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**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- From the Editor's Desk..... 2
- How Safe Is Delhi For Sen- 2
- Internet-A Necessity or Men- 3
- Road Rage 3
- School Ad- 3
- Mission
- Are Women 4
- Safe In Delhi?
- Traffic Snarls 4

# Modern Maladies

BBC NEWS SCHOOL REPORT

BAL BHARATI PUBLIC SCHOOL,

GANGA RAM HOSPITAL MARG, NEW DELHI -110060

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## PARKING SPACE: GOING, GOING AND GONE....

- RASHI SHARMA (X-B)

24 year old Shweta Garg, a frequent visitor to Kamla Nagar Market, is astonished to see her car wedged between two bulky ones. She had parked it in a relatively empty space an hour ago. On many occasions, Delhiites face such situations when one minute there's a space for their car and the next minute, multiple cars try to fit into that tiny space.

With the growing need for owning a vehicle, in New Delhi, parking has become a daily nuisance. The increasing parking menace has been leading to law and order problems, even murders in some cases.

Parking is a problem not only in public places, but also in front of houses. The signs of 'No Parking' are generally ignored. "When we shifted to this society, the most satisfying factor was that I had a guaranteed space to park my car", says Ankur Sharma, a resident of Vasant Vihar. But now he is absolutely disappointed. "Coming back from my office, even at 11 at night, I

seldom find space right outside my house to park"

Incidentally, the Government has announced its plans to introduce high tech and multi level parking slots in popular markets like Khan Market and Sarojini Nagar. But the dwellers remain skeptical. "The



parking issue has been prevalent for quite some time now. Where were the plans a few years back, when people were slicing each others' throats just to park their car?" says Sakshi, a BPO em-

ployee. "The plans have been in the pipeline for some time, but the probability of them seeing the light of the day is low", says a Government official, on conditions of anonymity.

Some Delhiites, however, are optimistic. "It's a great idea if multi level parking is introduced", says a DU student Rakesh Jain. A shop owner in Karol Bagh feels "People get very irritated due to the parking constraints, which affects our sales. Now with the new parking slots and spaces, hopefully we'll have happy customers." When told about the Government plan, Pradeep, a valet working in Khan Market says, "People get very fed up when they cannot find space to park their cars. Maybe after the plans are established, they won't be annoyed as much and our income will increase as well".

## LITTER HERE AND THERE...

- VAISHALI CHAWLA (IX-H)

Sixteen year old Rohit slips over a banana peel while walking on the pavement. The stench from the garbage pile in the park is unbearable for the residents of D block, Janak Puri. This not so pleasant condition of the capital proves why Delhiites top the list of Indians who litter. Even though the Supreme Court has passed anti-littering orders, Delhiites continue their job of turning the capital into a big trash can.

Nevertheless, the city is waking up to the fact that something needs to be done to make the Capital a healthy and clean place to live. And this is exactly what the government has in mind.



MCD Standing Committee Chairman, Yogender Chandolia, says, "In 2009, we had started an anti littering drive to keep Delhi clean. We had designed advertisements for newspapers, television and radio which are still running and frankly, are running quite successfully." The MCD also launched a concept wherein the cleaning trucks and the sweepers scrub the city clean at night. "We thought that in this way, we could achieve our objective without causing any hindrance in the daily routine of the city.

Many schools in Delhi are

making commendable efforts to sensitize the children regarding litter management. "Our school has separate bins for biodegradable and non biodegradable waste. Use of plastic bags is discouraged. We have an Environmental Club which conducts regular workshops to create awareness about keeping the school and the city clean and we also have a vermicompost pit", says Saniya Mirani, a student of Bal Bharati Public School, Ganga Ram Hospital Marg.

Reports also suggest that due to the recent Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, one does see a much cleaner & greener city. However, the crux of the matter remains that both the administration & the citizens should ensure that the initiatives taken to keep the Capital a bright and clean place continue.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK.....



