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Monday is No 1 accident day in Bengaluru

Bengaluru traffic is most hazardous between 3 and 9 pm on the first day of the week. That could be because techies who party hard on the weekend are groggy, irritable, and at the wheel

Tini Sara Anien, DHNS, Bengaluru, JAN 20 2019, 17:46PM IST UPDATED: JAN 20 2019, 20:54PM IST

Police say the increase in accidents during early evenings can be because of stress, poor eyesight and restlessness.

Monday is the most accident-prone day in Bengaluru, according to statistics collated by the traffic police.

In 2018, Mondays saw 709 accidents, as against 705 on Wednesdays and 663 on Thursdays. The most dangerous hours are between 3 and 6 pm, when 768 of a total 4,611 accidents took place. The 6 to 9 pm slot, with two fewer accidents, is almost as dangerous. The least accidents were recorded between 1 am and 6 am.

Police say the increase in accidents in the early evening can be attributed to stress, people hurrying home, poor eyesight and advanced age of pedestrians and road users. Many Bengalureans visit their hometowns for the weekend and rush back on Monday. Toll queues are longer on Mondays, and add to the stress.

Also Read

Behavioural analysts suspect several Bengaluru-specific reasons for the trend. Dr Roshan Jain, senior consultant psychiatrist, Apollo Hospitals, blames late-night partying.

"In the corporate lifestyle, most people party through the weekend till Sunday night, which adds to the fatigue. They push themselves to work through Monday and the exhaustion and frustration comes back when they are driving back home," he says.

More people work when the week begins, adding to the number of vehicles on the road. "In Bengaluru, people who work on different shifts are exposed to serious health hazards and sleep problems. All this leads to frustration and impaired judgement, which can easily lead to road accidents," he adds.

Shwetha B C, lecturer of psychology, BMS College for Women, says accidents in the evenings involve two factors: active and latent failures.

"Incompetence, carelessness and recklessness can be psychological reasons. A UK study on traffic psychology says evening accidents are caused by inherited risks combining with circumstances. Anxiety, and lack of concentration are other reasons cited by the study," she says.

The study was conducted by S Plainis, J Murray and G Allikaris. Perceptual errors caused by dim lighting can also lead to accidents in the evenings, she reckons.

Shwetha says professionals heading to work at 3 pm for the late-afternoon shift experience frustration because of the change in their biological clock.

Poor planning

P Harishekaran, Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic), says specific areas in the city are prone to accidents. In 2018, 770 accidents took place on national highways (167 fatal and 603 non-fatal), 185 on state highways (30 fatal and 155 non-fatal), and 3,656 on other roads (464 fatal and 3,192 non-fatal), he told Metrolife.

Poor infrastructure and improper planning lead to many accidents, explains Harishekaran.

"The traffic department is reasonably equipped to maintain the city's roads. We are not trying to escape from our responsibilities, but many civic bodies are involved in smooth traffic management," he says.

Traffic is chaotic around IT parks during the early evening hours. "Huge spaces are dedicated to commercial hubs and IT parks. People working there commute across the city. Residential hubs have to be created near these spaces to limit lakhs of people doing long commutes," he says.

The traffic police will soon be using social media extensively to create awareness about road safety. "We are now doing it with cab, BMTC and KSRTC drivers. We are going to shift our focus from enforcement to regulation,"he says.

Bengaluru special
A doctor suspects two days of heavy partying adds to the vulnerability of Monday traffic. In his view, this is how partying impacts road safety:

- Late night drinking on Saturday and Sunday.

- Dragging feet to work early on Monday.

- Exhausted, frustrated by afternoon.

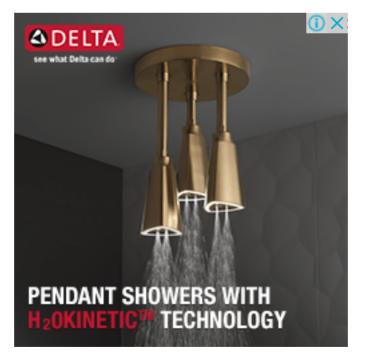- Lack of concentration while driving back home.

