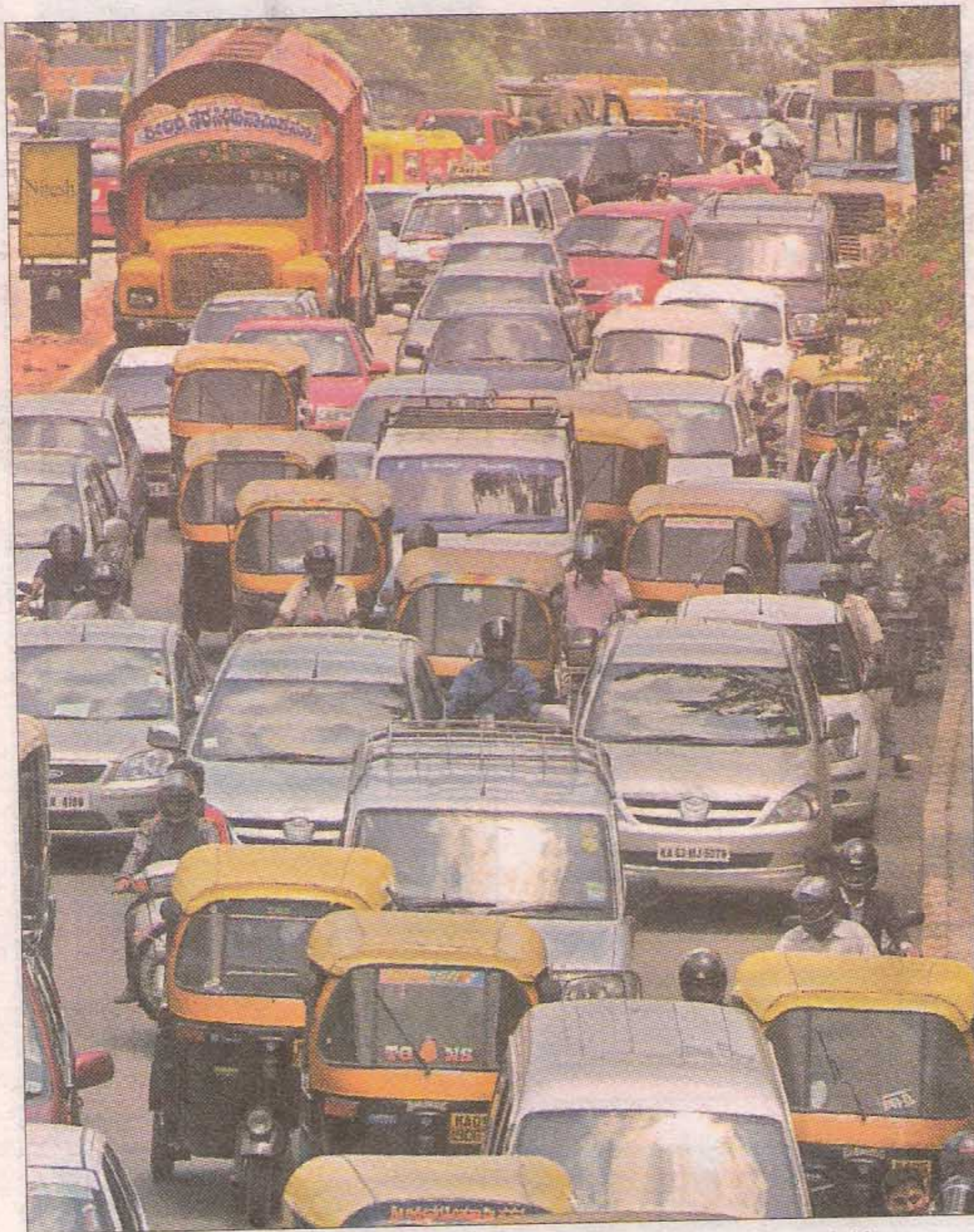


Peak-(a)-Boo!



CHAOS REIGNS SUPREME: A traffic snarl at Sankey Road near Windsor Manor bridge

RASHMI RAO

BENGALURU

Much has been said and written about Bengaluru's traffic. It's chaotic, to say the least. And it's clear there are newer and more number of peak hours now.

It started perhaps with the IT industry changing work timings from 9:30 am to an hour earlier to beat the rush hour! So company buses were forced to start as early as 6:30 am in order to reach offices before 8:15 am. Soon, other sectors followed with a shift in timings. However, businesses in the city continue to open around 10 am. In between are school timings and one can see school buses

and vans criss crossing streets between 7 am and 8 am. After 10:30 am is when people with business meetings, salespersons making their rounds, and homemakers step out of home. Now, throw in the BPO cabs (they are not bound by regular timings anyway) and the autos which are out in full force by 8:30 am! Repeat

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four lakh vehicles are
added every year**

PRAVEEN SOOD

this madness from 3 pm on the way back and you get the full picture.

Said Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Praveen Sood, "Till five years ago, our peak hours were 8:30-11:30 am and 5:30-7:30 pm. The rest of the day was non-peak. Of late, these differences have ceased to exist. Bengaluru's roads were designed only for 10 lakh vehicles, but we have 32 lakh vehicles today. Four lakh new vehicles are added every year!"

Director, KSRTC and former DCP (Traffic) M.A. Saleem concurred with this saying, "Bengaluru's vehicular population at 32 lakh is the second highest in the country, next only to Delhi. Even Mumbai with a population of 15 million people, has only 16 lakh vehicles on its roads. In Tokyo, out of a population of 30 million, 27 million use public transport. But here, everyone wants to drive around in their vehicles — office-goers have shifted from buses to two-wheelers or cars, homemakers travel on wheels to the nearby mall and even after work people drive to restaurants or movies."

Mr Sood admitted that the increasing number of vehicles has had a multiplier effect with road space being taken up for parking purposes. "Everyone wants free parking. Any infrastructure will be insufficient if four lakh vehicles are added every year. If we can create a good public transport system, we can convince people to give up their vehicles. People are willing to pay for efficient transport. Non-registration of new vehicles is an undemocratic method of dealing with the issue," he added.

He also pointed out that traffic decongestion is not the traffic cop's responsibility. "There is a limit to a cop's jugglery. Of the 2,500 traffic policemen, 1,000 of them are manning traffic at any point in time during 8 am and 9 pm. There is a shortfall in their numbers and the city traffic police is doing its very best," he added.



For once, it was a pleasant view to find roads choked with colourful runners rather than screeching vehicles struggling for space.

The challenge for the Traffic police of Bangalore on Sunday was to ensure a clear running field for the elite athletes and the participants of every category with minimum inconvenience to the public. We did our best to ensure minimum disruption for an international event of such a big stature and popularity.

I thank the public for putting up with some inconvenience for the sake of more than 18,000 Bangaloreans who filled the roads with lot of colour and high spirits.

Shri Praveen Sood, IPS, IGP & Additional Commissioner of Police Traffic, Bangalore City