

If a cop comes sniffing at you, dial 100

Traffic police top brass say personnel can check for driving under the influence of alcohol only with breathalysers. Motorists can say no to 'sniff' tests

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The New Year is just around the corner and so are sobriety checkpoints! The city traffic police chief, however, has ordered a ban on the practice of 'sniffing' tests — policemen sticking their noses in your face to check your breath for alcohol.

M A Saleem, additional commissioner of police (traffic), said traffic police are not empowered to conduct checks in this crude way. Police can check for motorists driving under the influence only if they are armed with breathalysers, he said.

Motorists have the right to reject

'sniffing' policemen. Moreover, motorists are empowered to file a complaint by calling 100. Saleem promises immediate action against guilty personnel.

With this diktat, the job of keeping drunk drivers off roads has now become harder for the traffic police this holiday season. The traffic police force in the city is armed with only 225 breathalysers, but there are more than 150 checkpoints. Moreover, according to sources, some of these instruments are not functioning properly. At times, they show wrong levels of alcohol content. The 'smell test' has been an ongoing practice in Bangalore for long and the police officials claim that it is carried out in order to avoid traffic jams.



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

This season even the high and mighty are not being spared. On Saturday night, traffic police had set up a checkpoint right at the entrance of a prestigious club on Residency Road. Motorists were enraged with police who came 'sniffing' and a few vented their fury.

"I was furious when cops came close to me to smell my breath," Prakash Raghpathi, who was subjected to 'sniff' test in Indiranagar, said. "When I asked them to use a breathalyser they did not respond properly. But they let me go as I had not consumed alcohol. This was the last thing I wanted after a long day at work."

When asked why the practice still continues, Saleem said, "Usually smelling somebody first saves time

especially during traffic. In case a person's breath smells of alcohol, the breathalyser is used to check the level of alcohol."

Drunk driving tests were intensified in the city from December 14. The drive is being conducted in conjunction with WHO's Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion centre. According to Nimhans, more than 900 deaths were reported in Bangalore alone last year.

When contacted, Dr G Gururaj, professor and head, department of epidemiology, Nimhans, who is also the co-ordinator of the event, said, "The public should know that the practice is wrong and they should always ask to be checked with a breathalyser."



This capsule can protect you from natural disasters

To be tested today, the 8,000-litre capsule can house six people for two months and protect them from quakes up to a magnitude of 12, from temperatures up to 3,000 degrees Centigrade and even from tsunamis

to address natural disasters, we are not propagating the December-21 doomsday thing. What triggered the making of the capsule — called Zoiz — was the huge human loss during the 2004 tsunami and subsequent ones like in Japan. We wanted to come up with a capsule which would offer a solution for all natural disasters."

Over 20 engineers and technicians have been working on the capsule for the last two years in which six people can easily survive for two months without stepping out.

"The inside is completely cushioned and is like the cockpit of an airplane," said Saravana M, technical director of the project. "It comes with inbuilt food, oxygen and toilet facilities. The fuel capacity is 50 litres and since natural disasters mostly occur due to water, it comes fitted with a small rotor. When the fuel is over, a parasailing mast will pull the rotor."

The first of the multiple layers has built-in deflectors, which makes it impact proof. The spring-like suspension from these deflectors pushes the capsule away from hazards. The shape and buoyancy design of the capsule makes it float automatically without any external motor and unlike ships which sink,

this one remains upright all the time. The second layer is made of ceramic refractory lining, which makes it volcano-resistant and protects it from temperatures of up to over 3,000 degrees centigrade. The third layer is a fibre reinforced layer which makes it water resistant. The last layer is a steel frame for structural strength.

Apart from this, the lead covering makes it immune to biological, chemical and nuclear explosions as well. It can also withstand earthquakes up to a magnitude of 12 on the Richter scale. The capsule also comes with a hot air balloon, the last resort in case of an emergen-

cy — people can fly out and stay in air till they land in a safe place.

ROAD SHOW

The makers, who will flag off the assembled capsule on December 21 in Mysore, will exhibit it during a road show in Mysore on December 24.

"We have applied for permission from the chief engineer of the irrigation department. Once we get permissions, we will test it live," Sathish added.

They will first make it fall from Balmuri Falls, followed by a test at Shimsha Falls.



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The timing is perfect. A prototype of the 'Doomsday' bunker will be tested at Balmuri Falls on the day the Mayan calendar marks as the end of the world. Phoenix Cabins, a Mysore-based company, has developed an 8,000-litre voluminous capsule that is crash-proof, water-proof, tsunami-proof, impact-proof, bullet-proof, and earthquake-resistant.

However, the makers are quick to point out that the capsule, a first in Karnataka, has nothing to do with doomsday. MSathish Kumar, managing director, Phoenix Cabins, told BANGALORE MIRROR: "Though it is built



The lead covering makes the capsule immune to biological, chemical and nuclear explosions