Mrs. Pooja Ahuja

As New Delhi celebrates its centenary of being the capital of India, it's time for introspection. The city has stood the test of time. There is a lot of history behind this city and we as Delhiites are indeed proud of it. Delhi, being the centre of power has always been deemed as a very important city. It's something to do with Delhi's karma. There is an aura around Delhi which keeps the men of power here. It has always been a city of influx and

that has made it culturally vibrant. Representing the nation's social, political and economic unity, the city somewhere gets neglected. Yes, there are problems; issues that demand immediate attention. There is no better way of addressing these community issues than involving the youth. In order to create long-term, sustainable and community based solutions to these challenges, we must authentically engage the youth in identi-

fying problems, proposing solutions, and most importantly working together to implement these solutions. Taking the first step towards our goal, we present this issue of **MODERN MALADIES** which aims at awakening Generation X on community challenges. The Newsletter offers reports on relevant problems concerning society, provides a plethora of information on the issues and also suggests appropriate action. - **Mrs. POOJA AHUJA**

*"Many a times senior citizens have been the butt of anti social behaviour – verbal abuse, vandalism, unprovoked assault, abusive behaviour intended to cause fear or distress"*

## HOW SAFE IS DELHI FOR SENIOR CITIZENS???

- SHREYA MOHAPATRA (X-G)

Safety and security of the elderly, especially those living alone is a concern. Due to various reasons the elderly are at times constrained to live away from their families and loved ones, which makes them particularly vulnerable to safety and security hazards. The year 2001 saw 15 senior citizens in Delhi become victims of murder. In 2002, there were 20 such cases. The count has been on a steady rise ever since. There have been numerous incidents of road accidents, burglaries, theft and even murder involving the elderly. "With the growing trend of children living separately from parents, the old people have to face haunting loneliness," says 60 year old, Mr. V.C.Goyal. He has been living alone with his wife in

an apartment for the past 5 years. "Due to our physical weakness and lonely status, we are easy targets for criminals – especially in urban surroundings," says another 72 year old who has been living alone in a flat in Vasant Kunj for 2 years now. "We are most likely to be exploited by the unscrupulous. Many a times senior citizens have been the butt of anti social behaviour – verbal abuse, vandalism, unprovoked assault & abusive behaviour intended to cause fear or distress" says 65 year old Aparna Sharma, a widow. Taking in account the previously reported incidents, they often fall victims to threats from their own relatives, domestic help or servants, landlords, tenants, strangers, thieves or intruders. They are constantly exposed to accidents or mishaps even within

the house.

Jorawer Singh and his wife, both aged above 80 say, "We often need to depend on some kind of aide or other. "If these people also break our trust, where would we go?" questions Mrs. Singh.

The aged have more often than not become innocent victims of rampant criminals who murder or cheat them without any second thought.

The scenario, however, seems to be improving. Many help lines, old age homes and centers have opened up for the elderly. Delhi Police has also initiated a very innovative drive for the safety of the senior citizens wherein school students are being sensitized and roped in to help and keep a watch over the senior citizens in their vicinity. It's important to think of and concretize more such drives so that the elderly in the city can sleep without fearing for their lives.



## INTERNET- A NECESSITY OR MENACE ?

- DHARMEET SINGH (IX-H)

Is there anything that can't be done on the Internet? From shopping in Tesco's to finding a house on the other side of the world – the possibilities are endless! Throughout the world a generation of P.C windows has emerged. Everyday thousands of pupils log-on to the Internet and enter a world of the wonderful and weird- but is the Internet really so marvellous?

Over the past few years many incidents have been reported of people of all ages being conned. It isn't exaggeration to talk about the Internet being used by paedophiles to prey on innocent and naïve children. Who knows? — the 15-year-old boy you are romancing may turn out to be a middle-aged man waiting to take advantage of a teenager's trust and naivety.