Reasons for accident spike Lakhs of people returning from weekend visits. Longer-than-
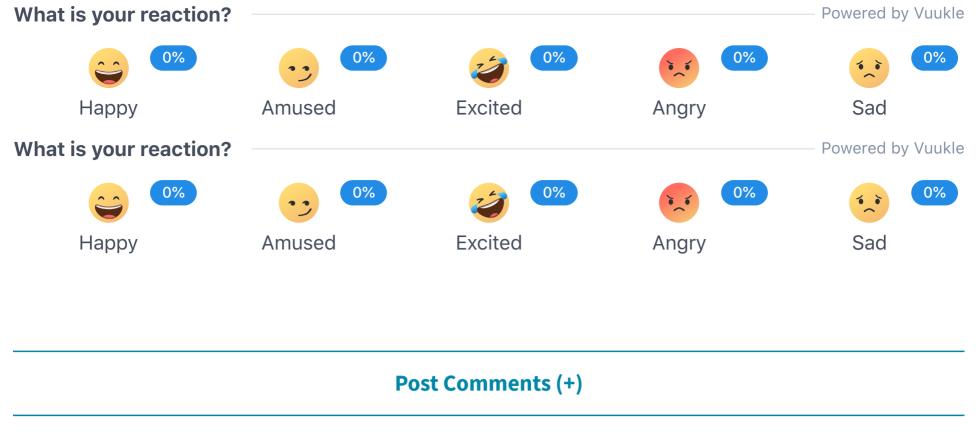
usual queues at toll gates Irritability of drivers deprived of sleep.

Several black spots: top cop

Additional Commissioner of Police P Harishekaran says the city has many accident 'black spots'. Among them e: Command Hospital bus stop on Old Airport Road, Bhattarahalli junction on Old Madras Road, Karthik Nagar near Jeevika Hospital, Veerasandra junction, Singasandra bus stop, GT Road, intersection near Jakkur aerodrome, and RV College junction on Mysuru.
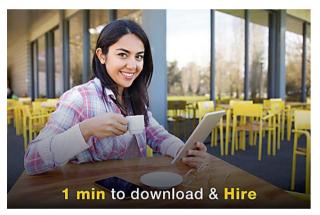
accidents   Police   traffic

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Bike rentals act against misuse

Hit by theft of spares, vandalism and irresponsible parking, rent-a-bike companies are now using tech to rein in errant users

Surupasree Sarmmah, DHNS, Bengaluru, FEB 19 2020, 20:22PM IST UPDATED: FEB 19 2020, 20:55PM IST

Bike rental companies are working on strategies to curb theft, vandalism and reckless driving.

Companies such as Bounce and Yulu had run into serious problems: many users were parking their vehicles randomly, stealing parts, and even vandalising them.

Bounce, a company whose yellow-coloured bikes are seen all over the city, has started acting against users who damage its vehicles.

Ankit Acharya, lead, corporate communication, Bounce, says, "Initially, we did face a lot of

challenges with vandalism and theft of spare parts. However, in the last few months, we have come up with stringent measures and seen a drastic reduction of such cases."

Tech is providing solutions. Helmets are connected by Bluetooth to the scooters, and this ensures that a Bounce user can't end a trip without returning the helmet. Theft of helmets was a major problem in the initial months.

"Apart from tech solutions, we are also concentrating on user education," he says.

Is blacklisting a solution? It does create a healthy fear, companies say. Bounce has banned many users in the past few months.

"About one to one-and-half lakh people use Bounce every day. If they are banned, they will have to go back to challenges like parking and waiting for a cab or auto," explains Acharya.

Working with cops

Bounce has been working closely with the Bengaluru and Hyderabad police.

A hotline allows the police to inform the company about rash riding, unlicenced riders, and scooters parked randomly.

"The government understands this is a noble initiative. Vandalism has come down drastically with the tech measures we have taken. We have seen only 10 to 15 cases of theft in the last 13 months," he says.

Industry problem

Sobin George, assistant professor, Institute of Social and Economic Change, sees vandalism of public property as a systemic problem.

"Initiatives like bike rentals have been around in the West for a long time. The problem here is that we have not prepared ourselves for such initiatives. The culture of respecting others' property is lacking," he says.

These bikes are convenient and affordable, and especially helpful in a city like Bengaluru. In time people will realise the value of such initiatives, and will treat the vehicles better, he says.

