

Gobar Times

ENVIRONMENT FOR KIDS

THE SURVIVAL GUIDE

COWPATS



CUT AND PASTE

Dilip Chhabaria is an auto maker who does not build new cars. He only breaks apart existing ones, mixing and matching them to produce dazzling new cars. His designer cars are sight to behold. Seeing a Maruti merging into a Fiat is indeed amusing.



POOR MAN'S LIMO

Not rich and snooty enough to have a limousine? Not to worry, there's help at hand at the Auto Expo. Parikh Auto Builders have mastered the art of stretching our very own ageless Ambassador car into a long, smart, spanking new limousine. All this for a very affordable Rs. 7-8 lakhs only.

Fundung



Anubhuti Panda



Did you reach the Auto-Expo on time? Or did it seem to take a lifetime - sitting in your car at the same red light inhaling petrol and diesel fumes? The dream of owning the 'in' car seems like a perfect picture but what price are we paying for it?

Are we unconsciously adding to our own problems? More and more patients are being admitted to hospitals with cancer, lung disorders and breathing problems. When stuck in a jam you begin to think...
Do we really need so many new cars on the roads?

AUTOEXPOSED 2000!

Industries cause lots of pollution ... but what about vehicles? In the last ten years, the number of vehicles on the road has almost doubled. The pollution they are causing is much more. Pollution from automobiles has increased eight times which is a very big amount. Imagine if your marks increased or decreased by eight times. Automobiles are a menace.

The problem is the fuel cars use. Petrol is bad enough, but diesel is really harmful to the air. Though it is cheap, the actual cost is our lives. The most harmful thing it gives out are small tiny particles which are 1/10 the diameter of hair — thus invisible. So, we can't feel that an invisible particle can cause big harm to mankind. These tiny killers continue to take lives and send an increasing number of people to the hospitals. The number of vehicles on the road has become a health hazard.

Nevertheless, this year is the fifth Indian automobile exhibition in Delhi. People are coming from far and wide to Auto-Expo 2000, to look at the large variety and different type of cars on display.

Car manufacturers, both from India and abroad, are showcasing their models of diesel-powered cars. Metallic colours, glitzy banners, entertaining cheer-leader shows, and credit payment schemes sell the great Indian dream of owning a low-cost, high efficiency, private car.

Gobar Times went along too. We found that there were petrol and diesel cars. A new attraction was the compressed natural gas (CNG) model. 2 stroke and 4 stroke engines for scooters. There was a car with a LPG cylinder. An added advantage — you can cook when the car breaks down!

Glitzy stalls with beautiful women were attracting huge crowds. "WOW! What a model!" onlookers exclaimed breathlessly. Was it the car they were talking about? While people dived in and out of cars, the company's executive rattled off the cars' latest features in a monotone while handing out colourful bags.

Can cars be environmentally-friendly?
The world famous companies all claimed they can. Automobile manufacturers were running helter skelter trying to woo their consumers

with the 'most eco-friendly cars'. Though the Fiat representative proudly pointed out that his was the only stall which actually displayed an eco-friendly car. Unlike others who only spoke about it. "Have you seen anybody else talk about the environment?" he questioned. But he did not have the last laugh. When asked, all companies had some new and innovative technology in their cars to check pollution. Some companies made their cars Euro I and Euro II compliant, when continuously tapped on the heads by new laws, and with deadlines pushed into their faces by the Supreme Court.

The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) had set up a 'green pavilion'. Through the questionnaire they had prepared for the public, they were aiming to make people "aware of the causes of pollution in their city". The SIAM engineers believed that the car owners were totally responsible for their cars. Nevertheless, SIAM president Venu Srinivasan confessed: "We've got a bad name because we've not been responsible enough earlier. But now we're realising our responsibilities too."

Fighting car pollution

The governments of Sweden and the United States of America ask their car manufacturers to give an 'emission warranty' — i.e. if the car is producing a lot of pollution due to some technical problem then the company is asked to take the car, repair it at its own cost, and return it. Does India have the guts to implement such a law?

And while the best diesel in the world is Swedish Class I which contains 0.001% of sulphur, India's best diesel has a sulphur content of about 0.05%. Isn't that astonishing?

Moreover, other big cities in the world close all the industries and ban cars when the pollution level is very high. But is Delhi capable of taking such a step?

India isn't yet following the measures other countries are taking to avoid pollution. Then why do we think that just because other countries don't get polluted, we won't either?

This year we have to take concerned steps so that we can enjoy our freedom to breathe fresh air.

