

Local

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Boats are anchored in a marina on Arabian Gulf Street. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Traffic: A never-ending soap opera

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Allow me to start with a prayer that Almighty Allah help our brothers and sisters in the beloved country of Lebanon to recover from the horrible events that took place earlier this week, and may peace prevail all over the region.

I hope all of our dear readers had a good Eid break, are in good health, and had a chance to communicate with their kinfolk while minding the necessary precautions to protect against the “gruesome” COVID-19 pandemic. These are trying times for us and Allah will reward us better with His grace - that is for sure.

Many have written about traffic problems and dilemmas, and many have blamed the streets, engineers, traffic men and so on. I, for the sake of argument, will say that some of those claims have merit, but that is not my point. What about us motorists?! Do we bear any responsibility? Do we contribute to the problem? And is it possible that we are arrogantly ignorant?

With the subject on my mind, I drove to work on Tuesday. My normal drive time is about 30 minutes, but

this time it took me 67 minutes! I had my ears and eyes wide open, and was shocked at the number of drivers who did everything other than the right thing. Many held their mobiles in their hands and were texting and maybe chatting while driving on the highway, and some were not aware that they were slowing the traffic.

At the exit from Route 30 to the Fifth Ring Road, there was an accident, and if that was not enough, a good number of drivers were coming to a complete stop at the exit to look at what was going on, and they almost caused accidents, in addition to blocking the traffic.

There are many crossroads in Shuwaikh industrial area, where I was stuck in the worst traffic accident in months. Many big and small vehicles drive on the streets, which is OK, but what is not OK is that many drivers do not pay attention to any traffic signs, nor do they observe rules at crossroads, and this creates total chaos. Policemen are then dispatched to handle the situation, which is not an easy task.

I said it before and I say it now - it is the attitude that

needs adjustment. Drivers must shed the notion that if I do not go past the driver in front of me, whatever the circumstances, then I am not a good driver! If I do not go at the speed of a race car on emergency lanes causing gravel to fly like missiles - cracking windshields and creating a hazardous situation - then I am not a good driver!

If I do not drive at the speed of 180 kmph in the far left lane, then suddenly swerve right at an exit without regard to what may happen with other motorists, then I am not a good driver! If I do not use my mobile and text my family and friends, then I am not a good driver!

Traffic laws in Kuwait are sufficient and are being applied at a good rate, but it is not possible to have a traffic policeman at every turn and corner. So I suggest the traffic department sends traffic violators to school - yes school - to rehabilitate them to become good drivers and test them, provided that their driving licenses are suspended until they successfully complete their traffic course!

Will there be something like this? I hope so!