"Most of these rides are used by teenagers who don't have a sense of ownership or responsibility," he says.

What can be done

For Yulu, which rents out small motorised cycles, tech has kept vandalism and theft under control.

"The design of the product is evolving in such a way that vandalism has been minimised. We educate our customers. If people still don't follow rules, we start to impose fines," says Hemant Gupta, co-founder and chief of operations, Yulu.

Yulu is currently working on an artificial intelligence mechanism that helps the company analyse a user's behaviour.

"We predict behaviour and take proactive steps. We also follow the 'bring your own helmet' rule," he says.
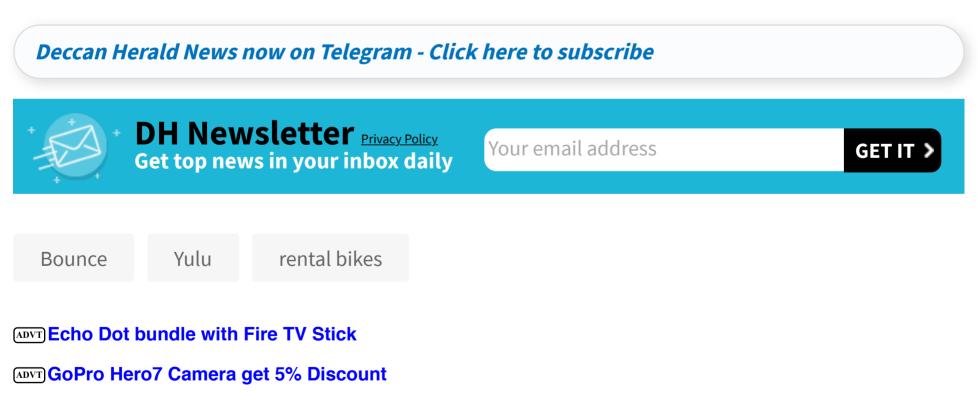
Yulu is used by teenagers who sometimes don't park at the designated spots. "Sometimes they park in the basement and we lose the GPS signal, and we assume it is lost. But somebody finds the cycle after a few weeks," he says.

When a new service is launched, it attracts people of all sorts. The novelty factor dilutes in a few months and brings down theft and vandalism, says Gupta.

Nuts and bolts solution

To counter theft of tyres, Bounce has changed the shape of their nuts and bolts. This ensures people with regular spanners can't casually steal tyres.

The company is also working on customising the tyres in such a way that they only fit Bounce scooters.

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Bounce   Yulu   rental bikes

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Here are a few thriller movies that you must watch

In recent years Kannada cinema has produced some intriguing films that have not just caught the attention of regional moviegoers but also a wider audience.

Mohamed Ahmed Shariff, DHNS, Bengaluru, FEB 18 2020, 17:55PM IST UPDATED: FEB 18 2020, 18:00PM IST

Bell Bottom

H ere are some movies that will keep your eyes glued to the screen.

Ulidavaru Kandante (2014)

Is it black, white or some shade of grey? This thriller from Rakshit Shetty is about the various angles and perspectives involed in a murder case. The movie is set in Karnataka's pristine Malpe. It's a mind-boggling anthology that is sure to have you at the edge of your seat.

RangiTaranga (2015)

What happens when your whole life turns out to be a lie? Are you a mere puppet or at fate's mercy? The twists and turns in 'RangiTaranga' will give you goosebumps as the protagonist goes on a journey to discover what's happening. It is as eerie as it can get. Late-night watch, anyone?

U Turn (2016)

Ever taken a wrong turn or any short-cuts to cut through the city's snarling traffic? The movie follows a journalist. Things go awry when murders start taking place on her trail.

Gultoo (2018)

The movie is about an IT employee who gets caught in a cybercrime case while trying to set up his own company.

Kavaludaari (2019)

A traffic constable and a retired police officer join forces to unravel the mystery of three skulls found near a metro construction site. The film directed by Hemanth Rao stars Roshni Prakash, Anant Nag and Achyutha Kumar in the lead roles.

Bell Bottom: Adventures of Detective Divakar (2019)

Set in the '80s, this Rishab Shetty film, 'Bell Bottom' is a must-watch Kannada thriller if you are James Bond fan. It follows the case of serial police station robbery. The film has been directed by Jayatheertha.