"We've got a bad name because we've not been responsible enough earlier. But now we're realising our responsibilities too".

VENU SRINIVASAN,
President of SIAM

LUNGING TO BREATHE

Inhaling city smog is bad for the body and bad for the brain. What to do? We, the citizens of India, need to pressurise the government into addressing the issue

OPINIONS ON POLLUTION

CSE has put up a stall at the Auto Expo 2000 warning people about high pollution levels in Delhi's air. Ms. Shiela Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi inaugurated the exhibition (see pic below).



The exhibition is an eye-opener on the devastation caused by vehicular air pollution. But how should we fight pollution? We went along to find out some answers.

"You have to nag, you have to push the government to do something. You be the leaders, we shall follow you."

Shiela Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi

"We are not being given clean air to breath in Delhi. We must educate schoolchildren about environmental degradation. In Denmark, schoolchildren are sensitised enough to give adults a lesson on, say, water conservation."

The Danish Ambassador

"It is time for the public to put pressure on the government and auto industry to take the onus of cleaning Delhi's air. The government should enforce stricter air-pollution norms for vehicular emissions, whereas the industry should manufacture less-polluting vehicles."

Anil Agarwal, Director CSE

The message was loud and clear. Delhi will become a graveyard if present pollution trends continue. But it is up to the Indian public to jostle for attention amidst the snazzy car models, and make sure that the government understands that.

POLLUTION MUST BE STOPPED.

Visit the CSE 'Right to Clean Air' exhibition at the AUTOEXPO 2000 at Pragati Maidan. Stall No: 705, (outdoors) opposite Hall 7ABC. Near Mother Dairy Parlour

INTERVIEW

To find out exactly what the Delhi government is planning to do about air pollution, GT interviewed Shiela Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi.

Gobar Times: In the recent past, the student body in Delhi has taken up important issues like Diwali crackers and plastics. Air pollution is going to be our third major campaign. Can we expect a more enthusiastic response this time from the government?

Shiela Dixit: Your campaign against plastic bags is not yet over. Wherever possible we are forcing the shopkeepers and the manufacturers not to give polybags and rather provide paper bags or cloth bags. You have to nag, you have to push the government to do something. You be the leaders, we shall follow you. I am very sure you will definitely get a better response next time.

GT: The Delhi government talks a lot but doesn't do anything.

SD: No, darling, we are doing. There will be a tremendous change this year.

GT: Why aren't there any more compressed natural gas (CNG)

buses on the roads even as you get closer to your deadline?

SD: Every time we have to convert a bus running on diesel into one that runs on CNG, we have to specially import a kit. Now we have decided to stop this



practice and completely phase out the old buses. Instead, we are going to buy buses which are manufactured to run on CNG only. Right now, we are thinking of buying around 3000 buses like this. There are only 12-13 CNG stations. Its a challenge for us.

GT: In other big cities around the globe when the pollution level becomes too high, the cars are stopped from running, and industries are closed down for two to three days. Is Delhi

capable of taking such a step?

SD: We are trying to shift our industries to nearby cities. Everything cannot be changed in one night. Last year we were fourth most polluted city. Today our position is seventh or eighth.

GT: Delhi's pollution is affecting nearby cities and towns. If we shift the industries to these towns, will it not affect us?

SD: Ten lakh people come everyday from nearby towns and cities to work here without paying anything. They use my air, my water, my roads, and my electricity free of cost. No effort will free Delhi from air pollution with one hand. We have to join hands and rid the pollution from the city.

DIESEL Killer trend



Car manufacturers claim that in addition to being "cost-efficient", diesel is also a more "eco-friendly" fuel than petrol.

But nothing can be farther from the truth. The reality is that diesel exhaust contains an extremely lethal pollutant — respirable suspended particulate matter (RSPM). The first question that comes to our minds is: what makes this four-letter word so scary?

Well, these particles cause the worst damage to the respiratory system as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and stay there. As if the threat of RSPM is not enough, diesel engines and exhaust are also primarily responsible for harmful emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulphur oxides (SOx), ozone, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), benzene and a variety of aldehydes.

In fact, the deadly cocktail of pollutants in diesel exhaust can lead to diseases varying from eye, nose and throat irritation, to a badly damaged nervous system, aggravated heart disorders and impaired respiratory tracts. PAH and SOx have also been found to be carcinogenic (cancer-causing), most often leading to lung cancer.

