

Preetha S Kumar, BANGALORE

"My friend's husband stopped talking to her and would often be out on tours. He hardly called and whenever she did, he never answered. He used to pick up fights over small issues every now and then. Her doubt that he might be having an affair was confirmed by a sleuth she hired - her husband was seeing his ex-girlfriend," says Jyoti Raghu, a dentist.

Does that sound like celluloid drama? Well, Sherlock Holmes, Adam Dalgliesh and Hercule Poirot are passe. This is an era of the new age, suave and mysterious secret agents who work round the clock in a super cagey manner.

Detective agencies are doing a good job in Bangalore and an increasing number of people are now turning to them for help.

And it seems the recession has not stopped Bangaloreans from thinking twice before hiring detectives. People are hiring sleuths to keep a tab on their children and spouses. And much to everyone's surprise, even corporate companies are opting for these services to track their employees. Annapurna Nagaraj found out with the help of a detective that her 17-year-old

P Ravindranath, Director, Private Eye

Parents hire us only when they smell something fishy and feel that something's not OK with their child's behaviour."

son was into drugs thereby enabling her to provide him the necessary support. "My son was behaving weirdly and would often come home late. He wouldn't talk at all and we got suspicious. My husband and I decided to hire a detective to know what was happening," says Nagaraj. "Thank God for them. Otherwise I wouldn't have found out what my child was going through. He was sent to a rehab immediately and now he's fine," she adds.

P Ravindranath, director, Private Eye, a detective agency in Bangalore, says, "Parents hire us to find out about the activities of their children, the company they are keeping, if they are into drugs etc. They hire us only when they smell something fishy and feel that something's not okay with their child's behaviour." He also reveals that he gets more cases pertaining to boys than girls. He explains that their agency has three kinds of service divisions: a security services division, a detective services division and a security training services division. He also divulges that, nowadays, a growing number of corporate companies are



## HERE'S LOOKING



## AT YOU, KID



For private investigators in the city, as long as there are secrets to be unearthed, business will be brisk as usual. Ahead of next month's workshop in the city, they say the recession has not affected them in the least

availing their services: "The knowledge and exposure of people is increasing. The companies hire us for pre-employment verification, gainful employment verification, intellectual property violation like trademark violation etc." In fact, many corporate banks also hire

detectives to trace a debtor or a judgement debtor, to trace assets for the purpose of attachment, fingerprints and handwriting analysis, insurance fraud detection etc.

Sociologists feel that as people become increasingly private, in fact, so private that they

are not even sure about their primary relations, there is a lack of meaningful communication, an alienating syndrome, that drives them towards third party reliance and anonymity. Detective hiring is just an extension of the same.

It's a case of neurosis on the part of the clients, arising from skepticism as things have gone wrong for them in their personal lives leading to their spying on others, even intimate ones, as there is a lack of faith.

"Traditional ways of trusting do not exist anymore. People want faster methods of knowing what the other person is up to. In this fast changing world where people don't even have the time to sit and talk to each other, secretive and suspicious dealings are becoming more apparent. Terms like loyalty, honesty and fidelity are nowhere to be found. Children these days have ample opportunities to misuse their freedom and since parents can't curtail their liberties, they hire a spy," says Dr Sulata Shenoy, a psychologist.

She feels it is justified in these times of unpredictability but hiring a Sherlock Holmes won't solve any problem. On the other hand, one might end up losing the bargain, when cer-

Harshwardhan, Private detective

Our business is on throughout the year because people who opt for these services are mainly from the upper middle-class."

tain things are revealed. "It is far healthier that you go back to the old ways of trusting each other. Have an environment that is conducive to a trust building relationship," she adds.

When asked if the recession has affected their services, Ravindranath responds with a quick 'No'. "Our business is rock steady mainly because investigation services are specialised services and are taken on an urgent need. Unlike other services, 'Shadowing and Surveillance' services are not for the future or the past. It is always for the present. If a wife doubts her husband with cheating on her, she wouldn't want to wait till things get worse."

Charges for spying can range anywhere between Rs3000 to Rs6000 for a person, per day, excluding the service tax. "Our business is on throughout the year, whether the recession is on or not, because people who opt for these services are mainly from the upper middle class who have that much to spare," says Harshwardhan (name changed), a private detective.

k\_preetha@dnaindia.net

# Technology and education join hands for learning

DNA Correspondent, BANGALORE

Manipal Education, launched its next generation learning system - EduNxt - to transform distributed learning in India.

