

and balance. At the same time, we have small companies which employ people on daily wages. No accountability whatsoever is done in this regard, as the drivers drive the buses for 16 hours at a stretch and are forced to complete 6 turns in a day. If they fail to do so, they are fined."

The common understanding that most of the public vehicles are owned by high police officials is said to be one of the reasons why no drastic steps have ever been taken against them but according to Mirza "This is a myth, an exaggeration of the facts. I can't comment on this. No such statistics are available to me on this allegation."

To the allegation that the traffic police are accustomed to taking bribes, and that the routine practice has been ongoing unabated Mirza said,

"We have taken many actions to curb this menace. This is definitely a problem. Unfortunately, only the police department is blamed for this menace while the fact is that the whole society has been indulging in it. We have arrested some of the cops red-handed during Eid season, supposedly the high period for such practices. We deployed special unmarked vehicles, which took the round of the city and apprehended a couple of traffic cops. As a matter of fact the police is one department which has a continuous accountability system and every day police are expelled, suspended, or demoted due to corruption, ineffectiveness or for not controlling the traffic properly. The figures reach thousands as it is a regular practice all year round."

Recently the police exerted strict checks at some locations, enforcing people to stop vehicles at Stop lines. This is only being done on main roads. Though the need for this trend to be adopted in other areas is paramount, the logistics are difficult to meet.

"We have made four traffic model zones, including Shahra-e-Pakistan and SITE area and once implemented properly, it will definitely make a difference. However, more traffic police will have to be deployed for this purpose. This is one reason why only a limited area is covered but it will definitely be expanded upon. As a start, we have enforced this stop-line rule on major arteries like Airport, Jehangir Kothani in Clifton and some areas of Saddar, where parking has also been improved. We have also made a Traffic Management Committee with the participation of EDO-Transport and concerned citizens. The group holds weekly meetings to monitor all aspects of traffic, including enforcement of rules, engineering faults on roads and highways and follow ups are done on regular basis."

Legal measures being taken to stop drivers from violating traffic rules has been a much discussed issue as Mirza's implementations have led to increased revenues for the state.

"We have applied section 279 on commercial drivers, which was never applied before. Section 279 says that if

Regarding the legal conditions and literacy level which a driver should fulfil while being employed for a public transport, the DIG traffic said, "According to laws, he should be young and physically fit, but there is no compulsory literacy level (unfortunately) for him. However, he should pass the driving test as a pre-requisite. In a country where the major mode of communication is public buses, this criterion for selecting a driver is an eye-opener. Verbal and physical scuffle between the drivers and passengers is a routine matter. While driving needs complete physical and mental peace, these drivers are usually very short-tempered. In developed countries, the drivers working for longer hours are given a rest period of 2-3 hours in order to relax their reflexes. But there is no such practice here. Instead, they are forced to work over time which simply makes them aggressive, agitated and restless - causing the inability to remain cool during driving."

that since its enforcement, some 2,429 drivers had been arrested.) The drivers hate me due to this Section, for which now a proper FIR is being cut, remand is taken, and the case is followed by a particular lawyer in court. For the first time we have come down so hard. This

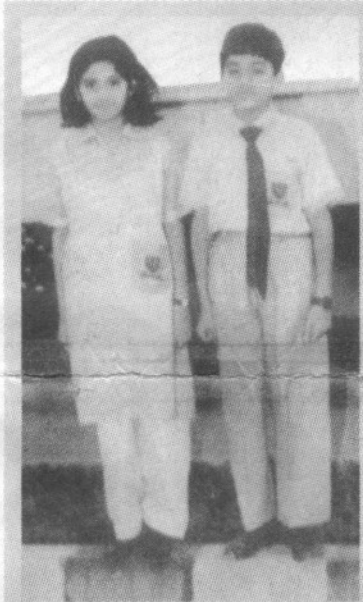
on the road

System

transporters. "It extracts money and has beated Mirza. "We have launched an aggressive certain time period after which the system or we will take severe action against areas of the city, transporters have made we to reach at certain given time. This is a driver fails to reach his destination at a is fined according to the minutes he has ch his destination, in whichever possible on the road. The Token System does not es should be channelled at one place at ermits more than the road capacity