In spite of all this, diesel cars are being promoted extensively

and expensively as vehicles with low-running costs (health costs excluded, of course). After all, the price of diesel in India is half that of petrol. Thus enabling diesel-powered four wheel drives to rule the roost.

So now that we are aware of the problem, we must look for solutions. Saying that diesel should be completely banned sounds quite impractical because heavy vehicles like trucks, buses and vans are completely dependent on diesel. However, the problem can be tackled effectively by using "cleaner" diesel.

The diesel currently available in India contains about 0.05 per cent of sulphur and 3-5 per cent of benzene, whereas Swedish class-I diesel contains less than 0.001 per cent of sulphur and less than 1 per cent of benzene. If this diesel was to be provided to consumers in Delhi, half the problem would be solved. The remaining solution lies in bringing the price of diesel on par with that of petrol.

It is up to us to take the decision. Either we opt for diesel as a cheaper fuel and let our lungs pay the price, or we give public health the top-most priority by completely doing away with diesel-powered cars.

It is up to us to make the right choice because the future, and our own survival, is in our hands.

An open letter to the Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

We went along to the fifth Auto-Expo to observe the car manufacturers, the consumers, and the people from the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) and the Society for Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). Here are our views on air pollution and cars.

- Delhi's government has been forced by the Supreme Court and given orders to convert all bus engines to run on compressed natural gas (CNG). Today there are only 10 of them on Delhi's roads whereas there should be 10,000 by April 2001. And the rest of the country is choking to death too. Let's save our lungs and turn the whole of India to CNG.

- The car manufacturers we interviewed just passed the blame and their responsibility onto the consumer. They said that if the consumers are to keep their cars neat and clean and serviced then their cars would create no pollution at all. They were always saying that their car was the best.

- PCRA and SIAM said that they have set some standards which the car manufacturers have to reach and any company who doesn't meet the standards had their cars banned. When asked how many cars they had banned, they had no answer. They also said that it was the duty of the oil companies whether the fuel is adulterated or not. They even said that it was the consumers who are really to be blamed.

- We also interviewed the consumers. Their only reply was that if they buy bad cars, then what can their maintenance measures do? Then they are also not made aware.

- The government's policy did disappoint us. Have any of your ministers or candidates got votes on the principle that they are keeping the environment pollution free? Government doesn't do anything, but only wait and see.

I hope that after reading this letter, your government gives important thought to our concerns and takes effective measures. We hope to see ourselves in the future not wearing oxygen masks.

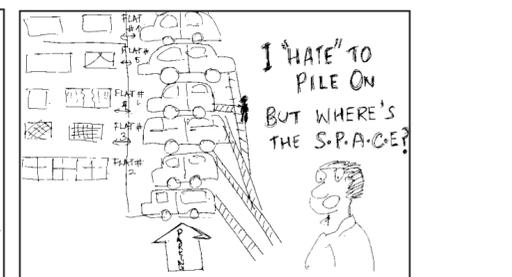
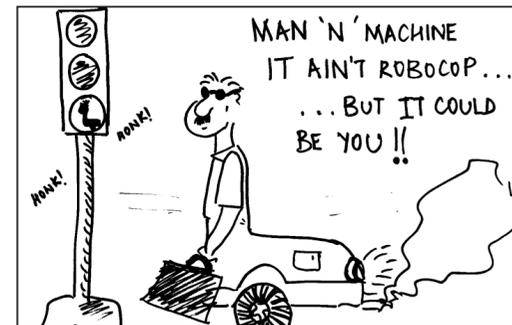
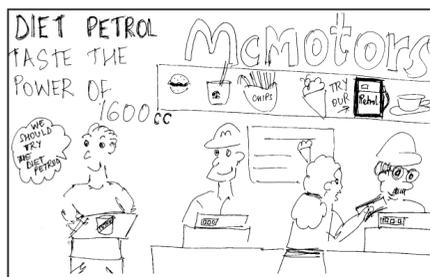
Thanking you,

Student Reporters,
Gobar Times



CARtoons

by Namrata Kilpady



AUTO-EXPO 2000 Reporter's Diary

JANUARY 12, 2000

10.30am

Arrive at Pragati Maidan — big queues of people, big queues of cars!

Security was alert and strict — checking every bag for bombs and pistols. Perhaps they thought we were going to hijack a car!

11a.m

We went to look around the CSE stall. We were told about the major problem faced by the people today in Delhi — which is air pollution. Who should be held responsible for this health hazard? We were told about the measures the government should take to eradicate pollution, the promises they have made and broken. And that some private bus companies do not know that by law non-CNG buses will not be allowed to run after April 2001.

