

Pune still a favoured home for pensioners

Favourable weather, security, proximity to Mumbai draw senior citizens to settle here

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MANY would perhaps think twice before still referring to Pune as Pensioner's paradise.' In fact, sobriquet like 'Boom town' and 'IT hub' might appear to be fast gaining popularity. However, Pune still seems to be living up to its image of a haven for senior citizens.

Amiable climate, coupled with security, attracts many of those who wish to lead a quiet life, post retirement. The amenities being provided by housing societies are an added advantage. Asha and Dilip Kamat are a case in example.

Having spent a major chunk of their lives in the Caribbean, where Dilip was a legal advisor, the Kamats came back to India looking for a peaceful place to retire. "We went scouting in Mumbai but didn't like the fast life here. Then we heard of com-



For Vijayan, it is good to be near Mumbai

munes for senior citizens in Pune and came here last August," says 70-year-old Asha Kamat.

For Pratima and Umesh Nanda also, Pune won over North India when they moved to the city last April. "We wanted to go to a place which had a peaceful environment combined with facilities of a big city. And Pune was the perfect answer. It's also much safer than cities in the North," says Pratima. Having spent about 15 years in Amalner, a small town in Maharashtra, the Nandas avoided the North for its extreme weather and soaring crime graph as well.

Pune's proximity to Mumbai is another reason why senior citizens choose to live here. Colonel Somdeo Mehta (retd) shifted to Pune at the end of last December: "Previously, I had spent 13 years in Thane. I had to undergo a bypass surgery in June, so I headed to Pune for better medical conditions. The climate is

very conducive and it is safer than other cities."

Thinking on similar lines was Shyama Vijayan, who stays alone in Kalyaninagar. Having worked in Dubai for about 19 years as a financial expert, she headed back to India a decade ago and decided to settle down in Pune: "I visited Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai but didn't feel like spending my post-retirement years there. Then I came to Pune and it had a good feel about it. Since my daughter stays in Mumbai, Pune was ideal because of its proximity to the city."

What also keeps these elders happy is the number of options available to keep themselves occupied. While Vijayan is managing the library in her residential complex, 65-year-old Vrinda Parolkar spends her time doing social work at Preet Mandir in Kalyaninagar. Parolkar shifted to Pune from Noida last year to spend time with her son.