DNA speak up

my byline

After the flight, you will be taken for a ride

Taxi drivers at Mumbai Airport are cheating passengers by producing duplicate tariff cards.

As per the practice at the arrival block, passengers hire a metered taxi after which the policeman notes their destination and the name of the passenger, and the driver starts the meter.

On reaching the destination, the passenger asks for the fare, wherein the taxi-drivers produce a duplicate rate card which quotes an exorbitant amount. These people also ask for 50 per cent extra charge, if you are travelling after midnight, which as per rules, should be 25 per cent.

On 11 and 12 February, while I was on my way back from Kolkata, I was cheated in a similar manner. When I enquired with rate cards from other taxi drivers in the city, I found that many of them use this modus-operandi.

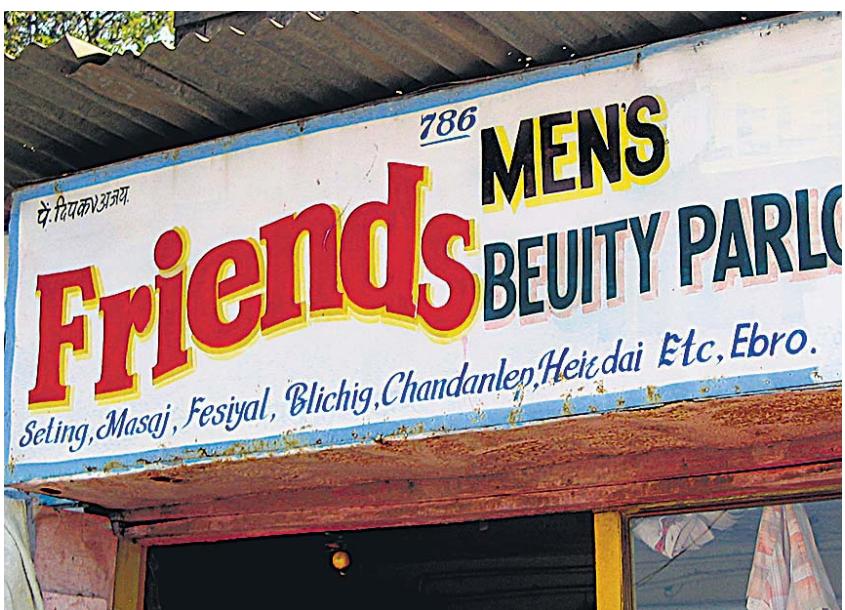I urge passengers to be aware of this cheating and I hope that people arriving in Mumbai are not misled and charged atrocious amounts.

— **Prakash Sura.** Thane

To print a copy of the taxi tariff card, visit:
http://trafficpolicemumbai.org/tariff.html

Feel strongly about something? Speak up and let the world know. Mail us your opinions on speakup@dnaindia.net All published entries will receive cash prizes

galti se mistake

READER SRINIDHI BHEESETTE CLICKED THIS HILARIOUS MASSACRE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Cash in on others' mistakes. Click a blooper and send it to speakup@dnaindia.net to win cash prizes

Slice of life

No phones, yet all was well

Ramesh Seth. Cuffe Parade

Every other day, one reads of millions of telephone subscribers are being added every month, thanks largely to mobile phones. However, at one time possession a telephone line was considered a great privilege, graciously conferred by the government monopoly — the telephone department.

Till as recent as two decades ago, India was divided into two. Most Indians waited for a new telephone connection and those who had the phone, were waiting for the dial tone. One heavy rain and the phone lines went down for a week or two.

Back then, there were very few telephone connections. I remember living in the in Amritsar during the 1940s. In our entire *mohalla* of about a hundred houses, there was not a single telephone connection. And what's more, no one missed it. Later, when we shifted to Civil Lines in our new mohalla, we were the only ones with a telephone till 1950. The entire neighbourhood came to our house for 'urgent' phone-calls.

In those days, getting a telephone connection was no joke. One had to a make an application on the prescribed form and then

Not so long ago

In the entire *mohalla* of about a hundred houses, there was not a single telephone connection

wait for years till your turn came. The only other option was to obtain recommendation from your MLA, MP or some minister who usually had a monthly quota of two or three connections which they used to distribute among their favourites. However, if you did not have right approach, you would end up waitinf for years.

In 1975, when I shifted from Marine Drive to Cuffe Parade, I applied for a new phone connection. Till then, I had to down eight floors, to the residence of my friend Darshan Chadda, to make calls. After about a year, I got my own telephone connection out of turn through some influence and I became one of the privileged few telephone owners.

Now, every breadwalla, bhajiwalla and delivery boy has a cell-phone. And they use them with vengeance to speed up their commerce. How times have changed!

Life and its million quirks. Mail your experiences to speakup@dnaindia.net. All published entries will win cash prizes

Out of site, out of mind

Communication is paving the way for the distant, yet compact future with distances getting shorter and the world, smaller. Why then are employers banning instant messengers, and social networking sites? Is it that they don't trust their employees or are security concerns forcing such unpopular restrictions? *Speak Up* scrapes the city's take on the issue

BLOCKED

You are trying to access an UNAUTHORISED WEBSITE

No internet access at work

I work for a chartered accountancy firm. We don't have internet connection on our computers. Only senior staffers in the organisation have access to the net. My friends use Orkut to stay in touch and I'm the only out of the circuit. I can't even access mails. The only time I can do this is when my seniors are not around; but that's a little risky because if one day I'm caught, I could lose my job.

