

Daily pass farce

Awareness regarding rules is lacking among both commuters and conductors

SHILPA KRISHNAN

Bangalore—The conductors of the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) do not follow

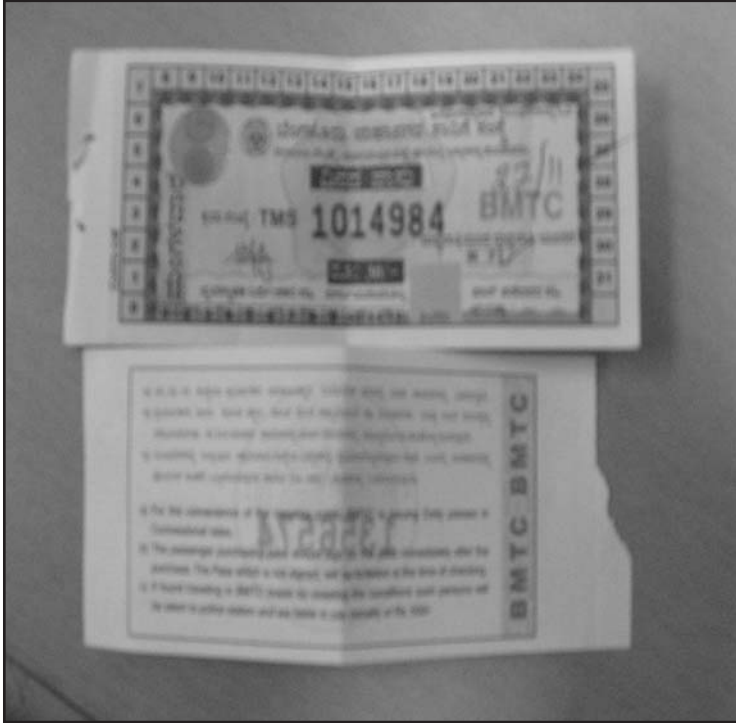
their own rules. As per instructions on the back of the daily bus passes issued by the BMTC, the person purchasing the pass must sign on it. The conductor is supposed to check the passes for signature and if any pass is found without the signature, the person has to be fined. However, most conductors do not follow this rule at all, nor do most commuters.

Ahmad, a commuter who regularly purchases the daily passes said, "I had no clue about the existence of such a rule. However, the conductors don't check the tickets as well, so it doesn't really matter." Swapna, another commuter added, "Neither did I have any knowledge of this rule. I don't understand why we

have such rules. We do not carry a pen with us all the time so how do they expect us to sign. Moreover, the bus is moving and there is so

conductor said that it would be difficult to check each pass for signatures and charge them fines. He said that they were supposed to charge Rs. 10 for every one rupee violation. However in the case of not signing bus passes, the fine is as high as five hundred rupees, he said. However, he felt that it would not be fair to the commuters as they are largely unaware of the rule.

Dastagir Sharif, Chief Transport Manager (Operations) said, "Yes, there is such a rule and if the commuter is caught with an unsigned bus pass then he will be fined. However, the ticket checking agents usually check only for those who do not buy the tickets and not for unsigned daily passes. The conductors too have not been properly instructed in this respect." He added, "We will look into this matter soon. Otherwise different people will use the same pass."



Though it is clearly mentioned that bus passes must be signed by the buyer, most passes remain unsigned.

- Pic by author

much crowd. It's a good thing that this rule is not given much importance."

Dhiranna, a bus conductor said that he did not know about any such rule and was unaware of his duties thereof. He mentioned that none of the authorities had insisted on this rule. Ramesh, another

Rock quarrying continues despite orders

SEETHA LAKSHMI T.D

Bangalore—Rock quarrying is the major booming activity in Bidadi and Ramanagaram taluks. This work has continued for the last 30 years around the villages of Kenchanaguppe and Kallugopalli, which are 40 Kms away from Bangalore on the way to Mysore. Nearly 80 crushers have taken licenses from the Revenue Department for quarrying, and more than 4000 workers are work as daily labourers.

But recently the Mines and Geology Department, and the Forest Department had issued an order to stop the quarrying stating that the rocks are in forest areas. The land, thus belongs to Forest Department. Despite this, quarrying is still taking place. Ms. Sannaboramma, the deputy Director for Department of Mines and Geology said, "We have issued the orders and will check on that. It will be stopped soon in the process".