With 2 out of 5 children encountering violent scenes on the internet and 1 in 7

parents admitting that they have no idea what their kids are doing when they're glued to the net, surely it is debatable that the Internet has the potential to be a dangerous menace. The Internet has dramatically changed the way we spend our money. "No more queues, sore feet, hunting for hours in cramped, smelly stores", said Mr. Subhash Prasad of Rajouri Garden. But let's not forget the risks of shopping on-line.

Internet is a marvel because of the wealth of information we can get on the net. It is an educational tool for children. Without a doubt, a click of the mouse has become more attractive than a turn of a page.

"Teenagers nowadays can access a variety of search- engines with their eyes closed but barely know how to use a dictionary!!", said Mr. Mahesh

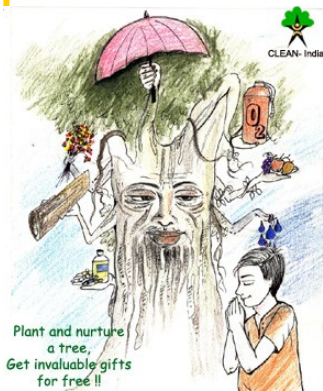
Tiwari of Moti Nagar. "Kids are obsessed with Facebook", said a frustrated Mrs. Kaushlya Devi of Ramesh Nagar.

Once upon a time it was only people who could catch a virus but now expensive boxes of metal and plastic have to be nursed back to health on a regular basis.



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS - AN AWAKENING

- AADYA AHUJA (X-G)



New Delhi, the capital city of India can be labeled as a massive bundle of co-existing contradictions. One can speak at length about the lack of

civic sense, corruption, chaos, maddening traffic, power failures and several other problems that weigh down the city. On the other hand, Delhi's awakening to environmental concerns is enough reason for Delhites to hold their heads high with pride.

Delhi, being the eighth most populated metropolis in the world, is a breeding ground for major environmental problems but the city administration has taken many steps in arresting environmental degradation on all fronts: Air, water, noise and waste management. Air pollution has been one of the major

concerns in the capital city. It has been combated by the government to a large extent. More than fifteen year old vehicles have been phased out. Entire public transport has been switched over to CNG fuel mode. The city has been declared as 'an air pollution control area'. Stringent emission norms for industries and thermal power stations have been set.

Water pollution is being tackled by keeping a check on its major sources i.e. domestic sewage and industrial effluent. It has been made mandatory for industrial units to have effluent treatment plants. Sewage treatment plants have been installed and are monitored every month. Water quality of River Yamuna is examined on monthly basis and corrective measures are taken. To check noise pollution, government of Delhi has taken many steps such as declaring certain areas like hospitals, educational institutions etc as 'silence zones'. Ambient noise monitoring is done on monthly basis at 40 locations in Delhi and faltering units are notified to take corrective action.

Waste management has been taken up as a challenge by the administration. The government converts 3500 tons of solid waste per day into power and compost. Landfill sites at three places on the outskirts of Delhi are being constructed. Segregation of waste into degradable and non-biodegradable is encouraged. The government has started many awareness campaigns which have been quite successful. Last but not the least, 'Green Delhi-Clean Delhi' is a dictum followed religiously by Delhi administration and its conscientious citizens. The green cover of Delhi has gone up from 3% in 1998 to almost 20% in 2010, making Delhi one of the greenest capital cities in the world. There are more than 15000 parks and gardens in the city which are being maintained with the help of NGOs, Eco clubs and Resident Welfare Associations.

This success story is a milestone in the progress of the capital city and asserts the motto 'Meri Dilli-Meri Shaan' (My Delhi-My Pride).

