

6. TomTom Traffic Index- Governance

Bengaluru, Kolkata among world's slowest cities as India ranks high on congestion index. The 2025 TomTom Traffic Index highlights a critical urban crisis in India, ranking the nation as the fifth most congested country globally and the second in Asia. This index serves as a benchmark for evaluating urban mobility, travel efficiency, and the environmental impact of city-wide transit.

1. India's Ranking in the 2025 TomTom Traffic Index

The findings reveal that Indian cities are disproportionately represented among the world's most congested urban centers.

National Status- India ranks 5th globally and 2nd in Asia in terms of overall traffic congestion.

Slowest Cities- Bengaluru and Kolkata were both listed among the world's five slowest cities, indicating severe mobility bottlenecks.

The Asian Congestion Leaderboard- Out of the top 10 most congested cities in Asia, six are Indian-

1. Bengaluru (Rank 1 in Asia; 74.4% congestion level)
2. Pune (Rank 2)
3. Mumbai (Rank 6)
4. New Delhi (Rank 7)
5. Kolkata (Rank 9)
6. Jaipur (Rank 10)

2. Multi-Dimensional Causes of Congestion

Traffic congestion in India is the result of a complex interplay between demographic shifts, infrastructure gaps, and behavioral patterns.

Demographic Pressure- Rapid urbanization and population growth have led to a density that exceeds the historical design of most Indian city centers.

Private Vehicle Proliferation- Rising disposable incomes, coupled with the perceived unreliability of public transport, have led to an explosion in private car and two-wheeler ownership.

Infrastructure Deficiencies- * **Narrow Arterial Roads-** Many urban cores retain historical layouts insufficient for modern volumes.

Missing Bypasses- Lack of peripheral roads forces long-distance transit traffic to pass through city centers.

Mixed Traffic Dynamics- The presence of slow-moving vehicles (rickshaws, carts) alongside high-speed cars, combined with a lack of lane discipline, significantly reduces the "Level of Service" (LoS) of roads.

Governance & Enforcement- Weak enforcement of traffic rules and a lack of integrated traffic management systems contribute to daily gridlock.

Space Encroachment- Illegal on-street parking and street-side encroachments effectively reduce the usable width of available carriage-ways.

3. Implications of Urban Gridlock

Congestion is not merely an inconvenience; it is a major economic and social drain on the nation.

Category	Impact and Consequences
Economic	Massive fuel wastage, delayed logistics, and loss of "man-hours" leading to reduced national productivity.
Environmental	High carbon emissions and localized air/noise pollution, undermining India's Net Zero targets.
Public Health	Worsening respiratory issues and high stress levels/road rage affecting mental well-being.
Safety & Emergency	Critical delays in ambulance and fire services; higher frequency of minor accidents due to chaotic flow.
Livability	Reduced "Ease of Doing Business" and a general decline in the quality of urban life.

4. Strategic Initiatives to Combat Congestion

The government has adopted a multi-pronged approach involving technology, infrastructure, and policy reform.

Mass Transit Expansion- * Metro Rail- Rapid expansion in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities.

BRTS & Suburban Rail- Enhancing high-capacity bus and train corridors.

Electric Buses- Decarbonizing the public fleet.

Technological Intervention- Implementation of Intelligent Traffic Management Systems (ITMS) using AI-driven sensors and adaptive traffic signals that change based on real-time density.

Urban Design (TOD)- Transit-Oriented Development aims to integrate high-density residential and commercial zones directly with mass transit hubs to reduce the need for long commutes.

Infrastructure Upgrades- Construction of multi-tier flyovers, inner and outer ring roads, and dedicated lanes for high-occupancy vehicles.

Parking & Policy Reforms- * Pricing- Implementing high-cost parking in congested zones.

Congestion Pricing- Exploring tolls for entry into central business districts during peak hours.

Staggered Timings- Encouraging offices to shift timings to flatten the "peak hour" curve.

Non-Motorized Transport (NMT)- Reclaiming Road space for pedestrians and developing dedicated cycle tracks to encourage last-mile connectivity without vehicles.

5. Conclusion

As highlighted by the 2025 TomTom Index, the crisis in cities like Bengaluru and Pune serves as a warning that infrastructure-led growth must be balanced with Smart Mobility solutions. The transition from "moving vehicles" to "moving people" is essential for India to achieve its sustainable urbanization goals.

Source- <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/urbanisation/bengaluru-kolkata-among-worlds-slowest-cities-as-india-ranks-high-on-congestion-index>