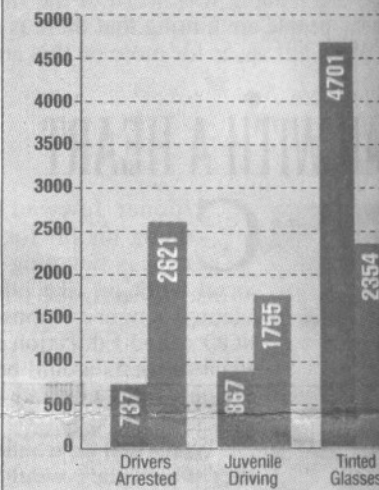
fatal accidents has lowered between 5-10 per cent."

When an accident occurs, there are a host of other factors involved which need to be considered before reaching any conclusion. Karachi has become a mismanaged city. Most of the problems are due to the absence of Northern and Southern bypasses, which should have been built 30-40 years ago in the outskirts of the city. In the absence of these bypasses, Karachi being the only port city, is used by heavy traffic which mixes with the city traffic, in short creating traffic jams and unsafe road conditions. Owing to the absence of an efficient railway system and air traffic being exorbitant, more than 80 percent



The traffic Police have taken out a booklet for school going children so that they can be educated on rules and regulations and a citizens responsibility when out on the road. This is one of the first measures taken in any civilised society and it is a major step in the right direction.

Graph Showing The Progress of Various Car Period from 28-05-2001 to 31-12-2001



is the only way to change the 'token' system. A little time period has been provided to give them to streamline their enterprises after which the Section will be enforced with full force. We hope we will ensure some safety on roads after this," he said optimistically.

"Speaking factually, traffic police does not enforce rules, it facilitates the traffic. The citizens should be aware of the laws and they should abide by them. In other countries, like London, Dubai no police constable is seen on the roads, still the traffic runs smoothly. Here, we are compelled to enforce these laws. Throughout the world, the drivers are not treated as criminals. However, if they violate rules under some intoxication etc then they are reprimanded under laws. But in Pakistan, drivers are included in the criminal justice system, which needs to be changed," he further added.

Involvement in Fatal

01 upto 31-12-2001

- Truck/W. Tanker 25%
- M/Bus/Coach 28%
- Buses 13%

Graph showing percentage of vehicles involvement in Fatal

Accidents for the period from 01-01-2002 upto 31-03-2002

Total Fatal Accidents 130



- Truck/W. Tanker 17%
- M/Bus/Coach 31%
- Buses 11%

From the naked eye

Out of a total of 10,83,277 vehicles in Karachi, buses and mini buses make only 1.62

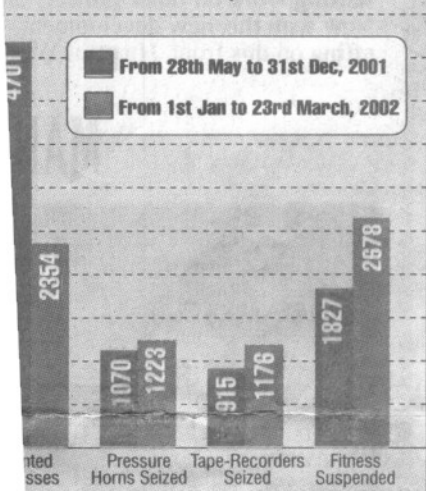
tumes or emission from the vehicle into environment-friendly gases."

The basic problem for health hazards amongst cops is that lead-mixed petrol is available in our country. Lead has severe effect on the human system and research shows that the IQ level and motor reflexes are effected in children whereas in adults it can cause cardiac ailments and arthritis if it is inhaled in excessive quantities as well as other fatal diseases. While giving some details of measures taken to safeguard against the effects of pollution, Saud Mirza said: "Masks were provided to cops earlier but they were neither good nor user-friendly. We will bring masks, which will be easy to use. We also want to raise awareness among our staff about environmental pollution but there is the fear that they will leave their and that others will refrain from joining the force.

