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Riding on footpath: Citizens nightmare

Abhirami Nair & Parnika S

Bengaluru: Despite countless pleas to the officials, the residents of 'Nagarjuna Premier' are terrified walking on the footpath near their residence. This is owing to the two-wheeler vehicles that are driven on the footpaths. Residents of this apartment near J P Nagar metro station, especially the senior citizens, have been facing this issue for quite some time. It is challenging for not just the residents but also the common people to walk without any fear.

"It is very difficult to walk on the footpath. The two-wheelers just ride there on the footpath and are not waiting for us to walk either. They hit a lady and she fell down. It is very difficult to commute by walking," said Malathi, who is a resident at Nagarjuna Premier for four years.

She expressed her concern by telling that it is high time and that the authorities should take care of the situation. They need to put up a barricade for their protection or construct a pathway for the residents to walk through. "We have made several attempts to bring this to the attention of the BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Pallike) officials but only in vain," she added. In response to her pleas, Chetan, a concerned citizen, said that the residents have to come forward and talk about their problems. He believes that one possible solution to this problem could be imposing a fine on the drivers on the footpath through the public eye app. "Even the public can use this app to upload pictures of vehicles which are breaking the rules," said Chetan.

Workers' union criticise amended Factory Act

Anjela Patrick & Joyce Rodrigues

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed a bill amending the Factories Act to allow the government to increase daily work hours from 9 to 12, but not exceed 48 hours per week. The bill also permits women to work night shifts in factories between 7 pm and 6 am after obtaining written permission from those interested in working night shifts and ensuring safety measures. This decision has sparked concern among trade unions throughout the state. According to the bill, the state government can increase the daily maximum hours of work by extending the total number of hours of work to six hours without an interval for any group, class, or factory. The bill would also make it possible for the government to set work hours for any day or week, above which workers would be entitled



Representational Image

Deccan Herald

to overtime pay at twice the regular rate. Furthermore, as stated in the bill, it would allow the employment of women workers on overtime work, thereby providing quality and equal opportunities to work and earn. Condemning the government's

decision, K V Bhat, state president of the Karnataka Rajya Akshara Dasoha Naukarara Sangha, said that people have fought for the 8-hour work shift for around 50 years. "Now the government has said 12 hours, and they have mentioned

that it is not compulsory; those who like to work can work. This, however, will not be the case. Depending on the market requirement and to increase production, they (factory owners) will force the workers," he added. Even though the bill proposes

to provide women with security measures such as establishing a complaint redressal mechanism in the factory, a sufficient number of restrooms, a transportation factory, and CCTV, it will still not ensure their safety, given the number of cases occurring in Bangalore, he said. "For women's safety, the drivers for the transportation can be the women themselves. In addition, women should be given in writing that if they're willing to work in the night hours, they will be provided with all security measures," he added. When asked which industry will benefit the most from these provisions, he said that the act will ultimately benefit the information technology or service industry. Despite being passed to profit the workers, this will profit the industries that hire them rather than the employees, he added.

'Obscene acts' are subjective and vaguely defined

Aasline Dsouza

There has been a long-standing debate around the acts of Public Display of Affection (PDA) in our country as it is often seen as disrespectful to others and harmful to community relations. PDA is a punishable offence in India as individuals can be booked for showing physical affection in public places, especially if they're offending anyone.

Under section 294 of the Indian Penal Code, the display of 'obscene acts' is a criminal offence with a punishment of up to three months imprisonment, a fine, or both. As the law does not give an explicit definition

of 'obscene acts', it is blatantly misused by the police, public and vigilante groups to harass couples, married or unmarried.

"When we look into the definition of the obscene act by law, it is not well defined. Every act of showing affection towards your near ones in public doesn't come under obscenity. A mother showing her love in public isn't considered obscene. But a couple in public going beyond the limits is an obscene act. Each and every such act can not be defined by law. Nobody has the right to intrude into one's fundamental rights. Hence formulating a policy

which is against constitutional rights is, wrong," said Advocate Aparna Chandran.

There are instances where the harassment took an ugly turn. For instance, in June 2022, a man was thrashed in Ayodhya for kissing his wife in the Saryu river. Ahead of Valentine's Day, the National Institute of Technology-Calicut (NITC) on February 9, issued a notice to the students informing them about banning PDAs on campus premises terming it inappropriate, as reported by The Times of India.

PDA is common among India's younger demographic and the negative outlook on

it is criticised by a growing number of young Indians who feel the need for a change in the perception towards the same. "Obscenity and offensiveness are largely subjective. A couple holding hands, or even walking together, anything can be constituted as obscene... this vagueness of law can be interpreted in any way by the people who want to misuse it. This thinking is not limited to a cultural context, it is an economic problem as well. Unless we tackle the economic roots, the cultural bond will not vanish," said Aratrika, a member of All India Students Association Karnataka.

Highlighting the city's inadequacies

Anirudh J

Bengaluru: The problem that cities face is that of the scale, where if a city crosses a certain amount of population, it will create multiple troubles such as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy and this turns a beautiful city into a mess, said Tara Krishnaswamy, co-founder of Citizens For Bengaluru on Thursday, at a panel discussion held at the Bangalore International Centre. The discussion was aimed at offering credible solutions to fill the gaps in the development of the city. Matthew Idiculla, a legal consultant at Azim Premji University discussed the idea of citizenship. "The right to the city's framework is nothing but the way for people who are residents to make claims over the city. Once we start looking at identifying the citizens through the traditional old-fashioned lens, it goes against the core idea of citizenship," he said. Speaking about migrants and their sense of ownership in the city, Anjali Karol Mohan, said, "Many apartment associations are conducting workshops for 30-40 slums regarding the communities to register or claim ownership and this will surely help them in getting the basic amenities."

The Syntax of networking

Jesbilin Joseph

Campus: Syntaxia offers a variety of events that provide students with an excellent opportunity to network with peers to have greater experience, also to improve technical skills, and gain insight into the real world, said Vishnu, one of the computer science students volunteers.

On February 23 and 24, St. Joseph's Institute of Information Technology and Cybernetics and Technophite Association of the Department of Computer



Title blocks

Jesbilin Joseph

Science hosted a two-day Inter-Collegiate Computer Science Fest called Syntaxia, where many events were held and students from colleges across Karnataka were invited to participate.

Speaking to The Beacon about the game Valorant, Tarun, the president of the

Cybernetics association said, "This is the first time we are hosting an offline esports game on our campus and we have set up 10 high-end gaming PCs for the participants."

Participants in the events were from a number of colleges, including Christ, Dayananda Sagar, Kristu Jayanti, and many others. The activities included bounty busters, a treasure hunt, code wars, a coding and debugging competition, and a brainwave byte, which tests the knowledge of the participants.

Charitable APU turns adamant

Kavya S

Bengaluru: It is disheartening that a charitable organisation like Azim Premji University (APU), is suppressing the dissent of students rather than involving the students in decision-making, said the All India Students Association (AISA), Karnataka, in a press release.

Students of APU have been protesting since Monday, February 13 against the imposition of a charge of 8,500 per semester for shuttle transport service for the first-year students residing in the university KGA residence.

Due to the increase in cases of sexual harassment, while traversing between the hostel and the campus, the students demanded the bus service. "We started a hunger strike yesterday and 80 students have been participating in it," said Kevin (name changed), a student of Azim Premji University. Speaking about mail sent to the vice-chancellor about an open house meeting he said, "This morning we received the mail, and there is nothing regarding the memorandum. He sent us that we are violating the code of conduct of the university."