But the farmers are complaining that the crushers are encroaching onto the agricultural lands and also the dust caused by crushing has severely brought down the agricultural production of the area. The grievances from villagers include cattle suffering from digestive problems, houses and roofs breaking due to the extremely high decibel sound of the quarry, and the excessive power shutdown caused by explosion. Environmental activists said that nature is not a commodity to exploit for the growth of a

particular section of the society. They maintained that the impacts of quarrying are rigorous on nature and the normal life of people.

Mr. Shivanna, a labor rights Activist from AITUC said, "The major tragedy is that the daily-wage workers working in the quarry are all from the poor and rural part of Karnataka and many of them are from Tamil Nadu. But this unorganized sector is not provided any facilities other than the wages of Rs 60 to Rs 150 per day. Many of them are also suffering from the "Silicosis" disease. But they are deprived from any medical care. They are also not allowed to organize themselves through any movements or organizations. They say that nearly 2000 workers are leading their life in thatches, in this dangerous state where they are not even able to fulfill their daily fundamental needs."

Talking about the order in the flip side of the issue, Mr. Nagesh, The Crushers Union, president says, "Stone is essential to various human needs, if we stop quarrying who will provide the stones to the public? And the land was given by the Maharaja. We have also licenses from the Revenue Department." He also mentioned that if the quarry was closed down, the workers would be out of jobs. The nearly 4000 workers employed there are unskilled.

But in this business of putting an end to rock quarrying, the laborers are becoming the real victims with out any alternate source of income.

Somebody answer the phone!

MANASA TEJESWINI

Bangalore—Telephone wires running on the footpath of Cubbon park has caused a lot of problem to the passersby as it is spread all over the place. The passersby complain that children tend to trip and fall over these wires. A passerby who refused to reveal his name says that it has been there for a long time and nobody seem to bother about the mess.

The Cubbon Park police said that though they have

The Cubbon Park police said that though they have complained to the BSNL authorities to remove the wires, they have not been removed by them as yet.

complained to the BSNL authorities to remove the wires, they have not removed them. They also said that they would give another complaint to get them

removed. Gayatri the area manager blamed the private operators saying that: "I accept that this problem exists. But the blame lies as much on the private operators. They get permission to lay cables during the night but because of

their inefficiency they do not fill the dug up holes and just leave the wires all around the place which has not been attended to from a long time. This is the reason why one sees so many cables outside on the roads.

When the private operators when contacted refused to comment on the issue saying that they were unaware of the problem and would soon take action.

Encroachments threaten Kempambudi Lake

DIELLE D'SOUZA

Bangalore—Gavipuram's Kempambudi Lake is threatened by encroachments but the authorities seemed unconcerned.

Although there are signs of landscaping around the lake, one end houses slums and building material including mud and stones. Open sewage drains that overflow into the now-drying lake and lines of washed clothes run around. Water lies stagnant in the drains and a rather bad smell accompanies the many flies that flit around.

November 18, 2007 saw a procession by the Kempambudi Kere Ulisi Andolan Samiti from Bull Temple road in Basavangudi to Kempambudi Lake to protest against the encroachments. Karnataka Rakshana Vedike president T.A.Narayana Gowda, while addressing a gathering on the

lake premises on the same day, said that many works including lakes

formed," he said. "This project is solely funded and executed by the BBMP." The BBMP, however, pleads ignorance with regard to encroachments at Kempambudi Lake. Mr. Nataraj, Engineer, Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike (BBMP) said, "We do not know anything about the



Clothesline being hung in the premises of the Kempambudi Lake

- Pic by author

and monuments by Kempe Gowda, the erstwhile ruler of Karnataka, had either vanished or were in a bad shape.

Umesh, Assistant Executive Engineer of the Lake Development Authority (LDA), insisted that the development work at the Kempambudi Lake was not under the LDA. "All work undertaken by the S M Krishna government took place even before the LDA was

encroachment." The S.M.Krishna government initiated development work of the lake. Former Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), K.N.Subha Reddy told a city newspaper that this work is still incomplete and efforts must be made to restore the water body. He said that he would be addressing the matter at the earliest and that he would do the needful.