There have been several measures employed to help monitor the problems and find how best to deal with them. "We keep ourselves in touch with concerned citizen groups with whom we discuss different steps for the safety of the police department. These include checking the blood of all the cops, specially those deployed in the interior city and reshuffling duty areas - this is an on-going programme.

Other steps are conducting special tests to check the lead level in blood is only available in the Agha Khan Hospital. We are bringing the equipment here and will set up a camp to conduct the blood test. Those who have a higher

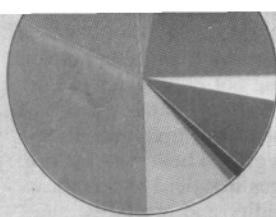
ous Campaign Against Traffic Violations for the 2-2001 and 01-01-2002 upto 23-03-2002.



Ticket System

“Recently, like other countries, in Pakistan also the ‘Challan’ system has been replaced by the Ticket system. By this system drivers are given a ticket when they violate the law. The severity of their violation and the fine they are supposed to is printed at the back of the ticket. The cops just mark the violation and give the ticket. The driver will pay that amount in a bank, within the given period. The ticket system has not only streamlined the procedure but has also minimised the chances of bribery. Since the enforcement of the ticket system, it has been decided in principal that of the total ticket money earned, 30 percent will be given to Police Department.”

tax 1%
Rs. 1%
Jeep 7%
motorcycles 2%
unknown 20%
Delivery Vans/P-up. 6%



Taxis 1%
M.C.Rs. 1%
Cars/Jeep 9%
Motorcycles 3%
Un-known 22%
Delivery Vans/P-up. 5%

freight traffic in Pakistan is handled on roads. The change in the route of trucks (chemical and water) which pass through the central areas and the establishment of inter-city bus terminals are some of the steps which can ease out the traffic congestion besides saving fuel and physical exertion arising out of constant jams.

The traffic police cannot be held responsible for all this.

According to a press report of 1999, around 50000 water tankers plying on city roads are high risk hazards to pedestrians and motorists alike. A rise of 23 percent has been recorded since then. The figures show manifold increase in fatal accidents due to reckless driving by tanker drivers, and these vehicles have never registered for fitness. There is no system to ascertain the actual number of water tankers plying on city roads," said the DIG.

While elaborating on the legal position he continued: "There should be a system of registering tankers from other cities because bearing number plates of other districts do not fall in the city's. These tankers should be granted permission to ply in the city by a MVR. According to section 50 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1960, 'A transport vehicle must notify the permitting authority in advance of its stay in the city beyond 14 days'."

Contrary to rules nobody bothers to intimate to the concerned authorities. The transpiration of liquid fuel in the city is a matter of serious concern. The same applies in the case with water tankers, in which the leakage of valves is also a common problem which sometimes result in serious road acci-

dents. There should be a provision in the law to impound vehicles that keep plying after being rejected a fitness or which do not hold a fitness certificate at all."

The move where heavy traffic was restricted to certain time periods in the day, has been discontinued. The reason given was that it was practically not possible to continue doing this. "In fact there are many agencies and organisations, including Traffic Police, KMC, KDA, DMCs, six cantonment boards, LDA, MDA, SITE, KPT, Civil Aviation, RTA, PTA and PQA, which are directly or indirectly responsible for the flow of traffic on the roads of the metropolis. Each authority had to synchronise and set their timings so as to work in that given period and this was not being practised. So it became ineffective.

"Primarily our planners have planned the roads in such a way that these do not cater to the most vulnerable group - pedestrians. Last year's rate of fatal accidents shows that out of 663 people, 54 per cent were pedestrians (the other vulnerable group are motor cyclists, who were 18 percent). Road network is only for car users. Take the example of Chundrigar Road, the hub of commercial and business activities. It does not have a single pedestrian bridge despite having almost 150 banks. Though there are a handful of bridges in the city these technically have become useless for the general public due to their designs.

