. Drivers carry bulky commodities in excess, in flagrant contravention of the existent laws. "I don't want to make repeated trips to the site where I deliver goods. It is convenient to carry it all at a time. Any way there are not many traffic constables here to keep a watch on vehicle movement so I can get away with it," said Raviraj P, a truck driver.

Driving overloaded vehicles has numerous perils.. "An overweight vehicle exerts pressure on the tyres, brakes and axles. While going downhill it travels fast. The vehicle can go out of control and the brakes can fail. It becomes difficult to steer the vehicle," said Mangat

Kumar, a lorry driver. Heavy trucks endanger the life of road users. They are involved in road mishaps where the fatalities rates are high and injuries inflicted on the victims are severe.

The menace is prevalent mostly on the highways and rural area. "The capacity to carry load differs from vehicle to vehicle. The Regional Transport Office decides it at the time of issuing the permit.

The vehicles are caught at check posts and taken to the weighbridges where the load is weighed and action is taken against them. Rs 3000 are charged for every extra ton loaded on it. But there are problems because of the shortage of weighbridges, which

are present mostly on the national highways," said N Narsimha, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Traffic Planning).

"I want to maximize my profit. It is better to carry all the load in one trip because it saves fuel and money," said R. Natrajan, a truck owner.

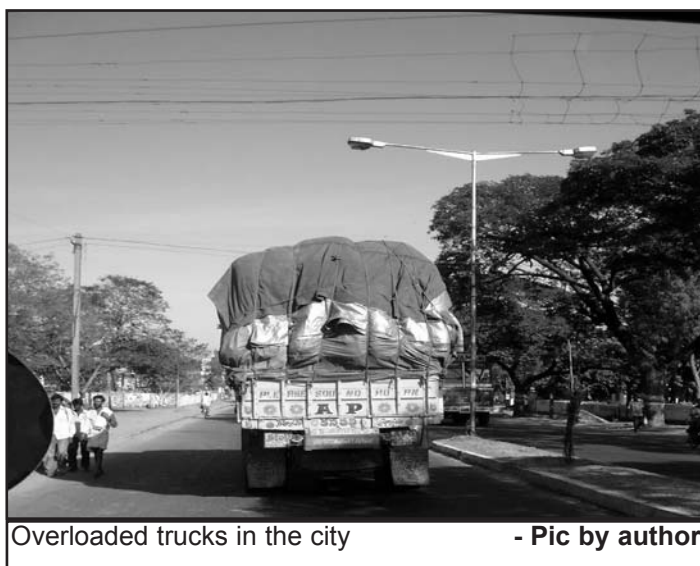
The onus lies on the RTOs to ensure the observance of these laws and to take action against the people flouting them. Krishna Reddy, RTO, Indranagar said that overweight vehicles damage the roads and bridges. During asphaltting the load carrying capacity of the road is decided and signboards indicating this are displayed.

He added that if they are disregarded there could be premature damage to the road. Overloaded trucks can cause the bridges to vibrate resulting in their collapse and the loss of life and property. This wastes the investment on the infrastructure.

Overweight trucks result in pollution, obstruction of traffic flow and low pick-up of the vehicle.

J Gyanendra, RTO, Koramangla said, "The vehicle manufacturers provide the Registered laden weight and the payload. The Gross Vehicle Weight is obtained by adding the payload and the unladen weight. Based on these specifications by the manufacturers and dealers, we issue permits and register the vehicles. The permissible load limits are mentioned in it."

He further explained, "We are also making use of the portable weighing machines, which were introduced four-five months ago. They give the weight of the vehicle immediately and counter the problem of shortage of weighbridges. The number of cases booked so far in 2007 is 12, 672 as against the 22, 276 in 2006 and 28, 134 in 2005. We are trying our best to curtail the problem. But people's participation and vigilance is important."



Overloaded trucks in the city - Pic by author

"Violating traffic rules is not a criminal offence and people can get away with it easily," said Mohammad Hussein, Police Inspector (Traffic)

The truck owners have their own vested interest in defying the road

Marriages in the state go unregistered

ADITI SONI
Bangalore—On February 14, 2006, the Supreme Court held that registration is necessary for any marriage. Yet, nothing much has moved people get their marriages registered. "If ten marriages happen every month, not more than eight are registered," said Sub Registrar Naveen (name changed), at Jayanagar.