Gentleman (2020)

Starring Prajwal Devraj, this 2020 film is centred around illegal egg cell mafia and a man with sleeping beauty syndrome. It's an entertainer with added suspense.
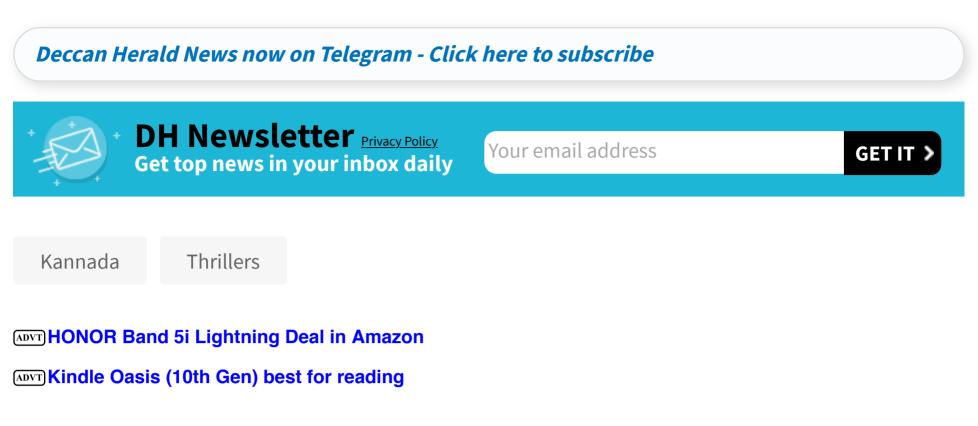
The list would remain incomplete without two of Rajkumar's classics:

Goadalli CID 999 (1968)

Goa, spy and a thriller. What a combo! 'Goadalli CID 999' created a generation of thriller fans. Add this 'Namma James Bond' flick to your watchlist.

Gandhada Gudi (1973)

One of Rajkumar's most memorable films, 'Gandhada Gudi' has been directed by Vijay and stars Vishnuvardhan and MP Shankar, among others. The films follows forest officer Kumar in his attempt to protect natural resources from poachers. Anand, the main antogonist, is later

revealed to be Kumar's brother.

Kannada   Thrillers

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Beware! Your identity can be stolen

Fraudulant QR codes and identity of big names are used to trick people into parting with huge amounts

Nina C George, DHNS, Bengaluru, FEB 18 2020, 17:53PM IST UPDATED: FEB 19 2020, 09:13AM IST

T he Cyber Crime Police Station registered 10,131 cases in 2019, up from 5,036 in 2018 and 2,023 the year before. Cases related to gifts, iPhones, OLX and loan offers topped all the cyber frauds last year. The most commonly used mode of cheating in this category is stealing an identity where fraudsters use the names and identities of well-known persons to swindle money.

The most recent case busted by the cyber crime police station had a gang from Rajasthan that used commissioner Bhaskar Rao's identity and photo to close a deal on OLX. The cops also found out that most of the QR code frauds reported from across the city over the past year were committed by a gang of five from Rajasthan.

Frauds tamper with software

Explaining how these fraudsters operate, Commissioner Bhaskar Rao tells Metrolife, "In QR Code payment, fraudsters design the code in such a way that instead of you trying to make a payment, the money in your account gets drained. So instead of you receiving the money, you end up losing it. The fraudsters tweak the software and cheat people. It is mostly the IT class who get cheated because ordinary people still use paper money."
 Rao also says that fraudsters constantly track new users in OLX, Quikr and other websites. They pose as buyers and contact people selling furniture, motorbikes, cars and electronic gadgets, he adds. "People who shop online must check their SMSes to see if they have received any communication from their respective banks before making any payment. You have to also thoroughly read the conditions on these shopping portals before clicking on the "agree to conditions" button. People blindly agree to the conditions, without knowing where it has come from and who has sent it," cautions Rao.

He further states that fraudsters usually steal the identity of army officers and top police officers to pass off as trustworthy.

