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To shift or not to shift?

Pushparaj C

Due to the new hybrid work culture, we continue to see 'To-Let' boards all around the city. Demand for rented houses is low because many IT professionals are yet to return to Bengaluru after the pandemic.

Prathik KG, an IT software developer in Capgemini India Pvt Ltd said, "Lately the company has introduced a new scheme known as the 'Hybrid Work Culture', a lot of us are in a dilemma whether to rent a house close to the office or not?" He added that they can still travel long distances from their homes if it was only for a couple of days of the week.

Many companies have introduced a new policy where professionals have to work from offices only twice a week, because of which employees prefer staying in their homes than relocating closer to their offices.

A senior software engineer from Oracle stated, "My office has been very flexible in accommodating our needs. They have introduced a 'book a slot' model, and we book a slot online, prior to the day we go to the office so that the particular cabin will be allocated to us."

He also added that the company gives them special perks by taking care of employees' accommodation by providing them with a hotel room whenever necessary.

Sagar, another software developer working in a private banking sector said his company has been flexible so far but will start adopting the hybrid model soon, due to which employees would try to rent houses where they could stay for a limited period.

'Some dreams take a long time...'

Afreen Hussain

"Why look at Mount Everest from a bird's eye view when I can look at the world from its peak?", this was the initial thought that manifested into a dream for Sunil Nataraj, a 49-year-old Bengalurean who summited the world's highest peak on May 15.

Nataraj, Director of Product Marketing at Broadcom said that it all goes back to the year 2011 when he booked a Mount Everest sight-seeing flight from Kathmandu but due to bad weather conditions, the flight got cancelled and left Nataraj with a thought to ponder upon which eventually turned into a dream.

"Some dreams take a long time, but I never doubted my capabilities because when you dream big, there is always a second thought that what if it doesn't happen? Those are



Never doubt your dreams

Special Arrangement

the dreams that fail where you are indirectly telling yourself that you aren't capable. But this was not such a dream, it was a thought which gradually became a dream, and eventually cemented strongly in my subconscious and I started working towards achieving it."

He planned his entire journey in stages, the first was to build up funds for his retirement, for his children's education and then to pursue his passion. He started accumulating the required funds in 2013 and that was the start of his journey. He went on to get himself physically

fit along with building his mental endurance.

When asked if age was a barrier in this expedition, he said, "I believe that it's all about a healthy mindset and a positive mental attitude but age did play a factor in my case as I was denied admissions into mountaineering institutions in India because their cut off was 35-40 years." However, Nataraj said that it did not stop him, he found his mentor in a Sherpa from Nepal. "My guide is a 32-year-old Sherpa from the mountains of Nepal who has summited Everest several times along with climbing most of the high mountains across the region. In about 7-10 days, he taught me the skills required for mountaineering. Last year, I summited a 6000 metres peak in Nepal with him, which is the Lobuche East, this helped

us bond well."

He aspires to inspire the next generation by talking about mountaineering and high-altitude climbing at colleges and by starting a podcast additionally.

He further added, "I have been writing to mountaineering institutions and the Ministry of Human Resources to create an exception in the case of the age factor. I believe that age must not be a barrier to anyone who wants to pursue their passion."

He concluded on a very motivational note, "Pursue all your dreams very passionately, if you have a dream, never doubt it, never doubt your capabilities. Just enjoy the journey and do not worry about the end result. It took me 12 long years to accomplish my dream but I did it and so can you."

SC takes another step towards progress

In recent years, the Supreme Court has delivered progressive decisions in matters of sex and sexuality. The legalisation of homosexual intercourse, decriminalisation of extra-marital sex and the declaration that pornography is a matter of personal choice (in response to the government's porn ban) are all examples of the apex court's progressive stance. The court has now added another chapter to this saga through the monumental verdict on May 26 which provides legal validity to sex work. A nation's laws regarding such matters act

as a measure of the social development of the state in the eyes of the international community.

Due to historic reasons, sex work has remained active in parts of Mumbai and Kolkata. However, this verdict should not be utilised to create such miserable dens of ruined lives, perpetuate sexual exploitation and spread STDs such as AIDS. Instead, sex workers need to be provided with licensing, welfare boards to prevent exploitation, STD tests at regular intervals, etc, to create a positive environment for them, similar to that of

Spain, Germany and the Netherlands.

In the end, the effectiveness of this verdict at the ground level is to be seen. After all, we live in a society that still frowns at consensual sex between adults which was legalised decades ago. Before the introduction of couple-friendly rooms by OYO, no decent place for such relationships was available anywhere in the country. To this day, such relationships are used as an excuse by police officials as well as the 'moral police' to harass and defame individuals.

Just like the Madras High

Court ordered the suspension of a police officer for filing an FIR in an instance of consensual sex, other courts and governments - both state and union - will have to take a strong stance to ensure the enactment of such progressive laws.

While nobody expects a sudden social transformation inspired by this single verdict, it will definitely be the first step towards change - social and institutional. One can only hope that at the very least, this verdict would cause some positive change in our society.

Joel P Anto

Scrabble: The unrecognised mindsport

Subadra Sarath

"Scrabble game is equal to chess as it is a very high analytical, mathematical, and extremely logical sport, so it is basically like a mind sport.

Yet it is not recognised as a sport by the newspapers," says Radhika Mahaveeraiya, a former journalist and member of the Karnataka State Scrabble Association (KSSA).

From May 26-29, the KSSA will organise the India Open for participants from across the country at Mu Sigma, ITPL Campus, Whitefield.

She also added that this is the annual tournament that the KSSA conducts. "For the last 2 years, we couldn't conduct the tournament due to Covid. Usually, we conduct it in January, but due to the third wave, it was not possible."

Since 2009, the tournament has seen international participation but this year the foreign flavour is missing.

The Enthusiasts' Division, a tournament open to all, will be held on Sunday. Participants will get a chance to play six games during this tournament.

Locally cultivated produce buffers inflation

Saishyam Srikanth

Pulling back dairy from the diet is one of the indicators of inflation. There is also a quick pivot made to local produce and greens during such times, data journalist Rukmini S said while speaking about her experiences as a reporter covering the Bundelkhand region during times of inflation.

In a conversation titled Food and Data with author Krish Ashok, the data journalist spoke about the trend that she observed in India with regard to food.

Rukmini mentioned how the availability of local food helped build resilience against inflation and she recollected how people would mix locally available greens with wheat to make chapati during times of strife.

She added that spending on 'healthy things' such as milk, dry fruits, etc, rose consistently, limiting the affordability of these products to a section. This presented quite a disturbing finding. She further added how cereal-heavy diets or the consumption of sugar are looked down upon,



Healthy on stomach, heavy on wallet

The Economic Times

yet these are the options that the poor have to survive with. "Looking at the numbers without the context drives one down a judgemental path."

'What is just a job for them, is a revolution for us': AAP

Sharon Anna James

"The might of the BJP IT cell is now a thing of the past. We have volunteers who are motivated and driven. They are giving a run for money to the IT cells, as what is just a job for them is a revolution for us," said Kamran, the social media in charge of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bengaluru.

AAP is the only non-national party that rules more than one state and is seeking to add Karnataka to its kitty. With a focus on the assembly elections

next year, the party announced several new office bearers for the city recently.

Kamran added that the party believes that social media plays a vital role in the local and state elections and they aim to bring out positivity through their content. "We do not believe in criticising the opposition and name-calling. We are sharing with everyone the good work we have been doing. The globally renowned and acclaimed AAP governance model is giving hope to Bangalore," he further stated.