Affordable and easy to use, EduNxt enables a collaborative and interactive environment for learning and includes small group mentoring, virtual classrooms, simulation and other interactive and self-study content, recorded presentations and shared browsing. This innovation from Manipal Education shifts the Education paradigm from being 'faculty-centric' to a 'learner-centric' environment. Students can now experience a 'portable campus',

Anand Sudarshan, CEO, Manipal Education

We see this innovation providing significant impetus to the higher education enrolment rate, employability and positively influence the economy of our country."

'carry along mentors' and have access to over one million online books and journals.

It will be launched first for Sikkim Manipal University's Distance Education (SMU - DE) students in July 2009. Speaking at the launch, Anand Sudarshan, CEO, Manipal Education said, "EduNxt is truly transformational and

has the potential to change higher education in India. It has the power to scale and provide highly affordable access to quality education to aspirants even in far-flung areas of the country, thus achieving geographic inclusivity. We see this innovation providing significant impetus to the higher education enrol-

ment rate, employability and positively influence the economy of our country."

Manipal Education is partnering with Microsoft, BSNL and netbook OEM suppliers to provide quality affordable education.

Steve Ballmer, CEO, Microsoft Corporation Pvt Ltd, said, "The EduNxt distance learning platform is a great example of how information technology can extend the reach of great educational resources."

Adding to this, Ravi Venkatesan, chairman, Microsoft India, said "Education in India has a chance of being transformed if various players, public and private, come together."

## classact

# Legal help is something that everyone needs

The Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) is an entrance exam adopted by a select group of law schools to enable them to admit students into their LLB courses. Course director Anita T speaks to Team DNA about the test and the specialisations available to students

Awareness amongst students with respect to 'law as a career' has increased over the last couple of years. Students who are not keen on taking up either medicine or engineering are looking at law as an alternative and thus more students are choosing to appear for the CLAT, making it more competitive.

Just like how CAT scores are accepted by several MBA colleges, the CLAT score is now being accepted by an increasing number of law schools.

Law schools find it easier to have a single administrator for the exam. We hope to have more law schools accepting the CLAT score in the future.

The exam pattern has changed this year. However, any student who has prepared well for this exam will be able to tackle all sections. Due to the increase in the number of applicants and the slight change in pattern, the students will have to score anywhere between

160 and 175 over 200 in order to get into the top law schools like National Law School of India University (NLSIU), NALSAR University of Law and National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS).

Time management is critical for tackling the exam. The CLAT paper has 200 questions and a time limit of 120 minutes; hence, students have to manage their time well. Since there is no negative marking, they should try and answer as many questions as they can. The first five minutes should be used to quickly scan the test paper. The student can then begin with the section they are most comfortable with.

The validity of the LLB degree is not connected to CLAT. Even if a law school or college does not accept the CLAT score, the degree awarded by them will remain valid. The Bar Council of India has to approve of the law school and the LLB degree being given by that particular law school.

The Constitution provides reservations for different classes and castes. It's an inherent part of our educational system. It should not affect the students - for them, it's a competitive exam; they should just focus on excelling.

Legal services have always been in demand. But now, with globalisation, there is an increase in demand for transactional lawyers and legal services. Of late, companies from the US and the UK have even started outsourcing their legal services to India in order to cut costs.

Anita T is course director, Paradygm Law Entrance Coaching Centre, Koramangala

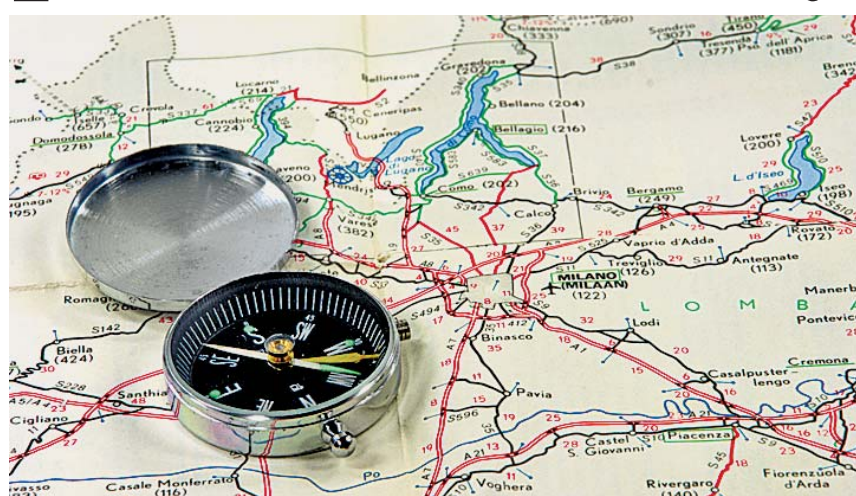
# Fill the gap with the life of your choice

Many youngsters are braving the odds, taking the time to find their calling instead of following the crowd and immediately enrolling in a college

Shivani Dave & Ann Malayil, BANGALORE

We have always heard about relatives and friends overseas taking years off between school and college. This trend seems to be catching up slowly but steadily in India too. With the class 12 exam results being announced, DNA speaks to a few students who have taken a gap year in the past and others who are planning to take a break before starting college.