"After zeroing in on the victim, the fraudsters will open an account in the victim's name on OLX. They will surf Facebook and get a picture of the victim and use it in the account. This is to make the case believable. People who upload their pictures multiple times on Facebook, without restricting the access to them, are potential targets," warns Rao.
He adds, "There must be an encrypting device that allows people who want to download your picture from Facebook. People must be aware of who their friends are in the list of contacts and mustn't easily agree to make new friends on social networking sites."

Stealing identity

Dr A Parashivamurthy, ADG and Additional Commissioner of Police, Crimes, Bengaluru City points out that stealing the identity of a person is also prevalent in the forgery of documents and altering land records. "Earlier, we had a case where the size of the land was altered in the sale deed and Khata was made for the same. This leads to fraudulent money transactions," he says. He also adds that names, age of persons and even the birth certificates are tampered with to gain financial benefits.

The fraudsters, who steal identities, always operate in gangs. A senior officer with the Cyber Crime Police Station in the city tells Metrolife, "The recent gang that was arrested from Rajasthan on charges of identity theft among other things kept changing their phones and sim cards. They even used a 15-year-old as bait to wriggle out of the crime. When juveniles are brought into the picture, the cases take a different turn. They work in a large group because it is easier to network."

The gangs also target the bank accounts of senior citizens and women, especially those that have been lying idle for a long time and use it to receive and transact money.

"They strike a deal with the account holder, promising him or her a certain sum as commission. The unsuspecting account holder falls for it and unknowingly becomes a party to the crime. They use multiple accounts and multiple sim cards," informs the officer.

Heed to this advice

City Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao has this advice

Turn off your Internet data when not in use. This could be used by frauds to snoop into your phone.

If you are shopping online, check for SMSes from banks confirming that the transaction has been completed the proper way.

Do not upload multiple photos on Facebook and other social media websites. Grant access to photos to only friends and family.

If you are shopping on OLX read the instructions carefully before clicking on the "agree to conditions" buttons. This could be a fraudulent website.
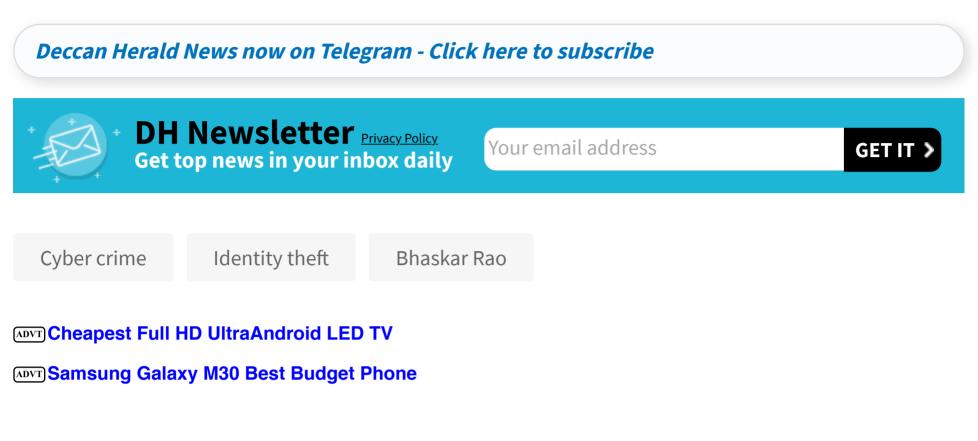
Punishment for identity theft?

According to section 66C whoever, fraudulently or dishonestly make use of the electronic signature, password or any other unique identification feature of any other person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years.

Types of cases in Bengaluru

December 19, 2019: A young techie bought a fridge from OLX and realised that she was cheated when she was delivered a toaster instead of a fridge. She lost Rs 25,000 in the deal.

January 2, 2020: A man, posing as a classmate of a woman in Bengaluru, claimed that her friend has sent her a diamond ring from the US and asked her to pay a lakh towards customs.

Cyber crime   Identity theft   Bhaskar Rao

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Does your doctor fat shame you?

Some of them peg all health issues on the patient's weight, leading to misdiagnosis and delayed treatment

Theres Sudeep, DHNS, Bengaluru, FEB 16 2020, 19:50PM IST UPDATED: FEB 16 2020, 19:53PM IST

Patients feel that many doctors dismiss symptoms and choose to concentrate on their the patient's weight during check-ups.