"Secondly, there are no designated bus stops in the city. Similarly, the public awareness regarding traffic rules is sadly lacking. Contrary to the past, when big transport companies would

per cent of the registered vehicles and these commercial vehicles are the main focus of attention because most of the accidents occur due to them. These buses not only have faulty engines, are ill maintained vehicles but most have ineffective brakes. This is one major reason why drivers are not blamed for not stopping a bus when required - or are difficult to pin down in case of a fatal road accident. The way these vehicles ply is erratic. They follow no specific rules and resort to overloading, reckless driving and traffic rules violation besides not passing the fitness criteria,

Bus drivers listening to music in full volume, do not stop buses for students as they are required to pay less; they do not stop to pick up females as their reserved seats are usually occupied by men. Another violation is the habit of drivers of mini buses, buses and coaches to stop their vehicles wherever they choose to pick or drop a passenger instead of the designated bus stops. They may stop shortly after crossing an intersection; at the turning or in the middle of the road and moreover, the bus need not come to a complete halt. The irony is that the police on duty may be standing yards away from the main intersection or will ignore the violation because he does not want to take on the mafia.

any negligence, or recklessness on a public highway undertaken by a driver, (which takes somebody's life,) the convict will be given two years rigorous imprisonment. This is totally in contrast to 1999 Motor Vehicles Ordinance, which only used to give six months imprisonment to the convict. (At the time this interview was conducted statistics saw

added. Considerable consideration is being given to restructuring the police as a profession and there is some interest in perceiving this as a profession for girls. Saud Mirza who has long been associated with the profession, thinks it is unfortunate that this not a favourite profession for people. "This is a job with backbreaking duty hours where being absent is not possible. It's a thankless job. You are always at loggerheads with someone during duty hours. In addition there are the health risk factors involved. As the pollution levels have increased the life expectancy level of these traffic-controlling cops has decreased by 10 years. Constant exposure to fumes and lead can be blamed, but so far no strategy has been devised for their protection.



Duties for cops are inclined to be long hours in harsh weather conditions with noise pollution only adding to the aggravation. It is an undeniable fact that traffic police on the roads and highways are the most vulnerable and fall victim to such pollution.

"Globally motor vehicle ordinances have been changed. They have made strict standards about engine life using lead-free fuel, but we are still following the rules of 1969. In the new vehicles they use catalytic converters which only work in lead-free environment. These converters convert the remaining

be given to Police Department, 15 per cent to the force as a reward and 15 per cent to buy equipment, like speed guns, motorcycles and cameras etc. This will definitely resolve many problems."

lead level will be deployed where there is less pollution. In developed countries people performing duties in areas where there is an exposure to emission, a meter is attached to their person to read the emission level. When the absorption reaches a point, they are sent on leave for remission. On returning, their level is reassessed and if satisfactory they are posted for duties. We want to adopt such a system.

"In addition, we are also arranging cameras to control jams and congestion. TYCO - has agreed to provide equipment that will send warnings before the traffic jam occurs. This will be initiated as a pilot project on Shahra-e-Faisal. It was planned in 1998, but the cost of Rs 5-6 crore, was a deterrent. Now we hope we will be able to generate some funds to buy this equipment.

Another development has been that the Traffic police has been launching website, besides airing a traffic awareness programme on FM 101. Scheme like deputing traffic wardens and traffic scouts from among volunteers are also underway. We hope Volunteers Traffic Wardens, will guide us about traffic congestion and jams and violations.

Besides, we are conducting a two-day training workshop every week, in which one day is dedicated for drivers - training them about defensive driving, and safety tips etc and one day is spared for children to give them awareness about traffic rules and a civic road sense. A brochure with the collaboration of Shell titled 'Traffic guidelines for Children' has also been printed."

Continuing, Saud Mirza said that there is a need also to create traffic awareness. "It must be part of curriculum for children. We need the support of philanthropists in this regard."