We became determined to fight pollution. We also wanted to find out what the car manufacturers had to say.

12 noon

Off to interview car manufacturers. First stop: the Society for Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). We wanted to talk to Venu Srinivasan who is the SIAM President. We were waiting for him in the office for around 45 minutes and finally a lady came to us and asked whom we were waiting for here. She wanted to shoo us away. She thought that questions from kids are too trivial to be answered by the president of SIAM. They have the time to manufacture cars but not to clean the air. We'll show them!

1.30 pm

We went to the FORD car pavilion. There one of the helpers sent us to reception. We wanted to meet the PR person. He was not available. We were sent to the press officer. He was too busy to talk. The technical manager was too technical. They did not say much more than : "Its a great car. Buy it"! We still didn't get an answer. The way they keep delegating work to each other was funny yet ironical because we blame government departments that do the same. Sadly, that's how the government works.

2.45pm: The Danish

Ambassador came.

We asked her about the problems she faces in India and how the pollution compares with Denmark. She said the Danish people are very aware of environmental issues. They do have water crisis but they are able to manage their difficulties. She said that in Delhi, she is not being provided with clean air and because of that she has a bad throat and a cough. In fact, she was coughing after every two lines that she spoke.



3pm

Shiela Dixit came to inaugurate the CSE stall. There was a banner of smogsmogsmog! So she had to cut through the smog to start the event. (Will she manage to cut through the smog in future?) Shiela Dixit was appalled to know that if Delhi were to follow the example of Mexico City it would shut down a good six months in every year due to air pollution.

She had a lung test. It took her three goes to do it properly. But in the end, her lung capacity was above normal. When she heard the result, she said: "I am getting a result above the normal, that means I am still abnormal". "Of course she is, she always moves in an airconditioned car, lives in an airconditioned home. She's not exposed to the environment. How can she have a

lung problem?" remarked the Gobar Times reporters.

Shiela Dixit wrote on CSE's graffiti wall: " With your support we shall overcome."

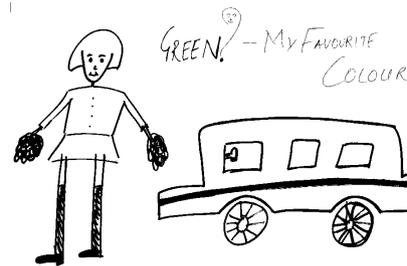
Then we asked her lots of questions. (See *GT's interview with Shiela Dixit*)

4.30pm

In the green pavilion on the graffiti board a message was written which was very interesting. The message was: POLLUTION IS AIDS — ARTIFICIALLY INVENTED DESTRUCTIVE SYNDROME.

5pm

We went to watch the dancing DAEWOO pompom-girls. They were



trying to attract big crowds to come and admire the cars. They were demonstrating all the facilities provided by the car: how to clean it and how spacious it is etc.

We asked the DAEWOO pompom-girls about ecofriendly vehicles. They said : "We have no diesel cars all our models are cleaner technologies we are extremely eco-conscious and eco-

friendly thankyou have a nice day". Just like a tape machine. And they were much more worried about their silver stockings than about the cars. We met some of them in the toilets. They refused to talk about green issues and would only talk about make-up.

6 pm

When all the rush of people were leaving, we saw that everyone was carrying QUALIS bags filled with pamphlets and flyers. Qualis makes Toyota cars. The car exhibitors have been loading the visitors with bits of paper and carry-bags. The public looked quite overloaded. What a waste of paper and resources.

We had a nice time there and wonderful memories which are like flowers kept in a book which never lose their aroma. Is it fine?

The *Gobar Times* Reporters vowed that they would never ever buy diesel or petrol cars and would rather buy CNG cars and want others to do the same. Please follow our example. Thank you.



ERRING ERA OF POLLUTION

Pollution, our greatest problem, is caused by cars. But the real culprit is not yet behind bars.

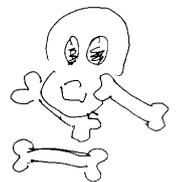
Due to this many people are dying every day. The government remarks: WE HAVE NO SAY.

Because of status, cars are important for people. But cars cause accidents and many legs get crippled.

Pollution is caused by you, me and all of us. We CAN reduce it by taking a CNG bus.

Let us make Delhi pollution free. Each one of us should plant a tree!

by Anubhooti Panda



[PEOPLE'S] STATUS
+

[CAR MANUFACTURERS] GREED
=

DEATH OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE