

# There's hardly any traffic management

Traffic management is almost a foreign concept to Kalasipalya with constables manning the congested and chaotic roads mostly caught in a twister.

One of the harried constables on duty rued that they were helpless and cannot do anything about the situation unless the government directs them to take action. "While a few private buses are allowed to enter the area, a few others are not. It is impossible to keep tabs on all the private buses. Due to their haphazard parking all over the place, commuters are the worst affected as they have to face a plethora of problems such as lack of space to walk, road blockages and difficulty in boarding buses," he says.

He agrees that it is the responsibility of the police officials to take action against violators and levy penalty on private bus drivers responsible for the chaos.

Another constable, who after trying to provide a semblance of order at the Kalasipalya bus stand, had this to say: "We are just dummies. Our higher-ups have instructed us that unless we have photographic or video evidence, we cannot book violators. But cameras have not been provided to our circle. All the traffic

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constables here work on a standalone basis. The higher officers know that we would face threats if we take on the erratic bus owners. So, we have no option but to be mute spectators to the goings-on."

The constant friction between BMTC drivers and private buses is a big headache for the police. This is particularly so at the point where private buses take the turn to Kalasipalya from under the flyover near KR Market.

Says a BMTC driver on condition of anonymity: "Private buses do not follow rules. Nor have they any concern for public safety. They overspeed, block our buses, have tinted windowpanes and most of

them don't even have a permit to operate their vehicles. Yet, by paying the usual 'mamool' to some BMTC official and the local police, they manage to have their way."

The Kalasipalya bus terminal also hosts buses from other states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Pramod Nair, a student of a City-based college, says, "People don't care. Whether the government comes up with a high-tech bus stand or not is a different question. At least, they must try to provide basic facilities like drinking water and toilets at the station."

Around 300 private buses are parked at the Kalasipalya bus stand every day, according to the traffic police. N Chandra Naidu, a private bus owner, said since they don't have enough space, they are forced to park their vehicles there. "Till date, no authority has come and told us to vacate the area. Where else do we go? There is no place elsewhere. If the government provides us ample parking space at some other place, we will be more than happy to move out. This is the only bus stand where people get access to private buses. Hence, it is always teeming with people. Earlier, we weren't facing any kind of parking problem. But now, due to a rise in the number of buses, there is a shortage of space."

"During peak hours, roads get blocked and there is hardly any space for commuters to walk. Besides the private vehicles' invasion of the bus stand premises, the condition of the roads is bad. In rainy season, the entire terminal and surroundings turn into a cesspool. The civic authorities should take some initiative to maintain infrastructure and improve the place," said Rajesh K, a vendor.

Traffic peaks mostly in the morning and evening. In the night, private buses line up in a long queue, leaving no space for BMTC buses.

Jude Rajesh, a regular commuter, said the only way to get rid of the problems in Kalasipalya is to shift the private bus stand to another place.

"It is really a headache coming over here. Commuters are in total confusion as to which bus they have to board. There are times when the BMTC buses do not stop at the scheduled stops, as they are occupied by private buses. Women, elderly citizens and children are the main sufferers," Rajesh added.

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