— **Prakash A.** Matunga

Only MSN is permitted

Using any application apart from MSN chat is restricted at my workplace. I work for an event management company based out of Delhi, so to cut the cost of communication we have been asked to be online on MSN. Yahoo, Rediff Bol and other applications are firewall-protected. Blocking these are fine by me. If all these applications are made available to employees, it would surely hamper their work.

— **Rakshita Khanna.** Andheri

I understand, it's important

At my workplace, at a database management company, we don't have access to the internet. This is due to security reasons as the database we handle is very sensitive. If everyone is given internet access, there's a possibility of data theft which would be a huge loss to the company. Hence, the ban. At times, I feel the pinch of not being able to use the net when a friend from abroad calls and wants to chat. But more or less, I have become used to it since it is in the interest of the company.

— **Beejal Thakur.** Goregaon

I miss chatting with my husband

Internet access is banned in our organisation because of virus threats from certain applications. I recently joined and I'm still getting used to this restriction. In my earlier workplace, we were allowed to surf the net and chat. I miss chatting with my husband who is in Dubai. I chat with him only on weekends when I'm at home. I think there should be certain relaxation this rule; it is too rigid.

— **Stella D'Cunha.** Malad

No more distractions

We did inform employees about blocking Orkut, Yahoo Messenger, MSN and Google Talk. There was the odd complaint about not being able to keep up with clients, but then slowly, things settled and everyone got used to it. Employees often got caught up with these applications and lost focus. Instead, we have the intranet facility, which allows you to stay in the loop even if the organisation has blocked messengers.

From my experience, I remember being hooked to instant messengers. If you are online, some friend signs in, windows pop up and you do get distracted even if your intention is to work. Therefore, I support blocking such applications at work.

From the IT point of view, the server isn't clogged and internet access is faster. Effectively, work gets done quicker.

— **Nilanjana Dattaray.** HR executive

For security reasons only

The primary reason for blocking websites like Orkut and YouTube is to protect our security environment. Most of these websites carry harmful viruses and have cookies that could potentiallydamage the system. Files containing significant information could be spoofed and accessed by trespassers. This could destroy creative work and result in losses.

Blocking sites have nothing to do with employees getting distracted. In fact, employees are aware that certain websites cannot be accessed for security reasons and they do not have objections to it. Every organisation has a comprehensive IT security policy wherein limited access is given to avoid data theft or security breach.

— **Rohit Singh Rane.** Head, Corporate Communication, Sankalpan Group

Firewalls block most sites

At the bank where I work, we don't have access to Gmail or Orkut, the reason for which is firewall safety. Being a bank, quite a lot of confidential information is being handled at all times so it is of utmost importance to have security against intrusion.

Hence the firewalls are made tougher, which restricts access to sites like Gmail and Orkut. Looking at the downside, it is inconvenient for employees who don't have internet access at home. So if they have personal work, they have to go to a cyber café.

If I wasn't in the HR section, even I would think that these restrictions are because the bosses don't trust me and my work.

— **Niharika Mohanty.** HR executive

here's why

> Organisations block websites for several reasons; it could be distractions, security risks, or technical complications. But the message should be ideally communicated via email or office memo to all employees. The morale of employees might be affected by such a move, but the damage can be mitigated if the company permits access after office hours as many employees put in overtime and could do with some recreation."
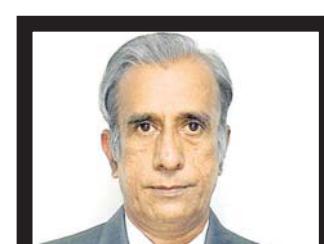> — **Romali Kalya.** HR Consultant

Don't take net access for granted

In BPOs, data security is a serious issue where no external communication is allowed and tight control is enforced. Even using a USB device can set off a security alarm. When most of the employees are young there is a lot of time wastage. No doubt the internet can be used for research but a mechanism to monitor efficiency is essential.

Most companies inform employees about IT policies and employees chose to work under the conditions and policies of the company. If they think that it is against freedom they can leave. People tend to think that facilities provided by the company can be used for personal use.

Internet access shouldn't be taken for granted. There are companies that function efficiently even without internet access to all, they provide kiosks instead where employees can get limited access.

— **Capt. Raghu Raman.** CEO, Mahindra Special Services Group

Why they block what they block

- **E-mail:** Access to email means employees can continuously download attachments — photographs, images, videos or music. Downloading uses a lot of bandwidth and that is why most companies block email services.
- **Social networking sites:** Access to social networking sites like Orkut, Facebook and Hi5 can be a distraction for employees. When many people log on to the same site at the same time, more bandwidth is used, dragging the internet connection down.
- **Chat sites and applications:** To allow a chat application to run, there has to be continuous contact with the server. In other words, the chat application uses bandwidth to display messages like 'Available for chat'. Chatting is a pastime and most companies provide company chat applications for official use.

— **Arun Kumar.** I-T Engineer, United Phosphorus Limited

numericks

There were **1.1bn** internet users around the world as on January 2007

the billboard

India has to tackle two PMs at the Centre. One is our PM , other is CPM.

— **VK Venkatachalam**

Send us funky billboards and win cash prizes

Sudoku

For the first time ever: Download Ultimate SUDOKU on your mobile. SMS <SDK> to 7575. Downloading charges Rs 99 per game. Only on GPRS WAP enabled mobile sets.

Yesterday's solution

How to play

Fill each of the blank boxes with the number grid from 1-9, and the letter grid from A-I with no letters or numbers repeating in vertical, horizontal rows or 3x 3 grids. Do not repeat any letters in a line. Each puzzle has only one solution.