

CYCLE WINS THE RACE



Vijay Dinakar, who pedals to his engineering college everyday, says it's the best way to beat traffic on city roads

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It's often dismissed as the commuting tortoise, but an engineering student, who has been cycling from his home in New Thippasandra, Indiranagar to RV College on Mysore Road for years, claims cycling beats the bus, bikes and even the Metro. **Bangalore Mirror** decided to test Vijay Dinakar's claims and found it to be true!

Dinakar, a third year student of RV College of Engineering, revealed that it was — ironically — the Metro project which got him cycling. "Bangalore traffic is one of the most annoying ways to waste time, but it's also a good teacher," Dinakar said. "I used to travel by BMTC bus to St Joseph's, Museum Road, my PU college. But when the Metro project kicked off on M G Road in 2007, commuting only got longer and more tiring. I decided to try cycling to college since it was only 8 km away. I found it quicker and far more

convenient. I discontinued cycling when I joined RV College which is 21 km away from home, but traffic on Mysore Road got me pedalling again. I found that I was faster than the college bus by 15 minutes. Even my college bus driver, C N Reddy, was surprised and he still wonders how I get there so quickly on a cycle." In a city which has inadequate infrastructure for even pedestrians, leave alone dedicated lanes for cyclists, it isn't easy. "Mysore Road is probably the

worst," Dinakar said. "At the Ring Road junction, I have to squeeze through a number of heavy vehicles to make progress. The footpaths are usually packed with two-wheelers, so on most days, I have no choice but to hoist the bike on my shoulders and walk. The upside is that people look at me with envy since I'm moving while they are stuck! But it's tiring." Cycling to college also makes him seriously 'uncool' and friends laugh at him, but those jibes don't bother Dinakar.

"It's not only about saving time, which for an engineering student is important. But it also keeps me thinking of ways of getting ahead and to keep moving. My friends tease me by saying what would the 'girls' think of me, but at the end of the day, the fun and a sense of achievement are rewards enough." Dinakar and like-minded friends have now launched **Avventura RVCE**, a cycling club which encourages other students to cycle to college.

A cyclist on a geared Hercules, a motorcyclist astride a 150 cc Pulsar, and a bus commuter set off from Indiranagar Metro station to find out which of the three modes of transport was the quickest on city roads. Their destination was RV College of Engineering, about 20 km away. All three left at 12.30 pm, an hour when the roads are usually not too clogged with traffic. If you think the biker was the quickest, then think again. The cyclist reached RV College a good 20 minutes ahead of the motorcyclist, while the man who took the bus arrived a full hour later!

PIC: S ESHWAR, P MUTHU, PRASHANT KUMAR S V



At Trinity Circle, Dinakar easily got out of a jam by carrying his bike and walking

From start to finish: **60 MINUTES**



THE CYCLIST

Vijay Dinakar, the cyclist, said, "Given the small amount of space a cycle occupies and its easy handling and manoeuvring, it was easy to beat the traffic from Indiranagar to MG Road. I reached Trinity Circle at 12:54 pm. My next pitstop, Corporation Circle, was an even shorter ride. I came through the one-way stretch on Kasturba Road from Cafe Coffee Day Square and reached at 12:59 pm. Nayandahalli Junction was a bit of a nightmare as I had to carry the bike to squeeze through trucks and buses. This stretch is always a challenge. I finally reached RV College at 1:30 pm to find I was the first to arrive."

THE BUS/METRO COMMUTER

Kiran Kumar, a third year engineering student of RV College, said "I took the Metro from Indiranagar station to Trinity junction, reaching by 1 pm. From here, I had to walk a bit to catch a bus to K R Market. I had reached Corporation Circle (at 1.30 pm) when I got a call from Dinakar saying that he had already reached the college. I had to change buses at KR Market and by the time I reached RV College it was 2.30 pm. So much for bus connectivity!"



From start to finish: **120 MINUTES**



THE BIKER

Manjunath C, a journalism student, was on the Pulsar. "The Metro might have done wonders to the city's image, but it's a big stretch of the imagination to say that it has reduced traffic on the roads," Manjunath said. "Traffic was jammed under the elevated Metro track. A cyclist could squeeze through, but I was stuck. I reached Corporation Circle at 1.10 pm. From there, it was a breeze until the end of Sirsi Circle flyover. Mysore Road was a pain, but once I crossed Nayandahalli junction, I could zip. I reached the college at 1.50 pm only to find Dinakar had reached long before me."

From start to finish: **80 MINUTES**



Manjunath, however, had to wait for the traffic to clear before resuming his journey



Traffic at Nayandahalli was heavy, but Dinakar still reached well ahead of the others

