

HYDERABAD



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ISB GOES GREEN

PIC OF THE DAY

(left) Students of ISB cycle along with city based environment activist Shrenik Rao as part of their green initiative.

— R. PAVAN

Citizens insensitive to pain, emergency

PRIYA RAMACHANDRAN
HYDERABAD

On Thursday evening, an elderly man was lying injured on the Patny-Paradise road, bleeding profusely from his head. He hardly evoked any emotion from passerbys, who carefully avoided running over him and continued on their way. It was only after a dozen calls by this correspondent and a crucial 30 minutes later, a 108 ambulance dispatched from far-away Kukatpally came to the scene. This is just one in a million cases in our city distraught with traffic accidents by the second.

The city doesn't have too much of a choice when it comes to emergency services, laments Triveni Khuddar, a Dell employee, witness to her friend's gruesome death saying, "108 is the only service that is considerably prompt. When my friend met with an accident, the Yashoda ambulance took almost half an hour to arrive and then it was too late."

When apathy is coupled with inefficiency, callousness and a lack of accountability, a man's life stands no

chance. The traffic situation is to be blamed according to Dr K. Hari Prasad, CEO, Apollo Health City. "We currently have 20 ambulances. But even if we add a 1,000 more vehicles, we'll have 1,000 ambulances jammed in traffic. Crucial minutes can be saved if people give way to ambulances. The process should be a 360 degree one with support from all sides."

The first thing many ambulances do is to take the victim to a government hospital as opposed to the nearest private one. Not many know, as a rule, an accident victim will not be billed till they reach a stage of stability at most hospitals.

People are aware yet behave irre-

When my friend met with an accident, the ambulance arrived 30 crucial minutes later. By then it was too late

TRIVENI K.

sponsibly according to Kaumudhi, deputy commissioner (traffic). "A separate track road for ambulance is just not possible. People have the awareness but they don't have the concern to make way for ambulances. Even recently, when there was fire in Begumpet, the whole flyover was blocked with curious onlookers who had to be shooed away," he says.

But there is hope. Sudhakar Nakula, EMRI COO says that the 108 service is all set to re-engineer their processes for quicker response.

"On some days the number of cases are so many, that we allot the nearest free vehicle to the call. It takes an average of 14 minutes to reach the accident site. Satyam engineers are working towards making the system more efficient. By the end of July the government will be adding 16 more vehicles in the city and nine two-wheelers are already in action to provide on the spot first-aid," he defends.

The blame game continues — the emergency services blame the traffic, the traffic personnel blame the people and the people blame government inefficiency. It is a vicious cycle.

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