

Gearing up for second innings

Md Asad

Retirement Expo Offers Options For Senior Citizens

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Bangalore: Seventy-year-old M Shiva Kumar stared wide-eyed at the Facebook page. “So, this is what it is! I always wondered what these kids do, pounding the keyboard all the time,” he said.

The Retirement India Expo at the Nimhans Convention Centre on Saturday was buzzing with thousands of senior citizens like Shiva Kumar. Organized by Dignity Foundation for senior citizens, it had everything they need for their second innings—from tips on exercises to retirement homes in gated communities...

From bhajans, therapy to health screening and life insurances, the three-day expo is all about life after 60. You can search for a second career or the wheelchair that fits your requirement. If you're alone and need a companion, a stall tells you how to adopt a pup. If you want to write a will, you'll even find people who guide you to prepare a legal heir certificate. There are counters for astrology, handwriting analysis, tarot, caricature, humour club and bowling.

There's a training class on the latest trends. A techie takes senior citizens through the basics of social networking sites, smsing and chatting on the internet. He tells them how to find friends, join communities, download photos from cameras and upload to networking sites, talk to children through Skype and even creates accounts for them.

“Many have good career profiles and have had great experiences. They even have computers at home, but don't know how to use them. They see their children and grandchildren working on it



LIVING LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN: Senior citizens are introduced to different facets of life that they can enjoy after retirement at The Retirement India Expo in Bangalore on Saturday

but never learn from them. But they're curious to know what it is all about,” said software professional Nithin G V.

“I wanted a job and went to a counter. They asked me for my email id. I don't have one. So I thought I should learn about it,” said S Krishnamacharya, a Bharat Electronics employee.

But the biggest hit seemed to be retirement homes. Many builders have come up with gated communities and testify that Bangalore is a big market for them.

“There has been a tremendous response in Bangalore — 80% of our units are sold off. The reason can be mainly attributed to the IT-BT sector. In a nuclear family, both husband and wife are working, leaving no time for the elderly. There's also rise in inter-caste marriages,” said B S Nalini, sales manager, Jain Farms.

Sathyanarayanan, CEO, Melur Meadows, said there's a strong trend in Bangalore. “People are not looking only for a place to live in but for assured services. Even

At the expo

- Demos of new products like wheelchairs
- Shake, rock and dance
- Information sessions on health
- Food good for you
- Travel options
- Retirement careers
- How to use cellphone
- Volunteering
- Photography
- Caricature
- Bowling
- Graphology

we have to keep it in mind that it's for a group whose income levels are dropping,” he said. There are options of living on rent or on lease, apart from buying a house.

The services are tailored for senior citizens. “Security is a major issue for them and we take care of that. We also provide a resident manager to pay bills their on time, there is medical assistance in the compound and such other facilities. Since we also cater to a group that has a lot of time on their hands, we organize some activity every month. For instance, in case they want to watch a movie, we block movie tickets for them,” said Satish Nene, vice-president, Paranjape Schemes. After their success in Pune, they are now exploring options in Bangalore.

“I have always lived independently all my life. Even now, my wife and I feel the need to stay together and pursue a spiritual life we dream of,” said Bharga P A, 74, who has decided to live in one such community.

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