Fat shaming may be prevalent in the society but comes as an unplesant surprise when medical professionals also indulge in it. Malavika Shiv was around 15 years old when she suspected she was having problems with her thyroid. "The blood tests I took showed varied results but all my symptoms pointed towards my suspicion. However, my doctor made multiple jokes about how 'fat' I was and how I was lying about being an athlete as he believed I was too heavy to take part in sports," she says.

He pegged her weight as the root of all her problems and asked her to shed a few kilos.

"I did lose weight before I saw him the next time but there were still no changes in my symptoms. He insisted I lose more weight. This was when I switched doctors," she says.

Her second doctor diagnosed her with a hormone imbalance and treated her accordingly.

She describes the entire episode as embarrassing and insulting.

This kind of fat shaming by a medical professional results in the actual problem going undiagnosed and also causing mental stress to the patient.

Doc focussed on weight gain, missed out on PCOS and tumour

Tasbeera was 13 years old when she started gaining weight at a rapid rate. In addition to gaining over 20 kg within a few years, her menstrual cycle too was disrupted. "We visited a highly recommended doctor, but he was nonchalant and dismissive," she says.

Tasbeera didn't get a proper diagnosis. The doctor concentrated on her weight and said everything will be fine once she loses a few kilos.

This, she says, was despite the fact that she and her mother explained how unusual and sudden the weight gain was and repeated her other problems.

Her mother asked her to visit another doctor who diagnosed her with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS). Subsequent tests also revealed that there was a benign tumour in her brain, causing a condition called prolactinoma which was the reason for her weight gain.

Along with the physical consequences of her delayed diagnosis, she was deeply affected mentally. "My self esteem dropped quite a bit after that and I started starving myself since the earlier doctor told me I had to lose weight. Even though I'd dropped close to 10 kg in around a year, none of my primary problems were going away," Tasbeera says.

One could argue that weight gain is a symptom of many illnesses but it is dangerous to blindly

focus on just that. Aakanksha Mishra's ordeal is an example. She went to the doctors for menstrual issues that were isolated from her weight but the doctors were not convinced.

"I had been overweight much before the irregularity in my cycle but the doctor kept insisting that my weight was a symptom of PCOS," she says. She was asked to take a number of tests, all of which cost her over Rs 5,000. The results came back negative for PCOS.

"It was only after this that my doctor shifted the focus away from my weight and asked questions about my lifestyle and mental health," she says.

Along with a quick check of her blood pressure, it was concluded that her issues were due to high stress.

While this may seem like the doctor was being meticulous, Aakanksha feels otherwise. She says that though she mentioned her struggle with stress and anxiety at the start, the doctor had dismissed it and chose to concentrate on her weight.

"Because I didn't have the time and resources, I was unable to switch doctors. It was my bad luck that I ended up with one who dismissed my actual problems solely because I was overweight," she feels.

'Gynaecs need to pay attention to weight, it is not fat shaming'

Thankfully, both Malavika and Tasbeera were able to get the right diagnosis later on. Many doctors are known to conflate weight to health, equating heavier patients as lazy ones and proceeding to treat them with that bias in mind.

They are not apologetic about it either. When Metrolife spoke to a gynaecologist about fat shaming and bias in her line of work, she defended the practice. Her only grouse was that doctors need to be able to communicate it in a less offensive manner.

"As gynaecologists, weight is something we need to pay extra attention to as it is an indicator of PCOS. The condition has no cure and can only be controlled with lifestyle changes like weight loss," she says.

When we told her about cases such as Tasbeera's and Malavika's, she said that while certain doctors can be harsh while conveying information, it is not done with the intention of shaming people.

Doctors' fixation on weight dangerous for patients

In a 2014 study regarding physician-patient communication, it was found out that doctors showed less respect for what overweight patients had to say and spent less time with them as compared to those that were not.

This lack of attention towards a patient solely because of their weight is highly dangerous and can result in more consequences than just a bruised self-esteem.

Dr S Manohar, the director of internal medicine at Sakra World Hospital, says that patients should always be clear about what their symptoms are so as to help the doctor arrive at an accurate diagnosis. "Regardless, no doctor should focus on just the weight of a patient when diagnosing them," he says.

fat shaming   fatphobia   fat bias   doctors

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