A survey conducted by the reporter showed that not more than four out of 10 (on an average) people have registered themselves. Though people at Majestic were unaware of the fact that marriage registration can lead to any good, Koramangla's young generation was quite active in getting themselves registered. In Hebbal, Shivajinagar and Jayanagar also the response was dull.

"Every marriage is registered here," said RajKamal Singh, In-charge of marriages in Sri Guru Singh Gurudwara, Ulsoor. The response from the Christ Church was the same. "According to the Christian Act, it is mandatory to get registered. As soon as you get married in the church of your own

domination, you are registered and the details get filed in the church. One copy of the certificate is given to the government while the other one is kept by the church itself", said John Charles, a priest. But Hindu Temples did not made registration mandatory. "If 200 marriages take place, I don't think that more than 50 marriages get registered in the government records" said a priest of Aiyappa Temple.

"Though I'm not registered, my son who recently got married got himself registered," said. Ashok Bedi, a resident of ShivajiNagar.

"I think its good to get yourself registered. Even the procedure is not difficult. All it takes is little courage to go to a Sub Registrar. This is definitely another way to help the government to keep track of and check social evils," said M Varun Dudeja, software engineer in Koramangla.

As per the Supreme Court's order on November 9, 2007, marriage registration should be made compulsory for all religions. All states have been given a three month deadline

Heritage website relegated to a relic

J. JAGANNATH
Bangalore—The Government of Karnataka's website <http://kannadasiri.kar.nic.in/> is lying defunct since 2004. The website that chronicles the entire Karnataka's heritage is owned, maintained and updated by Department of Kannada & Culture, Government of Karnataka, says the website.

This website has not been updated since April 19th, 2004 as is clearly visible in the site. The responsibilities of designing and hosting the site lie with National Informatics Centre (NIC), Karnataka. When asked about the delay in updating the site, Lakshmi Shah, an official at NIC said, "We need to get a letter from the Department of Kannada and Culture and only then can we post content onto the website."

Usha Suresh, Director of Karnataka State Archives expressed ignorance about the delay. She said: "Sometimes things do get delayed. I have talked with the NIC people and they said that the website will be updated by next week along with the search engine, which is currently offline. The computerization and cataloguing of the entire available data is the cause for delay. Also the fact that we are combining the older and newer information is another reason for this delay."

The website does not even mention that Usha Suresh has succeeded B.Sreedhara as the Director of Karnataka State Archives.

The Karnataka Gazetteer too is not updated on the website regularly, the gazette is a 45 years old institution, which has till date compiled 91 gazetteer volumes and these volumes run into 60,000 pages.

Shiraganahalli.N.Raju, editor of Karnataka Gazetteer Department had a different view on the

delay in updating the website." Ours is a static website unlike the other government websites. However, we do post the gazettes whenever they are published. There are various stages in publication like compiling the state and district gazetteers, drafting of chapters and then a Government Advisory Committee approves them, which takes up lot of time" he said.

"We publish gazettes both in Kannada and English. Sadly, the English copies are sold out but the Kannada ones are lying in the godown. In 1999, we published 3000 and 4000 copies of the Handbook of Karnataka in Kannada and English respectively. The English ones are sold out but still 2000 Kannada copies are yet

"The website should not be updated for at least another couple of years because people are not buying the gazettes" – S.N.Raju, editor, Karnataka Gazetteer Department

to be bought," said Raju.

"In my view the website should not be updated for at least another couple of years because people are not buying the gazettes, as they are freely available on the net. That is the reason why we have not yet posted the English version of Mandya and Dakshin Kannada gazetteer." said Raju.

Shivaram, Under Secretary to I.M.Vittal Murthy, Principal Secretary, Kannada & Culture Department said that he recently joined his job and that he is unaware about the delay in updating the website. "I will discuss this issue with Mr.Murthy, who is not well, as soon as possible. After that, suitable action will be taken," he said.