"I was not certain on what I wanted to do after my 12th, so I decided to take a year off and gain some experience in different areas to know my field of interest. I did about four internships in different fields like advertising, human resources, management and accountancy. I am doing Boom now and it was the one year I took off, that helped me to decide," says Rishabh Chauhan. Sometimes deciding what path to take for a bachelors degree can be easier said than done if one does not know what he/she is passionate about. At times like these, travelling and



exploring the world helps find the right answers. So was the case with Diya M, who took a year off to find her niche. "I did science in my 12th and got 87 per cent marks. I worked very hard for those marks but I never really enjoyed the subjects I studied. It was for this reason that I chose to take a year off to figure out what I really wanted to do for the rest of my life. I travelled to various places and experienced different cultures. I also took up classes in dancing, singing and designing. It was during this time that I realised

my love for art. I am now doing my degree in fine arts and truly enjoying it."

To know more about this new trend and its benefits, DNA spoke to Sudha Joshi, an education counsellor. "If students are taking a year off to travel in order to learn and gain experience then it is advisable, as this leads to wider understanding and awareness. Generally, we see more science students taking a year off in case they are not happy with their marks. Sometimes, due to financial problems in the family,

Diya M, Student

I took science in my 12th, but never really enjoyed the subjects. So I chose to take a year off to figure out what I really wanted to do for the rest of my life."

Risbah Chauhan, Student

I was not certain on what I wanted to do after my PUC, so I took a year off and did about internships in different fields like advertising, human resources, management and accountancy."

students take time off from studies to earn money for further education." Vishal NP who is presently doing his engineering, says, "After my PUC, I did not score well enough in my CET exam. Because of this, I could not get into a good college. So, I took a year off to prepare better and took the exam again the following year. I scored better in my second attempt and it helped me get into a better college."

Be it travelling or doing things you, love taking a year off can be beneficial and fun.

# Now, bring the ocean into your living room

Invest in the time to set up a saltwater aquarium for an experience no regular freshwater exhibits can match

Elizabeth Soumya, BANGALORE

Many in the city want to recreate the fascinating world of underwater creatures. There are enough and more marine water fish hobbyists in the city, says KN Rajaram, a businessman who owns a store called Matsyavatar.

There are many reasons why seawater fish can be more attractive than freshwater creatures. "The variety of seawater fish is unmatched; the creatures in the sea are so varied, different and colourful. Stunning bright pinks, yellows and other hues can't be found

in freshwater fish that are duller in comparison. There are also a lot of unique invertebrates and anemones that can't be found in freshwater," he says. But Rajaram warns that marine tanks require high maintenance since the fish need to have particular chemical conditions in the water for survival.

Also, one needs to mix a lot of additives to the water such as liquid iron, liquid iodine, liquid strontium, liquid molybdenum and liquid calcium, he says. The pH level in the water needs to be 8.3, which means the water needs to be slightly alkaline. Test kits and additives are available in the market.

One needs to be willing to spend a considerable amount of time if it is taken up as a hobby; care has to be given on a consistent basis. "Negligence will lead to the death of marine fish, as is what usually happens with freshwater fish because of careless owners. We never give our fish to first time owners. It is ad-



visable to keep freshwater fish before buying marine fish. In a marine aquarium, the water itself is alive with thousands of microscopic creatures," adds Rajaram.

A marine aquarium can have a few plants, mostly seaweeds. But one needs to be careful

KNOW YOUR FISH	
The most basic saltwater aquarium measures three feet by two feet by two feet, costing Rs40,000.	
Cost per fish	Price (in Rs)
Indian clown fish	100
Star fish	170
Finger star	170
Doctor wrasse	300
Three spot damselfish	150

KN Rajaram, Matsyavatar

It is advisable to keep freshwater fish before buying marine fish. In a marine aquarium, the water itself is alive with thousands of microscopic creatures

to see if the fish one has are vegetarian, as many marine fish eat up plants. Despite the challenges, Rajaram insists that there is nothing like having marine fish, as it is like having a beautiful slice of the ocean right inside your home.

e\_soumya@dnaindia.net