## ARE WOMEN SAFE IN DELHI?

-PRACHI PAL (X-G)

The recent gruesome murder of a female journalist in Delhi in the wee hours of the morning sent shock waves throughout the country. Once again Delhi came under the scanner. Eve teasing; harassing women, killing for dowry, the Tandoor case, Jessica Lal murder, Aarushi murder case— the list is endless. “Delhi’s bad track record continues to grow. Cruelty to women has become a way of life, be it towards a stranger, daughter, wife or mother. More so if you are a foreigner” says Shruti Tewari, a university student. Results revealed by National Crime Report Bureau show that over 32,000 murders, 19,000 rapes, 7,500 dowry deaths and 36,500 molestation cases are the violent crimes reported in India in 2010 against women “Women have strengths that amaze everyone. They carry children, they

carry burdens yet they hold faith, happiness, love and joy. They can wipe a tear, cover a wound and pat your back at the same time. Then why aren’t they valued?” asks Bi-



mala Verma, an annoyed housewife. There of course is visible, a silver lining to the cloud. In an urgent response to the alarming situation, the Delhi Government has held interactive sessions within its departments that deal with women’s affairs, it has

involved its various departments – Industry, Labour, Police, Education, Transport, and Health – to form a general consensus to curb the menace of crimes against women. It has further solicited assistance and support from all sections of society – Psychiatrists, Legal Experts, Delhi Commission for Women, and others to pinpoint or locate the root cause of the problems to chalk out measures to eliminate the offences and finally, a strategy to implement such measures. Criminals in a lot of cases of crime against women have been brought to justice. Measures like well lit roads at night, increased police patrolling, plying of safe cabs etc. have helped the situation improve. One can hope that soon the women of Delhi wouldn’t hesitate before venturing out alone.

## TRAFFIC SNARLS

- SMITA PATHAK (X-G)

Are you also sick of being caught in the traffic every day? The daily commute in Delhi is longer and more gruelling than ever before, reflecting the failure of transportation infrastructure, according to IBM’s first global Commuter Pain study.

According to a study, Delhi bags the fifth position for the city hit by worst traffics. Traffic related problems have risen exponentially in the capital. As per the survey of 2011, Delhi NCR, apart from its own population of about 19 million, also accommodates thousands of commuters from outlying areas who come to work in the city every day. Delhi has a car density of 85 cars per 1000 persons—roughly 10 times the national average, and 1992 kilometres of road per 100 square kilometres as against the nation’s average of 74! And these figures don’t come anywhere near explaining the chaos that reigns the Capital’s roads 24×7. Shweta Bansal, a student, says “Most car owning households have almost as many cars as the number of members and nearly 3.5 lakh cars are added to the roads of the capital every year.” And though rains cheer the city up but Delhiites have a harrowing time due to the traffic menace. “It is not uncommon for a 10 Kilometre commute to take as much as an hour in Delhi” says Shivani Bhattacharya, an Engineer.

Enforcement of traffic rules seems to be an unheard concept and traffic cops care for nothing except their monetary benefits. Pedal-happy drivers brazenly jump signals, sticking out their arms to pass a currency note to the traffic cop on duty with prac-



tised ease.

However the administration has recognised the problem of traffic congestion in the Capital as a serious issue that needs to be tackled. Delhi Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit said that congestion and limited road space has to be taken care of and people should shift from use of private vehicles to public transport. The Govt. has

also started a new state-of-the-art computerised vehicle inspection and certification unit and Drivers’ Training Institute to provide safe and pollution-free public transport system in the Capital. The expansion of Metro Rail is a pointer in this direction. A large number of flyovers have been constructed to ease out problems of traffic congestion Traffic Police has launched specific drives for enforcement of traffic laws and rules in areas which has direct bearing on improving the road discipline and safety level.

However Govt. cannot deal with the problem alone. We, as citizens of Delhi, have to join hands to find a solution to the problem. No doubt owning big & expensive vehicles is a sign of personal prosperity but it’s high time Delhiites think unselfishly about the city and find ways to decongest it. Car pools and use of public transport are some very handy and easy-to implement solutions.