

# Traffic



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It is not an uncommon sight to witness people traveling in vehicles on the roads of Chennai lashing out with their arms and pointing fingers at fellow commuters, who according to them, seem to have committed a traffic violation. Often pillion riders take care of the latter and indulge in the customary mouthing of expletives, appearing to do some sort of panicky dance in the process. With an astounding number of cars alone being put out on the road everyday, it is hardly any surprise that Chennai's traffic troubles have been mounting. If statistics and the tag of Chennai being the 'Detroit' of India are anything to go by, Chennai is soon all set to have a production capacity of 2.2 million vehicles per annum, according to state deputy Chief Minister, M K Stalin. In addition to automobile giants like Ford, Hyundai, Daimler, Renault-Nissan, Mitsubishi and BMW, Peugeot is also looking to set up operations near Chennai.

Needless to say, a lot of consumers from Chennai are going to be major customers for these companies. However, this is only limited to cars. The Metropolitan Transport Corporation, according to latest figures, operates 3,421 buses in its fleet in Chennai, and ferries close to 55.29 lakh passengers every single day, across 690 routes. Add to this, the burgeoning two-wheeler population, and then one can imagine the scenario of Chennai's traffic. With so many people plying the roads, it is of absolute necessity, now more than ever, that the population of Chennai is educated on road rules. The Chennai City Traffic Police (CCTP) has also been playing quite an active role in this regard. It has conducted various safety camps and awareness programmes, but by and large, it boils down to every single person in ensuring that there are no major mishaps.

However, to assist in such endeavours, CCTP has set up a few programmes. One of these is the Citizen for Safe Roads (CSR) programme. Under this project, any member of the public, provided they are above the age of 18, can sign-up and enlist themselves as a road safety volunteer. This has been started as a purely social service project, due to which volunteers are not paid. In addition to this, CCTP has also installed CCTV cameras at important junctions, using which perpetrators can be reprimanded.

In an attempt to bolster community participation, CCTP has also started reaching out through social media. With a swanky website at their disposition, the aggrieved can file complaints and have their queries answered online. A Facebook profile page for the CCTP has attracted close to 2, 500 followers, but the page itself has been plagued by inactivity since August 19, 2010. Nevertheless, many people felt that such positive activity on the part of CCTP was bound to foster a change in the public's perspective of the Traffic Police.

Another important development, that will without doubt have a heavy bearing on the way traffic in Chennai is regulated is the proposed plan for the establishment of the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA). The Tamil Nadu Government on November 10, 2010 passed legislation in approval of the same. This plan aims to integrate all the modes of public transport in Chennai under one authority, and facilities such as common ticketing/common passes across all modes are expected to be rolled out to the public. This should also provide a reason for people to adopt public transport readily, once the Chennai Metro is completed by 2015. The CUMTA is also expected to look into matters of traffic management after the

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initial stages. It is learnt from an eight-part series carried out by Times of India in April 2010 that a plan for a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority for Chennai (Madras) was proposed as early as 35 years ago. It is also learnt that usually it has been the MTC that has stubbornly refused to integrate itself with the existing Suburban Train and MRTS services.

It is in these matters that the CUMTA is expected to play a very pivotal role; regulating and managing the city's ever-increasing traffic problems.

Interesting times lie ahead, and if things go as planned Chennai will surpass Delhi and Mumbai in providing a relatively smooth commuting experience in

the near future. Sources ??“ 1) The MTC Website 2) Times of India -

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/Moving-Chennais-traffic-and-shaking-up-the-system/articleshow/5798730.cms> 3) Articles and blog

posts about the CUMTA and the bill passed in November - [http://www.](http://www.thehindu.com/multimedia/archive/00287/Chennai_Unified_Met_287799a.pdf)

[thehindu.com/multimedia/archive/00287/Chennai\\_Unified\\_Met\\_287799a.pdf](http://www.thehindu.com/multimedia/archive/00287/Chennai_Unified_Met_287799a.pdf)